

# UMM PRESIDENT CRAIG MC GREGOR

## Annual Report for 2025

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Welcome to the Northern Illinois Conference United Methodist Men. I hope you find our website ([nicumm.org](http://nicumm.org)) helpful and informative. If you have questions about Men's Ministry in the United Methodist Church, feel free to email me at ([craigscottmcgregor@gmail.com](mailto:craigscottmcgregor@gmail.com)).

Craig McGregor

NICUMM Conference President

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### **ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

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

President: Craig Mc Gregor

The year 2025 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 Lake South District. Craig Mc Gregor introduced NICUMM Executive Committee team. They were Craig Mc Gregor, Conference President; Dave Hilton, Conference 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. Dave Holland talked about EMS, Legacy Builders, and Charters.

George Groves shared United Methodist Men future plans for the NCJUMM/NACP/GCUMM and talked about "Men's Ministries Revival" programs. 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. Lastly, Jim Loeppert gave us a scouting update report.

Our Spiritual Congress and our mission efforts continue to be focal points for our men. The topic of Spiritual Congress 2025 was "Forged by Grace – Forging men in your church and around the world". Our keynote speaker was Bishop James Edward Swanson, SR., who served as the president of the General Commission on UMM and recently the Interim General Secretary of GCUMM. He is a sought-after preacher,

worship leader and lecturer. He has presented to people throughout the U.S. and around the world. The other noted speakers for the weekend included:

(1) Rev. Dr. Norval Brown (Pastoring at Cary United Methodist Church in Cary, Illinois). He brings gifts in spiritual formation to church as he is called to lead retreats, revivals, and to provide individual direction.

(2) Rev. Dr. Audrea F. Nanabray (Superintendent of the Lake South District for NIC). She has served the NIC as a Safe Sanctuaries Trainer, helping churches keep children and vulnerable adults safe from exploitation.

(3) Rev. Dr. Char Hoffman (Retired Elder serving part-time at Hebron United Methodist Church in Hebron, Illinois). She noticed that it was difficult for the men to open up and share the way the women are able to in a group. She has been able to engage men in God's transformation at work in their lives.

(4) Rev. Dr. Richard "Rick" Vance the new General Secretary of the GCUMM. (Prior to becoming General Secretary, Rick served as Director of Operations and Director of the Center for Men's Ministries at GCUMM.) His calling is simple and powerful, to help men grow in Christ, build authentic relationships, and live lives of faithful service.

(5) Rev. Mark Lubbock (Executive Director United Methodist Men Foundation). He firmly believes "everything I do is from the viewpoint of a servant of Jesus". Says Lubbock. "I am deeply passionate about fostering men's discipleship, interfaith, and driving sustainable impact in alignment with the core values of United Methodist Foundation".

(6) Mr. Paul Dreiske (Member of the First Church in Crystal Lake). Since his retirement in 2015, Paul has faithfully immersed himself in music and Biblical Studies, actively serving, supporting, and teaching Men's Ministries. He gave a presentation about "Grace" from the church pew perspective.

Friday night was movie night. The Christian movie shown was "The Forge". It was received well and prompted great discussions. On Saturday morning the Jean Bush Award was presented to Rev. Dr. Char Hoffman, and the John Wesley Award was presented to Herb John. This year for the first time on Saturday afternoon at Conference Point, the men had an opportunity to do a service project involving packing dry meals to be distributed worldwide. The materials needed to package the meals were provide by the Midwest Mission Distribution Center. We put together 320 meals in an hour and half. On Saturday night the "Four Heaven's Sake" quartet from Crystal Lake UMC performed for us.

Over the last few years, GCUMM/NACP has launched a new brand and website at [UnitedMensMinistry.com](http://UnitedMensMinistry.com) and many men are now starting to use the "United" app.

Conference and District activities are reaching men for Christ. Here are some of our 2025 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 64<sup>th</sup> Spiritual Congress at Williams Bay, WI in September.
  - At our December NICUMM Executive meeting, it was decided that in 2026 that 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 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 2025, Rev. Dr. Hoffman, NIC UMM Clergy Representative, received the Jean Bush Award for leadership in local men's ministry. Her UMM members were present for the awards ceremony.
  - At Spiritual Congress 2025, Herb John NIC UMM Prayer Advocate received the John Wesley Award for leadership in conference wide men's ministry. His family members were present at the awards ceremony.

**Lake South District Report: President, Jim Simmons, as of 1/19/26**

**The District UMM Executive Committee is as follows:**

President, Jim Simmons; Vice-President, Verner Geddes; Financial Secretary, Tommy Taylor; Treasurer, Bernard Brantley; Recording Secretary, Juan McKinney; Sergeant-at-Arms, John Burrell; Parliamentarian, Vernon (Scoop)

Turner; Prayer Advocate, Charles Smith; Scouting Coordinator, Vacant; Hunger Advocate, Vacant.

