

The V.O.I.C.E.

Valuable Organizational Information Connecting Everyone

The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Methodist Women

Volume 4, Issue 1
March 2022

Change is in the Air

Dear UMW Sisters:

Are you, the United Methodist Women of the Michigan Conference ready to TURN IT UP?! That is the theme for Assembly 2022 in Orlando, Florida. We will TURN IT UP for spiritual healing and renewal, for rebirth in a new time, for women leaders, and for justice for women, children and youth. Can't you just feel the excitement? There is **change on the horizon for United Methodist Women**. By March 1 there will be an announcement of a re-branding, a new image for our organization. Change can be scary but change also brings a new energy and courage for bold new actions. Let's prepare to celebrate this change together as we move into the next 150 years of mission!

In 2022 United Methodist Community House (UMCH) is celebrating 120 years in mission in the Grand Rapids community. Yes, 120 years ago our foremothers saw a need and began helping immigrants in their neighborhood. In true UMW fashion we have diligently continued to support the mission as it has changed to serve the changing needs of their neighborhood. Just a few years ago the West Michigan Conference

UMW transferred ownership of the building to UMCH to better position them for growth and allow us to focus our giving to directly support the programs at UMCH. **Change is in the air at UMCH** as they prepare to launch a major building project in the coming year. We show up, we take action, we get it done and we keep getting it done 120 years later!

I encourage each and every UMW in the Michigan Conference to consider supporting UMCH with a gift of \$10 per month over the next 12 months, giving \$120 in honor of our 120 years of mission support. You can make a one-time gift or set up a recurring monthly gift at their website: <http://www.umchousegr.org> and click on the "Donate Now" button. You can also give through your local unit. TURN IT UP for UMCH in 2022 and increase support for our local UMW National Mission Institution.

Together in mission,

Julia Paradine-Rice

Michigan Conference UMW
President
jparadinerice@gmail.com
989-576-0675

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United Methodist Women: Faith • Hope • Love in Action

We are women with a Purpose!

The organized unit of the United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Why We Engage in Social Action

For more than 150 years, Methodist women organized for mission have worked in the name of Jesus to take positions on social justice issues and change legislation, systems, structures and practices considered unjust and oppressive. These bold foremothers advocated to end lynching, improve women's health, raise women's status in society, organize for fair wages and benefits for workers and families and adopt the Charter for Racial Justice.

Today, we continue to build on this foundation as we work to end maternal mortality, attain a living wage for all, interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure energy that is just for all. As United Methodist Women of the 21st century, we are called to be bold in our witness, working to dismantle systems of oppression and build, together, a better world.

We don't yet live in a society that treats God's creation with dignity and respect. We live in a world where institutional structures and social relations oppress people and defy the will of God. The Bible tells the story of God always and everywhere at work for liberation and healing, justice and peace. When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus answered: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

To love our neighbor as ourselves we must change the systems that do harm in the first place. This was a vital message of Jesus' ministry, challenging the existing social order, proclaiming God's reign: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

The early Christian community recognized the vitality of this call. We are called to a living faith—a faith that makes itself known by its fruits. Indeed, God is always at work to make change in the world, appearing in unexpected ways and reversing the norms of "polite" society to ensure abundant life and wholeness for all.

Our United Methodist heritage reflects a history of commitment to vital discipleship and social action. John Wesley strongly emphasized the Christian life as a combination of faith and love put into practice. The United Methodist Church affirms these same beliefs today: By joining heart and hand, we assert that personal religion, evangelical witness, and Christian social action are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing. Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the

