

Historical Messenger

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Special points of interest:

- Marilyn McNitt has replaced Diana Spitalne Miller as Chair of the Archives and History Commission
- Matthew May has left the Detroit Conference Archives to move to Massachusetts with his family
- Rebecca McNitt has moved from archival volunteer to Interim Archivist
- Dr. Chris Momany will be the speaker at Annual Conference this year

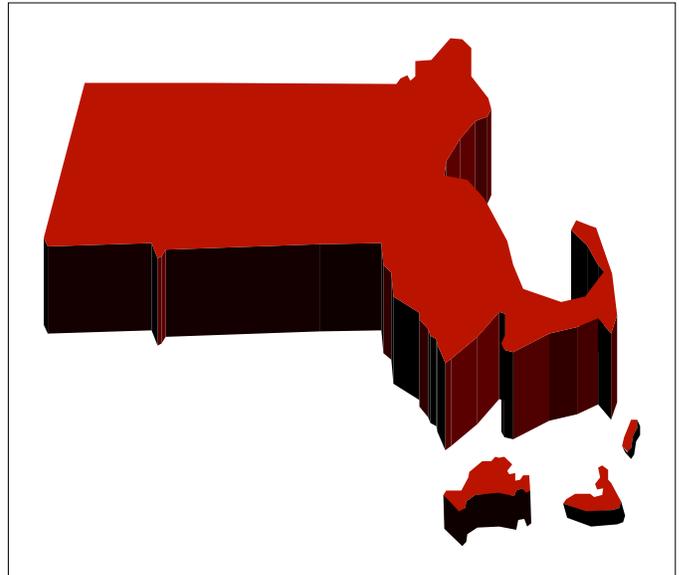
Farewell by Matthew May

Good-byes are never easy, and it is with more than a bit of melancholy that, after five years as archivist, I say farewell to the Detroit Conference as my family travels to our new home in northeastern Massachusetts.

It has been a great pleasure to help the hundreds of folks who have written, called, and e-mailed the archives in search of information on the vast history of the United Methodist Church in Michigan. Not only has it been gratifying to help people looking for baptismal records, marriage records, and the like, digging through the records and history of the church has been a tremendously edifying experience for me. I learned a lot about our history as well, an opportunity I would not have had were it not for the honor of serving as archivist.

I am very happy to say that during my time as archivist, the Commission succeeded in raising the profile of the archives. We were very active in promoting the mission of the archives through a variety of outlets. I was honored to make personal appearances on behalf of the Commission to explain our methodology of preserving records and what churches can do for records retention at a workshop in Birmingham, and in talks to groups at churches like Grosse Pointe First and Grace United Methodist in Britton.

We have also enjoyed presenting our annual church history award to churches that have promoted their own histories



Matthew May and his family have moved to Massachusetts for work.

through published books, DVDs, and other outlets. The J.A. Baughman Annual Church History Award (so named for the contributions of Rev. J.A. Baughman, a circuit rider and early founder of many Methodist churches in southeastern Michigan) will be an ongoing Commission activity, and we encourage churches to participate.

In addition to, I hope, educating various segments of the United Methodist community in Michigan about our standards for records retention, I was able to take advantage of many opportunities to expand our reach through writing. During my time as archivist, I published articles in publications such as the *Michigan Christian Advocate* and *Touchstone Magazine*, utilizing records and information exclusively housed at our archive in the Shipman Library.

The Friends of the Archives, specifically

Farewell (continued from p. 1)

Sharon Scott, Mary Whitman, and Jeanne Thomas, have been an invaluable source of support and assistance. Their effort and dedication brought about the very successful publication of the anthology of the works of the late Rev. Ronald A. Brunger many of you have been so kind to purchase in an effort to further our work. In conjunction with the Commission, they have hosted memorable lectures during Annual Conference from luminaries such as Dr. William Quick, and Rev. LaVere Webster and, this year, Rev. Christopher Momany. Seldom have I come across a group of people more dedicated to an organization as the Friends are to the archives.

Thank you to everyone who has made my tenure as archivist a very enjoyable time of my life. I really appreciate the opportunity to serve the church as archivist, especially Diana Miller, Marilyn McNitt, and Linda Schramm. It has been a great honor and pleasure to come to know Rev. Jim Simmons, who served the archives so well and has been a great friend to me.

I could not have succeeded at the archives were it not for the patience, assistance, and overall goodwill of the staff of the Shipman Library, specifically librarians Noelle Keller and David Cruse. They have been of great help in assisting me with research queries, as well as providing a helping hand during Annual Con-

ference meetings. The Conference is very fortunate to have such a competent, caring partnership such as it is with Noelle and David.

