# the 2017 AWFUMC BOOK OF REPORTS



Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

Southeastern Jurisdiction

**Welcome!** We are glad you will attend the 2017 Annual Conference Session of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. The session will be June 4 - 7, 2017 at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

#### Reservations

Visit <a href="http://www.awfumc.org/ac2017">http://www.awfumc.org/ac2017</a> if you or members in your group wish to make a reservation for lunch(es), the Clergy Spouses Gathering, the Laity Banquet, volunteer for the UPPER ROOM PRAYER LINE, participate in the Biometric Health Screening (see below), and/or reserve nursery care. The online **reservation** system does **NOT register** your attendance to annual conference. Attendance is marked and counted at the registration/check-in table inside the host church

#### From the Pension and Health Benefits Office

Clergy participating in the Conference active health insurance plan are required to fulfill two requirements (a Health Quotient {HQ} and a Biometric Health Screening) by August 31, 2017 to avoid a \$50.00 personal wellness surcharge. There will be opportunity to complete the HQ and the health screening at Annual Conference. Screenings will take place on Monday, June 5, and Tuesday, June 6, from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Even if you have completed the health screening, someone will be there to assist you with completing the HQ. The health screening is a "non-fasting" screening.

Laity and all dependents on the active health insurance plan may also participate in screening, but are not required to do so. Individuals (clergy or laity) not on the Conference active health insurance plan may also participate in the screening (a fee will apply).

#### Mission Offering

The conference offering will support **Local Mission Agencies**: The Ark, Mary Ellen's Hearth, Milk & Honey, Mobile Inner City Mission, Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries, and Dumas Wesley.

#### UMCOR Relief Kits

We will again collect UMCOR relief kits at annual conference. UMCOR is especially requesting health kits and school kits. Relief Supply kits help provide care for the most vulnerable people during times of crisis. UMCOR kits are distributed globally, and help sustain everyday life for people who lack ready access to essential supplies. Bring your kits to the truck in the parking lot at Frazer. Coleman American will ship the kits and supplies to the Sager Brown depot in Baldwin, Louisiana. Visit <a href="www.awfumc.org/reliefkits">www.awfumc.org/reliefkits</a> for more details

#### From the JOURNAL Editor

The 2017 *Conference Journal* will be available for digital download from the conference website or hard copy purchase from Amazon. Notice of availability and "ordering links" will be announced from the conference office when the *Journal* becomes available.

#### From the Conference Secretary

Members of annual conference are encouraged to become familiar with all conference standing rules included in this *Book of Reports*. Specifically Standing Rule 15 and the section entitled *Administrative Procedures of the Annual Conference*. If you have questions, please contact the conference secretary, David Saliba, at (850) 492-2135.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION	
2017 Annual Conference WORKING Agenda	5
Guest Speakers, Guest Musicians	11.15
The Standing Rules with Committee Revisions	16
Consent Agenda	
Proposed Constitutional Amendments	28
Rationale	
Resolutions	
2017 Annual Conference Tellers	
2017 Illinuar Comercine Tenero	.175
ACADEMY FOR CONGREGATIONAL EXCELLENCE (ACE)	35
COMMUNITIES OF TRANSFORMATION	
CONFERENCE CORE TEAM/CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES	
DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY MINISTRY	
DISTIBLE RESTORED RESTORED RESTREET	
DISTRICT REPORTS	42
DISTRICT RELIGIONS	
LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS	
Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry	51
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)	51
Birmingham-Southern College	54
Huntingdon College	
Wesley Foundations	
Conference Lay Leader	
Lay Servant Ministries	
United Methodist Men	
United Methodist Women	
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM REPORTS	
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM REPORTS Board of Pension and Health Benefits	
Board of Pension and Health Benefits	70
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance	
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees	73
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees	73
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension	73
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program	73
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017	73 75 77 80
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities	73 75 77 80 81
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities	73 75 77 80 81
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund	73 75 77 80 81 81
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982	73 75 77 80 81 81 82
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities  Report 9 - Depositories  Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees	73 75 77 80 81 81 82
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities  Report 9 - Depositories  Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees  Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982  Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons  Report 13 - Special Grants	73 75 77 80 81 81 82 82
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities  Report 9 - Depositories  Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees  Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982  Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons	73 75 77 80 81 81 82 82
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities  Report 9 - Depositories  Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees  Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982  Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons  Report 13 - Special Grants	73 75 77 80 81 81 82 82 82
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants	73 75 77 80 81 81 82 82 82 83 84 84
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services	. 73 . 75 . 77 . 80 . 81 . 81 . 82 . 82 . 82 . 83 . 84 . 84 . 85 . 85 . 86
Board of Pension and Health Benefits  Report 1 - Health Insurance  Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees  Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees  Report 4 - Pension  Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program  Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017  Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund  Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities  Report 9 - Depositories  Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees  Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982  Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons  Report 13 - Special Grants  Report 14 - Homes for Claimants  Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants  Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants	. 73 . 75 . 77 . 80 . 81 . 81 . 82 . 82 . 82 . 83 . 84 . 84 . 85 . 85 . 86
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services	. 73 . 75 . 77 . 80 . 81 . 81 . 82 . 82 . 82 . 83 . 84 . 84 . 85 . 85 . 86 . 86 . 86 . 86 . 86 . 86 . 86 . 86
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services Report 18 - Policy on Medical and Disabling Conditions Leave and CPP Disability Benefits Report 19 - Death Benefit Program  Board of Trustees	. 73 . 75 . 77 . 80 . 81 . 81 . 82 . 82 . 82 . 83 . 84 . 85 . 86 . 86 . 86 . 92
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services Report 18 - Policy on Medical and Disabling Conditions Leave and CPP Disability Benefits Report 19 - Death Benefit Program  Board of Trustees Report 6 - Parsonage Standards	73 75 77 80 81 82 82 83 84 84 85 85 86 86 86 86 89 99
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services Report 18 - Policy on Medical and Disabling Conditions Leave and CPP Disability Benefits Report 19 - Death Benefit Program  Board of Trustees Report 6 - Parsonage Standards Report 7 - Sexual Misconduct Policy	73 75 77 80 81 82 82 83 84 84 85 86 86 92 93 93 91
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services Report 18 - Policy on Medical and Disabling Conditions Leave and CPP Disability Benefits Report 19 - Death Benefit Program  Board of Trustees Report 7 - Sexual Misconduct Policy Report 8 - Safe Sanctuaries Policy	7375778081818282828384848586929397 .100 .103
Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report 1 - Health Insurance Report 2 - Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees Report 4 - Pension Report 5 - Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program Report 6 - Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017 Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund Report 8 - Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities Report 9 - Depositories Report 10 - Pensions for Lay Employees Report 11 - Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre - 1982 Report 12 - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons Report 13 - Special Grants Report 14 - Homes for Claimants Report 15 - Policy for Claimants Home Occupants Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants Report 17 - Other Retirement Services Report 18 - Policy on Medical and Disabling Conditions Leave and CPP Disability Benefits Report 19 - Death Benefit Program  Board of Trustees Report 6 - Parsonage Standards Report 7 - Sexual Misconduct Policy	73 75 77 80 81 81 82 82 83 84 84 85 86 92 93 97 91

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Report 11 - Minimum Insurance Requirements	115
Report 12 - Annual Conference Conflict of Interest Policy	116
Commission on Equitable Compensation	119
Arrearage Policy	121
Disbursements for 2016	
Minimum Salary for 2018	120
Council on Finance and Administration	
Report 1 - Organizational Structure	122
Report 2 - Conference Officers	
Report 3 - Bonding Requirements	125
Report 4 - Budgeting, Funding and Auditing Procedures	
Report 5 - Zero-Based Budgeting	
Report 6 - Fund Raising and Collection Policies	
Report 7 - Apportionments with Supplemental Report	
Report 8 - Stewardship Responsibilities and Local Church Concerns	
Report 9 - Formula and Allocations	
Report 10 - District Superintendents' Compensation	
Report 11 - Moving Guidelines and Expenses	
Report 12 - Annual Conference Expenses	
Report 13 - Credit Card Policy	
Report 14 - Investment Policy Statement	
Report 15 - Fiscal Year End	
Audit Statement	139
MISSION TEAM REPORTS	
Board of Church and Society	140
Board of Congregational Development	
Board of Discipleship	
Board of Global Ministries	172
Division of Advance Specials	143
Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns	173
Division of Disability Concerns	145
Entition of Educatory Converses	
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Commission on Archives and History	
Archivist's Report	146
Historical Society President's Report.	147
Committee on Episcopacy	149
CONFERENCE AGENCY REPORTS	
Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly.	
Methodist Homes Corporation	
United Methodist Children's Home	
United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union	156
United Methodist Development Fund	
United Methodist Foundation, Inc.	160
CONFERENCE MISSIONS AND MINISTRIES REPORTS	
Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM)	
Dumas Wesley Community Center	
Golden Cross	
Mary Ellen's Hearth at Nellie Burge Community Center	
Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries	
Mission u 2016	
Pensacola UM Community Ministries	172

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
United Methodist Inner City Mission	173
OTHER REPORTS	
Africa University	174
Hinton Center.	176
Lake Junaluska Assembly, Inc.	177
Schools of Theology	178
APPENDIX	
Conference Officers, Appointive, Extended Cabinet	188
District Offices	189
Conference Center	190
Frequent Contacts	191
Correction Form to 2016 Conference JOURNAL	



# 2017 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference WORKING Agenda

June 4 - 7, 2017

Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church, Montgomery, AL *IMAGINE: By Faith It Can Happen* 

Sunday, June 4

1:00 p.m. Exhibits, Registration Set Up – Atrium

2:30 p.m. Church and Society – 3101

3:00 p.m. Registration Opens - Atrium

Cokesbury Bookstore Opens

Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM) Snack Bar – Servery

Appointive Cabinet Meeting – Parlor

3:30 p.m. Tellers Orientation – Wesley Hall

Mass Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary

4:00 p.m. Assistant Secretaries Orientation - Wesley Hall

Committee on Petitions and Resolutions – 7201

Global Ministries – 3101

4:30 p.m. Fellowship of Local and Associate Members Meeting –7202/7209

Bishop's Dinner – 6102

5:00 p.m. Pages Orientation – Wesley Hall

Memorial Luncheon Set Up – 4100 Mass Choir Meal – Fellowship Hall

Board of Ordained Ministry Meeting – 6111

5:30 p.m. Conference Registration Closes for the Day

5:30 p.m. Mass Choir gathers – Sanctuary

Opening Worship Processional gathers – Chapel

6:00 p.m. OPENING WORSHIP CELEBRATION with Holy Communion –

Sanctuary

Greetings from Host Pastor: Rev. Larry Bryars

Sermon: Rev. Robin Wilson

Music: Mass Choir

Local Mission Agency Offering: The Ark, Mary Ellen's Hearth, Milk & Honey, Mobile Inner City Mission, Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries,

Dumas Wesley

7:30 p.m. Clergy Executive Session – Wesley Hall

Laity Session – Sanctuary

Monday, June 5

7:00 a.m. Conference Registration Opens (closes at 2:00 p.m.) – Atrium

Experiential Prayer Room – Surge (7 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

Asbury Foundation Breakfast – 6102

7:30 a.m. Board of Laity – 6111

8:00 a.m. Biometric Health Screening (Non-Fasting) for Persons on

Conference Health Plan (closes at 2 p.m.) – Cokesbury Room

8:30 a.m. Opening Worship – Wesley Hall

Sermon: Rev. John Brooks

9:30 a.m. CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION – Wesley Hall

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Hymn: And Are We Yet Alive

Video: Baypines District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Welcome from the Host District Superintendent – Rev. Darren McClellan

Opening Business and Organization of the Conference – Wesley Hall

Setting the "bar" of the Conference

Election of secretarial staff

Approval of the 2016 Conference Journal

Adoption of the 2017 Conference Working Agenda

Presentation of the 2017 Consent Agenda

Committee on Standing Rules (to lay on the table overnight) – Shirley Woodie

Committee on Resolutions and Petitions (to lay on the table overnight) – Rev. Christina Shaver

10:10 a.m. Break – Preparation for Worship

(Families of deceased clergy and clergy spouses gather in Chapel; members of annual conference are invited to come by to greet them prior to the memorial service. AWFC Cabinet and worship participants will gather in Parlor)

10:30 a.m. ORDER OF THE DAY - Memorial Service and Holy Communion

Sanctuary

Liturgist: Rev. Olivia Poole Sermon: Rev. Ralph Sigler Monday, June 5 (Cont.)

12:00 p.m. General Lunch – Fellowship Hall

Memorial Service Luncheon – 4100

Asbury Club Luncheon – 8110 North Gym

Wesley Heirs Luncheon – 6102 Candler Club Luncheon – 6111 Duke Club Luncheon – 7203

CFA Investment Committee – 6101

1:30 p.m. CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION – Wesley Hall

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Video: Demopolis District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Board of Laity Address – Beverly Maddox

Committee on Episcopacy – Alexis Tibbetts

Committee on Nomination – Rev. David Saliba

Constitutional Amendments – Rev. David Saliba

Report of the Commission on the Way Forward

Board of Church and Society Report – Pat Luna

Board of Ordained Ministry – Rev. Jim Sanders

Recognition of Commissioning and Ordination classes

Recognition of First-Time Licensed Local Pastors

Recognition of Licensed Local Pastors who completed Course of Study Recognition of Clergy in Extension Ministries and Appointments Beyond the Local Church

(Retirees gather in Parlor by 2:45)

3:30 p.m. ORDER OF THE DAY - Recognition of Retiring Clergy –

Wesley Hall

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Video: Dothan District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Reception for Retiring Clergy

Council on Finance and Administration Meeting –

NO EVENING MEAL AT HOST CHURCH

Monday, June 5 (Cont.)

7:00 p.m. Service of Ordination & Commissioning – Montgomery First

United Methodist Church (Choral Concert at 6:20 p.m.)

Sermon: Bishop David Graves

Music: Montgomery First United Methodist Church Choirs

Ministerial Education Fund Offering

Reception – Fellowship Hall, Montgomery First United

Methodist Church

Tuesday, June 6

7:00 a.m. Conference Registration Opens (closes at Noon) – Atrium

Experiential Prayer Room – Surge (7 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

COSROW - 6111

Deacon Breakfast – 6102

Upper Room Prayer Line - United Methodist Men - 3131

334-495-6360 (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)

8:00 a.m. Biometric Health Screening (Non-Fasting) for Persons on

Conference Health Plan (closes at 2 p.m.) – Cokesbury Room

8:30 a.m. Opening Worship with Holy Communion

Sermon: Rev. Sung-kuk Hong

9:30 a.m. CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION – Wesley Hall

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson Video: Marianna/Panama City District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Report of the Journal Committee – Rev. Brennan Peacock

Teaching Session: Claire Bowen

10:40 a m Break

11:00 a.m. Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Video: Mobile District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Teaching Session: Victor Dingus

11:45 a.m. Clergy Spouses (active, retired, surviving) Gathering – FUMC,

Montgomery

12:00 Noon General Lunch – Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, June 6 (Cont.)

Cabinet – Parlor

Spiritual Formation – 7207/7209

Birmingham-Southern Luncheon – 6111

Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century – 7208

1:30 p.m. Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Video: Montgomery/Opelika District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Action on Standing Rules – Shirley Woodie

Action on Resolutions and Petitions – Christina Shaver

UM Children's Home - Blake Horne

Connectional Ministries – Rev. Nancy Watson

2:45 p.m. Break - sponsored by the United Methodist Children's Home

3:15 p.m. Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Video: Montgomery/Prattville District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry – Rev. Scott Hohn

Greetings: Huntingdon College and Birmingham

Southern College Francis Asbury Award

Special Greeting – Bishop Lawson Bryan

Special Awards and Recognitions

Denman Evangelism Award - Division of Evangelism -

Rev. Larry Anderson

Alice Lee Award – COSROW – Ruth Ann Powers

One Matters Award – Town and Country Commission – Rev.

Lance Eiland

Local Church Heritage Award – Commission on Archives and

History – Rev. Olivia Poole; Sharon Tucker

Bishop's Scouting Award – Board of Laity – Vaughn Nichols

Scholarship Award and Report of the United Methodist

Connectional FCU

Special Called Session of General Conference, February 23-26, 2019

Conference Announcements and Recess

5:00 p.m. Laity Banquet - Mary Ellen Bullard Address – Fellowship Hall

Speaker: Patricia Barnes (Sister Schubert)

Wednesday, June 7

7:00 a.m. Experiential Prayer Room – Surge (7 a.m. - 10 a.m.)

8:30 a.m. Opening Worship with Holy Communion

Sermon: Rev. Meghan Kelley

9:30 a.m. CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION – Wesley Hall

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Video: Pensacola District Glory Sightings

Opening Prayer:

Report of the Journal Committee – Rev. Gillian Walters

Action Item: Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits –

Rev. Bob McKibben

Action Item: Commission on Equitable Compensation – Rev. W.

Michael Cobb

Report from the Cabinet, Task Force on the Work of the Districts

Rev. Robbins Sims

Council on Finance and Administration – Beebe Frederick

Action Item: 2018 Conference Budget Statistician's Report – Frank Dunnewind

Report of the Cabinet – Wesley Hall – Rev. June Jernigan

Change in Charge Lines Property Resolutions

Closing Business of the Conference

Where shall the 2018 session be held?

Courtesies and Appreciation – Rev. Wesley Wachob

Conference Announcements

11:00 a.m. ORDER OF THE DAY – Episcopal Address & Sending Forth

Service

Fixing of the 2017 - 2018 Appointments – Wesley Hall Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

Opening Prayer:

Adjournment Sine Die

\*\*\*NO WEDNESDAY LUNCH AT HOST CHURCH\*\*\*

Meeting of the Board of Directors for Hispanic-Latino Ministries

## **OPENING WORSHIP**



**Robin Wilson** is the Senior Pastor at Dauphin Way United Methodist Church in Mobile, Alabama. Robin and her husband, Rev. Jeff Wilson, have three children, Rebecca, Eleanor, and Nolan.

# **MEMORIAL SERVICE**



Ralph Sigler, Founder and Lead Pastor of Harvest Church in Dothan, Alabama, comes from a family of United Methodist pastors, including his great-grandfather, grandfather, father and four uncles. Ralph's father, Richard (Dick) Sigler, served in the Alabama-West Florida Conference, as do both of his brothers, Mike (Ozark First) and

Wayne (Frazer). Ralph and his wife Rhonda have three grown sons, Daniel, Joel (senior at Asbury Seminary, married to Olivia), and Paul.

Ralph graduated from Asbury College with a Bible degree and joined the staff of Enterprise First Methodist, initially serving under his father there. After fourteen years of youth ministry (over nine years in Enterprise and over four years at Centenary UMC in Lexington, Kentucky), Ralph graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary. While in seminary Ralph became interested in the idea of starting a church, and he was given that opportunity with an appointment to plant a new Methodist church in Dothan in 1996. Moving his family from Lexington to Dothan, they began the church in their home almost immediately and soon after began services in a school. The church met in a school for seven years before building the present building.

After twenty years, Harvest Church averages 1600+ in attendance on Sundays and maintains this vision: to reach the unchurched, engage in authentic worship, and provide opportunities for meaningful relationships through small groups. Ralph's desire is that the church be known as Jesus' disciples by the way they love each other. Ralph wrote a Discipleship Bible study for small groups at Harvest and it is now being used by other churches and groups around the world. The goal of this study, as of all Ralph's ministry, is to explain what it really means to follow Jesus as a true disciple and how to make disciples as Jesus commanded.

## TEACHING SESSIONS



Claire Bowen comes to the Methodist Church as both a human resources professional from the corporate world and an active, life-long UMC member. "I never thought I had enough emotional objectivity to bring my corporate HR skills to the church I love," Claire confesses. "But about 4 years ago I got over that."

Claire started her work in the UMC by conducting on-boarding seminars for new senior pastors at large churches and the staff members at those churches. She then began to do this same type of work for the new bishops elected in 2016, arranging on-boarding sessions for them with both their cabinets and the pastors of large congregations under their charge. Claire has expanded her work to include new district superintendents, new associates who join a church team, and new senior pastors with their lay leaders.

Before starting her own consulting firm, Claire Bowen and Company, in Atlanta, Claire was at First Atlanta Corporation, which had 6,000 employees at the time. After serving as the HR manager for the 1,500-person retail division of the company, she moved to lead the firm's Corporate Leadership Training School, and later became the Organization Development Specialist in charge of Team Building, Strategic Planning, and Leadership Coaching. She delivers these three products within the Methodist Churches as well

**Dr. Victor Dingus**, President, Owner, and Principle consultant has spent the last three decades helping product manufacturers, service organizations, educational institutions, large Department of Defense organizations, and small, medium, and large congregations identify and improve product and service quality, organizational productivity and effectiveness, fruitfulness, and overall customer value. He

does this through his integration of strategic organization design, annual business planning, quality and lean manufacturing, Six Sigma applications, plant floor automation, Enterprise Resource Planning knowledge, and envisioning the next steps in community ministries.

Victor has a passion for coaching and mentoring people through his leading and teaching at Servant Leadership Academy, Lay Ministry Center and Hinton Rural Life Center where he meets leaders with their current skills and journeys with them over time for their highest good. He has led numerous hands-on workshops as well conducted senior management retreats and transformational workshops. He has coached, mentored, and facilitated over 250 congregations in transformative **NEXT STEPS MINISTRY NOW** ministry and help them write the next chapter in long and fruitful ministry.

# MORNING WORSHIP



**John Edward Brooks** is the District Superintendent of the Montgomery-Prattville District. He began this journey in 1990 when he embraced his call to ministry and became a full-time seminary student at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

While managing the Cokesbury Bookstore on the ITC campus and operating his janitorial service, Bishop Cornelius Henderson insisted that he meet Bishop William Morris who was at ITC on an annually scheduled recruiting event. Bishop Morris was the Episcopal Area Leader of the Alabama West Florida Conference and invited John to go to Pensacola, Florida, to start his first full time appointment. Prior to this full- time appointment, John had served as student pastor with Wesley Chapel in Elberton, Georgia, and assistant pastor with Emmanuel and Dodd Sterling United Methodist Churches in Georgia. John has been involved with mentoring and tutoring throughout his ministry with grade school students and ministry candidacy participants from many different United Methodist Churches. John served at Saint Paul UMC in Pensacola before coming to Metropolitan UMC in Montgomery, Alabama, in 2007. After seven years of ministry with Metropolitan, in 2014 Bishop Leeland invited John to join his Episcopacy Leadership Team.

John believes that God has prepared us to lead for such a time as this and invites every member of the Montgomery-Prattville District to embrace God's truth with him and carry it forward into a world that is dying for lack of experiencing God in their daily lives.



**Sung-Kuk Hong** was born and grew up in Seoul, Korea. He was educated in Korea. He graduated from Seoul Theological University with B.A. degree, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with M. Div. degree, Emory University with Th. M. degree in Old Testament, and Luther Rice Theological Seminary with M.A. degree in Biblical Studies

He and his wife, Hye Kyung Hong, have two children, Sean and Jenah. Formerly the assistant pastor of St. James United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Sung-Kuk is currently pastor of The Lord's Church of Montgomery. God has blessed The Lord's church in many ways as the last eleven years have been filled with vital worship and service. Sung-Kuk and his congregation strive to make Christ known to the Korean community in Montgomery.

# **MORNING WORSHIP**



Meghan Kelley hails from Orlando, Florida. She was baptized, confirmed, and married at the First United Methodist Church of Orlando. Meghan received her BA in Classical Civilizations from the Florida State University. While there, she was active at the Wesley Foundation. Meghan received her M.Div from Duke Divinity School.

She met her husband, Rev. Wes Kelley on the chapel steps at Duke. They were married shortly after their graduation in May 2009. Together they have two children, Myles (age 3) and Parker (age 1). She always roots for the Duke Blue Devils in basketball, except when they play the FSU Seminoles. Their children, however, are being taught to cheer for Duke.

# LAITY BANQUET



Patricia Barnes, Sister Schubert, enjoyed brief careers as an airline flight attendant and an advertising agency media buyer before returning to her hometown of Troy, Alabama to work as an interior designer in the family furniture business. In 1989, she started selling a few pans of rolls to benefit her church bazaar. With the guidance of food broker George Barnes, Mrs. Barnes led Sister Schubert's

Homemade Rolls through several years of explosive growth, opening a state-of-theart bakery and expanding production to more than a million rolls a day.

In addition to her leadership role at Sister Schubert's, Mrs. Barnes serves as Culinary Ambassador for the State of Alabama and sits on the Board of Directors of the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame. A strong supporter of education, Mrs. Barnes serves Auburn University as a Visiting Executive in the Lowder School of Business, as a member of the Women's Philanthropy Board and as a member of the Dean's Board of the School of Human Sciences.



# **GUESTS MUSICIANS**



**Robert Henry McMichael, III**, is a fifth generation Atlantan. A product of the Atlanta Public Schools, Robert is a 1999 graduate of Morehouse College and a 2009 graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

Robert has distinguished himself as a writer, lecturer, vocalist, and organist. He has served in numerous capacities in churches throughout the Atlanta area. He currently serves the Mt. Bethel/St. Philip United Methodist Church in Marietta as Worship Leader.

Robert believes that it is his calling to "Spread the Liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and song." It is this calling that has sparked Robert to begin writing his first publication *With My Whole Heart: Worship as a Lifestyle*. Robert believes that worship should be more than a once a week event, rather; it should be the lifeline upon which Christians thrive.

Robert is an active member of several community and civic organizations: the NAACP, the Boys and Girls Club of America, the American Guild of Organists, the Hampton University Choir Director's/Organist Guild, and the National Academy of Religion. Robert enjoys water sports, reading, writing, and especially cooking. He is the son of former US Marshal Robert and Kathye McMichael. Robert has adopted as his life's theme, "Love, The More Excellent Way!"



Jarvis R. Wilson is the youngest of three children born to the late Clarence and Gladys Wilson in Atlanta, Georgia. A true lover of gospel music, Jarvis began playing the organ in church at age ten. Currently he serves as Minister of Music at the Israel Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Jarvis' other activities include Director of the Madison Association Youth Choir, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Gospel Choir, the Blend of Men and the QLS Seniors Chorus.

# THE STANDING RULES with committee revisions

[All paragraph references are to the 2012 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church except as otherwise noted.]

#### INTRODUCTION

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church shall be organized and structured according to the mandates of the latest edition of *The Book of Discipline*, and shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church. In keeping with those standards, this conference commits itself to the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race and gender (see ¶ 604.1). The following Standing Rules are adopted by the Alabama-West Florida Conference for its own governance and to fit its specific setting for mission and ministry. The Alabama-West Florida Conference shall follow *Roberts Rules of Order* except where superseded by explicit rules in *The Book of Discipline* or in these Standing Rules.

- 1. These Standing Rules shall be implemented, applied or amended as follows:
  - A. These rules shall be effective at the end of the annual conference at which they are passed. All rules remain in effect until they are rescinded or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting on the next day after the proposed amendment has been presented in writing.
  - B. Any proposed changes in the Standing Rules should be received in writing by the chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules no later than February 1.
  - C. Any of these rules, except Standing Rule (SR) 1D, may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at annual conference.
  - D. A change in the number of districts may not be made later than the first business session of the annual conference.

#### OFFICERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

2. The conference secretary and the *Journal* editor (nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations, see SR 5B) and the treasurer/statistician and the conference registrar (nominated by the Council on Finance and Administration) shall be elected at the first session of the annual conference following the general conference, with tenure of office to begin on December 1, following their election, and to serve for the succeeding quadrennium.

#### (¶ **603.7** and ¶ **619**)

#### COMMITTEES RELATING TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

3. There shall be a Committee on Standing Rules, composed of the conference secretary, the director of Connectional Ministries (see SR 5A), the conference treasurer, the *Journal* editor and five at-large members including the chairperson. This committee shall be nominated by the Committee on Nominations (see SR 5B), shall include both lay and clergy, and shall be elected by the annual conference. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

- 4. There shall be a Committee on Resolutions and Petitions, composed of four clergy and four lay persons, nominated by the Committee on Nominations, which shall consider all petitions addressed to the general, jurisdictional, and annual conferences. After consideration, the committee shall submit the petitions, with its written recommendation and the rationale for each recommendation, to the annual conference for action. Resolutions shall be submitted to the committee by February 15, except in cases where it can be demonstrated by the author of a late petition that the situation which gave rise to making the petition was not apparent until after the deadline for petitions. The committee shall provide copies of all resolutions submitted by February 15 to all voting members present at the conference session. The maker of the late resolution shall supply these copies of his/her resolution if submitted after February 15. No resolution will be received on the last day of the session
- 5. A. The leadership, missional and administrative structures of the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall come together at a "common table" or organization known as the "Connecting Our Resources and Empowerment" Team or CORE Team. The means of electing and appointing representatives connected to the CORE Team, which includes boards, committees, councils, commissions and divisions of the Leadership Team, the Mission Team, and the Administrative Team, are spelled out in these Standing Rules (also see SR 24 and following).
- B. There shall be a Committee on Nominations, composed of: the resident bishop, who shall be the chairperson; the conference lay leader; the conference secretary, who shall be the secretary of this committee; the director of connectional ministries; the conference treasurer; the conference presidents of United Methodist Men (UMM) and of United Methodist Women (UMW); a United Methodist youth; the eight district lay leaders; the eight district superintendents; the Conference Resource Center Office program staff; and three at-large members chosen by the bishop with attention given to the need for inclusive representation. This committee shall nominate persons quadrennially to the CORE Team, conference boards, commissions, committees, councils, etc., as listed in these Standing Rules and as needed by other conference institutions (per the bishop's discretion). Nominations shall be consistent with the most recent *Book of Discipline*, with attention given to inclusiveness, diversity and expertise. The committee shall submit its nominations as early as possible in the annual conference session. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- 6. There shall be a Committee on Courtesies and Introductions, composed of three lay and two clergy members, which shall be responsible for presentation of visitors to the conference, and for a report in the closing session expressing appreciation to persons and groups who have rendered special services in the program.
- 7. There shall be a Committee on the Journal, appointed quadrennially by the bishop, composed of two members, who shall examine the minutes of daily sessions for accuracy and report the findings to the conference.

8. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall handle expenses of the conference session. There shall be a Conference Administration Fund, the amount to be fixed annually by the Council on Finance and Administration, with assessments for the fund to be allocated annually to individual pastoral charges on the apportioned formula basis. When the Annual Conference makes available lodging for the annual conference session, CFA will establish reasonable fees. When the Annual Conference makes available meals for the annual conference session, CFA will establish reasonable fees. Conference meals for which there is no charge, shall be funded by the Annual Conference Administration Fund. Instructions shall be provided in advance by the conference registrar. The following persons are eligible for this:

A. The presiding bishop and spouse, all elergy members in full connection and all-provisional members;

B. All elergy being admitted as provisional members and all transferred members from other conferences:

C. All associate members and local pastors serving pastoral charges;

D. Local and supply pastors scheduled to receive pastoral appointments;

E. Spouses and surviving spouses of clergy who receive General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) annuities;

F. Clergy from other conferences serving within our conference;

G. Lay members of the conference as specified in SR 14 or duly elected reserve lay members, provided the principal lay members are not in attendance;

H. Diaconal ministers:

I. Up to two youth pages selected from each district (lodging expenses to be paid by their district); and

J. At large lay members, distinguished guests, and those specified in SR 14B.

When the Annual Conference makes lodging and/or meals available, CFA will establish reasonable fees for delegates and other guests; any meals offered at reduced or no charge will funded by the Annual Conference Administration Fund. Instructions for reservations and payment shall be provided by the conference registrar no later than the time online reservations for annual conference become active.

- 9. The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee:
- A. There shall be an Annual Conference Session Planning Committee, composed of the presiding bishop who shall serve as chairperson, the host district superintendent, the conference secretary, the *Journal* editor who shall serve as secretary of the committee, the conference registrar, the conference treasurer, the chairperson of the Conference Division of Worship, the director of connectional ministries, the conference lay Leader, the host district lay leader, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the chairperson of the Conference Board of Advocacy and Racial Ethnic Ministries Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (¶ 632), a United Methodist youth, and a United Methodist young adult.
- B. The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee shall arrange tentatively the program of the annual conference session, and shall submit the program to

the opening session for possible amendment and adoption as its agenda. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be included in the program.

- C. A period of recognition of retiring clergy shall be held during the conference session, with a suitable program arranged by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- D. A memorial service commemorating each clergyperson or "surviving spouse" or diaconal minister who died since the last annual conference shall be arranged by the Annual Conference Planning Committee and the Division Chair of Worship in conjunction with the Commission on Archives and History. The Commission shall also provide a memoir of the deceased for publication in the *Journal*.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

10. The rules of order of the preceding general conference shall govern parliamentary procedure in this conference in all matters not covered by the standing rules. In order to be recognized to address the conference, each person must identify him/herself as to name and the capacity in which he/she is entitled to speak to the session.

#### 11. Reports and resolutions:

- A. All reports and resolutions shall be consistent with the Guidelines for Reports; and shall be placed on the conference agenda by the conference secretary in the order designated by the Annual Conference Session Planning Committee. Proposed resolutions and changes to the conference standing rules shall lie on the conference secretary's desk for at least one business session before being acted upon by the conference
- B. By a two-thirds vote of those present and voting an agenda item may be taken up out of order for consideration.
- C. All amendments to reports of boards and agencies as printed in the *Book of Reports* and all motions arising from the floor of the conference shall be made in writing to the conference secretary.
- D. At the annual conference session, no materials (handouts, etc.) shall be placed on the pews or seats when the conference is in recess, unless a prior majority vote approves an exception to this rule.
- 12. In order to expedite the business of the conference, the Consent Agenda Committee, composed of the secretary of the annual conference, the chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules, the director of connectional ministries, and the *Journal* editor, in consultation with agencies or individuals presenting reports, recommendations or resolutions, may present in the *Book of Reports* a written list of items which shall be known as the Consent Agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda shall be considered as adopted by consent of the annual conference. An individual item may be removed from the Consent Agenda by a written request signed by twelve lay and/or clergy members of the annual conference and presented

to the conference secretary prior to the first business session. When a matter has been removed from the Consent Agenda, it shall be placed into the regular agenda at an appropriate time.

- 13. Election of General and Jurisdictional delegations:
- A. Delegates to the general and jurisdictional conferences shall be elected at the annual conference session in the calendar year preceding the quadrennial General Conference according to stipulations in ¶ 502.3, ¶ 502.4 and ¶ 515 respectively of the Book of Discipline. In compliance with the 2012 2016 Book of Discipline ¶ 35, all eligible clergy shall be listed on the ballot for General and Jurisdictional Elections. They shall serve in all sessions of these conferences held during the quadrennium. In addition to those delegates funded by the general and jurisdictional conferences, the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall pay the expenses of only one more alternate delegate, lay and clergy, to the general and jurisdictional conferences at the rate paid to the delegates.
- B. In the election of delegates, the presiding bishop shall appoint four teams of tellers (two clergy teams and two lay teams), each team consisting of one representative from each district, one of whom shall serve as head teller.
- C. In the election of these delegates, the ballots shall be furnished to the conference by the conference secretary at the time of voting. No vote shall be valid unless cast on the ballot designated by the presiding bishop.
- D. One year prior to an electing annual conference, the Board of Laity shall make plans and policies regarding the lay elections, and give guidance to laity regarding the process of caucusing, nominating and electing the lay delegation. Following the opening session of the electing annual conference, the laity, in their orientation session, will give opportunity for any persons seeking election (whose name has not been put in nomination in advance) to provide a single printed profile sheet for distribution.
- E. A general code of ethical standards will be demonstrated by every candidate, lay and clergy. Every individual's right to exercise his/her voting or political expression should be consistent with the *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church*.
- F. Endorsements of candidates will be made only by individuals and/or local churches, or the district electing caucus.
- 14. Annual Conference lay members:

A. Lay members to the annual conference shall be elected yearly in the charge conferences. One youth member to the annual conference (age 12-17) (expenses to be paid by their district) and one young adult member (age 18-30) shall be selected from each district. The conference secretary (if lay), the conference lay leader, the director of conference lay servant ministries, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, a United

Methodist youth, the conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), a United Methodist young adult, active deaconesses and home missioners under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, district lay leaders, and diaconal ministers, shall be lay members to the annual conference. (For churches with more than one clergyperson under appointment, see ¶ 32 of the *Book of Discipline*.)

- B. In compliance with the disciplinary requirement ( $\P$  32) to keep lay representation in the annual conference session equal to that of clergy, the conference secretary shall ascertain whether the upcoming session will be in balance with respect to lay and clergy membership as of January 1 each year. If additional lay members are needed, the conference secretary shall add them using the following guidelines:
- (1) The first eight shall be the district presidents of United Methodist Women. In the event that fewer than eight are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.
- (2) The second eight shall be the district presidents of the United Methodist Men. In the event that fewer than eight are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.
- (3) Next, the secretary shall name an additional youth and young adult from each district. In the event that fewer than sixteen are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.
- (4) Next the secretary shall name full-time lay workers on the professional staff of the Conference Resource Center Office.
- (5) Next the secretary shall name the lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
- (6) Next the secretary shall name lay members of the general and jurisdictional delegations (including alternates) in the order of their election.
- (7) Next the secretary shall name lay persons who are chairpersons of CORE Team boards, commissions, councils, etc., in the order listed in the CORE organizational document, and the at-large members of the CORE Team.
- (8) Next the secretary shall name lay members of the Council on Finance and Administration
- (9) The remainder shall be at-large members divided among the eight districts and selected by each district. In the event that there is a remainder of less than eight,

the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.

(10) If a person is selected by the above process who is already a member of annual conference as the delegate from his/her church/charge, he or she may serve in the new capacity and thus empower the church's alternate delegate to attend as the voting representative of the charge. The district superintendent and district lay leader of each district may assist in this process in conjunction with their district's orientation session in preparation for the annual conference.

#### 15. The Conference *Journal* and *Book of Reports*:

The publication and distribution of The Annual Conference Journal and the Book of Reports shall be supervised by the Editorial Committee, chaired by the Journal editor and composed of the conference secretary, the director of ministerial services, the treasurer/statistician, and the director of connectional ministries. The Journal editor shall be responsible for preparation of the Book of Reports and its distribution either in printed or electronic form to all eligible persons. Materials and reports to be included in the Book of Reports shall be in the hands of the Journal editor NO LATER THAN the last Monday in February. The Book of Reports shall contain instructions for ordering the Journal. The Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the cost of each Journal including mailing. All names, addresses, reports, resolutions, and/or other materials to be included in the Journal of the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall be in the hands of the conference secretary no later than ten working days after the close of annual conference.

#### 16. Board Memberships and Trusteeships:

A. With the exception of the Board of Ordained Ministry, no person may serve on more than one quadrennial agency of this conference at the same time. Except as provided by the *Book of Discipline*, one's term on a quadrennial agency shall not exceed eight years within any twelve consecutive years. Elected membership on non-quadrennial agencies is limited to no more than eight of any twelve consecutive years, with the exception of the Board of Laity. For the sake of administrative and program continuity, this standing rule shall not apply where existing constitutions require the retiring chair to continue to serve for a period not to exceed two years. The quadrennial agencies are: the Conference Board of Global Ministries, the Board of Discipleship, the Board of Church and Society, the Board of Congregational Development, the Town and Country Commission, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, the Board of Advocacy and Ethnic Ministries the Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (¶ 632), the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Commission on Equitable Compensation, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the Council on Finance and Administration, and the at-large members on the CORE Team.

B. Persons may be enlisted to assist boards and agencies for specific task force responsibilities.

- C. No person shall serve on more than one board of trustees or board of directors of institutions or agencies related to this annual conference at the same time. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to mean that persons may not serve concurrently on boards of trustees or directors and as members of quadrennial boards and agencies or ex-officio trustees or directors, where disciplinary provisions apply.
- D. Persons who fail to attend and participate in the meetings and programs expected of their elected position for one year without legitimate excuse shall be replaced. The person chosen by the Committee on Nominations to fill the unexpired term may also be elected to serve an additional quadrennium.
- E. No person shall serve more than nine consecutive years (three terms) as a trustee of any agency or institution related to this annual conference, nor shall this person be eligible for election again to that board for three years.
- 17. Organizational stipulations for boards and agencies:
- A. All conference program boards, commissions, divisions, and committees, except as provided by the *Book of Discipline*, shall begin their tenure immediately upon election at annual conference.
- B. Every year the Conference Committee on Nominations shall complete its work four weeks before the date set for the regular conference session, in order to inform nominees of their selection and anticipated confirmation.
- 18. There shall be eight districts in this annual conference.
- 19. A district conference shall be held annually in each district of this annual conference, with its program year starting in January. The voting membership of the district conference shall be consistent with the directives of the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*, (¶ 658 and ¶ 659).
- 20. Each district shall have a District Committee on Nominations composed of the district superintendent as chairperson, and with a membership of three clergy and four lay persons, elected annually. No member may serve for more than three consecutive years with the exception of the district superintendent. The District Committee on Nominations may submit to the district conference the names of one clergy and one lay person for election for each district work area and agelevel ministry, and such other persons as are needed for membership to the District Council on Ministries or District CORE Team. Persons to be nominated shall be consulted by their district superintendent prior to the submission of their names. The District Committee on Nominations may fill vacancies with replacements to take office immediately. Such persons shall be confirmed at the next meeting of the district conference (¶ 659.1).

- 21. Neither a district superintendent nor a paid staff person of the annual conference shall serve as an elected member on a quadrennial board, commission, or committee, except as specifically provided by the *Book of Discipline*. Vacancies occurring by appointment of members of boards, divisions, commissions and committees to the district superintendency shall be filled by the conference session when such appointments are made.
- 22. In the allocation of askings on the formula basis, the financial strength of the church shall NOT include monies expended for the following items:
- A. Principal and interest on capital indebtedness.
- B. Buildings and capital improvements.
- C. General Advance Specials and World Service Special Gifts.
- D. Conference Advance Specials.
- E. Remittances by United Methodist Women to the conference treasurer.
- F. Remittances to any authorized conference capital fund campaign.
- G. Remittances to the Birmingham-Southern College Scholarship Fund and/or capital gifts.
- H. Remittances to Huntingdon College Scholarship Fund and/or capital gifts.
- I. Children's Home White Christmas Offering and Homes for the Aging/Fountain of Love offering.
- J. Special Day Offerings of the General Church: (One Great Hour of Sharing, etc.)
- K. All apportioned funds from the General Church, the conference and the districts
- L. Benevolences paid directly by the local church.
- M. Direct billing for pension and health benefits.
- 23. The treasurer of the annual conference shall make the final settlement regarding apportionments, and disburse all funds to the annual conference boards, commissions and committees or treasurers after the close of the fiscal year, following the guidelines of zero-based budgeting.

#### BOARDS AND AGENCIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- 24. There shall be a Conference CORE Team, as outlined in the "Plan of Organization for the Alabama-West Florida Conference." Policies or procedures for the CORE Team shall be guided by the most current *Book of Discipline*. The "Plan of Organization for the Alabama-West Florida Conference" shall be available on the conference website. Other offices, program boards, commissions, etc., as required by the *Discipline* but not a part of the CORE Team, are also authorized. Also see SR 5.
- 25. There shall be a Golden Cross fund and offering to aid medical needs of conference members/pastors. The chair of Golden Cross shall be nominated by, and shall report to, the CORE Team Division of Missions.
- 26. There shall be a Conference Policies and Personnel Committee appointed by the Bishop and approved by the CORE Team. The Committee shall establish uniform and equitable policies and procedures in the employment of Conference

Resource Center personnel <u>staff</u>. It shall be the goal of our annual conference that all conference and district offices maintain reasonably consistent and inclusive policies regarding personnel, as is appropriate to each locale.

- 27. There shall be a Board of Ordained Ministry as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (¶ **635**).
- 28. There shall be a Board of Laity, as described in the *Book of Discipline* (¶ 631), which shall be composed of the conference lay leader, the district lay leaders, the conference president of United Methodist Women (UMW), an additional officer of UMW, the conference president of United Methodist Men (UMM), the conference scouting coordinator, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries (LSM), an additional officer of LSM, a United Methodist youth, and a United Methodist young adult, and the first elected lay delegate to general conference. Additionally, the following shall serve ex-officio: the presiding bishop, one cabinet representative, and the director of connectional ministries.
- 29. The conference lay leader shall be nominated by the Conference Board of Laity and elected by the annual conference at the time of quadrennial reorganization. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. The conference lay leader may serve no more than two succeeding quadrennia as the conference lay leader. All other officers within the Board of Laity shall be elected by the board. Vacancies in the office of conference lay leader shall be filled by nomination from the board in the interim, and confirmed at the following annual conference.
- 30. There shall be an Academy for Congregational Excellence, Inc. as authorized by the CORE Team, composed of officers and board members specified in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Academy for Congregational Excellence
- 31. There shall be a Commission on Equitable Compensation as provided by the *Book of Discipline* ( $\P$  **625**), composed of twelve members, six lay and six clergy, at least one clergy and one lay being from churches with fewer than 200 members.

