

## VI. DAILY PROCEEDINGS of the West Michigan Annual Conference

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### FIRST DAY — CLERGY SESSION Thursday, June 4, 2009, 8:30 AM

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Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton called the clergy session to order at 8:37 AM.

Lynn Grimes gave announcements, inviting clergy to join in the ordination service and encouraging clergy to give generously to the offering which will pay for ordination gifts. The offering was taken.

Laurie Haller led the clergy in singing the Ordination hymn *Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire* and also encouraged clergy to participate in the Ordination Service.

Dick Morrison led the clergy in the call to praise and prayer. Bill Dobbs led the clergy in *Come and Find the Quiet Center*. Dick Morrison led the clergy in prayer, read Romans 12:1-2, and led the prayers of the people. Bill Dobbs led the clergy in singing *We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding*.

**Motion:** Lynn Grimes moved that Terry Euper, Laura Witkowski, Sus'ann Busley, Vicki Gibbs, and Diane Allarding be granted voice, but not vote in the clergy session. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Lynn Grimes moved that voice but not vote be granted to provisional, associate, affiliate, full-and part-time local pastors under appointment, persons on honorable location and diaconal ministers. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Lynn Grimes moved to set the bar of clergy session as persons on the floor of the arena. **Motion carried.**

Lynn Grimes introduced the Board of Ordained Ministry and recognized them for the hard work that they do throughout the year.

For the Order of Elders, Bill Beachy reported on his renewal leave and encouraged clergy to explore the possibility of taking renewal leave.

For the Order of Deacons Julie Dix reminded us that the Order of Deacons and Elders are on the same playing field. However, the Order of Deacons and Elders differ around the table; Elders preside and unify, Deacons link and extend. While the Elders and Deacons have distinct roles, their work nevertheless overlaps. Both are called to serve passionately and are called to work as one team. Julie Dix stated that our primary challenge is to listen to God with an ear on how the two orders might work together to transform the world and the Church.

Michael Riegler spoke for the John Wesley Association. Michael highlighted Constitutional Amendment 19, which would extend voting rights to licensed local pastors and asked for each of us to be in prayer as we vote on this amendment.

**Motion:** Ed Perkins moved “that the Clergy Session of the West Michigan Annual Conference direct the chairs of the Orders of Elders, the Order of Deacons, the John Wesley Association and the Board of Ordained Ministry to schedule an open meeting for the members of those groups with the Bishop and Cabinet, to discuss the process of appointment-making in the West Michigan Conference, with particular reference to our Conference Flexible Housing Policy and how it is administered and that this meeting happen prior to December 1, 2009. **Motion Carried.**

Lynn Grimes presented **Question 17** with an answer of yes.

Grimes presented **Question 18. Question carried.**

Greg Martin presented **Question 19** and **Question 20** for information only.

Martin presented **Question 21-A. Question carried.**

Martin presented **Question 21-B. Question carried.**

Martin presented **Question 21-C. Question carried.**

Martin presented **Question 22-D** for information only.

John Boley presented **Question 24** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 25** and it was **carried.**

Boley presented **Question 26** and it was **carried.**

Greg Martin introduced Barbara Jo Fay and moved **Question 27** to elect her as an associate member. Two speeches were made on her behalf. **Question 27 carried;** Bishop Keaton greeted Barbara Jo Fay on stage.

Mona Joslyn presented **Question 28-A.** and speeches were offered on behalf of Martha S. Beals, Kimberly DeLong, and Christina Wright for election as probationary deacon. **Question carried.**

Dwayne Bagley presented **Question 28-B.** Speeches were offered on behalf of Thomas F. Arthur, Catherine M. Christman, DeAnn J. Dobbs, Julie A. Greyerbiehl, Ameer A. Miller, Jonathan D. VanDop, and John Matthew Weiler for election as provisional elders. **Question carried.** The Provisional deacons and elders were greeted on stage by the Bishop.

**Question 29-A** was presented for information only by Joslyn and **Question 29-B** by Bagley.

Joslyn presented **Question 31-A. Question carried.**

Joslyn presented **Question 32-A. Question carried.**

Bagley presented **Question 31-B. Question carried.**

Bagley presented **Question 33-A.** Candidates for election as members in full connection stood as their names were read: Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai, Patricia L. Bromberek, Robert M. Hughes, Jeffrey L. Reese. **Question 33-A carried.** Elders being elected as members in full connection were greeted by the Bishop on stage.

**Question 41** was presented for information only.

Boley presented **Question 43** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 44-A. Question carried.**

Boley presented **Question 44-B** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 46-C. Question carried.**

Boley presented **Question 48-C** and asked that we would be in prayer after he read the name of each clergy who passed away during the past year. The Bishop led prayer after the names

were read.

Boley presented **Question 49** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 50-A 1**. Allen J. Duyck and Rhonda L. Prater were approved with a 2/3 vote for another year of leave of absence. Linda J. Burson, Karen A. Tomkins, Melaine Young, Susan J. Arnold Trowbridge, and Michelle M. Wisdom-Long were approved by a majority vote.

Boley presented **Question 50-A 2. Question carried.**

Boley presented **Question 50-A 3**. A June 1, 2009 transitional leave for Mark R. Babb was **carried**.

Charles Farnum requested the clergy be in prayer for Michael Palmer. A prayer was offered by Bishop Keaton.

Boley presented **Question 50-C 1. i. Question carried.**

Boley presented **Question 50-C 1. iii. Question carried.** The date of June 1, 2009 was added for Mark R. Babb's leave.

Boley presented **Question 50-D** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 52-A** for information only **and C carried.**

Boley presented **Question 53** for information. Boley asked the retiring clergy to stand and be recognized as he read their names. **Question 53 carried.**

Boley presented **Questions 53-B, 54, 55 and 56-B** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 56-A. Question carried.** The retiring local pastors were asked to stand as their names were read in order to be recognized.

Joslyn presented **Questions 60, 64, and 75-B** for information only.

Boley presented **Question 76-A. Question carried.**

Boley presented **Question 76-B** for information only.

