

The welcome to the NI Annual Conference was by Bishop Sally Dyck with “Y Church 2020” as the theme. In 2019 the LGBTQ issue was discussed and resolved, but 2020 had other issues in mind with the COVID-19 pandemic, Racism with George Floyd and others, and the Polarization of the federal presidency election. Bishop Dyck’s emphasis was on “Why hope in Christ Jesus?” She opened with a prayer by Carlo Coretta and a plea that “we” is more “I” in today’s current trend. The sanctity of church and “holy spirit” remains in spite of human efforts to destroy. Innovations into the future have been good. Bishop Dyck asked each of us to respond: How did you grow in faith?

Motions opened to accept virtual decisions as binding with the legislative order to address racism first and the budget last. The consent calendar was approved.

Anti-racism legislation was approved to mandate every four years all active and new clergy training with laity training encouraged but optional. Every council shall have educational programs to understand meaningful and applicable systemic racism and move to eradicate such. It was resolved that annual conferences, district, and local levels will have programs and resources to eradicate racism within religion.

Redistricting the Northern Illinois UMC districts from six to five was approved, effective July 1, 2021. The rationale is made due to changes in population, decline in church membership, number of churches within the AC and downward financial trends. A reduction allows for efficiency and effectiveness with technology aiding connectivity.

The following chart compares number of churches to average number of churches per district trends over 30 years with six districts.

Current 2020	2010	2000	1990
352/57	374/62	406/68	426/71

Real apportionment receipts have decreased from 10,352,465 in 1997 to 5,616,540 in 2018 or approximately one half.

The Bishop and cabinet will work on alignment of churches for five districts with sharing throughout the conference for feedback and perfection. New districts will be set by January 1, 2021 and take effect on July 1, 2021. The month of January 2021 will receive reconsiderations for any church it feels should be placed in a different district with final decisions by January end.

A slate of all nomination positions was approved with an amendment to have the nominations committee select secretary and chairman positions.

United Methodist Foundation reported assets of \$80,000,000 in fossil free investments with giving to the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Northern Illinois Food Bank, and River Bend Foodbank.

The Annual Conference Shepherding Team Update goals were to increase vital congregations, promote anti-racism and justice, and to grow and make disciples.

**"It's a Beautiful Day" video was a wonderful send off for Bishop Dyck highlighting her eight years of service.**

**The new interim NIC bishop will be Bishop John Hopkins for approximately one year to begin January 1, 2021.**

**MISSION CHALLENGE: Not CREEDS, but DEEDS!**

**"Courage is contagious...it makes others bolder and stronger."**