In addition, one superintendent named by the cabinet and a staff person from the fiscal office shall be members.

32. There shall be a Commission on Archives and History as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (¶ 641). Eight members shall be elected by the annual conference at the beginning of each quadrennium for a term of four years. Ex-officio members with vote shall include a representative from Huntingdon College, the conference historian (unless receiving compensation), the president of the AWFC Historical Society, the resident bishop, and the conference secretary. The Archivist shall be an ex-officio member without vote. A chairperson, vice-chairperson, and recording secretary/financial secretary, shall be elected by the commission.

- 33. There shall be a Board of Pension and Health Benefits as provided by the *Book of Discipline* ( $\P$  **639**), composed of eighteen members elected to 8-year terms, arranged in four-year classes to include representatives of both lay and clergy of both sexes. The Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave shall be constituted as provided by the *Book of Discipline* ( $\P$  **652**), with efforts made to be inclusive.
- 34. There shall be an Assembly Grounds Board of Trustees, constituted as authorized by a Corporation Charter from the State of Alabama, record of which can be found on page 112 of the 1958 *Journal* of our Annual Conference, and all amendments thereto. The current Articles of Incorporation and bylaws shall be available on the conference website.
- 35. There shall be a Council on Finance and Administration as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (¶ 611), composed of eight lay, five clergy members, and the ex-officio members as specified in ¶ 612. Unless the following are otherwise reimbursed, the CFA shall pay from the Conference administrative budget the reasonable and relevant expenses (as set or approved by CFA) of: the conference secretary's office; expenses of the Council on Finance and Administration; all expenses of printing, honoraria, and incidental expenses connected with annual conference sessions; expenses of cabinet meetings; expenses of all conference agencies and special committees not participating in the conference benevolence budget; room and board at annual conference of agencies and special committees meeting with the Council on Finance and Administration for the purpose of making budget requests; honoraria of the conference secretary and assistant secretaries for annual conference, the registrar and assistants, the *Journal* editor; all expenses incurred by the *Journal* Editor in preparing/printing the *Book of Reports* and the conference *Journal*.
- 36. There shall be an Episcopal Residence Committee as provided by the *Book of Discipline* (¶ 638), composed of the chairperson of the Committee on Episcopacy, the president of the Annual Conference Board of Trustees, the president of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, and two at-large representatives selected by the bishop. Efforts shall be made to keep membership inclusive, and at least two members of this committee shall be women.

# **CONSENT AGENDA**

The following reports indicated by agency name and beginning page number are a part of the CONSENT AGENDA. They will be considered as having passed by consent of the annual conference unless they are removed from the CONSENT AGENDA on Monday, June 5, at the afternoon session. PLEASE READ THE REPORTS CAREFULLY PRIOR TO THE ABOVE DATE. (See Standing Rule Number 12.)

Academy for Congregational Excellence Report
Communities of Transformation Report
Conference CORE Team/Connectional Ministries Report
Disaster Response and Recovery Ministry Report
District Reports
Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry Report
Conference Board of Trustees
Conference Board of Church and Society Report
Conference Board of Congregational Development Report
Conference Board of Discipleship Report
Conference Board of Global Ministries Reports
Conference Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns Reports
Commission on Archives and History Reports
Committee on Episcopacy Report
Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly Board of Trustees Report
Methodist Homes Corporation Report
United Methodist Children's Home Report
United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union Report
United Methodist Foundation, Inc. Report
United Methodist Development Fund, Inc. Report
Alabama Rural Ministry Report
Dumas Wesley Community Center Report
Golden Cross Report
Mary Ellen's Hearth (Nellie Burge) Report
Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries Report
Mission u Report
Pensacola UM Community Ministries Report
United Methodist Inner City Mission Report
Africa University Report
Hinter Center Report
Lake Junaluska Report
Schools of Theology Reports

# PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS with RATIONALE

2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
The United Methodist Church

#### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – I

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 746 Yes, 56 No (Calendar Item 121, *DCA* p. 2106). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division One, add a new paragraph between current  $\P\P$  5 and 6:

As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The United Methodist Church recognizes it is contrary to Scripture and to logic to say that God is male or female, as maleness and femaleness are characteristics of human bodies and cultures, not characteristics of the divine. The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women's and girl's equality and well-being.

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, this would become the new ¶6, and the current ¶¶ 6-61 would be renumbered as ¶¶ 7-62.

#### AND

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – II**

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 509 Yes, 242 No (Calendar Item 429, *DCA* p. 2212). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division One, ¶4, *Article IV*, amend by deletion and addition as follows:

After "all persons" delete "without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition". After "because of race, color, national origin," delete "status," and add "ability". At the end of the paragraph, add "nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 4 would read: The United Methodist Church is part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, ability, or economic condition, nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.

#### AND

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – III**

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 767 Yes, 22 No (Calendar Item 111, *DCA* pp. 2105). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, *Article III*, (2016 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, *Article III*) amend by addition as follows:

After the first sentence, add, "Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 34 would read:

The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its jurisdictional or central conference in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional or central conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the jurisdictional or central conference. The additional delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conferences may act as reserve delegates to the General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference.

#### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – IV

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 621 Yes, 15 No (Calendar Item 468, *DCA* p. 2217). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three,  $\P$  46, *Article I*, amend by addition, as follows:

To the end of the paragraph, add "provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 46 would read:

The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

#### AND

#### Proposed Constitutional Amendment - V

On May 17, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 715 Yes, 79 No (Calendar Item 446, *DCA* p. 2214). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 50, *Article VI*, amend by addition, as follows:

After the last paragraph, add "These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 50 would read:

The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined. 94

The jurisdictional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference.

These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.

# Rationale for Proposed Constitutional Amendments The United Methodist Church Voted General Conference May 2016

- I. (New  $\P$  6) The Constitution contains a paragraph on racial justice but not one on gender justice. The language of this petition is parallel to the language of Article 5 on racial justice already in our Constitution. It is an affirmation that, as part of our core foundational beliefs, this church will forever stand against any actions, organizations or individuals that discriminate or dehumanize women and girls anywhere on this planet.
- II. ( $\P$ 4) Adding "gender" (meaning male and female) to the Constitution affirms and protects The United Methodist Church's commitment to gender equity throughout our worldwide connection. "Gender" is the disciplinary term for fair treatment of women and men (e.g.,  $\P$ 16). The addition of the proposed final clause allows gender-specific groups like United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men.
- III. (¶ 34) The provision in ¶ 13. *Article I*. 2, "Delegates shall be elected in a fair and open process by the annual conferences," is unduly vague. The addition of this one sentence to paragraph 34 of The *Book of Discipline* helps clarify that General Conference delegates shall be elected by the body of annual conference instead of simply being appointed by the bishop. Bishops appointing delegates without delegates being properly elected has been a practice in some central conferences
- IV. ( $\P$  46) As is the case for the jurisdictions, episcopal elections in the central conferences should be held in the regular sessions of those conferences, except when unexpected vacancies occur because of the death or early retirement of one or more bishops.
- V. (¶ 50) Judicial Decision 475 ruled unconstitutional the Council of Bishops holding its individual members accountable for their work, referencing ¶ 50 of the Constitution. This legislation follows Judicial Decision 1275 requirement of a legislative resolution from General Conference so the Council of Bishops may provide oversight of its members.

## RESOLUTIONS

# A Resolution Concerning the Welfare of Unaccompanied Migrant Children in the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

Whereas, we accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.

Whereas, throughout Scripture the people of God are called to love sojourners in our midst, treating them "as if they were one of your citizens" and loving them as we do ourselves (Leviticus 19:33-34 NRSV)

Whereas, in Scripture, migrant persons are also identified as messengers bringing good news and/or support for events to come.

Whereas, more than 700 unaccompanied migrant children have been relocated to Alabama since October 2015.

Whereas, most unaccompanied children arrive in the U.S. from Central America without a guardian and are taken into custody by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which provides limited food, shelter and medical care.

Whereas, the reality of illegal immigration will not go away, we who are the church should lean to scripture and support those who cannot speak for themselves.

Whereas, through scripture it is said to, "remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday." (Isaiah 58:9-10 NRSV)

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church meeting in its regularly scheduled session June 4 through June 7, 2017 does petition the Governor of the State of Alabama, the Honorable Dr. Robert Bentley, and the members of the Alabama House of Representatives and the Alabama Senate to offer additional support for unaccompanied migrant children in the state of Alabama until they have found legal support and permanent housing; and

Be it further resolved that the United Methodists of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference who are residents of Alabama be encouraged to contact their State Legislators and local immigration offices to inquire about ways to support local agencies in their counties; and

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor and every member of the Alabama State Legislature.

#### Submitted by:

The Conference Board of Church and Society.

#### A Resolution Concerning Adequate, Long-term Funding for Alabama Medicaid

Whereas the inspired, God-breathed words of the Old and New Testaments advocate for the care of the most vulnerable (see Matthew 25:31-46 and other passages); and

Whereas the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states in ¶162.III.V:

"Health care is a basic human right." And further states: "Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is a responsibility each person owes others and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril. In Ezekiel 34:4a, God points out the failures of the leadership of Israel to care for the weak: 'You don't strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, bring back the strays, or seek the lost.' As a result all suffer. Like police and fire protection, health care is best funded through the government's ability to tax each person equitably and directly fund the provider entities."; and

Whereas the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states in ¶164.V:

A) Basic Freedoms and Human Rights—We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal; to the right to privacy; and to the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care; and

Whereas the 2016 Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church states in Resolution #3202. Health and Wholeness:

United Methodist congregations are encouraged to:

- become actively involved at all levels in the development of support systems for health care in the community; and
- become advocates for a healthful environment; accessible, affordable health care; continued public support for health care of persons unable to provide for themselves; continued support for health-related research; and provision of church facilities to enable health-related ministries; and

Whereas the 2016 Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church states in Resolution #4056. Greed:

Call to Action:

At the Local Church Level:

3. That local congregations advocate for just tax structures that ensure that all people have adequate resources for housing, affordable healthy food, clean water, energy, health care, and public transportation; and

Whereas the recent history concerning funding for Alabama Medicaid through the State's General Fund has provided only for stop-gap funding using non-recurring sources of revenue, thus placing the availability of health care for more than one million Alabamians <sup>1</sup> at risk;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church meeting in its regularly scheduled session June 4 through June7, 2017 does petition the Governor of the State of Alabama, the Honorable Dr. Robert Bentley, and the members of the Alabama House of Representatives and the Alabama Senate to end the chronic funding shortfalls that threaten to curtail and/or eliminate Medicaid services in the State of Alabama and to secure for Medicaid a sufficient, sustainable revenue stream; and

Be it further resolved that the United Methodists of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference who are residents of Alabama be encouraged to contact their State Legislators and urge them to work toward this end; and

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor and every member of the Alabama State Legislature.

#### Submitted by:

The Conference Board of Church and Society.

<sup>1</sup> Alabama Medicaid 2015 Annual Report

# ACADEMY FOR CONGREGATIONAL **EXCELLENCE (ACE)**



The Academy for Congregational Excellence, also known as ACE, is a ministry serving the Alabama-West Florida Academy for Conference that has a vision of "Effective Leaders, Fruitful Excellence Churches, and a Transformed World". We want to meet the Effective Leaders. Fruitfull Churches needs of clergy and laity across the Conference to help them

grow in their capacity to make disciples of Jesus Christ who will, in turn, become disciple-makers. Good leaders raise up other leaders. This exponential focus will enable us to live into the mission of the Annual Conference of, "Making disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the World."

One of the ministries we have held over the last 3 years, has been Becoming a More Effective Leader. Approximately 115 people have participated in this 10 month class, meeting one Thursday per month at Frazer in Montgomery to hear presentations and have discussions around topics that were responses to a survey taken across the Conference identifying places where pastors and laity wanted help.

Now, we are trying to build portability into ACE by going into the districts and providing leadership in the following areas:

Presenting Yourself as a Leader, Organizing & Leading Fruitful Meetings, Family Systems Profiles for Churches, Effective Delegation, Team Building, Managing Your Time & Your Life, Resolving Conflict in Healthy Ways, Ordering the Life of the Church, Financial Responsibilities & Stewardship, and, From Membership to Discipleship.

In addition, other areas of need can be addressed if ACE is given the time to prepare what is requested, and given an invitation to come into the districts by the Superintendents.

Also, this past year ACE has introduced Partners in Preaching, a small group ministry that is ably led by Dr. Sam Persons Parkes. These 2 groups met in Dothan, Alabama, and Montgomery, Alabama. The reviews have been excellent! We want to expand this ministry across the Conference and take some innovative steps to help people communicate and hear the Good News of Christ in this next year. Please contact us at the provided addresses to find out more.

Presently, ACE is working on an innovative ministry to involve laity. Dr. Blake Horne, who is on the Board of Directors, is working to put together a plan modeled after Leadership Montgomery, where laity come together to look at area needs, resources, and possibilities. They will work together to identify leaders who can make a difference in raising up other leaders to bring transformation to regions and communities.

In addition, the Academy for Ministry with Children is under the ACE umbrella. This wonderful ministry is designed to equip persons to help children understand and experience faith in Christ. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them." This is the focus of this ministry.

Please go to our website at <a href="www.AWFACE.org">www.AWFACE.org</a> to find information on these ministries, along with many other helpful links. Also, ACE has a Facebook page we would like you to visit and use to communicate with us. We are happy to receive your inspirational thoughts, suggestions, and general comments as we all seek to become faithful disciples and disciple-makers. You can also email Rev. Ron Ball, the Director of ACE, at <a href="tball8859@yahoo.com">tball8859@yahoo.com</a> to ask questions or offer information and suggestions.

We are also pleased to cooperate with Catapult events that point us toward being an "externally focused church". Remember, our call is to "GO" into all the world.

ACE appreciates your prayers and any support you can provide to help ACE go to the next level. If you are having a special event that we can help you with, please do not hesitate to call ACE. This is YOUR ministry and we want to make it effective for each and all. We do believe that every church can be fruitful in making disciples when are more equipped and when we become more intentional in reaching out to others. Together, we can work with God in the transformation of this world which John 3:16 tells us that God "so loves."

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Ron Ball, Director The Academy for Congregational Excellence



# COMMUNITIES OF TRANSFORMATION (COT)

Communities of Transformation (COT) is a conference-wide initiative designed to do ministry with the poor (not to or for the poor). Our ministry reaches those who live on the margins of society – families who struggle, who live in isolation, who are unemployed or under-employed, and families who are stuck in all manner of difficult life circumstances. This is a relational ministry, filled with hope.

This initiative of the AWFUMC has resulted in the formation of surprising and unprecedented community alliances. We have become the church, a community-wide church that meets together once a week. It has been a dramatically transformational experience. Community leaders report that our COT meetings are the most diverse gatherings in their communities' histories. We are diverse in every way imaginable. We are diverse racially. That is the first thing you would notice as you walk into a meeting. But we are also diverse in our faith backgrounds and church traditions, in our financial circumstances, in our political persuasions, in our educational levels, in the neighborhoods where we live, in our employment histories, and in our life experiences – in nearly every way imaginable. We are people who have been presidents of organizations and political leaders, and we are high school dropouts and people with poor employment histories. We live in affluence and we live in poverty. Most importantly, we have become friends. We

are a community. We are all working together for a common end. And we are all being transformed into a loving, compassionate, understanding community that supports, encourages, and nurtures one another.

During 2016, much progress has been made in our six firmly established COT communities. Those sites are in the following: Brewton, Dothan, Eufaula, Mobile, Phenix City, and Selma.

Also during 2016, COT began developing the following sites:

- •Pine Hill, AL in the Demopolis District, with Pine Hill and Arlington UMC working together.
- •Evergreen, AL in the Baypines District, with the following churches working collaboratively: First UMC, Bermuda, Mt. Zion, Sparta Hill, and St. Paul United Methodist Churches, as well as AME Zion and New Hope AME.
- •Montgomery, with the following churches working collaboratively: Aldersgate, Metropolitan, Perry Hill, Whitfield Memorial, and Woodland United Methodist Churches, as well as Hall Memorial CME.

COT VISTA members have also been assigned to Baldwin County and Union Springs, working with the United Methodist churches in those communities to prepare for a Communities of Transformation initiative. Baldwin County United Methodist church representatives exploring COT have included the following: Fairhope, Robertsdale, Gulf Shores, Orange Beach, Bay Minette, Loxley, and Jubilee Shores UMC. In Union Springs, First United Methodist Church has been leading the community discussions.

Additional communities throughout the Conference have expressed interest and have held community and exploratory meetings to begin the COT conversation.

Instrumental to the implementation of these sites was the acquisition of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA's), through the writing of and receiving a federal grant. We have completed year two of this grant and renewed for 2017 for year three. Nearly all of the COT sites are staffed by an AmeriCorps VISTA. VISTA members are always local, and are most often identified by and from within the UMC church. They serve and provide leadership in their hometown, where their chief job is to coordinate all of the volunteers engaged in this initiative. We have had twelve VISTA members, with six of those newly allocated to AWFUMC in spring of 2016. With the help of these new VISTA members, we are able to staff a total of six established sites and an additional five sites that are under development.

During 2016, 404 volunteers were engaged in this initiative in these communities. More than 9,577 volunteer hours were invested by church volunteers who invested themselves in building new hope in the lives of others. In addition, we acquired over \$384,000 through cash, in-kind donations, grants, and the federal VISTA cost share to support these local ministries.

But the real progress is that which is made by our COT participants throughout the Conference. Participants have obtained GED's, graduated from community colleges, finished Bachelor's degrees, gotten part-time jobs, full-time jobs, jobs with benefits, and have moved into safer housing. COT participants have learned money management skills, parenting skills, strengthened relationships, learned

conflict management strategies, and have learned about improved nutrition for themselves and their families. This has all been accomplished because participants have made and sustained meaningful friendships that have provided stability, nurture, and encouragement as these dramatic life changes are made.

Our goals for 2016 were to sustain, grow, and build the COT initiative. The first goal was to sustain and strengthen our six established sites. Second, was to grow our newest Communities of Transformation sites that began to form in the second half of 2016, as well as the regions that are exploring establishing new sites. Third was to continue to build our capacity so that we can establish future sites throughout the entire Alabama-West Florida Conference.

Please go to <a href="https://www.facebook.com/CommunitiesofTransformation">https://www.facebook.com/CommunitiesofTransformation</a> or <a href="https://www.facebook.com/CommunitiesofTransformation">CommunitiesofTransformation</a>. or additional information, you may contact COT Coordinators, Fred and Laurel Blackwell, at 334.524.3652, or at laurel@awfumc.org.

Respectfully submitted, Fred and Laurel Blackwell Communities of Transformation Coordinators

# CONFERENCE CORE TEAM CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

What a year of joyful service it has been in the Alabama-West Florida Office of Connectional Ministries! It has been my privilege and honor to serve in partnership with Bishop Graves, Conference Lay Leader Beverly Maddox, the Cabinet, and Conference clergy and laity as "the steward of the vision of the annual conference," (¶608.6.c.(1), Book of Discipline, 2016). In our collective effort to develop, clarify, interpret, and embody that vision, we have been able to embark on a time of rethinking our processes and realigning our resources. None of this would be remotely possible without the gifts, graces, and hard work of our Connectional Ministries staff: Fred and Laurel Blackwell, Amelia Fletcher, Sandy Gutting, Traci Herndon, Brittney Herndon, Susan Hunt, Jennifer Lusher, Rev. Neil McDavid, Rev. Dan Pezet, Martha Rovira, and Rev. Jeremy Steele. This incredible team of leaders allows us to focus our attention on our Connectional Ministry goal: our resources will be aligned to serve each church as it becomes all that God has called it to be, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In March of 2016 the CORE team began by reviewing our purpose as originally outlined in the Plan of Reorganization, approved by the Annual Conference in 2002. We agreed that it was time to look closely at the planned use of all our resources with an eye toward responsible stewardship and sustainability. Recommendations from the CORE Team for funding of our mission and ministry come before the Annual Conference each year; it is our continued desire to live within our means, all the while trusting that God will provide what we need to carry out his work in his Kingdom.

We are so very pleased that we have been able to enter into an arrangement with **Ms. Kristi McClellan** as a contract grant writer. Her priority will be assisting the local mission agencies that are currently supported by the AWF conference. You

will find reports from these ministries and agencies elsewhere in this Book of Reports; they are to be commended for their excellent, even if difficult, ministry with the poor. As a resource to equip these ministries to seek funding from within their communities, McClellan will work with each group to help them identify the most appropriate grants for their needs.

The **Task Force for Inclusivity**, led by Rev. John Brooks and Rev. Sara Shaver, has continued its work in helping our churches and communities grow in their appreciation and promotion of diverse and multicultural faith communities. "A Place at the Table" is scheduled for April 8, 2017. It will be a gathering of ethnic groups (lay and clergy) seeking to have intentional conversations about inclusion and unity in the local church. It is our prayer that this time of intentional conversation will be the first of many which will aid in establishing commonality, creating community and bringing clarity of purpose. One direct result of the work of this task force has been our ability, with realignment of present resources, to bring to our staff **Ms. Jennifer Lusher** as Director of Leadership Strategies. One of Ms. Lusher's primary responsibilities will be the development and encouragement of diversity as we identify, recruit, and train leaders among our laity across the Conference.

**Rev. Jeremy Steele** is a gift to our conference and has exemplified outstanding work in training and supporting those who work with our youth across the conference. In conjunction with our Office of Communications, he has produced a series of videos available to anyone who wants to learn about youth ministry and leadership. He and his team have developed some exciting plans for 2017 and beyond in order to help those who lead our youth in small membership churches where resources are limited.

As reported to the Annual Conference in 2016, **Alabama Rural Ministries**, **Communities of Transformation**, **The Antioch Project**, and **Fresh Expressions** continue to expand their efforts and bear rich fruit. We are grateful for their dedication to welcoming all into God's kingdom and sharing the love of Jesus so needed in our world

One of the challenges in presenting a yearly report on Connectional Ministries is to describe a constantly moving, adapting, and changing entity. Some of the things in this report will be old news by the time of Annual Conference; others are still in an initial phase, awaiting full development and implementation. Our resolve throughout this year, continuing into the future, is to join the Bishop in his commitment to win people to Christ, to see the unseen, to transform lives, and to help The United Methodist Church change the world. We believe that the best way for us to do exactly that is to offer tools and resources to churches in our Conference, particularly those whose own resources are limited, such that they in turn may fulfill their God-given mission.

It has been both humbling and encouraging to work with so many faithful and gifted leaders in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Their commitment to Kingdom work is a bright ray of hope in uncertain times, a reminder that God's love prevails even in the most difficult circumstances. What a joy it is to be part of a people called to be one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all

the world!

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Nancy Watson Director of Connectional Ministries

## DISASTER RESPONSE and RECOVERY

### Recovery:

Escambia County, FL and AL: AWFUMC Disaster Response and Recovery has been active since February 2016. We have worked alongside BRACE (Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies), Escambia Long Term Recovery, World Renew, United Way, Catholic Charities, St. Vincent DePaul, United Ministries, Habitat for Humanity, UMVIM volunteers, and Connectional volunteers. Our presence in the recovery will remain until April 2017 when our UMCOR grant and operations close. AWFUMC's Florida Recovery Team assigns and coordinates all of the repair work for the volunteer teams on behalf of the LTRG (long term recovery group) and includes coordinating the purchase and delivery of all construction materials and contracted labor. In one quarter alone, the estimate value of volunteer labor donated was \$91,024. The best compliment to us has come from leadership within one of our long-standing partners, Christian Reform Church World Renew response teams whose leadership reported, "This recovery has far exceeded our greatest expectations and we have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside our Methodist partners during the flood of 2014 and now."

In the fall, arrangements to host a volunteer team from HOPE Animal Assist Crisis Response program proved a huge blessing. The team came to the Century community with 2 therapy dogs and worked with identified special needs children, as well as, children with storm-related anxiety. With over-whelming success their specialty provided a way for those children to communicate their feelings after the tornadoes.

Renovation to Century UMC annex building enables their congregation to serve the community while their church rebuild is complete. The newly remodeled building has a full kitchen which feeds community children weekly, as well as a beautiful worship space to use until the new sanctuary is constructed. Pastor Janet Lee and her committee partnered with local funds and UMCOR funds to accomplish the renovation. Century UMC has gladly made their annex building available to the volunteers during their lunch break each day should they want to escape the elements and enjoy a noon-time meal. Together they have a welcoming space.

Celebrating the end of home repairs with a "House Blessing" ceremony led by the volunteer team is by far one of the greatest highlights of what we do in recovery. Seeing the joy and gratefulness in the homeowner's heart, praying over their property and hearing how their lives have been changed for good is one reason why we do what we do!

Under our UMCOR grant two people work full time with the recovery in case

management and construction management. Lynn Dobry, who headed up the Florida Recovery Team for the 2014 flood, remains in place to manage cases and to locally steer the executive management work of the recovery. Felic Fusner, our construction manager, is skillful and has had much to offer with local knowledge of the community and general construction. Both serve with strong faith, integrity, and with full servant hands and heart.

Thanks to Rev. Michael Lawler who led our efforts in the Coffee County recovery that is now closed.

## **Response:**

Congregations throughout the conference helped meet immediate needs in surrounding communities hit by flooding and tornadoes. A Conference led collection of tools and basic supplies helped meet the first needs of those in Baton Rouge and Denham Springs, Louisiana as well as and other areas. The region received work teams as well. That opportunity to serve and rebuild will be ongoing with UMVIM throughout the next few years.

The Florida Conference was hit by Hurricane Matthew and a series of tornadic storms. As a conference we have supported donations and teams.

Several other sister conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction were hit by fire and severe weather. As always, Disaster Response Coordinators, in the tradition of the Southeastern Jurisdiction, keep a verbal connection with UMCOR leadership and each other to monitor the needs and requests of sister conferences so as to know how best to respond and serve. That physical link is vital to receiving pertinent information and extending our hand of faith and love in difficult times.

#### **Preparedness:**

Currently the Conference has six District Coordinators to work with District Superintendents and give the Conference "boots on the ground" during disaster events. District Coordinators are listed on the Conference website and are a district's direct link in the chain of information. The Conference has five UMCOR trainers for Early Response Training. Training is vitally important as teams and churches wish to serve their own communities or in others in a mindful way. ERT training is offered on request and has a fee to cover shirts, manuals, and badges. Badges are good for three years and should coincide with the year a background check has been filed with the local church.

Extensive repair has been completed on the shower trailer thanks to Eclectic United Methodist Church Methodist Men and Rev. Rob Gulledge. This skilled and devoted group has replaced and upgraded pumps, piping, water heaters, fuses, and more. The trailer has already been in use with Alabama Rural Ministry groups.

Two Conference-sponsored webinars offered were Disaster Response for Clergy and Initiating Local Church Preparedness. Documents for Connecting Neighbors (an UMCOR guide for the local church to respond) are on the website and can be done by church councils or groups.

Our Conference has continuously been in response/or recovery for the last ten years. Good communication and support is integral for this arm of our church to

implement a multi-level team of local leaders, district support and Conference staff.

Many thanks to all our local churches who rise up; to trainers and district coordinators who volunteer their time and skills to make us better; to Susan Hunt and Mary Catherine Phillips who help direct volunteer links and develop emergency information; Frank Dunnewind and Heidi Mitchel in the Fiscal Office who maintain the reports and records; to the entire Conference staff and overall leadership of DCM Rev. Nancy Watson and of Bishop David Graves.

Respectfully submitted, Amelia Fletcher, Disaster Response and Recovery Coordinator Alabama-West Florida Conference UMC

## DISTRICT REPORTS

# **Baypines District**

The Baypines District has had another successful year as we have expanded our ministries and continued to engage our congregants - encouraging them and ourselves to grow as Disciples. We feel like we are better connected as a District than we have been in the past, and we feel there is a better spirit among the churches and the clergy. Because our District is so diverse geographically, it has always been a challenge to be unified. We feel like we are making great progress on embracing this diversity and in discovering our identity. We are excited to see that people across our District know and care for people in other communities. We are looking to build on the partnerships that we feel exist in the District. We want to encourage our churches to step out and risk new things. We want them to reach out to other churches as we continue to partner together in missions. We want to reach out to our young people and get them more connected to the larger church. In short, we want to be better stewards of our Connection. We feel like we have grown in our stewardship since last year. Below are some highlights that demonstrate this.

We have grown in our **financial stewardship**. We are still debt free as a District and our Apportionments continue to rise. As a result, our Missional giving also continues to increase.

We have grown in our **stewardship to our ministries**. Our United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women continue to be a strong force in our District. They are active and involved in many local, District and Conference projects. As we look to the future, our goal is to have an active UMM and UMW group in each church.

Our Lay Servant ministries are thriving in the District. We have many trained Lay Servants who are active in and provide leadership in their local churches, teach classes, lead various ministries, and even serve as pastors of local churches. We recently conducted a Lay Servant training in the District which was very well attended. We praise the efforts of our Lay Servants and the District Lay Servant leadership.

Blue Lake Camp, which is located in our District, continues to grow and thrive. They had 30,000 user days at the Camp in 2016. They have recently hired a new

Camp Director and are building a new house for his use.

We have grown in our **stewardship to missions**:

**In Jerusalem** - a very exciting accomplishment in our District is our partnership with the San Pedro mission, serving the Hispanic community in Baldwin County. We have committed financially to the church, and we are putting a team in place to help them acquire land for a church building. Our goal is to help them become self-sufficient and a chartered United Methodist Church. We are also working with the pastor to find mentoring resources as he continues his path toward Ordination as an Elder.

In Judea and Samaria - several communities in nearby Conferences are cleaning up from recent devastating tornado damage. Trained Early Response Teams (ERT) from our District responded to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and another team is returning from the Albany, Georgia, area as I write this. Our District has many trained and badged ERT's and always responds quickly and with great compassion. We have great leadership for disaster response at the District level and we will continue to train and equip individual responders and teams.

**To the ends of the earth** - our Missions programs are thriving and we celebrate them. This year, we will host our second annual District trip to Costa Rica and a District trip to the Red Bird Missionary Conference, where we sponsor three churches. We are thrilled to be offer these opportunities and we will look to establish local projects that can be offered District-wide as well.

It has been a great year for the Baypines District, and we are so thankful for the leadership of our new District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Darren McClellan. We look forward to working with him, with his guidance and encouragement, as we seek new ways to be transformed disciples of Christ and even better stewards of our Connection.

Patrick G. Shubird, Chairperson District CORE Team

## <u>Dothan District</u>

The Dothan District is very thankful for all the Lord has done in 2016. The Dothan District Core team and the churches of our district spent the year looking for opportunities to spread love and grace in the communities in which we live.

The Core Team worked diligently on Super Sunday to insure that we were providing our congregations with the knowledge they needed for both conducting the business of the church and also preparing them to go out and spread the Good News. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Sara Shaver, conducted a very informative session on the work of the PPR committee while Mr. Frank Dunnewind, Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, met with the chairpersons of the Finance committees of the local churches. These sessions were very well attended and provided the chairpersons with the information that they needed to help them in conducting the business of their respective churches.

The Christmas flood of 2015 had a great impact on many in our district. Under

the leadership of the Dothan District Disaster Response Coordinator, Rev. Michael Lawler, our district reached out to those that were negatively impacted and began to minister to them by providing supplies and helping to find housing. It is great thing to see the workers of God step up and help those around us. As part of this the Dothan District Core team decided to begin raising money to build a Habitat for Humanity home in the City of Elba. As a team, we began to look for ways to raise money to support this project. Many offerings have been taken by the churches in the district and many have been very generous. As we continue with fundraising we know that God will bless these efforts.

The Dothan District had two gatherings during the year that allowed both clergy and laity to fellowship together and enjoy a meal. The first gathering was held at Cloverdale. Entertainment was provided by the Bethel Boys and everyone enjoyed a fun evening of laughter and good BBQ.

The second was held at Dothan First United Methodist Church. During this gathering we celebrated the different ministries in the area. They were given small tokens of appreciation by the District Superintendent, Sara Shaver.

The Dothan District United Methodist Women exceeded their \$18,500 pledge to missions in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Their goal is to challenge every church in our district to have an active Local Unit of United Methodist Women involved in the mission for women, children and youth. Current membership includes over 490 women focused on the vision of turning faith, hope and love into action.

The Dothan District is very blessed to have Rev. Sara Shaver as our district superintendent leading our district into the future.

Submitted by Clifford W. Haynes Dothan District Lay Leader

# Marianna-Panama City District

The 2016-2017 conference year has been an eventful one for the Marianna-Panama City District. This has been a year of considerable transition as we welcomed a new District Superintendent, Dr. Doug Pennington; a new district administrator, Shelly Slate; and new acting directors at The Ark, Mike and Liz Bennett. Some of the changes in our district have included deep losses with the fire at Springfield UMC; the death of Dr. Chris Perry, pastor at Good News UMC, and the death of Woody Bollinger, district director of disaster ministries. God has shown his faithfulness in all of our changes, whether good or bad, and his grace continues to be sufficient amidst these and all challenges. Here are some highlights and updates on ministry in the Marianna-Panama City District:

•Lynn Haven UMC hosted this year's **District Conference** on Sunday, January 29, 2017. New District Officers were elected and 2018 Budget was approved. Dr. Victor Dingus lead a workshop entitled "The Next Step", offering support to our small churches who want to take the next step in revitalization and community

impact. Rev. Dan Pezet, Conference Director of Congregational Vitality, led the workshop "Tweaking Church: Taking Your Best Ministries to the Next Level".

- •Our Annual District **Youth Rally** was held at Panama City First UMC on the evening of January 29, 2016. Over 150 youth and youth leaders from around the district enjoyed an evening of fellowship, fun and worship. Carl Fountain was the evening's speaker and "The Consumed" provided the music.
- •Under the leadership of Linda Hornsby, the **Lay Servant Ministry** continues to thrive in the Marianna-Panama City District. We are very proud of these committed laity, always ready to fill a pulpit when needed. In 2016 lay speakers shared 108 messages at 47 different churches in the MPC District.
- •The district's work with our **homeless community** continues. The Saturday morning breakfast program is thriving as volunteers from our local Methodist churches as well as volunteers throughout our community come together to prepare and serve the homeless a warm meal every week.
- •Marianna-Panama City District **United Methodist Women** are as active as ever. With their outstanding President, Karen Fillman, they are leaders and vital participates in activities all year throughout the conference. Their annual Education Day was held on September 10, 2016 at St. Andrew UMC with the day's focus being about ministry related to incarceration.
- •We are very proud of **Woodlawn UMC!** They made the 2017 Edition of Len Wilson's Top 25 Fastest Growing Large Churches. We are grateful for their ministry and outreach.
- •In the mist of their change in leadership, **The Ark** continues to be a missional presence in the Panama City Beach community. Their outreach includes a summer program for J-1 visiting workers from overseas, a winter program for snowbirds, and working with the Bay County Human Trafficking Task Force. The onsite coffee shop, The Pour, helps offset a portion of the Ark's operating cost as well as serves as an excellent way to educate neighbors about the love of Jesus Christ.

We look forward to the year ahead with excitement of what Christ will bring our way as we dedicate ourselves to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Submitted by, Shelly Slate, District Administrative Assistant Doug Pennington, District Superintendent

## **Mobile District**

The Mobile District gives thanks to God for the joy of ministry, and we celebrate the faithful service of our United Methodist congregations and pastors as they give their all for the glory of God and the advancement of his Kingdom.

The year saw changes for our district. In July, our District Superintendent Rev. Doug Pennington was appointed to the Marianna-Panama City District. We were

sad to lose him, but glad to welcome Rev. Dr. Darren McClellan as our new District Superintendent. Though his time with us was short, our district certainly appreciates his service. In September, Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson became the District Superintendent, and we are grateful for the leadership he has provided for the district. Additionally, with the rest of the Conference, we welcomed Bishop David Graves as our new bishop. Bishop Graves held a series of meetings with the people of our district in January. We appreciate the time he gave to share from his heart and dialog with us. We left encouraged and excited about the changes his leadership will bring.

In October, District Superintendent Jeff Wilson called the clergy together for a District Preacher's Meeting. It was an important time of worship, fellowship, and instruction for our pastors. In November, Dr. Wilson and Dauphin Way UMC hosted a "District Family Clergy Outing," an opportunity for pastors, spouses, and their children to enjoy a day together playing, eating, and riding the Duck Boat! A good time was had by all. In January, Toulminville-Warren UMC hosted the annual District Conference in conjunction with Bishop Graves' Town Hall meeting.

Our communities are blessed by the incredible work of local United Methodist agencies. In the midst of ever increasing needs and decreasing funds, these agencies persist, working tirelessly to improve the lives of those in need. We celebrate the fruitful ministries of the United Methodist Inner City Mission, the Dumas Wesley Community Center, the Babies First program of the United Methodist Children's Home, the Metro Jail Ministry, and Raise the Roof. We are also proud of the University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation. The Wesley Foundation continues to nurture the faith of area college students, who, in turn, model living out the faith in ways that make a difference to others. We give thanks to all those who make each of these vital ministries so fruitful.

The Mobile District is blessed as well with over 570 women in 22 local United Methodist Women Units. We celebrate that our own Ms. Clara Ester was elected National United Methodist Women Vice-President and was also elected a Director on the National Board of United Methodist Women for the Southeastern Jurisdiction Leadership Team. Our own Mrs. Debbie Bell was elected as Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women President, and Mrs. Barbara Carroll is now the Mobile District's UMW president. Among the UMW's many good works, they raised \$20,000 for missions and contributed over 400 UMCOR kits. Both in our district and across the world, the United Methodist Women continue to lead the church into mission. We are grateful!

The Open Doors Resale store has continued to be an amazing ministry, impacting thousands of lives. Under the leadership of Audrey Bryan and Rev. Charles Fail, and with the help of many hard working volunteers, Open Doors has contributed over \$250,000 to area ministries, including: Dumas Wesley Community Center, United Methodist Inner City Mission, Babies First, the University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation, Metro Jail Ministry, St. John UMC's Hispanic ministry (El Arbol de Vida), Communities of Transformation and West Wilmer Mission Church.

The Communities of Transformation program has continued to make a profound difference, both in the lives of participants and volunteers. The goal of this ministry

is to break the cycle of poverty, recognizing that the issue of poverty is much broader than financial issues. This past year, lives were radically changed and souls were saved as a result of Communities of Transformation. We appreciate Katy Wrona and the team of volunteers that make this effort possible, and we are excited about the future of this program as it continues to expand.

The work of the North Mobile Planning Council was inspiring, as always. Their activities for the north part of our district include gatherings for singing and fellowship, a banquet celebrating their pastors, and the White Christmas Dinner, which raised \$20,650 for the United Methodist Children's Home this year! Over the past four years, they have raised an amazing \$69,273 for this very worthy cause.

The QuadW Missional Internship was again a great blessing to many churches in our district. Lives of interns were changed as they helped congregations connect more deeply with their communities, and we celebrate that an increasing number have realized a call to vocational ministry within the UMC as a result of the experience. Launched by the Mobile District in 2009, the program will be in ten cities across the country in 2017. Our thanks to the QuadW Foundation and all those who have contributed to the success of this ministry.

The real heroes of our district are the pastors and members of each of our local churches. Day in and day out, they serve God, care for one another, and minister to the people of their communities. Each Sunday across the district, the word of God is rightly preached and the sacraments duly administered. God is passionately praised through ancient hymns and modern music. Members grow in their knowledge and love of God through small groups, Sunday school classes, Confirmation, and Bible Studies. Fellowship and laughter are shared over countless meals. Both infants and new believers are baptized and welcomed into the life of the Church. Marriage ceremonies are conducted; the sick and shut-ins are visited; and the lives of those departed are celebrated with confidence in the resurrection to come. Throughout the year, the hungry are fed, shelter is provided, Godly counsel is offered, and the good news of Jesus Christ is shared with a lost and hurting world. By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the cause of Christ is advanced among us.

The people called Methodist of the Mobile District have been blessed by God and have faithfully embraced the calling to bless others in his name. For all of this, we give thanks. To God be the glory!

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Don Woolley, District Missioner

Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson, District Superintendent

## Montgomery-Opelika District

The Montgomery-Opelika District experienced several new beginnings in the 2016-17 Conference year. The following are some of the highlights:

It has been our joy to welcome Bishop David Graves and his wife Nancy to our Conference and District. In addition to meeting with various groups of constituents

from our district, Bishop Graves held a very helpful town-hall in Montgomery. He also met personally with laity and the fulltime and part-time clergy in our district. We are most appreciative of his leadership.

Five of our fulltime churches received new pastors. Dr. Larry Bryars was appointed to Frazer Memorial in Montgomery. Dr. Cory Smith was appointed to Auburn. Dr. Lester Spencer returned home for his second appointment to St. James Church in Montgomery. Rev. Chip Oakley was appointed to Liberty. Rev. Dave Marnell was appointed to Brantley/Brunson's Chapel.

Communities of Transformation is beginning to expand in our district. COT ministries are taking shape in Montgomery, Troy and Union Springs. Meanwhile, COT is strong and growing in Phenix City.

Our District Discipleship Team has provided coaches for three churches involved in The Antioch Project. Members of this team are helping Opp, Bonifay, and Mt. Zion (Smiths Station) churches to create viable systems for seeking, engaging, nurturing and deploying disciples of Jesus.

One of the most promising initiatives in our district is the launch of *Next Steps*. Dr. Victor Dingus has met with pastors and laity from several of our small membership churches. Cohorts of churches are being formed to address four basic questions. They are:

- 1. Who are we now?
- 2. What is God's purpose for us now?
- 3. Who are our neighbors now?
- 4. What is the next step?

The questions posed through Next Steps are appropriate for all of churches and ministries. The good news is that many of our faith communities are able to answer those questions from positions of strength and fruitfulness. Though others may find the challenge more daunting, even they are able to say with assurance that they are part of a people whom the Lord has placed in this region for this season of service and witness

With this call upon our lives, all of us rejoice in the opportunities before us in the Montgomery/Opelika District.

Respectfully submitted, Robbins Sims, Superintendent

# **Montgomery-Prattville District**

The Montgomery-Prattville District experienced another excellent year of growth in grace and ministry. We are so thankful for the graciousness of God and the fruitfulness of God's ministry among us. We are joyful, grateful, and humbled to have the privilege of joining together in all that God is doing in our midst. We remain ever thankful for the Alabama-West Florida Conference and the great connectional system of our United Methodist Church.

Our District saw change in our Lay Leadership this year. David Bowen served as

our District Lay Leader for the last six years. We appreciate David's faithfulness and leadership during this time. Cathy Givan is our new District Lay Leader. Cathy previously served as our District President of the United Methodist Women (UMW). We know that Cathy will bring the same passion to the position of Lay Leader as she had as our UMW President.

We also had a change in the leadership of Lay Servant Ministries. David Bowen had been our District Director of Lay Servant Ministries for the past six years. He became the Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries on July 1, 2016 replacing Helen Edwards, who had served in that role for the past eight years. We appreciate the leadership of David and Helen not only at the District level but at the Conference and Jurisdictional levels. Tom Crenshaw from First UMC in Greenville is our new District Director of Lay Servant Ministries. We appreciate Tom's willingness to take on this important role in our District.

Our Lay Servant Ministries remain a thriving part of our ministry in the District. We have trained a number of Lay Servants who are actively providing leadership in their local churches by teaching classes, leading various ministries, and serving as supply pastors of local churches. Our District participates with the other districts in holding an annual lay servant training event.

Our United Methodist Women continue to be a strong and vital force in our District. Our women are active not only at the local level but at the District and Conference levels as well. It is our hope that every church in our District will soon have a functioning United Methodist Women's group. We continue to struggle with developing functioning United Methodist Men's groups in the District. However, working with our Conference leaders we are optimistic of better results in the upcoming year.

We are grateful for our partnership with Dr. Robbins Sims and the people of the Montgomery-Opelika District. We held our joint annual United Methodist Children's Home banquet at Whitfield Memorial. Our District continues to be a strong supporter of the Children's Home and the great work that it does.

We are thankful for Communities of Transformation and the ministry in our district in Selma. Communities of Transformation is making an important difference in the lives of so many across our Conference. We very much appreciate the work of Fred and Laurel Blackwell in leading this process.

We are blessed in this District by having a wonderful Administrative Assistant and Communications Director. Ashley Epler continues to do a great job serving as the Administrative Assistant for both the Montgomery-Opelika and Montgomery-Prattville Districts. Courtney Albrecht is doing a splendid job as our Communications Director making sure that every member of our districts is kept informed of all that is happening.

Our District participated in the farewell for Bishop Paul and Janet Leeland. We are so appreciative of the leadership of the Leeland's during their eight-year tenure. We know that they will have a fruitful ministry in the Western North Carolina Conference. We also participated in welcoming Bishop David and Nancy Graves to our Conference at a service and reception at First UMC, Montgomery.

We are thankful for Bishop Graves and Nancy and we can already see important results from their partnership in ministry with us.