Grimes presented **Question 84** for information only.

**Motion:** Grimes moved the adoption of the entire BOM report and Disciplinary Questions; **motion carried.**

Bishop Keaton requested the clergy sing *Joy to the World* and then he closed in prayer; clergy session adjourned at 11:08AM.

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### FIRST DAY — OPENING WORSHIP

Thursday, June 4, 2009, 1:30 PM

Worship began in the Calvin College Van Noord Arena with the Sounding of the Shofar followed by a processional in which the conference choir sang *Prepare Ye* and liturgical dancer, Jessica Marie Smith, performed. Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton then opened the 2009 Annual Conference of the West Michigan Annual Conference.

Bishop Keaton gave a sermon in which he reminded us that God is bigger than all those things that create suffering, those things that are affecting our lives now, bankruptcy of Chrysler and GM, unemployment, swine flu, and church closings. Yet in the midst of suffering we still have joy in Jesus Christ and therefore we should rejoice in our suffering because it produces endurance. Bishop Keaton reminded us that even in this time of suffering, we must continue to show hospitality and generosity. There is hope even in our times of suffering. The United Methodist Church will not have resurgence without suffering, without sacrifice, but our suffering and sacrifice will produce endurance, hope, and change.

An offering was taken for Haiti. Members of Conference then shared in Holy Communion.

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### FIRST DAY — AFTERNOON SESSION

Thursday, June 4, 2009, 3:30 PM

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Stephanie Wiltse brought the West Michigan Conference together singing *Jesus, We Are Here* and *Seek Ye First*.

David Wiltse introduced the Conference to the Vital Signs of Hope DVD's that they will see throughout the Conference. The conference was encouraged to pick a video that inspires them and to attend a discussion group based on that DVD during the Friday workshops. The first Vital Signs of Hope DVD was shown, Concord UMC.

**Motion:** Bill Johnson moved the limits of the floor as the main level of the arena and the center section 212 in the balcony. The other sections in the balcony will be reserved for non-voting guests. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved the adoption of Rules of Order as printed as the Rules of Order for the Conference.

**Motion:** David Lundquist moved to amend Rule 19 by addition of the following sentence to the rule: "Prior to each Annual Conference session all recommendations for action at the Corporate Session shall be submitted and considered as Petitions under Rule 12." Rule 19 would then read: "The Conference Program Committee shall designate a specific time for the Corporate Session to meet during the Conference. Prior to each Annual Conference session all recommendations for action at the Corporate Session shall be submitted and considered as Petitions under Rule 12." **Motion carried.**

Motion was then referred to the Committee on Rules of Order to bring back to this Annual Conference.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved to adopt the Rules of Order for the Conference with the exclusion of the motion by David Lundquist. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Bill Johnson moved the adoption of the agenda as printed in the Program Book, with necessary changes, and that the constitutional amendments be considered on Friday morning and voted on by 11:00 AM. **Motion carried.**

Greetings were given from Calvin College from president of Calvin College Dr. Gaylen Byker. Byker expressed how much he enjoyed hosting us at Calvin College and wished God's blessing on our Conference.

**Motion:** Bill Johnson moved that Terry Euper, Diane Allarding, Vicki Gibbs, Paul Thomas, Mike Clark, Dr. Charles Yoost and Dan R. Dick be allowed voice but no vote during conference. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Benton Heisler moved the adoption of the reports as printed in the Conference Journal Volume 1 found online. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Bill Johnson moved that the following persons have voice but not vote during the health care legislation (Items 14 and 15) Ronald Stoll and Robert Richard. Johnson also moved that Jack Tingle, member of the Board of Trustees, have voice but not vote during the discussion of Item 10. **Motion carried.**

Conference Secretary Laura Witkowski extended regrets from clergy unable to attend.

Susan Hansen extended greetings from Metro Ministries and invited people to visit the Metro Ministries booth at the Ministry Fair on Saturday.

The second Vital Signs of Hope DVD was shown, Grand Rapids First.

Lynn Grimes of the Board of Ordained Ministry summarized the proceedings from the morning clergy session stating that five persons were elected for ordination and ten persons for provisional membership and celebrated that the average age of the provisional class is 33. She also stated that retiring clergy would be recognized at Marking Scared Time and those who passed away in the past year would be honored during the Memorial Service. She also stated that a motion was passed to assess the appointment-making process in the West Michigan Conference.

Steve Charnley, representing the Conference Nominating Committee, introduced and invited the committee to come forward. The preliminary nominating committee report was distributed and Charnley gave corrections. Charnley then recognized the following people: Mary TerMeer for her work as Chair of the Committee on Prison Ministry and Restorative Justice Concerns; Laura Witkowski for her service as Conference Secretary; Peggy Baker for her work as Chair of the Committee on Journal; John Ross Thompson for his work as Chair of the Trustees of Lake Louise; John Armstrong for his work on the Board of Christian Camping; Terri Cummins for work as Conference Coordinator of Children's Ministry; Janet Pool for her work as Chair of the Board of Discipleship; David Meister for his work as Conference Coordinator for the Older Adult Ministries Committee; Linda Burton for her work as Conference Coordinator of Single Adult Ministries; Ted Carlson for his work as Chair of the Trustees of West Michigan Conference; Barb Flory for her work as Chair of New Church Establishment and Development Committee; Gerald Hagens for his work as Chair of the Conference Personal Committee.

Nicki Holland and Skylar Richardson reported that they will be selling Love Links again this year to support the Youth Service Fund. They challenged the districts to a friendly competition to purchase the most Love Links. The Bishop, of course, gave \$6 to get them started.

Bill Johnson shared an explanation of why Conference was moved from the Fine Arts Center, stating the FAC is under construction. He invited all issues be brought immediately to the attention of the organizers of the Conference so they can be remedied.

Sue Cobb from the Council of Finance and Administration thanked the generous giving of the local churches, which allowed the West Michigan Conference to give 100% of general apportionments. Sue also thanked those congregations who gave 100% of their Ministry Shares. Further she shared what Ministry Shares support. Prospero Tumonong presented to Bishop Keaton a certificate for 100% giving to apportionments by the West Michigan Conference.

