

EMPIRE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BEACON Volume 15 No. 9 September



MICHIGAN UMC CONFERENCE REORGANIZED

EUMC now in the Northern Skies District

As the freshly reorganized Michigan Conference moves beyond its first few months, Rev. Dean Prentiss, superintendent of the Greater Southwest District, reminds us that new life often begins in seasons of change, when people are willing to listen, adapt, and trust the Spirit's leading.

DEAN PRENTISS, Superintendent, [Greater Southwest District](#)

One month into life as four districts, the Michigan Conference is learning again what it means to become something new together. On July 1, following action by the 2026 Michigan Annual Conference, seven districts turned into four — Central Shores, Greater Detroit, Greater Southwest, and Northern Skies — and a new Conference Superintendent began work. The change has brought new maps, rhythms, teams, branches, zones, and questions. More importantly, it has invited us into new relationships, renewed imagination, and a deeper reliance on the grace of God.

Transitions often reveal both our hopes and our limits. In the first months, pastors, laity, district staff, superintendents, and conference leaders have been learning names and local contexts and discovering the gifts already present across these new districts. Some communities are meeting their new district leadership for the first time. Some are reconnecting with churches that have long shared ministry nearby but are now formally joined in a new way. In every place, relationship-building has become the first faithful work.

Those relationships matter because a district is more than a boundary on a map. A district is a network of congregations and leaders called to encourage, resource, and serve Christ's mission together. As trust grows, so does the capacity to ask different kinds of questions: What might we do better together than alone? Where is God already at work among us? Which ministries are ready to be strengthened, shared, or newly imagined? What forms of connection can help clergy and congregations feel less isolated and more supported?

The move to four geographic districts grew, in part, from practical realities, including the need to align ministry needs with financial capacity. Yet the first month has also reminded us that faithful stewardship is not about doing less with less. At its best, stewardship creates space to discern what matters most and to imagine new possibilities for the sake of the gospel. Across the conference, creativity is already emerging: renewed collaboration among leaders, fresh attention to healthy partnerships, and conversations about how local churches can connect to strengthen discipleship, mission, and community impact. [continue next page]



**2026 All-Church Meeting
Wed., September 2, 2026**

Time: 7:00 PM Fellowship Hall

Agenda: Celebrating Pastor's milestone, SPRC's recommendations,
and detailing the half-time pastoral care structure.

Grace does not mean pretending the work is easy. It means choosing patience, generosity, and honesty as we do the work together. It means listening carefully before jumping to conclusions. It means naming challenges without losing sight of God's faithfulness. It means making room for questions while continuing to move forward. In a connectional church, grace is more than a kind gesture; it is part of how we practice being the body of Christ.

Of course, no transition is seamless. New systems take time. Communication patterns need testing and refinement. Staff and leaders shoulder significant responsibilities while learning new roles. Clergy and congregations may feel uncertainty, grief, curiosity, relief, or all of these at once. That is why this season asks us to offer and receive much grace. Grace for the person learning a new process. Grace for the leader fielding more questions than usual. Grace for the congregation wondering what will change and what will remain. Grace for ourselves when the way forward is not yet fully clear.

As the freshly reorganized Michigan Conference moves beyond this first month, we do so with deep faith and tremendous hope. Faith reminds us that God does not wait for every structure to be perfect before calling people to follow Jesus, serve neighbors, and transform communities. Hope reminds us that new life often begins in seasons of change, when people are willing to listen, learn, adapt, and trust the Spirit's leading.

The first month of living into four geographic districts has not answered every question, but it has given us a place to begin. We begin by building relationships. We begin by imagining possibilities. We begin by extending grace. We begin by remembering that the mission entrusted to us has not changed: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. And we begin together, confident that the God who has brought us this far will continue to lead us forward.



EMPIRE UNIT – WESTERN WATERS DISTRICT



Monday, Sept. 14 - 11:00 AM

On the agenda, Fall & Winter events

Planning

... Jean Petersen

Purpose of United Women in Faith . . .