Respectfully submitted, John Brooks, Superintendent

# LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry

Our conference has seven full-time Wesley Foundations, representing the campus ministry of The United Methodist Church. These ministries are all led by full-time directors, six clergy and one lay. We have Wesley Foundations at Alabama State University, Auburn University, Troy University, Tuskegee University, The University of South Alabama, The University of West Alabama, and the University of West Florida. We have two Conference colleges in Alabama: Birmingham-Southern College and Huntingdon College. We are also seeking to start a new Wesley Foundation on the campus of Auburn University at Montgomery.

One of the areas of focus for The United Methodist Church is developing new leaders to guide our church to communicate the gospel in a changing world and to enact ministries that will transform lives. Christian leadership development is taking place through our conference's Wesley Foundations and colleges. Students are equipped to lead small groups, to join together in leading local and international mission trips. They visit seminaries and are guided to discern whether they are called to ordained ministry or to be lay leaders in their local churches. Our students lead worship, preach and teach in local churches of our conference. Our campus ministries are diverse, reaching out and including women and men, people of color and international students. They create spaces where students learn how to follow Christ and how to make the world more just and fair.

Campus ministry is in the DNA of the United Methodist Church. Our founder John Wesley was a campus minister, and he and his brother Charles were involved in a small group ministry of accountable discipleship on the campus of Oxford University. Today, we continue their tradition on the campuses of our annual conference. Our annual conference is a role model for other annual conferences in the way we support campus ministry. Thank you for the financial support that you give to our campus ministries and for the countless hours that you volunteer to make our campus ministries fruitful and effective.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. Scott Christopher Hohn, Chair Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries

# General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)

The agency launched a new mission and vision at the start of 2017. The updated mission and vision simplify our role as the primary leadership development agency for The United Methodist Church.

#### MISSION

Our mission is to lead and connect the educational and ministerial life of The United Methodist Church

#### VISION

We will continue to transform the world through the power of education and ministry in the Methodist tradition. We will serve God and the worldwide Church in recruiting, nurturing, and educating lay and clergy leaders who seek wisdom and live ethically as God's peacemakers.

#### **EDUCATION**

The **Collegiate Ministry Office** at GBHEM hosted Imagine What's NEXT, a three-day event for young adults ages 18-26 to discern their call of lay or clergy leadership and learn ways to connect that God-given call through the work of the church

The **Young Clergy Initiative** funds innovative projects across the church to attract young people to ordained ministry. The \$7 million initiative has funded more than 75 projects. The 2017 event will take place in Portland, Oregon, November 3 - 5.

The agency has a **Global Methodist Education Network** that includes more than 1,000 institutions of higher education around the world. GBHEM supports **Schools, Colleges and Universities** across the U.S.

Global Education and New Initiatives at GBHEM provides technical assistance, financial support, scholarships and recruitment aids for five target regions across the globe: Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, Europe and the U.S. In addition to schools, the office supports international and regional associations, as well as oversees the Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development.

The **Black College Fund** invests in the hopes and dreams of those students attending United Methodist-related historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The Black College Fund distributes 95 percent (on average more than \$9 million) of all funds received equally to the 11 HBCUs. The fund provides for faculty development, infrastructure maintenance, and for students who need financial support and scholarship.

The agency works with the Commission on **Central Conference Theological Education (CCTE)** to distribute grants for the theological education of pastoral leaders in the Central Conferences. The 2012 General Conference established a \$5 million CCTE fund, and more than 250 grants have been awarded across 22 countries to date. Due to its impact, the fund was doubled at the 2016 General Conference. New grant recipients were announced in March 2017.

In 2016, GBHEM's Office of **Loans and Scholarships** awarded 2,025 students with more than \$3.1 million in scholarships and 406 students with more than \$1.9 million in loans.

GBHEM reestablished its **publishing ministry** in 2016 to engage, nurture, and advocate for the intellectual life of The United Methodist Church. Through this ministry, GBHEM produces academic resources for the constituencies of the

agency, including single-author and multi-author works, as well as edited volumes. More than ten new and revised books have been released under the publishing ministry.

#### **MINISTRY**

In partnership with Discipleship Ministries, GBHEM provides e-readers to theological schools in remote areas of Africa and Asia, offering access to the latest textbooks and references books. The **E-Reader Project** has distributed nearly 1,500 devices to 22 theological seminaries, loaded with publications in English, French, and Portuguese.

Individuals pursing **licensed and ordained ministry** find the resources they need to overcome challenges and barriers sometimes encountered when responding to God's call in GBHEM's Candidacy Office. In addition, the office revised the BOM Handbook following General Conference along with the conference relations resources for the 2016 Book of Discipline.

Course of Study and Specialized Theological Education provides resources for local pastors to gain the education and training needed for service across the church, with courses available in Spanish. The office launched Portuguese Course Study programs in 2016 and will continue to expand. GBHEM launched three new education options for part-time pastors in December 2016: an Extension of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO) located at United Theological Seminary; a satellite Course of Study program with Saint Paul School of Theology in Hays, Kansas; a pilot Escuela de Cursos de Estudios (ECE); and a Spanish Course of Study, in Denver, Colorado.

Chaplains and pastoral counselors are credentialed through the **United Methodist Endorsing Agency**, which provides resources for chaplains and counselors serving inside and outside the walls of the church.

GBHEM leads clergy continuing education programs, providing resources for spiritual formation and professional development to help ensure an effective clergy for the church. Clergy Lifelong Learning provides an innovative platform for ministry through the multilingual UMC Cyber Campus. In addition, the office organized the 60th anniversary celebration of full clergy rights for women in August 2016 at the United Methodist Clergywomen gathering, which included 450 attendees from 27 countries, speaking six languages. This office continues to provide guidance in cross-cultural/cross-racial leadership development throughout the denomination.

The agency supports **deacons and diaconal ministers** as they lead the people of God into ministries of compassion and justice, and interpret the needs of the world to the church. The Office of Deacon Ministry Development and Provisional Membership led the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the "recovery" of full-member clergy deacons for the church. In addition, a new certification in parish nursing was created, and the certification in camping and retreat ministries was

updated (in collaboration with Discipleship Ministries).

Submitted by,

Danecia Jones, Senior Communications Specialist, Office of Communications

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## **Birmingham-Southern College**

On June 10, 2016, Linda Flaherty-Goldsmith became the 15th president of Birmingham-Southern College (BSC), returning to the college and bringing many years of senior leadership experience in higher education. To read more about President Flaherty-Goldsmith visit:

http://www.bsc.edu/administration/president/index.cfm

Enrollment (*Sara H. Newhouse, Vice President for Admission and Financial Planning*): After welcoming 358 new students in the fall, Birmingham-Southern College set a goal of 450 new students for fall 2017. Several new initiatives were undertaken to support this goal.

You are invited to bring students to events and receptions on campus and in your area. Indeed, your continued support through participating directly in recruitment activities, reaching out to prospective students, or simply referring them to us is deeply appreciated. Feel free to contact me or the Admission office for event schedule or to meet the recruiter for your area.

Retention (*David M. Eberhardt, Jr., Ed.D., Vice-President for Student Development*): BSC has focused much attention on retention of students in recent years, with meaningful success. The average retention of first-year students returning for their second year has risen from 81% to 84% with measures in place to support student success.

In addition, Southern Exposure, a one-week residential program for incoming students from families where parents did not complete college, connects students to successful mentors on campus, to services and individuals available to them, and helps them create community before they enroll

Religious Life and Wesley Fellowship (*Rev. Julie Holly*): For two years now I have served the church and college as the chaplain, director of religious life, and director of Wesley Fellowship. Having moved beyond the first year of simply learning the particulars of college ministry, I have made significant progress in my initial goal of developing relationships. Partnerships with other college departments have both enriched religious life and helped expand and deepen my connections with students, staff, and faculty. In 2016, we coordinated with the theater department and counseling and health services to create a month long focus

on sex and the prevention of sexual assault.

In January 2017, I partnered with a Latin American politics professor to lead a student exploration service-learning trip to Cuba. Also in 2017, I began the spring semester by partnering with Greek-life organizers to help train the student leaders of campus sororities and fraternities. I reached out to coaches to connect with more athletic teams, to offer spiritual support and to make sure student athletes are aware of religious life groups and activities on campus.

In addition to leading and supporting Christian ministry on campus, religious life also works to cultivate understanding and cooperation among all faith groups on campus through educational opportunities, fellowship, and shared service projects. We continue our ongoing partnership with the Muslim Student Association, and I am working with other groups both on and off campus to help re-start a Jewish student group on campus. The primary ways in which I have focused on leadership development is through the religious life student leadership team and with a February 2017 series on Strengths Finder in Wesley Fellowship.

We give thanks for the many ways you are engaged with and support the college in prayer, time and scholarships. Over 100 students are currently receiving North Alabama UMC scholarships, eleven receive scholarship through UMHigher Education Foundation and nine through your support from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Linda Flaherty-Goldsmith Julie B Holly Laura B Sisson

President Chaplain Director, Church Relations

## **Huntingdon College**

What is the purpose of college? Football weekends, fraternity and sorority parties, intramurals, hanging out?

Well... at Huntingdon, our students enjoy all of those things, but our faculty and staff focus from day one of a student's college experience on the real purpose of higher education: *Building Great Lives*. We work with each student to design a plan of study and a campus experience to help that student discover his or her calling in life. We believe that the most important thing we do is to help a student answer the most important question in life: "What am I uniquely called to do with my life?" And we prepare our students to graduate from Huntingdon equipped for that first professional job or for graduate school, so that they, indeed, will lead great lives.

In fact, Huntingdon students over the last five years have earned acceptance into graduate programs and placement into entry-level professional positions at rates which far exceed the national average for college and university graduates. Most notably, Huntingdon students excel at admission to seminaries; health-related graduate programs; law schools; and job placements in private businesses,

accounting firms, public school teaching, and non-profit service agencies.

But why wait until the start of college to begin exploring life's most important question: "What am I called to do with my life?" This summer, high school students from all over Alabama and Florida are attending three summer academies on the Huntingdon campus in Montgomery's beautiful Old Cloverdale neighborhood.

The Huntingdon College Health Sciences Academy, June 7-9, introduces rising high school seniors to the importance of shadowing and networking in preparation for careers as physicians, dentists, pharmacists, physician assistants, nurses, and occupational and physical therapists. The Huntingdon College Economic and Community Development Scholars Program, June 12-14, provides rising high school seniors on-site learning, problem-solving, and networking with respected experts who work each day to advance their local communities. The Huntingdon Leadership Academy (HLA), June 25-30, is designed for rising high school juniors and seniors who wish to engage in sustained theological reflection on the Bible, Christian tradition, and spiritual formation. For more information on all three academies, please contact me at 334/833-4409 or at my email address (camwest@ hawks.huntingdon.edu). Students may still register for HLA at the HLA website (huntingdon.edu/huntingdon-leadership-academy).

Listed as a Top Ten College in the Southeast and a Top Ten College Value in the Southeast, Huntingdon provides a highly affordable college education through our Cross and Flame Grant for all United Methodist students. *We Build Great Lives*! Spread the word, and help us make Huntingdon the college of first choice for students who want a rare and unique college experience!

Submitted by, (The Reverend) J. Cameron West, President Huntingdon College

# **Wesley Foundations**

## Auburn Wesley Foundation and Cooperative Parish

Serving the Auburn University community and the surrounding area continues to be exciting. The many layers of ministry are beginning to be more challenging to describe as the outreach and ministry expands. When asked, 'tell me what all you do', the answer can take a while. We are extremely thankful for the support of the Annual Conference, the Montgomery Opelika District, churches, alumni and friends. Below is a quick synopsis of some of what is happening.

The Auburn Wesley Foundation and Cooperative Parish is comprised of the student ministry and five small membership churches. The East side of the Parish Lead Pastor is Rev. Tony Jeck and he serves Gold Hill UMC and Pepperell UMC. Joining him are two student pastors, Wesley Rhodes and Leo Gonzalez. In student ministry Rev. Jeck coordinated the Weekly worship service at the Wesley Foundation.

The West side of the Parish has been in transition with Rev. John Weaver leaving to accept the Wesley Foundation Director position at MTSU. We are very thankful for Rev. Weaver's service for the past four years and his important role in starting the Parish. Thank you, John! We are excited to have a new teammate in the Parish, Rev. Dr. Anna Crews Camphouse. She joined our team in January and is the Lead Pastor at Armstrong UMC, Loachapoka UMC and Notasulga UMC. Student Pastors serving with her are Kevin Lazarus and Conner Feemster. In addition she is serving in Campus ministry in various capacities, but with a focus in vocational discernment.

### **Student Ministry**

## **Student Program Ministry**

Worship at Wesley; Thursday night dinner; Bible studies; freshmen community; worship bands; intramural sports; graduate student lunch and devotion; Christian fellowship; social events; seminars; game day tailgates; retreats; Holy Week; winter ski trip

#### **Student Misson/Service**

Super Mission Saturday home repair with ARM; monthly food bank with Loachapoka UMC; gleaning/crop drop; Christmas mission flood relief; North Carolina May mission; children/youth caravan; Tanzania 2017

### Auburn Wesley Foundation Staff

Director/Campus Minister – Rev. David Goolsby

Campus Minister/Worship Pastor – Rev. Tony Jeck

Campus Minister- Rev. Dr Anna Crews Camphouse

Director of Administration, Alumni and Development – Patricia Stevenson Administrative Assistant – Stephanie Jeck

Ministry Interns: Olivia Adkins, Jakaela Davis, Kevin Lazarus, Anna Ozment,

Wesley Rhodes

Thank you Alabama-West Florida!

Grace and Peace, David Goolsby

## Auburn Wesley Foundation Board of Directors

Mrs. Emilyn Gipson, Chair

Dr. Rob Thomas, Chair, Personnel Committee

Mrs. Lynne Finch, Chair, Finance Committee

Mr. Wyatt Northup, Chair, Trustees

Class of 2018Class of 2019Mrs. Emilyn GipsonDr. Bill DeutschMr. Johnny LawrenceMr. Justin SmithMs. Suzy FarmingtonMr. Ross Beitzel

Class of 2020 Class of 2021

Dr. Megan Burton Mrs. Lynne Finch
Mrs. Rebecca Moseley Mr. Stephen Gentry
Dr. Ben Farrow Mrs. Sarah Crim

## Ex-Officio Members of the Board

Bishop David Graves

Dr. Robbins Sims

Rev. Nancy Watson

Dr. Cory Smith, Auburn UMC

Rev. Libba Stinson, Grace UMC

Rev. Rusty Hutson, Cornerstone UMC

Rev. Josh Agerton, Embrace UMC

Rev. David Goolsby, Director

Rev. Tony Jeck, Associate Director

Miss Grace Ann Moody, Student President

At-large, student, any additional board members: Mr. Wyatt Northup, Mr. Ronnie Anders, Mrs. Kimberly Belcher, Mr. Randy Simpson, Dr. Rob Thomas, Dr. Kelly Hester, Mr. Keith Patterson, Mr. Jerry Van Tuyl, Mrs. Beth Cofield, Miss Haley Horn, Miss Rachel King, Mr. Andrew Hodnette

### **Wesley Foundation at Alabama State University**

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is with great joy that I extend my deepest gratitude to you for your unyielding commitment to our young theologians of the Wesley Foundation at Alabama State University. These young people's journeys have been enhanced because of the great love shown to them through your giving and your presence. This past year marks my fifth year serving as the Wesley Foundation at ASU's Campus Minister and I can truly say that I am amazed at God's work in this wonderful organization.

Along with our weekly worship activities, the Wesley Foundation is now active in 6 residential facilities on the ASU campus and we are often called upon to co-facilitate campus events due to the high volume of student involvement in our organization during my time at ASU. Our students are also highly sought after by neighboring communities for mentorship and leadership opportunities. Last year, our students had the opportunity to share in community with an Atlanta church community that was grieving the death of one of their young adult parishioners whose life was tragically ended at the hand of senseless violence. The students of the Wesley Foundation at ASU shared in the journey of this particular congregation through fellowship, mentoring and servant leadership. Invited as members of a social justice panel, the students engaged in dialogue discussing the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement as well as offered their support for Blue Lives Matter campaign, while addressing the need for healing and justice in our communities. These experiences aided the ASU student leaders in dealing with our current socio-political climate in productive ways that promoted truth telling and reconciliation

Overall, this year has been a year of spiritual renewal and recommitment to the call of justice and love in our world. The Wesley Foundation at ASU has committed to moving forward in transforming our world by pledging to share in the struggles of others while offering them hope through the ministry of presence, service and action. In the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people." Again, thank you for your partnership in the Christian call to action.

Regards, Charity Starr Mitchell, Campus Minister

#### Executive Board Members

President - Gloria Williams Vice President - Cathy Washington Treasurer - Crystal Jackson

#### **Troy University Wesley Foundation**

The vision of the Troy University Wesley Foundation is to fully experience God's love and to reflect God's love to all creation.

The mission of the Troy University Wesley Foundation is to fully express God's love by providing a safe community for all students. The mission assists to introduce or maintain Christianity as a priority for undergraduate and graduate students

#### **Program Ministry**

The Troy Wesley Foundation helps students to experience God's love in community with each other throughout the week. For the last decade, Thursday night dinner has been a signature weekly event at the Troy Wesley. Through this fellowship dinner, we share the love of Christ with students and staff. Local churches or other groups make meals for students to enjoy. This dinner is offered to all students and staff on campus free of charge and is often the way new students become active at the Troy Wesley. We believe that in this space students, some of whom are not Christians, are able to see the living Christ. One way they experience this is through student led devotion and prayer time each week. As they become more active in the Wesley, they are able to experience the love of Christ through Bible studies, worship services, and more. They are able to live out Christ's mission to their local community through local and international missions. In the often lonely years of college, students are able to be part of an amazing community that is centered in love and mission of Jesus Christ.

We have also started a Bible Study & Worship on Wednesday nights where we serve the sacrament of Holy Communion. The students have named this time Kairos. In the fall we go through a book of the Bible in a verse by verse study. In the spring our conversations are more topical. We are blessed to have a student led

worship band that leads us in worship every week. We have grown numerically but more importantly, our students are growing spiritually. They are asking hard questions and studying to find those answers.

Our student leaders facilitate small groups and prayer groups. We have three of those groups currently running.

#### Missions

The Troy Wesley students are very involved in serving others through **mission work** on campus and far from home. We keep our eyes opened for ways to serve our local area.

## Stewardship

Students continually found ways in the last year to work together to best utilize their God-given gifts. Students planned fellowship and outreach events, completed service projects, cooked meals, provided worship music, led small groups, made relationships, and fundraised to support the Troy Wesley. We parked cars at football games. Our 11th annual golf tournament took place in the spring at the Troy Country Club. Our board of directors got really involved in fundraising in the last year as well. They are now excited to be holding their "Taste of Heaven" fundraiser each fall. "Taste of Heaven" brings in the best cooks from the neighboring churches as they compete for the best recipe. This is not only a fundraiser but a way that local churches have been able to fellowship together and rally around the Wesley. As they give, people are asked to pray for the Wesley Foundation that we are continuing to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World.

#### What our students are saying

"Instead of just expecting to be filled every week, the Wesley requires me to serve"

"The Wesley means a community of believers that are friends and want to know Christ better and make him know. It is family because you have accepted us into part of the family. It is the swing on the front porch – a place of peace."

"The Wesley has kept me grounded in my faith and kept me coming back when I was tempted to wander."

"My Wesley family encourages me to be my best self. They believe in me in ways I do not believe in myself."

"The Wesley has strengthened my faith by giving me a place where I can not only attend and be poured into by others but I can also contribute and pour into others. The Wesley provides me with an opportunity to help and lead."

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the students and staff of Troy University. Our presence on campus positively impacts the lives of many young people as we strive to reflect God's love to all creation. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue our ministry at Troy University.

Respectfully submitted, Elaine Brown, Director Troy University Wesley Foundation

#### **University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation**

The Wesley Foundation continues to reach the students of the University of South Alabama (USA) and beyond. We strive for all students to experience purpose, meaning, and abundant life as authentic disciples of Christ. It is a hard calling, but a privilege to be on the front lines shaping the next leaders of our church. Wesley is a place for students to learn, live out, and be changed by what it means to love God and love their neighbors. Students GROW their faith in Christ, CONNECT with other students in Christian fellowship, and SERVE their neighbors in response to the love of Christ.

#### Grow

Wesley helps students grow their faith through DISCIPLESHIP and WORSHIP. In depth Bible studies, worship services, accountability groups and small groups are all weekly events at Wesley. At our Tuesdays night service, students experience scripture, prayer, discussion, sermons, conversations and reflective exercises.

#### Connect

Students are hungry for authentic community. This community is built through connections between students doing life, sharing experiences and having fun together. If we expect students to remain or become Christians in college, then Christian fellowship is vital! We weekly engage students (not already involved with Wesley) on campus through various forms of outreach. Our building (just off of campus) is also a great asset for connection. What a blessing it is to have a place for students to connect and call home. We use this "home-base" as a place to do ministry as well as launch students out into ministry!

#### Serve

We believe in loving our neighbors. We equip students to be in mission every day wherever they are. Mission is not just something that we do, but it is who we are. The least, the last and the lonely are all around us every day. College campuses are a ripe mission field. Our students are on mission in dorm rooms and classes and everywhere in-between. We also give students opportunities to get out of their comfort zones and experience God in different contexts. This is done through opportunities for local missions (working with local agencies) as well as mission trips.

#### **Board of Directors**

USA Wesley has a great board of directors! Our board meets every other month and whenever necessary. Along with normal board responsibilities, our board organizes two big fundraisers a year. One fundraiser helps cover programming costs, while the other helps to reduce the mortgage on our building. We are very thankful to both, the Mobile and Baypines Churches and District Superintendents that support us and help us with these fundraisers! Our board continues to work hard to provide for our program and building needs. We are thankful for such

great board members! Our 2017-2018 Board of Directors Officers include: Cris Smith (**Board Chair**), Amanda Messer (**Vice Chair**), Jade Davis (**Treasurer**), Destiny Dunn (**Secretary**), Scott Weldon (**Finance Chair**), Brent Cumbest (**Property Chair**), Harold Williamson (**Personnel Chair**), and Elisa Kennedy (**Nominations Chair**)

<u>Class of 2020</u>: Jay Cooper, Crystal Couch, Anna Costarides, David Hamby, Trip Sullivan, Amy Howard, Kimberly Ingram, Frederick Outlaw, Scott Weldon, and Stan White

<u>Class of 2018</u>: Hanes Swingle, Michael Brown, Melissa Smith, Kristen O'Keefe, Len Hurston, Jade Davis, Kim Feagin, Destiny Dunn, and Howard Munn <u>Class of 2019</u>: Judy Burnham, Brent Cumbest, Kim Doss, Elisa Kennedy, Amanda Messer, Amy Mitchell, Matt O'Riley, Cris Smith, and Harold Williamson.

USA Wesley is thankful to the pastors and laity of The AWF Conference for it's amazing support! Specifically we thank the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry for its continued support and investment in the church's future!

Grace and Peace, Johnny Peters, Director / Campus Minister

#### **University of West Alabama Wesley Foundation**

The University of West Alabama (UWA) Wesley Foundation is the United Methodist College Campus Ministry located just off the UWA Campus in Livingston, Alabama.

Our 2016-17 theme verse strives to encourage college students to become visionary leaders, of their campus ministries, by adhering to the promises God has made to be with us always; even through the journey of college. *Joshua 1:9, "… Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."* 

The Wesley of the University of West Alabama is unique in that it is a 10-room residence facility and Campus Ministry to all students on the UWA Campus. The UWA Wesley Foundation promotes aspects of fellowship, discipleship, outreach, and missions by providing a Monday night dinner that is sponsored by our local Methodist churches; offering student-led studies that concentrate on sharing personal narrative of triumph and ways to demonstrate unconditional Christian love in a society that is broken; building relationships on campus through acts of service and love; and being a presence in our local Sumter county community through active programs that encourage the youth of Sumter county, who will most likely attend college at UWA.

Some of our most notable moments of fellowship, discipleship, outreach, and missions include: "Wesley Is Your Valentine," (an on campus event that gave out messages of God's hope, love, inspiration, and lots of homemade cookies and brownies); "West Alabama/West Florida Leadership Retreat," (a leadership

retreat where Wesley leaders from colleges across West Alabama and West Florida met to create vision for our campuses this coming academic year); "Reading Time," (a reading ministry for elementary school students at Livingston Jr. High in Livingston, Alabama); "Change for Change," (a ministry dedicated to the American Cancer Society/Relay for Life); "Food Pantry," (a ministry that grew this year, thanks to Linden UMC, to service over 25 students with care food packages for the semester.

As the Wesley continues to grow, so does the beauty in seeing God work in student leadership and the formation of stronger campus relationships that will promote visibility of the Wesley at the University of West Alabama. We are a ministry who is excited by the ideas of others, the community of creativity, and the desire to worship God in a myriad of ways.

We give an immense thank you to our local churches, the Alabama-West Florida Conference, our community partners, friends of the Wesley, faithful students and residents, and all of the prayers and support (near and far) that sustain us, year after year.

We hold you in our prayers and we send you our love, thanks, and appreciation, from the UWA Wesley Foundation.

Kitsy Dixon (2016-2017), UWA Wesley Foundation

# University of West Florida and Pensacola State College Wesley Foundation

**Highlights of this year**: 1. College students are excited about getting together and being part of the body of Christ. 2. We received a great group of new students with our Freshmen class. 3. Rev. Stuart Worth celebrated his first full year of being full time as the campus Minister for the UWF/PSC Wesley Foundation. 4. Our Wesley Band has been leading worship at several churches. Filled in for six months at First Pace UMC then helped launch a contemporary service at St. Mark UMC. 5. Wesley is partnering with the Board of Missions in hopes of one day building a facility on the campus of UWF. 6. Wesley helped host the Meltdown youth retreat that reached over 900 people and Fused which are both district youth events.

Basic structure: Our regular meeting times are Monday nights at 5:30 and Thursday nights at 9. We meet in classrooms on campus at UWF and have a time of worship, fellowship, and Bible study. Although the majority of our students work part time we still find time to get together and share our lives with one another. Being college students we love fun outings like cookouts, beach parties, movie nights, and going out to eat. We also get involved locally helping youth groups, building wheel chair ramps, and volunteering at Habitat for Humanity.

What you can do to help: 1. Pray, and then pray some more for our college students and their leaders. 2. Let young people know that campus ministry exists

and invite them to become part of our group. 3. Our campus ministry is mostly funded by the generosity of United Methodists so please consider partnering with us financially. We would love to come speak at your church, play music for you, or help out where ever there may be a need.

## Nominations Report:

<u>Class of 2017</u>: Sandra Thompson, Clint Jernigan, Jim Hurd, Beth Herndon <u>Class of 2018</u>: Nancy Hammond, Ryan Walsh, Wesley Anderson, Lance Whorton, Levi Gardner

<u>Class of 2019</u>: Hugo Garnier, Patrick McBride, Ebb Hagan, Casey Malone, Matt Hull, Caroline Hare, Matt Dailey, Jennifer Precht, Patrick Carnathan, Nathan Pooley, Rick Branch

<u>Class of 2020</u>: Ashley Wilkinson Meyer, Myron Smity, Patty Northup, David Morris, Pam Avery, Gail Baughman, Jonathan Hart

Rev. Stuart Worth, Campus Minister, UWF/PSC Wesley Foundation

## **Conference Lay Leader**

On June 13, 2016, I was elected to serve the AWF Conference as the Conference Lay Leader. I was excited and humbled by the overwhelming voice of support and approval by the members of the Conference Board of Laity and by the delegates and clergy of the Annual Conference. While there are many responsibilities of the Conference Lay Leader, the most important to me is being an advocate for the laity in the life of the Church and to promote awareness of the many ministries they lead and serve in the Alabama West Florida Conference.

The Conference Lay Leader is the chairperson of the Conference Board of Laity consisting of the following: Frank Jenkins, Associate Conference Lay Leader; the eight District Lay Leaders: Mandie Kinsey, Baypines District; Billy Dozier, Demopolis District; Cliff Haynes, Dothan District; Cameron Winton, Marianna/ Panama City District; Clara Ester, Mobile District; Chuck Gambrell, Montgomery/ Opelika District; Cathy Givan, Montgomery/Prattville District; Gene Floore, Pensacola District; David Bowen, Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries; Helen Edwards, Conference Lay Servant Ministries; Frank Moore, Conference President of United Methodist Men; Vaughan Nichols, Conference Scouting Coordinator; Debbie Bell, Conference United Methodist Women President; Nancy Shealy, Conference UMW at large; Barbara Boland, treasurer and at large; Dr. Nell Stott; Pat Shubird; Matt Langford, Young Adult; Megan Krist, Young Adult; Sydney Wilson, Youth; Chase McKoon, Youth; Dr. Steve Furr, General Conference Delegate, Past Conference Lay Leader; and Ex-officio members The Resident Bishop, David Graves; Cabinet Representative, Rev. Timothy Trent; and Director of Connectional Ministries, Rev. Nancy Watson. I am thankful for these individuals who come together to complete the Conference Board of Laity. They dedicate untold hours to strengthening the laity in our conference.

This past year has been a busy year. I attended the SEJ Conference and was

privileged to see David Graves elected and appointed to serve as Bishop for our conference and to see Rev. Dr. Lawson Bryan elected and appointed to serve South Georgia Conference as Bishop. Next was the farewell receptions for Bishop Paul and Janet Leeland and welcome receptions for Bishop David and Nancy Graves. In October, I attended the Quadrennial Extended Cabinet Training event. I have attended many meetings including: Town and Country Commission, Committee on Episcopacy, CORE TEAM Budget and full committee, Extended Cabinet meetings, the SEJ College of Bishops meeting with the Conference Lay Leaders and Conference Directors of Connectional Ministries, Town Hall meetings with Bishop Graves in all eight of our districts, and the Assoc. of Annual Conference Lay Leaders and Conference Directors of Lay Servant Ministries Convocation in Nashville, Tennessee. As you can see, it has been a very busy year!

Beverly Maddox AWF UMC Conference Lay Leader

# **Lay Servant Ministries**

Lay Servant Ministries is one of the most significant lay leadership development programs available in the United Methodist connection. Through this system of equipping and empowering, lay servants have the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who then go and make other disciples.

We go into the world in outreach and mission, offering hospitality to those not yet in the body. We offer Christ by providing an opportunity for people to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the Spirit and profession of faith. We nurture people in Christian living to help them find a true sense of purpose in life and what it means to live out their belief through acts of piety, acts of mercy, and other means of grace. Through engagement, we send out these grace-filled followers of Jesus Christ who are putting their faith into action, helping to transform the surrounding community, and offering hospitality in the name of Jesus Christ

There are three categories of lay servants under Lay Servant Ministries: Certified Lay Servants, Certified Lay Speakers, and Certified Lay Ministers. A Certified Lay Servant is a professing member of a local church or charge or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist collegiate ministry who desires to serve the church and who knows and is committed to Scripture and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church. This is a person who has received specific training to witness to the Christian faith through spoken communication, to lead within a church and community, and to provide caring ministry. The Certified Lay Servant must have approval of his/her Senior Minister before beginning the process and must take the Basic Course and one Advanced Course.

A **Certified Lay Speaker** is a Certified Lay Servant whose call has been affirmed by the Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries to serve the church in pulpit supply. In addition to the Basic Course, one must complete the following

courses to become a Certified lay Speaker: Leading Worship, Leading Prayer, Discovering Spiritual Gifts, Preaching, United Methodist Heritage, and United Methodist Polity.

A **Certified Lay Minister** is a Certified Lay Servant or Certified Lay Missioner who is called and equipped to conduct public worship, care for the congregation, assist in program leadership, develop new and existing faith communities, preach the Word, lead small groups, or establish community outreach ministries as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergyperson. Approval is granted through the Board of Ordained Ministry and assignment is made by the District Superintendent. A track of study is required to become a Certified Lay Minister. All three categories have annual renewal, education, and reporting requirements.

Our District Directors hold trainings throughout the year in each of the eight districts and the Conference Committee holds an annual training event at Blue Lake each March. During 2016, we were asked to fill in for clergy 1,214 times. Our lay speakers spoke in 388 different churches. At the end of the year, we had 562 Certified Lay Servants and Certified Lay Speakers.

We are extremely grateful for the support of the clergy in the Conference and for the help and support of the District Superintendents. We give thanks for the overwhelming support given to us by Bishop Paul Leeland and Bishop David Graves

There has been great leadership throughout the years leading our Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries. I am humbled and privileged to follow so many dedicated, wonderful people as Conference Director.

1988-1996 Collier Martin

1996-1998 Curtis Henderson

1998-2004 Judy Reiter

2004-2008 Wavne Bradshaw

2008-2016 Helen Edwards

I want to personally thank Helen Edwards for her leadership and her willingness to assist me in numerous ways in my first year as Conference Director.

We are also very thankful for our Conference Committee on Lay Speaking Ministries. Our Committee consists of: **Conference Director**, David Bowen **District Directors**: Baypines: Peggy Duck Branch; Demopolis: Lynn Adams Dothan: Carolyn Myers; Mariana/Panama City: Linda Hornsby; Mobile: John Sellers; Montgomery/Opelika: Pat Caylor; Montgomery/Prattville: Tom Crenshaw Pensacola: Bruce Knecht; **At-Large Members**: Beverly Maddox, Helen Edwards, Rev. Elizabeth Whatley, Matt Langford, Edna Williams, Candace McKim, Judy Reiter, Mike Arnold, Mary Messer, and Rev. Steve Kopp.

Our Conference remains active in the national Annual Conference Directors of Lay Servant Ministries and in our organization within the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

We are excited to be the host conference for the Southeastern Jurisdiction Annual Conference and District Directors of Lay Servant Ministries 2018 meeting. The meeting will be held July 12-14, 2018 at First United Methodist Church in Montgomery.

David Bowen Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries

# **United Methodist Men**



The United Methodist Men of the Alabama-West Florida (AWF)
Conference have worked diligently in 2016 to implement our mission of supporting spiritual growth among men, and helping men to mature as disciples as they encourage spiritual formation in others.

Our yearly Men's Advance was held in April of 2016. Our theme was "Lead Like Jesus". Jim Boesch, deployed staff of the General Commission United Methodist Men, was the workshop speaker. This Leadership Development Encounter is a developmental workshop designed to introduce the "Lead Like Jesus" servant leader model. The Advance Keynote Speaker was Bishop James Swanson, Resident Bishop of the Mississippi Area and president of the General Commission on United Methodist Men. He provided an inspirational and challenging sermon and message on the responsibilities of men's ministry in the church. His message was one of the most motivating and exciting ever presented to the men of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

The Joe Garris Sr. Outstanding Men's Ministry Award, was established to recognize the vision and leadership of Joe Garris, the first AWF Conference UMM President. The award is presented annually to a UMM Unit for their service in promoting men's ministry in their church, community, and the AWF Conference. The 2016 recipient was the Brewton First United Methodist Church.

A new conference UMM award, the Robert Powell, Men's Ministry Achievement Award was established to recognize the leadership and inspiration of Robert Powell, a former Conference President and National President of the United Methodist Men. The award is to recognize an individual who demonstrates the qualities of discipleship and provides by example, spiritual growth among men. The first recipient was Chuck Christian of Cokesbury UMC.

Additionally, the Conference United Methodist Men have established an annual presentation of The Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to be presented at the Laity Banquet during the AWF Annual Conference. The second annual recipient was Conference UMW President Frances Lynn Hamric.

Our support of Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly, our conference campground, continued as we completed the replacement of the aging bunk beds in two of the three campgrounds. Bed linens were provided for the camp's new queen size family bedrooms and a new backdrop for the archery range was provided by the Providence UMC UMM. The Blue Lake Methodist Camp continues to be one of the well-supported projects of UMM.

Our Upper Room Living Prayer ministry continues to be a central piece in our spiritual development and mission work. In 2016, the AWF Conference United Methodist Men provided \$3,100 to the Upper Room Prayer Center. In addition to supporting this vital ministry with our gifts, we have encouraged churches to establish new prayer groups to answer the prayer line.

Activities of the UMM charter groups are varied and include Prayer Ministry, Bible Study, Lectionary Study, support of EMS Ministry, support of Boy Scouts, Blue Lake Methodist Camp improvement projects, local church Youth Program support, church Trustee project support, community outreach, district Pastor Appreciation Banquets, support of the Upper Room Living Prayer Center, fellowship outings and dinners, and Men's Ministry support to churches.

We rejoice in the work of our local units and their pastors to strengthen and renew the men's ministries programs in the local church. Through their efforts, activities in local churches have grown, new men have been invited to share in discipleship, and new charter units have been added to the conference. Our goal is to empower the ministry of Jesus Christ through men within the congregations of the United Methodist Church.

Frank Moore, President Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Men

# **United Methodist Women**

## **PURPOSE**:

to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

#### **FUNDING**:

In 2016, The Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women met our \$125,000 Pledge to Mission to the National organization and exercised good stewardship within our annual budget. The many National agencies include the Dumas Wesley Community Center in Mobile, Alabama. Our mission dollars continue to journey throughout specific projects and help in establishing Methodist Women's societies in other countries and also include help with hospitals, schools and assist with agriculture projects. As well, other funds collected went to specific conference and district agency destinations within our local church communities.

#### **FOCUS**:

**Leadership Development**, where the central mission of United Methodist Women present opportunities and development for our future leaders. In 2016, we assembled to elect the 2016-2020 southeastern jurisdiction leadership team and National directors. We are honored to announce the election of these leaders from our Alabama-West Florida conference; Betty Helms, for Southeastern Jurisdiction

President and Clara Ester, for a Director of the National Board of United Methodist Women for this Jurisdiction Leadership Team. Additionally, Clara Ester received the nomination and was elected as the National Vice-President of United Methodist Women

Conference and District Executive Mission Teams, where we are attentive to the scope of work for the United Methodist Women Purpose within the Local Unit (at the Church).

Cooperative Mission u and district mission studies, where we study lessons of a Biblical, social and geographical nature. Participants are then prepared study leaders to lead or assist these same studies at their local church or Local Unit. Reading Program, where a diverse range of books in categories like Education for mission, Nurturing for community, Social action, Spiritual growth and Leadership development are available to expose us to concepts of mission. At this time, immigration, environment and climate justice, domestic violence and human trafficking are our areas of special emphases.

#### GOALS:

Our goal and our challenge, is to ensure every church in our conference has an active Local Unit of United Methodist Women involved in the mission for women, children and youth. Our current membership includes over 3700 women at 148 Local Units focused on the same vision of turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of the agencies that assist women, children and youth in our communities and around the world.

Listen, as we begin to say our organization name "United Methodist Women," more than pronouncing our initials "UMW".

Prepared by

Deborah S. Bell (Debbie). President 2017-2018 Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women on behalf of Lynn Hamric, 2015-2016 President

[Resources: "On a Path for Mission"

brochure, www.umwmissionresources.org/ AWF-UMW workbook]

# **ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM REPORTS Board of Pension and Health Benefits**

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits offers quality health-care, disability, pension, retirement, financial planning, long-term care and death benefit coverage to the clergy and churches of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

With the continued uncertainty in the health-care environment the Board continues to give careful attention to our resources as we look toward the future. Our greatest resource is confidence in God's abundance and goodness.

Your Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall be prudent in long-term planning, and we shall be optimistic in our management of the Board's important benefits programs. We are committed to the goal of sustainable churches, a sustainable Alabama West Florida Annual Conference, and a sustainable United Methodist Church.

## Report 1 – Health Insurance

The Board works hard to provide excellent health care coverage to our clergy and lay participants through a partially self-funded insurance plan, administered by Blue Cross – Blue Shield of Alabama. Montgomery lay member Mike Horsley serves as chairperson of the Insurance Sub-Committee of the Board. Reverend Meghan Kelley is chairing the Wellness Sub-Committee of the Board. The cost of this health insurance plan is covered by participant premium equivalents, church direct billing, and apportionments. While contributions to the Clergy Retired Benefit Stabilization Fund are presently suspended, it remains a part of our funding plan to guarantee the financial strength of our Health Insurance Plan and to help offset the unfunded liability for retiree benefits. The Board's health insurance reserve investment fund's market value as of December 31, 2016 was \$6.4 million. The Board of Pension also maintains an Operating Reserve Fund at the United Methodist Foundation with a balance of \$500,000.

In order for the plan to remain viable and available to all, participation by eligible clergy must be mandatory. The only exemption being when the clergyperson can provide satisfactory evidence that he/she is covered by a spouse's group plan or that he/she is covered by a military or government retirement health plan. In an effort to minimize health claims and stabilize premium equivalents, an additional requirement for remaining in the plan is the minimal participation in the Annual Conference Wellness Initiative. Plan participants must complete an annual Biometric Screening and Health Quotient. Participation in additional wellness activities offered by the Board is optional but highly encouraged. In 2016, the first year of this initiative, there were 308 participants who completed the Biometric Screening and Health Quotient. There were only six clergy members who failed to complete the requirement.

Clergy who are 65 years of age or older, not in retirement status and serving under a 75% or full time appointment will remain on the active insurance plan with premium equivalents being direct billed to the church. No premium reduction is

applied. Spouses, under age 65, of clergy not in retirement status and serving under a 75% or full time appointment may remain on the active plan.

A surviving spouse who was on the active plan at the time of the pastor's death may remain on the plan and receive a premium reduction of 2.9% per service year over five years. When the spouse reaches age 65 and is Medicare eligible, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions. Should the surviving spouse remarry coverage will no longer be available.

A divorced spouse and dependents of a pastor who were on the active plan at the time of the divorce may remain on the active plan but must pay the established premium equivalent for themselves and their dependents. Should the divorced spouse remarry coverage will no longer be available.

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits seeks to increase the insurance reserves each year in its efforts both to maintain fiscal strength and stability in our insurance program and to offset the unfunded liability associated with providing post-retirement medical benefits to current and future retirees. The board established a target of \$4,468,783 for 2018 and will recalculate the target annually. The Conference unfunded liability for retiree health benefits was estimated in 2015 to be approximately \$27,600,000. The 2015 study results are included in Report 2.

The Group Health Benefits Plan is not a form of entitlement. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits reserve the right to amend the active and retired plan of benefits and the eligibility needed to qualify. With the approval of the Annual Conference the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits may eliminate either or both of these plans.

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) health benefit provisions amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the Internal Revenue Code and the Public Health Service Act to require group health plans to provide a temporary continuation of group health coverage that otherwise might be terminated. The law generally applies to all group health plans maintained by private-sector employers with 20 or more employees, or by state or local governments. The law does not apply to plans sponsored by the Federal Government or by churches and certain church-related organizations. While providing COBRA coverage was optional in the past, Board of Pension and Health Benefits believes that it is no longer necessary and not in keeping with our commitment to faithful stewardship of Annual Conference funds.

Conference health care coverage is available for lay employees of local churches, and the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits encourages every church with lay employees to consider adding this important benefit. For information on premiums and enrollment requirements, please contact the Conference Fiscal Office.

	2016 H	<b>Iealth Fund</b>	d Receipts and Expendit	ures	
Beginnin	g Balance			\$	283,491.42
Receipts					
	Apportion	ments		\$	1,300,008.00
	Premiums				
		Clergy	\$ 3,037,851.44		
		Lay	\$ 1,106,369.90		
		Retired	\$ 85,508.37		
			\$ 4,229,729.71		
	RBSF			\$	_
	Refunds o	n Claims		\$	(795.00)
	Reinsuran			\$	28,208.94
	Misc Retp	os .		\$	-
	Total rece			\$	27,413.94
Total Av	_	1		\$	5,840,643.07
Expendit				-	
	Claims				
	Ciumis	Clergy	Prescipt	\$	933,295.14
		Сісіду	Other	\$	1,670,758.97
			Total Clergy	\$	2,604,054.11
			Total Cicigy	Ψ	2,004,034.11
		Retiree	Medsupp Claims	\$	467,102.26
		Retifice	Active Health	\$	120,641.55
			Total Retiree	\$	587,743.81
			Total Retiree	Þ	367,743.61
		Lov	Prescipt	\$	503,080.92
		Lay	Other	\$	863,074.99
				\$	
		Total 2016 (	Total Lay Claims and Admin	Þ	1,366,155.91
		10tal 2016 C	lainis and Admin		\$4,557,953.83
	Reinsuran	ice Premium	⊥ Paid	\$	340,621.02
		emium Paid		\$	271,689.52
	Premium			\$	1,804.00
	ACA Fees			\$	27,992.91
		Transition C	Costs	\$	5,250.00
	Fund Ope			\$	51,675.93
	- ши орс	Salary	45,800.00	-	,0,0,0
		Pension	2,042.90		
		Postage	\$ 306.32		
		FICA	\$ 3,503.71		
		Travel	\$ 23.00		
		Supplies	\$ 25.00		
	Miscellan		-	\$	17,060.00
			ditures	\$	716,093.38
Total 20	Total Operating Expenditures  Total 2016 Claims, Admin, and Operations				\$5,274,047.21
1 0tai 20	10 Ciaiiis,	Aumin, and	opei auviis		#3,41 <b>7,04</b> 1.41
	Net Avail	⊥ lable over Ex	nense	\$	566,595.86
	1100 Avail	abic over Ex	урсияс	Ψ	300,373.00

## Report 2 – Report of Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees

In response to the direction of the 2000 General Conference, every two years the Alabama-West Florida Conference retains an outside consulting firm to calculate the liabilities associated with providing postretirement medical benefits to current and future retirees in accordance with the terms of its existing plans and contribution arrangement. The report in Exhibit 1 was prepared by AON Hewitt Consulting, based on conditions existing as of January 1, 2015.

