



Time to Talk —

Greetings and Blessings to you, friends of Hope UMC! It is time to talk! I want to invite you in to a conversation, or should I say a 'dialogue'. Be looking for monthly opportunities for small groups to gather and talk about the many issues we are facing as a church and as a community. I know someone who words it better than I can, so here is a message to you from Bishop David Bard of our Michigan Annual Conference:

August 1, 2021 | LANSING — “Come now, let us reason together.” Ever heard that phrase? It seems an invitation to a conversation. But, in its original context, the [first chapter of Isaiah \(as translated in the King James Version\)](#), really isn't an invitation to reasoned conversation. The voice of God is addressing the Israelite people, and the context is like a courtroom. God, being God, all the evidence is weighted in the Lord's favor.

Come now, let us reason together. We are not God. These words, in the context of person-to-person discourse, are an invitation to conversation, to dialogue, and I invite us into such conversations as Michigan United Methodists in this crucial season in the life of the world, the life of our country, and the life of our denomination.

Come now, let us reason together. The late physicist David Bohm makes an intriguing distinction between “dialogue” and “discussion.” Dialogue comes from Greek words meaning “through the word” or “through the meaning.” “The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a stream of meaning flowing among us and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding.” (David Bohm, [On Dialogue](#), 7).

On the other hand, discussion has the same root as “percussion” and “concussion.” “It really means to break things up. It emphasizes the idea of analysis, where there may be many points of view, and where everyone is presenting a different one – analyzing and breaking up. ... Discussion is almost like a ping-pong game, where people are batting the ideas back and forth” (Bohm, 7).

Both discussion and dialogue have their place and value. We tend, though, to lean much more heavily into discussion. Dialogue involves a willingness to listen more deeply, to be more open to the voices of others, to discover new ideas and imaginings together. I invite us to come and reason together, to enter into discussion and, even more, into dialogue. I invite us in the name and spirit of Jesus.

I have already invited every United Methodist congregation in Michigan into a dialogue about race. If we are all created in the image of God, how is it that our history is so marred by racialized thinking and discriminatory practices? How does this history still reverberate in our society? I have and will continue to encourage those conversations and continue to work with the leadership of the Michigan Conference in providing resources for this critical work; this work is essential to our journey with Jesus.

In this summer of unprecedented weather – heat waves, drought, flooding, and fires — we would do well to enter into conversations about being good stewards of God's creation. How have the means we've used to provide energy and drive our economy impacted the environment? How might we repair damage done? How might we address a changing climate given that we have been part of that change? This is a topic to be elaborated on another time.



This month, I also want to encourage and highlight conversations, discussions, and dialogues around The United Methodist Church. In 2020 we were to meet in General Conference where a vote was to be taken on a proposal that would have provided for division within The United Methodist Church. That General Conference is now scheduled for 2022, and we are entering the sixth year of our usual four-year quadrennium. I am beginning my sixth year of my four-year assignment as bishop of the Michigan Area and will likely begin a second year of a one-year interim as the bishop of the Minnesota Conference. The question of division has been postponed, but the likelihood of separation remains significant, and this invites us into a time of important conversations – discussions, yes, but more important, dialogues.

For congregations, deep conversations about mission, vision, and values are always important and always timely. This is true whether we face a denominational division or not. It is always important for congregations to know who they are, what they do well, and how they can best be in ministry. We share a common mission as United Methodist Churches to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Yet every congregation has a certain uniqueness in the way they help form people as disciples of Jesus. Every congregation exists in a particular time and place and needs to think about disciple-making in their context. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to grow in God's love and grace and seek to make a positive difference in the world. Yet, no congregation can make all the difference the world needs. We need to figure out which ministries to transform the world make the most sense for us, given our gifts, graces, resources, and context.

One of the pressing questions, a question that is central to our dividedness as a denomination, is how a congregation will include LGBTQ+ persons. Our [Book of Discipline](#) encourages churches “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.” (§161.G). How does your congregation understand inclusion? When you answer that question, ask how your congregation might be in a larger church where congregations answer that question differently. How you respond to such questions should be aligned with your understanding of mission, vision, and values.