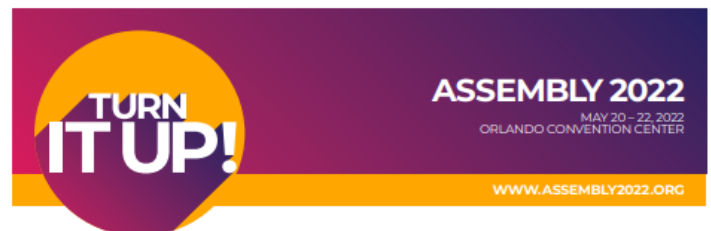
Open to All Churches

Disaffiliation, closure, separation are complicated processes for our United Methodist Churches. The Michigan Conference United Methodist Women are pleased to invite United Methodist Women of all churches who may experience change in church status to stay active with the Michigan Conference United Methodist Women. The mission of United Methodist Women remains committed to serving women, children, and youth throughout Michigan, the United States and globally, with faith, hope, and love in action. As United Methodist Women please know that we remain a sisterhood of grace. Contact your Conference and district presidents for questions and details, or email me at rbydandrs@aol.com.
United Methodist Women, Open to All Churches

United Methodist Women.
Open to All Churches

Ruby Anderson

National Director/Program Advisory Group
rbydandrs@aol.com, (586) 940-0221



In 2022 we will reflect on today's challenges and together find comfort and strength to move forward, building new ways for faith-filled women to make a difference in our communities and the world. We will recommit to our purpose, but also more. For such a time as this we will **TURN IT UP!**

TURN IT UP! for spiritual healing and renewal

TURN IT UP! for rebirth in a new time

TURN IT UP! for women leaders

TURN IT UP! for justice for women, children and youth

Come to Orlando to care for your spirit, worship with your sisters and celebrate the positive impact women create in the world.

life of the world. (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016, ¶102)

United Methodist Women's national campaigns are a way for us to work together on shared goals across lines of difference and geographic distance. When we all come together and lift our voices to address a specific shared concern, we are far more likely to win measurable change for our communities. Prayerfully consider how God is calling you to join one of United Methodist Women's campaigns.

Contact Jocelyn Davis, Social Action Coordinator at missydavis32@gmail.com or (810) 694-6266 for more information.

An Act of Kindness Fulfills a Dream!

Erin Jackson, a speedskater, believed she could win a Gold Medal in the Winter Olympics of 2022. She put in many years of hard work to make her dream come true. She competed at trials in the 2018 Olympics after four months of training in speedskating. Erin and Brittany Bowe, a fellow speedskater and childhood friend, vowed to compete at the 2022 Olympics.

Erin was the World Champion 500 Meter Speedskater at the time of the trials for the 2022 Winter Olympics. Unfortunately, she made an uncharacteristic slip and found herself in third place. Only the top two skaters were allowed to go to the 2022 Olympics. Brittany spoke with the coach and asked if she gave up her spot in the 500 meter race, would it be given to Erin. The coach said, "yes." Brittany and Erin were both

overjoyed. Erin was moved by Brittany's generosity. Brittany had already qualified for the 1,000 and 1,500 meter races, which she is favored to win. She felt that Erin deserved to be in the race due to her hard work and ability. She believed Erin could win the Gold! And Erin did, in grand style!

Brittany was willing to share these Olympic moments with her friend. The act of stepping aside and giving her friend her spot was an "act of kindness." It was an act she did freely. As it turns out, Brittany ended up also competing in the 500 meter race as other countries were unable to fill their quota of athletes! That which she freely gave up, was returned to her! Brittany raced to 16th place.

Now that Erin has won her gold medal, the ladies are concentrating on Brittany's upcoming races. Erin is mentoring and supporting Brittany. She wants Brittany to experience winning a Gold Medal

also.

"Acts of Kindness" make the world a better place. "Acts of Kindness" are born out of love for one another and community. "Acts of Kindness" are free and freely given. "Acts of Kindness" are gifts from God."

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." (quote attributed to John Wesley)

"Acts of Kindness" are "Love in Action!"

Ethel M. Gill

Secretary
(313) 530-5393
butterfly1425@yahoo.com



Membership Nurture and Outreach - The New is All Virtual

The new wineskins are virtual. Call it online, webinars, YouTube, or Zoom, whatever, but Membership Nurture and Outreach coordinators must sharpen their skills and share with the local Units. The census is now done online. Membership enrollment is online—myUMW.

I sure hope you have experienced some of the *Faith Talks* and *Climate Justice* sessions and *videos* available on the United Methodist Women website. Offer to do a workshop/program for your local Units on all the virtual opportunities and the new

ways of United Methodist Women.