The full report presents actuarial liabilities for the plan, as well as the applicable expense and liability amounts that would exist in the conference-reported plan financial information in accordance with the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards Nos. 106 and 132.

In addition, cash flow information is presented which projects the future claims and participant contributions for the current group of active and retired participants, along with the resulting employer costs. Cash flows, liabilities, and the net periodic post-retirement benefit costs have been calculated based on conditions existing as of the January 1, 2015 measurement date.

Please contact the Fiscal Office at 888-873-3127 if you would like to review the report in its entirety. In this report (Number 2, Exhibit 1), we summarize the information provided through the valuation. Currently there is no formal funding plan established, although the Board of Pension and Health Benefits seeks to use any revenues over expenditures in the health insurance program to build up reserves and to underwrite this liability. We fund the annual retiree health costs through apportionments and individual monthly premium equivalents.

## **Exhibit 1 - Summary of Results**

## **Financial Information**

The following table summarizes the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 106 (FAS 106) results of the programs. The Net Periodic Postretirement Benefit Cost is the expense the Plan Sponsor must record in their financial statements for the fiscal year.

	Fiscal Year Ending			
	12/31/2015	12/31/2014	12/31/2013	12/31/2012
(1) Net Periodic Postretirement Benefit Cost	\$3,445,339	\$3,358,076	\$3,510,793	\$3,426,178
(2) Accumulated Postretirement Benefit Obligation	\$20,284,167	\$19,469,538	\$19,691,805	\$18,850,846
(3) Expected Postretirement Benefit Obligation	\$27,607,324	\$27,061,546	\$26,532,244	\$25,970,062
(4) Succeeding Year Cash Flow Projection	\$618,238	\$569,805	\$593,413	\$546,925
(5) Fair Value of Assets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
(a) Irrevocable Trust	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
(b) Allocated for Benefits	\$5,576,927	N/A	\$4,065,668	\$3,358,088
(c) Recognized Under FAS 106	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
(6) APBO at Expected Return (7.00%)	\$13,554,748	\$12,973,795	\$13,693,617	\$13,062,333
(7) (Accrued)/Prepaid Benefit Cost				
(a) Beginning of Year	(\$22,889,513)	(\$20,107,632)	(\$17,151,094)	(\$14,271,841)
(b) Net Employer Contribution in Year	N/A	\$576,195	\$554,255	\$546,925
(c) (Financial Statement Expense)	(\$3,445,339)	(\$3,358,076)	(\$3,510,793)	\$3,426,178
(d) End of Year	N/A	(\$22,889,513)	(\$20,107,632)	(\$17,151,094)
(8) Charge/(Credit) to Unrestricted Net Assets	N/A	(\$2,605,346)	(\$638,094)	\$2,540,711
(9) Discount Rate	4.35%	4.35%	4.50%	4.50%
(10) Health Care Trend Rate				
(a) Initial	8.00%	8.50%	8.50%	9.50%
(b) Ultimate	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
(c) Year Ultimate Trend Attained	2024	2024	2023	2023
(11) Expected Return on Assets	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%

## Valuation Data

The following data table summarizes the covered plan population included in this valuation and the last valuation that data was collected

	1/1/2015	1/1/2013
(1) Number of Participants and Dependents		
(a) Active Employees		
(i) Clergy	268	294
(ii) Lay	N/A	N/A
(iii) Total	268	294
(b) Retirees		
(i) Clergy	240	240
(ii) Lay	N/A	N/A
(iii) Total	240	240
(c ) Dependent Spouses	63	66
(d) Total	571	600

## Source of Data

- Data was collected as of January 1, 2015 and is supplied to us by the Employer and a third party administrator
- (2) Although we believe these to be accurate and complete, the data and financial information have not been audited by us.

## Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees

**Purpose of the Plan**: This is a retiree health plan designed to supplement the amounts Medicare pays for some hospital, medical, and surgical services. The Plan is not designed to cover all the expenses that Medicare does not pay. You must be eligible for Medicare and enrolled in Parts A and B of Medicare in order to receive any benefits under the Plan. Part D is recommended but not required to participate in the Plan. However, drug coverage is not included in the Plan. The Plan is self-insured by the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church. This means that the Conference pays for all claims out of its own assets and does not buy an insurance policy to pay benefits under the Plan. Blue Cross is responsible for administering claims under the Plan; Blue Cross does not insure the benefits under the Plan.

## **Eligibility: Retirees**

- •All clergy who retire from active service in the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference and are eligible for Medicare have access to the plan for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses if they meet the following conditions. The clergy member must have been actively serving in the conference and been participating in the Active Health Plan for five (5) years immediately prior to retiring. A clergy member who is eligible to enter the program but chooses not to enroll and remains outside of the program for twelve (12) months, will give up their eligibility in the MEDSUPP for themselves and their spouse.
- •Upon reaching age 65 and being Medicare eligible, the spouse will go on the Medicare Supplement Plan at the full Medicare Supplement premium equivalent. Once the clergy participant enters retirement status, appropriate premium equivalent reductions will be applied for both the clergy and spouse as outlined below.
- •Annual conference employees who are employed with the conference at the time of their retirement and are at least age 65 at retirement have access to the plan for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.
- •Local church lay employees who have been continuously employed within the Alabama-West Florida Conference for 20 years and are at least age 65, in retirement status, enrolled in the active insurance plan at least five (5) consecutive years immediately prior to retirement, have access to the plan for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses. Premiums must continue to be paid by the church on church check. A lay employee, who is eligible to enter the program but chooses not to enroll and remains outside of the program for twelve (12) months, will give up their eligibility in the MEDSUPP for themselves and their spouse.

## **Premium Equivalent Reductions**

•To be eligible for a premium equivalent reduction for themselves and their spouses, clergy and annual conference lay employees must be enrolled in the conference active insurance plan for at least 5 years prior to retirement and have 5 or more years of service in the Alabama West Florida Conference. Years of service for clergy are as recorded by the Wespath Benefits and Investments. Years of service for annual conference lay employees are as recorded in their employment

records. Retired local church lay employees are not eligible for premium reductions.

- •Participants retiring on or before July 1, 2016 will receive the premium reduction for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses that were in place for them on July 1, 2016.
- •Participants retiring after July 1, 2016 with 5 to 34 years of service will receive a 2.9% premium reduction for each year of service for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.
- •Clergy members retiring after July 1, 2016 with 35 or more years of service will receive a full premium reduction for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.
- •With respect to married individuals that are each clergy with appointments in the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference, each such clergy must satisfy Medicare and Plan eligibility requirements and premium reductions will be applied to each such clergy and not because of their status as a spouse of a clergy.

## Premium Equivalent for Appointed Retired Clergy (under age 65)

<u>Church's Premium Payment</u>: Equal to the premium equivalent for the active plan established annually by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Premium Equivalent for Appointed Retired Clergy (age 65+)

<u>Church's Premium Payment</u>: Equal 80% of the premium equivalent for the Medicare Supplement Plan established annually by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

<u>Clergy's Premium Payment</u>: Premium equivalent minus premium reduction. Clergy Spouse: Full Premium equivalent minus premium reduction.

## Pastors Retiring Prior to Age 65:

Retired pastors who have not reached the age of eligibility for Medicare and have 30 or more years of service as recorded by Wespath Benefits and Investments may remain on the active plan with a premium reduction of 2.9% per service year. Their dependents may continue on the active coverage by paying the full premium equivalent established by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. When the clergy member reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions. When the spouse reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement plan and any appropriate premium reductions as well. In the case of clergy couples without dependent coverage, individual clergy persons will be eligible in their own rights and premium reductions will be applied as individuals not as spouses of a clergy.

## Pastors Retiring Under the Twenty Year Rule:

Retired pastors who have not reached the age of eligibility for Medicare and have 20 or more years of service but less than 30 as recorded by Wespath Benefits and Investments can remain on the active plan but must pay the established premium equivalent for themselves and their dependents. When the clergy member reaches the age 65, if he or she remained on the active plan, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions. When the

spouse reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement plan and any appropriate premium reductions as well

## **Pastors on Clergy Medical Leave:**

Clergy on Clergy Medical Leave and receiving Comprehensive Protection Plan disability benefits must qualify for Social Security Disability, and elect Medicare, on or before the end of their 24th month following the receipt of Comprehensive Protection Plan disability benefits.

Once qualified for Medicare, clergy on Social Security disability have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions.

Clergy on Clergy Medical Leave and receiving Comprehensive Protection Plan disability benefits who are not eligible for or choose not to elect Medicare coverage, may continue active coverage by paying the full monthly premium equivalent.

## Retiree Benefit Stabilization Fund

Contributions made by clergy to the Retiree Benefit Stabilization Fund (RBSF) remain in suspension. The RBSF will continue to be maintained for present and future use.

## Report 4 - Pension

The Reverend Amy Persons-Parkes chairs the Pension sub-committee of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The Board continues to be delighted by the fine work of Wespath Benefits and Investments. With assets exceeding \$21 billion and over 91,000 active and retired participants, Wespath Benefits and Investments ranks in the top 100 pension plans in the country and is the largest faith-based not-for-profit financial service organization in the world. In addition, Wespath Benefits and Investments acts as a socially responsible investor and participates actively in shareholder advocacy, proxy voting, portfolio screening, and community investing. Wespath Benefits and Investments is the largest denominational investor in affordable housing programs for low- and moderate-income families in the nation. To date, they have allocated nearly \$1 billion to affordable housing and community development investments.

Many current and future retirees find that their pension benefit is derived from several different plans. While the number and variety of plans make calculating pension benefits confusing, the various plans offer a certain level of security due to the diverse ways in which retiree pensions are funded.

1. The Pre-1982 plan bases the pension payment for a retired person on the number of years served with pension credit prior to 1982 and the Past Service Rate (PSR). The Board of Pension set as its goal to offer a sustainable PSR increase in future years. In 2017 the PSR is set at seven hundred forty-three (\$743) per service year for retired clergy and five hundred twenty dollars and ten cents (\$520.10)

for surviving spouses. For 2018 the Board proposes a past service rate of seven hundred fifty-eight dollars (\$758) per service year for retired clergy. The total rate for surviving spouses is proposed to be five hundred thirty dollars and fifty cents (\$530.50). The Annual Conference charges those living in Conference provided retirement homes \$50.00 per month for clergy and \$35.00 per month for surviving spouses.

- 2. The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) was the mandatory retirement plan for clergy serving from 1982 through 2006. Under this plan, the Conference Board of Pension contributed 12% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) on behalf of each eligible clergy person under appointment. Benefits at retirement are based upon specific decisions made by the retiring participant.
- 3. By mandate of the 2004 General Conference, beginning in January 2007, Wespath Benefits and Investments replaced the MPP with the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), which has two components a Core Defined Benefit Plan and a Core Defined Contribution Plan. The Core Defined Benefit Plan determines a pension benefit using the following formula by multiplying 1.25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) in the year of retirement by the number of years of credited service after 2006. The Core Defined Contribution Plan determines the pension benefit from the defined contribution of 3% of the participant's plan compensation. Clergy appointed to less than full time service and Part Time Local Pastors at 75% are credited for service at 75%. By mandate of the 2012 General Conference benefits under this plan stopped accruing on December 31, 2013. Participants will lose no earned benefit.
- 4. The 2012 General Conference modified the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The January 2014 plan retains the two components a Core Defined Benefit Plan and a Core Defined Contribution Plan. The Core Defined Benefit Plan determines a pension benefit using the following formula by multiplying 1% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) in the year of retirement by the number of years of credited service after 2013. The Core Defined Contribution (DC) Plan determines the pension benefit from the defined contribution of 2% of the participant's plan compensation. In addition the conference will match participant's voluntary personal contributions to The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) up to 1% of the participants plan compensation and deposit those matching funds into the participant's CRSP DC account. Clergy appointed at not less than 75% of full time service and Part Time Local Pastors appointed at not less than 75% are required to participate in the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Clergy appointed at less than 75% are not eligible to participate in CRSP, but may and are encouraged to, participate in the UMPIP.
- 5. The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is a voluntary defined-contribution plan for personal contributions and rollovers made by clergy and lay employees.

When the recommendation of the Alabama West Florida Conference Commission on Equitable Compensation is approved and in cooperation with the cabinet, the Conference Board of Pension sets the following appointment salary service standards for 2018:

1	Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or greater than \$37,200 will serve at 100% and are eligible for pension and
	health insurance benefits, unless appointed by the Bishop and the Cabinet
	to less than 75%.
2	Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or
	greater than \$27,900 but less than \$37,200 will serve at 75% and are
	eligible for pension and health insurance benefits, unless otherwise
	appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet to a lower percentage.
3	Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or
	greater than \$18,600 but less than \$27,900 will serve at 50%, unless
	otherwise appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet to a lower percentage, and
	are not eligible to participate in CRSP or the health insurance plan.
4	Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or
	greater than \$9,300 but less than \$18,600 will serve at 25%, unless
	otherwise appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet to a lower percentage, and
	are not eligible to participate in CRSP or the health insurance plan.

Retiring pastors may expect their pension benefits to come from multiple plans – Pre-1982 based on years of service with pension credit before January 1, 1982 and the PSR or the Defined Benefit Service Monies (DBSM) whichever provides the greater annuity payment, MPP based on defined contributions from 1982 through 2006, supplemented by PIP and UMPIP contributions, CRSP based on the number of service years between 2007 and 2013 and the DAC in the year of retirement and CRSP based on the number of service years after 2013. Because of the change in plans, it is important for participants to verify that the pre 2016 appointment information, including appointment percentages for less than full time appointments, listed in the *Journal of the Alabama-West Florida Conference* each year is correct. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits will assume that the Journal information is correct unless a correction is submitted in writing and verified within the conference year in which the Journal is printed.

The Cumulative Pension and Benefit Fund served as a voluntary defined-contribution retirement plan through 2006, funded through employer contributions made on behalf of deacons (prior to 2006), diaconal ministers, and lay employees of local churches. This fund is now part of the UMPIP plan.

Information from Wespath Benefits and Investments is available online at www.gbophb.org.

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits recommends that the apportionment line item for Conference Claimants Fund be set at \$500,000 (28.6% decrease) for 2018. Since pension liabilities are tied to the Conference Average Compensation and market results of Wespath Benefits and Investments plan assets, future increases

in the Conference Claimants Fund line item may track with these variables and Wespath Benefits and Investments actuarial projections.

We call attention to paragraph 622 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church relative to the requirement that the apportionment for the pension and benefit programs be paid in proportion to the payment of the pastor's salary by the local church. The Discipline gives the church treasurer the primary responsibility for the application of proportional payment. If the church treasurer fails to do this, the pastor is then required to adjust his/her cash salary.

## Report 5 – Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program

This Supplement One is applicable to the Alabama-West Florida Conference and is effective January 1, 2007. It replaces any previously executed Addendum A (or Attachment 1) and shall be in effect until amended by the Annual Conference in accordance with the provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security and the Comprehensive Protection Plan revised January 1, 2007.

CPP contribution base shall be the active participant's plan contribution for a plan year not to exceed 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation.

The CPP contribution rate shall be 3% of the contribution base of each active participant. [CPP Section 4.01(a).]

The CPP church contribution shall be made monthly to the plan by the Annual Conference in accordance with the Plan Document. Such CPP church contributions shall be transferred monthly from the deposit account of the Alabama-West Florida Conference by Wespath Benefits and Investments to the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The Annual Conference shall maintain an amount in its deposit account sufficient to provide for the monthly transfer of the church contributions on behalf of its active participants. The Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits is hereby authorized, at its discretion, to arrange with Wespath Benefits and Investments for active participation in CPP by persons who are eligible under special rules but not automatically included as active participants. [CPP Section 3.03(a)]

All full and associate members appointed to Sabbatical Leave or to attend school shall continue to participate in CPP, provided the Conference makes the required contribution based on 3% of the plan compensation [Disciplinary Paragraph 351; CPP Section 3.02(a).]

The surviving spouse benefit will be 70% of the participant's formula benefit.

## Report 6 – Alabama West Florida Annual Conference Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2017

The 2012 General Conference established a requirement for Annual Conferences to develop a comprehensive funding plan to identify both liabilities and resources. The Conference Board of Pension has both developed the plan and submitted it to Wespath Benefits and Investments for review. At this time we are waiting for the favorable opinion letter from them. It will be published in the 2017 Journal following annual conference. If you would like to see the complete plan, contact the Fiscal Office at 888-873-3127.

## Report 7 - Claimants' Memorial Fund

We recommend the continuation of the Claimants' Memorial Fund, such funds being invested by this board with the interest being used for the benefits of the conference claimants. Individuals and groups are invited to make voluntary contributions in any amount as memorials to deceased ministers, members of minister families, or lay persons. Checks should be made payable to the Alabama-West Florida Conference and sent to the conference treasurer, Montgomery, with the name or names of the persons being memorialized. Families of those so memorialized will be notified that a memorial gift was received.

## Report 8 – Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities

In keeping with paragraph 1506.3.a, and 4, of the 2016 Discipline, we recommend that those clergy appointed to extension ministries be approved for pension responsibility on this Annual Conference in the following full time appointments: the director of the Assembly Grounds, the director of the Mobile Inner City Mission, the director of each Wesley Foundation, the Chaplain at the United Methodist Children's Home, the Director of the Pensacola Urban Ministry and the Pensacola Hispanic Ministry provided such appointments are made as members of this Annual Conference under paragraph 344.1a(1) and 346.1 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The district superintendents, clergy appointed to the Conference Connectional Ministry, Ministerial Services, and the Fiscal Offices are approved with pension responsibility on this Annual Conference.

We recommend that special appointments to the United Methodist colleges and universities and other general agencies shall be listed as with pension responsibility on the institution or agency.

We recommend that chaplains in the Armed Forces be listed with pension responsibility on the chaplaincy of the military service.

We recommend that clergy under appointment as approved evangelists, area appointments and other special ministries shall be listed with pension responsibility on this Annual Conference only upon payment to the Conference Claimants Fund an amount equal to 14% of the DAC as determined by Wespath Benefits and Investments.

By special arrangement those clergy or probationary members on Sabbatical leave or appointed to attend school may qualify for the Comprehensive Protection Plan. . We recommend that special appointments to non-Methodist institutions shall be listed without pension responsibility on this Annual Conference.

We recommend that all missionaries shall be listed with pension responsibility on the General Board of Global Ministries

## Report 9 – Depositories

We recommend that the official depository for pension funds shall be the same as that designated by the Conference for other Conference funds as well as Wespath Benefits and Investments.

## Report 10 – Pensions for Lay Employees

We strongly endorse the UMPIP and the Lay Long Term Disability Plan administered by Wespath Benefits and Investments for lay employees of United Methodist local churches and agencies. In keeping with paragraph 258.2g (12) of the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline, we recommend and urge our churches to use these plans provided by the General Church to provide pension equal to at least 3% of compensation and death and disability coverage for our lay persons who serve our churches.

Churches and agencies should contact Wespath Benefits and Investments, 1901 Chestnut Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025, (800) 851-2201 for information on becoming plan sponsors for the UMPIP for lay employees.

## Report 11 – Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre-1982

We call attention to the following provisions relative to full time service, rendered prior to January 1, 1982, as a normal condition for pension credit which appears in paragraph 1506.3 of the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline.

A. Full-time service of a ministerial member or a lay pastor shall be required as a normal condition for pension credit; provided, however, that such credit may be granted for part time service by a three-fourth vote of those present and voting in the Annual Conference, on recommendation of the conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits

B. Full-time service shall mean that full time is devoted to the work of a pastor by one who has not attained the mandatory age of retirement for a Conference member, who is not attending school as a regular student, who is not substantially employed in non-pastoral work; and whose cash support per annum from all church sources is not less than the schedule of equitable compensation adopted by the Annual Conference for those in this person's classification.

It should be noted that service of either a ministerial member or lay pastor is without pension credit if it is not full-time service as defined, except in cases of approved part-time service.

## Report 12 – Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the Alabama–West Florida Annual Conference

The Alabama – West Florida Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church ("clergypersons");

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, and disabled clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, and disabled clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

## NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the "*Discipline*"), which includes all such payments from Wespath Benefits and Investments during the year 2018 by each active, retired, or disabled clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such clergyperson; and

THAT the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from Wespath Benefits and Investments and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath Benefits and Investments plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, or a disabled clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference

of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled clergyperson's pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: It should be noted that the above applies only to the clergyperson and not to the surviving spouse. The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2) and regulations there under to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the clergyperon's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. If you need further information concerning this exclusion, please contact your CPA or the Conference Fiscal Office

## Report 13 – Special Grants

The Conference Board of Pension recommends that the following monthly grant be made for the 2017 Conference year:

Oakley W. Melton, III \$300.00

## **Report 14 – Homes for Claimants**

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits owns 11 living units for persons who retired from the conference prior to 2003. Ms. Beth Gordon is chairperson of the Homes sub-committee of the board. No additional assignments of homes to retirees will take place, and homes are being sold as they are vacated. Home sales proceeds are placed in the Homes for Claimants account for homes operating expenses.

AUBURN	803 Cahaba Street	Rev. & Mrs. Jamie Pickard
DOTHAN	913 Clearmont Drive	Mrs. Linda Arledge
JACKSON	432 Golfview Drive	Mrs. Jake B. Brown
MOBILE	3636 Vista Ridge	Sold
MONTGOMERY	821 Bridleway Court	Rev. Jon C. Couey
	3708 Duquesne	Rev. and Mrs. Leonard Shults
	813 Hatcher Street	Mrs. Carolyn Wilson
OPELIKA	2008 Glenwood Drive	Mrs. Gerald Freeman
PENSACOLA	2003A and B. N. 15th Ave	Sold
	3585 Gatewood Drive	Vacant
	2743 Honeywood	Mrs. Thomas Sowell
	6313 Langley Place	Mrs. Driftwood Rucker

## Report 15 – Policy for Claimants Home Occupants

Should an occupant of a claimant's home choose to relocate from a claimant's home the following policy will apply:

Documented moving expenses not to exceed \$2,000 will be reimbursed.

A grant not to exceed \$3000 will be given to offset documented closing costs for the purchase of a home or documented rental deposit for an apartment, town home or assisted living facility.

The moving expenses and grant will be available to clergy persons or a surviving spouse occupying a claimant home. It is not available to family members when the home is vacated as a result of the death of a clergy person or surviving spouse.

## Report 16 - Need-based Housing Grants

By direction of the Annual Conference, the Board began selling vacant homes in 2003. Beginning in 2005, the Board began offering need-based housing grants for retiring clergy. To qualify an applicant must be:

A clergy person who retires with a minimum of 20 years full-time service with pension credit in the Alabama-West Florida Conference and is receiving his/her pension.

An un-remarried surviving spouse of an active clergy person with a minimum of ten (10) years full-time service in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. He/she must have been married to the qualified clergy person during the years of qualifying service. Exceptions may be considered in the case of death prior to 10 years of service.

The surviving spouse of a retired clergy person who was married to that clergy person at the time of his/her retirement.

Clergy Persons who are placed on Clergy Medical Leave by the Annual Conference.

## APPLICATION PERIOD:

Clergy that retire June 1, 2003 or thereafter may apply for a grant any time subsequent to their retirement. Surviving spouses may apply within one year of the date of death of the clergy person. Clergy persons who are placed on Clergy Medical Leave by the Annual Conference may apply within one year of being placed on Clergy Medical Leave or they may apply subsequent to retirement, provided they retire on or after June 1, 2003.

To be considered for a grant, the applicant and spouse's post-retirement earned income from all sources must be equal to or less than 1.25% of the denominational average compensation (DAC) in the year of application.

Applicants must submit a Board of Pension and Health Benefits Financial Statement, along with the most recent 1040 Income Tax Form including all schedules. Applicants may also be asked to complete an interview with a Grant Committee appointed by the Board of Pension.

Grants are intended to assist retiring clergy to obtain housing. The money granted to applicants should be used to aid with some form of housing such as down payments, closing costs, rental deposits, etc. Grants are awarded on a one-time basis up to \$3,500, as set forth herein. Grants will be disbursed within 30 day after approval by the Grants Committee.

Grants are not guaranteed but will be awarded based upon the Grant Committee's discretion considering financial need, circumstances, available grant funds and the totality of the overall circumstances.

#### Amendments

These guidelines maybe amended from time to time by simple majority of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

## Report 17 – Other Retirement Services

Wespath Benefits and Investments offers other outstanding services to active and retired clergy including Voluntary Supplemental Life Insurance through UNUM. Active and Retired clergy (and participating UMPIP lay employees) have access to free financial planning services through EY (Ernst and Young) For more information on these services, please contact Frank Dunnewind at the Conference Fiscal Office

## Report 18 – Alabama-West Florida Conference Policy on Clergy Medical Leave and CPP Benefits

(Approved June 2005)

## TERMS:

Medical Leave: A conference relations status of a clergy member who is unable to perform his or her ministerial work because of a physical or emotional impairment, the conference may grant medical leave upon recommendation of the conference boards of ordained ministry and pension.

CPP Disability Benefits: Benefits paid by the Comprehensive Protection Plan to clergy persons who are determined by Wespath Benefits and Investments to be eligible for these benefits and are on medical leave.

Medical Leave is granted to clergy who are members of the annual conference who are unable to perform their ministerial work because of incapacity due to health matters and disabling conditions. It is not a status that is used to solve appointment problems.

# The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church References: Paragraph 356. Medical Leave Due to Medical and Disabling Conditions that Prevent Performance of Ministerial Duties—

- 1. When clergy who are members of an annual conference (¶ 369) are unable to perform their ministerial duties because of medical and disabling conditions, upon recommendations of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions, and by a majority vote of the executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual conference who are present and voting, they may be granted annual medical leave without losing their relationship to the annual conference; provided, however, that such leave may be granted or renewed upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case by the joint committee on clergy medical leave of the annual conference, or the party responsible for managing clergy medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference's policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions. This relationship may be initiated by the clergy member or cabinet with or without the consent of the clergy member through the Board of Ordained Ministry. When medical leave is given without the clergy member's consent, reasonable accommodation shall be offered whenever possible. When a clergy member is granted medical leave by the annual conference, if the medical evidence has not yet met the standards for the receipt of benefits as set forth in the Comprehensive Protection Plan, section 5.04, the conference board of pensions may authorize payment of the benefits in the amount that would otherwise be payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The payments shall be made by Wespath Benefits and Investments as a charge to the annual conference granting the medical leave. If payments from the Comprehensive Protection Plan are subsequently approved, the annual conference will be reimbursed for benefits already paid, not to exceed the amount otherwise payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. Each medical leave granted by the annual conference shall be recorded in the conference minutes
- 2. When clergy who are members of an annual conference are unable to perform their ministerial duties between sessions of the annual conference on account of medical conditions, with the approval of a majority of the district superintendents, after consultation with the executive committee of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive committee of the conference board of pensions, a medical leave may be granted by the bishop for the remainder of the conference year; provided, however, that such leave may be granted upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case including accommodation provisions by the joint committee on clergy medical leave of the annual conference, or the party responsible for managing clergy medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference's policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions. When a clergy member

is granted medical leave by the bishop, if the medical evidence has not yet met the standards for receipt of benefits as set forth in the Comprehensive Protection Plan, section 5.04, the conference board of pensions may authorize payment of the benefits in the amount that would otherwise be payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The payments shall be made by Wespath Benefits and Investments as a charge to the annual conference granting the medical leave. If payments from the Comprehensive Protection Plan are subsequently approved, the annual conference will be reimbursed for benefits already paid, not to exceed the amount otherwise payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan.

3. When clergy members on medical leave provide medical evidence that they have recovered sufficiently to resume ministerial duties, or are able to return through reasonable accommodation, in consultation with the appointive cabinet, upon recommendation of the Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave (JCCML) or the conference relations committee, and with the approval of the executive committee of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they may receive an appointment from a bishop between sessions of the annual conference, thereby terminating the medical leave. Such appointment shall be reported immediately by the cabinet to the conference board of pensions and to Wespath Benefits and Investments. Such termination of leave, together with the effective date, shall also be recorded in the minutes of the annual conference at its next regular session.

Paragraph 635.2(1): "Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

"The duties of the annual conference board of ordained ministry shall be...

k) To interview applicants and make recommendation concerning: (1) changes from the effective relation to a leave of absence or retirement; (2) return to the effective relation from other relations; (3) honorable location; (4) readmission of located persons and persons discontinued from probationary membership; (5) sabbatical leave; (6) medical leave; (7) appointment as a student; (8) termination; and (9) changes to or from less than full-time ministry.

"The board shall keep a record of these changes and the reason behind them and place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference maintained by the secretary of the conference."

Paragraph 652. Each annual conference shall establish a procedure by which it will manage clergy medical leave. The annual conference may establish a Joint Committee on Clergy Medical leave (JCCML). If the annual conference establishes such a committee, it should be composed of at least two representatives each from the Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions, who may be elected by those boards at the beginning of each quadrennium and at other times when vacancies occur, and a district superintendent appointed from time to time by the bishop to represent the cabinet. The joint committee shall be encouraged to include in its composition a person with a disability, preferably someone under appointment. Unless and until other members are elected, the chairperson and

registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the chairperson and secretary of the conference board of pensions, or others designated by them, shall be authorized to represent their respective boards. The committee shall organize at the beginning of each quadrennium by the election of a chairperson and a secretary. If the annual conference does not establish a joint committee, the annual conference's established policy and process for managing clergy medical leave nonetheless should involve the Board of Ordained Ministry, the conference board of pension and representation from the cabinet.

The duties of the annual conference, with respect to clergy medical leave, or the Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave, or its equivalent, shall be:

- a) To study issues related to clergy medical leave in the annual conference.
- b) To provide for a continuing personal ministry to any clergy on medical leave of the conference and to aid them in maintaining fellowship with the members of the conference.
- c) To provide advice and support to and, where appropriate advocacy for, clergy on medical leave in (i) applying for and securing disability benefits from the Comprehensive Protection Plan and government programs, (ii) exploring possible sources of interim financial assistance before disability benefits can be obtained, (iii) establishing rehabilitation and return-to-service programs, and (iv) assessing the need for and providing reasonable accommodations.
- d) To make recommendations to the Board of Ordained Ministry, the conference board of pension, and the cabinet on matters related to clergy medical leave, including steps for the prevention of the need for medical leave, the process of granting medical leave, benefits, grants or other assistance, and programs of rehabilitation.
- e) To cooperate with and give assistance to Wespath Benefits and Investments in its administration of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, the Comprehensive Protection Plan and other benefit plans for clergy on medical leave, and to the extent applicable assist with the disability benefits and other benefits provided under those plans.

## Going on Medical Leave

When an eligible clergyperson requests CPP Benefits:

- 1. Application is requested from Conference Pension and Benefits Officer or Wespath Benefits and Investments.
- 2. Application is completed:
  - a. Form A., Applicant Information for Long-Term Disability Benefits is completed, signed by the applicant, and mailed to Wespath Benefits and Investments.
  - b. Form C, Clergy Disability Benefits Application is completed and signed by the applicant including the Authorization to Release Information page to Wespath Benefits and Investments and mailed to the District Superintendent
- 3. The District Superintendent signs Form C, acknowledging that the individual is applying for disability benefits and mails it to the Conference Pension and Benefits Officer

- 4. The Conference Benefits Officer signs Form C, acknowledging that the individual is applying for disability benefits.
- 5. The Conference Benefits Officer contacts by phone or email each member of the JCCML to alert them to the fact that the individual is applying for CPP Disability Benefits and signs Form C for the Chair of (JCCML) The Conference Pension and Benefits Officer mails Form C to Wespath Benefits and Investments..
- 6. Form F.: The District Superintendent must state, in writing, that the Bishop has or will grant the individual clergy medical leave. The District Superintendent must also indicate one of the following:
  - a. The applicant will be granted clergy medical leave ONLY if disability benefits are approved from the CPP and if approved the date incapacity leave will begin,
  - b. The applicant has been or will be granted medical leave and the conference deposit account should be charged for conference disability grant in the amount of:

Greater of 70% of plan compensation or 40% of DAC (standard CPP benefit)

Other (specify amount)

c. The applicant has been or will be granted medical leave without benefits and the date medical leave will begin.

If the conference deposit account is to be charged with CPP benefits (option b), the conference Pension and Benefits officer will coordinate approval with the Executive Committee of the conference board of pension and health benefits.

Form F is signed by the Conference Pension and Benefits Officer and mailed to Wespath Benefits and Investments.

The Conference Pension and Benefits Officer will provide a copy of Form F to the board of ordained ministry Executive Secretary to insure that the board of ordained ministry takes appropriate action. Because of HIPPA privacy regulations, it will be the standard position of the JCCML to recommend to the board of ordained ministry the status recommended by Liberty Mutual Insurance.

## **Coming Off Medical Leave**

For participants with a date of disability prior to December 31, 2012; among the reasons a participant will no longer receive CPP disability benefits are the following:

1. If a participant becomes disabled on or prior to the date he/she attains age 60, and is receiving disability benefits in the Conference year in which he/she attains age 65, and the disability continues, then the benefits will terminate on June 30 following the person's 65th birthday anniversary (if the final day of the regular session of such person's conference falls in the month of May or June, or, otherwise, on the last day of the month in which the closing day of such Conference session occurs) Para 5.04 d. (7) CPP Plan Document.

- 2. If the participant becomes disabled after age 60, and the disability continues, then the benefits will terminate on the earlier to occur of (i) June 30 following the end of a five year period from the date the disability was determined to have begun (if the final day of the regular session of such person's Conference falls in Mayor June, or , otherwise, on the last day of the month following the end of such five-year period in which the closing day of such Conference session occurs); or (ii) June 30 following such person's retirement date (if the final day of the regular session of such person's Conference falls in Mayor June, or, otherwise, on the last day of the month in which the closing day of such Conference session occurs). Para 5.4 d. (8) CPP Plan Document.
- 3. If the individual provides medical evidence that they have recovered sufficiently to resume ministerial work, or are able to return through reasonable accommodations a request must be submitted to the Bishop and the Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave.

For participants with a date of disability January 1, 2013 or later; Age Benefit Table:

Age at CPP Disability Date	Benefit Duration
62	60 Months
63	48 Months
64	42 Months
65	36 Months
66	30 Months
67	24 Months
68	18 Months
69	12 Months or until Age 72, whichever occurs earlier

The JCCML, through the Conference Pension and Benefits Officer, may request a referral through the Disability Management Alternatives for the name of a physician available and competent to provide an Independent Medical Evaluation of the individual's request Because of HIPPA privacy regulations, the JCCML will request only a recommendation from the physician as to the individual's ability to resume work and will follow the physician's recommendation as to making a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Alternately, and at the discretion of the JCCML, the recommendation of Liberty Mutual regarding continuation of CPP Disability Benefits may form the recommendation of the JCCML to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Having received the recommendation from the JCCML, the Board of Ordained Ministry will conduct the interview required in paragraph 635.2 (k)

If an individual receives an appointment between sessions of annual conference, the cabinet must report the appointment immediately to the conference board of pension and the Wespath Benefits and Investments. Such termination of medical leave, together with the effective date must also be recorded in the minutes of the annual conference at its next regular session.

## **Part-Time Appointments**

If an individual seeks a part-time appointment in anticipation of coming off medical leave the following information is required:

- 1. The appointment cannot last longer than 12 months.
- 2. The written recommendation of the individual's doctor. The operative word is recommendation. That is, the doctor believes that it is in the medical best interest of the individual to begin part-time service and is encouraging and cooperating with the return to part-time service.
- 3. The number of hours that the individual will work.
- 4. When the appointment will start
- 5. Will the person serve a church as the only pastor or will the individual serve as an associate of a church?

Approved: Board of Pension and Health Benefits - 01/12/2005; Board of Ministry - 03/01/2005

## Report 19 – Death Benefit Program

Since January 1, 1995 the conference has participated in Wespath Benefits and Investments' Basic Protection Plan, now Clergy Supplemental Life. Clergy Supplemental Life is an additional death benefit added to the regular death benefit provided by the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) in which each full-time clergy, with a base compensation and housing equal to at least 25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC).

2017 Death	Benefit for	Active	Participants
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Active Participant CPP death benefit	\$50,000.00
Active Participant Clergy Supplemental	
Life death benefit (under age 70)	\$25,000.00
Active Participant Clergy Supplemental	
Life death benefit (70 or older)	\$16,250.00

## 2017 Death Benefit for Retired Participants

For clergy who retired before January 1, 2013	
in the year of death	30% of DAC
For clergy who retired after January 1, 2013	\$20,400.00
Retired Participant Clergy Supplemental	

Life benefit \$ 5,000.00

For additional information related to other death benefits go to the Alabama-West Florida website at <a href="https://www.awfumc.org">www.awfumc.org</a>.

## Submitted by,

The Reverend Doctor Robert C. McKibben, Chair Board of Pension and Health Benefits

## **Board of Trustees**

## **REPORT 1 – FUND BALANCES**

The Board of Trustees of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference holds in trust all properties of the Annual Conference. The real properties held are the following: The Episcopal Residence: 3291 Lancaster Lane, Montgomery and the Annual Conference Office building at 4719 Woodmere Blvd, Montgomery. The Board is the Trustee for the following bequests (cost value as of December 31, 2016):

FUND	COST VALUE	BENEFICARY
1. Norris Allen Fund	\$ 206,710.20	Board of Ministry
2. Hattie B. Norred Fund	\$ 95,369.44	Board of Trustees
3. C.B. Gilmore Fund	\$ 166,966.91	Board of Trustees
4. Lowndesboro Trust	\$ 7,376.41	Lowndesboro UMC
5. Mary Lloyd Reynolds	\$ 99,249.59	Board of Missions
6. J.B. Skinner Estate	\$1,004,855.92	Children's Home

The Board of Trustees holds these funds in trust, with the revenues being used as directed by the donors.

We call attention to the resolution adopted by the Annual Conference of 1988, which designated the Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation as the official depository for discretionary endowment funds owned by the Annual Conference and its related boards and agencies. Local churches are encouraged to use the Foundation for endowment funds in order to insure proper management and fiduciary accountability.

## **REPORT 2 - SIGNATURE AUTHORITY**

In keeping with ¶2515 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, the President and any one of the following officers of the Board of Trustees may sign any required written instruments necessary to carry out the action authorized by the Annual Conference regarding the sale, transfer, lease or purchase of Annual Conference property: The Vice President or the Secretary.

# REPORT 3 - DESIGNATION OF UMC OWNED PROPERTY AS CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, OR ARCHITECTURAL LANDMARK

Paragraph 2512.7 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* directs that "the board [of trustees of the annual conference], after consultation with the conference commission on archives and history. . . shall develop a policy for an annual conference response, on behalf of any local church, church-related agency, or district or annual conference board of trustees located within the bounds of the annual conference, to any governmental effort to designate a property held in

trust for the benefit of The United Methodist Church (¶2501) by any such board of trustees as a cultural, historical, or architectural landmark."

Governmental designation of church-owned real property as a cultural, historical, or architectural landmark severely infringes upon and restricts the rights of the church as a property owner and as a religious institution.

Governmental designation of church-owned real property can cause a reduction in the market value of the property.

Typically, the exterior facade of a building may not be altered without governmental permission.

Depending on governmental requirements, alterations of the interior may be forbidden without governmental permission.

Improvements (such as buildings) on the property are either forbidden to be demolished, or can be demolished only after extensive and expensive applications and hearings.

Sale of landmarked property, when it is no longer required for church purposes, becomes almost impossible; a buyer is not given the freedom to demolish the structures on the property or to use it as he/she sees fit. Such limitations would render church-owned property virtually unable to be sold in the future.

The church could be blocked from transforming the donations given in the past to establish real property for United Methodist use into new establishments for United Methodist Church use, a promise made to the donors at the time their donations were originally solicited.

In exchange for such limitations on the use of property, governmental bodies typically will compensate the property owner for such reduction in property value and limitations on development and use by allowing federal and state income tax credits against actual expenditures made for future rehabilitation work done to the property. Such income tax credits are worthless to a church, however, because a church does not pay income taxes.

Because of the restrictions and infringements upon the rights of the church as a property owner and religious institution, in general such governmental designations should be discouraged.

There may be, however, instances when allowing such a land-marking to take place is in the best interests of both the public and the church. Therefore, the following principles are established as the policy of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference:

- 1. Any Board of Trustees which voluntarily wishes to cooperate with a governmental body in having that property landmarked which the Board of Trustees holds in trust for The United Methodist Church shall do the following:
  - a. Comply with the provisions of ¶s 2515, 2539, 2540, 2541, and/or 2543 (as appropriate) of *The 2106 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, just as if such land-marking were a sale of the property.
  - b. Obtain a majority vote of the Bishop and Cabinet, combined, approving such a voluntary land-marking of church-owned property.
- 2. On behalf of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, the Annual Conference Board of Trustees, as the designated successor in interest to churchowned property held in trust for the United Methodist Church under ¶2549.3 of The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, and as the designated agency "to intervene and take all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of the annual conference anywhere and in all matters relating to property and rights to property" of any of its agencies, organizations, or local churches under 2512.4, is directed to intervene, at the request of the superintendent of the district in which the affected property is located, to oppose any governmental effort to involuntarily designate any such property as a cultural, historical, or architectural landmark. This intervention may include engaging what legal or professional counsel is needed. Such intervention may include opposing such land-marking designation in any or all state or federal courts, if necessary and appropriate. The Annual Conference Board of Trustees may, at its discretion, undertake such intervention by financial assistance to the affected board of trustees. Such funding shall come first from any positive balance in the fund described below. Additional funding, if necessary, be requested from the Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration
- 3. The Annual Conference Committee on Finance and Administration shall establish an interest-on-investments account to be used, at the discretion of the Annual Conference Board of Trustees, to help defray the costs of opposing governmental efforts at involuntary land-marking of church-owned property as described above. Funds contributed to this fund may only be used for the designated purpose. Any use of these funds will be reported to the Annual Conference. Income generated from this account may be used by the Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration (or its successor organization) for any purpose it shall designate. The Annual Conference Board of Trustees is directed to a) request monies from the apportioned budget of the Annual Conference, as reasonably available, and b) solicit voluntary contributions, to put into the account to hold in reserve for the designated purpose.

## **REPORT 4 - GENERAL TRUST GUIDELINES**

In the absence of specific guidelines regarding the investment and distribution of gifts to the Alabama-West Florida Conference Board of Trustees, the board establishes these guidelines in order to provide ongoing support of the ministries identified by the donor. The use of "Board of Trustees" in this document refers

to the Board of Trustees of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church

- •The objective of the trust is to conserve principal as an ongoing source of funding.
- •Any part of the principal may be withdrawn only in extreme and overwhelming circumstances, bordering on the financial survival of the entity designated by the donor and must be approved by the Board of Trustees.
- •Fund management will be provided through the services of the Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation.
- •Up to 100% of the income may be utilized upon approval of the Board of Trustees. The Board shall use the "Corporate Law" definition of income, which generally defines income as earnings from all sources including interest, dividends, net rentals and capital appreciation.
- •Realized capital gains will routinely be treated as an increase in principal value unless approved by the Board of Trustees for distribution as part of "income".
- •The use of a trust fund as collateral for a loan will be decided on a case by case basis by the Board of Trustees.
- •Board of Trustees will determine the investment strategy for each fund and any changes in investment strategy will require approval of the Board.
- •Any material change to the income distribution policy requires approval of the Board of Trustees.
- •Board of Trustees encourages the use of the General Trust Guidelines for all additional gifts.

#### REPORT 5 - 15 PASSENGER VANS

In an extra ordinary action The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (see <a href="www.nhtsa.gov">www.nhtsa.gov</a>) issued a safety advisory for the fourth time in five years saving:

- •15 passenger vans are far more prone to rolling over than school buses, cars, or mini-vans.
- •Occupants of 15 passenger vans are less apt to wear seat belts.
- •15 passenger vans are three times more likely to roll over when fully loaded than when they have fewer than 10 passengers.

Federal law does not let car dealers sell the vans for transporting people 18 years and younger.

The South Carolina United Methodist Advocate, dated May 2001 stated: School buses average 0.2 deaths per 100 million miles. Vans average 1.2 deaths per 100 million miles.

The Alabama-West Florida Chancellor states, "I believe that the use of these vans should be strongly discouraged by the Conference. There have been studies which tend to show that 15-passenger vans can become unstable in emergency situations where the vans are fully loaded. While the vans have not been prohibited by the Department of Transportation, the use of fully loaded vans to transport passengers has been strongly questioned. There is evidence that a fully loaded 15-passenger

van exceeds the design criteria for the suspension systems of the van. Under emergency braking or handling maneuvers, the van can become unstable and there have been several crashes involving fully loaded vans. Consequently, it is my opinion that the Conference should strongly discourage the use of 15-passenger vans for the transportation of people in our Conference. Although the Conference cannot prohibit the use of these vans, I believe we should strongly discourage the use of these vans due to the liability concerns and safety concerns."

