

2017 Annual Conference Notes

The annual conference of the WI UMC was held on June 16-19 in Middleton. The conference deals with several items of business, e.g., approval of a Conference budget for the next year; setting the minimum compensation for clergy (each congregation determines the compensation amounts for their clergy) and setting guidance for insurance, mileage, etc. The appointments of Rev. Dr. Mark Fowler and Rev. Tina Lang were renewed and the Rev. Breanna Illéné was appointed to First Church part-time as Assisting Pastor for Young Adults.

Resolutions were passed opposing both the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and, the arrest and deportation of undocumented immigrants solely based on the lack of documentation.

Another activity was worship with an emphasis on creating new energy in congregations. There were several sessions emphasizing ways to increase membership involvement in both church and outreach to the community.

There were reports of ongoing activities in the conference, such as an emphasis on planting new congregations as well as revitalizing existing congregations through the training of new leaders. Donna Veatch received the Perry Saito award for her commitment and dedication to ministries of compassion and social justice.

A third part consisted of worship services for retiring clergy (including Rev. Joan Deming), for clergy being ordained and for members who died in the past year.

Although First Church paid 100% of its apportionment in 2016, only 80.4% of projected apportionments were received in 2016 from the conference as a whole. In 2015, 85.0% were received. Seventy percent of apportionment funds are used in Wisconsin for congregational revitalization, mission churches, leadership development, church camps and local congregation support. Twenty-five percent goes to support global and national ministries. Only 5% goes to administrative costs.

First Church lay delegates were Olivia Hwang, Doug Knudson, Bobbi Foutch-Reynolds and Donna Veatch. Rev. Dr. Mark Fowler and Rev. Tina Lang and several retired clergy, who are affiliated with First Church, attended.