**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

**Northern Illinois Conference United Methodist Men (NICUMM)**

President: Craig Mc Gregor

  The year 2024 had the NICUMM continuing to recover from the COVID shutdowns within our new districts organization while reaching out in ministry and mission to help others to know and grow in Christ. At the NICUMM Lenten annual meeting hosted by Prairie South District , Mark Dehority shared  future plans for the NACP/GCUMM (he is the new president of the NACP). He stated we are in the servant/leader/disciple-making business! He talked about revival and some of the things we are doing in the UMM.  District President Jim Simmons and Bishop Dan Schwerin led the election and installation of officers for the next quadrennium. The slate of nominees was in the bulletin and was also handed out. There were no nominations from the floor, and the nominations were passed unanimously. The duly elected officers for the NICUMM Executive Committee were Craig Mc Gregor, President; Dave Hilton, Vice President; David Holland, Conference Secretary; Eugene Williams, Conference Treasurer; Herb John, Conference Prayer Advocate; and Jim Loeppert, Conference Scouting Coordinator. The non-elected officers for the NICUMM Executive Committee are  John Maxson, Prairie Central District President; Jim Simmons, Lake South District President; Bob Garvens, Prairie North District President; and Jim Nelson, Member At Large.

  Our Spiritual Congress and our mission efforts continue to be focal points for our men.  The topic of Spiritual Congress 2024 was “A Thousand Roads – Every Man’s Journey of Faith”.  Our keynote speaker was Jim Boesch, our GCUMM Staff Leadership Trainer and public speaker.  The other keynote speaker was Jeff Isaac, CEO of Pathway to Adventure Boys Scouts of America (BSA). Other noted speakers for the weekend included Mark Dehority (NACP President), Rev. Char Hoffmann, Ken Hudgins, Rev. Brian Gilbert (Lake South DS), Jim Leoppert, George Groves (NCJUMM President), and Steve Nailor (UMMF President) . The primary focus of the weekend event was to experience self-testimonials and to develop your own testimonial. Dan Holmes provided us with special music on Saturday evening. The Jean Bush Award was presented to Eugene Williams and the John Wesley Award was presented to Dave Holland.

  Over the last few years, GCUMM/NACP has launched a new brand and website at UnitedMensMinistry.com. These new programs were presented at NICUMM conference, district and local unit meetings, as they were part of the NICUMM display at the annual conference. Many men are now starting to use the “United” app in place of the Live Bold app for their individual spiritual journey. In late 2023, the Live Bold app was phased out.

Conference and District activities are reaching men for Christ. Here are some of our 2024 highlights for the conference activities as well as for the activities that were common to all districts:

* The Conference and District UMM are having in-person meetings as well as some ZOOM and livestreamed meetings.
* Created the new 2024-2028 plan of work for the NICUMM, with major  changes to the previous (2018-2021) working plan.
* Held the 63rd Spiritual Congress at Williams Bay, WI in September.
* At our December NICUMM Executive meeting, it was decided that in 2026 the NICUMM and the Boy Scouts of America would have a joint NIC Scouts Circuit Rider event in the Midwest for the first time.
* Men’s Ministry Specialist (MMS): NICUMM have four men certified as an MMS.
* EMS/Legacy Builders & Charters were a major emphasis to invite men to become involved in Men’s Ministry, especially those with elapsed memberships.
* Meals for Millions/Society of St. Andrew (SOSA) continues as our major Mission Program, and the NIC was recognized again as the 2024 Top Conference for donations to SOSA.
* Scouting Ministries Programs and reaching out to younger men and women. The United Methodist Men supports, with National Memorandums of Understanding, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the United States of America, and Big Brothers /  Big Sisters.  As the BSA was working toward a settlement of its bankruptcy case, our Conference Scouting Coordinator, Jim Loeppert, worked to develop a new relationship with Scouting and other youth serving organizations, one that could still involve our churches in serving the youth and young adults in our communities.  We developed a Small, Single-Purpose, Community Corporation (SSPCC) as a Not-For-Profit (NFP)  corporation.  This corporation would charter 3 to 10 units from various churches and sign Facilities Use Agreements for meeting space and storage with the individual church.
* The Conference Scouting Coordinator worked with the conference insurance broker to submit the BSA Youth Protection Training program to the Conference Liability Insurance Carrier, Philadelphia, for evaluation.   The result is that our Conference and our Churches can consider Adult Members of BSA as Youth Protection Trained and that there should be no need to require additional Safe Sanctuary or Safe Gatherings training.
* The Scouting Coordinator met with Bishop Dan Schwerin twice during the year to discuss Scouting in our churches. At the Bishop’s request the Scouting Coordinator has formed an Ad hoc Committee to provide resources to those churches and individuals requesting help in discerning the amount that they should pledge to the Conference for the BSA Survivors Fund.
* The Conference Prayer Advocate is working with the District Presidents to establish district Prayer Advocates in the effort to build a team to establish Prayer Advocates in churches. We have reached the point of realizing that helping men learn to pray and to seek to become a disciple of Jesus, is every man’s responsibility and not the province of a special few. The Mighty Men of Prayer small group study is being pursued by men in the conference.
* At Spiritual Congress 2024, Eugene Williams, NIC UMM Treasurer and Conference Co-Lay Leader, received the Jean Bush Award for leadership in local men’s ministry. His family members were present for the awards ceremony.
* At Spiritual Congress 2024, Dave Holland, NIC UMM Secretary received the John Wesley Award for leadership in conference wide men’s ministry.  His family members were present for the awards ceremony.