I would also like to extend thanks to Rev. Jean Snyder, who alerted me to the archivist's job opening in late 2005, and to Rev. Judy May, my mom, who traded in her days off so that I would be able to travel to Adrian on Fridays. I will miss all of the friends I have made, but will always carry fond memories of my time as Detroit Conference archivist.

It is a pleasure to say that the archives are in wonderful hands in the persons of Marilyn and Rebecca McNitt, about whom more information is available in this edition of the *Messenger*. They will take the archives to a new level of influence and importance and I know that all friends of the archive will give them their complete support.

It is hoped that, eventually, the Conference will see fit to make the position of archivist, at the very least, a half-time position. The significant increase in archives queries over the past five years has hampered the ability to process donations and materials. The preservation of our history is a vitally important function for the Conference and should be treated as such.

"It is a pleasure to say that the archives are in wonderful hands in the persons of Marilyn and Rebecca McNitt...."

2011 Baughman Award by Rebecca McNitt

This year's J.A. Baughman History Award is being presented at Annual Conference to North Lake United Methodist Church of Chelsea, Michigan.

In honor of their 175th year, North Lake United Methodist Church created a number of anniversary celebration materials. These materials included the 175th Anniversary book of the



church, as well as a calendar, a cookbook, and a weekly trivia tablet.

We would like to thank North Lake United Methodist Church, as well as all of the other entrants for their participation in this year's competition.

J.A. Baughman Church History Award Application Form

Detroit Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History

Deadline: March 1, 2012

The Commission on Archives and History sponsors an annual church history competition named in honor of Rev. J.A. Baughman, a prominent founder of Methodist churches in southeastern Michigan in the nineteenth century. Send in a written history, a video history, or even the link to a website detailing the story of your church. The Commission recognizes the best entry at Annual Conference.



Contestants are under no strict guidelines. Past entries have included formal written histories complete with oral histories, video interviews with longtime congregants and church historians, photographs, building histories, video/audio recordings of sermons and special services, and all of the above. The only limitation is your imagination.

If your church would like to participate in the Detroit Conference's church history competition, please fill out this application and submit it, along with your church's entry, to the Conference Archivist at the address listed below. Questions and comments concerning the competition may also be sent to the Conference Archivist.

Church Information

Name of church:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Church website (if applicable):

Contact person/phone, e-mail:

Format (circle all that apply): Print Video (DVD/VHS) Website Other

Date history was compiled

Submit application and entry to:

**Conference Archivist
Archive of the Detroit Conference of the United Methodist Church
Shipman Library, Adrian College
110 S. Madison St.
Adrian, MI 49221**

Send in a written history, a video history, or even the link to a website detailing the story of your church. The Commission recognizes the best entry at Annual Conference.

Annual Conference Meeting by Marilyn McNitt

Join us for our Annual Conference meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2011 in the Hickman Conference Room of the Caine Student Center. Our speaker will be Rev. Christopher Momany.

A 1984 graduate of Adrian College, Dr. Momany's Master of Divinity thesis received the 1987 Princeton Theological Seminary Senior Fellowship in history. He was awarded a Doctor of Ministry in 1992 with an emphasis upon ethics in the Wesleyan Tradition and Postcritical Hermeneutics. Chaplain of Adrian Col-

lege since 1996, Chris is a member of the West Michigan Conference.

Chris will discuss his new book *Doing Good: A Grace-Filled Approach to Holiness*. His book explores the Wesleyan approach to both law and grace, guiding individuals to match their faith with action. In addition it shows individuals and churches how to express Christianity in ways that will attract others to the faith and the life of the church.

Annual
Conference
Meeting

May 18, 2011

6:00PM

Hickman
Conference Room -
Caine Student
Center

All in the Family by Matthew May

When change comes, it is often best to rely on family to adjust and grow. That is the case with the Commission on Archives and History and the McNitt family.

During last year's Annual Conference meeting of the Commission on Archives and History, Diana Miller had two announcements: First, effective August 1, she was resigning her position of Commission Chair. Second, Marilyn McNitt, a former member of the Commission, had agreed to assume the role of chair.

Earlier this year, I announced my resignation as archivist effective at the end of March in conjunction with my move to New England. At a Commission meeting this past February, it was agreed that Rebecca McNitt, Marilyn's daughter, would take on the role of interim archivist. The archives could not be in better hands.

Many of you know Marilyn from her previous service on the Commission, and are familiar with her experience at the prestigious Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan. She will bring a professional expertise to the administration of the Commission, which will be invaluable as the archives continues to field more and more research requests and process more and more donations and submissions.

Marilyn has an ambitious agenda for the archives. Working with the Friends of the Archives, she plans to expand the Internet presence of the archives to streamline the search process. Working with Noelle Keller of the Shipman Library, Marilyn has plans to launch joint efforts with Adrian College to secure grant money for the archives. There is no doubt that the archives will continue to thrive under the guidance of Marilyn's expertise.