It is the recommendation of the Board of Trustees that churches not use or purchase 15 passenger vans to transport passengers and that before churches do so that they obtain competent legal advice and consult with their insurance company.

#### REPORT 6 - PARSONAGE STANDARDS

The Book of Discipline states, "Housing provisions shall comply with Annual Conference housing policy and parsonage standards." In order to establish a housing policy and housing standard the Annual Conference recommends three options available for the local church. The Annual Conference does not put one option above the other. The options are co-equal, depending upon the local situation.

The Charge Conference shall review the recommendations of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s) of a local Charge in consultation with the District Superintendent, the Charge shall choose one of these three options.

## **OPTION ONE**

Housing Allowance: Any congregation considering a housing allowance shall consult with the District Superintendent to understand all the positive and negative aspects of housing allowances. Before implementing a housing allowance, a congregation must obtain the District Superintendent's permission. The congregation must present a tentative draft budget for the first two years and demonstrate the impact of the change on the overall fiscal health of the congregation. If the congregation decides to sell an existing parsonage, the church leadership shall follow the Discipline guidelines for selling the parsonage and using the proceeds of the sale.

Upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees with approval by the Finance Committee, the Charge Conference shall provide an annual housing allowance. The housing allowance shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration of the pastor(s).

## OPTION TWO

Upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees with approval by the Finance Committee, the Charge Conference shall provide a parsonage that furnishes only major appliances, installed floor covering and window dressing.

#### OPTION THREE

Upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees with approval by the Finance Committee, the Charge Conference shall provide an adequately furnished parsonage, with quality furnishings, that complies with these standards:

## REQUIRED MINIMUM STANDARDS

In addition to the Discipline requirements for parsonages the following is required for all parsonages, in the Alabama -West Florida Annual Conference.

- •Electrical wiring that meets code and is sufficient to meet today's needs for electricity.
- •Climate control both heating and air conditioning

## Rooms:

- Living Room or Great Room
- •Dining Room or eating area large enough for at least 8 people
- •Kitchen
- •3 bedrooms
- •2 baths
- ·Indoor laundry area
- •Shelter for 2 vehicles
- Secure storage area

## Equipment:

Good quality, dependable appliances:

- Stove
- Microwave
- Dishwasher
- •Refrigerator with freezer compartment
- Washer and dryer
- •Hot water heater of at least 60 gallons
- •Wired for basic cable or satellite dish service
- •Maintained smoke alarms
- •Current fire extinguishers for kitchen and other required areas
- Vacuum, if there are carpets

If no lawn service and pastor is expected to maintain lawn the following are minimum requirements:

- •Gas mower
- Trimmer or weed eater

## Furnishings:

- •Quality window coverings in neutral colors that insure privacy
- •Quality floor coverings in neutral colors that is durable and easy to maintain

## Maintenance:

- •Regular pest control inspection and treatment
- •Annual termite inspection and treatment

- •Landscaping and maintenance thereof should be representative of the neighborhood
- •Regular schedule for painting both on the outside and inside of the house as needed. Any needed repairs should be done in a timely manner
- Annual carpet cleaning
- •Regular maintenance and cleaning of chimneys if one exists

## CARE OF THE PROPERTY

- 1. The pastor and family should care for the parsonage as good stewards for the Lord's property, carefully avoiding undue wear and tear, but at the same time they should "be at home" in the parsonage, knowing that the home and furnishings are to be used with inevitable and expected depreciation.
- 2. The pastor and family are responsible for the repair or replacement of furnishings when, through negligent use of furnishings, breakage results, but ordinary wear and tear, such as is expected when a house is lived in, is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees/Parsonage Committee.
- 3. The church shall provide an adequate amount of insurance of the building, furnishings, and equipment and for public liability. The minimum amount of insurance carried on the parsonage should be equal to 80% of the replacement value of the building, furnishings, and equipment. *All clergy families are responsible for insuring all of the family's personal items*.
- 4. There shall be a plan identifying repairs, replacements or additions that need to be made to the parsonage. All broken and worn-out furniture or equipment should be removed.
- 5. The Board of Trustees in consultation with the parsonage committee shall keep the parsonage and furnishing in good repair. They shall furnish the clergy family with a list of those church members who can do minor repairs and the names of repair companies with whom the church does business. A list of procedures to follow when repair work is needed should also be given to the clergy family
- 6. Regular pest control inspection and treatment, annual termite inspection and annual carpet cleaning should be budgeted.
- 7. The pastor and spouse should be consulted in the selection of furnishings and equipment.
- 8. If the vacating parsonage family had pets they shall be responsible for having the house and yard treated for fleas and other parasites before moving. They shall also be responsible for having the carpeting and upholstery cleaned and must vacate the house early in order to allow for this process to occur.
- 9. Each pastoral charge should place an amount in the budget annually for normal maintenance and repairs to the building, furnishings, and equipment or the replacement of same if necessary.

# REPORT 7 - POLICY STATEMENT CONCERNING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY CLERGY OF THE ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, INC.

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. affirms *The 2016 Book of Resolutions*, Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment Within the Church, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. In accordance with *The 2016 Book of Discipline* ¶161(F), we affirm that all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29 states, all are one in Christ. Therefore, this Conference of the United Methodist Church supports equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation or gender.

## **Statement of Purpose**

Clergy members of this conference are in a position of sacred trust, responsibility and power which affords the opportunity for unique relationships of grace and caring. Sexual *misconduct* by *the* clergy *violates this* trust and constitutes an abuse of the power and position of the clergy. It is the purpose of this policy to prohibit sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct by the clergy members of this conference in the performance of their responsibilities as ministers of the gospel. It is also the purpose of this policy to provide a method for reporting such misconduct and a procedure for resolution of complaints of misconduct involving clergy members of this Conference.

## **Theological Foundation**

All persons are created by God. Scripture teaches that male and female are created in the image of God, and are of equal value in Christ. Jesus was sent into the world that all persons may experience whole relationships with God and each other. We are called to live in a right relationship with God, with one another, and with ourselves. This calling to live in the fullness of our God-created humanity requires that we sustain a vital relationship to God so that we may maintain the dignity of all life, and treat each other with respect and dignity. *The 2016 Book of Discipline* states: "We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church and society."

#### **Definitions**

**Sexual harassment** is defined by *The 2016 Book of Discipline*,¶161(J) as "any unwanted sexual comment, advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender." Sexual harassment may occur in any environment where the work of the church takes place. Sexual harassment also

includes intimidating or coercive behavior that threatens or results in a tangible employment action.

**Gender Harassment** is behavior that is harassing in nature against a woman because she is a woman or against a man because he is a man.

**Sexual abuse** is conduct of a sexual nature that is in violation of the legal rights of others and/or conduct that is prohibit by law. Sexual abuse includes criminal sexual conduct or sexual contact by force, threat or intimidation that is in violation of the laws of the states of Alabama or Florida. As applicable to interactions with children or vulnerable persons, the term "sexual abuse" includes the subjection of a child or vulnerable person to any sexual act by any person responsible for their care in violation of the laws of the states of Alabama or Florida. To uphold the moral standards of the United Methodist Church as defined by *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, no person under the age of 18 nor any vulnerable adult may give consent to sexual acts.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other person of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, parishioner, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker or volunteer.

**Sexual Misconduct** is conduct which is a chargeable offense within the meaning of ¶2702 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. Sexual misconduct may also be an abuse of power through sexual contact or activity (not limited to sexual intercourse) which exploits the vulnerability of a parishioner, client, staff member, or volunteer, or conduct which causes or allows those persons to engage in sexual conduct with a person in a professional relationship (whether paid or unpaid) to this annual conference

Sexual misconduct may also include any sexual contact or activity (not limited to sexual intercourse) between a person in a therapeutic or counseling role or relationship with a parishioner or client. In such instances, consent is not a defense. Such behavior is inappropriate and immoral.

## **Policy Statement**

Sexual harassment, gender harassment, sexual abuse and misconduct of a sexual nature within the life of the Church interfere with its moral mission. The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church prohibits and will not tolerate these behaviors, which are sinful, demeaning, abusive and wrong. This Conference commits itself to the fair and expedient investigation of any complaint of sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse or misconduct of a sexual nature within the Conference and will take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with the *Book of Discipline*. Further, it shall be the policy of The Alabama West-Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church to create an environment of

hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free from this type of sinful conduct and which encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

## **Procedure for Reporting Complaints**

Some instances of harassment can be resolved informally by conversation between the parties or facilitated by mediation. In all other instances, conduct that is in violation of this policy must be reported immediately. Such a report may be made either to the Presiding Bishop of the Conference or any District Superintendent of this Conference. A report of such conduct may be reported to the Presiding Bishop at the Bishop's office in Montgomery, Alabama or to the District Superintendent at any of the District Offices within the Conference. Upon receipt by a District Superintendent of a report of clergy misconduct of a sexual nature, the District Superintendent must immediately report such complaint to the Presiding Bishop.

## **Non-Retaliation for Reporting**

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church will not retaliate against any person who brings forward a complaint or reports any conduct prohibited by this policy. All staff, leaders and volunteers are expected to immediately report any knowledge of harassment, abuse or misconduct to any one of the persons listed above. Prompt and appropriate investigation and corrective action, where appropriate, will be taken, including discipline. Persons who make false accusations may also be disciplined in the event that the accusations have been proven false.

## **Investigations**

All investigations and remedial measures shall take place according to the pertinent provisions of the *Book of Discipline*. Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed to in any way alter or enlarge on any requirement of the *Book of Discipline*. All complaints or reports of conduct that is in violation of this policy shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*. All investigations shall be consistent with fair process as set forth in ¶2701 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline* and the Decisions of The Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church.

## Confidentiality

While The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality, it will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing information concerning the complaint or the investigation only on a "need to know" basis and as necessary to promote God's call for justice, reconciliation and healing.

## **Mandatory Reporting**

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church will comply with all applicable state or federal laws regarding the mandatory reporting of misconduct of a sexual nature committed by any clergy.

## Mediation and Reconciliation

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church encourages resolution of disputes and conflicts by mediation and reconciliation. Where appropriate, the Conference encourages parties to utilize mediation in order to reach a just and equitable resolution of the matter, giving due consideration to the severity of the situation, the position of the parties and nature of the conduct involved. Where appropriate, the conference encourages the utilization of mediation agencies such as *Just Peace*, and appropriate support teams.

## REPORT 8 - SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY and MINIMUM STANDARDS

**INTRODUCTION**. One mission of The Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference Board of Trustees is to support the work of the local church. At each meeting the members keep in front of them the question, "How will this action help the local church?" Our prayer is that the revised Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards will help the local church accomplish its ministries while ensuring the safety of our children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults. We encourage clergy and laity to read this policy and make it an essential part of the operations of your local church. If you have any questions you may contact any member of the Board of Trustees

- I. **THEOLOGICAL BASIS**. The theological basis of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards (SSPMS) is grounded in the following:
- A. Children are important! Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me . . ." (Mark 9.37, all Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version). We ought to offer hospitality and protect children. Jesus said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18.6; Mark 9.42).
- B. *The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church* state that ". . . children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse." Id, Paragraph (¶) 162C.
- C. Members of the United Methodist Church regularly pledge commitment to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be "... surrounded by steadfast love, ... established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (*Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 44).
- D. Paragraph 2702 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* 2016 names child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment as chargeable offenses for both clergy and lay members.

II. **DEFINITIONS**. The following definitions shall be used in establishing, applying, and interpreting the SSPMS:

## A. Abuse

- 1. **Physical abuse** occurs where a person intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult.
- 2. **Emotional abuse** occurs where a person speaks violently or cruelly to a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult, or otherwise exposes a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult to violence or emotional cruelty.
- 3. **Neglect** is abuse which occurs where a person endangers the health, safety, or welfare of a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult by failing to act in a reasonable manner
- 4. **Sexual abuse** occurs where an adult or another older or more powerful youth has sexual contact with a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult.

## B. Personnel

- 1. **Governing body** refers to the local church leadership approved and elected by the annual Charge Conference of the local church and in compliance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016* (¶ 243, 244, and 247). Examples may include Church Council, Administrative Board, Board of Stewards, etc.
- 2. **Authority figure** is a person who is the primary leader of any youth, children, or at-risk or vulnerable adult activity and such person is required to be twenty-one (21) years of age or older.
- 3. **Assistant** is a person who gives help to and is directed by an **authority figure** in the course of any **youth**, **children**, or **at-risk or vulnerable adult** activity including, but not limited to, volunteers, interns, camp counselors, and Vacation Bible School workers. Such an assistant must be at least twelve (12) years of age. However, in order to count for satisfying requirements of the **two adult rule** (¶ II.C.1, below,) such assistant must be an **adult** as herein defined.
- 4. **Adults** are all persons who have attained the age of majority (19 years in Alabama and 18 years in Florida).
- 5. **Floater** is an adult who acts as an **assistant** to an **authority figure** to monitor **covered activities or events** (¶ II.C.2, below,) in order to comply with the **two adult rule** (¶ II.C.1, below,) when achieving such compliance by use of two non-related adults is unfeasible.
- 6. **Children** are all persons from infants through the fifth grade or sixth grade, as determined by each local church in order to conform with grade-level practices of its local area schools regarding classifications of elementary schools and middle or junior high schools.
- 7. **Youth** are all persons in the sixth-grade or seventh-grade through the twelfth-grade, as determined by each local church in order to conform with grade-level practices of its local area schools regarding classifications of middle or junior high schools and high schools.
- 8. **At-risk** or **vulnerable adults** are adults with physical, mental, and/or developmental impairment or disability.

## C. Activities

- 1. Two adult rule is a core principle regarding the supervision required for covered activities and overnight events. This rule means that a minimum of two adults who are not related to each other should be utilized in all programming with children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults. However, when unfeasible to staff at buildings and outdoor areas with two non-related adults, there should be at least an additional adult serving as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas where such programming occurs. Visual and physical access means either an open door or door with a window that provides a line of sight enabling the floater to see into a room or other building space and to see fully outdoor sites where covered activities or events take place.
- 2. Covered activities or events for purposes of this document include all church programming for children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults.
- 3. **Overnight events** are a type of **covered activity or event** which extends through the evening and which may include summer camps, retreats, mission trips, and lock-ins.
- a. **Room sharing limits** means that adults staying with young people during **overnight events** must be the same gender as the young people and that such adults must not be alone in a lodging room with a young person at any time and must not share a bed with a young person unless he/she is an immediate family member or guardian of such young person and of the same gender.
- b. **Immediate family member or guardian room sharing exception** means that an immediate family member or guardian of a young person who is chaperoning an **overnight event** is permitted to share a room and bed with his/her child no matter the gender as long as no other young people are sharing the room.
- 4. Transportation
- a. **Transportation** is a **covered activity** whenever such transportation is provided in a church-owned or leased vehicle (car, SUV, van, bus, etc.) or when a church staff member is the driver of or present in any vehicle used for such transportation. This provision shall not apply to multi-vehicle caravanning transportation. Two adults are not required to occupy each of the private vehicles in a caravan. b. Any such transportation provided for a church-sponsored or church-hosted
- b. Any such transportation provided for a church-sponsored or church-hosted program of day-care, pre-school, or after-school care that is licensed under the laws of Alabama or Florida shall abide by and conform with the respective state laws and regulations, if any, applicable to such a transportation function.
- III. **POLICY STATEMENT**. In covenant with all United Methodist congregations and the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, we endeavor as follows:
- A. We shall strive to provide for physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults.
- B. We shall strive to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be "... surrounded by steadfast love, ... established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (*Baptismal Covenant II, The United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 44).

- C. We shall strive to prevent physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults involved in any ministry sponsored by our Annual Conference or our local congregation.
- D. We shall strive to provide and facilitate the use of reasonable care and effort in caring for the children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults involved in any ministry sponsored by our Annual Conference or our local congregation.
- E. We shall strive to minister to and act in the best interests of persons who are experiencing abuse or who have been victims of abuse in the past.
- F. We shall strive to be aware of and comply with our legal responsibilities regarding the types of abuse addressed in this document.
- G. We shall strive to screen all current and future staff, and all volunteers for every program that involves children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults.
- H. We shall strive to acknowledge, respond to, and investigate all questions or reports regarding alleged abuse.
- I. We shall strive to adhere to biblical church discipline, particularly as recognized in ¶ 2702 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*, which names child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment as chargeable offenses for clergy and lay members.
- J. We shall commit to observe the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards.
- IV. **STANDARDS: THEIR ADOPTION**. Local churches within the Conference may adopt their own Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards, provided such standards equal or exceed in strength of protection for children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults the minimum standards here stated. In the absence of such local church action, the minimum standards that shall be utilized in implementing and applying the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards undertaken in the above-stated covenant with other United Methodist congregations and the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church shall be as follows:
- A. <u>RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION</u>. Implementing the Safe Sanctuaries Policy & Minimum Standards (SSPMS) at a local church shall be the responsibility of the Pastor in Charge, the governing body, and a permanent Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SSC) organized in compliance with the local church's governance process.
- B. <u>SAFE SANCTUATRIES COMMITTEE</u>. A Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SSC) shall have the responsibility for developing local church safe sanctuaries policies and minimum standards and procedures; communicating with and educating the congregation concerning those policies and procedures; recruiting, screening,

and training paid staff and volunteers; conducting site inspections and making recommendations; retaining records; and regularly reviewing conference policies and procedures, applicable state laws, and the insurance policy provisions and insurer requirements. Such periodic training and education on Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards and procedures provided by the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall be attended each quadrennium by the local church Pastor in Charge and SSC chairperson or other SSC designated member. Further, it is recommended that attendance at such conference-wide training include at a minimum designees from the local church who will be personally coordinating and conducting safe sanctuaries training for employees and staff within the local church.

- C. MEMBERSHIP OF SAFE SANCTUARIES COMMITTEE. The membership of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SSC), in addition to its chairperson, shall include, but not be limited to, the Pastor in Charge, Governing Body chairperson, Lay Delegate to AWF Annual Conference, Lay Leader, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee chairperson, Board of Trustees chairperson, and may include, if such offices and positions exist, Youth Director, youth leadership team representative, Children's Director, children's leadership team representative, Day Care Director, After School Program Director, and one or two at-large lay members.
- D. <u>ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING</u>. The following accountability and reporting measures shall be developed and employed:
- 1. Congregational Accountability. The SSC shall report to the Governing Body of the local church congregation at least annually and at such other interim times as circumstances relating to its responsibilities may require. In addition, the SSC shall regularly inform the Governing Body and the congregation at large concerning its efforts to recruit volunteers. Also the Governing Body and congregation shall regularly be informed and reminded by the SSC of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards content, and the Standards, Qualifications, and Screening requirements under the SSPMS that are applicable to employment of paid staff and to granting permission for service by volunteer workers. The SSC shall periodically announce and publicize that a church member may at any time upon request to the Pastor in Charge or his/her designee review and/or obtain a personal written copy of the complete policy document.
- 2. Infractions/Incidents Accountability. Actions or conduct concerning any personnel and covered activities as defined in this SSPMS document that are observed by or otherwise brought to the attention of a person (paid staff member; volunteer worker; parent or other relative of a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult; church member, church visitor, or guest; etc.) which is reasonably believed to be an infraction or incident in violation of this SSPMS should be promptly reported to the Pastor in Charge and to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee chairperson, or in the absence of either or both to their designated staff church employee. Resources and instructions for reporting suspected infractions or incidents constituting abuse (whether of child, youth, at-risk or vulnerable adult) proscribed by this policy document should be conspicuously posted in and about the local church buildings and campus.

- E. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR SERVING CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND AT-RISK OR VULNERABLE ADULTS FOR VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL. The qualifications for volunteer service in a local church with duties and responsibilities that include serving children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults shall be as follows:
- 1. Must have demonstrated an active relationship in the local church where service will occur for a minimum of three months prior to being permitted to serve as an authority figure.
- 2. Must be competent to work effectively in the served activity as an assistant in the judgment of the supervising staff member or supervising authority figure.
- F. <u>SCREENING AND BACKGROUND</u>. The local church shall obtain background checks on all persons serving with children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults. Such persons shall be subject to the following requirements and actions:
- 1. Complete an Application/Commitment form.
- 2. Be interviewed by the director of the ministry or program to be served.
- 3. Have experience and qualifications necessary for the staff position or volunteer service sought.
- 4. Attend training by the church or annual conference in maintaining the SSPMS; or in the event of an unforeseen circumstance requiring use of a substitute worker who has not had such training, that substitute worker must be briefed on the SSPMS by the director or other supervisor before beginning work.
- 5. Consent to initiation by the local church of the following background check(s):
- a. Multi-state criminal and sexual offender check based on social security number.
- b. Motor vehicle records check (for those who will be transporting children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults). The Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference recommends background checks be run through the Trak-1 Company or other reputable screening company. A background check will be valid for five years unless the individual has been absent for twelve (12) months or longer.
- 6. The process for conducting the above described background checks and for handling the results received shall include the following:
- a. Authority to initiate requests for criminal/sexual offender and motor vehicle background checks (see ¶ IV.F.6, above,) shall be limited to the Pastor in Charge or to his/her designated senior non-cleric staff employee.
- b. Upon receipt of background checks documents/data, whether favorable or unfavorable, its confidentiality shall be maintained. For such background check reports concerning a staff member, secure distribution will be made only to the Pastor in Charge, the SSC chairperson, and the Staff-Parrish Relations (Pastor-Parish Relations) Committee chairperson. For such background check reports concerning a volunteer, secure distribution will be made only to the Pastor in Charge and the SSC chairperson. For both categories of persons further actions shall be taken in accordance with provisions in Section G below.

## G. UNFAVORABLE REPORTS

1. The individual who has been the subject of a background check, the results of which are unfavorable, shall be so informed in writing with a Notice of Unfavorable Background Check form (see Conference website for forms).

- 2. If an unfavorable report concerns a volunteer applicant, the Pastor in Charge and another church leader (laity or staff) chosen by the Pastor in Charge shall meet with the volunteer applicant to review and discuss the report.
- 3. If the unfavorable report concerns a staff applicant, the Pastor in Charge and Staff-Parish Committee chairperson shall meet with the staff applicant to review and discuss the report and shall thereafter take such personnel action as shall be deemed appropriate.
- 4. Review of unfavorable reports containing any history of criminal charges or convictions or of any reported non-criminal conduct nevertheless suggesting potential unfitness for employment or volunteer status may take into consideration the following factors:
- a. The nature and seriousness of the crime or conduct
- b. The relationship of the crime or conduct to the purpose and nature of the church job or program for which employment or volunteer status is sought
- c. The age of the person at the time of the commission of the crime or conduct
- d. The time elapsed since the person's crime or conduct
- 5. Any background check reported charge, conviction, or conduct that deals with sexual abuse or child abuse shall bar the person from working as an employee or volunteer with children, youth, and/or at-risk or vulnerable adults.
- 6. Documentation of the employment or volunteer decision made shall be placed in the person's application or employee personnel file.

## H. RECORD RETENTION.

- 1. Records from the screening process including Application/Commitment interview forms and information from prior employment, references, and background checks shall be maintained in personnel and application files by individual name for each staff member/volunteer.
- 2. Both paper and electronic media records shall be kept safe and secure.
- I. TRAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS. The local church, within fourteen (14) days of employment or the beginning of volunteer service, shall provide training regarding safe sanctuaries policy, minimum standards, and procedures to such new workers who will work with children, youth and/or at-risk or vulnerable adults. Additionally, regularly occurring (at least annual) continuing education for safe sanctuaries training is required of all such workers (new and old). Attendance at all training programs shall be documented and retained in personnel files of the attendees. Upon completion of the training, attendees will sign an acknowledgement they have received the training and understand the SSPMS. The training should include, but is not limited to, the following:
- 1. The definitions and signs of child abuse and reporting of child abuse
- 2. The church's policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them (i.e. two adult rule, sign-in and sign-out sheets, procedures to follow if an accident occurs, procedures to follow for reporting an alleged incident of child abuse, information on state child abuse laws)
- 3. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics
- 4. Appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child, youth, and at-risk or

vulnerable adult events

- 5. Definitions of appropriate interpersonal boundaries (ways of touching students, appropriate language, etc.)
- 6. All forms used by the church for application, background checks, reporting, and teacher files

## V. REPORTING AND CHILD ABUSE INTERVENTION RESOURCES.

Child abuse reporting requirements and procedures for the states of Alabama and Florida and a list of child abuse intervention resources are provided below.

- A. Reporting abuse or alleged abuse in Alabama. Alabama's mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting law states that all school teachers and officials, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, members of the clergy as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report, or cause a report to be made of the same, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority. When an initial report is made to a law enforcement official, the official subsequently shall inform the Department of Human Resources of the report so that the department can carry out its responsibility to provide protective services when deemed appropriate to the respective child or children.
- B. **Reporting abuse or alleged abuse in Florida**. All cases of suspected abuse must be reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. Initial reports should NOT be made to the county/local branch of the Florida Department of Children and Families. The Florida Abuse Hotline may be reached at 1-800-96-ABUSE. Reports may be faxed in; however, the preferred option for the Florida Department of Children and Families is for persons to call the Florida Abuse Hotline and talk to a Hotline counselor
- C. **Child Abuse Intervention Resources**. Below are child abuse intervention reporting resources and contacts for use by the local church.
- 1. National Child Abuse Hotline 1(800) 4-A-CHILD
- 2. Florida Child Abuse Hotline 1(800) 96-ABUSE
- 3. County Department of Human/Children Services
- 4. Area Child Protective Services; for Alabama, the appropriate county Department of Human Resources (DHR)
- 5. National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse 1(312) 663-3520
- 6. Parents Anonymous 1(800) 421-0353
- 7. Alabama Sex Offender Registry http://community.dps.state.al.us
- 8. Florida Sex Offender Registry www.flsexoffender.net

## RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ALABAMA - WEST FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WHEREAS, the 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church provides that the Annual Conference shall have the authority to determine the manner in which proceeds from the sale of abandoned church assets may be distributed; and

WHEREAS, the Conference Trustees hereby recommend to the Annual Conference that it adopt certain policies and procedures pertaining to discontinued and abandoned church property, real, tangible, and intangible, including, but not limited to, church buildings and furnishings, parsonages and any other church-owned furnishings, cemeteries and records relating thereto, membership, baptismal, and other historic records, Christian and church insignia, and gifts held in trust, assets of any endowment foundations or invested funds; and

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved and recommended by the Board of Trustees of the Alabama - West Florida Conference that the following policies and procedures be adopted during the next business session of the Annual Conference of the Alabama - West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church:

# Report 9 - POLICIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF DISCONTINUED OR ABANDONED LOCAL CHURCHES AND THEIR ASSETS

The Annual Conference of the Alabama - West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby establishes the following policies and procedures for the distribution of proceeds of discontinued or abandoned churches and their assets. In all instances regarding the disposition of the assets of a local church as a result of discontinuance or abandonment of a local church, the current *United Methodist Book of Discipline* shall be consulted and followed along with these policies and procedures, which are designed to provide for the orderly gathering and disposition of said assets:

### A. Discontinued Churches

- 1. The district superintendent initiates the process for the assessment of a local church's potential following the steps prescribed in the current *Book of Discipline*.
- 2. Upon reaching the conclusion that a local church no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized, the district superintendent shall initiate the process by which the local church may be declared or may declare itself discontinued.
- 3. When remaining members are available, a charge or church conference will be held for the purpose of approving discontinuance.
- 4. If there is a cemetery cared for by the trustees of a local church, the local church trustees shall arrange for the incorporation of a Cemetery Association, either among themselves or including other interested persons in the community, and the cemetery shall be deeded to said Cemetery Association. In so doing:
- A. A separate survey of church and cemetery property will be required.
- B. The conveyance of the cemetery property must be approved by the church

conference or charge conference prior to the conveyance.

- 5. Any action to discontinue a local church requires an affirmative vote of the presiding bishop and a majority of the district superintendents and the district board of church location and building.
- 6. When a local church is discontinued according to the above procedures, the district superintendent, relying upon his or her sole discretion in the best interest of the Conference and in compliance with applicable church and civil law, shall be responsible for, and is the legally authorized representative of the Conference for: a) transferring remaining members to other United Methodist Churches, b) obtaining the deed to the property and a legal opinion as to any reversion restrictions in the deed, c) determining which group or persons will be responsible for the upkeep of the building and maintaining insurance premiums, and d) making recommendations for the future use of the property to the Annual Conference. If no recommendation is made, it shall be deemed abandoned consistent with Paragraph 2549.2(b) of the 2016 Book of Discipline.
- 7. District Superintendents will present resolutions for the discontinuance of churches during the next business session of the Annual Conference.

## B. Abandoned Churches

- 1. A local church that is already discontinued, may be further declared to be abandoned. The change in status from "discontinued" to "abandoned" may be made by local church/charge conference action, or at the recommendation of the district superintendent.
- 2. The following groups must approve the change in status: the presiding bishop and a majority of the district superintendents and members of the district board of church location and building. Upon approval of the change in status from discontinued to abandoned, the district superintendent will so notify the Conference Board of Trustees.
- 3. It is understood that this change in status means that the church and its assets are available for future sale or disposal by the Conference Board of Trustees.
- 4. The district superintendent or his/her designee and the Conference Board of Trustees shall cooperatively care for the following details: a) appoint a committee to conduct an immediate inventory of all local church assets; b) prepare a final accounting of outstanding financial obligations of the local church, to include any monies owed to the Conference, including but not limited to, any accrued direct bill obligations and current year apportionments that have not been paid; c) consult and follow the most recent Checklist for the Discontinuance or Abandonment of Local Church Property prepared by the GCFA Legal Department, d) provide all building keys and security codes, if any, to the Conference Board of Trustees, e) remove sacred objects of special value, church insignia and symbols, f) secure the buildings and exercise control over access thereto, and g) secure any gift, legacy, devise, annuity or other benefit that becomes available to the Conference as a result of a church's becoming abandoned.

## C. Sale of Abandoned Churches

1. The Conference Board of Trustees and the district superintendents shall cooperate in the sale of abandoned churches.

The following steps must be followed:

- (a) An independent appraisal be secured, the cost of which will be deducted from the sale proceeds.
- (b) All listing agreements shall include the following wording: "The seller is required by *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* to give consideration to other denominations represented in the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union. The seller reserves the right to reject offers from independent church organizations not connected with the Commission."
- (c) The Conference Board of Trustees may hire a real estate agent to list the sale at fair market value, and must provide necessary insurance, utilities, and upkeep of the property pending the sale, the cost of which will be deducted from the sale proceeds.
- (d) All written offers for purchase must be directed to the Conference Board of Trustees.
- (e) For an offer to be accepted, a majority of the Conference Board of Trustees must accept the offer by affirmative vote and authorize all deeds and other legal documents for the transfer of the property.
- (f) The Conference Board of Trustees shall request a written statement from the presiding bishop indicating that the ad interim sale of the abandoned church property has been executed in conformity with Paragraph 2515 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.
- (g) The Conference Board of Trustees shall report all sales of abandoned church property in a given year at the next business session of the Annual Conference.

## D. Distribution of Net Proceeds from the Sale of Abandoned Churches

- 1. The Conference Board of Trustees shall distribute the net proceeds from the sale of abandoned churches pursuant to Paragraphs 2549.3, 2549.5, and 2549.7 of the *2016 Book of Discipline* and this policy.
- 2. All proceeds from the sale of abandoned churches located in non-urban centers, as defined in Paragraph 2549.7, shall first be applied to satisfy any and all financial obligations of the abandoned church, including, but not limited to, unpaid pension and health benefits for the current year, any unpaid apportionments for the current year, and any other short-term or long-term liabilities incurred by the abandoned church. The remaining funds shall be distributed as follows:
- A. One half of the net proceeds shall be distributed to the Emerging Ministry Account of the district trustees in the district where the abandoned church was formerly located. Said proceeds shall be held in trust for use by the district for missional purposes, including, but not limited to places for United Methodist worship, ministry, or faith development; provided, however, in the event that the district trustees fail to use said proceeds in accordance with this provision within three years of receipt, or fail to receive an extension from the Conference Trustees, the said proceeds shall revert to the Conference Trustees to transfer to the Board of Congregational Development to use for new church starts and congregation revitalization within the Conference.
- B. The remaining half of the net proceeds shall be transferred by the Conference Trustees to the Board of Congregational Development to use for new church starts and congregational vitalization within the Conference.

- 3. All proceeds from abandoned churches in urban centers of the Conference, after all financial obligations of the abandoned church, including, but not limited to, unpaid pension and health benefits for the current year, any unpaid apportionments for the current year, and any other short-term or long-term liabilities incurred by the abandoned church, shall be distributed to the respective district trustees' Emerging Ministry Account to be used by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Cabinet in the Urban Center in which the sold property is located; provided, however, in the event that the district trustees fail to use said proceeds in accordance with this provision within three years of receipt, or fail to receive an extension from the Conference Trustees, the said proceeds shall revert to the Conference Trustees to transfer to the Board of Congregational Development to use for new church starts and congregation revitalization in Urban Centers within the Conference.
- 4. The Conference Treasurer shall provide quarterly financial reports to the Conference Trustees and to the Cabinet on the Conference Property Fund with income received and disbursements made for the Conference Property Fund, the District Emerging Ministry Accounts and the Conference Congregational Development Account. The President of the Trustees shall include in the Trustees Report to the Annual Conference a Financial Report on the Conference Property Fund.

## REPORT 10 CONFERENCE - WIDE INSURANCE PROGRAM (UNITED METHODIST INSURANCE)

In September 2006 the Board of Trustees joined United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust (PACT) by insuring all of the annual conference owned property and operations. In 2007 the Annual Conference adopted, but did not make mandatory, a resolution to establish PACT as the conference-wide insurance carrier for all of the churches and ministries of this annual conference beginning January 1, 2008.

In 2011 the denomination's top financial agency (GCFA) became the single owner of the PACT program. The General Council on Finance and Administration approved a plan to allow the United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust Company to buy out the 12 annual (regional) conferences and two general agencies that then owned the company. The new entity became United Methodist Insurance (UMI). In 2015 fifty-two churches and agencies were insured by UMI through the Alabama-West Florida Conference

The Conference began and ended 2016 with a balance of \$284,780.55.

We will continue to offer the UMI coverage to churches in the Alabama-West Florida Conference via the UMI partnership which began January 1, 2010, with the Church Insurance Agency Corporation (CIAC). The Church Insurance Agency Corporation is the Episcopal Church equivalent of UMI, that is, a captive that has provided ministry protection for the Episcopal churches in the US for over 100 years. CIAC will provide UMI the program administration services, including billing and endorsement changes. Their Alabama-West Florida representative,

Mr. Paul Stephens who lives in Nashville, has proven to be of benefit to the local churches of the annual conference. He can be reached at (615) 599-6830, cell number (615) 477-1583 or <a href="mailto:psecptonsorg">pstephens@cpg.org</a>.

## **REPORT 11 - MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

The Book of Discipline 2016 Par. 2533.2 requires local church trustees to annually compare the existence and adequacy and report on the adequacy of local church property and liability insurance coverage "to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risks." Since 1797, the Book of Discipline has provided that the property and assets of local churches are held in trust for the benefit of the denomination. Inadequate insurance puts local church property and assets at risk; including the denomination's trust interest therein. Therefore, Trustees of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, representing the denomination's trust interest, have adopted the following minimum insurance requirements for local churches:

## **COMMERCIAL PACKAGE POLICY**, to include the following minimum limits:

Buildings, Organs & Contents	Insured to Replacement Value, "All Risk" Coverage			
Fine Arts	\$25,000			
Comprehensive General Liability	Occurrence	\$1,000,000	Aggregate	\$3,000,000
Pastoral Counseling Liability	Occurrence	\$1,000,000	Aggregate	\$3,000,000
Hired and Non Owned Auto Liability	Occurrence	\$1,000,000	Aggregate	\$3,000,000
Employee Benefits Liability (EBL)	Occurrence	\$1,000,000	Aggregate	\$1,000,000
Medical Payments	\$10,000			
Sexual Misconduct Liability	Occurrence	\$1,000,000	Aggregate	\$2,000,000
Crime / Employee Dishonesty	Occurrence	\$25,000		

## **DIRECTORS & OFFICERS (D&O) POLICY**, including the following minimum liability limits:

•Directors' & Officers \$1.000,000

•Employment Practices Liability (EPL) \$1,000,000 (including Sexual Harassment)

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION POLICY, including supply clergy

•Bodily Injury by Accident Each accident \$1,000,000 •Bodily Injury by Disease Policy limit \$1,000,000

## UMBRELLA POLICY (Excess Liability)

## An Umbrella policy is suggested but not required

This excess policy must extend over Commercial General Liability, Pastoral Counseling, Employee Benefits Liability, Owned Auto, Hired & Non-Owned Auto and Workers Compensation. A higher per occurrence limit may be appropriate based on specific risk characteristics such as church size and/or scope of operations and ministries.

Per Occurrence Limit \$1,000,000 (minimum) Aggregate \$1,000,000

## REPORT 12 – ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

## Article I Purpose

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the Alabama West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church's (a nonprofit organization, hereafter referred to as the "Conference") interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Conference or another Interested Person as defined below, or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Board members or other Interested Persons as defined below have a fiduciary duty to exercise good faith in all transactions involving the Conference or one of its Affiliates as defined below. A rule of honest and fair dealing shall apply to transactions between Interested Persons and the Conference. They shall not knowingly use their positions or knowledge gained therefrom to materially or financially benefit, so that a conflict of interest may arise between the Conference's interest and that of any Interested Person.

## Article II Definitions

## 1. Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, employee or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an Interested Person. If a person is an Interested Person with respect to any board, committee or corporation controlled or wholly elected by the Conference ("Affiliate" or "Affiliates"), he/she is an Interested Person with respect to the Conference and any other of its Affiliates for the purposes of this policy.

## 2. Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or any family member of such person:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Conference has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with the Conference or with any entity or individual with which the Conference has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Conference is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

For the purposes of this Policy, "compensation" includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial, and the term "family member" includes the person's spouse, brothers, sisters, ancestors and lineal descendants

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists

## **Article III**

## Procedures

## 1. Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an Interested Person must disclose at the earliest possible time the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

## 2. Non-participation in Decisions

Any person who is required to disclose a conflict of interest pursuant to this policy shall not participate in any deliberations, consideration, discussion, or determination of any matter in which such person has a conflicting interest and shall not vote at any stage of such proceedings. Such person will be excused from the meeting room at all times that such matter is being discussed or voted upon by the remaining members of the board or committee.

## 3. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the Interested Person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining disinterested board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists

- 4. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
- a. An Interested Person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the proposed transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested Person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Conference can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Conference's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, the governing board or committee shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
- 5. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
- a. If the governing board, committee or management has reasonable cause to

believe an Interested Person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the Interested Person of the basis for such belief and afford the Interested Person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the Interested Person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board, committee, or management determines the Interested Person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take, or shall refer to the appropriate body to take, appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

### Article IV

## Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

#### Article V

### Compensation

- a. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Conference for services is precluded from participating in the discussion of, and voting on, matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Conference for services is precluded from participating in the discussion of, and voting on, matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Conference, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

#### Article VI

## **Dissemination of Policy**

The Conference Treasurer's Office shall be responsible for ensuring that a copy of this Policy is provided to each employee of the Conference and its Affiliates and to each Interested Person as defined above on an annual basis.

#### Article VII

## **Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the Conference operates in a manner consistent with its charitable and religious purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its

tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations, if any, conform to the Conference's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

#### Article VIII

## **Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Conference may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

Submitted by, Mrs. June Carpenter, President Conference Board of Trustees

## **Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC)**

"It is the purpose of the commission on equitable compensation to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference by: (a) recommending conference standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; (c) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations; and (d) submitting an arrearage policy to be adopted by the annual conference." (¶625.2, 2016 Discipline)

The CEC assists congregations which have potential for growth to become capable of financially supporting a full-time pastor, and assure that all full-time appointed pastors in the AWF Conference receive minimum salary. The CEC recommends the **following guidelines** for all churches/charges in our conference that apply for a subsidy grant:

1. Only full-time pastors, certified by the Board of Ordained Ministry (district and conference levels as applicable), approved by the annual conference, and appointed to a church or charge are eligible for a CEC subsidy grant. No associate pastor, part-time local, or supply pastor shall be eligible for a subsidy grant. The amount of equitable compensation a pastor may receive is based upon the taxable cash salary prior to any voluntary employee reductions such as a 403(b) plan or written cafeteria plan plus utility exclusions, excluding a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage. Full-time local pastors without a parsonage must receive a housing allowance to bring their total plan compensation up to 60% of the denominational average compensation so that they will be eligible for Comprehensive Protection Plan benefits.

- 2. No pastor shall receive a subsidy grant from CEC when the pastor receives income from any other church source if that income plus salary from the charge is more than minimum salary. No pastor serving outside the bounds of our conference shall be eligible to receive equitable compensation.
- 3. For a pastor to receive an equitable compensation subsidy grant, the church/charge must pay at least 80% of minimum salary for the year in which CEC a subsidy grant is provided, and have paid at least 50% of the previous year's apportionments. Direct Bill health insurance and pension payments shall be waived for charges upon their initial approval for a CEC subsidy grant, if no outstanding arrearage exists. Each succeeding year of receiving a CEC subsidy grant, churches/charges must make progress toward providing full clergy compensation according to the following schedule to qualify for a continued subsidy grant. Percentages listed below apply to the approved minimum salary for the calendar year in which a subsidy grant will be received:

Year 2: 85% of minimum salary and 100% apportionments paid

Year 3: 90% of minimum salary, and 100% apportionments paid

Year 4: 90% of minimum salary, 100% apportionments, and Defined Benefit portion of Direct Bill paid

Year 5: 95% of minimum salary, 100% apportionments, and complete Pension portion of Direct Bill paid

After five years of receiving a CEC subsidy grant, a church/charge may be approved for a sixth year of exemption from the Health Insurance portion of the Direct Bill if the charge is paying 100% of minimum salary, 100% of apportionments and 100% of the pension portion of the Direct Bill.

- 4. Churches/charges applying for a CEC subsidy grant that are already paying above 80% of minimum salary shall be expected to make appropriate progress toward becoming self-sustaining in accord with the schedule in Paragraph 3.
- 5. The CEC recognizes that occasionally circumstances will demand special consideration. The district superintendent of the applying church/charge should assess such cases and present rationale for a subsidy grant to the CEC. Churches/charges must be willing to participate in a formal congregational development effort offered by the annual conference.
- 6. District superintendents are required to review all equitable compensation situations in their districts to ascertain the necessity for assistance and, whenever possible, seek to reduce the need for a CEC subsidy grant. The district superintendent shall be responsible for the accurate completion and submission of subsidy grant applications to the CEC. The secretary of the CEC shall not issue a check order for an equitable compensation subsidy grant until all criteria have been met as determined by the CEC.

The CEC recommends a minimum salary of \$37,200 for all full-time appointed clergy for 2018.

## Equitable Compensation **Disbursements for 2016**

Choctaw/Washington (Demopolis)	\$ 6,396
Eutaw (Demopolis)	\$ 5,484
St. Matthew/Jackson Chapel (Demopolis)	\$ 4,572
St. Paul/St. Mary (Demopolis)	\$ 22,104
Thomaston (Demopolis)	\$ 5,334
Lime Springs Kinston	\$ 3,354
Pinckard/Denton Rd. (Dothan)	\$ 5,994
Aldersgate/Sunflower (Mobile)	\$ 6,396
Georgetown-Chunchula (Mobile)	\$ 1,830
Theodore First (Mobile)	\$ 3,660
Zion Fellowship (Montgomery-Opelika)	\$ 951
New Beginnings (Montgomery-Prattville)	\$ 5,004
TOTAL	\$ 74,733

## **Arrearage Policy**

- 1. In the event that the local church treasurer becomes aware that the church will be unable to provide to the pastor full payment of a regularly scheduled payroll, housing allowance installment, or full payment for regular directly billed benefit payments such as pension and health care, the church treasurer shall immediately notify both verbally (within 24 hours) and in writing (within 3 days) the pastor, lay leader, and chairs of S/PPRC, finance, trustees, and the church council of the impending arrearage. Upon receipt of such notice, the chair of S/PPRC and/or the pastor shall immediately (within 3 days) notify the DS of the impending arrearage. It is the pastor's responsibility to keep copies of all written notifications and to provide additional written confirmation to the DS when an arrearage has taken place. Failure to document salary or benefit arrearages may result in a loss of compensation and/or forfeiture of pension and benefits.
- 2. Upon receipt of notice of an impending arrearage, the chair of S/PPRC shall immediately (within 24 hours) call a meeting of the pastor, lay leader, and chairs of finance, trustees, and the church council to discuss the financial situation and seek remedies to prevent an arrearage from occurring. Such remedies might include drawing from invested funds, an emergency appeal for special giving from the congregation, or emergency grants or loans from the District or Conference. In accord with *Discipline* ¶624, such remedies cannot include a reduction in the pastor's compensation until the beginning of the next conference year.
- 3. If after consultation with the lay leader and chairs of S/PPRC, finance, trustees, and church council it becomes apparent that the church may be facing a long term financial crisis, the chair of S/PPRC shall notify in writing the pastor and DS that:
  (a) a CEC subsidy grant is necessary to maintain compensation for the remainder of the conference year, (b) a change in pastoral compensation may be necessary at the beginning of the following conference year, or (c) a change in pastoral appointment as deemed necessary by the bishop and cabinet.
- 4. If the local church becomes delinquent in the pastor's compensation (i.e. more than 30 days), then the district superintendent shall notify the CEC, which on its own initiative may send a representative to meet with the local church and pastor to seek resolution of the issue, or develop a payment plan with the local church/

charge so that the pastor receives full payment of compensation by the end of the conference year. The district superintendent shall be invited to participate in this process.