Now is the time for conversation, discussion, and dialogue on mission, vision, values, and inclusion. Now is not the time for decisions about what your congregation might do when a denominational divide happens. The alternatives are not even well-defined at this point and moving too quickly in the direction of such a decision short-cuts dialogue.

As a conference, our recent annual conference sessions have affirmed a certain kind of inclusion, a direction for our conference moving into the future. While votes on resolutions related to inclusion occupy a lot of time and attention at annual conference, you need to know that our conference continues to work on other forward-looking initiatives to increase congregational vibrancy, foster bold and effective leadership, and deepen our engagement together in Christ-centered mission and ministry. We have critical conversations going and will deepen and broaden our dialogue.

While we have affirmed an understanding of inclusion as a conference, I remain committed to the Michigan Conference being a spacious conference, a place where people of differing views find common ground in the love of God to be in ministry together for Jesus Christ. What might that spacious conference look like? We need deeper dialogue about this.

We also need deep and broad conversations about how we will work with each other and treat one another in this in-between time, this time before a denominational divide. How we treat one another during this time will affect the witness of every one of our congregations moving into the future, no matter what our denomination looks like in that future.

If we are to have the kinds of conversations, both discussions, and dialogues, that I put forward here, if they are to be genuinely productive and genuinely dialogical, they require certain commitments. They require commitments to mutual respect, regardless of disagreement. Mutual respect does not mean anyone can say anything any way they like. It means that we will respect what people share and encourage honest sharing and mutual vulnerability within shared ground rules for speaking. I am committed to conversations of mutual respect.



I am also committed to conversations that are truthful. In contentious times, we are all tempted to want to promote our point-of-view and slight other viewpoints. It is one thing to state one's view forthrightly; it is another thing to distort the viewpoint of another. We need to be committed to basic truthfulness. I am committed to sharing information fairly. I am committed to having alternatives presented fairly.

If we can find ways to reason together in our congregations and our conference, to engage in constructive and deep dialogue, all of our churches will be stronger for it no matter their future denominational affiliation. To be able to speak with grace, honesty humility even in the middle of deep contentiousness, to speak in such a way that our conversation "ministers grace to the hearers" to use John Wesley's phrase, will be a powerful witness to a world where such conversations are all too rare.

Writing this, I have had a Lucinda Williams song echoing in the back of my mind, "There's Just Something About What Happens When We Talk." Grace can happen. Understanding can happen. There can be mutual respect. Come, let us reason together because there's just something about what happens when we talk.

On this Joyful Conversational Journey With You,
Bishop David



LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

OUTREACH MINISTRIES – Coffee Hour will start back up in September. Diana Graham is coordinating and is looking for volunteers to serve, make goodies or help with clean up. Please contact Diana if you are interested @ dlgraham10@comcast.net. Chris Edgerton is coordinating Sunday Greeters. If you can help please reach out to Chris at chrisaka1976@gmail.com.

CAMP OUT– There will be a Camp Out behind the church where the new trails are being cleared in September. More to come on this family event.

TRUSTEES – Jim Weingart will be holding an informational meeting on the formation of a new Trustees Committee that will help with indoor and outdoor tasks around the church. Date TBD. Currently there are several tasks that need to be completed such as painting several of the offices and work at the parsonage.

SMALL GROUPS – There will be small group discussions on inclusivity starting the end of September. These are based on open invitations / signups for new groups. More to come next month.

ALL ABOARD MURAL – It was decided that \$1500 to \$3000 will be committed to the All Aboard Mural being painted on the old grain silos and business at the corner of M-62 and Elkhart Road. This is subject to discussions with the artist and their recommendations for depicting Hope of Edwardsburg on one of the mural panels.

FINANCES – Currently no major expenses. The Payroll Protection Loan has been officially forgiven!



