



Unfinished: Growing Up and Into Christ invites us to explore a faith that expands beyond our limits and welcomes transformation. Inspired by Ephesians 4:15-16, this conference is a journey of collective Spirit-filled discernment, rooted in the belief that our faith is a vast, inviting dwelling, unfinished and constantly expanding. Together, we will wrestle with disillusionment and imagine a more spacious, authentic way of following Christ. Through conversations, worship, and reflection, we will seek to grow into the fullness of Christ, embracing a faith marked by grace, curiosity, and joy.

Conference Highlights

Clergy will attend the Clergy Session on Thursday, May 29 at 2:00 pm. Annual Conference begins with Opening Worship and Memorial Service on Friday, May 30 at 1:00 pm and concludes at 2:00 pm on Sunday, June 1. Bishop David Bard will preach for Friday afternoon's Opening Worship and Memorial Service, as well as for the Service of Recognition, Commissioning and Ordination on Sunday morning. A [block schedule](#) is available on the [Annual Conference website](#). Registration is open March 1 to May 1.



Guest Teacher – Debie Thomas

Debie is the author of *A Faith of Many Rooms: Inhabiting a More Spacious Christianity*, and *Into the Mess and Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of Christ*. She is also a columnist and contributing editor for *The Christian Century*. From 2014 to 2022, Debie worked as a staff writer for *Journey with Jesus: A Weekly Webzine for the Global Church*, and from 2014 to 2024, served as a lay minister for formation at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto, CA. She studied English Literature at Wellesley College and Brown University and earned an MFA in Creative Writing at The Ohio State University. Currently, Debie is a seminarian at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, CA. [Read more here](#).

Debie will be a guest during Friday's Laity Perspective and will teach on Saturday morning.

Mission Festival

Join the fun Friday night during the EngageMI Mission Festival. Much like a community fair, you'll have a chance to stroll through ~40 exhibits of mission opportunities currently available through our [EngageMI](#) program. These are solid missions to support and implement at your local congregation. Enjoy live music, snacks & desserts, and welcome Bishop David & Julie Bard back to the Michigan Conference.

NEW! Through the generosity of the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan, you'll receive five \$1 Mission Bucks with your registration to spend at the Mission Festival. Support the Missions you've connected with! If you wish to do more, The UM Foundation will match your personal \$5 donation with another \$5 to spend at the Mission Festival! Registrants will receive a link to donate by April 1. All participating missions will receive their funding post-conference.



Where to Stay - Onsite Lodging Options

Options at the Grand Traverse Resort include Hotel Rooms and modern Tower Rooms, and Condos connected by a complimentary shuttle service. If you're young and fully mobile, consider staying offsite, or not registering on March 1, to allow those with more mobility concerns to stay onsite. See [hotel, tower and condo information](#) on the Annual Conference website.

If family members are staying with you and are not members of AC, please have them register as a multi-day visitor and select a double room. You are encouraged to find a roommate to share a double room (2 beds) so fewer members to annual conference need to make a daily commute.

You can lower your cost by having a triple or quadruple occupancy in some of these rooms. Complete your registration online, then contact AC Registrar [Sarah Vollmer](#) to finalize arrangements. Shared rooms/roommates must stay the same nights, or the full single rate will apply. The hotel requires a valid credit card per room when you arrive. A photo ID is needed at Registration check-in.

Offsite Lodging Options

Once the Grand Traverse Resort is full, other hotel blocks will open. You can take a free door-to-door shuttle to select area hotels on the Cherry Loop and avoid taking and parking your car! The full list will be posted at 2025.michiganumc.org. You must make your own arrangements and follow stated cancellation policies.

Airbnb, VRBO and other online booking sites have condos on their site that are part of the Grand Traverse Resort complex. These owners are listing them independently and are not part of the rental pool in our contract. If they are on the Grand Traverse Resort property, free shuttle service would be included.

Camping Options:

[Keith J. Charters Traverse City State Park](#)
[Everflowing Waters Campground](#)

Meals

We've worked very closely with the Grand Traverse Resort's Food & Beverage Manager and Chef to craft delicious meals. Grand Traverse Resort has committed to providing complete menus for those with special dietary needs. If you avoid any of the seven main allergens (dairy, egg, tree nuts, peanuts, shellfish, fish, wheat/gluten), you can select from the special allergen-free buffet line – located outside of the Michigan Ballroom and in the Tower/Mackinac/Peninsula Room pre-function space. Outdoor seating does not have a special dietary needs buffet line. Check the special dietary meal option checkbox at each meal. If you have concerns, please see Grand Traverse Resort staff.

Meal prices include a 24% gratuity for servers. Breakfast is \$16 | Lunch is \$20 | Dinner is \$24 | There are also four onsite restaurants. Other onsite breakfast options include NIIII, hotel coffee shop, Hotel and Tower room service, or grab-and-go from Campus Ministries Snack Station. See [menus on the website](#).

Pre-Conference Opportunities – Friday

Golf Tournament - 4-Person Scramble | 9 Holes | Shotgun Start @ 8 am | \$80 per person

Proceeds Benefit Campus Ministries of the Michigan Conference. See the [golf flyer](#) for more information.