Now, there is the 'Mighty Networks'. Subscribe for a full year of Program Resources content for only \$10. Subscribe and be part of the monthly Community Gathering. (Is this like a Unit meeting? I'm not sure.)

The Community Gathering offers leaders--

- Support in leading programs
 - Spiritual growth/soul care
 - Fellowship and community building
 - Engagement and networking
- I believe all district and conference team members should subscribe to this 'Mighty Networks'. Women without an

active Unit, this is for you! Go to/use the United Methodist Women webpage and explore all it offers as often as you use Amazon.

On a sad note—If you have a Unit disbanding or in the process of disaffiliation, please contact me for the basic steps that need to be taken in closing out the Unit books and membership.

Cindy Thiele

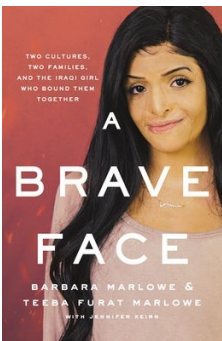
Membership Nurture and Outreach
cindahthiele@gmail.com
(269) 673-4514

Program Resources - Reading Program

So where have the books you have been reading taken you to.

“Here’s to books, the cheapest vacation you can buy.”
~ Charlain Harris

Have you read [A Brave Face: Two Cultures, Two Families and The Iraqi Girl Who Bound Them Together?](#) A story about an Iraqi girl brought to



Cleveland, Ohio for surgeries to restore her face and scalp burned in a roadside bombing in Iraq. To restore this child required many surgeries, resulting in her staying for many years. This is a heart-warming story which will give you a look into two cultures and what is required to repair severe burns.

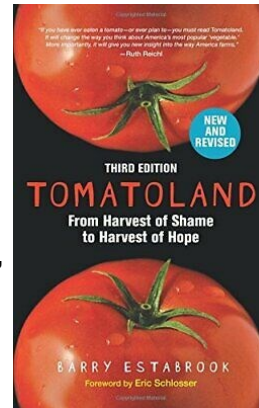
The other book I recently read was [Tomatoland](#). After reading this book I may never eat another tomato from

Florida! We are all familiar with the perfect, hard as a rock, tasteless tomatoes in our grocery stores.

[Tomatoland](#) will enlighten you as to why this is so. In addition, to the biology of it all, you will gain insight into the lives of the migrants who work in the tomato fields. We can buy these terrible tomatoes at a cheap cost on the backs of the people who work the tomato fields.

Keep on reading! – and travelling.

It is time to get your Reading Program report filled out and submitted to your district Program Resources Coordinator. The report should include all the books read from Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2021. You will receive your recognition at your annual meeting in the fall. Be sure to include the Faith Talks you have watched – Three Faith Talks equal one Bonus Book, two Faith Talks equal one book in the



Spiritual Growth category. If you watched the movies [Just Mercy](#), [The Hate U Give](#) or [Pushout](#), you can count each as a book in the Social Action category.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions about the reading program. Also, I am willing to visit local units or District meetings within about 100 miles. I probably could go further - ask! I love to talk about books and UMW.

Spread the word “Reading is a cheap vacation.”

Ruth Sutton

Secretary of Program Resources
(989) 708-9968
suttonr1@charter.net

Education & Interpretation

A quiet and scary Covid-19 year is finally gone and it's time we put it behind us and open up a brand new season of Education & Interpretation. I've taken a few extra training courses lately on Education & Interpretation and some United Methodist Women Faith Talks and have a new respect and understanding of what our jobs really involve. I even learned how we are supposed to be working closely with our Treasurers! Who knew???

Our Treasurers have a lot to do to collect and report how much money everyone pledges and turns in, then report on where she sends it. I think we can call our Treasurers the "Realists", telling us how much we take in, and how much we spent. The Education & Interpretation Coordinators are like the "Cheerleaders", getting you excited about new ideas for fund-raising and telling everyone how much good we are able to do to support our many missions, both at home and around the

world for women, youth and children. And we are blessed to be able to better share this information with you going forth.