THOMAS ROSSMAN	9/01
KATIE FAHEY	9/02
BRIAN DELL	9/02
SANDIE WEILER	9/03
AMY HARRIS	9/03
ADALEIGH BLUNIER	9/04
SADIE BENTZER	9/05
MICHELE BARNHART	9/06
JENI BORN	9/07
MYRA THIELMANN	9/07
VERLAINE HOFFMAN	9/08
KEVIN ROUCH	9/09
BILLY GRISSINGER	9/10
CAROL BOWMAN	9/10
DEANA MOLER	9/10
PAIGE HOOVER	9/11
JIM RALPH	9/11
DALE WESTFALL	9/11
DON WESTFALL	9/11
RYAN ACKELS	9/12
LINCOLN ADAMS	9/12
BRAD WEGNER	9/12
SHIRLEY ANDREWS	9/12
WYATT BENTZER	9/12
RHODA WESTFALL	9/13
DAVE HERMAN	9/15
JOSEPH SCHMIDTENDORFF	9/16
ED GARDNER	9/16
LAURA BLOUGH	9/17
HARRY STEMPL	9/18
AMBER WILLIAMSON	9/19
MARK WERNER	9/19
NICOLE FLEMING	9/20
NATE STARKEY	9/20
CARL HIGLEY	9/20
KATHY DEW	9/20
BILL FAHEY	9/21
DON SOALES	9/21
STACY STRAWDERMAN	9/23
SHARON BURGER	9/23
JILL BLOUGH	9/24
CADEN MANFRED	9/25
MARILYN SCHMIDTENDORFF	9/25
LUCAS STEVENSON	9/26
PETER EMMETT	9/28
ROBIN ENGLISH	9/28
KATIE HENDRICKS	9/29
MIKE GORDON	9/30



KIM & DON MANSELL	9/01
CAROL & PHIL PETERS	9/04
HEATHER & CHRIS MORGAN	9/07
LISA & JAMES KRILL	9/10
LYDIA & JACK GOULD	9/12
RHODA & DON WESTFALL	9/13
NETTIE & KEITH RUSSELL	9/14
LORENA & DAVID WILFERT	9/15
JILL & RUSTY KAYNER	9/15
NATALIE & CHRIS FRENTZ	9/16
JANICE & WENDELL LEIST	9/18
ROBIN & GLENN EMENAKER	9/19
POLLY (BOTT) & RODNEY RIENKS	9/19
SANDY & LARRY ACKELS	9/26
SANDIE & JACK WEILER	9/29
CHRISTIE & SCOTT ERWIN	9/29
SARA & STEPHAN CLAIRDAY	9/30



Hope's online **Prayer Chain** has faithfully continued during the pandemic. To have a prayer concern added, call **Melissa at Hope, 269-663-5321**, and leave your request on her answering machine. Or email your request to Marti Bartels, mbbartels@aol.com.

SHUT-IN PRAYERS

Those Hope members listed below are restricted to home or nursing facility. The term shut-in reflects that their condition warrants "shut inside" or not able to leave the home on a regular basis. Should you have additional people to add to the list please call the church at 269-663-5321 Ext. 2.

Please remember these people in prayer: Bob Fuller, Ardith & Carl Higley, Verlaine Hoffman, Sherry Leininger, Beth Mann and Grace Werner.



Finance Questions ???:

If you have a question about the how the church finances work, please contact Dawn Weingart at extension 6 or Pastor Nate at extension 8 at 269-663-5321. We also have summaries of the information that has been published in prior newsletters in the office.



Current Hope Financial Information

Month of July Ministry Fund Summary

Ministry Fund Donations:	\$ 21,978
Ministry Fund Expenses:	\$-17,128
Surplus for the Month:	\$ 4,850

Year-to-date surplus: \$31,166

All July bills have been paid. Our Ministry Fund balance is \$86,353. Thank you for your continued support!