The third Signs of Hope DVD was shown, Harrison: The Gathering.

Benton Heisler, Conference Director, presented a video on the Four Areas of Focus of the United Methodist Church that came out of the 2008 General Conference.

Brad Kalajainen reported on the need for new churches. He stated that the United Methodist

Church will start 650 new churches in the next four years. Kalajainen talked about the need for all of our churches to support the new church starts in West Michigan. Kalajainen introduced Matt Bistayi as the newest New Church Start pastor in Allendale. Bistayi spoke to the Conference about his and his family's excitement about the new Valley Church. He challenged churches to help support and partner with the new Valley Church. Kalajainen introduced Barb Flory as the New Church Start Director who expressed her passion for new church starts and her new role. Laurie Haller, Grand Rapids District Superintendent, led a prayer for Matt Bistayi and for the new Valley Church which he will be starting.

Mary Jo Delany expressed concern about accessibility of the facility and the need for shuttles. Bill Johnson shared that this would be addressed shortly.

Laurie Haller introduced Jim Salley, Associate Vice-Chancellor of Africa University. Salley addressed the Conference and thanked the West Michigan Conference for giving 100% to Africa University. Salley talked about the success of Africa University demonstrated in the more than 3,000 graduates.

Laurie Dahlman explained the Consent Calendar should instead be called a Decision Calendar. Dahlman also stated that petitions 2, 5, 13 and 16 will be considered together and will be voted on together. She stated that these items can be lifted from the Decision Calendar in writing at the Conference Secretary's office; the deadline is Friday at 7:00 PM.

Dahlman reported that Petition 8 has been withdrawn, there is a response to Petition 9 and 7, and the Constitutional Amendments will be voted on Friday morning. She then gave instruction around conduct during legislative sessions.

Lisa Batten prayed before legislation.

Jana Lynn Almeida presented **Item #1. Motion carried.**

Kennetha Bigham-Tsai presented **Item #4.** There was one speech in favor. **Motion carried.**

**Item #6** was presented by Naomi Garcia. There was one speech in favor. **Motion carried.**

The fourth Vital Signs of Hope DVD was shown, Lansing Korean.

Bill Johnson introduced Michael Wildschut who stated that there is a golf cart shuttle available. Wildschut also gave instruction about parking. Johnson gave other announcements. Doug Vernon prayed and the conference was recessed at 6:02 PM.

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### **FIRST DAY — EVENING SESSION**

**Thursday, June 4, 2009, 7:30 PM**

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The Reverend Dan Dick delivered his first presentation on Vital Signs of Hope. He identified core characteristics of vital congregations. He also described the need for congregations to remember how great God is, and get excited about sharing Christ.

Larry Hollon presented the Rethink church initiative. He presented data around 18-35 year old perceptions of church - it is rather unfavorable. There is hope in the fact that this demographic seems to be interested in a church that would rethink itself beyond worship and a building. Hollon encouraged the conference to check out [rethinkchurch.org](http://rethinkchurch.org) and [10thousanddoors.org](http://10thousanddoors.org) to discover more about the rethink church initiative. Naomi Garcia will be the Rethink church trainer for WMAC.

Slone provided a pneumonic (CHURCH) on how people can rethink church:

- Contact conference communicator
- Help implement a rethink church strategy
- Update your churches find a church page
- Revisit and bookmark rethinkchurch.org often for ideas
- Create buzz about 10thousanddoors.org
- Host a welcoming training event

Scott Manning, Chair of Religion and Race, presented the monitoring report. There were 690 in attendance in the opening legislative session 304 clergy and 386 laity. 300 were male and 390 female. Of the members who spoke or lead 95 were lay, 93 clergy, 96 male and 92 female. The choir and instrumental musicians were all Caucasians. Manning noted that space needs to be made for those unable to stand for singing. Five young adults were approved for provisional membership. Manning commented that discussion was conducted without heated debate or argument.

Jerry Devine offered prayer and conference was adjourned at 9:16PM.

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### SECOND DAY — MORNING WORSHIP

Friday, June 5, 2009, 8:00 AM

Worship opened with the announcement of the Messiah's coming followed by the singing of *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, *Star Child*, and *Shine, Jesus, Shine*.

Bishop Keaton introduced Dr. Charles D. Yoost. Yoost stated as we engage in the day to day work of discipleship, sometimes we grow weary and are reluctant to follow where God is leading us. Yoost said that following Jesus means we must move from where we are now, to the place where the Spirit is calling us to be. He reminded us that following Jesus requires us to leave some things behind: our prejudices, our self-centeredness, our resentment of others and we must give ourselves for others.

Terry Euper invited conference to give to the offering, which will support the Allendale New Church Start, Valley Church. The offering was taken. Conference sang *The Summons*.

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### SECOND DAY — MORNING SESSION

Friday, June 5, 2009, 9:15 AM

Stephanie Wiltse led conference in singing *Standing in the Need of Prayer* and *Spirit of the Living God*. Bishop Keaton asked Kennetha Bigham-Tsai to lead us in prayer.

The fifth Signs of Hope DVD was shown, Indian River.

David Nellist offered prayer before the legislative session.

Laura Witkowski provided instruction for voting on Constitutional Amendments. Laity, deacons in full connection and elders in full connection are eligible to vote. The ballot is a lilac sheet; only lilac colored sheets will be counted. The amendments can be debated, but not amended. All amendments will be voted on at the same time.

David Lundquist expressed concern that materials had been distributed against procedure. Ward Pierce confirmed that passing out materials at the door is against procedure and the material presented at the door should be ignored.

Terry Euper clarified that those who have been elected as Elders at clergy session are not eligible to vote on the Constitutional Amendments since the Ordination Service has not yet occurred.

