

Pre-Conference Reports

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2017 Pre-Conference Reports

Boards & Agencies of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

The United Methodist Church

Boards & Agencies Related to Program & Mission

Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries **David Armstrong, Chair**

This is my first year as chair of the Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries (BCRM), and after three years on the board I've gained an entirely new perspective now that I'm leading the organization. I was well familiar with operations at the site level, where we continue to provide a fantastic experience for campers, retreat attenders, and various other groups of every stripe. Faith development, spirit nurturing, community, building relationship with God and one another, worship, and radical hospitality happen every day at our camp and retreat sites. Great food and great fun go hand in hand with great discovery and great healing. Lives are transformed in an environment of love and God's beautiful creation. All that has been part of camping in Oregon-Idaho for almost 100 years.

What I didn't realize was how much is happening behind the scenes, especially at the Conference office. After the unexpected but necessary termination of our Executive Director last August, Dan Wilson-Fey, our Conference and BCRM Treasurer, and I served as Co-Interim Directors for about a month and a half. It gave me a new appreciation for both the work of the Executive Director and the number of hours that Dan and the rest of the Conference BCRM staff put towards keeping camp and retreat ministries running so smoothly. I want to personally thank Dan, Geneva, Eric, Janice and all the rest of the Conference staff for their faithful service to Camp and Retreat Ministries.

Luckily, in mid-September Todd Bartlett, then Director at the Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, agreed to step in as Interim Director. Todd hit the ground running and has hired new site directors at Camp Magruder, where Troy Taylor moved up from assistant director, and at Camp Latgawa where Sam Grainger was made permanent after serving as interim director since April 2016. Then, after a nationwide search, Todd emerged as our choice for permanent Executive Director and took over in January, while still serving part time at Collins. Most recently, Todd has chosen Dan Benson as his successor at Alton Collins; Dan began there on May 15. It's been a year of personnel changes, but we now have great directors at all of the sites, and an Executive Director with deep experience in Oregon-Idaho. I'm thrilled to welcome Todd, Troy, and Sam to their new positions and Dan into the CRM fold.

In September the Camp and Retreat Ministries board met at Sawtooth Camp for the first time, as far as we could determine, in its 48-year history. We met in the beautiful new welcome center that had just been completed, and enjoyed both the hospitality of Dave and Candace Hargreaves and their expertise in leading groups through the challenge course. We continue to make upgrades at our sites to ensure a safe, comfortable, and beautiful experience for our campers of all ages.

In a year of great change in our country, our church, and BCRM, the mission of Camp and Retreat Ministries remains unchanged: "We are a people dedicated to creating quality environments of Christian hospitality and learning," so that our campers and guests:

- **Grow in wisdom and in healthy self-esteem.**
- **Develop lifestyles of loving interdependence with each other and all of creation.**
- **Affirm and expand their faith in God and their service as Christian disciples within God's world.**

With God's help and yours, Camp and Retreat Ministries will continue to offer God's beautiful creation and grace to all.

Communications

Greg Nelson, Director of Communications

The last thirteen months have been dedicated to connection. The connected church came to the Oregon-Idaho Conference for General Conference; we gathered in Scottsdale, Arizona for Jurisdictional Conference; we held our own annual conference. Each of these offered a great opportunity (and challenge) to tell the story of the people of The United Methodist Church.

The communication efforts of the conference provide up-to-date information for conference and local church leaders as well as resources and training for local churches. Efforts in the last year have focused on helping churches learn about marketing and understand the critical need for churches to have websites that share something about values and ministries.

Working together with Pacific Northwest Conference and the Western Jurisdiction is an increasing component of our conference communication approach. Many groups now meet as dual conference teams to plan and implement a regional strategy. Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest conferences work to coordinate key messages and promote events across conference lines. Western Jurisdiction Communicators meet regularly via teleconference to coordinate work and support each other. Together they support the jurisdictional website and committees.

The Director of Communications oversees the web site, annual conference session technology, public relations and crisis communications, weekly *UM Connector*, serves on the Ministry Leadership Team and extended cabinet, and provides communication support for conference groups and committees.

