



# Hello, Neighbors!

Our Vision Statement-  
To be a welcoming neighborhood so that all may experience God's love and grace.

Our Mission Statement-  
To meet new neighbors, nurture everyone's relationship with Christ, and transform the world together.

## Marble Memorial United Methodist Church • April 2024 IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD



**Baked Potato Bar**  
Saturday  
April 20  
5:00pm until 7:00pm  
**FREE and Open to Everyone**  
Marble Memorial UMC  
8 Park Lane, downtown Milan  
[marbleumc.org](http://marbleumc.org)

**Neighborhood Closet Shop or Swap**  
3rd Saturdays  
11am-1pm and 5pm-7pm



Marble Memorial United Methodist Church  
8 Park Lane, Milan  
[marbleumc.org](http://marbleumc.org) 734-439-2421

**APRIL 20: A FREE EVENT**

**Marble Memorial United Methodist Church**  
Matt West, Pastor  
8 Park Lane, Milan, Michigan 48160  
10:30 a.m. Worship In-person  
Facebook and YouTube  
Church Phone: 734-439-2421  
Pastor's Emergency Number: 269-967-4444  
Church Website: [marbleumc.org](http://marbleumc.org)  
Church E-mail: [office@marbleumc.org](mailto:office@marbleumc.org)  
Church Office Hours: Mon-Thu, 9 am - 3 pm  
(closed holidays)  
Facebook: "Marble Memorial UMC"  
Online Giving: [Tithe.ly Giving](https://www.tithe.ly/giving)



**Blood Drive**  
**Marble Memorial United Methodist**  
Fellowship Hall  
8 Park Street  
Milan, MI 48160  
**Wednesday, May 1, 2024**  
1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.



**REGISTER FOR AN APPOINTMENT:  
ONLINE AT: REDCROSSBLOOD.ORG  
CALL: 800-733-2767**

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## Neighborhood Notes from our Pastor

Hello, neighbors!

At the end of April, delegates from around the world will be coming together for General Conference. I thought I would take this opportunity to share some information from the Michigan Conference website about the upcoming conference. Included in this piece, is an excerpt from the start and end of an article on General Conference.

### **What to know about General Conference proposals**

*By Heather Hahn*

After tough years of dealing with disease and departures, United Methodists are about to gather for a General Conference that will chart the denomination's future.

More than 1,000 legislative petitions aiming to shape that future will be before the lay and clergy delegates when they meet for the denomination's COVID-delayed policymaking assembly [on April 23-May 3 in Charlotte, North Carolina](#).

The theme for the international gathering, which draws delegates and other church leaders from four continents, [will be "...and know that I am God" from Psalm 46](#).

"We find ourselves at a seminal moment in the life of this denomination. It's a marker point, a shift, a pivot from what was to what can be," Council of Bishops President Thomas J. Bickerton told delegates and other observers.

The bishop, who also leads the New York Conference, spoke at the end of [the Feb. 29-March 1 online orientation](#) co-hosted by United Methodist Communications and the Rev. Gary Graves, General Conference secretary.

At the briefing, Bickerton and other speakers addressed United Methodists still feeling the impact of the COVID pandemic and church disaffiliations.

Bickerton said the church can only move forward.

"Personally, I don't want to go back to mediocrity and old habits," said the bishop, who attended his first General Conference in 1984. "I don't want to go back to racist behaviors, gender bias or models that exclude rather than welcome. This is a moment for us to get a new wind and a new sense of purpose."

During the orientation, [which was also recorded](#), viewers [received an overview of the logistics of General Conference](#) as well as legislation up for the delegates' votes.

### **This is a list of proposals delegates will be working with.**

**Regionalization**

**General Book of Discipline**

**Revised Social Principles**

**Acts of Repentance**

**Amendments for equality**

**Budget**

**Adding African bishops**

**Changes to U.S. clergy benefits**

**Closer ties with Episcopalians**

*Because it is a topic on everyone's mind, I decided to leave the description of what this last proposal entails:*

### **Separations and disaffiliations**

Back when no one had heard of COVID-19 and United Methodists expected to hold General Conference in 2020, the legislative proposals getting all the buzz involved separating the denomination along theological lines.