So hang on to your hats ladies, we have a lot of ideas and information to share with you that you'll be glad to hear about!

Michele Weston

Education & Interpretation
mweston38@att.net
(810) 694-6266
c (810) 624-1184

Charter for Racial Justice Moment

At Conference Leadership Team meetings, the Charter for Racial Justice committee member presents a Charter for Racial Justice Moment.

I would like to share with you, what was presented at our November meeting, an article of Bennett College. (See this in the on-line version of the VOICE.)

After the Charter for Racial Justice moment was presented, the team found out from one of our very own, Jimmie Jones, a member of the Michigan Conference

Leadership Team, attended Bennett College in 1954 – 1958. Mrs. Jones is currently on the Nominations committee. I interviewed Mrs. Jones about her days as a student at Bennett College. During this time, the civil rights movement was in motion in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Mrs. Jones mention that during her time at Bennett that the late, Martin Luther King Jr., came through Greensboro and spoke at the college. She also reminded me that the history of



Bennett with lunch counter sit-ins were reference in the book “Women United for Change 150 Years to Mission”. At Mission u, we attended a training on this book. On pages 14 and 15, mentions on February 1, 1960, four black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical Institute begin a sit-in at Woolworth’s lunch counters and the next day the male students were joined by women from Bennett College.

Contact Jocelyn Davis at (810) 694-6266 for more information.

Messages from District Presidents

What blessings I enjoy! A post on Facebook said “If you want to feel rich just think of all the things you have that money cannot buy.” If I was charged for all of my blessings I’d be not only broke, but also quite in debt. Instead, I’m in debt to Jesus Christ who is saving me from material things and nudging me toward spiritual things. I’m so deaf and blind that Jesus is the only one who would tackle the job! I’m so grateful!

One of my biggest blessings is my family and my friends. Although I live in the woods on a two-track with no neighbors, about three quarters of a mile from my mailbox, I have more friends now than when I lived in a bigger city. I need to be intentional about getting out and creating friends. I have made so many friends across the state through United Methodist Women! Those friendships even extend to other continents. Once you meet someone, you learn a bit about them – their families, jobs, struggles, and aspirations.

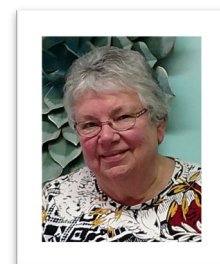
When you are introduces to United Methodist Women, you learn how to plan a soup supper, send twenty-seven greeting cards to homebound folks, deliver a funeral dinner, and read books for the United Methodist Women Reading Program. When you read books from the Reading Program, you learn about social justice issues, then you start really listening to the news and reading between the lines. Then the other Reading Program areas grab you:

Spiritual Growth, Education for Mission, Leadership Development, and Education for Mission. You then are able to share what you’ve learned with your friends. This leads you to reading one more book... She Came to Slay: The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman by Erica Armstrong Dunbar is on its way to my library right now!

We know that within United Methodist Women “Something’s Coming,” like the song from West Side Story. There has always been so much – but wait! – now there’s more! At no extra charge! Not even for shipping & handling! We don’t even have to pay postage! It will come right to our inbox & mailbox! Something is coming, big changes, but still women helping other women, children & youth. Still women of faith. I can hardly wait! How about you? It will be another of life’s wonderful blessings! We have gone through so many changes, especially these last two years, so what’s a bit more? Again, I can hardly wait! As we are admonished to “Wait for the Lord” (Ps 27:14), now we must wait on National United Methodist Women!

Julia Hulka

President
Northern Waters District
jahulka49@gmail.com
(989) 348-1992
c (989) 860-8189



Messages from District Presidents

It is Sunday afternoon and I am sitting in my recliner with my favorite blanket over me, a cat wanting to curl up in my lap for a nap, (no room as my lap is full with my computer typing this article). My husband is busy reading the Sunday paper (with eyes half closed) and the dog is stretched out on the floor taking his afternoon nap. We are all trying to stay warm, as I am sure you are, on these cold, cold January days. I am so glad we have Zoom that we can use when the weather is such that we can't get out for in person meetings. We held a Greater Southwest District UMW meeting on Saturday morning Jan. 22nd with all in attendance except one enjoying golfing in Florida. We have finalized our events for this year with dates and places and are planning on all of them being in person, unless told we can't.