Bishop Keaton led conference in singing *How Great Thou Art* and the youth led conference in singing *Jesus Loves Me*.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #1**. There were nine speeches for and 5 speeches against the amendment.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved to call the previous question. **Motion to call the questions carried.**

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #2**.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved that we limit debate to three speeches for and three against and limiting speeches to three minutes. **Motion to limit debate carried.** There were no speeches for or against the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #6**. There was one speech against the amendment. Laurie Dahlman asked whether or not the Detroit Conference and West Michigan Conferences, if united, would be without proper number of delegates for up to eight years. David Lundquist was unsure if that would be correct, but thought so. Ryan Minier asked who would determine how many delegates a conference would have. David Lundquist stated that General Conference would determine that number. There was one speech against the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #8**. There were no speeches for or against the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #9**. Lynn DeMoss asked how the amendment would relate to provisions for Bishops. There were no speeches for or against the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #15**. There were no speeches for or against the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #17**. There were no speeches for or against the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #19**. There were three speeches for the amendment.

Laurie Dahlman presented **Constitutional Amendment #22**.

Greg Buchner asked that we ask people to mark their worksheet not ballot.

Laurie Dahlman presented the **remaining twenty-three Constitutional Amendments**. There were several speeches for and several speeches against the amendments. Len Schoenherr asked for someone from the General Conference Delegation to explain the amendments. Laurie Dahlman expressed that she had voted against them because she felt it made the church in Africa feel separated from the United Methodist Church. Laurie Haller spoke as a delegate to General Conference who voted for the Amendments. Haller expressed that the Amendments

would lay the ground work for establishing a way to address the concerns of the church in the United States outside of the world gathering of General Conference.

Laurie Dahlman gave instruction on voting and informed conference that the full results would be available in October. The ballots were distributed.

**Motion:** Lynn DeMoss moved that debate be extended past the order of the day. **Motion failed.**

Benton Heisler offered prayer before the vote and the vote was taken.

The final Signs of Hope DVD was shown, Plainwell UMC.

Benton Heisler recognized district staff members who are retiring: Jennifer Weaver from the Heartland District, Sue Wright from the Grand Rapids District and Minette Himes from the Kalamazoo District. Terry Kost and Fred Moore were also recognized by Heisler as retirees from the Conference Treasurer's Office.

Paul Thomas from the Detroit Annual Conference brought greetings from the Detroit Annual Conference. He thanked us for letting Detroit borrow Jerry DeVine for the next couple years as their new Director of Connectional Ministries. Thomas spoke of the cooperative ministries that are happening between the conferences even though we still remain separate conferences. He encouraged service to others without thinking about ourselves as one way in which we could ReThink Church.

Duane Miller, District Superintendent of the Detroit East District encouraged us to look for place of hope so that we can make steps into the future.

Chris Momany, Chaplain from Adrian College addressed conference. He talked about the success of their pre-seminary program. Momany also spoke about the Chaplains Office program to fight contemporary slavery or "human trafficking." Momany challenged us to take seriously that every person has value.

Russell McReynolds, Trustee of Adrian College, encouraged conference to continue to invite students to attend Adrian College as well as find ways to support Adrian in these difficult financial times.

Bill Johnson gave announcements. Stephanie Wiltse led conference in singing *Happy Birthday* to all those who have birthdays during conference. Prayer was offered by a young adult and conference was in recess at 11:52 AM.

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## SECOND DAY — AFTERNOON SESSION

Friday, June 5, 2009, 1:30 PM

**Motion:** Move approval of the minutes of June 4. **Motion carried.**

Bishop Keaton introduced Rev. Dan R. Dick, who provided the conference with core characteristics of vitality. He stated that vital congregations must have balanced focus and must balance between inward formation and outward transformation. Vital congregations must form partnerships to do God's work. Partnerships, Dan Dick said, allow churches to accomplish goals that would otherwise be too large for them to do on their own and must have high participation levels.

Bill Johnson offered announcements and recessed the conference to workshops at 2:18 PM.

Following several different workshops, the conference reconvened at 3:45 PM with Stephanie Wiltse leading conference in singing *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian* and *We Shall Overcome*. Laura Witkowski lifted up prayer concerns and Neil Davis offered prayer. Witkowski announced the offerings taken: Clergy Session total was \$700.82, Opening Worship total was \$4,652 which will be going to Haiti and Friday Morning Worship total was \$4,447.76, which will be going to the new church start, Valley Church in Allendale.

Benton Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministries, spoke to conference on how we need to heal old wounds and move forward. He spoke of many of the signs of hope across the conference. Heisler told conference that Bishop's Day will help us learn how to go out and make disciples for Jesus Christ and that the Bishop's Day will occur on different days in regional areas. He challenged conference to think about "what if" we did things differently. Heisler encouraged us to be witnesses of hope and to go out into the community and demonstrate the hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

Bishop Keaton led conference in singing *I Love to Tell the Story*. The Bishop recognized Conference Chancellor, Tom Shearer.

Annette Erbes opened the legislative session in prayer.

Laurie Dahlman led legislation. Jack Tingle presented **Item #10**. He noted that there would be substantial saving if this legislation is approved. There was one speech for the amendment. Larry Rubingh asked for a point of order as to whether Item #10 is out of order based on the Discipline. Pros Tumonong responded that the Judicial Council (Decision #866) has already made a ruling on ability for a conference to implement a conference wide insurance plan; and such a plan was found to be in accordance with the Discipline. There were two speeches in favor of the amendment and five speeches against the amendment.

**Motion:** Greg Buchner moved to amend Item #10 by replacing "shall" with "may" on line 20. There was one speech in favor of the amendment. Benton Heisler asked if the amendment would change the savings the proposal is intended to provide. Tumonong stated that the amendment would change the intent of the item.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved to call the previous question and all that is before us. **Motion carried.**

A standing/hand count was necessary in determining if the amendment to Item #10 had carried. **The amendment to Item #10 Carried;** 304 yes, 296 no. A vote was then taken on the amended Item #10. **Item #10 carried as amended.**

**Motion:** Charlie Farnum moved to reconsider the item. **Motion carried.** The amended Item #10 was reconsidered. There was one speech against the item. Jeremy Williams questioned what was before the conference. Bishop Keaton stated that we were reconsidering the amended item. There was one speech for the item and several questions.