- 5. If the local church is already receiving a subsidy grant, the CEC may: (a) determine if all subsidy grant funds allocated to the church were used to pay the pastor's salary, (b) examine the original subsidy grant application to determine if the amount requested was reduced, (c) require an outside audit of all church funds in compliance with GCFA Guidelines, (www.gcfa.org). The CEC shall notify the district superintendent in writing of its findings and recommendations.
- 6. If a local church becomes delinquent in the payment of the pastor's direct billed pension and benefits (i.e., more than 30 days), then the conference treasurer shall notify the conference benefits officer, the district superintendent, and the CEC. On behalf of the conference, the benefits officer and/or DS shall develop a written payment plan with the local church so that the conference receives full payment of pension and benefits by the end of the conference year.
- 7. Discipline ¶ 2543.1 makes clear that no real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged to pay for the current or budgeted expenses of a local church (including arrearages), nor shall the principal proceeds of a sale of any such property be so used. This provision shall apply alike to unincorporated and incorporated local churches.
- 8. In extreme and unresolved circumstances, the local church and/or pastor may petition a session of the annual conference for assistance in payment of the arrearage, after completing the required financial audit of the church.
- 9. It is the responsibility of the pastor to provide evidence of an arrearage by providing documentation such as: treasurer's reports, charge conference reports of adopted compensation, check stubs, W-2 forms, and a Certification of Payment Form signed by the pastor, S/PPRC chair, trustee chair, treasurer, and church council chair.
- 10. The statute of limitations for filing a claim for funds from the annual conference (i.e., notification to the DS) for any salary arrearage is one year from the date of the initial arrearage. Once an appointment ends, the pastor no longer has claim on the local church for compensation funds (¶ 342.4, *Discipline*).

Rev. Michael Cobb, Chairperson Commission on Equitable Compensation

## **Council on Finance and Administration (CFA)**

## Report No. 1 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Purpose: To develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

1. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall be organized in accordance with paragraph 610 and 611 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and Standing Rule No. 35 in the 2016 Journal of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

- 2. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall meet prior to Annual Conference and during session as needed. A fall and winter/spring meeting of CFA shall be held. The president of the Council may call other meetings.
- 3. All persons interested in presenting a request to CFA are invited to do so or to attend any of the Council meetings. All Council meetings shall be open to all interested persons, except when, by majority vote, the council elects to meet in executive session.
- 4. The Committee on Investments within CFA shall be responsible for reviewing, approving, and supervising all banking relationships of CFA with special attention given to investments including those of conference agencies.
- 5. The Committee on Audit and Review within CFA shall have responsibility for reviewing audits of all agencies receiving funds from the Annual Conference.
- 6. The Regions Bank shall be designated to serve as the conference depository to receive funds and keep specified records.

## **Report No. 2 - CONFERENCE OFFICERS**

The Council on Finance and Administration shall be responsible for budgeting and for the work of the conference officers as listed in Standing Rule No.2.

### A. Conference Secretary

The conference secretary fulfills the responsibilities prescribed by the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and the Standing Rules of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

#### B. Conference Fiscal Officer and the Fiscal Office

- 1. The responsibilities of the Fiscal Office shall include: Conference Treasurer/ Director of Administrative Services; Statistician; Conference Benefits Officer and Executive Secretary of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits; and other responsibilities assigned by the Council on Finance and Administration.
- 2. The Fiscal Officer shall keep records, make reports, and handle all financial transactions of all conference agencies.
- 3. The Fiscal Office shall prepare reports as required by the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), and mail copies to persons who may need such reports.
- 4. All apportioned district and conference funds shall be channeled through Regions Bank and records kept by the Fiscal Office of the Conference.
- 5. The Fiscal Office shall disburse all checks pertaining to every fund and keep proper files of the copies of the check orders from the secretaries authorizing the issue of such checks. Copies of the checks issued shall be filed after having been charged against the account upon which they have been drawn.
- 6. The Fiscal Office shall tabulate, church by church, fund by fund, the information given on the remittance blanks for the conference depository.

## C. Journal Editor - Conference Journal and Brochure of Reports

- 1. The Journal Editor shall chair the Editorial Committee (Standing Rule No. 15), and be responsible for the publication and distribution of the Annual *Conference Journal* and the *Book of Reports* for the Annual Conference.
- 2. All boards, commissions, committees and other agencies submitting reports to be included in the Book of Reports must have the reports in the hands of the editor no later than the last Monday in February.
- 3. The Journal Editor shall have authority to edit reports but not to change the meaning of any part of any report.
- 4. Standing Rule No. 15 shall be followed in distributing the *Book of Reports*. It shall be the responsibility of the district superintendents to supply the names and addresses of lay members no later than the last Monday of February. Additional copies shall be made available to the conference registrar.
- 5. All memoirs (including photographs) must be in the hands of the editor by the closing of the last business session of the annual conference. Responsibility for this material shall reside with the Commission on Archives and History.
- 6. All material to be included in the Journal (other than those in 5 above) must be in hands of the editor not later than ten (10) working days after the close of the Annual Conference.
- 7. The Annual *Conference Journal* shall be distributed according to Standing Rule No. 15. Instructions for ordering the Journal will be provided in the *Book of Reports*.

## D. Conference Registrar and Registration Policies

- 1. The Conference Registrar shall have full responsibility for interpreting the eligibility of those covered under Standing Rule No. 8 for entertainment at the Annual Conference Session. This may be appealed to the Council on Finance and Administration.
- 2. The Conference Registrar shall supervise registration of and assignment of rooms to Annual Conference delegates and handle calls for persons attending sessions
- 3. Chairpersons of boards and agencies who are not elected delegates and attend the Annual Conference in order to give reports shall have their expenses paid by their own board or agency.
- 4. All physical preparation for Annual Conference shall be under the Registrar's supervision in cooperation with the Dais Committee, Worship Committee, and host facility staff.
- 5. No materials will be allowed on the registration table other than that necessary for registration. Other arrangements should be made to distribute materials through the site manager.
- 6. Use of dining halls, rooms, or areas shall be determined by the site manager. Fees for dining rooms shall be paid by the group using such rooms.
- 7. Space and/or rooms to be used for displays shall be assigned by the site manager and no other. Space shall be assigned on a first come basis.
- 8. Commercial displays will be allowed only in a room assigned and publicized for this purpose, with the exception of Cokesbury, which will continue to have a room assigned only to it.

9. Special needs, such as hymnals, altar furnishings, projectors, etc., shall be arranged through the site manager at least two weeks before conference. Needs arising during Annual Conference, which could not be anticipated, will also be arranged through the site manager.

## **Report No. 3 - BONDING REQUIREMENTS**

Paragraph 618.1 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church gives CFA responsibility for the fidelity bonding of the conference treasurer. CFA recommends that the present policy of bonding be continued through the United Methodist Insurance. Paragraph 618.2 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church gives CFA the responsibility of requiring all agencies and boards for which the conference treasurer does not serve as treasurer to have fidelity bonding of there is such amounts as it deems adequate.

In order to avoid the depositing of conference funds in any one bank in excess of the insured limits, CFA shall serve as the clearing house for all agencies in the Annual Conference making deposits in any bank, either savings or checking accounts. Bank accounts shall not be opened by any agency without approval by CFA. No agency shall permit the total amount deposited in anyone bank to exceed insured limits without CFA approval.

## Report No. 4 - BUDGETING, FUNDING, and AUDITING PROCEDURES

- 1. All boards and agencies are required to cooperate with the conference treasurer in the development of detailed financial reports of the income, expenditures, remaining balances, and audits.
- 2. Program budget requests shall follow the prescribed procedures established by the CORE Team
- 3. Agencies may request, or be asked, to meet with CFA to clarify their budget request or report.
- 4. The Conference Resource Center and all boards and agencies receiving funds from conference benevolences with budget amounts approved by the Annual Conference shall be allowed to draw funds or make expenditures on a monthly basis as needed. Funds available monthly for the program boards will be those approved by the CORE Team from the available pool. Funds available for the Conference Resource Center will be based on the benevolence receipts of the current year. Agencies of the Annual Conference that require monthly support will receive 1/12 of the approved allocation each month. Any expenditure more than the amount approved by the CORE Team in any Conference program board account shall be cleared with the President of CFA and the Director of Connectional Ministries
- 5. All expenditures from the Interest on Investments Account shall be approved by a majority vote of CFA.
- 6. Each Agency, whose records are not kept by the Fiscal Office, is required to bond its treasurer and provide a certificate of insurance to CFA. Such agency shall provide a copy of its audit and other reports to CFA as deemed necessary by CFA.

(Paragraphs 618.2 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church) Reports to CFA shall be in such detail, and provided at such times, as the Council shall direct.

- 7. CFA may withhold conference funds from any agency or board that fails or refuses to present proper bonds or audits. Such withholding shall continue until proper requests are met.
- 8. An audit of the complete financial status of the Annual Conference shall be published in the Conference Journal.

## Report No. 5 - ZERO-BASED BUDGETING

The following proposal for "zero-based" budgeting is presented by the Council on Finance and Administration (the original proposal was adopted by the Conference on June 1, 1988):

- 1. All program area budgets of Annual Conference boards and agencies will begin the year with a zero balance.
- 2. The annual budgets for program boards and agencies shall be prepared on a "zero-base." It is intended that all programs, projects and functions, old and new, be analyzed and reevaluated regularly and systematically by the CORE Team. Groups requesting budgeted funds shall be required to justify those requests in detail to explain why money is needed, specifically what it will be used for, the resulting benefits, and what would result if the request were denied.
- 3. At the end of the fiscal year, the unused balances for each board and agency shall be transferred to a reserve account, which shall be designated the "Mission and Ministry Fund."
- 4. The Mission and Ministry Fund shall consist of the following:
- a. Funds remaining in the CORE Team Missional Giving Fund at the end of the year
- b. Funds which may be budgeted for the Mission and Ministry Fund
- c. Funds received from terminated activities which remain unused for those activities when transferred by the CORE Team
- d. Interest earned from sources as may be provided by the Council on Finance and Administration
- e. Funds from other sources that may be deposited by any board or agency or group within the Annual Conference.
- 5. Additional use of Mission and Ministry funds by program boards and agencies or for other program purposes of the Annual Conference shall be approved by a majority vote of the CORE Team.

## Report No. 6 - FUND RAISING and COLLECTION POLICIES

CFA makes the following recommendations for those causes for which no funds are allocated:

1. That each local church observe World Communion Sunday, Human Relations Day, UMCOR Sunday, United Methodist Student Day, Peace with Justice Sunday, Native American Awareness Sunday, and Golden Cross Sunday and that special offerings be received or budgeted for these special days.

- 2. That our conference continue to give its hearty support to the Advance Special program at both the General and Conference levels. (See complete listing of approved Conference Advance Special programs in the Journal Report of the Board of Global Ministries or the General Conference data log of Mission Handbook.)
- 3. That the Alabama-West Florida Conference fully support the following programs and give sponsoring agencies permission to raise and receive funds, provided that there be no goals or quotas placed on local churches:

### A. Blue Lake:

- 1) Camps for the underprivileged and special youth (Blue Lake Assembly Ground Trustees)
- 2) United Methodist Women's Blue Lake Support
- 3) Blue Lake Partner Program (Assembly Ground Trustees)
- 4) "Camping Sunday" for Blue Lake improvement and volunteer recognition (Assembly Ground Trustees)
- 5) 20in12 Blue Lake Campaign
- 6) "Blue Lake Sunday" to help reduce debt at Blue Lake (Assembly Ground Trustees)
- B. Homes for the Aging:
  - 1) "Fountain of Love Offering," for Homes for the Aging (primarily in February) (The Board of Global Ministries)
  - 2) Support for New Homes sponsored by Methodist Homes for the Aging
- C. The White Christmas and fifth Sunday church school offerings for the Children's Home
- D. Golden Cross Ministries (primarily on Mother's Day) (The Committee on Health and Welfare Ministries)
- E. Youth Service Fund (United Methodist Youth)
- F. Huntingdon College (Board of Higher Education)
- G. Mobile Inner City Mission Endowment Fund (Board of Global Ministries)
- H. United Methodist Men's Kingdom Builders Project (Board of Laity)
- I. New Church Development Fund (Commission on New Congregational Development)
- J. Wesley Foundation:
  - 1) University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation Capital Fund Campaign
  - 2) University of West Alabama Wesley Foundation Capital Fund Campaign
- K. Central Conference Pension Initiative (Board of Pension and Health Benefits)
- L. Academy for Congregational Excellence
- M. 5 on the 5th (Nellie Burge BOD)
- N. Dumas Wesley Roof Repair Project

**Report No. 7 - APPORTIONMENTS** 

GENERAL CHURCH FUNDS	2017	2018	+/-
World Service	1,758,485	1,834,158	4.30%
Ministerial Education Fund	593,935	619,493	4.30%
Black College Fund	236,915	247,110	4.30%
Africa University Fund	53,021	55,302	4.30%
Episcopal Fund	520,759	543,169	4.30%
General Administration Fund	208,806		4.30%
	•	217,791	
Interdenominational Coop. Fund	46,450	48,449	4.30%
SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTIONAL FUND	20.100	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	0.000/
SEJ Administration Fund	29,100	29,100	0.00%
ANNUAL CONFERENCE FUNDS			
Blue Lake Operation	196,450	190,708	-2.92%
Blue Lake Capital Improvement			
and Debt Retirement	100,250	97,304	-2.94%
Capital and Operating Fund (Trustees)	193,800	190,000	-1.96%
(1) Conference Administration Fund	664,900	662,400	-0.38%
(2) Conference Ministries	1,210,100	1,250,600	3.35%
(3) Congregational Development	388,700	388,700	0.00%
District Superintendents Fund	1,021,450	1,055,800	3.36%
Equitable Compensation Fund	40,000	50,000	25.00%
Homes for the Aging	64,450	64,450	0.00%
Academy for Congregational Excellence	75,000	75,000	0.00%
Higher Education			
Huntingdon/Birmingham Southern College	620,850	620,850	0.00%
Student Aid, Huntingdon College	246,450	246,450	0.00%
Wesley Foundation/Campus Ministry	550,350	572,634	4.05%
Board of Pension and Health Benefits			
Conference Claimants Fund	700,000	500,000	-28.57%
Health Insurance Fund	1,400,000	1,500,000	7.14%
Board of Pension and Health Benefits	32,000	25,000	-21.88%
TOTAL CONFERENCE BUDGET	10,952,221	11,084,468	1.21%

## Report No. 7 - APPORTIONMENTS continued

(1) Includes:			
Archives and History	72,400	72,400	0.00%
Board of Ordained Ministry	52,650	60,000	13.96%
Episcopal Office Expense	123,850	130,000	4.97%
Fiscal Office	251,100	247,000	-1.63%
Annual Conference Administration	144,900	133,000	-8.21%
Moving Fund for Retirees	<u>20,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>	0.00%
Sub Total	664,900	662,400	-0.38%
(2) Includes:			
Connectional Ministries/Communications	674,100	714,600	6.01%
Mission and Ministry Fund	536,000	<u>536,000</u>	0.00%
Sub Total	1,210,100	1,250,600	3.35%

Connectional Ministries/Communications: \$714,600

Supports salaries, benefits and expenses for six (6) program staff and two (2) support staff. Also supports general office expenses including telephone, printing, mailing, computer and miscellaneous expenses.

Mission and Ministry Fund: \$536,000

This fund supports eight (8) of the Boards related to the Conference CORE Team. They are Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns, Church and Society, Discipleship, Global Ministries, Laity, Higher Ed and Campus Ministries, Hispanic Ministries and Town and Country. The Mission and Ministry Fund also provides support for agencies related to the annual conference and new and emerging ministries. Those being supported in 2017 are Dumas Wesley Community Center, Mobile Inner City Metro Ministries, Mary Ellen's Hearth (formerly Nellie Burge Community Center), The Ark (formerly Noah's Ark), Alabama Rural Ministries, Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries, Milk and Honey, Communities of Transformation and Quad W.

## (3)Includes:

Congregational Development Office	148,700	148,700	0.00%
New Church Pastors' Salaries	170,000	170,000	0.00%
New Church Development Fund	50,000	50,000	0.00%
Church Revitalization Fund	20,000	20,000	0.00%
Sub Total	388,700	388,700	0.00%

**Report No. 7 - APPORTIONMENTS continued** 

APPORTIONMENTS - SUPPLI	EM	ENTAL RE	POF	RT				
		2016		2016	2016		2016	
	Apportioned			Received	%Received	]	Expended	
World Service Fund	\$	1,715,103	\$	1,462,052	85.25%	\$	1,462,052	
Ministerial Education Fund	\$	588,829	\$	519,346	88.20%	\$	519,346	
Black College Fund	\$	234,890	\$	201,476	85.77%	\$	201,476	
Africa University Fund	\$	52,582	\$	46,284	88.02%	\$	46,284	
Episcopal Fund	\$	552,882	\$	487,318	88.14%	\$	487,318	
General Administration Fund	\$	207,072	\$	182,552	88.16%	\$	182,552	
Interdenominational Coop Fund	\$	46,073	\$	35,493	77.04%	\$	35,493	
TOTALS	\$	3,397,431	\$	2,934,521	86.37%	\$	2,934,521	
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SEJ FUNDS								
SEJ Administration	\$	58,380	\$	53,259	91.23%	\$	53,259	
TOTALS	\$	58,380	\$	53,259	91.23%	\$	53,259	
		,						
ANNUAL CONFERENCE FUND	S							
Blue Lake Operation Fund	\$	191,650	\$	150,053	78.30%	\$	150,053	
B/L Cap Impr/Debt Retirement Fu	\$	97,800	\$	76,573	78.30%	\$	76,573	
Capital and Operations (Trustees)	\$	193,800	\$	168,837	87.12%	\$	158,422	
Conference Administration Fund	\$	664,900	\$	636,000	95.65%	\$	636,000	
Conference Resource Center	\$	674,100	\$	675,128	100.15%	\$	675,128	
Connection Ministry Prog Pool	\$	536,000	\$	410,657	76.62%	\$	410,657	
Congregational Development Fund	\$	388,700	\$	337,583	86.85%	\$	337,583	
Dist. Superintendent's Fund	\$	1,011,850	\$	1,011,852	100.00%	\$	990,710	
Equitable Compensation Fund	\$	25,000	\$	19,574	78.30%	\$	80,392	
Huntingdon/BSC	\$	620,850	\$	486,097	78.30%	\$	486,097	
Student Aid, Huntingdon	\$	246,450	\$	192,959	78.30%	\$	192,959	
Wesley Foundations	\$	530,350	\$	479,947	90.50%	\$	479,947	
Homes for the Aging	\$	64,450	\$	50,462	78.30%	\$	50,462	
Conference Claimants Fund	\$	800,000	\$	756,590	94.57%	\$	756,590	
Health Insurance Fund	\$	1,300,000	\$	1,300,008	100.00%	\$	1,300,008	
Academy for Congretional Excelle	\$	75,000	\$	58,721	78.29%	\$	37,920	
Bd. of Pension and Health Benefit	\$	32,000	\$	25,054	78.29%	\$	16,505	
TOTALS	\$	7,452,900	\$	6,836,095	91.72%	\$	6,836,006	
GRAND TOTALS	\$	10,908,711	\$	9,823,875	86.59%	\$	9,823,786	
		. ,						

## Report No. 8 STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES and LOCAL CHURCH CONCERNS

- 1. CFA believes that all apportionments are needed in the amounts apportioned. Furthermore, CFA believes that all churches have the capacity to pay apportionments in full. In 2015, 88.49% of apportioned funds were paid by local churches. In 2016, 90.07% of apportioned funds were paid by local churches. CFA continues to encourage all churches and all United Methodist Christians in the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference to participate fully in our connectional ministries through generous serving, generous giving, generous living, generous leading, and generous praying. The 2018 Conference budget reflects a 1.21% increase in total Connectional Missional giving (apportionments.) General Church apportionments have increased by \$147,101 or 4.30%. Jurisdictional apportionments remain unchanged in 2018. Over-all Annual Conference Connectional Missional (apportionments) decreased by .02 % in 2018.
- 2. By action of the 2001 Annual Conference, the following schedule shall be used in setting apportionments for new churches:

1st full year no apportionment 2nd year 25% apportioned 3R year 50% apportioned 4th year 75% apportioned 5th year & following 100% apportioned

- 3. Apportionments shall be made to all churches using the apportionment formula outlined in CFA Report Formula and Allocations.
- 4. Local churches shall provide for the audits of local church records as provided in paragraph 258.4d of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church

## Report No. 9 FORMULA and ALLOCATIONS

- 1. In 2012 a task force was formed to evaluate the fairness of the current formula for determining conference apportionments. They reviewed formulas used in each of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Annual Conferences. The task force recommend, and the 2013 Annual Conference approved, the continued use of the current apportionment formula.
- 2. Therefore, the apportionments shall be developed using a formula based on financial strength of the local churches and membership of the local churches. Financial strength will be weighted 75% and professing membership will be weighted 25% in the formula. Apportionments will be determined by local church decimal applied to the amount of each budget item at the conference level.
- 3. The financial strength of a local church in calculating the decimal formula shall be based on all local expenditures (lines 48-57 of the Local Church Report to the Annual Conference). This eliminates all apportionments (including direct billing) and special giving from the formula. (Listing: Standing Rule No. 22)
- 4. The winter/spring meeting of the Council on Finance and Administration shall be the time for receiving requests from all boards and agencies for the ensuing

year. All boards and agencies should be advised that they place their allocations in jeopardy when they fail to submit timely budget requests.

5. The local church will enter the Local Church Report information using the "UMC GCFA Statistical Input System" located on Alabama-West Florida Conference Web Site (<a href="www.awfumc.org">www.awfumc.org</a>) Contact the District Superintendent's office for the User Name and Password if they are not known by the church pastor. The pastor and chairperson of the Committee on Finance or the church treasurer shall review the annual local church report as being correct before its final submission. The Fiscal Office will establish a date by which it should be notified if corrections are necessary. If no corrections are identified by that date, the fiscal officer will consider the report accurate. When the new year's apportionments are run in July/August, there will be only one set of apportionments, which will be the final set. There will not be a "Trial Set" of apportionments.

## Report No. 10 - DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS' COMPENSATION

In 2012 a task force was formed to study district superintendents' compensation. The task force, composed to both clergy and lay members studied many annual conferences' formulas for District Superintendent's salary. Their recommendation, approved by CFA and approved at the 2013 Annual Conference, recommend that superintendents' salaries be based on the average of the highest 25 senior pastor's salary appointed to a local church from within the conference. The 25 pastors' salaries in the formula do not include District Superintendents nor do they include clergy conference staff members. From time to time CFA may adjust its District Superintendents salary recommendation. In keeping with this salary formula, CFA recommends that the base salary of the district superintendents be \$120,475 resulting in an increase of 3.69%.

The base salary of the district superintendents shall be set at \$120,475 for 2018 with travel expense paid on voucher from a travel pool of \$92,000. The executive committee of CFA shall adjust the rate per mile, as needed, within this limit.

- 1. District superintendents shall receive no supplementary travel funds from district administration funds.
- 2. Each district shall place funds in its budget for district parsonage utilities, up to a total of \$4,500, for each calendar budget year. Utilities to be included are electricity; gas, water sewage, and basic television cable or satellite services, telephone, Internet service, and trash collection.
- 3. The districts which provide district superintendents a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage shall designate the housing amount in the minutes of the District Conference. This designation shall be made in advance of payment of such allowance, either upon appointment or in advance of the calendar year thereafter.
- 4. Each district shall place in its district administration fund an amount not to exceed \$2,000 for continuing education.

## Report No. 11 - MOVING GUIDELINES and EXPENSES

The second Sunday following the adjournment of Annual Conference shall be the last Sunday of pastoral responsibility for each conference year. The official moving day will be Tuesday, June 20, 2017 and may be adjusted according to the needs and concerns worked out in consultation with the clergy persons, the churches and approved by the District Superintendent.

The entire June salary shall be paid to the pastor by the church from which he/she is moving. In effect 50% of the annual salary will be paid January through June; with the remaining 50% paid by the church receiving a new pastor. Health insurance contributions and/or premiums, as well as any UMPIP payments are to be deducted from the pastor's compensation for the full month of June, with the receiving church beginning such payments in July.

Upon retirement, disability, termination, or death of a minister serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference and serving a full time appointments under the provisions of Paragraph 333.1 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, the conference shall pay up to \$3,000 for documented moving expenses to the first place of retirement, termination, or disability or the first place of dwelling for a surviving spouse. Moving expenses to be reimbursed shall not be incurred prior to retirement or termination notification to the Bishop and will be reimbursed after the move is completed.

## Guidelines for clergy under appointment:

- 1. Following notification of appointment change by the district superintendent, the Chairperson of the PPRC should contact the minister to be appointed to communicate the church's policy in paying moving expenses and to discuss moving plans.
- 2. The receiving church is responsible for the first \$3,000 of documented moving expenses and is encouraged to pay all documented expenses for the incoming ministerial family.

## Report No. 12 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXPENSES

- 1. A charge of \$28.00 per person, per night, will be made for all who use Conference provided housing. (Standing Rule No.8) CFA will be responsible for studying and investigating possible locations and expenses for housing during future sessions of the Annual Conference.
- 2. The Book of Reports will contain instructions for ordering printed regular bound copies of the Conference Journal. (Standing Rule 15)
- 3. Electronic versions of the Book of Reports and the Conference Journal may be substituted for printed copies.

## Report 13 - CREDIT CARD POLICY

Organizations for which the Council on Financial and Administration have responsibility and or the Fiscal office provides financial services must coordinate approval before establishing credit card account and credit limits for consumer credit accounts.

## **Report No. 14 - INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

### SCOPE OF THIS INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT

This statement of investment policy reflects the investment policy, objectives, and constraints of the Council on Finance and Administration of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. (CFA)

#### PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Council on Finance and Administration sets forth this statement of investment policy in order to do the following:

- 1. Define and assign the responsibilities of all involved parties.
- 2. Establish a clear understanding for all involved parties of the investment goals and objectives for assets.
- 3. Manage assets according to prudent standards as established in common trust law and in accordance with general guidelines by the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church.
- 4. Establish the relevant investment horizon for which assets will be managed.

In general, the purpose of this statement is to outline a philosophy and attitude which will guide the investment management of the assets towards the desired results. It is intended to be sufficiently specific to be meaningful, yet flexible enough to be practical.

#### DEFINITIONS

- 1. "The Council on Finance and Administration" is the governing council established to administer the assets as specified by *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* in its most recent edition and applicable actions of the annual conference.
- 2. "The Council on Finance and Administration" shall be referred to hereinafter as the "Council" in regard to this policy statement.
- 3. "The Investment Committee" consists of members of the Council, appointed by the Council, to act on behalf of the Council to administer this policy. It shall be referred to hereinafter as the "Committee" in regard to this policy statement.
- 4. "Investment Manager" shall mean any individuals or organizations employed to manage the investment of all or part of the assets.
- 5. "Investment Broker" shall mean any individual or organization employed to provide advisory services, including advice on investment objectives and/or asset allocation, manager search, and performance monitoring.
- 6. "Assets" shall mean all funds and securities for which the Council is responsible.

- 7. "Securities" shall refer to the marketable investment securities which are defined as acceptable in this statement.
- 8. "Investment Horizon" shall be the time period over which the investment objectives, as set forth, are expected to be met. The maximum investment horizon for these assets shall be set by the Council.

## **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

The Committee is responsible for directing and monitoring the investment management of the assets. As such, the committee is authorized to delegate certain responsibilities to professional experts in various fields subject to Council approval. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1. The <u>Investment Broker</u> may assist the Committee in: establishing investment policy, objectives, and guidelines; selecting investment managers; reviewing such managers over time; measuring and evaluating investment performance; and other tasks as deemed appropriate.
- 2. If an <u>Investment Manager</u> is used, he/she has discretion to purchase, sell, or hold the specific securities that will be used to meet the investment objectives.
- 3. The <u>Custodian</u> will physically (or through agreement with a sub-custodian) maintain possession of securities administered by the Committee, collect dividend and interest payments, redeem maturing securities, and effect receipt and delivery following purchases and sales. The custodian may also perform regular accounting of all assets owned, purchased, or sold, as well as movements of assets into and out of the investment accounts.
- 4. Additional specialists such as attorneys, auditors, and others may be employed by the Committee to assist in meeting its responsibilities and obligations to administer assets prudently.

If such experts employed are also deemed to be fiduciaries, they must acknowledge such in writing. All expenses for such experts must be customary and reasonable, and will be borne by the Council as deemed appropriate and necessary.

#### ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

## Responsibility of the Council

The Council is charged by law, <u>The Book of Discipline</u> and the actions of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church with the responsibility for the management of the investment assets. The Council and Committee shall discharge their duties solely in the interest of the annual conference, with the care, skill, prudence and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing, that a prudent person, acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character with like aims. The specific responsibilities of the Committee, subject to the approval of the Council, relating to the management of investment assets include:

- 1. Projecting the investment needs and communicating such needs to the investment brokers/investment managers on a timely basis.
- 2. Determining the Council's risk tolerance and investment horizon, and communicating these to the appropriate parties.

- 3. Establishing reasonable and consistent investment objectives, policies, and guidelines which will direct the investment of the assets.
- 4. Prudently and diligently selecting qualified investment professionals, including investment manager(s), an investment broker, and a custodian.
- 5. Regularly evaluating the performance of the investment manager(s) to assure adherence to policy guidelines and monitor investment objective progress.
- 6. Developing and enacting proper control procedures: for example, replacing an investment manager due to a fundamental change in investment management process or failure to comply with established guidelines.
- 7. The Conference Treasurer shall serve as the contact person for the investment brokers or investment managers.

## Responsibility of the Investment Broker

The investment broker's role is that of a non-discretionary advisor to the Committee. Investment advice concerning the management of investment assets will be offered by the investment broker and will be consistent with the investment objectives, policies, guidelines, and constraints as established in this policy statement. Specific responsibilities of the investment broker include the following:

- 1. Assisting in the development and periodic review of investment policy.
- 2. Conducting investment manager searches when requested by the Committee.
- 3. Providing "due diligence" or research on the investment manager(s).
- 4. Monitoring the performance of the investment manager(s) to provide the Committee with the ability to determine the progress toward the investment objectives.
- 5. Communicating matters of policy, manager research, and manager performance to the Committee.
- 6. Reviewing asset investment history, historical capital markets performance, and the contents of this investment policy statement with any newly appointed members of the Committee and Council.
- 7. Executing orders for the purchase and sale of securities.

## Responsibility of the Investment Manager(s)

Each investment manager must acknowledge in writing its acceptance of responsibility as a fiduciary. Each investment manager will have full discretion to make all investment decisions for the assets placed under its jurisdiction, while observing and operating within all policies, guidelines, constraints, and philosophies as outlined in this policy statement. Specific responsibilities of the investment manager(s) include the following:

- 1. Discretionary investment management including decisions to buy, sell, or hold individual securities, and to alter asset allocation within the guide lines established in this policy statement.
- 2. Reporting, on a timely basis, quarterly investment performance results.
- 3. Communicating any major changes to economic outlook, investment strategy, or any other factors which affect implementation of investment process or the investment objective progress of investment management.

- 4. Informing the Committee regarding any qualitative change to investment management organization: Examples include changes in portfolio management personnel, ownership structure, investment philosophy, etc.
- 5. Voting proxies, if requested by the Committee, on behalf of the Council, and communicating such voting records to the Committee on a timely basis.

#### INVESTMENT GUIDELINES

## Allowable Assets

- 1. Cash Equivalents
- •Treasury Bills
- Treasury Money Market Funds
- •Repurchase Agreements
- •Certificates of Deposit
- •Common Development Fund of the AL-WF United Methodist Development Fund, Inc.
- •Flexible Demand Note offered by The United Methodist Development Fund
- 2. Fixed Income Securities
- •U.S. Government and Agency Securities
- Mortgage Backed Bonds
- •Income Fund of the Al-WF United Methodist Foundation. Inc.
- •Fixed Term Notes offered by The United Methodist Development Fund
- 3. Equity Securities
- •Common Stocks of U.S. Corporations
- •Convertible Notes and Bonds of U.S. Corporations
- •Growth Fund and Growth & Income Fund of the AW-FL United Methodist Foundation, Inc.
- 4. Restrictions

Investments shall not knowingly be made in securities in which the corporate entity has a significant interest in distilled spirits, wine or other fermented juices, tobacco, gambling, pornography or firearms. Investments shall not knowingly be made in securities of corporate entity in which the core business:

- •Manufactures cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or in a company in which 10% or more of gross revenues are derived from supplying key components to the tobacco industry or the sale and marketing of tobacco related products.
- •Produces alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, distilled liquor) or in a company in which 10% or more of gross revenues are derived from supplying key elements for alcohol production or from the sale, distribution or marketing of alcoholic beverages.
- •Owns or manages casinos, racetracks, off-track betting parlors; or in a company that derives 10% or more of gross revenues from the production of goods and services related to the gaming or lottery industries.
- •Derives 10% or more gross revenues from the production, distribution or sale of products or devices that are interpreted to be pornographic, meet the legal criteria for obscenity or legal definition of "harmful to minors."
- •Derives 10% or more gross revenues from the manufacture, sale or distribution of antipersonnel weapons such as land mines, "assault type" automatic and

semiautomatic weapons, firearms, and ammunition provided for commercial and private markets.

## **Prohibited Assets and Transactions**

Prohibited investments and transactions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Commodities and Futures Contracts
- Private Placements
- Options
- Short Selling
- •Margin Transactions

## Diversification

In order to achieve a prudent level of portfolio diversification, the securities of anyone company or government should not exceed 10% of the total assets under management, and no more than 20% of the total assets should be invested in anyone industry. With the exception of U.S. Government securities, no fixed income issues may exceed 15% of the market value of the fixed income portfolio.

## Guidelines for Fixed Income Investments and Cash Equivalents

- •Assets may be invested only in investment grade bonds rated A (or equivalent) or better.
- •Maximum maturity for any single fixed income security is 10 years.
- •Money Market Funds selected shall contain only U.S. Treasury securities.

## <u>Investment Policy Review</u>

To assure continued relevance of the guidelines, objectives, financial status and capital markets expectations as established in this statement of investment policy, the Council shall review this policy at least annually.

## Report No. 15 - FISCAL YEAR END

- 1. The Fiscal Office will close the annual financial records on the fifth working day of January.
- 2. This date will be the last day that apportionment payments can be credited to the prior year asking.
- 3. Churches sending apportionment payments AFTER December 31 must do one of the following:
- a. Deliver payment to the Fiscal Office in Montgomery AL any time before 10:00 a.m. on the closing date.
- b. Mail the payment. Regardless of the postmark date, payments received after 10:00 a.m. on the closing date cannot be credited to the prior year apportionments.
- c. Deposit payment in the Annual Conference account on or before 1:00 p.m. on the closing date at a local Regions Bank. <u>Fax</u> a copy of the <u>bank receipt</u> and a copy of the <u>remittance breakdown</u> to the Fiscal Office when the deposit is made.

Call the Fiscal Office (1-888-873-3127) to obtain the current deposit account number

4. The Fiscal Office must know of these deposits on the closing date. Persons without access to a fax machine should call 1-888-873-3127 and report the deposit information. Please Note: The bank's business day may end earlier than the time the bank closes. For example, often deposits received after 2:00 p.m. are credited to the next day's business. CONTACT THE LOCAL BANK TO DETERIME WHEN A DEPOSIT MUST BE MADE, IN ORDER TO BE CREDITED ON THE CLOSING DATE.

Submitted by, Mr. Beebe Frederick, President Council on Finance and Administration

## **Conference Audit Statement**

The Council on Finance and Administration of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church engaged Warren, Averett, LLC to conduct audits of the Council on Finance, Connectional Ministries, Conference Administration, and Episcopal Office Accounts for the Conference Fiscal Year 2016. Warren, Averet, LLC issued unmodified opinions on each of the statements of cash receipts, disbursements, and transfers of the above-referenced funds. The audited financial statements will be published in the 2017 Alabama-West Florida Annual *Conference Journal* and will be available upon written request to the Conference Fiscal Office, ATTN: Frank Dunnewind, 4719 Woodmere Boulevard, Montgomery, AL 36106.

## **MISSION TEAM REPORTS**

## **Board of Church and Society**

The Conference Board of Church and Society has had an exciting and fruitful year! The Board presented three resolutions to the 2016 Annual Conference session. All three of the resolutions passed immediately (death penalty in Alabama and Florida and healthcare reform). A fourth resolution, submitted by Rick Branch, supporting harm reduction for LGBTQ Teens was referred to our board for further discussion and action planning. We accepted this referral and have been diligently forming a plan throughout the year to start some conversations in the conference about this issue.

The board has established a three-part series of Courageous Conversations. The goal is to learn how to have healthy conversations with each other. The three sessions will revolve around bringing people together to talk about bullying in general and then further on LGBTQ bullying, but "Courageous Conversations" is a tool that can be used for any difficult or controversial topic. These three sessions will be held in three different areas of the conference and will be led by M. Scott Hughes Director, Adult Discipleship. In addition to these sessions, we are also working on a resource list (books, websites) that we will share with the conference.

In October of 2016, the board sponsored a Social Principles seminar led by Dr. Wesley Wachob from Pensacola First UMC. Approximately 60 people were in attendance and even more were able to view the seminar via live streaming. In 2017, we are working to do another of these Social Principles seminars in the Montgomery area.

In addition to our time spent on the resolution, we have made it a priority to also train our board. We had a member of the General Board of Church and Society (Susan Burton) come and do an all-day seminar with us in November 2016. She talked with us about how to be an advocate in our own churches. This was a great educational opportunity for our board. We are also working on another training session of this same nature to be brought to area churches.

In 2016, one young clergy person in the conference was able to attend the General Board of Church and Society Seminar in Washington DC with the help of our board. All these young clergy were excited about this opportunity and were able to bring back lots of new information for their churches. Two more young clergy were sent in early 2017.

In February of 2016, the board hosted the 6th annual Legislative Prayer Breakfast. Rev. Dr. Brian Miller was the speaker. In February 2017, the board hosted the 7th annual Legislative Prayer Breakfast with Rev. Dr. Jeremy Pridgeon of First UMC Montgomery as the invited speaker.

We have included two resolutions for your consideration. Once the Alabama legislature comes into session, we will be able to submit additional resolutions for Annual Conference 2017. This allows us to be able to direct our resolutions along

the lines of the issues that are present in the legislature.

Submitted by, Khristen J Carlson, Chairperson

## **Board of Congregational Development**

The Conference Board of Congregational Development (BOCD) exists to enable the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church to better fulfill its mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" by:

- 1. Starting new congregations in connection with district and local church partners.
- 2. Encouraging and resourcing existing congregations to start Fresh Expressions of church
- 3. Assisting existing congregations, large or small, to excel in ministry, i.e., the Antioch Project.

Key factors in starting new congregations are identifying pastors with the gifts and graces for church planting, finding local church planting partners, and determining the most needed new church places.

The Board of Congregational Development administers a process for evaluation of candidates recommended by District Superintendents to pastor a new church start. Pastors who may have such an interest should discuss that with their District Superintendent. During 2016, nine pastors involved in starting new churches received some salary support, with pension and health benefits from the board. In addition, New Church Grants were awarded as follows:

- \$20,000 The Heart in Mobile
- \$17,500 City Lights in Panama City
- \$20,000 Encompass in Pensacola

The Board of Congregational Development is also about encouraging and resourcing existing congregations to start fresh expressions of church. **Fresh Expressions** is a missionary minded movement of people who are creating new kinds of church alongside existing congregations. It is designed for churches who desire to move into their mission fields and connect with the growing diverse and unchurched population. It is a movement of the church that is about going where people are and creating relatively small new communities of faith which are often lay-led. Churches of varying sizes are engaging in this movement of creating new, fresh expressions of church.

At its heart, Fresh Expressions is about reaching people who are not currently being reached, and building the body of Christ right where they are. This is an indigenous, context oriented, mission field driven, local church connected approach to creating new places for new people.

Two Fresh Expressions Vision Days have been held this conference year, one in Pensacola and one in Prattville, which was held in partnership with the North

Alabama Conference. One hundred twenty five persons attended the Pensacola Vision Day, representing forty four churches.

The Board of Congregational Development is also engaged in the ministry of **local church revitalization**. This ministry is coordinated through the Director of Congregational Vitality, Rev. Dan Pezet, as he uses community demographic studies and the Antioch Project for congregational revitalization.

In the 2015/2016 Conference year revitalization efforts have been initiated with 15 churches within the Dothan, Pensacola, Mobile, Montgomery-Opelika, Montgomery-Prattville and Marianna/Panama City and Baypines Districts. This is an initiative that helps churches enter into a new level of fruitful ministry. The Antioch Project consists of three main phases:

- Leading the local congregation through a time of prayer, reflection, and self study.
- Sending a team to develop recommendations for the church to fulfill in the future
- Providing coaches to help the church fulfill its recommendations.

All 15 Antioch Project churches have advanced to the third stage and are working with coaches to fulfill the recommendations developed through the Antioch Project process.

District Superintendents may identify local churches as candidates to participate in the Antioch Project based on specific criteria. Individual churches which may have interest in participating in The Antioch Project should contact their District Superintendent.

As a further aid in church revitalization, district offices and individual churches are supported with demographic information for their geographic area. Contact Sandy Gutting at (850) 291-1244 for assistance with this information.

The Board of Congregational Development also evaluates and awards local church Revitalization Grants. In 2016 Revitalization Grants were given to:

- \$5,000 Millbrook First in Millbrook
- \$5,000 Dalraida UMC in Montgomery
- \$7,700 Pine Forest UMC in Pensacola

This report is submitted with appreciation for the dedication and contributions by the members and staff who represent this board.

Frederick G. Outlaw, Chairperson

## **Board of Discipleship (BOD)**

The Conference Board of Discipleship was organized by the annual conference to maintain the connectional relationship between Discipleship Ministries and the conference, district and local church. The purpose of the Conference Board of

Discipleship is:

- to lead and assist congregations and districts in the conference in their efforts to communicate and celebrate the redeeming and reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ to persons of every age, ethnic background, and social condition
- to invite persons to commit their lives to Christ and His church and to enable persons to live as Christian disciples in the world.

The BOD is challenged by and seeking alignment of programs, education and spending as they relate to the purpose of transformational discipleship. What is our mission in this alignment? We are seeking ways of partnership to empower, affirm and strengthen discipleship making that already exists, identifying new ideas and innovations in this goal. We wish to honor the ongoing work that is transformational in the making of new disciples. The BOD made decisions about spending that will make better use of our time as volunteers and yet be focused on the target of transformational support. The budget was not increased and some meetings will be held online. Join us in prayer for unity in focus for transformational discipleship growth.

The **Bishop's Confirmation Retreat** was held March 3rd – 5th at Blue Lake. This retreat is to celebrate and focus on the commitments made in membership vows in the United Methodist Church (UMC) to prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.

**Inspirit 2017** – A Retreat for Older Adults was held April 6 - 8 at Blue Lake. This retreat is a time to rekindle, relax and renew...a ministry event designed for adults 50 plus.

Our Spring meeting of the BOD was held on March 30, 2017.

Our **team members** include Mel Barkley, Lisa Ausley, Barbara Wilder, Larry Anderson, Patti Bodenhamer, Sam Persons Parkes, Jay Cooper, Nancy Watson, Dan Pezet and Tripp Gulledge.

Submitted by Lisa Hunt, Chair

## **Board of Global Ministries**

## Division of Advance Specials

The General Advance is the official program of the United Methodist Church created to give churches the opportunity to go the extra mile in giving. We endeavor to continue to communicate the Biblical call for mission and assist all people through training and leadership development to understand how the United Methodist Church ministers to the needs of the world. The Conference Advance Special program is for projects within the bounds of the annual conference, as recommended by the Conference Board of Global Ministries, and is consistent with the goals of the General Advance. (2016 *Book of Discipline* ¶656)

The Conference Advance Specials are used to feed the hungry, help women and their children who are in need of shelter, ministry to college students, repair homes for the elderly and poor, ministry to our Hispanic-Latino members, provide a safe place for children to study and play, ministry to those with special needs, end the cycle of poverty, and for inner-city and at-risk children. When working on your budget or looking for some second-mile giving opportunities, please consider the ministries listed below, which have been approved for Conference Advance Special Status (CASS) by the Conference Board of Global Ministries (CBGM).