"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."

Saturday, September 19, 2026

10 a.m.–2 p.m. (doors open at 9:30 a.m.)

United Methodist Church of Ludington

5810 Bryant Road, Ludington, Michigan

COST: \$20 including brunch and program

Registration deadline 9/14

Registration forms on table in Fellowship Hall or contact Jean Petersen

Program: Beyond Charity - Walking Together in Hope

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Valerie Mossman-Celestin, a United Methodist Deaconess and Executive Director of Haitian Assets for Peace International (HAPI), has worked alongside Haitian leaders for more than 25 years. Together, they have expanded healthcare, education, and economic opportunity through sustainable, locally led ministry. As Co-Chair of the Michigan Conference Haiti Task Force, Valerie shares stories

of faith, partnership, and the hope that grows when communities walk together.

MISSION FOCUS (INGATHERING): Please consider donating tampons to COVE (Communities Overcoming Violent Encounters) and/or nonperishable food and tampons to help stock Ludington UMC's Little Food Pantry.





ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2026

PRESENT: Pastor Melody & Denny Olin, Sandy Mallory, Roy Pentilla, Jan Lyon, Roger & Beth Noonan, Meredith Goodrick, Claudia Bomersback, Tom & Jean Petersen, Roger & Carol Merrillatt

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. Pastor Melody opened it with a prayer. Tom Petersen made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2026 meeting. Passed unanimously.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Melody served at a youth camp for a week in July. She covered a funeral at Grant UMC. She attended a zoom meeting regarding 2027 pastor compensation which had a large attendance. She is working on our Charge Conference forms. **EUMC Annual Church Conference will be held on October 10 at 2:00 p.m. at Old Mission UM Church.** Pastor Melody will be on vacation for September 11-26th. Trunk or Treat is on the calendar – 10/31. Pork sliders [left-over pork from 1st Responder's event] and hot dogs will be served. **Adult bible school will be held October 12-15.**

STAFF PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS: Tom Petersen said SPRC will meet tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. to prepare for charge conference. The annual parsonage inspection will be held in September. SPRC is trying to find a new pianist and are having a hard time finding someone. They also raised the pay for the pianist.

FINANCE: Meredith Goodrick gave the treasurer's report. Income: \$16554.29 Expenditures: \$12252.15; Net Revenue: \$4102.14. **2026 General Fund Monthly Income Required:** \$13542.00. 2026 General Fund expense items: Ministry Shares, Church operations, Church programs, Missions, clergy & staff salaries.

Discussion: Pastor Melody is retiring July 2027; she would like to become our part-time pastor which would save on cost of pastor salary compensation/ benefits.

TRUSTEES: Jean Petersen reported that the trustees met on August 2.

1. Parsonage kitchen countertop has been replaced and looks great thanks to all the work that went into contracting that work and picking out what to install; fellowship hall window shades have been reattached so they open and close now - Thank you, Tom Haiderer. He will also be looking at the light and fan switches to see if he can replace them.
2. Four armchairs have been purchased through Donna's skills on FB marketplace and have been cleaned by Sandy Mallory. The chairs will replace the last pew next to the video tech table [People passing through sometimes catch the cords or bump the table].
3. The window in the paper pantry needs to be replaced. Tom Haiderer is checking on prices.
4. The Sunday school room will be cleaned in October; Candy is looking into shelves for organization/storage.
5. Tom Petersen is talking to the fire department about replacing our AED which is out of date; we can't get replacement parts for it.
6. Tom Haiderer is going to purchase a new coffee cart which will be easier to move back and forth.

MAPS REPORT: The **Ministries and Missions Program** committee met on August 10. Donna is getting supplies ready for **GL Teachers & Staff Appreciation gifts**. A date to assemble these gifts will be announced for a Sunday after worship in September.