**Motion:** Charlie Farnum moved to amend by adding to the end of the motion after "feasible."

"The policy would become mandatory for all churches effective August 1, 2009. The Conference Board of Trustees shall investigate ways to assist churches for whom this creates a cost increase."

David Lundquist asked for a point of order stating that Farnum's amendment reversed the approved amended item. Bishop Keaton ruled the amendment was out of order. Bishop Keaton's ruling was supported by Conference.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved to postpone the question to next legislative session. **Motion carried.**

Ethel Stears and Ellen Brubaker recognized David Wiltse's service to the Church. Wiltse graciously expressed his gratitude for being able to serve as part of the Conference Staff as Graphic Arts Director for the last 32 years.

Dr. Susan Conner, Provost of Albion College, shared Albion's new motto "I think, therefore I am." Conner said this motto expresses Albion's commitment to educate students who go out into the world to make a difference.

The monitoring report was given. Bill Johnson offered announcements and Bishop Keaton shared prayer requests. Greg Lawton prayed and the session was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

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### SECOND DAY — MEMORIAL SERVICE

Friday, June 5, 2009, 7:30 PM

The Memorial Service began with the singing of *Amazing Grace*, which was followed by the reading of Psalm 23 and an invitation to the season. The Conference Choir sang *Bound for the Promised Land*. Liturgist, Eric Burton-Kreiger read Ephesians 1:15-23 and the Rev. Bill Johnson gave a sermon entitled *Rumors of Hope*. A bagpiper played *Amazing Grace* while walking through the chapel and continued behind the chapel during the time of remembrance. Conference Secretary, Laura Witkowski, read the names of clergy, spouses and lay persons who have died since the previous Annual Conference as a candle was lifted in their honor. Family members and friends stood as the names were read. The service ended with Jessica Marie Smith dancing to *I Can Only Imagine* and the singing of *For All the Saints*.

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### THIRD DAY — MORNING WORSHIP

Saturday, June 6, 2009, 8:00 AM

Worship opened with an invitation to the season followed by conference singing *O Crucified Redeemer*. Mark 8:31-38 and Romans 5:3-5 were read with a musical meditation between, *Nothing Can Trouble*.

Bishop Keaton introduced Dr. Charles Yoost. Yoost said that he believed the United Methodist Church has a message that people want and need. However, discipleship has a cost and he believes today a lot of churches are offering "decaffeinated Christianity". Yoost said that people often come to church trying to remedy their problems. Then they meet Jesus and find that Jesus requires them to deal with problems that they have spent their whole life trying to avoid. Yoost says the Good News is that Jesus always gives us the ability to bear the crosses that are put before us.

Yoost's sermon was followed by a time of confession in which, *Forgive Us, O Lord* was sung and words of assurance were offered. Terry Euper introduced an offering for Nothing But Nets for Malaria Prevention. Worship concluded with intercessions and the singing of *Speak, O Lord* by the Conference Choir.

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### THIRD DAY — MORNING SESSION

Saturday, June 6, 2009, 9:15 AM

Stephanie Wiltse began the day with *He Came Down, That We May Have Love* and *I So Glad*. Laura Witkowski gave results of voting for constitutional amendments (see section IX. A and B for the results) all amendments carried except amendment six, which failed.

Laurie Dahlman, Conference Lay Leader, introduced members of the Board of Lay Ministries. Dahlman encouraged laity and clergy to work together to ReThink Church. She also said that they will be concentrating on developing new leaders. She said that we need to continue to work toward “claity”, clergy and laity working together. Dahlman requested that conference keep the Cabinet in our prayers and churches who are having pastoral changes.

Neil Davis opened the legislative portion of the session in prayer. Dahlman led legislation.

**Motion:** Billie Dalton moved Item #10 be lifted from the table. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved to change the word “may” to “shall.” Point of order from Lou Grettenberger, who asked if the original amendment, which changed “shall” to “may,” was out of order. Bishop Keaton ruled that the amendment was not out of order. There were three speeches against the amendment and one speech for the amendment. Robert Nystrom asked why the July 1, 2009 date was chosen. Pros Tumonong responded that the date was chosen because savings could be gained right away. Tumonong then spoke for the motion.

**Motion:** Greg Buchner called the question on all that is before conference. **Motion carried. Pierce amendment was carried. Item #10 carried in its original form.**

**Motion:** Tamara Williams moved to suspend the rules to limit debate to four speeches for and four against and to limit speeches to three minutes. **Motion carried.**

Melody Surgeon Ryder requested a standing/hand count on Item #10. The Conference voted to allow the teller count. **Item #10 carried, 474 yes, 260 no.**

Pros Tumonong presented **Item #14**. Mike Anthes and Pros Tumonong answered questions. There were four speeches for the item and four speeches against. **Item #14 carried.**

Billie Dalton requested a standing/hand count. The conference voted against a standing vote.

Pros Tumonong presented **Item #15**. Mike Anthes answered questions. Laurie Haller asked if a person would need to be hired to manage the policy. Anthes stated that they are looking at hiring a consultant. **Item #15 carried.**

David Hills presented **Item #13**. There was a point of information made and **Item #13 carried.**

Dahlman presented the **Decision Calendar, Items #2, #5 and #16. Decision Calendar carried.**

John Ross Thompson presented **Item #7**. David Hills presented **Item #7-R**. There was one speech against #7-R.