Rebecca is a graduate of Albion College and the University of Michigan, and currently works at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor. She has been assisting in the archives since late last year as a volunteer and has already made a significant contribution to the organization of our collection by cataloging the "stacks" in the back of the archives. Rebecca graciously agreed to serve as interim archivist in February and is making great progress in processing the overflow of materials currently at the archives.

Thanks to the dedication of the McNitt family, the Commission on Archives and History will make a seamless transition during this period of change.

In the Interim by Rebecca McNitt

Since the resignation of Matthew May at the end of March, I have been filling in as Interim Archivist for the Detroit Conference. During my tenure, I have started to create a plan of action for the archives, setting short and long-term goals.

Beginning as Matt's volunteer assistant back in October 2010, I created a database listing all of the books located in the archive. The clergy index, originally created by Jim and Charlotte Simmons, has been updated back to 2003, with further updates made when new information is located.



collections, as well as insuring that all files that were displaced by the 2004 flood are in their proper, anticipated location.

We have started to reorganize and process materials in the archive, attempting to clear space for office work and update researcher paperwork. A more permanent archive e-mail address has been created for the archive to insure that messages and reference requests will not be lost during archivist transitions.

In the short-term, there are plans in place to design and implement an archive website which will house information about and finding aids for different collections in the archive. We will also be attempting to process all of the unprocessed

The more long-term plans for the archive include adding the finding aids created in the short-term to our archive website. Processing all of the unprocessed materials in the archives is also a serious long-term issue. There is also a plan to create new labels for all of the materials that differentiate them clearly from the Adrian College archives, located in the same room, and also clarify any confusion as to what is held in the various boxes. We also hope to add all of the collection's books into the Adrian College Library catalog to make it clear to a wider audience what holdings we have available.

Short-Term Goals:

- Website
- Process unprocessed materials
- Return of flood displaced materials to their proper place

Long-Term Goals:

- Add finding aids to website
- Clarify labeling
- Add all books into Adrian College Library catalog

Stop on By by Rebecca McNitt

While at this year's annual conference, we hope that you will stop in the Shipman Library to take a look at our exhibit of archival treasures.

Among other items, there is a photograph of the 1910 Detroit Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church,

postcards of a variety of Detroit Conference churches, and the 1856 Conference journal of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

These items will be on display in the entry-way of the library throughout annual conference, so take a look!

Questions about the content of this newsletter and research queries may be directed to:

Detroit Conference of the United Methodist Church
 Shipman Library
 Adrian College
 110 S. Madison St.
 Adrian, MI 49221
 (517) 265-5161 x4429
 dcumcarchives@adrian.edu

Extended online content coming soon!



**Marilyn McNitt –
 Chair**

**Rebecca McNitt -
 Interim Archivist**

A Tribute to Diana Miller by Matthew May

After seven years of service, Commission Chair Diana Miller announced her resignation at last year's Annual Conference, effective August 1, 2010.

Diana played a central role in organizing and scheduling last year's extremely successful North Central Jurisdiction meeting held at Adrian July 5-8. The theme of the convocation was "Celebrating at Historic Adrian College: The Methodist Anti-slavery Movement and 200 Years of Methodism in Michigan." Diana was instrumental in putting together a memorable program with dynamic speakers and educational an historical tour in Detroit that many agreed was among the best they had ever attended.

As chair of the Commission on Archives and History, Diana logged almost as much mileage as a circuit rider. During

her tenure, she represented the Commission at North Central Jurisdiction meetings in places such as Jacksonville, Illinois, Mitchell, South Dakota, and Dayton, Ohio. She also made trips to Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, and Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.

Everyone associated with the commission appreciates and honors Diana's service and work, especially in light of her many responsibilities in other offices and capacities for the Detroit Conference. On a personal note, I enjoyed working with Diana and am appreciative for her support of my tenure as archivist.

We know she will enjoy life with Duane at their house on the lake and visits to her beloved grandchildren. Thank you, Diana, for your dedication to the Detroit Annual Conference and the preservation of the history of Methodism in Michigan.

Friends of the Archive

Donations to the archive collection may be made after consultation with the archivist. Monetary donations are welcome by joining the "Friends of the Archive" group, which sponsors memberships of one year for \$6, two years for \$15, five years for \$30, and a lifetime membership of \$100. Payment by check (payable to "Friends of the Archive") and member information can be sent to:

Sharon Scott, Treasurer
 214 E. Michigan Ave.
 Clinton, MI 49236

"Friends of the Archive" is a non-profit group that supports the Archive and the mission of historical preservation of documents and material pertaining to the Detroit Conference. Your support is necessary to sustain the Archive and bridge the past, present, and future.