July Mortgage & Mission Fund Allocation:

- \$454.00 Missions
- \$1,000.00 Parsonage Mortgage Extra Principal Payment
- \$450.00 Designated Donation to Parsonage Mortgage Paydown
- \$3,086.00 Capital Improvements
- \$4,990.00 Total June Donations

Parsonage Mortgage Update:

- \$998.58 Regular Mortgage Payment - Ministry Fund
- \$450.00 Rental donations
- \$1,450.00 Extra Principal Payment from the Mortgage Fund
- \$2,898.58 Total Payment

Current Parsonage Mortgage Balance = \$150,191 after the August 2021 Payment.
Our projected payoff date is November 2038, which is 18 months earlier than the original payoff date!

Craft Night – Friday, Sept 3

Craft night is coming on Friday, Sept 3, from 6:00pm – Midnight in Reese Hall. Join us whenever you are available. Bring a friend and a current project that you are working on. We will be collecting personal care items for the Food Pantry if you'd like to donate.



Volunteers and food donations are needed at the Edwardsburg Food Pantry!



EFP

Edwardsburg Food Pantry
Helping our neighbors with their most basic needs



Keep our Service People in Prayer

Joshua Adams, Charles Berry, Matt Bowman, Andre Brower, Phil Bryden, Sam Chaput, Jonathan Ditson, James Galloway, Justin Gerou, Dakota Kizer, Andrea Long, Alyssa Malott, Josh Mamer, Jay Moore, Brandon Morgan, Jessica Ramus, Jason Salter, Dylan Smallwood, Jeff Starr, and Tyler Wilson.

To keep the list of service people accurate, would you please notify Melissa in the Hope office or Shirley Andrews if your listed loved one is no longer serving. OR if a name should be



Tuesday, September 14th 3-5pm
Here in the Hope parking lot
Volunteers welcome!

Crystal Springs Camp Decommissioning

Sunday, Sept. 12, 2021
2 - 4 pm
33774 Crystal Springs St
Dowagiac, MI 49047



Crystal Springs Camp & Retreat Center in Dowagiac, Michigan, will be decommissioned as a United Methodist camp on **Sunday, Sep 12, 2021 at 2-4 pm**. The public is invited to attend. The historic camp has been host to over 160 years of revivals, family camps, summer camps, weddings, retreats and more. It is important to honor those memories and give time and space to returning sacred land to other uses.

Michigan Area United Methodist Camping as part of its strategic plan for a more sustainable future of camp and retreat ministry in Michigan, sold Crystal Springs along with other properties over the last few years. The Camping Board of Directors and the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church wanted to sell to the Pokagon Band Of Potawatomi, who did in fact purchase the land this summer. They own land adjacent to the camp.

The United Methodist Commission on Native American Ministry, Bishop David Bard and other Michigan Conference leaders will be involved in the Decommissioning service.

"From a justice standpoint the MAUMC Board wanted to sell to the Pokagon Band. It was the right thing to do. Before Europeans settled here, all of Michigan was Native American land," explained Executive Director David Berkey. "We felt it was an important gesture toward restorative justice to return the land in this way."

Crystal Springs Camp, located at 33774 Crystal Springs St, Dowagiac, MI 49047, was founded in 1860. At the time of its closing in 2019 it was the oldest camp in the state and the second oldest Methodist camp in the United States. Michigan Area United Methodist Camping is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create transformative camp and retreat experiences that develop disciples of Jesus Christ. The sale of Crystal Springs and its other properties will go a long way toward upgrading the remaining facilities to provide quality experiences for all who use them. These include Lake Huron Retreat Center (Burtchville), Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat (Pentwater) and Wesley Woods Camp & Retreat Center (Dowling). Learn more at www.umcamping.org.

Next
church
CLEAN UP

**Saturday, September 11th
8am-12pm**

**Lunch will be provided
Come whenever you are available!**

Clean up days are the 2nd Saturday of each month

Miracles or ????

When I was in the eighth grade my dad asked me to ride on our 3 bottom mounted plow to add weight to allow the plow to plow deeper. After several rounds I moved my hands and got my right thumb caught in a swivel bracket and broke it at the joint. The doctor who set it said my thumb had a good chance it would be stiff. Upon taking the cast off the doctor asked if I could move my thumb and as I tried it was a little stiff but quickly began full motion.