**Motion:** Kennetha Bigham-Tsai made a motion to refer 7 and 7-R.

“Move to refer Item #7-R and Item #7 to a task force charged with producing a report and/or recommendations regarding issues related to the West Michigan Conference Housing Policy. This report or the task force’s recommendations shall be submitted by January 1, 2010 to the Cabinet and to the Conference Director for dialogue and then action by the Annual Conference in 2010. In its recommendations or report, this task force will be charged with the following (not necessarily in order of importance):

- Clarify the relationship between itinerancy and residency and its impact on the appointive process

- Sustain the United Methodist tradition of itinerancy taking into account the Biblical and the distinctly Wesleyan theological and historical underpinnings of itinerancy
- Support the United Methodist connectional structure of our conference
- Take into account historical changes (in particular the increase of women pastors, dual career couples, and clergy couples) that impact our tradition of itinerancy, listening especially for our collective experiential wisdom
- Address the needs of clergy and their families, taking into account ways to support the physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial well-being of clergy and their families
- Address the needs of the local church
- Hold together the needs of the UMC connection, local churches, local communities, and the clergy and their families
- Address questions of equity in pension support and compensation as this relates to housing
- Take into account issues of class and socio-economic status, gender and race as these issues relate to housing
- Keep the conference true to the United Methodist commitment to inclusiveness as stated in Article IV of our Constitution (Book of Discipline para. 4) by directly addressing how housing and residency requirements impact under-represented groups such as women and people of color
- Provide for dialogue, transparency and openness of process by holding open meetings in which feedback is sought.

This task force shall be chosen by respective committee chairs and shall be representative of all involved in the appointive process and in housing issues, including one representative from each of the following groups as well as the individuals listed:

- Board of Ordained Ministry
- Cabinet
- COSROW
- Conference Committee on Religion and Race
- The Conference Trustees
- Committee on Equitable Compensation
- And the following individuals or their representatives: Conference Director, Clergy Assistant to the Bishop, Conference Treasurer, with Naomi Garcia as facilitator.

As well, the task force shall have representation of both clergy and laity and shall

include in its clergy ranks persons in both systems of housing. The task force shall also include someone with a monitoring function to insure that all voices are heard.”

There were two speeches against the motion to refer and four speeches for the motion to refer.

**Motion:** John Ross Thompson moved to delete the words “to refer items 7-R and item 7” and replace it with “establish.” Bishop Keaton said the word refer could not be removed and the motion was ruled out of order.

There was one speech in favor of the motion to refer.

**Motion:** David Lundquist moved to amend the motion to refer as follows “I move to amend by addition the following to the list of members of the task force: Up to 4 lay representatives of local churches who serve on its Staff Parish Relations Committee or other groups who have dealt with clergy housing matters.” **Motion to amend referral carried.**

There was one speech against motion to refer.

**Motion:** Fran Grabowski moved the previous question to refer. **Motion carried.**

**Motion to refer Items #7 and #7-R carried.**

A standing/hand count was requested. Request failed.

The Cokesbury presentation was given by Joan Mueller. She reported that Cokesbury will be making cuts in operating costs in the next year due to reduced sales during this difficult economic situation. She reported that Cokesbury will not be able to disburse money to the Pension Fund this year.

**Motion:** David Lundquist moved to take a special offering tomorrow (Sunday, June 7) for support of the Central Conference Pension Fund. **Motion carried.**

Olaotan Awodipe, our Black College Fund Summer Intern from Huston-Tillotson University greeted the conference on behalf of the Black Colleges. He thanked conference for paying 100% of to the Black College Fund. Members from the School for Pastoral Ministry senate did a skit which invited clergy to attend the 2009 Michigan Area School for Pastoral Ministry. Bill Johnson led announcements and prayer.

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### THIRD DAY — MARKING SACRED TIME

Saturday, June 6, 2009, 3:30 PM

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Lynn Grimes opened worship and those gathered sang *Forward Through the Ages*. John Boley recognized the holder of the Conference Cane.

Greg Martin introduced those who have completed licensing school to become a Local Pastor: Mona Kindel, Trevor McDermont, Anne Reigler. Martin welcomed Richard Fritz, Beth Reum, and Mona Kindel, who are entering their first appointment as a local pastor. Martin congratulated Paul Hane, J. Robert Keim, and Sharyn K. Osmond for their completion of Course of Study. Martin also recognized Barbara Jo Fay, who was elected as an associate member of Conference. They were all greeted by Bishop Keaton.

Dwyane Bagley welcomed Thomas Faulman Arther, Martha Sheagren Beals, Catherine Marie Christman, and Kimberly DeLong, DeAnne Janine Dobbs, Julie Ann Greyerbiehl, Ameer Miller, Jonathan Van Dop, John Matthew Weiler, and Christina Lynn Wright as provisionary members. They were greeted by Bishop Keaton.

Bagley then introduced those elected to be ordained elder: Kennetha Jo Bigham-Tsai, Patricia Lynn Bromberek, Robert Merlin Hughes, Jeffery L. Reese and Janet Sue Carter who is elected to be an ordained deacon. Bishop Keaton asked the candidates the Historic questions.

The retirees were then recognized and shared stories and advice from their years of ministry. Honored were Nancy L. Boelens, Linda J. Carlson, Charles Cerling, Geoffrey Leigh Hayes, Joseph D. Huston, David L. Johnston, Robert E. Jones, David G. Knapp, Raymond J. Townsend, Oscar Venturea, and Bobby Dale Whitlock.

The mantle was passed from Joe Huston to Robert Hughes.

The Marking Sacred Time Service was concluded with the hymn *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*.

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### THIRD DAY — EVENING SESSION

Saturday, June 6, 2009, 7:00 PM

Dan Dick spoke to conference about the need for churches to show hospitality. Dan Dick said we need to create a culture which starts by creating a place where people can become what God wants them to be. It must be a place where people feel welcome and comfortable, but it also must be a place of discipleship. What makes a church unique is that we are the Body of Christ and we must be a sign of the body of Christ; and therefore must be countercultural. Dan Dick said that churches must focus on their ministry and mission and when they do that they will grow. He contended that focusing on growth or money instead of the ministry and mission doesn't work. Part of the church's ministry and mission requires the church to go out into the world. This also allows more people to get involved. The more opportunities and different opportunities there are for people to get involved in, the more success a church will have. Dan Dick stated "worship and evangelism should be kept separate." Worship should not be about learning about God, but praising and celebrating God. He said that everyone must be given an opportunity for leadership in the church and accountability and membership are important. There must be a commitment to lifelong education and learning by everyone in the church and churches must also have a way to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of a church to make disciples. Churches must ask four big questions: What is our story? Message? Purpose? Impact? Dan Dick provided four non-negotiables of vitality 1) healthy relationships 2) positive and productive environment 3) clear expectation with accountability 4) commitment to the highest vision of development and learning.