Conference communications works to inform and inspire the people of the Oregon-Idaho Conference with resource information for use in local ministry, news of the United Methodist connection, and the stories of vitality in our Oregon-Idaho churches and ministries.

Key events in the last year include:

- Hosting General Conference and working with communicators from around the globe to share about the Oregon-Idaho Conference and the city of Portland. Director of Communications, Greg Nelson attended a pre-General Conference briefing in Harare, Zimbabwe to greet delegates and help them be prepared for General Conference.
- Working with other Western Jurisdiction Communicators to provide information on the Western Jurisdictional Conference, episcopal election, and assignment of bishops to areas for the new quadrennium.
- Providing ongoing support for presentations and messaging at the Annual Conference session. This year working to implement a shared annual conference that will include both the Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest Conferences.

The conference website is a resource to churches and church leaders and a connection point for information about our conference and ministry settings. In the last year, it has had over 48,000 visits and 162,000 page views. Social media continues to be a growing area of connection. Facebook “likes” have increased 27 percent in the last year.

Social media connections through Facebook and Twitter provide additional channels for connection to churches and individuals. The conference Facebook page is a resource for local churches to share worship reminders and scripture graphics each week.

Over 660,000 emails have been sent to local churches and conference leaders in the last year. Using email as a primary communication method has greatly reduced costs and increased the number of people reached with news, resources, updates, and invitations. It is critical that clergy and conference leaders keep the conference up-to-date about email addresses. Updates should be sent to district offices.

Connect to the conference via these online links:

- ~ Conference Website: www.umi.org,
- ~ Episcopal Area Website: www.greaternw.org,
- ~ Facebook: www.facebook.com/UMOrId,
- ~ Twitter: @UMOI

Hispanic Ministry **Jorge Rodriguez F., Coordinator**

We thank God for the opportunity to work together to reach out, integrate and equip our brothers and sisters from the large Hispanic community within our conference. We are grateful for the support of our conference cabinet, clergy, and churches within our network who have relied on the leadership of Hispanic brothers and sisters who are leaders in their ministries and who work day by day in this challenge of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The Hispanic ministry is moving forward, growing and pursuing our goals for 2024 of having 15 faith communities in our conference.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan was designed during several meetings, consultations and work with local leaders, pastors, youth, National Hispanic Plan, members of the conference cabinet and the Hispanic conference committee.

We will be focusing on 3 work areas:

1. Development of local leaders
2. Planting and development of new faith communities
3. Advocacy

CURRENT HISPANIC MINISTRIES

There are three Hispanic ministries in our conference, which I will describe:

United Methodist Church “Friendship and Faith”

- Located in Wilder, Idaho
- Lay assigned: Alejandro Bravo
- Organizations: an active group of teenagers, group of women, group of men and worship team
- Community programs: food bank, clothing bank
- Attendance: 65+ people
- Local Leaders in Training
 - In the course of studies: Ana Diaz and Gregorio Juica
 - Certified Lay Minister (CLM) candidates: Alejandro Bravo, Eleazar Arias
- Plans for the next two years: expanding the ministry to Vale, Oregon

Las Naciones (the Nations) United Methodist Church (Hillsboro, OR)

- Located in the Hillsboro UMC Building
- Pastor: Rev. Jorge Rodriguez V.
- Attendance: 25+ people
- Local Leaders: Fernando Miranda
- Ministry very focused on serving the community with various programs
 - ESL
 - Paternity classes
 - Tutoring in mathematics
 - Reading
 - Advocacy on immigration issues, among others.
- Plans for the next two years: New faith community in Gresham, OR

The Nations United Methodist Church (Salem, OR)

- Located in Salem, Oregon, using the Jason Lee UMC (closing church)
- Attendance: 12 people
- Pastor: Jorge Rodriguez F.
- This is a ministry that just begins.
- Plans:
 - Formation of the Hispanic Congregation The Nations
 - Establish the Jason Lee Hispanic Resource Center
- Programs for the community:
 - Citizenship classes
 - Paternity classes
 - ESL
- Plans for the next five years:
 - Establish the congregation in Salem
 - Expand the ministry with another new community of faith.