Greater Southwest District UMW dates and locations for 2022 events are as follows:

Spring Fling March 26th at South Haven UMC
10:00-1:00 sack lunch provided

Mission Evening June 16th at Climax UMC
6:30-8:00 with strawberry shortcake

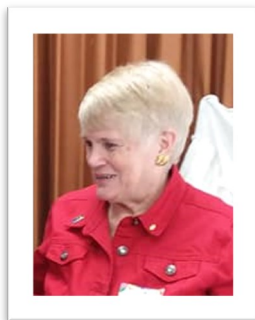
District Annual Celebration October 1st at
Otsego UMC 9:30-2:00 lunch provided

We look forward to sending women from our district to Orlando, FL for National Assembly, Mission u at either Lake Huron Retreat Center or Gaylord UMC, and Conference Annual Celebration at Westwood UMC in Kalamazoo. We are excited about 2022 and what we will learn about and achieve for missions this year. Come and join us on our journey.

In Service to Christ through
United Methodist Women

Linda Burton-Collier

President
Greater Southwest District
(269) 793-7340
lindaburtoncollier@gmail.com



Greetings from the Midwest District. We would like to invite you to our district events that we are hosting this spring. They will be in person with masks highly recommended.

On Saturday, March 19, 2022 we will host our Spring Fling event. Nancy Snell from Kalamazoo Area will be our speaker. Nancy will share about the Civil Rights Tour held this last fall. She will also be bringing her guitar to share her music with us. A representative from GR Community House will be present to give us an update. Our ingathering will also be for Community House. Then we will break sessions with a book review, grants, mission hands on activities.

Then on Saturday, April 30, 2022 we will meet at Middleville UMC for our annual Spring Retreat. This year it is a one day event. Dawn Ferguson will be our retreat leader.

Both events have a \$15.00 per person registration fee.

As a reminder, I moved a little over a year ago. My address, email address and phone number may need to be updated on your lists.

Jean Sherman

Midwest District President
sherdairy1@gmail.com
(810) 694-6266
c (810) 624-1184



March 23 - Day of Giving

Ways to give:

Check: United Methodist Women

Attn: Development, The Legacy Fund Endowment Fund, 475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10115

Write **"DAY OF GIVING"** in the memo section.

Text: 41444 and enter "Legacy150" in the message area.

Phone: 800-278-7771(8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST, Mon.–Fri.)

Online: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/150

Together, we are building our legacy!



Messages from District Presidents

Greetings from Central Bay District United Methodist Women. As we write this, we are preparing for our Spiritual Enrichment Brunch on February 12, 2022. We want to thank Pastor Michael Kelley and the members of the Gordonville UMC for opening their doors for this event, and to Gordonville UMW who agreed to host the annual Spiritual Brunch. Unfortunately, the COVID Omicron rate has caused much concern for large gatherings and rather than put anyone at risk we have opted to go virtual on Zoom. It is with sad hearts that we do this as we will miss seeing everyone in person but hope you join us on Zoom.

We are working very hard to do our job and keep everyone updated to what is happening in Central Bay District. As with many other Districts we need women to step up and help fill the open positions on the Leadership Team. We have openings for Secretary of Program Resources, Nominations, and Social Action. If interested, please contact one of the Central Bay District Leadership Team Members. The Leadership Team is keeping our D-Zone Partner's updated on what is happening. On April 29-30 we are planning the Spiritual Life Retreat at The Springs, in Gladwin. Praying that we will be able to meet in person for this event. The Speaker is Sonyn Luna with a message on "A Journey with Jesus" (understanding an immigrant's journey).

Caroline and I will be attending the Assembly "Turn it up" Virtually on Zoom, which will be held on May 20-22 in Orlando, Florida.