Bob Lynch offered prayer and Bill Johnson gave announcements, which he ended by showing a video about the Wesley Foundations.

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### FOURTH DAY — OPENING WORSHIP

Sunday, June 7, 2009, 8:00 AM

Worship began with a procession and the singing of *Allelu! Allelu!* The Wesley Foundation Praise Band then sang *Halle, Halle, Hallelujah, We're Here to Worship*, and *Song of Hope*. An invitation to the season of Easter was read and the praise band sang *Marvelous Light*. John 20:1-18 was read while Jessica Marie Smith danced to the scripture passage. The Conference

Choir and Praise Band sang *Redeemer*. Conference was invited to participate in reading an Easter liturgy and then sang *Every Morning is Easter Morning*. Colossians 1:9-20, 24-27 was read and a video clip was shown. Rev. Devon Herrell shared a message of hope, in the midst of the despair she sees in the conference. The Praise Band led conference in singing *A New Hallelujah*. Terry Euper introduced an offering for Ministries with Persons with HIV/AIDS. The offering was taken accompanied by music from the praise band. Worship concluded with the singing of *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*, sung by conference and the Conference Choir.

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#### FOURTH DAY — MORNING SESSION

Sunday, June 7, 2009, 9:45 AM

Bishop Keaton opened the session by leading conference in singing *How Great Thou Art*. Benton Heisler presented Dan Dick a “proper” doctor kit to thank him for helping us improve our vital signs this week. The Bishop’s staff introduced themselves and Bishop Keaton recognized them for their hard work. Barb Flory introduced Matt Bistayi, the appointed new church start pastor, and his wife Shelly and son AJ. Laurie Haller prayed for Matt his family and their ministry. Bob Mayo, Dean of the Cabinet, gave the cabinet report. Mayo opened in prayer and then presented statistics that showed the decline in participation in churches in the conference over the past 37 years; despite the fact that Michigan’s population has increased. He said that we have work to do and encouraged the conference to take advantage of opportunities offered like Bishop’s Day. Mayo talked about unresolved conflict in the church and how pastoral moves due to conflict are costly and not effective for the growth of the church. Mayo recognized the economic squeeze and its affect on churches this year. He praised conference for their benevolence giving.

Clergy Assistant to the Bishop, Terry Euper and District Superintendents read the changes as Bishop Jonathan Keaton fixed the appointments for 2009-2010. Bishop Keaton recognized Jerry DeVine as new Director of Connectional Ministries for Detroit Conference and introduced Tamara Williams as new Albion District Superintendent. Robert Hundley was introduced as the new Lansing District Superintendent. Bishop Keaton prayed for the appointments and fixed the document for 2009 as corrected. Terry Euper introduced the offering for the Central Conferences pensions.

Laurie Dahlman recognized the ministry of lay speaking. Blair Cutler from the Wesley Foundation prayed to open legislation. Laurie Dahlman led legislation.

Charles Farnum presented **Item #3**.

**Motion:** Benton Heisler moved to amend Item #3 by removing the Annual Conference Congregational Transformation Committee from the Plan of Organization in Section III.B.4.b.1.e and in all other places where it appears. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Benton Heisler moved to refer this motion as amended to CCOM for review and recommendation to the 2010 Annual Conference. **Motion to refer carried.**

Jeremy Williams presented **Item #9**. Naomi Garcia presented **Item #9-R**. **Item #9-R was carried. Item #9 was carried as amended.**

Floyd Weaver presented **Item #11**. There were three speeches against the item and one speech for the item.

**Motion:** Charlie Farnum moved called the question for all that was before conference. **Motion carried. Item #11 failed.**

**Motion:** Larry Rubingh moved that the decision made on Item #10 be referred to Judicial

Council. **Motion failed.** A standing/hand count was requested and motion failed, 101 yes, 300 no.

David Hills presented **Item #12**. He corrected Item #12 to change provisional year two salary to \$36,075.

**Motion:** Dale Golden moved to amend Item #12 to “0%” increase.

There were six speeches for and five speeches against the amendment.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce called the question of all that is before us. **Motion carried.** A standing/hand count was requested. **Amendment to Item #12 carried**, 261 yes, 243 no. **Item #12 as amended carried.**

The Youth Council presented a skit and gave the love links report. They reported that Kalamazoo was the winner of the love links challenge. The total raised was \$6,423. The monitoring report was given. Bill Johnson gave announcements and Martha Beals offered prayer.

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#### FOURTH DAY — AFTERNOON SESSION

Sunday, June 7, 2009, 1:20 PM

Laurie Dahlman led legislation. A previous motion from David Lundquist was referred to the Rules of Order Committee and that motion was addressed. The Rules of Order Committee would like to study the petition and bring it back to the next annual conference. The recommendation was supported by the conference. David Hills presented

**Item #17-R.** There were two speeches in favor of the item.

**Motion:** Greg Buchner moved to call the question and all that was before conference. **Motion carried. Item #17-R carried. Item #17 as amended carried.**

The bishop vacated the stage as the Corporate Session began with Jack Tingle taking the chair. Tingle reported that the sale of Oakdale UMC is pending with the resolution of some electrical issues. He also reported that the comprehensive insurance policy will create savings throughout the conference.

**Motion:** Neil Davis moved to approve the discontinuation of Brandywine Trinity UMC in accordance with ¶2548.2 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008*. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** Neil Davis made a motion for the transfer of property, church and parsonage, from Brandywine to Buchanan Faith UMC. **Motion carried.** The corporate session was adjourned at 1:42 PM.