OTHER INFORMATION

We had a training last March 3-4 for Sunday school teachers with 12 in attendance at Las Naciones UMC in Hillsboro. Trainer: Rev. Marcelo Escarzaga from the California-Nevada Conference. We are planning to have our first family retreat this year in October.

**Conference Lay Leader
Board of Lay Ministry
Jan Nelson, chair**

It has been my privilege to serve as your conference lay leader this year. The first thing I learned was how many gaps there were in my understanding of this role and of the concerns of the laity in Idaho and Oregon, and I have been working this year to fill those gaps. I have had a great gift and partner in this work in Emilie Kroen, our associate lay leader. I thank God for all the laity who continually show passion and creativity in the work of making disciples of Jesus and transforming the world.

The most visible role of the lay leader is to serve on a number of conference committees and boards. In these places, particularly the Ministry Leadership Team and the Annual Conference Sessions Team, I have worked to express the concerns and perspective of laity and to make our conference ministries most effective for lay participation.

The role I most treasure is to participate in the concerns and joys lay people have in their ministries. In this I have been less active than I would like to be, and I hope to improve in the coming year. I welcome the opportunity to visit your churches and ministries, to hear your stories, and to listen to your concerns. I want to celebrate with you when things are great and help you fix things when they are not.

The Board of Lay Ministry is working to equip laity across the conference to carry out the mission of the church. A primary focus is assessing current training and enrichment opportunities. We want to know if the conference is offering the training people feel they need in a way they are able and willing to access it. Another effort of the Board is to seek better ways of sharing and celebrating the work of the church and the laity across the conference. We hope that people will look at what is working in another church and be inspired for ministry in their own areas.

All of this work is ongoing, and all feedback is welcome. Please contact the conference or district lay leaders or lay speaking coordinators with any suggestions of how to better encourage the work of the laity in our conference.

Mission and Ministry

Lowell Greathouse, Mission and Ministry Coordinator

It is hard to believe that just over a year ago we hosted the UMC General Conference in Portland. That event, and the gracious (and tireless) hospitality that so many of you were involved in, helped remind all of us in the annual conference that we belong to a global church and a connectional system. My role, as Mission and Ministry Coordinator, is a part of this larger UMC system. However, my goal is to make this work relevant to how we function as a network of local congregations attempting to maximize our impact in the world as we make disciples of Jesus Christ. I am also interested in doing this in a manner that reconnects us to the “movement” spirit that marked Methodism in its earliest days.

During the past year, I continued to relate to a number of grassroots efforts, such as the University Park Affordable Housing Project, Hispanic new starts, and other innovative community-based experiments so that the larger institution could benefit from what we are learning in the field. In addition, I’ve attempted to develop and align the various parts of our annual conference program structure, so that they function more effectively and work as a part of the Greater Northwest Area.

I am currently working to re-align the Ministry Leadership Team within the annual conference governance structure, and serve in a staff role with CONAM, the Global Mission Team, the Hispanic Ministry Council, the Board of Laity, Campus Ministry, Youth Ministry, and various church and society related matters in order to accomplish this. I have also gathered the Annual Conference program directors on a monthly basis, so that we can coordinate our work more effectively. Some of this may not seem to make a difference at the local church level, but we enhance our common work as a connectional church when we are working together and sharing and learning about innovative ministry from each other.

My goal is to have the center and edges of our annual conference communicate in ways that make our connectional structure work for the advancement of our ministry. One of the ways I do this is through *Spirit Alive*, which is sent to over 3,500 lay and clergy leaders in the annual conference two times each month. As a part of this communication, I profile creative approaches to ministry that take place at a local church level. At the same time, thanks to funding from The Collins Foundation and the National Hispanic/Latino Plan, we are able to engage in a variety of lay leadership efforts and work in several targeted areas of ministry. As a result, we have made significant progress in terms of Hispanic Ministry (i.e. developing another Hispanic New Start Ministry in the Salem-Keizer area) and lay leadership development (e.g. the Radical Compassion trainings with Dr. Frank Rogers).

