



Wisconsin's Lights were Shining Bright at Synod: Hosting the 32nd General Synod

by Rev. Debbie Payden

The months of planning and the days of providing extravagant hospitality and service to the larger United Church of Christ for General Synod 32 is over. **Your participation in providing this ministry was overwhelming!**

Thanks to all who gave of their financial and in-kind resources, loaning of space, equipment, and transportation, time, energy, and presence before and during General Synod. In hopes of not slighting anyone, **here is how the Wisconsin Conference provided for and hosted the 32nd General Synod in Milwaukee**, June 21-25, 2019, in so many, many ways:

- Close to \$60,000 donated to the Local Arrangements Committee for their work from churches and individuals in the Conference
- 4 Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) Chairpersons working for 1 ½ years toward Synod.
- 27 LAC Coordinators facilitating specific areas of ministry.
- 382 scheduled volunteers giving at least 6 hours of service and many gave more.
- 105+ churches participating with volunteers and donated items.
- 3,355 volunteer hours on site for Synod not to mention the work of the LAC prior to Synod.
- Rich and Diana Pine gave hours upon hours upon hours of organizing volunteer schedules, helping LAC coordinators, sending and receiving mountains of emails and doing so with grace, patience and gentleness.
- Volunteers stepped up to the plate after their initial hours when needed in various areas of Synod, especially in Childcare and Children's Ministry.

- 3,000 gift bags filled at Brookfield Congregational UCC by 50+ volunteers from various churches in the Southeast Association.
- Brookfield Congregational UCC housed the gift bags and transported them to various Synod hotels in downtown Milwaukee.
- 3000+ trees of hope were carved by Orlin Brommer of Hope UCC in Cochrane for the guest bags.
- Cathy Benjamin and Laura McLeod contacted, cajoled, and handled all the items for the delegate gift bags including the Great Cheese Curd Give Away.
- Debbie Hoogersteger gave many volunteers pieces of a puzzle so they would remember they were all important and needed to host General Synod.
- Presenters from various agencies and academic settings for the Educational Intensives.
- Beth Meyer and Dale Stohre went many, many extra miles providing care for Volunteers.
- Emmanuel UCC in Hales Corners loaned their communion table for the liturgical setting.
- The Communion ware for the Community Worship on Sunday, June 23, was designed and made by Rev. Colleen Kwong.
- Christ UCC housed furniture used in the Exhibit hall by OPTIC. Members of Plymouth Congregational UCC and Christ UCC moved the furniture to the Wisconsin Center. After Synod, the furniture was given to Pathfinders.
- Parks Edge Preschool (a CHHSM agency) loaned equipment for the Childcare room for Infants to K5 along with one of their lead early childhood education teachers.
- Sparta Congregational UCC donated a plethora of crayons, markers, and color pencils to the Children's ministry (which afterward were donated to the Cathedral Women's Center).
- One-time volunteer presenters for the Children's Ministry, (dance, music, drumming, origami).
- Lighthouse loaned to the Children's ministry by George Tucker.
- Greendale Community UCC provided large pillows and First Congregational UCC Oconomowoc provided bean bag chairs for the Children's room.

- Bus organizers from various parts of Wisconsin for the afternoon worship on Sunday, June 23.
- Jeff Kitzman, (First Congregational UCC, South Milwaukee), the Milwaukee music liaison with the national music coordinator and trumpeter in the “house band.”
- Lighthouse made by Roxanne and Roberto Sanchez to post ways UCC members *Shine the Light* in their communities.
- Rev. Jean Wallenfang, directing her last General Synod as stage manager.
- Wisconsin Conference support staff for the loan of various equipment and materials as well as extra help with financial concerns, promotion and electronic processes and media.
- For a wide variety of handmade prayer shawls for the Wellness area and Prayer room.
- Mission Outreach agencies in Milwaukee and the extra care and time organizing by Tim Perkins.
- Shinefest!, despite weather concerns, was a joy-filled, fun and very Wisconsin/Milwaukee summer event!
- And so much more...

Thank you, Wisconsin Conference UCC! You indeed SHINE!

And here are just a few quotes about what others are saying about us!

I think everyone agrees that the Wisconsin Conference was a great host; the volunteers were well organized, friendly and gracious. —Edith Guffey, Conference Minister, Kansas-Oklahoma Conference UCC

I have literally just walked in to my home after a wonderful experience at Synod. Thank you for your radical hospitality from airport greetings to cheese curds. I appreciate all of your efforts and willingness to make those of us visiting feel we were truly welcome. Y'all were excellent ambassadors for Wisconsin. —Lella Baker

Thanks for your extravagant welcome! Your planning team, staff, conference minister and volunteers did wonderful work! —Mike Denton

Thank you to the Wisconsin Conference and all who made this amazing event possible. It was a wonderful! —Jean Ostrom

Thanks Wisconsin Conference. GS 32 was fantastic. Danke for the gemutlichkeit. It was wunderbar! —Bob Hamilton

You all are AWESOME! Thank you for providing our UCC family with such an amazing experience! —Sheri Prestemon, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference UCC