



Bishop Deborah Lieder Kieseley blesses Joshua James Reynolds, infant son of Rev. Lindsey Hall and Rev. Jon Reynolds.~mic photo/Jeremy Africa

Today's highlights

- 8:30 AM Plenary Session
- 10:30 AM DAC LEAD Groups
- 2:00 PM DAC Episcopal Endorsement
- 4:00 PM WMC Laity Orientation 1
- 6:00 PM WMC Clergy Session
- 6:00 PM WMC Laity Orientation 2
- 7:00 PM DAC Plenary

 **74° CLOUDY**

*“Do not let
your hearts be
troubled, and do
not let them be
afraid.”*

-John 14:27b *NSV*

THE WATERS MAKE US ONE

By Kay DeMoss, Senior Writer/Editor

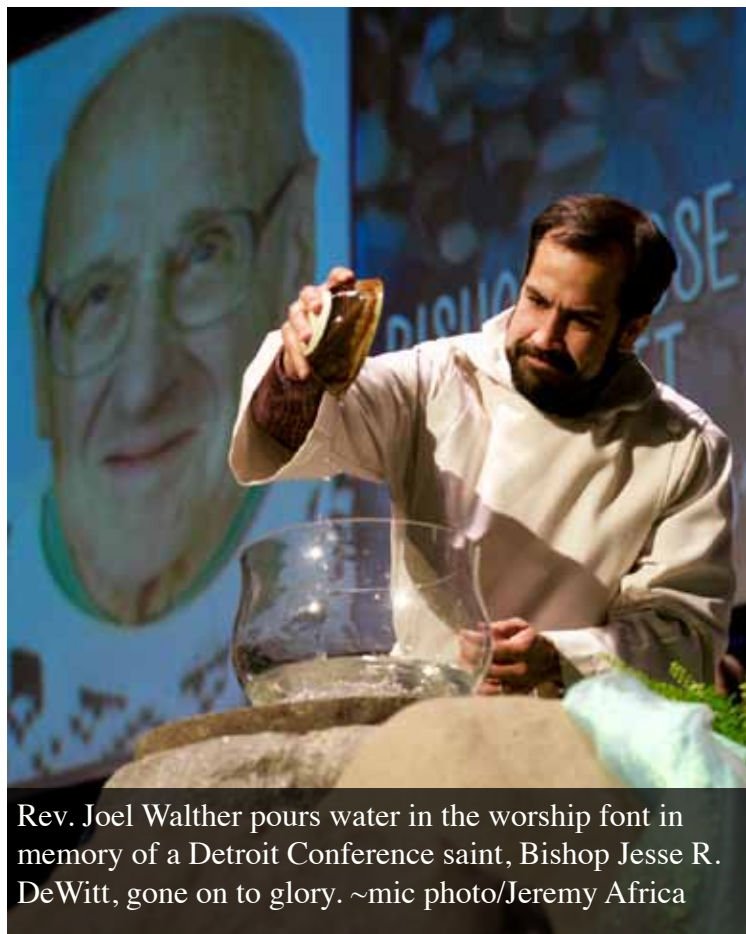
EAST LANSING, Mich. (MIC) --“Jesus, we are here, we are here for you.” These words called the Detroit Annual Conference to worship on Wednesday and song leader Jorge Lockward replied, “Yes, Lord. We are HERE, not somewhere else.” With that reminder members of the Conference were given spatial context. The Rev. Barbara Lewis-Lakin, in a sermon titled “Finding a Way,” then provided spiritual context.

“People have asked me, ‘Why open our Annual Conference with a memorial service?’” she said. “It does seem jarring,” she continued, “but it makes perfect sense. For we remember as we gather, and that helps to make us who we are.”

Saying, “Their faith is part of our faith in a God who is always remembering,” Lewis-Lakin went on to emphasize that “death ends life but it does not end relationship.” Acknowledging that losses are “messy and painful, important and holy,” she listed various experiences of loss close at hand... General Conference action (or inaction), the political campaigns, the Bishop’s retirement, and the end of life for two annual conferences in Michigan. “There are as many kinds of losses as there are people in this room,” she said, “and all those losses are worthy of holding gently.”

The community found hope and comfort in her words, “Being accompanied in grief is healing.”

See **WATER** on back



Rev. Joel Walther pours water in the worship font in memory of a Detroit Conference saint, Bishop Jesse R. DeWitt, gone on to glory. ~mic photo/Jeremy Africa

WATER continued from front page

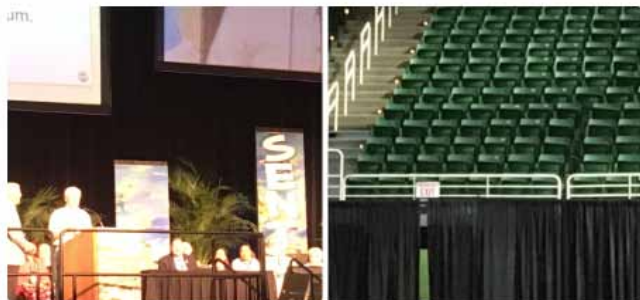
Lewis-Lakin's message then came alive around a large bowl of water at the worship center. As saints of the Detroit Conference were named, small vessels of water were poured into the central bowl. It was out of that same font that Bishop Deb would later baptize Joshua James Reynolds, infant son of Rev. Lindsey Hall and Rev. Jon Reynolds. Common waters, memorializing the dead and blessing the living, were a dramatic portrayal of the "great cloud of witnesses" celebrated by Lewis-Lakin.

SWEET TWEET O'THE DAY



Pastor Matthew @PastorMatthewC

We're discussing emergency exits. Methodists don't catch fire, we just get strangely warmed. #MIUMC16



ALL NEW! A GOOD THING

By Kay DeMoss, Senior Writer/Editor

"New" is the best way to describe the 2016 Annual Conference. After years of gathering in Adrian and Grand Rapids, conference members are in a new place ... Michigan State University. Friendly faces in the Detroit Conference are encountered as new faces in West Michigan (and vice versa). The agenda is different ... similar activities but organized in a whole new schedule.



Directors of Connectional Ministries—Revs Jerry DeVine and Benton Heisler comment on the significance of this new way of doing Annual Conference.

"This is our first experience as the 'new Michigan Conference,'" Benton notes. "For once it is absolutely true 'that we have never done it that way before.'"

Benton says that hospitality is the key to living in the midst of all the newness. "A wonderful guiding verse for our experience is Ephesians 4:32. Let's watch over and watch out for one another and 'be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God in Christ also forgave you.'"

"Why does it matter that we gather as United Methodists here in Michigan?" Jerry asks. He returns to his ordination and the advice Bishop Joseph Yeakel gave to young pastors: "We are episcopal, itinerant, connectional and conciliar." Jerry concludes, "It is our 'conciliar' nature that calls us together in Lansing next week. We will take the time to council together, which brings wisdom and perspectives from lay and clergy disciples to our shaping of our shared life together."

Benton places all this newness in a familiar framework with the 2016 Annual Conference as the capstone of a four year theme: 1) 2013 key word was Inspire, the topic Leadership; 2) The 2014 key word was Gather, the topic Worship; 3) The 2015 key word was Grow, the topic Discipleship; and 4) The 2016 key word is Send, the topic Missions.

Giving God the last word on this topic ... "See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them."