I continue to be a part of the Greater Northwest (GNW) Area Cabinet, which means coordinating a number of joint ventures with the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference, including the Cross-Cultural, Cross-Racial Retreats for clergy, coordinating the Radical Compassion Workshops with Dr. Frank Rogers, participating in the Certified Lay Ministry training, holding GNW Area CONAM Retreats for our Native American leaders, and helping to plan this year’s Shared Annual Conference Session.

Part of my responsibility is to connect with the larger church, and I do this on our behalf as an annual conference, participating in the Western Jurisdictional Mission Cabinet, the WJ Hispanic Ministry Council, and the WJ Korean Ministry Council, as well as connecting with the Association of Directors of Connectional Ministry nationally.

It is a privilege to work in this capacity and connect with so many of you in the process. Even as we continue to see great changes in what the institution of the church looks like, it is also clear that there is great innovation and creativity taking place within the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference. I look forward to our work together in the coming year.

Peace with Justice

Claudia Roberts, Conference Peace with Justice Coordinator

In 2016 we were reminded of how much we are in need of peace and justice in our country and in the world. People seem to be very fearful and respond with anger and hatred to address this fear without understanding that the emotional opposite of fear is love. We, as Christians, strive to respond to the fear and anger around us by responding with God's LOVE.

The United Methodist Peace with Justice Program is one way we as Methodists respond in love to the injustices around the world. Every project we support, every person we help with scholarships, every issue we raise up to the light helps to counter the angst in our communities.

Many United Methodists do not know that the special offering we take in our churches is used to fund projects around the world and in our own conferences. Fifty percent of the donations stay in the conference and fifty percent goes to the General Board of Church and Society to fund larger projects in the US and worldwide. If your church has stopped collecting this special offering one Sunday a year, consider reinstating this offering. The amount of the offering is not as important as knowing that your church is contributing toward projects that are making a difference locally, nationally, and in the world. If you need resources like flyers, envelopes, or videos to help tell the story of this fund, just let me know.

Last summer we received a grant request from Payette United Methodist Church to put on a back-to-school event for grade school children. This is what they proposed. "We plan to invite our neighborhood K-5 students to our church to collect the school supplies they will need for the school year. We will serve lunch and then invite the kids in to go through a 'store' to get the supplies they need. Each child will be escorted by a member of our congregation.

"We want our neighborhood kids who are mostly Hispanic to experience exactly what the other kids do! We plan to get the word out by placing flyers on the doors of all houses in our direct neighborhood. We will also have the flyers available at the local school which serves free lunch to kids all summer. The flyers will be in English and Spanish. We also have a sandwich board made up to put out in front of our church. We will have a bounce house for the kids to play in after collecting their supplies."

And Cris Warzyn reported after the event, "Our School Supply Fair was a huge success! We had so many people show up to help and so many children come to get supplies! Our hours were from 11-1 and by noon all of our supplies were gone! We took names and will do our best to get everyone who showed up ready for school before school starts. I had said if one parent was relieved or blessed by our generosity it would all be worth it and that happened over and over again today. We blessed and were blessed for sure!" She later reported that the teachers were so happy the first day of school when their students showed up with all of their supplies.

This qualifies as a Peace with Justice project because it allows disadvantaged students to start school on an even playing field, better prepared to learn. It strengthens the sense of love and caring in the whole community.

Another thing that happened this year was working with Close the Gap in Idaho to expand Medicaid. We also provided partial scholarships to three young clergy to attend a Young Pastors event sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society.

As your church plans activities for the year, think of how you might benefit from a PWJ grant to help fund an event or provide an educational program on a justice issue or even plant a peace pole. Please contact me, Claudia Jean Roberts at cjrclrklr@gmail.com, or look for me at Annual Conference.