#### JOURNAL of the ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE - 2017 ADVANCE SPECIALS

0110-19	Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM)
0110-7	Communities of Transformation
0110-2	Dumas Wesley Community Center
0110-1	Hispanic Ministries
0110-6	Nellie Burge/Mary Ellen's Hearth
0110-133	Pensacola State College/Univ. of West Florida Wesley Foundation
0110-51	Prodisee Pantry
0110-40	Society of St. Andrew
0110-163	Sunshine Camp
0110-22	Transformational Recovery Mission
0110-132	Tuskegee Wesley Foundation
0110-90	UM Children's Home
0110-3	UM Inner City Mission, Mobile
0110-136	University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation
0110-136	University of West Alabama Wesley Foundation

Receiving Conference Advance Special status does not guarantee any funding, only the opportunity to open channels for extra-mile giving throughout the bounds of our annual conference. The actual money received will depend completely on donor gifts. Extra-mile giving to any of these Conference Advance Specials should be sent to the Conference Treasurer marked with their Advance number; 100% of every Advance gift is sent directly to the mission or ministry of your choice. Through our Advance giving, we continue to make a positive and enduring impact on the world Christ has called us to serve.

More information, including the guidelines and application, can be found at <a href="www.awfumc.org/advance">www.awfumc.org/advance</a>. Or contact Michael Lawler at <a href="michaeljlawler@aol.com">michaeljlawler@aol.com</a>.

Applications are due January 1 each year.

Respectfully submitted, Michael J Lawler, Advance Specials Chairperson Conference Board of Global Ministries, Advance Specials Division

## <u>Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns</u> Division of Disability Concerns

As a part of the Board of Advocacy, the mission of the Division of Disability Concerns is to work alongside and to assist with resources and programs for churches specific to supporting individuals with disabilities. The DisAbility Ministries Committee, an agency of the United Methodist Church, provides beneficial information and resources in advocacy, education and empowerment.

In the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, "We recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals with mental, physical, developmental, neurological, and psychological conditions or disabilities as full members of the family of God. We also affirm their rightful place in both the church and society. We affirm the responsibility of the Church and society to be in ministry with children, youth, and adults with mental, physical, developmental, and/or psychological conditions or disabilities whose particular needs in the areas of mobility, communication, intellectual comprehension, or personal relationships might make more challenging their participation or that of their families in the life of the Church and the community. We urge the Church and society to recognize and receive the gifts of persons with disabilities to enable them to be full participants in the community of faith. We call the Church and society to be sensitive to, and advocate for, programs of rehabilitation, services, employment, education, appropriate housing, and transportation. We call on the Church and society to protect the civil rights of persons with all types and kinds of disabilities." The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012 ¶ 162

To recognize and affirm these statements, and to celebrate "the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities", each Annual Conference is encouraged to observe a Disability Awareness Sunday. February 26, 2017 was designated as the date for the Alabama-West Florida Conference (AWFC), placed on the event calendar and was promoted in the *News Connection*.

A free webinar entitled "Becoming a Barrier-Free Congregation," held on October 25, 2016 was recommended to help welcome people with disabilities into the life of the church. The leader was Sharon McCart who serves as the chair of the DisAbility Ministries Committee of the United Methodist Church. A PowerPoint which was used in this webinar is available at this link: https://umc-gbcs.org/content/blog/McCart-Disability-Barriers-Down.pptx

A web page for Disability Ministries has been created on our AWFC website: <a href="http://www.awfumc.org/disabilityministries.">http://www.awfumc.org/disabilityministries.</a>

We welcome others to join in forming a task force on disabilities to share insights, ideas and resources with others. In 2017, we will highlight successful programs and ministries which best serve individuals with disabilities. We encourage all churches to truly be a place of "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors."

Submitted by

Berta Hurston Division of Disability Concerns

# **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORTS Commission on Archives and History**

## Archivist Report

The Methodist Archives Center (MAC) is the depository for the Alabama West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church. It is located in the Houghton Memorial Library on the Huntingdon College campus in Montgomery, Alabama. The Methodist Archives Center performs a joint function for the college and the conference.

The Commission On Archives And History (COAH) is the agency responsible for management of the Methodist Archives Center. It is the responsibility of the archivist and those working at the MAC to maintain the daily operation of the Center. We also assist the COAH with their meetings, the Memorial Service held at each AWFC Annual Session, and the Memorial Luncheon which is given for the immediate family members of those deceased clergy and spouses who were remembered at the Memorial Service. It is also the archivist's responsibility to gather information and write the Memoirs printed each year in the Journal of the AWFC. We also assist the AWFC Historical Society with their meetings and projects throughout the year.

In 2016 the MAC answered one-hundred-eighty reference questions. They consisted of the following: 55% General Public – Methodist Related; 15.56% Huntingdon College Students; 11.11% Methodist Conference Employees; 7.78% General Public – College Related; 4.44% Huntingdon College Faculty/Staff; 3.89% Huntingdon College Faculty/Staff; and 2.22% Huntingdon College Alumni. The Methodist Archives Center had over thirty walk-in visitors.

# **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORTS Commission on Archives and History**

## Archivist Report

The following are the names and numbers of the accessions received and processed for the Alabama West Florida Conference:

- MC784 Library, Publications, Periodicals
- MC785 Reference Files
- MC786 Audio Visuals
- MC787 Artifacts
- MC788 Charge Conference Records
- MC789 Diaries
- MC790 Ashford United Methodist Church
- MC791 St. Paul United Methodist Church, Montgomery, Alabama
- MC793 Marion Junction United Methodist Church
- MC794 Opp United Methodist Church

- MC795 Ministers' Spouses Retreat
- MC796 Vera Cruze United Methodist Church
- MC797 Methodist Episcopal Church Journals
- MC798 Sunday School Committee
- MC799 AWFC Historical Society
- MC800 AWFC Commission On Archives And History

The following are the names and numbers of the accessions received and processed for Huntingdon College:

- HC290 Reference Files
- HC291 Audio Visuals
- HC292 Library, Publications, Periodicals
- HC293 Artifacts
- HC294 Capstones
- HC295 Institute of Religious Drama
- HC296 Personal Papers of Eric Kidwell, Director Houghton Memorial Library
- HC297 Letters From Harper Lee's Sister, Louise Lee Conner
- HC298 Greek Life Recruitment Brochures
- HC299 Person Papers of Lady Huntingdon, Margaret Lane
- HC300 Huntingdon College Organization Charts

Submitted by,

Sharon Tucker, Archivist

Alabama-West Florida Conference

## Historical Society President's Report

The Alabama-West Florida Conference Historical Society (AWF-HS) is a voluntary membership organization formed to work with the Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History (COAH) in the collection and preservation of materials related to the history of the United Methodist Church and its antecedents. The Society promotes research, writing, and publication in the field; and develops interest in United Methodist history and skills for pursuing it among local church historians and others. Anyone who is interested in preserving the heritage of this Conference and our local churches is welcomed and encouraged to join and participate.

At the 2016 AWF Annual Conference, the Society assisted the COAH in organizing and executing the annual Memorial Luncheon for surviving spouses and family members of deceased Conference clergy.

The Society also maintained an informational table. A beautifully-framed print of a painting of John Wesley, donated by Rev. Ed Shirley, AWF-HS Vice President, and a member of his congregation, was displayed. A drawing was held from the AWF-HS membership applications received since the last Annual Conference, and the winner of the print was Dr. Charles Satterwhite.

The Local Church Heritage Award, presented each year to the church most diligent

in preserving its heritage during the previous calendar year, was awarded by Rev. Pam Avery, Chair of the COAH, to Texasville UMC, Clayton, AL.

The Society's 2016 Annual Meeting was held on September 19, at historic St. Stephens UMC in St. Stephens, Alabama. During a brief three decades, beginning in the 1790s to its decline in the 1820s, St. Stephens which was situated on a high bluff on the Tombigbee River where the rocky shoals forced boats traveling north from Mobile to end their journey. St. Stephens was the site of a Spanish fort, an American fort and trading post, and the first Alabama Territorial Capitol.

As early as 1799, Rev. Tobias Gibson, a Methodist missionary from South Carolina visited the area and organized religious societies. The renowned Lorenzo Dow came across the Creek Nation in 1803 and preached to the "Bigbee" settlers. By 1833 the historic town was reduced to a village and by 1850 only the ruins of the old town remained. Most of the residents had moved three miles west to a settlement they named New St. Stephens. Later the "new" was dropped and "old" became part of the old town location name. Land for the building of a Methodist church was donated and a contract for the building was awarded in April 1857.

The original sanctuary is still in use and was the location for the 2016 AWF-HS Annual Meeting. The Society was generously and warmly welcomed by Rev. Tommy Gaillard, Pastor of St. Stephens UMC and by the St. Stephens UMC congregation. The morning program began with Cecilia Adams and Dr. Ashley Coleman providing interesting information about the St. Stephens church and community history.

Rev. Ed Shirley, who is also the Alabama-West Florida UMC Conference Historian, presented a dramatic monologue in the persona of Bishop Francis Asbury.

Olivia Parnell shared about Confederate history in the St. Stephens and Washington County area and the local Methodist ministers who have served here.

The significant history of this area and its role as the first Alabama Territorial Capitol was recognized by the state of Alabama in creating the Old St. Stephens Historical Park, which contains the area which was the location of the original St. Stephens.

Rev. Shirley closed the program with thanks to the St. Stephens UMC pastor, those who developed the excellent brochure, those who gave presentations, and the St. Stephens congregation. He announced that the 2017 Annual Meeting of the AWF Conference Historical Society would be held on the third Thursday in September, 2017, at Pensacola FUMC, Pensacola, Florida.

After expressing the Society's appreciation for the hospitality of the pastor and congregation of St. Stephens UMC, President Jim Young adjourned the meeting.

Our website at www.awfhistory.com and our official Facebook page, www.

facebook.com/awfmethodists, are helping to make us more widely known. Our newsletters provide interesting articles concerning our Alabama-West Florida Methodist history and the activities of the Society.

We are continuing the work began by the founders of the Society and those faithful members who have worked diligently to help preserve our shared heritage. We again recall the admonition found in Deuteronomy: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." Deuteronomy 32:7 (KJV)

Respectfully submitted, Jim Young, President

## **Committee on Episcopacy**

2016 began a new quadrennium for the United Methodist Church (UMC) and with it came all the Episcopacy Committee responsibilities of bidding farewell to one bishop and welcoming another. Bishop Paul and Janet Leeland who had conscientiously served the Alabama-West-Florida (AWF) Conference for eight years were assigned in July, 2016, to the Western North Carolina Conference. Simultaneously, Bishop David and Nancy Graves were assigned to the AWF conference for the 2016-2020 quadrennium. The Committee on Episcopacy is deeply appreciative of the fruitful and effective service of the Leelands and is most pleased with the assignment of the Graves to our conference.

Bishop Graves was nominated for election to the Episcopacy from the Holston Conference and was the second bishop elected at our Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Conference. He comes to us having been an ordained pastor in the UMC for more than 27 years. Bishop Graves is a native of Knoxville, Tennessee; a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the Candler School of Theology. He has been a pastor in small, medium and large membership churches, as well as having served as a District Superintendent He was, also, the recipient of the prestigious Holston Denman Evangelism Award. We are thrilled he was assigned to our AWF Conference and look forward to serving in ministry with him. When there is a change in the Episcopacy leadership of a conference the work of the Conference Committee on Episcopacy ramps up with a diversity of activities to support the transition. A reception was held at the SEJ Conference at Lake Junaluska in July to introduce Bishop David and Nancy Graves to the AWF delegation and guests. A heartfelt thank you goes to Dawn Hare for her coordination of that reception. A formal Conference-wide Farewell Reception was held for Bishop Paul and Janet Leeland, along with many informal farewells to thank them for their service and their friendship.

The episcopal residence was prepared for receiving our incoming Bishop Graves and his family. A special thank you goes to our Residency Committee chair, Susu Millsap, along with the out-going co-chairs, Jean Belt and Eileene Griffith, for their attentive work on the grounds and interior of the residence; and to the Leelands who over the years had identified the needs of the house as they arose. Because the

house had been so well maintained over the years, much less had to be done than would otherwise have been required.

Two formal services with receptions were held to officially welcome Bishop David and Nancy Graves to our AWF Conference. Many thanks are deserved by all who participated in those welcoming services, but especially to the staff and volunteers at the First UMC of Montgomery and the Crosspoint UMC, Niceville Campus for hosting those two Conference-wide, formal welcoming events and in particular to Karl Stegall and Rurel Ausley for their leadership.

Bishop Graves and his wife Nancy have wasted no time in getting to know the people and the churches of our Conference. For calendar year 2017 Bishop Graves has already scheduled himself to preach at 32 churches, he has held a Town Hall meetings in each of our eight districts, and agreed to attend/speak at 22 other Conference events. He has hosted On-Boarding events across the Conference in order to quickly get familiar with our Conference, its culture, strengths and needs.

Our Conference is blessed to have Bishop David William Graves assigned to our AWF Conference.

As I pass the duties of the chair of this committee on to Alexis Tibbetts, I would like to thank all the members of your AWF Episcopal Committee for their service and leadership this year: Rurel Ausley, Larry Bryars, Marsha Clayton, Helen Edwards, Tonya Elmore, Clara Ester, Steve Furr, Shirley Hodges, Duane Keck, Beverly Maddox, Susu Millsap, Dan Morris, Lori Roach, Cory Smith, Karl Stegall, Alexis Tibbetts, and Wesley Wachob.

Respectfully submitted,
Paulette Thompson, Chairperson
Committee on Episcopacy

# CONFERENCE AGENCY REPORTS Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly

Blue Lake is excited to announce that 2017 is the **65th anniversary** of Blue Lake. Sixty-five years ago, a group of United Methodist had a vision of a camp by the lake and soon it was a reality. We strive to provide a place where people of all ages can come to God's great creation and have a meaningful experience with our creator.

We are partnering with the Town and Country Commission to find ways to involve **small member churches** in retreats and conference wide events.

In 2016 we experienced one of our best years, as we had 26,000 user days. It is amazing that we have had that many **visitors** to Blue Lake.

In the Fall of 2016, a **NOMADs** group spent 3 weeks doing some much needed improvements to the Lambuth Chapel. We also have built a shade structure for the archery range. Additional improvements were made to the swim beach with 2 new inflatables (ice burg and water trampoline) and a new fishing dock. A metal roof was installed on the Wesley Chapel. Blue Lake also installed a 110ft tower to help with our ability to receive good internet service at camp. If you have not been to the Lake in a while you need to come visit!

Our new **Program Director** is Jeff Wilson, a young man who comes to us from Camp Lake Steven's Methodist Camp in Oxford, Mississippi. I am excited to have Jeff here to provide the best program opportunities that we can offer our groups. We not only provide programs in the summer, but can offer a year-round program experience to meet your needs.

I wish to thank Bishop Graves and the members of the Alabama-West Florida Conference for their continued support, prayers and love of Blue Lake. Without your support Blue Lake would not be the ministry that it is today.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Lewandowski, Executive Director Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly

## **Methodist Homes Corporation**

A TALE OF TRANSFORMATION: REDEFINING HOME

Wesley Place on Honeysuckle in Dothan, formerly known as Wesley Manor, has a new name and a new beginning. Opened as Methodist Homes' second largest community in 1968, updates to the building were sorely needed, but the senior living community is gaining much more than that. An extensive construction and renovation project that began in 2016 will be completed before Annual Conference this year, with Wesley Place on Honeysuckle's 200+ residents enjoying new or renovated spaces in a person-centered, resident-directed environment that is virtually unheard of in senior care today. Though the physical transformation of Wesley Place on Honeysuckle is considerable, it is the cultural transformation in

the new physical environment that is truly redefining home for older adults. A STORY OF HOME: As children, if we're fortunate, we make our home with our parents. When we transition as young adults to college or working on our own, we create a new home for ourselves in a dorm, or maybe our first apartment. Later, we get married and create another home that joins two lives as one. Adding additional members to the family, we make another home to accommodate everyone. As our children move away to create their own homes, we downsize and make a new home for our retirement. Yet as we come to the golden years of our lives, we find it very difficult to create our newest home in a place that looks, feels and operates like a hospital. Can we not instead create our newest home in an environment that looks, feels and operates like home, and includes the care we need? YES! We call them Households.

Wesley Place on Honeysuckle opened the very first Household in the state of Alabama – The Rehab Inn – in December of 2016. Households are health care environments built on the model of a home, complete with a private entryway, kitchen, living room, family style dining room, den, and more. In a Household, smaller numbers of residents enjoy person-centered care in an interpersonal relationship environment that functions much like a family. Food is prepared and served fresh, right from the kitchen, to residents seated at the family-style dining table, or at the kitchen bar, if desired. Residents at Wesley Place on Honeysuckle set their own schedules, much as they have always done, determining for themselves how best to spend their days.

Certainly proud of what we're building in Dothan (and at its sister community in Birmingham), we would be remiss not to mention that Methodist Homes enjoys operating 12 other senior communities in Alabama and northwest Florida. On a daily basis, through the hearts and hands of 800+ associates, care is provided to more than 1,200 residents in the various settings of affordable housing, independent living, assisted living, memory care assisted living, skilled nursing and skilled rehabilitation. In the Alabama-West Florida Conference, these communities include The Epworth House in Selma; Mathison Retirement Community in Panama City; Wesley Gardens in Montgomery; Wesley Haven Villa and Wesley Scott Place in Pensacola; and, of course, Wesley Place on Honeysuckle. Each has its own history of providing care to elders in a Christian environment.

The Fountain of Love, which provides financial assistance to residents who do not qualify for government assistance programs, continues to depend on the support of the Conference as a whole, as well as the direct support of Churches through special offerings, United Methodist men's and women's organizations, Sunday School classes and others with a heart for elders in need.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for the Fountain of Love and all our Methodist Homes in the Conference

Christopher Tomlin, President and CEO Methodist Homes Corporation

#### Methodist Homes Board of Trustees

Class of 2020

Rev. John I. Baxter – Grand Bay Rev. Edward Deabler – Montgomery Mr. Stephan McClellan – Pensacola Dr. Dianne L. Griswold – Montgomery Dr. John Ed Mathison – Montgomery

## **United Methodist Children's Home**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For the past 127 years The United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH) has been caring for orphaned and vulnerable children as a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through group homes, higher education homes, transitional living homes, foster homes (regular, therapeutic and enhanced), adoption services and family preservation, UMCH extends the ministry of its supporting congregations in the North Alabama and Alabama-West Florida Conferences of the United Methodist Church. In this brief report I will highlight the vital statistics of our work in 2016, as well as summarize the programmatic highlights and changes.

#### **BOARD UPDATE**

- •Mark Saliba, a member of Covenant United Methodist Church of Dothan, Alabama, provided excellent leadership in his 3nd year as UMCH's board president. UMCH's 2016 board consisted of 21 clergy and lay persons from across the AL/West Florida (11) and North Alabama (10) conferences.
- •UMCH's clergy advisory board, led by Dr. Patrick Quinn of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church of Montgomery, continued bi-annual meetings to provide UMCH with sustained feedback and counsel regarding the ministry's strategic direction. Clergy from both conferences are represented on the clergy advisory board.

#### PROGRAM/MINISTRIES UPDATE

- •In 2016, UMCH served 80 youth through our group homes, higher education homes, and transitional living homes (a 21% increase over 2015). In addition, UMCH served 121 children through our foster care ministries in Alabama and Northwest Florida. Total days of care delivered to these children increased by 24% over 2015.
- •UMCH served 164 families through our Family Preservation Ministry in South Alabama, which represented caring contact with 614 individuals. This ministry has a 90 plus percent success rate in preventing family dissolution due to child neglect. UMCH also served 27 families through its adoption services ministry.
- •The Florida Foster Care Ministry (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties) saw tremendous growth in 2016. This ministry served 94 children in the calendar year (a 19% increase over 2015) and delivered an average of approximately 141 days of care to each of these children. In all, the program provided 13,252 days of care for these children in 2016 (a 72% increase over 2015).

- •UMCH developed a new Family Preservation ministry in the Florida Panhandle. Modeled after the pre-existing Family Preservation ministry in the Alabama Wiregrass, the Florida FOCUS Program will serve Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Co. families who are in danger of dissolution due to child neglect.
- •All in all, UMCH made a difference in the lives of 1,029 individuals through our various ministries in 2016.
- •100% of UMCH's eligible high school seniors (7) graduated in 2016. Two UMCH residents also graduated from community college.
- •In fall 2016, UMCH began the fourth academic year of our residential higher education program with homes in Tuscaloosa and Florence. This program served 21 young men and women in 2016.
- UMCH is continuing to provide opportunities for our youth which they would not otherwise experience. UMCH partnered with Crosspoint United Methodist Church (Niceville) for the 4rd Annual Mission Trip to Washington D.C. UMCH sent a team of 25 youth and staff to our nation's capital to serve the poor and homeless. UMCH's 2017 mission trip is slated for June 11-17 in Chicago, Illinois. UMCH also held its 5th Annual Awards Weekend at Laguna Beach Christian Retreat in Panama City Beach, Florida on May 19-21, 2017. We value this time to celebrate our kids and youth.

#### CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH

- •In 2016 various UMCH staff visited our United Methodist Congregations on 156 different occasions to share testimony about the transformational ministry of UMCH to children, youth, and at-risk families.
- •UMCH's President/CEO visited 23 different United Methodist congregations on 20 Sundays in 2016, preaching 21 sermons and delivering 24 ministry moments/award presentations.

#### FUTURE

- •UMCH and the Dumas Wesley Community Center (Mobile) have entered into a conceptual agreement to form a joint ministry venture through the Sybil Smith Family Village (SSFV). SSFV seeks to help families with children experiencing homelessness establish and maintain self-sufficiency. Able to accommodate up to 17 families with children, SSFV offers transitional housing, job skills, and access to various helping resources for up to 24 months.
- •UMCH will continue strategic planning in 2017, chaired by Glenda Allred of First United Methodist Church of Montgomery. Planning efforts will continue to focus on several key areas:
- 1. Ministries and Services
- 2. Facilities
- 3. Funding/Finances
- 4. Marketing/Branding

The United Methodist Children's Home is a **ministry** of the Alabama-West Florida and North Alabama Conferences of the United Methodist Church to the hurting and forgotten children of Alabama and Northwest Florida. With God's help and

the support of our United Methodist churches, we are developing new and creative ways to fulfill the greatest and most ageless mission an organization could hope to have: "To follow the example of Christ by embracing all God's children.....one child, one family at a time."

God bless you, churches and believers of this great annual conference, for seeing the great needs of our children and responding so faithfully!

Grace and Peace, K. Blake Horne, Ph.D., President/CEO The United Methodist Children's Home office 334/387-2112 Blake.Horne@umch.net www.UMCH.net

## **United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union**

### Chairman's Report

Your Board of Directors' primary job is to set direction for and manage the credit union, making sure it is operated in a sound and prudent manner and that all decisions are guided by the best interests of the members. During 2016, we continued to implement those strategies necessary to maintain growth along with a strong financial picture while continuing to serve our members with inexpensive financial services, and outstanding member service. We believe in "Helping Our Members Afford Life."

#### Our achievements include:

- •Our major achievement this year was that we increased our asset size by almost \$1.5 M to \$29,086,895.58.
- •At the same time, we also increased our membership to over 5,000 members.
- •Our Church Loan lending also increased this year by 28.2% for a net growth of \$377.950.00.
- •Once again, we awarded four \$1,000 college scholarships to members ages 17 35 located in our four conferences Florida, North Georgia, South Georgia and Alabama-West Florida Conferences.
- •We continue to update the technological enhancements for our products and services as they become available so that we can continue to provide members with safe and secure ways to do business with our Credit Union.

Of course, all of this could not have been achieved without our staff, my fellow board members, and other volunteers that helped make 2016 another great year for your Credit Union. Most importantly, however, I want to thank you, our members, for continuing to do business with your Credit Union.

James Mitchell, Chairman

#### Supervisory Committee Report

United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union's Supervisory Committee independently evaluates the soundness of the credit union's operations and activities. This committee is responsible for a series of internal and external audits that are performed to insure that the Credit Union complies with generally accepted accounting principles. This committee also makes certain that United Methodist Connectional FCU's audited financial statements provide a fair and accurate representation of the financial condition of the credit union and is compliant with state and federal regulations.

As a result of the audits held and in conjunction with the annual examination of the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), it is the opinion of the Supervisory Committee that the financial condition of United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union continues to remain strong and well managed, with sound policies and programs. The Credit Union is also compliant with the Credit Union's by-laws, Alabama, Georgia and Florida state laws relating to credit unions, and applicable federal laws and regulations.

#### Supervisory Committee Report

The Supervisory Committee would like to commend the staff, management and volunteers of the Credit Union for their efforts in maintaining the soundness and safety of the credit union.

#### Maryanne McCurdy, Chairman

Committee Members: Winnie Dean, Charles Houston, Shoune Lawton, Clarence Thrower

#### Treasurer's Report

United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union ended 2016 with a strong balance sheet and positive net income. We will maintain our strategy of continued, controlled growth as we strengthen both our balance sheet and income statements in the years to come.

#### 2016 Highlights:

- •Assets increased from \$27,639,307.52 as of December 31, 2015 to \$29,086,895.58 as of year-end 2016.
- •Loans to members decreased slightly from \$17,765,038.96 at year-end 2015 to \$17,361,756.01 as of year-end 2016.
- •Income on investments increased from \$70,234.35 in 2015 to \$83,960.01 as of year-end 2016.
- •Operating expenses increased slightly from \$1,182,764.69 in 2015 to \$1,213,675.32 in 2016.
- •Net income decreased from \$57,800.76 as of year-end 2015 to \$22,842.11 as of year-end 2016.

Your Board of Directors, Management and Staff are committed to ensuring the stability and financial success of your Credit Union. 2017 will find us continuing on this course.

Michael McQueen, Treasurer

# **CONFERENCE AGENCY REPORTS United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union**

Assets	Summary as of 12/31/15	Summary as of 12/31/16
1 KOSCES	Sammary as of 12/31/15	Summary us of 12/31/10
Cash	\$344,865.70	\$320,264.41
Loans To Members	\$17,765,038.96	\$17,361,756.01
Loan Participation	\$1,337,580.02	\$1,715,530.97
Allowance for Loan Losses	(\$82,830.63)	(\$60,828.76)
Other Receivables	\$0.00	\$0.00
Investments	\$7,606,814.67	\$9,110,076.21
Accrued Income	\$64,472.15	\$65,624.06
Prepaid Exp & Defer Charges	\$39,676.38	\$37,187.77
Fixed Assets	\$516,615.27	\$490,209.91
All Other Assets	\$47,075.00	\$47,075.00
Total Assets	\$27,639,307.52	\$29,086,895.58
	. , ,	. , ,
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$7,369.53	\$16,039.18
Dividends Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Notes Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Taxes Payable	\$669.81	\$545.49
Accrued Expenses	\$43,273.15	\$26,954.49
Deferred Credits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Liabilities	\$4,385.58	\$914.45
Total Liabilities	\$55,698.07	\$44,453.61
Equity		
Shares of Members	\$24,968,184.56	\$26,404,174.97
Reserves	\$682,937.04	\$682,937.04
Undivided Earnings	\$1,874,687.09	\$1,932,487.85
Net Income	\$57,800.76	\$22,842.11
Total Equity	\$27,583,609.45	\$29,042,441.97
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$27,639,307.52	\$29,086,895.58
		<i>\$27,000,070,000</i>
Income Statement	Summary as of 12/31/15	Summary as of 12/31/16

\$1,022,256.59	\$1,023,293.62
\$70,234.35	\$83,960.01
\$153,306.68	\$139,637.06
\$102,702.11	\$85,156.20
\$1,348,499.73	\$1,332,046.89
\$496,058.71	\$531,265.94
\$153,605.76	\$163,597.52
\$59,014.73	\$54,614.67
\$18,309.00	\$17,533.00
\$45,846.90	\$47,091.20
\$105,961.19	\$96,358.68
\$54,093.91	\$37,586.83
\$28,957.77	\$52,507.37
\$195,088.98	\$198,370.52
\$8,000.00	\$0.00
\$0.00	\$0.00
\$4,948.86	\$5,029.80
\$118.08	\$0.00
\$0.10	\$9.95
\$4,583.71	\$3,269.37
\$8,176.99	\$6,440.47
\$1,182,764.69	\$1,213,675.32
\$165,735.04	\$118,371.57
\$165,735.04	\$118,371.57
\$107,934.28	\$95,529.46
\$0.00	\$0.00
\$57,800.76	\$22,842.11
	\$70,234.35 \$153,306.68 \$102,702.11 \$1,348,499.73 \$1,348,499.73 \$153,605.76 \$59,014.73 \$18,309.00 \$45,846.90 \$105,961.19 \$54,093.91 \$28,957.77 \$195,088.98 \$8,000.00 \$4,948.86 \$118.08 \$0.10 \$4,583.71 \$8,176.99 \$1,182,764.69 \$165,735.04 \$107,934.28

## **United Methodist Development Fund**

The United Methodist Development Fund for our Conference provides sources of financing for church and church organizations' building projects, renovation projects and property purchases. In 2016 the Development Fund provided first mortgage loans for various projects in the Conference totaling \$1,332,000. These loans are made possible by deposits from local churches, agencies and church members looking for competitive rates on liquid funds and the opportunity to participate in church building and growth.

Any church or individual can invest in the United Methodist Development Fund accounts. Applications are available through the United Methodist Foundation office or on our web page, www.alwfumf.org. Interest earned on the deposits may be mailed to you as frequently as quarterly or reinvested into the same.

Loans through the Development Fund are only offered on a first mortgage basis or by assigning assets already held through the United Methodist Foundation. The Development Fund does not charge points or closing costs for establishing a loan; however there are certain filing requirements. The Development Fund staff works diligently to respond promptly to the needs of the church and works as a consultant to determine the financial impact on the church of the debt amount. For information on rates and availability of funds please call Terri Turner at (334)793-6820.

We appreciate the hard work of our Board of Directors and their commitment to providing the services vital to church growth in our Conference.

Henry Hooks, President Terri H. Turner, Executive Director

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: Henry Hooks

Executive Director: Terri H. Turner

Lay Directors:

Henry Hooks, Steve McCarroll, Clay Carnathan, Pat Luna

Conference Treasurer: Frank S. Dunnewind Conference Missions Secretary: Susan Hunt Conference Lay Leader: Beverly Maddox Resident Bishop: Bishop David Graves U.M. Foundation President: Aubrey Stabler Cabinet Representative: Rev. Sara Shaver

## **United Methodist Foundation, Inc.**

The Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation provides endowment assistance as well as investment, financial and administrative services to local churches and agencies within our conference. The services are designed to strengthen ministries by growing the financial resources needed in ministry as well as encouraging generosity and good stewardship of gifts. As of the end of

2016, the Foundation was responsible for investing and administering in excess of \$80 million in ministry related funds. As a result of the participation in our financial services by our churches and agencies, the Foundation has been able to provide additional free services to encourage generosity and good stewardship the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

#### **Permanent Endowment Program**

By providing the framework and steps to establish a permanent endowment program, a church or agency can benefit from larger estate gifts designed to provide perpetual income for growth and new opportunities in ministry for the organization. By utilizing the prototype set-up documents provided by the U. M. Foundation, an Endowment Committee is able to direct donors in making gifts that are time-tested and an expression of their values. The Foundation also provides free marketing resources that can be used for education and inspiration of our members in the various ways they can give. Foundation staff is available to consult with interested donors and their advisors on the best way for someone to make an estate gift. The Permanent Endowment Program is creating a useful vehicle for encouraging legacy gifts to the church and a way to administer those gifts long-term.

#### **Scholarship Services**

The Foundation provides our administrative and investment services for 130 separate scholarship funds set up by families, churches and other organizations in the conference. Of that number, 25 of these scholarship funds have requested that the Foundation Scholarship Committee be responsible for receiving applications and selecting the recipients as an added service that we provide free of charge. The total amount of scholarships administered and granted from the Foundation in 2016 was \$275,296. Since the year 2000, the Foundation has given out \$2,492,471 in scholarship funds.

The U. M. Foundation is available to provide free programs on long-term financial planning, investment strategies, wills and estate planning, charitable gift options, and the gift-making process among others. These programs are available to existing partners or churches and organizations interested in creating a culture of generosity, planning and accountability.

For more information on any of the United Methodist Foundation's services, you may reach us at (334)793-6820 or <a href="mailto:foundation@alwfumf.org">foundation@alwfumf.org</a>.

The Board of Directors unanimously endorses and recommends the following board and officers

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

Current President: Aubrey Stabler Incoming President: Ross Cotter

Treasurer: Herbert Barr

Terri Turner. Executive Director

#### LAY DIRECTORS

**CLASS 2017** 

Tommy Boyd - Mty/Pratt
Gene Floore - Pensacola
Aubrey Stabler - Mty/Pratt
Henry Hooks - Mar/PC
Olen Kirby - Demopolis
Jennie Hoppenjan - Pensacola
Russ Dunman - Mty/Opelika

Ross Cotter - Dothan
James Hall - Dothan
Mike Tucker - Mar/PC
Dennis Adams - Baypines
Mac McCorquodale - Demopolis
Stephen Burch - Pensacola
Jody Dunn - Mobile

CLASS 2018

Herbert Barr – Dothan

Jon Heath - Dothan

Lany Simmons – Baypines

Bill Hill – Demopolis

Eric Canada – Mty/Opel

Beebe Frederick – Mty/Opel

Jeff Outlaw - Dothan

**CLASS 2019** 

Chris Beam – Pensacola John Bullard, Jr. – Mty/Pratt
Mark Davidson - Mobile Laureen Lynn – Mobile
Harry Nelson – Dothan Mike Norris - Mty/Pratt
Talana Wilkins – Dothan Jeff Sessions - Mobile
Jana Ealum – Mty/Pratt Howard Meadows – Mty/Pratt

Ex-Officio Members:

The Resident Bishop All District Superintendents Conference Lay Leader

## CONFERENCE MISSION and MINISTRIES REPORTS

## Alabama Rural Ministries (ARM)

Extending the love of Christ through home repair and children's ministry

In 2016, some pretty amazing things happened! In our partnership with Tuskegee Methodist, we invested over \$100,000 into the church. Upgrades included an updated fire safety system, new doors and windows, and continued progress in the bunk rooms. For the first time, the church hosted our youth teams working in the Lee/Macon county areas. We are grateful to the District and Conference for their prayers and support!

Below lists the impact of the year:

- •Served with 38 families and completed repairs for 24 homes- we made them safe, warm, dry and beautiful.
- •Hosted 992 volunteers on 21 non-local teams along with several local (Lee/Macon County) teams
- •62 children were reached through our Sonshine Kids Day Camp ministry

Here are a few other updates:

Youth Mission Camp (Compassion And Ministry Partnerships)- Made for More!

Our mission camps are immersion experiences that build relationships as we extend the love of Christ! Hosted by mission driven college student counselors, youth are challenged in areas of discipleship and intentional service. The Great Commission and Great Commandment slam together. We are made for more than just cushy jobs to lead comfortable lives and to stay away from pain and struggle. In fact...how boring! So, if you don't agree with that and just think church and being a follower is to be comfortable, financially blessed, and be safe, don't send us your youth. Because we are going to say they are made for more. We are going to challenge them to a lifestyle of service. We are going to dare them to actively minister in their communities. We dare you to come and join us! No one is too young or old to join with us so you can be more faithful at home.

**Cycle of Service**, our bicycle ride across the state last April raised over \$26,000 for home repair and hosted a total of fifteen riders. We are grateful to these churches: Livingston UMC, Memorial UMC (Selma), Trinity UMC (Phenix City) and Tuskegee Methodist who helped us along the way. We appreciate Auburn UMC who undergirds the whole event. This year's ride is slated for April 21-23, 2017 to cover 300 miles in three days across three states. There is also a way for "spinners" and virtual riders to participate! Register at www.cycleofservice.arm-al.org

#### Main Events:

#### Sweet Homes for Alabama- aka No More Shacks

We had great participation from so many churches, pastors, and laity helping us out. I and others lived in shacks to raise funds and awareness about poverty housing. A few churches put out wheelbarrows in their churches, collected change and sent back to us. "The Wheelbarrow of Change" raised over \$1000. Local college students lived in cardboard houses or slept in their cars one night to replicate homelessness. Our efforts generated over \$82,000 and highlighted the need for better housing and how we can collectively work together to serve in our communities this way.

Our MLK worship service and National Day of Service is always a highlight in the winter months. Workdays occurred on both the Saturday and Monday of the weekend. Our community worship continues to be a time of many people coming together and worshipping as a multi-ethnic kingdom! The days of serving had approximately 100 "friends" who split into several groups doing home repair, renovation at the Tuskegee Methodist, or a children's Bible camp on both of the days.

ARM is training crew leaders, hosting financial literacy classes for our families, and developing youth retreats like **Lead Up** to challenge our youth. Our student group, ARM@AU is working the Auburn campus to get more students involved and we are starting to pray about the next campus to start a student group. We are renovating a Tuskegee property into a duplex for veterans and making plans to BUILD new houses in the near future. Add this to progress on the bath house and Tuskegee Methodist renovations as it opens itself up as a community mission center and you will see that we have had a few things going on. The Holy Spirit has been

at work and we are just trying to keep up!

How can you plug in?

- 1) We can come to you! Our ministry team can come and do workshops that help you connect to low-income, broken, and the "unseen" people in your community. We can also preach a sermon lead a youth or college retreat or help with your mission event, so just give us a shout.
- 2) We can help you understand the political structures in Alabama that perpetuate poverty-keep your eyes on the Alabama Housing Trust fund and the bill to remove the grocery tax.
- 3) Of course, bring a group either in the summer or for a weekend retreat to do home repair. We'll help you plan it out and cover the details.
- 4) Finally, you can help us renovate Tuskegee Church. We have to raise another \$75,000 to complete the kitchen and bathhouse. Stay tuned for how you, your small group, or church can play a major role!

We thank all of those who have come to Tuskegee and Livingston to serve with us. We are grateful for all of our partner churches, groups, and individuals who give and also challenge and encourage us! Our vision is to eliminate poverty housing in rural Alabama and you all are instrumental in making that happen. See you all at Annual Conference. Come get filled at the snack bar and of course get your new coffee mug! Blessings to you all in your ministries!

Grace and peace, Lisa Pierce

## Alabama Rural Ministry Board of Directors 2017-2020

Class 2017

Mike Martin Randy Stephens Roland Vaughan Charles Walters Sharron Willbanks Sarah Head

Roger Sailors

Class 2018

Paul Schrantz Amy Kelsey

Rev. Jamal Oliver Margaret Vollenweilder

John Bibliss

Class 2019

Jimmy Aulner Dara Hosey
Scott Middleton Ken Story
Fred Callahan Dave Mashburn

Class 2020

Roger Sailors Sharon Wilbanks Karin Hopkins Rev. John Fox

Morgan Bell

#### Ex Officio:

Bishop Davis Graves
District Superintendent Rev. Robins Simms
Conference Missions Coordinator Susan Hunt
AU Wesley Director Rev. David Goolsby
TU Wesley Director Wallace Noble

## **Dumas Wesley Community Center**

The Dumas Wesley Community Center (DWCC) is a neighborhood based non-profit organization located in the Crichton community of Mobile, Alabama. DWCC was founded in 1903, by the Woman's Society of Christian Service (present day United Methodist Women). The agency's original mission was to serve poor women and children who worked in the cotton mills of the Crichton community. Over the years DWCC evolved to meet the changing needs of the community, becoming a multi-service center.

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Dumas Wesley Community Center of Mobile, Alabama is to EDUCATE, EMPOWER and ENRICH our local community through collaborative programs of Christian service that: Provide for immediate human needs, Strengthen family life, Develop leadership and encourage personal responsibility.

#### Neighborhood Outreach

The intent of our Neighborhood Outreach and Advocacy program is to implement and foster trust and belief in the residents of Crichton, thus serving as a catalyst for the advocacy and betterment of the community. Our major goals are:

- •Rehabilitation of family life through education and services.
- •Improve the lives of disadvantaged and underserved area youth, families and senior citizens.
- •A renewal of community interest in the neighborhood as a place of pride.

#### **Youth Programs**

The After School Achievement Program (ASAP) provides a safe environment for community youth to participate in age-appropriate activities. Specific programs include church and city basketball leagues, after-school safe haven, summer camp, tutoring, computer lab, music lessons, and a youth empowerment program.

#### Sybil H. Smith Family Village Transitional Housing Program

The Sybil H. Smith Family Village transitional housing program began serving homeless families in July, 1999. To date, the Center has served over 850 individuals from seven Alabama counties, the Mississippi coast area and the Florida panhandle. This unique program provides homeless families with the tools to establish and maintain self-sufficiency. It combines transitional housing of up to 24 months with on-site support services as well as referrals to other community agencies and institutions. Eighty percent of our clients successfully complete the program, become gainfully employed and remain in permanent housing. This

percentage is well above the national average (60%) for similar transitional housing programs.

#### Senior SAIL Program

The Dumas Wesley Senior Activities for Independent Living (SAIL) Program provides Crichton and Toulminville seniors age 60 plus with a hot congregate meal, daily activities and dependable transportation to medical appointments. Eighty-one percent of seniors live alone and are dependent.

A hot, nutritious meal is served to 25 seniors at the center, and in addition, meals are transported to 36 homebound seniors. Participants enjoy a variety of activities, including games, sing-alongs, nutrition education, speakers, health checks and field trips.

#### Other Partner Programs:

#### The Joseph Project: A Community Food Pantry

The Joseph Project, named for the Joseph story in Genesis 41, is a partnership between the Ashland Place United Methodist Church and the Dumas Wesley Community Center. Serving an average of 100 individuals each week, the food pantry is open for all in need; completely volunteer-supported and operated.

#### The Clothing Closet

Dumas Wesley Community Center offers a clothing closest for those in need. Serving an average of 30 individuals each week, the closet is a community-wide program that is completely volunteer-supported and operated.

#### Our Sisters' Closet

The mission of Our Sisters' Closet is to increase the self-confidence and job opportunities of disadvantaged women who are job seeking by providing free interview and workplace clothing, job search support and career advancement training to women, men and teens.

#### Monitoring of Home Day Care Feeding Program

Dumas Wesley staffs the monitoring of the feeding program in 59 home daycares in Mobile and Washington Counties. This program plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for local low-income families. Homes must be licensed and approved in order to qualify for meal reimbursements. Dumas Wesley monitors each provider through quarterly on-site visits, in-home trainings and annual workshops.

#### Assistance to Refugee and Immigrant Populations

Attorney Perry Noble has brought pro bono legal services to Dumas Wesley, serving immigrant and refugee families and individuals. Assistance is provided by appointment only.

**How can you participate in the ministry of Dumas Wesley Community Center?** For over a century we have been proudly serving our community. We have a well-

established reputation for quality service among our multi-generational client base. We serve hundreds of needy families every year. Really special to us is that our programs meet the needs of the entire family. We want to continue to meet these needs for generations to come, but without your support our programs wouldn't be possible! We ask for your continued prayers, monetary support and sharing of your talents and skills through volunteerism. Thank you and God bless!

Yours in Service, Kate Carver Executive Director Dumas Wesley Community Center

## **Golden Cross**

Golden Cross is a special fund of the United Methodist Church. It exists in order to: Respond to the most pressing health care needs; Allow the local church to give with compassion; Adhere to the guidelines set forth by the conference.

The Golden Cross represents Christ's healing presence in a hurting world. As United Methodists, we are active in and support the ministries of Christian care by reaching out to those in need. The Golden Cross offering is retained within the conference where it is received. The conference designates the use of the offering. The contributions you give to the Alabama-West Florida Conference provide the opportunity to make available financial aid for medical delinquent expense charges from a hospital, physician or pharmacy. Golden Cross receives no funds from apportioned items; the only source of income is from the people of the local church within our Conference. Please send your offering to the AWF Conference Treasurer, designated as "Golden Cross."

Golden Cross Sunday will be held on a different Sunday in 2017. The announcement of the new date for Golden Cross Sunday will be communicated to local churches through the AWFUMC News Connection services and website. Local churches are encouraged to give on this day – or any day of their choosing – so that the most urgent requests can be fulfilled.

#### Guidelines used to assist those in need:

- •Assistance shall be available for United Methodists of the conference. Payment toward financial assistance shall be made directly to the hospital, physicians, or pharmacy.
- •The Director of Golden Cross will provide each applicant with a form that must be filled out in advance of receiving assistance. It is also available on the website of the AWF Conference.
- •A copy of the balance with past due, unpaid balances must be provided with the completed application form.
- •This information is to be returned to the Director of Golden Cross.
- •Assistance will be granted to a person only upon the recommendation of a pastor or District Superintendent who is in a position to know of the need or circumstances. Assistance will be granted for a pastor only on the recommendation

of the District Superintendent.