Blessings,

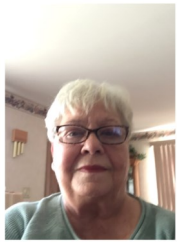
Caroline Diaz

Co-President
Central Bay District
diazc5282@gmail.com
(989) 450-1735



Doris Simons

Co-President
Central Bay District
dorissimons@att.net
(989)781-1492



Charter for Racial Justice Grant

To encourage local UMW units to engage in projects to expand understanding of racial justice issues, the Michigan Conference UMW Charter for Racial Justice Committee is offering grants in amounts up to \$300 to local units.



Some ideas you may want to consider:

- Racial justice book study
- Guest speaker
- Travel to a museum or other site of racial justice significance

More resources for your unit are available at the following UMW website: **UMW Racial Justice Opportunities for Local Units**

Applications are encouraged by April 1, 2022 – but will be accepted until all available funds have been granted. If your grant is accepted, we will ask your unit to send a short report to the Charter for Racial Justice Committee once you have completed your project/program.

Your submitted application letter should include the following information:

- Name of Unit, contact person name/address/e-mail/phone number,
- Grant amount you are requesting and detailed use of funds
- Goals you hope to achieve and estimated # of people participating
- Beginning and ending date of project
- Any additional information to help us understand your plans.

Please send your application letter to jparadinerice@gmail.com or via snail mail to: Julia Paradine-Rice, 11942 Prairie Edge Street, Schoolcraft, MI 49087

Get Your Placemats Here!

Anyone interested in acquiring placemats that promote United



United Methodist
Community House

Methodist Community House should contact Carla Moore at cmoore@umchousegr.org. Give her a two week lead from when you need it. These would be great for District Annual Celebrations or any mission event.

Important 2021 Dates:

June 1-4 ~ Michigan MUC
Annual Conference

August 11-13 ~ Mission u
Lake Huron Retreat Center

October 16-18 ~ Mission u of the North
Gaylord First UMC

October 22 ~ Conference Annual
Westwood UMC ~ Kalamazoo

The V.O.I.C.E.

Valuable Organizational Information Connecting Everyone

The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Methodist Women

Published three times a year: February, May and August

Send submissions by the 10th of the previous month to
Sally Messner, sallymessner@yahoo.com

Mission u 202 Study: Luke 13, Who Can We Be Together?

A Transformative Biblical Curriculum for Adults,
Youth and Children

We find ourselves in a period of incredible disruption and uncertainty. In the midst of a devastating pandemic, a divisive political climate and economic turmoil, we are turning to stories of Jesus that have anchored Christian communities in challenging times for over two millennia. Some of these stories of Jesus are found in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. The chapter opens and closes with a community trying to make sense of and navigate their way through times of turmoil and tragedy. However, the chapter centers on a story of Jesus teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath when a woman suddenly appears. Jesus makes the choice to “set [her] free from [her] ailment” (Luke 13:12) which causes a great deal of commotion among the leaders and crowd gathered there. In this context, Jesus likens the kingdom to a mustard seed and yeast (Luke 13:18-21). What did those images evoke for

Jesus’ first-century Jewish audience? And what possibilities might seed and yeast hold for us today?

At the end of this study our hope is that participants will leave with a bigger and broader vision of the kind of community Christ is calling us to be in times of loss, grief and massive disruption. What would be possible if we tend to the needs of our communities in small and often disruptive ways as Jesus did in Luke 13? May we do so with the faith that a multitude of small actions, like seeds, can activate a community’s healing and renewal.

Goals:

- Experience spiritual practices that support us through uncertainty, loss and grief
- Develop capacity to interpret Scripture in multiple ways
- Build our biblical and theological understanding of key metaphors in the parables of the mustard seed and yeast
- Deepen our learning through intergenerational conversations and connections
- Engage in community conversations to explore which small actions to heal and restore can be activated locally and globally (in connection with the justice priorities of United Methodist Women)

SAVE THE MISSION u DATES:

August 11-13 ~ at Lake Huron Retreat Center
October 16-18 ~ at Gaylord First UMC
Look for details in the next VOICE!