- A Wednesday evening Bible Study Program was provided for the District from January thru May and continues from September thru the third week of December.
- A District Celebration Dinner Event was held on June 7th to Honor three Men and one Women for their Service to their churches and communities in the district. Included was a celebration of 33 years for the Bible Study Program to the Men of the District.
- 7 District meetings including the Celebration event were held in 2025.
- 10 churches have active United Methodist Men Chartered Units in the district with an additional 6 churches with nonactive Charters. This was a reduction of one nonactive Unit from last year's report because of church closings.
- 44 Men have active EMS memberships in the district with an additional 8 Men with nonactive EMS memberships. This was a reduction of eight active and two nonactive memberships from last year's report because of church closings.
- 15 Men represented the district at the Northern Illinois Conference UMM Annual meeting and Communion Service at UMC of New Lenox in March.
- 12 Men represented the district at the Northern Illinois Conference UMM Spiritual Congress at Williams Bay, WI in September.
- Special Events were held in October with a Potato Drop sponsored by the New Lenox Men and a presentation by the Alleluia Quartet in November at Morgan Park UMC.

Jim Simmons  
President Lake South District

### **Prairie Central District Report: President, John Maxson, as of 1/15/26**

The district has 11 chartered churches and 27 EMS members. The emphasis this year was on improving communications and strengthening value to members. We worked to build the database, leverage district communication resources by working with the District Superintendent and her staff and implement innovative ideas. We also built on last year's programming to attract the interest of members and non-members. For more information about this report and the events, please contact John Maxson (312-933-3239).

### **UMM Communications Initiative: *One Man, One Church***

- With men being flooded with text, email, U.S. Mail, screen displays, and other visual messages, it is hard to break through the clutter and inform men about opportunities for men's ministry. With word of mouth being the most effective vehicle, Prairie Central District men have worked to identify one man in each of

our 57 churches willing to read electronic media and ensure that the proper clergy and laity in his church receives the information. This single person commits to being the catalyst in his congregation to make sure that the word gets out. These “one man” messengers have been identified in about half of our churches, a goal for 2026 being to identify the remainder.

### **District UMM Meeting and Advent Service**

- Prairie Central District men celebrated the season of Advent with a service on Saturday morning, December 13, 2025, at the Barrington United Methodist Church, 98 Algonquin Road, Barrington Hills. The morning started with a hearty breakfast, a district business meeting featuring NIC-UMM President Craig McGregor and other announcements, and an inspirational service themed ADVENT ROAD: MEN ON A JOURNEY designed specifically for this constituency by Pastor David Lagos-Fonseca.

### **District Leadership Event**

- Prairie Central District United Methodist Men are playing an active role in organizing and promoting the District Leadership Training event scheduled for January 31, 2026, at Grace United Methodist Church in Schaumburg. Spearheaded by District Superintendent Wendy Hardin-Herrmann, activities will explore the meaning of church culture as outlined in the book by Jim Ozier titled *Church Culture: How to Assess It, Shift It, and Shape It*. According to Mr. Ozier, culture is the principal determinant of a church’s success and is independent of church size, demographics, and the socio-economic profile of the community. He will be at the conference leading the discussion.

### **Prairie North District: President, Bob Garvens, as of 01/20/26**

#### **The District UMM Executive Committee is as follows:**

President, Bob Garvens; Vice President, Dave Hilton; Secretary, Dave Holland; Treasurer, Michael Simmons; Scouting Advocate, Roman Salamon; Hunger Advocate, Vacant; Prayer Advocate, Vacant.

- On March 1, the Prairie North District had its Spring Communion and worship service  
Hosted by Harmony UMC at Freeport, with approximately 55 people attending. Our guest speaker was Harmony UMC pastor, Rev. Eddie Eddy.
- On March 22, 2024, a couple of the district men attended the NICUMM annual meeting at New Lennox.
- The district hosted a night out at the minor league Beloit Sky Carp game at ABC Stadium in Beloit on August 13. This was a new event with a goal to gather the district during the summer months for fellowship and fun. We were pleased to have about 95 people in attendance and plan to repeat in 2026 with the benefit of experience from the first time.

- On Sept. 13-15, some of the District men attended Spiritual Congress in Conference Point, Williams Bay WI.
- On November 8, Grace UMC hosted the District Fall Communion Service. The guest speaker was Rev Jane Easley. There were about 80 people in attendance. The offering raised \$5,355.10 for the Society of St Andrew Meals for Millions (MFM) program and \$280 for the Northwest IL Food Bank.
- The district has 6 Chartered churches and 10 EMS members

**Lake North District: President, Open**

- The district has 6 Chartered churches and 6 EMS members.
- The Lake North District has no district UMM officers.

**Prairie South District: President, Open**

- The district has 7 Chartered churches and 4 EMS members.
- Continued to provide hunger relief through various pantries and gleaning sweet corn, and countless garden vegetables.

Closing Remarks: With the Covid shutdown of our churches in March of 2020, most of our Men's events that were based on meetings, fellowship and/or group missions were put on hold at our local churches. During this time many church charters and EMS memberships lapsed. Men have dropped away from the UMM organizations and our churches. In 2022 and 2023, our churches got back to normal, however many of our UMM units lost momentum, leadership, and members. For 2023 we worked to reestablish, renew, and/or replace our men's ministries with the use of the new Men's Ministry products. For 2024 the official disaffiliation of churches from the main body of United Methodist Church has caused men to be concerned about the future of United Methodist Men. In response, the churches and UMM groups are working on ways to revitalize and to create new possibilities and new hope for new ministries that truly reach out to the local communities.

For the NICUMM

Craig Mc Gregor

Conference UMM President