Each of those proposals is still before delegates. The plans include the New Denominations of United Methodism, New Expressions Worldwide, Next Generation UMC and the negotiated Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation. Ultimately, the delegates will need to decide how they want to handle those petitions.

In the meantime as General Conference has been delayed, a separation of sorts already has taken place.

Over the past four years, the denomination has seen [nearly 7,700 U.S. churches](#) — about a quarter of its U.S. congregations — disaffiliate under a policy approved by the 2019 special General Conference that expired at the end of 2023.

That policy, the Discipline's Paragraph 2553, allowed churches to leave with property "for reasons of conscience" related to homosexuality, if they met certain financial and procedural obligations. Because of action taken by the 2019 General Conference, that policy only applied in the U.S.

*Continued on the next page*

## **Separations and disaffiliations *Continued***

The coming General Conference will see petitions to extend Paragraph 2553, so that it can continue to apply in the U.S. and expand to churches in the central conferences.

Other petitions seek to enable whole U.S. annual conferences to leave or make it easier for annual conferences in Africa, Europe and the Philippines to do so.

It should be noted that [four annual conferences in Eurasia are planning to leave the denomination](#) under a provision that already exists in the Book of Discipline.

The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters has been working with the Eurasian annual conferences as they plan to depart The United Methodist Church to become an autonomous Methodist denomination. The standing committee plans to present its recommendations regarding Eurasia to the full plenary floor.

*Here is the ending to the article written by Hahn:*

### **No ordinary meeting**

Even with so many decisions before delegates, Council of Bishops President Bickerton stressed that General Conference is no simple business meeting. Instead, he urged viewers to see this as “a convening of the Body of Christ to discern the will of God for the future of the church we love.”

He urged delegates to take time to pray, meditate and reflect. He also suggested delegates might fast on the Fridays leading up to General Conference.

Bishops preside at General Conference but do not have a vote. Nevertheless, many know well the delegate experience, having served in that role before their elections.

“If you come to General Conference with a spirit that is solely centered around legislation, trust me, you’ll leave Charlotte disappointed,” he said.

“But if you spend these next seven weeks anticipating that the Spirit of God will show up in Charlotte and participate in actively welcoming the Spirit’s presence in our midst, I believe that we all will find renewed energy and purpose for what the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church will look like moving forward.”

Thank you for taking the time to read this information,  
and please be in prayer for our delegates going from Michigan.

***Peace be with you!***

***Pastor Matt***

## **Unavoidable – by Rod Hill**

Beloved friends, it’s not my normal practice to speak on topics that many will regard as political, but I’m compelled by circumstance and faith to speak. We have, as Christ-following people, recently watched and witnessed the monstrous tragedy in and around Gaza and Israel. Current evidence documents that it began last October as a horrendous attack on peace-loving Israelis by their Palestinian neighbors. From that awful day, it has degenerated into an ongoing massacre of even more innocents that goes on still today.

So far, this is all true, but like most truths in life, there is more to the story, and in this case, much more. The active conflict between Israel and its neighbor Palestine has been happening since before most of us were born. Beyond that, unless we have family involved, (as I have on both sides) very little captures our attention until something awful happens.

Put in the simplest terms, Palestine is not what we think it is, and Israel has not lived up to their reputation as God’s People beset by godless invaders. In fact, over their 75-year history, the nation state of Israel has conducted an escalating campaign of colonization of the lands of neighboring Palestine since their founding in 1949. These neighbors worship the same God as Israel, Christians and Muslims, and have also lived in those lands for thousands of years.

I know this is difficult to accept and I’m sorry. But I am compelled to bring it up because the Michigan Conference of the UMC will be voting on resolutions condemning Israeli Crimes Against Humanity in our coming June session. I pray that you have questions and I offer a three-part study of these issues for those called to respond.