Discussion: **"Is there a need in Empire for an Emergency Warming/Cooling Center."** The library is open and people do use it for this purpose. The Township Hall is a Red Cross emergency center but can only be set up by them and they staff it. For us to do this here in our church it would require at least a generator, air conditioning and people to staff it when open. Tom Petersen is trying to contact the Leelanau County Emergency Manager to see what is needed. Then we will form a committee like the First Responders Committee inviting community members from the library, village, township, EACC, Lions Club, Glen Lake Women's Club, First Responders, Catholic Church and anyone else interested to discuss possible need, sites and how it would work. *This is a work in progress and will take time.*

2026 Events: A successful First Responders Appreciation Day/ Pig Roast was held on June 20; Anchor Day was held on July 18 – EUMC float participation; Benefit Pancake Breakfast was held on July 25 for the Semple/Mara families and approximately \$3600 was raised.

WORSHIP & NURTURE: Worship team met on August 3. Sunday services are planned through 9/27. "Purveyors of Awe" will be the sermon series. Tom Peterson will fill the pulpit on 9/13 and 9/30; Choir will do special music on 8/9 and 9/6. More bulletins are needed during the Summer months.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH: Met in July for brunch at "The Lighthouse" in Elberta. Next regular meeting is September 14 at 11:00 a.m.

MEMORIAL: Following Aggie Wilson's passing, someone was needed to oversee memorials. Meredith Goodrick graciously volunteered to serve in this role. Thank you, Meredith!

MISSIONS: Mission of the month for August is BACN KIN-ship Program. Mission of the month for September is Haiti Children's Project & Water for Life in Liberia. Next Paper Pantry is August 25, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Carole Merillatt said that she is not happy with the coffee and would like to switch to Magnum.
- Denny Olin said we need a date for the 2027 1st Responders Appreciation Pig Roast and suggested Sat., June 26, 2027; he will check with participating local organizations and caterer to see if that date is feasible.
- Discussion: "welcoming visitors" to our church.

ADJOURNMENT: Meredith Goodrick made a motion to adjourn at 11:30. Second by Jan Lyon.

NEXT MEETING: December 13, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted, Beth Noonan, Recording Secretary



Each of you should use whatever gift you have been given to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10



MISSION FOR SEPTEMBER

Haiti Children's Project (Haiti #3020507)

Water for Life (Liberia #3020811)

HAITI: Children's Project #3020507 - Providing life-changing health care and education services, including treatment of chronic illnesses like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, to children and their family for over 50

years. and/or

LIBERIA: The Water for Life project #3020811 is a grassroots initiative and seeks to address the water and sanitation needs of affected communities through the following means: Seek resources (funding) for the construction of 40 wells and 30 toilet facilities within communities and schools. ***Please be generous!***

You may place donations in the collection pails at the back of the sanctuary or mail a check payable to Empire United Methodist Church, PO Box 261, Empire, MI 49630, with KINship Program noted at the memo line.

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways. Through your support, and our church, we fund many projects each year.



CARE GIVERS GROUP

Meets Every Other Wednesday at 11:00 AM

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Barb Foged 231-633-3348 or Kay Coombs 231-227-1051

The Public is Welcome!

Empire United Methodist Church - Vision Statement:

A community who goes out, serving in love, sharing Christ.



EMPIRE AREA PAPER PANTRY

4TH TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 22 - 5:00 – 6:30 PM

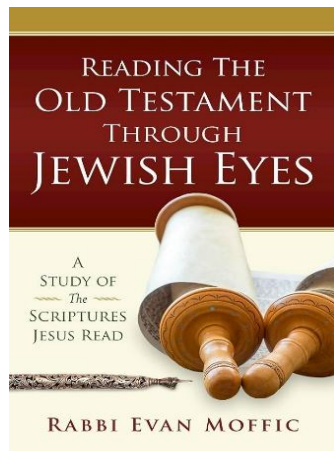
We currently serve 15 families. A list of needed Paper Pantry items is posted on the church office door. Donations are appreciated—thank you!

