

“Inviting” Sermon of the Year

PURPOSE

The Board of Evangelism offers an annual prize for the “Inviting” Sermons of the Year to encourage pastors and congregations to share the ***Good News of life in Christ***.

WHO MAY APPLY

Pastors, Lay Speakers, Campus Ministers, Chaplains, District Superintendents, and even the Bishop—anyone associated with the West Michigan Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church who, in speaking before an audience, invites listeners to respond positively to the hope of Jesus Christ.

REQUIREMENTS

- The sermons must be given at a United Methodist service, campus gathering, street ministry, or other public venue in the **nine months prior to the annual conference in which the prize is presented**.
- **Sermons may be submitted within the following categories**
 1. An “**inviting sermon**” which builds on the **Igniting Ministries emphasis** and winsomely invites guests and visitors to explore life in Christ with the congregation.
 2. An “**inviting sermon**” which challenges the congregation to **deepen its commitment to share Christ**, becoming activists on behalf of an invitational community of faith.
 3. An “**inviting sermon**” calling listeners to **respond to the gospel claim** that Jesus Christ is the risen Savior and Lord.
- **Submit the following to the Chair of the Board of Evangelism by April 1:**
 - 3 copies of the sermon manuscript
 - One sentence each describing:
 1. The location and circumstance in which the sermon was preached;
 2. Which of the three categories in which you wish the sermon to be evaluated;
 3. The sermon’s “big idea” or its “central focus;” and
 4. Your homiletic intention (i.e., What did you want to have happen as a result of people listening to this sermon?)
 - An attached copy of the manuscript in either Word or WordPerfect.
 - An audio- or video-tape of the sermon. (***Sermon only please.***)
 - Limit of one submission per entrant.

PANEL OF JUDGES

The entries will be judged by a panel made up of two members of the Board of Evangelism, two “distinguished guest judges” and a Certified Lay Speaker. The sermons will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Its authenticity of witness/testimony to Jesus Christ;
- Its clarity of persuasive or purposeful intention;
- Its creativity of style balanced with substantive engagement with Scripture;
- Its inviting stance balanced with respect for the listeners;
- Its challenge for listeners to embrace discipleship within the fellowship and mutual commitments of congregational life.

PRIZE

The prize-winning sermons will be printed and made available at Annual Conference. The authors of the sermons will have his/her name printed on a plaque which will carry the names of winners from year to year. Winners will also receive a \$200 gift-certificate to Cokesbury Press.

“INVITING SERMON” APPLICATION

Submit by April 1

To: Gary Bondarenko, Chair Conference Board of Evangelism
2400 E. Lake Lansing Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823

(Name)

(Address)

Zip code

()
Ph. Number

(Church, or Ministry Location)

Title of Sermon

Date Preached

Submit the following with the application form:

- 3 copies of the sermon manuscript
- One sentence each describing
 1. the location and circumstance in which the sermon was preached
 2. Which of the 3 categories in which you wish the sermon to be evaluated
 3. The sermon’s “big idea” or its “central focus;” and
 4. Your homiletic intention (i.e. What did you want to have happen as a result of people listening to this sermon?)
- An attached copy of the manuscript in either Word or WordPerfect
- An audio-or video-tape of the sermon. (sermon only please)
- Limit of one submission per entrant