5k Run / Walk / Ride / Wag | 10:30 am Start on May 30 | \$35 per person | Registration includes a T-Shirt

Through generous support from the Conference Board of Pension and Health, a live 5K will be held onsite on May 30 at 10:30 am. The "Zero-K – I'll Move to End Child Hunger" event will have signs along the route noting your progress with shorter loops to walk or run any time during annual conference. Organize a fun walk/run locally and receive any donation to relieve child hunger in Michigan. All funds will be distributed to every county in Michigan for immediate hunger relief! Registration will open after March 1, here: <https://miumc.swoogo.com/ZeroK25>

More information: 2025.michiganumc.org

Child Care

Limited onsite child care will be available for children of members to conference. Child care will be held onsite in a hospitality suite. Space is limited. We ask that parents bring toys and activities to share. Registration and payment is through the Annual Conference registration form. **Note: Registration for child care closes on April 15 to allow time to hire staff based on enrollment.**

Service Opportunities

Rice Meal Packing (Blessing Bags) will return for a third year! We are partnering with [Midwest Mission](#) to assemble rice meal bags for those in need - most recently sent to Ukraine. Rice meal bags will be assembled at Annual Conference in hands-on mission on Friday, May 30 from 9 am - noon, before Annual Conference begins. Each rice meal bag contains rice, vitamin pack, dehydrated vegetables and soy, and provides six meals. The supply cost is \$2 per bag.

You can help! Donations will be collected on the AC Registration form for Rice Meal Bags at \$2/each. In addition, 250 people are needed for three hours for assembly. Standing and sitting jobs are available in assembly line fashion. You don't need to assemble to donate for material cost. Check your interest on the AC Registration form. Groups can sign up to provide a team of workers, or give a group donation here: <https://miumc.swoogo.com/Rice2025>

Volunteers are also needed to serve as Ushers & Tellers, 5K Timekeepers, Grace Patrol, Registration Desk Help, Choir Members and Stagehands. Sign up to volunteer through the registration system.

Clergy Retirees & Conference Equalization Member Rate

Retired Clergy will have the \$200 cost of registration waived for Annual Conference. You are responsible for all other expenses. The fee is automatically deducted in the registration system, so the balance, including any late fee, is your responsibility.

Conference Equalization Members

Those persons who are seated because of their positions of conference leadership or selected by the Board of Laity have a \$50 non-refundable registration fee. The rest of their basic expenses are paid by the Annual Conference. Please "take what you need" but also "use what you take." Once onsite lodging is sold out, offsite hotel blocks will open. Equalization Members can receive a reimbursement up to \$80 per night for off-site lodging with a receipt. Reimbursement forms are available at the Registration Desk.

Expenses covered for Equalization Members:

- \$150 Registration
- Onsite lunches and dinners between the opening and closing of the conference (Friday dinner, Saturday lunch & dinner, Sunday lunch).
- 2 nights lodging in a shared hotel room at Grand Traverse Resort, or \$80 per night reimbursement for offsite lodging with receipt.

Expenses NOT covered for Equalization Members:

- Travel expenses or bus shuttle from the East Side
- Friday lunch, Sunday dinner, and any breakfasts
- Offsite meals or meals at the Grand Traverse Resort restaurants.
- Housing expenses that exceed \$80 per night (i.e., the additional cost for a Hotel Single or Tower room)
- Registration Late Fees

If you select a more expensive room option, or meals not included in the Equalization package, the balance for those expenses will appear at the end of your registration. You are responsible for paying them either immediately with a credit card, or by mailing a check, received by April 25.

More information: 2025.michiganumc.org



Statement of Care

Let us be reminded it is a privilege to gather and serve as members of this body. We have a contractual agreement of good conduct with Grand Traverse Resort, and a covenant with the body to care for each other. Should the need arise, a member of the Commission on the Annual Conference will remind you of your covenant to care for one another. By completing your registration, you've assessed that your personal wellness is suited for this gathering, you are committed to care for self and others, and you agree to conduct yourself with integrity for the blessing of the body of Christ, gathered by the shores of the Grand Traverse Bay.

Health and Safety at Annual Conference

The Commission on the Annual Conference Session will monitor infection rates, and CDC health and safety guidelines. We encourage safe distancing to prevent the spread of illness. At this time masking is not required yet strongly encouraged if you are immune compromised in any way.

The Michigan Conference reserves the right to amend this directive based on guidelines from the State of Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services with regard to COVID-19, RSV, or other communicable diseases.

More Registration Need-to-Know (aka, the Fine Print)

Registration opens Saturday, March 1 at 9:00 am. [Watch your email for a link to register.](#) The influx of traffic has crashed the website in the past, delaying your registration. Have your emergency contact information available for registration.

Registration ends May 1, 2025 at 5 pm. **If you're not registered by May 1, you will not be able to participate in Legislative Committee work scheduled for May 20-21.** All cancellations incur a \$50 cancellation fee. There are no cancellation refunds after May 1 as food and housing orders have been placed. Registration reopens May 22, with a \$50 late fee, not covered for equalization members or retirees. Payments by check for registration must be received in the Treasurer's office by April 25 to validate your registration, or your registration will be cancelled, and onsite housing given to someone on the waiting list. Reregistration will incur the \$50 late fee. Your balance must be paid in full to participate in Legislative Committees. Meals are not guaranteed with late registration.

Contact Us!

Email your Annual Conference questions to Conference Events Planner Nancy Arnold at: narnold@michiganumc.org. Send registration questions to Annual Conference Registrar Sarah Vollmer at: svollmer@michiganumc.org. Please note that Sarah's registrar hours are nights and weekends as she's teaching full-time.

See you at Annual Conference!

The Commission on the Annual Conference Session