Commission on Religion and Race

Kalina Malua Katoa, Chair

In the past year, our Conference Inter-Cultural Awareness training team led by June Fothergill was able to do another training workshop in the Columbia District. The goal of the CORR Training team is to do two trainings (Spring and Fall) a year. For each training session, we need a host church. Here is June's report on the training workshop we did this past year.

The Intercultural Training Team of the Oregon-Idaho Commission on Religion and Race was greatly privileged to be asked by the Oregon-Idaho Conference Committee on Native American Ministries to conduct an Inter-Cultural Training for CONAM and others with interest this fall. The training took place Saturday, September 16 at Wilshire United Methodist Native American Fellowship in Portland, Oregon. As is our custom, the training team met the day before to practice and plan for the next day's training. Members of the Wilshire church fellowship participated on the team and provided hospitality. The training team for this event included: June Fothergill, John Go, Rochelle Killete, Kalina Malua Katoa, Bobbie Edwards, Trudy Pollard, and Richard Flanagan. Other members of the team who could not participate in this training are: Jorge Rodriguez Flores and Gloria Marple. The materials used are from the Kaleidoscope Institute and the Pacific Northwest Conference. This was the second time the team has conducted training without support from the PNW team.

On the training day members of CONAM asked to lead an opening prayer. Eva Johnson, co-chairperson of CONAM, led this prayer time. The day of training included opportunities to learn and practice tools for intercultural communication and understanding. These included: Respectful Communication Guidelines, Mutual Invitation, Kaleidoscope Bible Study, Iceberg Analogy of Culture, Power Analysis and Photo Language. There were also interesting skits, role plays, small and large group discussion and breaks for networking and rest. Native American storyteller, Ed Edmo also shared stories and poems with the group. The last activity was a chance for folks from different regions to talk with one another about how they might use the tools they had learned in their ministries. They were given an opportunity to portray and share these ideas with the whole group. The training ended with a prayer by Eva Johnson and of course pictures and evaluations.

This training was an example of how we on the Intercultural competency training team are willing to adapt to the local needs and situation of any group that asks us to come. We are eager to offer these tools to local churches and other groups of the conference. We believe that they are a good beginning to help our church leaders develop the self-awareness and gifts needed to minister in a multicultural world. The tools are practical, useable ideas that are applicable to a variety of ministry settings. As a multi-ethnic team, we continue to work together to deepen our understanding of each other and ourselves as we can work together for Christ's mission. If you would like to know more or to schedule training for your church or group, contact Rev. June Fothergill at juneafothergill@gmail.com.

To conclude this report, I want to thank the members of Team CORR for your dedication in bearing this yoke. We might need to endure splitting to two training teams to meet the training demand in the coming year.

Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Lynda Montgomery

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, one of 13 general agencies of the United Methodist Church, advocates for full participation of women in the total life of the church. We're helping the church recognize every person- clergy and lay, women and men-as full and equal parts of God's human family. We believe that a fully engaged and empowered membership vital to The United Methodist Church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world.

This is what we do through training, education, research and monitoring. We address gender discrimination and sexism within church structure, nurture clergy and lay leaders within the church, raise awareness of women's issues and opportunities, educate church leaders and seminarians on sexual harassment or abuse, develop guidelines for inclusive and expansive language, monitor annual conferences and the General Conference for inclusiveness.

Our work is far from finished, however. Women comprise more than half of our worldwide membership, yet many U.S. congregations still refuse to accept a woman pastor. Women are underrepresented as clergy, superintendents and bishops. Women are five times more likely than men to be targets of sexual harassment and misconduct in the church.