A copy of the past due bills and the completed application form is to be sent to the Golden Cross Director, Julie Terrell, 4570 Sailboat Lane, Pensacola, FL 32514. The amount of assistance granted to any person shall be limited to a total of \$1,200.00 for any combination of hospital, physician, or pharmacy bills. There have been two requests for Golden Cross assistance this past year, and the fund was able to help both recipients with costs of overdue medical and pharmacy bills. Local church pastors are encouraged to contact the Golden Cross Director to assist members of their congregations who may need assistance from the Golden Cross fund.

Respectfully Submitted, Julie Terrell, RN

# Mary Ellen's Hearth at Nellie Burge Community Center Organization Overview



For over 112 years, Nellie Burge Community Center has been serving vulnerable families in the River Region. After a lengthy assessment of needs in the community, the board determined that the Nellie Burge Community Center could best serve the community by providing transitional housing for homeless women with children. The center was reopened in 2011 and the ministry was renamed "Mary Ellen's Hearth" in honor of long time board member and volunteer Mary Ellen Bullard. With strong roots in civic engagement and community collaboration, Mary Ellen's Hearth helps families move to a more stabilized status. In an otherwise wealthy county, deep pockets of poverty and a dearth of affordable housing option leave some families unable to meet their most basic needs. While all of the families we care for are low income, according to HUD definitions, 50% of our families are very low income and 30% are extremely low income. Families living in poverty are under constant distress. Hunger, scarcity, and housing insecurity caused by poverty often lead to chronic trauma. Under these conditions, families are ill-equipped to gain access to stabilizing services that could lead to self-sufficiency. By stabilizing a family's housing situation and providing critical services that support movement towards self-sufficiency, Mary Ellen's Hearth works to mitigate the effects of homelessness on the children and families we serve. The following program components provide essential support so families experiencing homelessness can make transformational changes:

#### Transitional Shelter (Mary Ellen's Hearth)

Families are housed for up to two years during which time they receive comprehensive support services and work towards identified goals for a successful transition to safe, affordable, decent housing.

#### **Support Services**

During their time in transitional housing, families receive comprehensive support

services designed to help parents care for themselves and their families, begin intentionally improving their life skills and decision-making abilities, and develop the internal resources necessary to become self-sufficient.

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Mary Ellen's Hearth is "offering hope, help and healing to homeless women and children through Christian love and values." We offer hope by providing life skills training. We offer help through our transitional housing services. Finally, we offer healing by covering everything with Christian love and support. Our goal is for residents to leave the program fully prepared for independent living, with their dignity and self-respect restored.

#### PROGRAM IMPACT

Mary Ellen's Hearth provided critical housing and support services to 109 families, comprised of 27 adults and 48 children (direct services) and 34 adults (indirect service), in FY2015-2016. Of the 27 families served over half of the children were 5 years old or younger. The following outcomes were achieved by families residing in transitional housing: families took goal-directed steps toward stability, children attended school regularly, families improved financial empowerment, and families continued to move toward maintaining self-sufficiency after leaving the shelter.

#### Rhonda's story:

We were pleased to have a graduate return this year to speak to current residents of her time residing at Mary Ellen's Hearth. Rhonda entered our MEH Transitional Housing program in November 26, 2014 with her 10 year old son, Kaleb. She was surprised to discover Mary Ellen's Hearth Transitional Housing program didn't feel like a homeless shelter. The volunteers were "beyond incredible." They cheered along with her and created an environment that felt almost homey. In addition, Rhonda started talking with the other shelter families and soon became friends with them; they became an important support system. While living at MEH, Rhonda worked with the program manager to develop an individualized family plan. She went back to school to finish her advanced degree and she maintained full-time employment. By the time Kaleb was 11, Rhonda had been promoted at her job and was earning enough money to begin the permanent housing transition. In February 2016, Rhonda moved in a small home. She and Kaleb received gifts, food, and housewares through MEH and volunteers. Since "graduating" Rhonda has donated her time as a way to "pay back" the organization and people who helped her so much

LaTeasa Hicks, Ed.D, MSW, LBSW, Executive Director Mary Ellen's Hearth at Nellie Burge Community Center Office: (334) 264-4108; Fax: (334) 649-1662

lateasa@nellieburge.org

## Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries

Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries was established in 1992 as a children's Bible study program within a low income, inner city housing project. By 1996, the

program was incorporated as a community-based non-profit organization - 501(C) (3) - and children received after school care, tutoring, mentoring, and nutrition, in addition to Christian education.

This ministry is an expression of God's love in the world and serves to bring God's healing, hope, and help to people in need. Milk and Honey has partnered with and been supported by a number of denominations. By providing services within the neighborhood, the program has become a valuable part of the lives of the neediest children in our service area.

Our Kids Club current programs include:

**After-school program**: This program provides tutoring, counseling, Bible study, and snacks to children during the year.

**Spring Break**: This program was initiated in 2003 in partnership with the Pensacola First United Methodist Church's Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty Task Force. There was a need to provide a nutritious lunch during the week-long Spring Break. Similar to the Summer Camp Program, this is also an opportunity to provide a safe, nurturing place for children when they are out of school.

**Summer Camp Program**: The Summer Camp program operates from June to August. The ten week session concentrates on teaching our core values: Love of God and yourself; Love for your community and nation; Respect for yourself and others; Academic excellence and Self Control. Milk and Honey believes that both Spring break and Summer Camp gives us the perfect opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of these children and youth.

Girls Embracing a More Excellent Way (GEMS): This program is targeted to African-American girls 10-17 years old from single family homes and/or high crime neighborhoods. Milk and Honey recognizes that girls with the above background need a support system to ensure successful entry into adolescence. The pilot program showed such a need for this program and was so overwhelming that it was reinstated in 2004. Since then activities have included a series of Friday night workshops in which informal group sessions are held with the girls to discuss issues with one-on-one mentoring through positive role models from the Links, Incorporated. Members of The Links, Incorporated are business and civic leaders, role models, mentors, activists and volunteers who work towards a common vision by engaging like-minded organizations and individuals in partnership. The girls learn strategies for effective goal setting, support for a commitment to a lifestyle of sexual abstinence until marriage, appropriate methods for interacting with peers and adults, and how to identify their spiritual gifts.

**BB-BAM** (Boyz Becoming Brilliant Amazing Men): Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries is proud to announce the start-up of its boys program: BB-BAM (Boyz Becoming Brilliant Amazing Men). A select group of boys have been chosen to form this program designed to teach, mentor, train, and develop skills needed

to become successful and great leaders. The BB-BAM select group of boys live in surrounding areas associated with high crime and in low social economic neighborhoods.

Bi-weekly meetings and educational field trips assist with ongoing training and teachings on the principles of **How To: "AVOID TRAPS"**: Fighting, gang violence, bullying, drugs, alcohol, negative peer pressure and decision making skills; **How to: "BECOME SUCCESSFUL"**: "Lead by Example" is the basic foundation process we teach and will be the basic knowledge of becoming successful and also maintaining that status throughout their lives; **How to:** "**MAKE GOOD CHOICES"**: By choosing better friends, dressing appropriately, respecting others and themselves it will become second nature to the boys to recognize the best choice.

**Thanksgiving and Christmas**: Program provides Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets with all the ingredients for a traditional holiday feast. Each meal is delivered to the household with serving utensils, aluminum pans, and table decorations

At Christmas (in partnership with other organizations and individuals) we provide new clothing, new household items, dental hygiene items, and toys. We also replenish a variety of school supplies for the kids.

Submitted by, Sonya Culliver, Executive Director

## Mission u 2016

The 48th Cooperative Mission u Event was held at Millbrook First United Methodist church – Millbrook, Alabama on July 29 –30. Approximately 80 people from over the conference were in attendance. Our 3 studies this year were:

•Spiritual Growth Study: The Bible and Human Sexuality – led by Julie Taylor and Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson

- •Geographic Study: Latin America: People and Faith led by Susan Hunt
- •Issue Study: Climate Justice led by Debbie Bracewell and Sue Owens

The Cooperative Mission u Committee consists of three agencies with-in our conference: Board of Church and Society, Board of General Ministries and United Methodist Women. These three groups plan and implement Mission u each year. This year was the last year for the Conference Board of Global Ministries to be a part of the Cooperative Mission u Team. We thank them for their many years of participation in this most important part of our mission to bring awareness to the many areas of mission emphasis in our church.

In 2017 the event will be hosted by Millbrook First United Methodist Church, Millbrook, AL on July 21-22, 2017. In 2018/19 the Mission u event will be held in the Pensacola District. Our goal is to be able to have this event move around our

conference in order to offer everyone the opportunity to attend this event.

Our 2017 studies and study leaders are:

•Spiritual Growth: A Covenantal Community — led by Carol Toney and Clara Ester

•Geographic Study: The Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist

Church – led by Kathie Harris and Joyce Genz

•Issue Study: Climate Justice – led by Debbie Bracewell

For participants, Mission u is an opportunity to study current issues impacting society based on current mission study topics with particular attention to the responsibilities of women in fulfilling the mission work of the church in the current world context. Mission u events also include worship and singing, interest groups around current issues, mission projects, and fellowship events. We are learning together for the Transformation of the World!

The Committee thanks each person that participated in any way to help make this event happen.

Respectfully submitted, Betty Helms, 2016/17 Dean Assistant Dean: TBD

## **Pensacola UM Community Ministries**

Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries (PUMCM) is located in one of the most impoverished Census tracts in the State of Florida, locally known as Brownsville. According to the most recent U.S. Census figures, almost 69% of households receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance benefits and 42.8% of the households live below the poverty level.

PUMCM serves as a community resource center for the under resourced in our community.

In 2016, 22,854 hot meals were served, \$16,473 clothing vouchers were issued, and 1,152 hygiene bags were provided. Hundreds were seen weekly through programs offered such as Learn To Read, Food Stamp Assistance, Life Skills Classes, Bicycle Ministry, Conversational English Classes, Computer Lab, Reentry Alliance Program, Celebrate Recovery, Grace Recovery groups, AA, Bible Studies and Sunday worship services (10 Adult Baptisms), Earn a Bike Program, Community Service and Volunteer Programs.

Visit our webpage (Pumcm.org) to see how you can serve with us! Thank you for in partnership with us, together the United Methodist Church is making disciples for Christ and changing lives!

Robin Noble, Director Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries

## **United Methodist Inner City Mission**

The United Methodist Inner City Mission is an extension ministry of the Alabama-West Florida Conference UMC. Since 2004, Rev. Tonny H. Algood has served as director of the Mission. The Mission was founded in 1965 and continues to serve Mobile's Oakdale-Maysville Community. According to the most recent Federal Census, 81.2% of the households in this area have low/moderate incomes which make it the poorest community in Mobile. The Mission provides a full scope of programs to minister to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the community. The Mission's Community Enrichment Program oversees a day program for senior citizens who are on limited income and often times are living by themselves with no personal means of transportation. Seniors are transported to the Mission for group activities, jazzercise, shopping trips, worship, fellowship, and lunch. Once a month, they have a lunch and learn program at the Mission with different speakers to address specific issues of interest to senior citizens.

The Community Enrichment Program and its Oakdale Community Service Club partners with Raise the Roof through Dauphin Way UMC to identify homes that are in desperate need of new roofs, painting, or repairs. Within this past year, six homes of Oakdale-Maysville residents have benefited from this ministry. Members of Raise the Roof have been able to use the relationships established through this program to build long term ministries with those who have been served. This past summer older youth who participate in the Mission's programs at Taylor Park participated on the Raise the Roof work teams. They were able to give back to their community which has supported them through the programs at Taylor Park.

The Mission continues to staff and operate all of the programs at Taylor Park Community Center. The Park is located next to Oaklawn Homes which is a 100 unit public housing facility. The Mission has a year around sports program of football, basketball, softball, and baseball for boys and girls ages four to fourteen. The teams are coached by volunteer parents and residents from the community. Through sports the children are taught teamwork, discipline, and how to establish priorities of God, family, school, and sports. The Mission operates an After School and Summer Tutorial Programs for at-risk students in pre-k thru the eighth grades. Volunteers from other churches and students from Spring Hill College tutor children in the After School Tutorial Program in reading, math, and computer skills. Volunteer mentors work with middle school and high school students to teach critical thinking and leadership skills. This is a new program that has been added this past year and it is being well received by the students. The Mission continues to partner with the Feeding the Gulf Coast's Kids' Café to provide hot meals and snacks during the After School Tutorial Program and breakfast and lunch during the Summer Tutorial and Enrichment Program. The Mission also partners with the Cooper Foundation and the Junior Achievement Program to present their curriculum to the children and youth at the park. In the summer of 2016, 135 children participated in our summer programs. Four of our high school students who grew up through our programs at Taylor Park came back and volunteered for

the eight weeks in the summer to assist with the younger children. The Mission took a total of 35 campers to Blue Lake for Camp Discovery. In addition to these 35, three of our high school volunteers went as "Junior Counselors".

The Mission's community garden at Taylor Park is now in its fifth year of planting and plays an important role in our programs. Bible lessons are shared with the children. During the summer of 2016, one horticulture student from Auburn University was assigned through Feeding the Gulf Coast to assist with our community garden. In addition, two residents from the community have volunteered to oversee the garden. The area of the garden has been expanded with plans to grow a cash crop to teach the students how to run a business. The profits will go back into the After School and Summer Tutorial Programs.

The Mission continues to provide emergency assistance to families in need of food, medicine, and assistance with utilities and rent. We also provide breakfast on Mondays through Thursdays for those in our community with an opportunity to minister to their spiritual needs.

Through all of these ministries, our mission is to love and love unconditionally those we serve as Jesus loves us. We continue to show this love through our words, actions, and deeds so others can see Christ in us. The ministries of the United Methodist Inner City Mission would not be possible if it were not for the support of our brothers and sisters throughout the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Please know how much we appreciate and depend on your gifts and your prayers.

Grace, peace, and prayers, Rev. Tonny H. Algood, Director

## OTHER REPORTS

## **Africa University**



Africa University ended 2016 poised to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and eager to embrace new opportunities for transformative ministry over the next 25 years.

The university community acknowledges, with heartfelt gratitude, the faithfulness and generosity of the Alabama-West Florida Conference in helping Africa University to realize its mission. We thank the congregations of the Alabama-West Florida Conference for investing 88.02 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2016.

Overall, the AUF achieved a high level of support within The United Methodist Church in 2016. Last year, the participation of local churches in connectional giving enabled 34 of the 56 United Methodist annual conferences in the United States to invest 100 percent or more of their asking to the AUF.

The support of the Alabama-West Florida Conference is of vital importance to Africa University. Through Africa University, United Methodist congregations

help young people to discover and sharpen their gifts for leadership. Students are equipped and they respond to the call to transform the world. Thanks to your generosity, the dream of the global United Methodist Church is alive in the contributions of the university's 7,000+ graduates. More than 90 percent of these graduates are still in Africa, serving communities in 32 countries. Currently, more than two dozen Africa University graduates are missionaries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, under the auspices of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Great things are on the horizon for Africa University in the next quarter century. Your Africa University is continuing to evolve and serve by:

- •Restructuring its academic units in order to remain relevant and provide a broader-based education to meet new demands in the African workforce.
- •Providing leadership formation experiences and learning for more than 1,400 students from 25 African countries. *Contrary to the norm for African higher education institutions, women represented more than half of the student body.*
- •Generating new knowledge and capacity to support peacebuilding and to improve food security, human rights, and leadership for the African continent.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary, we invite the individual members, congregations and districts of the Alabama-West Florida Conference to celebrate and increase their engagement with Africa University. After all, this ministry draws its mandate, energy and capacity to transform from The United Methodist Church. We sustain this ministry together — praying, loving and sharing — and there is no other way that we could do it!

Please encourage your congregation to invest 100 percent of its asking to the AUF and other general church funds. Engage in a season of daily prayer for Africa University. Join Africa University's honorary alumni association. Consider hosting a special "AU@25" event or an Africa University Sunday in your local church or area. Use your event to increase awareness of Africa University's ministry and invite attendees to each give \$25 each in honor of the 25th anniversary.

Thank you, Alabama-West Florida United Methodists, for your unwavering witness in response to the call to faith, hope, and transformation in the world. We pray that blessings continue to abound for all who lead and serve in disciple-making ministry in the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement Africa University Development Office P O Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007 Tel: (615) 340-7438 jsalley@gbhem.org www.support-africauniversity.org

## **Hinton Center**

Hinton Rural Life Center is a mission agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church, located in rural Appalachia



in Western North Carolina. Hinton Center also serves as a Christian retreat and conference center where guests come to retreat, reflect and renew.

Inspired by Jesus Christ, Hinton Rural Life Center's purpose is to engage individuals, congregations and communities in transformation through retreat ministry and missional outreach. Hinton Center is deeply rooted in the community and is a concerned catalyst for transformation with the issue of poverty, especially the challenges of generational poverty.

Recently, Hinton conducted an asset map and quality of life study of the area, and is working with community leaders to begin addressing the findings. Through Hinton's mission opportunities, home repairs are facilitated alongside local residents and families with the goal of making homes safer, warmer, and drier. This outreach has an emphasis on relationship-building and being in ministry with our neighbors. In 2016, Hinton's home repair ministry involved nearly 850 ministry partners, served approximately 70 home sites, and offered about 90 worship services.

Additionally, Hinton incorporates both a garden and firewood ministry. The garden provides ministry partners and guests with fresh food, while enabling Hinton to share the harvest with other local ministries that are actively combating food insecurity. The firewood is given to local residents using wood as their main heat source or a cost-saving alternative. Hinton meets tangible needs, while simultaneously building community with a lasting effect on those who we help and who come to help.

The ministry is more than home repairs, as Hinton serves as a training ground for discipleship and provides young adults and church groups the opportunity to live out faith actively and intentionally while serving alongside the community. With Hinton's mission outreach, the hope is to see lives transformed, both in those we work alongside and in those who come to serve. Last year, Hinton recorded 20,287 volunteer hours. Think about this: that would take one person working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, 2.3 years to complete on their own.

Hinton Center also fosters community. Last November, during area wildfires the National Forest Service placed crews of firefighters at Hinton Center. Following their arrival, the community showed immense support for the brave men and women. Groups from all over volunteered, donated, and wrote heartfelt thankyous. These notes started on a small scale, but soon packages carrying hundreds of letters arrived at Hinton's door, sharing messages of gratitude, respect, and love. Some children wrote about a neighbor or family member whose home was saved because of the firefighters. Others drew pictures of happy stick-figure firefighters extinguishing brightly-colored flames. In the midst of the emergency,

the community rallied together in ways that some firefighters said they had never experienced.

Whether it's spending time on the back porch overlooking Lake Chatuge or going out to construct a ramp, Hinton Center offers something for everyone. Come and see for yourself! For more information, visit <a href="https://www.hintoncenter.org">www.hintoncenter.org</a> or contact 828-389-8336.

Rev. Dawn Livingston, Deacon Director of Program Ministries (828) 389-8336, TF (866) 389-8336 www.hintoncenter.org

## Lake Junaluska Assembly, Inc.

We are happy to report that Lake Junaluska once again ended the year "in the black", wrapping up 2016 with a balance of over \$200,000. We continue to accomplish this without any operational apportionment support from the Southeastern Jurisdiction. Lake Junaluska has embraced the new financial model that was approved by the 2008 SEJ Conference and we remain committed to not only "living within our means" but also to ensure the long term sustainability of our mission to be a place of Christian hospitality where lives are transformed through renewal of soul, mind, and body. Two thousand sixteen was also a great year for charitable giving. We received \$908,571.20 from 1,285 individuals. We are so grateful to continue to receive the support of new and returning donors each year affirming the mission of Lake Junaluska through their charitable giving.

As we continue to refine and implement our plans for improvements to our facilities, grounds, and programs, we are also continuing to solidify our commitment to one of our most important assets, our staff. Of the \$200,000 "profit" from 2016, \$50,000 was distributed, in the form of profit sharing, back to all current staff who worked in 2016 along with an across the board 1% pay increase for all current staff in 2017. The remainder, along with the generous support of our donors, is being used for a wide array of ongoing capital improvements that we will be looking forward to reporting on next year. We are also proud to report that the Terrace has been consistently ranked among the top ten in Western North Carolina, alongside properties like the Inn on Biltmore Estate and Grove Park Inn on Trip Adviser. We are also working diligently to refine and improve our existing programming for youth and adults and continually seek to implement new innovative programs that align with our mission. The Lake Junaluska Singers will be back in 2017 under the direction of Mary Wannamaker Huff. Mary is the founding director of the New York City Children's Chorus. We are also pleased to have Rev. Mitzi Johnson, an Elder in the North Carolina Conference of the UMC, as our new Director of Programming. 2017 is going to be a fabulous year for programming at Lake Junaluska.

As a member of the United Methodist Church within the Southeastern Jurisdiction we want you to know that "your" asset, Lake Junaluska, is doing very well. You

can be very proud of this important organization within the jurisdiction and the larger United Methodist Church. We are striving to be good stewards of the resources with which you have entrusted us.

To learn more about what is going on at Lake Junaluska, we encourage you to pick up a copy of our 2017 *Discover Lake Junaluska* magazine. Peruse its pages to read about the impact of our programs, to learn about new projects we are working on, and to familiarize yourself with our calendar of events. We do hope you can come and visit us this year for a conference, a retreat, or a vacation to be transformed and renewed in soul, mind, and body.

Submitted by Jack Ewing, Executive Director

## Schools of Theology Boston University

Dear Colleagues in the Alabama-West Florida Conference:

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) travels with you in the vital journey of seeking God, building knowledge, and equipping leaders for the church and society. We celebrate our students, alums, and church partners, who join hands in serving God and building toward transformed communities.

#### **BREAKING NEWS:**

- •<u>Congregations</u>: We welcomed Jonathan Calvillo as a new faculty member in sociology of religion, leading us toward better understanding of congregations and faith identity. See also our website of congregational resources: <a href="http://www.bu.edu/cpt/current-projects-2/congregational-research-and-development/">http://www.bu.edu/cpt/current-projects-2/congregational-research-and-development/</a>.
- •<u>Doctor of Ministry</u>: The DMin program in Transformational Leadership is soaring with deeply committed student cohorts who are widely ecumenical, culturally diverse, and increasingly global. The blended model includes intensives, online courses, and close work with faculty mentors.
- •<u>Scholarships</u>: We multiplied funding for student scholarships and housing, including the Vincent Machozi Scholarship for African students who seek to cultivate ministries of compassion, justice, and peace in their homelands.
- •<u>Religion and Arts Initiative</u>: The Initiative sponsored a hymn-writing contest this year, complementing the photography contest last year and STH's rotating art exhibits. The current exhibit focuses on ecological healing: "Sense of Place" by women print-makers from Ecuador and Maine.

# **PARTNERING FOR MINISTRY AND TRANSFORMATION**: Preparing students for ministry means meaningful partnerships with the local spiritual community.

• <u>Congregational courses</u>: Courses in congregations with church leaders and students learning together.

- •<u>Religion and Conflict Transformation Clinic</u>: Internships, workshops, and projects that foster justice and reconciliation.
- •<u>Travel seminars</u>: Courses engaging local communities on Arizona-Mexican border and in Cuba, Germany, and Indonesia.
- •<u>Ecumenical partnerships</u>: Continuing close work with UMC, AME and other Wesleyan denominations, while building strong programs with the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ.
- •<u>Partnership with Hebrew College</u>: Joint courses and public events, plus cosponsoring *The Journal of Interreligious Studies*. The focus is on enriching theological education and developing religious leaders who are faithful and wise.

#### TAKING ACTION GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY:

- •<u>Campus action</u>: Work with Boston University to improve accessibility and sustainability: to provide full access for all persons (a work in progress) and to live sustainably with the planet.
- •<u>Internships in global service and peacemaking</u>: Student-initiated internships for service with communities across the world, and for just peacemaking projects with international organizations.

## **RENEWED COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE**: Celebrating differences while joining together for action.

- •<u>Standing with Standing Rock</u>: Several BUSTH students and alums joined indigenous peoples at the Oceti Sakowin Camp in North Dakota to protest the pipeline on sacred Sioux land.
- •<u>Deep conversations</u>: Faculty, students and administrators have led deep conversations on issues that divide, but with respectful listening that builds community life and communal action.

#### **OTHER NOTABLE HEADLINES:**

- •Our own **Associate Dean Pamela Lightsey** was featured in Boston University's 2016 Annual Report for her pursuit of justice, empowerment, and change.
- •Our graduating senior, **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** (AME) led the Boston Women's March, and some 75 STH faculty and students marched, calling for social and ecological justice as we build new futures in the United States.
- •Students of all theological and social orientations are asking and then acting: "What can I do to make this world better?" "How can I witness to my Christian faith?"

As BUSTH looks back on 2016, it celebrates transformational leaders who have loved God and cared mightily for God's world. Their living legacy gives us hope and courage for the future.

Blessings and gratitude,

Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean

## Candler

For more than 100 years, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has prepared *real* people to make a *real* difference in the *real* world. Since our founding in 1914, over 10,000 students have graduated from Candler, where they have been shaped as thoughtful, principled, and courageous Christian leaders dedicated transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

One of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is also one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, a top-tier research institution offering extensive resources and a rich context for study. Our location in Atlanta provides a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of the 21st century. Simply put, there is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

In order to keep pace with the needs of the church and the world, Candler offers 17 degrees: seven single degrees and ten dual degrees pairing theology with bioethics, business, international development, law, public health, or social work. One of our newest degrees is a Doctor of Ministry that is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry as they study and apply what they learn in real time. We've also partnered with the University of Georgia's School of Social Work to create an MDiv/MSW where students learn to maximize their effectiveness by combining pastoral skills such as spiritual counseling with social work practices such as family therapy and community assessment.

Our student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. four hundred seventy-five students are enrolled, with 51 percent women, 34 percent people of color (U.S.), and a median age of 30. Students represent 39 denominations, with half coming from the Methodist family. 83 percent of students are seeking a degree to prepare them as ministry professionals.

Candler has a deep commitment to alleviating student debt and employs a multi-pronged approach to tackle this issue. In 2016-2017, we awarded nearly \$5.75 million in Candler scholarships, with 95 percent of MDiv students receiving aid and the average scholarship covering 73 percent of tuition. Plus, our comprehensive "Faith & Finance" program teaches money management skills that serve our students now and will continue to serve them—and the churches they lead—well into the future.

In fall of 2016, Candler welcomed to the faculty Larry Goodpaster as Bishop-in-Residence, and Kendall Soulen as Professor of Systematic Theology. Also this fall, three Candler alumni began their terms as newly elected bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction: David Graves 90T in Alabama-West Florida, R. Lawson Bryan 75T 85T in South Georgia, and Sue Haupert-Johnson 95T in North Georgia.

Candler draws considerable strength and inspiration from its relationship with The United Methodist Church. Our ability to fulfill our mission of educating faithful

and creative leaders for the church's ministries in the world depends upon your support, gifts, and prayers. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of our denomination. Visit us in person in Atlanta or online at <u>candler.emory.edu</u> to see firsthand how Candler prepares *real* people to make a *real* difference in the *real* world.

Jan Love Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics Candler School of Theology

## **Duke Divinity School**

In the academic year 2016–2017, we have been delighted to welcome our new dean of Duke Divinity School, Elaine A. Heath. Dean Heath also serves as professor of missional and pastoral theology, and her research interests focus on evangelism and spirituality, evangelism and gender, new monasticism, and emergence in church and theological education. Prior to coming to Duke, she was the McCreless Professor of Evangelism at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas. Dean Heath is the co-founder of the Missional Wisdom Foundation, which provides opportunities for clergy and laity to learn how to live in intentional, missional communities in diverse social contexts, and she is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. She has published books for scholars, churches, and laypeople; her most recent book is *God Unbound: Wisdom from Galatians for the Anxious Church* (Upper Room).

Since arriving at Duke in July, Dean Heath has begun work on a new strategic plan for the Divinity School. By the end of 2016, the initial listening and feedback phase had been completed and a task force convened to help guide the process of strategic goal-setting. With Dean Heath's leadership, Duke Divinity School remains mindful of our mission to train, prepare, and form men and women committed to God and enthusiastic about ministry. We endeavor to prepare leaders for a changing church and world who will have the spiritual formation, theological foundation, and institutional flexibility to serve God in established churches, intentional communities, or missional organizations, as the Holy Spirit guides them.

This year we welcomed students from a range of backgrounds who are called to serve God and the church. In 2016, our total enrollment was 641 students: 418 are enrolled in the M.Div. degree program; 52 in the M.T.S.; 8 in the Th.M.; 45 in the Th.D.; 71 in the D.Min.; 16 in the M.A.C.P.; 23 in the M.A.C.S.; and 8 who are special students. Thirty-seven percent of our students are United Methodist, with an additional 4 percent from other Wesleyan traditions, and 48 percent of our M.Div. students are United Methodist. Eleven percent of all students are Baptist, 8 percent are Anglican or Episcopalian, 3 percent are Roman Catholic, 11 percent are Presbyterian or Reformed, with the rest from 24 other denominations or nondenominational churches

On April 9, the Divinity School hosted the first annual Hispanic Preaching Festival to celebrate and explore Hispanic homiletics. The event drew 54 participants from

14 different Hispanic congregations across the region. Attendees included pastors, laypeople, and students. The festival featured sermons from local pastors, including Alma Ruiz M.Div.'13 and associate pastor of Fiesta Cristiana, which is affiliated with Apex UMC in Apex, N.C., and Raúl Colón, pastor of Centro Cristiano de Vida in Wake Forest, N.C. The festival was part of the Hispanic-Latino/a Preaching Initiative, a Spanish-language program that provides opportunities for Hispanic and Latino/a (H/L) pastors to receive homiletical training in a peer group format. Each year, 10 applicants serving as pastors in the H/L community are chosen to participate as preaching fellows. The peer group begins with a retreat and then meets monthly for 15 months to engage with homiletical, theological, and exegetical resources led by the program coordinator and other invited teachers.

Our initiatives, centers, and programs are a vital resource for us in connecting the work of Duke Divinity School with other disciplines and constituents. The Center for Reconciliation celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, continuing its work of fostering reconciliation through the Summer Institute, the CFR Justice Fellows, and the Great Lakes Initiative in East Africa. The Office of Black Church Studies, in partnership with the Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts, Duke Performances, Duke Dance, and the Duke Department of African and African-American Studies, presented a symposium on African-American Theology and the Arts, featuring the renowned dance company Ailey II. The Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative hosted the event "Practice & Presence: Gathering for Christians in Healthcare," for healthcare professionals who want to deepen or reimagine the relationship of faith in vocation in community with likeminded practitioners. Faith & Leadership, the online magazine published by LEADD, continues to reach over 300,000 readers and provide a resource for theological reflection and "traditioned innovation" for all in ministry. Their continued excellent work was recognized again this year with awards from the Associated Church Press "Best of the Christian Press" contest.

In partnership with the Western North Carolina and North Carolina Conferences, the Thriving Rural Communities initiative sponsored the 2016 Convocation on the Rural Church, "Apprenticeship with Jesus," to discuss issues important for transforming rural churches and communities. The Divinity School held a two-day conference titled "Tamar's Ashes: Pastoral Ministry Amidst Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence" for the school's students as part of the Mentoring for Ministry program. Duke Divinity School remains committed to supporting local churches and local pastors, particularly in under-resourced communities, and providing pastoral training for our students to allow them to minister to people and in places that are often marginalized or forgotten.

We are delighted to announce the hiring of a new assistant professor of homiletics, Jerusha Neal. She is currently serving as a missionary and lecturer in practical theology at the Davuilevu Theological College of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma in the South Pacific. Her particular interests are formational theological education, teaching preaching in cross-cultural settings, and affirming women in their pastoral call. A native of the U.S. Midwest, Neal has served as co-pastor of the Santee United Methodist Church in Santee, Calif., and been the director of

Christian education at the First Presbyterian Church of Fullerton, Calif.

We remain deeply grateful for the relationships among the United Methodist Church, this Annual Conference, and Duke Divinity School. We look forward to working with you in the task of preparing men and women for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at <a href="https://www.divinity.duke.edu">www.divinity.duke.edu</a>.

Respectfully submitted by The Office of Dean Elaine A. Heath

## **Gammon Theological Seminary**

Gammon Theological Seminary, located in Atlanta, GA, is the United Methodist constituent member of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), a consortium of six historically African American theological schools. Gammon/ITC is a co-educational, professional graduate school of theology. Its faculty personifies vigorous scholarship, rigorous academic discipline, and significant research in the service of the church and other communities in the world. Gammon/ITC is the world's premier resource for black church scholarship and faith-based solutions to the spiritual and socio-economic challenges confronting the African American community and beyond.

Founded in 1883 by the Methodist Episcopal Church and with assistance from the Freedman's Aid Society, today Gammon Theological Seminary is one of the 13 theological schools of the United Methodist Church. The faculty and administration of Gammon/ITC create an environment in which critical thinking, investigative reflection, decision making, and responsible action are fostered. Gammon/ITC is a member of the Atlanta University Center Complex, the world's largest enterprise of African American higher education. It is also a member of The University Center of Georgia and the Atlanta Theological Association. The school is fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Because of the support of this Annual Conference, Gammon/ITC students carry on a proud tradition. They are taught to think independently and communicate effectively. They are also challenged to become involved in finding solutions to problems that affect the human condition, and to become active in the community beyond this campus. Additionally, graduates of this institution are encouraged to maintain a lifelong desire for intellectual growth, spiritual development, and the acquisition of skills for the practice of ministry.

Gammon/ITC has had a very exciting and busy year living out its mission, which is to recruit, support and educate pastors and leaders for the United Methodist Church. Gammon Theological Seminary is extremely grateful to this Annual Conference for your support of theological education, and for your commitment to ensuring that God's church will be served by persons who are called and trained to lead us forward.

Dr. Albert D. Mosley President

## **Garrett-Evangelical**

In 2016-2017, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is focusing on the following priorities:

- •Supporting the local church in addressing economic challenges and engaging young adults as active members of the church.
- •Furthering our commitment to public theology with the launch of the **Garrett-Evanston Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools Program** and the Hispanic and Latino/a Center's **installation of the Cátedra Paulo Freire**.
- •Re-imagining lifelong learning as a new "Connectional Learning" program that provides opportunities to meet learners where they are with the type of education they need when they need it.
- •Engaging faculty scholarship in the design of new courses for a **new MDiv curriculum** beginning Fall 2017 and in celebrating **faculty publications**.

# SUPPORTING THE LOCAL CHURCH IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary received two Lilly Endowment awards this fall. A \$750,000 grant will support clergy education in theologically informed financial and business practices. The grant is part of Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. To help clergy meet these economic challenges, Garrett-Evangelical has created a multi-dimensional program, "Leading Vibrant Congregations: A Collaboration of Faith and Finance." To read more about the program, visit: <a href="www.garrett.edu/">www.garrett.edu/</a> FaithAndFinance.

The \$1.5 million grant will assist congregations in launching or mentoring new ministries that will attract young adults – a population that congregations today are struggling to reach. The grant is part of Lilly Endowment's newly announced Young Adult Initiative 2016. With this grant, Garrett-Evangelical becomes one of 12 innovation hubs around the country helping churches create informed and meaningful ministries for millennials. Read more about "Holy Yearnings, Holy Listening, Holy Partnerships: A Peer-to-Peer Young Adult Ministry Initiative" at www.garrett.edu/YoungAdultInitiative.

# PUBLIC THEOLOGY

This year, Garrett-Evangelical opened the **Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools® program** in partnership with the Evanston community. The CDF Freedom School's program is a six-week, high-quality, literacy-rich program free to underserved children proven to curb summer learning loss and help close achievement gaps. Last summer, we had thirty-five children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade who participated. Parents saw their children fall in love with reading, excited to go to the school each day, and, the Garrett-Evanston CDF Freedom Schools Program is approved for summer 2017.

We are driven to increase enrollment of Hispanic and Latina/o students. Dr. Débora Junker, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Hispanic Center, has revived the work of the Center including new volunteer activities and "lunch and learn" discussions. In 2016, the Center installed the **Cátedra Paulo Freire**, which promotes educational events, research activities, and the enrichment of dialogue among students, faculty, religious leaders, and community members. The Cátedra is a resource for Latino/a communities encouraging their engagement and interaction with the realities and contexts of the Latino/a population in the U.S., and at the same time enhances relationships with the Garrett-Evangelical community.

#### CONNECTIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING

Connectional Learning is our language for building an extended learning community that connects: personal learning interests with accessible non-degree educational resources; professional development needs for knowledge and skills with continuing education units; and diversity of learners to a variety of delivery formats (on and off-campus; online; hybrid). Check our Connectional Learning site often for the latest regional offerings, online courses, webinars, and faculty blogs: www.garrett.edu/ConnectionalLearning

#### FACUTLY SCHOLARSHIP

In light of all that is happening in the world today and our commitment to put faith into action for the wellbeing of all persons and creation, we have redefined the focus, requirements, and targeted outcomes of our Master of Divinity degree. The **new MDiv curriculum** will begin fall 2017. The faculty has designed a number of new courses for this curriculum that prepare leaders for ministry in contemporary cultural and social realities, including attention to race, gender, class, and sexuality, as well as the personal and vocational development of the student.

We are also pleased to share the following **faculty publications** that may be of interest to you:

- •Nancy E. Bedford, Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology, *Galatians: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*
- Wonhee Anne Joh, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Critical Theology against US Militarism in Asia
- •James L. Papandrea, Associate Professor of Church History: Handed Down: The Catholic Faith of Early Christians; Seven Revolutions: How Christianity Changed the World and Can Change It Again; The Earliest Christologies: Five Images of Christ in Postapostolic Age
- •Stephen G. Ray, Jr., Neal F. and Ila A. Fisher Professor of Systematic Theology, Awake to the Moment: An Introduction to Theology
- •Jack L. Seymour, Professor Emeritus of Religious Education, *Teaching Biblical Faith*
- •Mark R. Teasdale, E. Stanley Jones Associate Professor of Evangelism, Evangelism for Non-Evangelists
- •Brent P. Waters, Jerre and Mary Joy Stead Professor of Christian Social Ethics: *Just Capitalism; Christian Moral Theology in the Emerging Technoculture*

•K.K. Yeo, Harry R. Kendall Professor of New Testament: *The Trinity Among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World; The Spirit Over the Earth: Pneumatology in the Majority World* 

Cordially, Lallene J. Rector, President

## Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO)

Thank you for this opportunity to bring you an update from MTSO. Here are a few highlights from a busy year.

### Recognition as a "bright spot" in theological education

Auburn Seminary recognized MTSO among a small number of seminaries in its September report, "Bright Spots in Theological Education: Hopeful Stories in a Time of Crisis and Change." Auburn is a leadership development institute seeking to equip leaders of faith and moral courage to inspire positive change in the world. The report details the "leap of faith" that began with MTSO's founding of Seminary Hill Farm and extends to an array of commitments to ecology and social justice.

#### Major Luce Foundation grant

The Henry Luce Foundation awarded MTSO a three-year, \$425,000 grant in December to support the establishment of the Seminary Environmental Leadership Initiative. The grant is shared by MTSO, the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development, and the Green Seminary Initiative, a project of Drew Theological School and GreenFaith. A growing number of seminary leaders recognize the moral imperative to play a role in the care of God's creation, but they face significant challenges in addressing environmental issues on their own. The Seminary Environmental Leadership Initiative aims to establish best practices and offer resources for seminaries that wish to engage in environmental issues academically and institutionally.

#### **Faculty appointments**

MTSO welcomed two new faculty members in January. Elaine Nogueira-Godsey serves as assistant professor of theology, ecology and race. She comes to MTSO from the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, where she was a post-doctoral research fellow. Francesca Nuzzolese is associate professor of pastoral care and counseling. Most recently she was associate professor of pastoral care and spiritual formation at Palmer Theological Seminary and Eastern University in Philadelphia.

#### New course at National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

MTSO offered a special graduate course, "Race, Religion and Nation: From Black Power to Black Lives Matter," at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in January. The class offered a historical exploration of the Black Lives Matter movement and its precursors, including Black Power activism, hip hop music and culture, and the presidency of Barack Obama. It was offered through MTSO's cooperative relationship with the Freedom Center.

Respectfully submitted, Danny Russell, Director of Communications

## <u>United Theological Seminary (UTS)</u>

Where Dreams Take Flight



United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, was founded in 1871 by Milton Wright, a Bishop in The Church of the United Brethren in Christ and father of aviation pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright. The Wright brothers had a passionate dream of developing the first successful "flying machine." They experienced great difficulties, hardships and setbacks in achieving their dream. Through their determination and commitment, however, their dream eventually was fulfilled, and they were the first human beings to achieve sustained flight.

God often plants a vision or dream in someone's heart to become a full-time servant of Jesus Christ. In St. Peter's sermon on Pentecost, Peter quotes the prophet Joel who said, "God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17). When God pours out the Spirit on someone and calls them into ministry, United seeks to partner with that person in helping them to grow spiritually and intellectually in achieving their God-given call and dream

In the fall of 2016, 418 students enrolled at United to answer God's call and vision for their lives <sup>1</sup>. Our prayer is that God will use United to prepare these students to become faithful, fruitful and effective pastors and church leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. According to a recent survey, 86% of our graduates are either currently serving in local congregations or are retired from serving in local congregations<sup>2</sup>. United alumni/ae are making an impact.

On January 1, 2017, United celebrated the beginning of a new partnership in ministry with Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO). United has become an extension site for the Course of Study School of Ohio located at MTSO, providing a convenient hybrid program for part-time pastors pursuing a local pastor's license. Through United's Course of Study, pastors experience a Friday-Saturday weekend on campus and finish coursework online over the weeks that follow. Courses are offered four times per year.

If you feel God calling you to serve in any form of Christian ministry, we encourage you to go online to united edu to discover the option that fits your ministry and calling. May God bless you as you respond to God's dream for your life to serve in either the ordained, commissioned or lay ministry.

Grace and Peace,

334.356.8014

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The District Superintendents Director of Communications

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Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly https://www.bluelakecamp.com/

Credit Union <a href="https://www.unitedmethodistcu.com/main.php">https://www.unitedmethodistcu.com/main.php</a>

Dumas Wesley <a href="http://www.dumaswesley.org/">http://www.dumaswesley.org/</a>

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Mary Ellen's Hearth a Nellie Burge Community http://www.nellieburge.org/

Methodist Homes Corporation <a href="http://www.methodisthomes.org/">http://www.methodisthomes.org/</a>

Milk and Honey <a href="http://www.milkandhoneyoutreach.org/">http://www.milkandhoneyoutreach.org/</a>

Pensacola UM Community Ministries <a href="http://pumcm.org/">http://pumcm.org/</a>

The Ark <a href="http://www.thearkpcb.org/">http://www.thearkpcb.org/</a>

UMM <a href="http://www.awfumc.org/unitedmethodistmenumm">http://www.awfumc.org/unitedmethodistmenumm</a>

 $UMW \hspace{0.1cm} \underline{http://www.awfumc.org/unitedmethodistwomenumw}$ 

United Methodist Children's Home http://www.umch.net/

United Methodist Foundation foundation@alwfumf.org

# **Correction To The Previous JOURNAL**

Errors are inevitable in any publication. If they are not corrected, it is probable that they will be reprinted in subsequent editions of the Conference JOURNAL.

If you found an error in last year's Conference JOURNAL, please make a note of it using the form below(\*). Said error will be reviewed.

The error is on page(s):

IT READS:

IT SHOULD READ:

After noting the correction, please email or mail to:

Alabama-West Florida Conference

ATTN: JOURNAL EDITOR

4719 Woodmere Boulevard Montgomery, AL 36106 awfcrc@awfumc.org

(\*) If needed please use a separate sheet of paper

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Baypines	Mark Lilly	Barbara Davis
Demopolis	Brian Dovey	Jess Burns
Dothan	Andy Gartman	Salli Rogers
Marianna/Panama City		
Mobile	Jennifer Gregory	Jeroy Carroll
Montgomery-Opelika	Ed Shirley	Terry Sasser
Montgomery-Prattville	John Bratcher	Chrystal Strickland
Pensacola	Jonathan Hart	Louise O'Bannon
TEAM B	Clergy	Lay
Baypines	Kevin Krist	Janet Twitty
Demopolis	Ray Lane	Virgil Hinson
Dothan	Clint McBroom	Kay Wingate
Marianna/Panama City		
Mobile	Barry Len Hurston	Kimi Oaks
Montgomery-Opelika	Grant Parker	Sandra Arnold
Montgomery-Prattville	Bessie Hamilton	Walt Lynch
Pensacola	Mike Ramsey	Candace McKim
ALTERNATE	Clergy	Lay
Baypines	Marg Perelli	Herman Harville
Demopolis	Tony Antonelli	Shirley Hodges
Dothan	Jean Smith	Eddy Parker
Marianna/Panama City		
Mobile	Joel Wasson	Barbara Carroll
Montgomery-Opelika	Ashley Davis	Brandy Cole
Montgomery-Prattville	Geoffrey Kagoro	Penny Colin
Pensacola	Levi Gardner	Pam Jones

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