I was 16 and driving a tractor and chopping brush in a field dad wanted to clear for farming. Mom and dad were working in one corner clearing it. As I glanced back at the chopper something flew up and hit me in my eye. I wear contacts and it broke the contact which flew out of my eye and I still felt like something was in my eye so I stopped by Mom and told her what happened and she didn't see anything. About an hour later we broke to come to the house for lunch and I told Mom it still felt like something was in my eye. This was a Sunday and Mom called our eye doctor and he was home and said to meet him in his office. Upon checking the eye he found a small piece of metal embedded in the eye which he was able to remove with a tool. He told Mom that I probably, because of the blow to the eye, my sight in that eye would probably decrease over 6 months to being blind. I had a check up six months later and had not lost any sight and the doctor said all was ok and would remain that way. He asked to print this article in the eye doctor paper to witness how that contact absorbed the blow and I didn't lose sight.

Just having finished raking hay about 7 miles from home. I had a tricycle front end tractor. As I got in high gear I took my eyes off the road. When I looked up there was a electric pole staring at me right in front of the tractor. I jerked to the left and missed hitting the front but the back tire hit the pole and flipped the tractor throwing me to the ground. I remember crawling on the ground as the tractor was flipping completely upside down. I got up and went over to the tractor and shut it off as it was still running. I didn't have even a scratch or bruise. I walked to a friends and called home. Dad was very upset but was greatfull I wasn't hurt.

I wanted to bread some chicken so I poured some cooking oil into a pan on the stove and proceeded to heat it up. Just as I thought it was hot enough it burst into flames. The pan (never had tried this before) was 2/3 full. I grabbed the handle of the pan and carefully started to carry it outside. I walked through the kitchen, opened the door, walked through the back porch, opened the back porch door and went down 3 steps while flames comming from the pan and not spilling a drop or catching anything else on fire and dumped out the grease.

I was working a 12 hour (4:00pm to 4:00am) night shift in late fall. I was living alons so I turned the heat down to 60 degrees and slept in a lounge chair in between farming as well and used an electric heater for warmth to sleep. One night (for no reason) I awoke just as the cord burst into flames. I jumped out of the chair, unplugged the heater and the flames immediately went out--no damage to anything except the heater.

During fall harvest in 2019 I was headed back home from doctor visit on us 12--a busy hwy--approaching a field they harvesting corn. The roadway was clear and just as I was approaching that area a cloud of dust (from a tractor and grain truck--which i saw neither) were creating I was traveling about 62 mph and slowed to about 50 and figured I would proceed as I hadn't seen anyone on the road. Just as I entered the dust patch, which I couldn't see two feet in front of the car, there appeared the large semi grain truck. My mind raced as I thought there is no way to stop and miss hitting the rear of the trailer and dieing. I jerked the car to the left by instinct, but with about two feet I should not miss hitting the trailer. The next moment the car (with a hard top) came out of the dust cloud was at the front of the semi and I was looking up to see the fright on the semi drivers face at seeing a car he obviously did not see in the dust either. The other miracle ??? was I was in the passing lane on a busy hwy and glanced ahead, as I tried to comprehend what had just happened with no accident, there were no other cars on the road in my passing lane for the next 1 mile.

Recently I had been experiencing pain and a growth under my right rib cage. A normal yearly doctor visit confirmed the growth of some sort and a ct scan was scheduled. The night before the ct scan I said "God I know you could heal this and remove the knot, swelling and pain". Side note--I'm on heavy pain meds for my back so if I still felt pain it must be serious. With my hand on the growth I no longer finished my prayer sentence than I felt the swelling going down and this pain go away. The next day the ct scan confirmed nothing was there.

Jesus performed many miracles ??? written in the Bible while He was on this earth, But that wasn't the end of His earthly miracles ??? and He still is doing them. Read about the documented Bible miracles and believe He will still perform them today. Love Deb and Tony Lang

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Join us whenever you are available. Bring a friend and
are working on. We will be collecting personal care items
you'd like to donate.