"Until we fully affirm the dignity and value, the contributions, the theological perspectives, the concerns, hopes, the recommendations, and even the discourse of and among women, the United Methodist Church will not be adequately equipped to make of all disciples, to carry a word of hope and peace and love to a broken world, and to demonstrate our authenticity as the incarnation of the life-transforming and barrier-breaking body of Christ." Book of Resolution, No 3443

United Methodist Women

Karen Morray, Conference President

United Methodist Women is grounded in Scripture and the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, and in our mission focus on women, youth, and children. Our four **Social Action priorities** during this quadrennium are: Climate Justice, Mass Incarceration and Criminalization of Communities of Color, Maternal and Child Health, and Income Inequality. Our women have advocated in Boise and Salem, have organized and participated in a rally at General Conference 2016, have educated ourselves at Mission u and at district and unit meetings, and are resolving and acting upon all four priorities locally to globally.

In 2016 the United Methodist Women of the Oregon-Idaho Conference gave \$116,187.36 to support the mission of United Methodist Women. We also gave over \$10,000 as designated gifts. This is "second mile giving," since most members of United Methodist Women are members of local churches and also give generously to them. With this **Mission Giving**, we help support 98 Mission Institutions in the United States; over 150 missions with women, youth, and children internationally; scholarships for over 70 international students; and eight Regional Missionaries.

Representatives from Oregon-Idaho United Methodist Women met with other United Methodist Women of the **Western Jurisdiction** in April 2016. Three women from our conference were elected to serve at the Jurisdictional and National levels: Roz Collins (Gresham UMC, Columbia) to the national Program Advisory Group; and Dixie Jacky (Meridian UMC, Sage) and Paula Sadler (Tigard UMC, Cascadia) to the Western Jurisdiction Executive Team.

Our **Gertrude Boyd Crane Scholarships** support Oregon-Idaho women studying for church-related professions. In 2016 we awarded the scholarship to Deena Wolfe, Mia (Mikyoung) Park, Jenny Willison, and Doreen Barlow (awarded, not accepted).

Our **Isobel F. Zimmerman Grant** supports leadership development among Native American and African American women and youth in Oregon and Idaho. In 2016 recipients were: Camping and Retreat Ministries to underwrite the participation of Niimiipuu youth at the Wallowa Horse Camp; and to the Lillian Vallely School, a Christian school for Native American youth in Blackfoot, Idaho, to underwrite their cultural arts program.

Mission u, the educational opportunity for United Methodist Women members and others, took place at Alton L. Collins Retreat Center (Oregon) and Nazareth Retreat Center (Idaho) in July 2016. The study topics were: Climate Justice: a Call to Hope and Action; Latin America: People and Faith; and The Bible and Human Sexuality: Claiming God's Good Gift. We thank our study leaders Rev. John Pitney, Paula Sadler, Jane Morse, and Bonnie McOmber.

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Our **Annual Meeting** took place at Hillview United Methodist Church (Sage) in October 2016, featuring workshops by Marisa Villarreal, Executive for Language Ministries and Leadership Development from National United Methodist Women. Sage District Superintendent Gwen Drake commissioned our new leaders and led us in Communion.

Eight women from Oregon-Idaho Conference attended **Leadership Development Days** in Tempe, Arizona in November 2016. A focus on Racial Justice was enhanced by art-as-action projects facilitated by “God is in the Graffiti” artists from La Plaza United Methodist Church in Los Angeles.

We encourage clergy leaders to support local units of United Methodist Women with your prayers and presence. According to the Discipline, every United Methodist church “shall have” a unit of UMW. A thriving unit is a sign of a thriving congregation, and a strong unit strengthens its church with its mission focus, leadership, and supportive community. United Methodist Women, organized for mission, develops disciples and transforms the world.

Boards & Agencies Related to Finance & Administration

Commission on Archives and History

**Nancie Fadeley, Chair; Shirley Manning Knepp, Oregon Archivist;
Linda Tewksbury and Steve Walker, Idaho Archivists**

The Oregon part of the Oregon-Idaho Conference Archives and History, located in the MICA building at Salem First UMC, has undergone many changes this year. New shelving and bookcases and different placement of material has increased the space for closed churches and the anticipated Methodist material from Willamette University.