**Motion:** Peggy Baker moved the acceptance of the minutes from June 5-6 and to give the Conference Secretary permission to perfect the minutes of Sunday, June 7. **Motion carried.**

Pros Tumonong presented **Item #17** with corrections, as part of the Council on Finance and Administration report. **Item #17 as corrected carried.**

**Motion:** David Hills moved to suspend the rules to consider a new motion regarding Item #10. **Motion carried.**

**Motion:** David Hills moved “If, with the implementation of Item #10, a local congregation can demonstrate to the Conference Trustees by means of a written quote, that they could

obtain equivalent insurance coverage from an alternate A.M. Best Rated A+ provider at a lower premium cost and the provider under the master group program will not match that premium, the Annual Conference shall reimburse the local church the difference out of the savings realized by coverage of Conference Facilities and properties.”

There were four speeches for the motion and one speech against the motion.

**Motion:** Jerry DeVine moved to amend by striking “shall” insert “may” and add after may “for up to one year,” then at end “as long as sufficient funds exists.” So that the motion reads:

“If, with the implementation of Item #10, a local congregation can demonstrate to the Conference Trustees by means of a written quote, that they could obtain equivalent insurance coverage from an alternate A.M. Best Rated A+ provider at a lower premium cost, and the provider under the Master Group Plan will not match that premium, the Annual Conference *may, for up to one year* reimburse the local congregation the difference out of the savings realized by coverage of Conference Facilities and properties, *as long as sufficient funds exist.*”

There were two speeches in favor of the motion.

**Motion:** Greg Buchner called the question for all that was before Conference. **Motion carried. The amendment to the motion was carried. The Hills motion as amended was carried.** The motion is referred to CF and A because of the financial implications.

**Motion:** Ward Pierce moved to suspend the rules to limit debate to 3 speeches for, 3 speeches against, and limit speeches to 3 minutes. **Motion carried.**

Larry Rubingh requested the Bishop make a Decision of Law on whether Item #10 is in accordance with our book of *Discipline* P2532.2. The Bishop will review Item #10.

The Conference Nominating Committee presented their final report with corrections.

**Motion:** Steve Charnley moved the acceptance of the report and asked for permission to perfect it. **Motion carried.**

Benton Heisler announced awards given over the past year. West Michigan received an award for the highest percentage churches participating in The Advance in the North Central Jurisdiction. The Bob Smith Hunger Award went to the Snow UMC for its exceptional giving to hunger at \$104 per member. The Helen Smith Hunger Awards were presented to Nottowa UMC – Small church category; Ionia First UMC – Mid-Size Church; and Kalamazoo First UMC – Large Church. Peace Maker of the Year – Penny Zago, Director of the Shalom Center and member of Lansing: Central UMC. Peace Sermon of the Year: Dale Hotelling, pastor of Muskegon: Crestwood UMC. Then, in a moment of personal privilege, Benton Heisler asked the Bishop to change the date of conference to not meet on Sunday or on a weekend during graduation season. Laura Witkowski announced the total from the morning offering as \$4,557.64 which is going to ministries with persons with HIV/AIDS. Bishop Keaton drew five names as winners of the Wellness Clinic Health Screening drawing. Bill Johnson offered thanks to those who helped to make the conference a success and ensured that all will receive personal thank you notes.

Joy Moore was given a moment of privilege and she recognized Kennetha Bigham-Tsai as the second African American women ordained in the West Michigan Conference. Bill Johnson recognized Jessica Marie Smith for her gift of dance which she shared with conference throughout the week. Smith thanked conference for the opportunity to come and shared how this experience gave her a renewed sense of purpose.

**Motion:** Bill Johnson moved adjournment of conference following Ordination. **Motion carried.**

**FOURTH DAY — COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION SERVICE**

**Sunday, June 7, 2009, 2:30 PM**

The clergy processed into Van Noord Arena singing *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* as they prepared to receive new deacons and elders in West Michigan Conference.

Barbara Jo Fay was recognized as an associate member. Those being commissioned were Thomas Arthur, Catherine Christman, DeAnn Dobbs, Ameer Miller, John Weiler, Martha Beals, Kimberly DeLong, Julie Greyerbiehl, Jonathan VanDop, Christina Wright. Those being ordained were Janet Sue Carter, Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Robert Merlin Hughes, Patricia Lynn Bromberek, and Jeffery L. Reese.

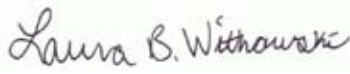
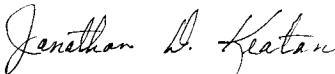
Bishop Jonathan Keaton gave a stirring sermon on the call to ministry. Bishop Keaton examined the candidates for commissioning, and then commissioned each by name. He then examined the candidates for ordination. Hands were laid upon each candidate as they were ordained as deacon and elders. The clergy stood and sang *Veni Creator Spiritus* as a welcome and blessing to the newly ordained. Communion was then served by those commissioned and ordained.

After the service of communion, Bishop Keaton extended an invitation to all who might have been feeling God’s call on their lives. As the conference sang *Here I Am Lord* a number of people came forward to be met by clergy and members of the Board of Ordained Ministry who prayed with them.

The service concluded with the singing of *Lord, You Give the Great Commission*.

*Bishop*  
Jonathan D Keaton

*Conference Secretary*  
Laura B. Witkowski



DAILY PROCEEDINGS

**CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING**

This is to certify that on Sunday, June 7, 2009, at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan,  
I recognized and welcomed into associate membership:

Barbara Jo Fay

I commissioned as probationary elders of the United Methodist Church:

Thomas Arthur, Catherine Christman, DeAnn Dobbs, Ameer Miller,  
John Weiler, Julie Greyerbiehl, Jonathan VanDop

I commissioned as deacons of the United Methodist Church:

Martha Beals, Kimberly DeLong, Christina Wright

I ordained as a deacon of the United Methodist Church:

Janet Sue Carter

I ordained as elders of the United Methodist Church:

Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Robert Merlin Hughes,  
Patricia Lynn Bromberek, and Jeffery L. Reese

Jonathan Keaton, Bishop

Michigan Area