Worship Services

SUNDAYS - In Person 10:00 AM

Sermons continue Online & Web Site

New Bible Study begins Sept 10 - Thursdays at 2:00 PM



“Coffee & Conversation”

“Reading the Old Testament through Jewish Eyes”
A Study of the Scriptures Jesus Read
by Rabbi Evan Moffic

Study book \$15 - Contact Tom Petersen



The EUMC Choir will present:

“What Does the Lord Require”

during the worship service on Sunday, Sept. 6.



**Thank you to everyone who helped
prepare appreciation gifts**

for Glen Lake Schools’

teachers and staff.

YOU ARE AWESOME!

MONTHLY CALENDAR

1st Sunday of every month

Holy Communion is served *All are welcome!*

“Take communion as often as you can. It is food for the journey.”

- **Leelanau Area Food Pantry Collection** - Donations of canned goods and packaged food are collected for the Leelanau Area Food Pantry. **Place in the “Food Pantry Cart” in the Lobby!** The pantry is always in need of volunteers. Please contact Elaine Pentilla for more information.

1st Monday of the month

- **Worship Team** **10:00 AM** (unless otherwise noted)
- **United Women of Faith** **11:00 AM** (unless otherwise noted)

4th Tuesday of every month:

EMPIRE PAPER PANTRY 5:00-6:30 PM

- ❖ **Do not forget the Socks Box in the Lobby for the TC homeless! We will continue to collect socks throughout the year!**
- ❖ **MISSION OF THE MONTH Offering** –During the month, currency and coins may be placed in the tin buckets on the tables at the back of the sanctuary. The **“Mission of the Month”** offering helps a wide variety of charities and the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund (for local families in need). Global, Conference and local charities are selected throughout the year for this offering. If you have any suggestions or questions about selections, please contact Jim Sorbie, chair of the Missions Team.
- ❖ **“NEW” in the Lobby - Collection cart for the Food Pantry & Storage Bins for Socks for the TC homeless!**

Be the church! *Whatever your passion or interest is, get involved! Join the choir, greet guests, help as an usher, host events, support the tech team, or serve in any other way.* Reach out to the pastor to find out how you can help—by sending cards or calling those on the church prayer list. Don't wait for an invitation; use your unique gifts and talents to make a difference.



DATE

SEP 6
SEP 13
SEP 20
SEP 27

HOST

Kay Coombs
Sandi Flack
Jean Petersen
Meredith Goodrick

COUNTERS

Gerri Sorbie, Tom Haiderer
Jan Lyon, Beth Noonan
Tom Petersen, Sandy Mallory
Kay Wilcox, Meredith Goodrick

Thank You for Serving!



Empire United Methodist Church “An Anchor in the Community 1884 – 2026”

The Beacon is a monthly publication of the Empire United Methodist Church. Contact us at PO Box 261, 10050 Michigan Street, Empire, MI 49630; 231-326-5510, or email: empireumc@gmail.com. Submit items for publications by the 3rd Wednesday each month.

Our Mission Statement: “To live out a faith in Jesus Christ through our efforts to hear others, share in God’s truths, join in worship and celebrate in the Joy of God’s grace.”

SUNDAYS	10:00 AM Worship Service	7:00 PM AA Group
MONDAYS	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Church Office open	
WEDNESDAYS	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Church Office open	
	11:00 AM - Care Givers Group every other week	
	12:30 PM - 12 Step Women’s Group	8:00 PM - NA Group
THURSDAYS	Church Office Closed	2:00 PM - Bible Study 3:45 PM – Choir rehearsal



**EMPIRE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
PO Box 261 – 10050 Michigan Street
Empire, MI 49630

Rev. Melody Olin, Pastor
(231) 326-5510
Cell: (989) 560-1667
Email: empireumc@gmail.com
Facebook.com/Empire United Methodist Church
Website: www.empireumc.org