***Details for this study appear on page 4.***

Sign up for one of the study sessions below at the church or email: [office@marbleumc.org](mailto:office@marbleumc.org)

**Thursday Evenings: 7PM**  
**April 18, 25 and May 2**

**Sunday Mornings: 9AM**  
**April 21, 28 and May 5**

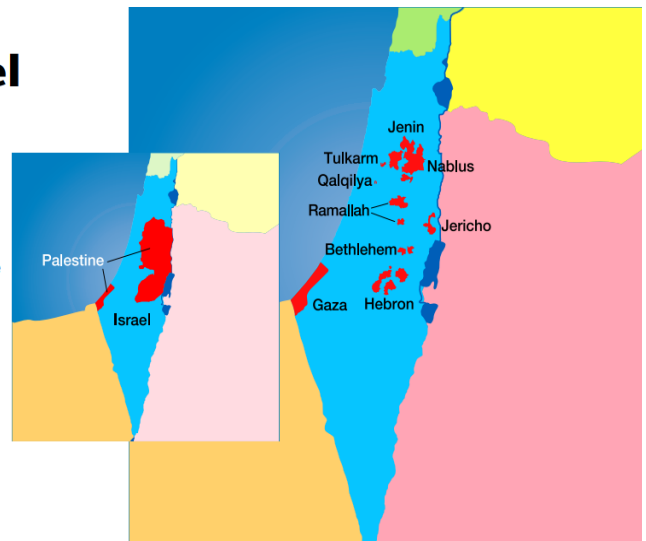
This study is led by Rod Hill. If you have questions, see Rod.

## Justice for Palestine/Israel STUDY GROUP

Palestine is not what we think it is, and Israel has not lived up to its reputation as God's Chosen People.

These neighbors worship the same God, Jews, Christians and Muslims, and have also lived in those lands for thousands of years.

Join our study of why these two neighbors continue to war on each other and how we United Methodist's might help them to build God's peace in their Holy Land.



**Neighborhood Groups:** Group coordinators are listed

### Sundays:

**Worship Team:** Music and Technology Contact: Pastor Matt [pastormattwest@gmail.com](mailto:pastormattwest@gmail.com)

Kidz Worship Contact Aby Cryderman: [acryderm@emich.edu](mailto:acryderm@emich.edu)

**Hospitality Team:** Greeters, Ushers, Coffee Fellowship

Contacts: (greeters) Tammy Balk [coachbolz@gmail.com](mailto:coachbolz@gmail.com) (coffee fellowship) Rose Timbers [rotimbers@aol.com](mailto:rotimbers@aol.com)

**Neighborhood Study Sunday at 9:00am in room #25.** The current study is "Meeting God in *Mark*" by Rowan Williams. Contact: Rod Hill [rhill@provide.net](mailto:rhill@provide.net)

### Mondays:

**Sassy Sisters Women's Study:** Mondays at 7:00pm at The Owl on Main Street.

Led by Melissa West [mdwest622@gmail.com](mailto:mdwest622@gmail.com)

### Tuesdays:

**Neighborhood Coffee Talk with Pastor Matt:** Tuesdays at 10:00am at The Owl, downtown Milan.

### Thursdays:

**Neighborhood Study on Prayer:** Second and Fourth Thursdays, April 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1:30pm @ MMUMC

Led by Nancy Nagle [nnagle@umich.edu](mailto:nnagle@umich.edu)

**Beer & Bibles Men's Study:** Dates in April: 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Original Gravity.

Led by Brian Foster: [bdfooster1989@gmail.com](mailto:bdfooster1989@gmail.com) and Jim Nagle [jnnagle@comcast.net](mailto:jnnagle@comcast.net)

All are welcome to attend



**New Neighbor (member) Class**  
First Class April 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm  
There's still time to register and attend. See Pastor Matt or Sign Up at the Office.

**United Women In Faith: Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays at 1pm**  
Women ages 16 and over, of all faiths, are welcomed!  
Join us on April 9<sup>th</sup>!

### Monthly Neighborhood Offering: April

**ARC of Milan:** ARC stands for Advocacy, Representation, and Connection. ARC's mission is to ensure that Milan, Michigan is a supportive and inclusive place for LGBTQIA+ people.



**Next Team Meeting:**  
April 3 7pm  
New Perspectives Welcomed!