Volunteer, Laura Arksey, has done a colossal job of sorting closed church materials. She has inventoried Sunnyside, Dundee, Estacada, St. Paul Center (Springfield), Dillard-Winston and Bennett Chapel. A great emphasis this year has been getting the archives of the closed churches inventoried, labeled, and shelved. This includes Methodist Episcopal South, Methodist Protestant Church, Primitive Methodist, United Evangelical Church, Church of United Brethren, Evangelical Church, Evangelical Association, United Brethren of Christ, Evangelical United Brethren, and ethnic churches: Hispanic, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Japanese, Korean and Native American. We have added about 500 new files to our archives.

A coffee server, presented to Rev. John Denison in 1891 by the Port Townsend (Washington) Methodist Episcopal Church, was brought to the archives by his descendants. This was returned to the Port Townsend church in October 2016. Shirley presented a Powerpoint program on the life of Rev. Denison to the congregation.

The Archives participated in the Willamette Heritage Center’s invitational heritage organizations exhibit. Our display showcased the collections and services of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference Archives.

As part of the General Conference held in Portland, a luncheon for the Bishop’s spouses was held at Salem First UMC. There was a large display of material from the archives for the guests to browse.

Shirley and Don Knepp attended the Archivists’ meeting in Madison, New Jersey in August. They will be attending the Western Jurisdiction Historical Society meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in June. Shirley will be one of the speakers. Her program will highlight two Oregon-Idaho pastors, Grace Weaver and William Sherman Burgoyne, and one national evangelist, Harry Denman.

Commission on Equitable Compensation

Daryl Blanksma, chair

The Commission on Equitable Compensation is charged by *The Book of Discipline* with recommending to the Annual Conference standards for pastoral support.

The Commission on Equitable Compensation recommends that for 2018 the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference fix the *minimum* base compensation, including the use of a parsonage, at the following rates:

- Elder in Full Connection/Associate Member: **\$38,800**
- Provisional Member: **\$36,950**
- Local Pastor: **\$34,900**

This recommendation represents at 2.5% increase over what was approved for 2017.

In addition, the minimum cash salary shall be increased by \$100 per year of service in the United Methodist Church, capped at a maximum of ten years or \$1,000.

Compensation from the local church includes cash salary, utilities allowance and a home for the pastor's use. We encourage churches and clergy to allocate compensation in ways that will assist clergy and their families to retain as great a portion of their income as is legally possible. Moving money out of cash salary and into a utilities allowance or a housing allowance could lower the amount clergy pay in taxes. Be sure to seek qualified assistance in making decisions that will affect tax liabilities.

The Commission on Equitable Compensations recommends the following housing guidelines relating to compensation:

1. If an adequate parsonage is not available for the use of the pastor, then a housing allowance shall be paid in addition to the above minimum compensation as part of the total compensation package. A two-tier formula will be applied with a housing allowance set at **\$12,789** for most areas of the Annual Conference and **\$14,920** for areas with unusually high housing costs.
2. For the purposes of housing policy, every parsonage will be considered as meeting the minimum compensation package. This is true whether the clergy are working full-time or part-time.
3. In lieu of a parsonage, churches will pay a housing allowance to the clergy as part of the total compensation package. The allowance will be at least commensurate to the percentage of employment (e.g. one quarter-time receives one quarter the housing allowances, one half-time receives one half the housing allowance.)
4. Churches and pastors may apply for an exemption to housing allowance recommendations under certain conditions. For example, a pastor already has a house in the area, or adequate housing is easily available in the local community for a lesser rate. If the Commission does not grant an exemption, the church **must** pay the housing portion of the ministerial compensation package.

The Commission also recommends, but cannot require, that a reimbursement for travel and professional expenses be set at no less than **\$3,500** annually. This is the same amount as last year. This reimbursement is not part of the pastor's compensation and should be included as part of the administrative budget of the church, not part of salary. For IRS purposes, churches should be sure they have adopted an Account Reimbursement Policy which is available from their district office.

The Commission has requested that the Council on Finance and Administration budget \$25,000 for the Equitable Compensation Fund for 2018, and budget \$1,000 for the administrative costs of the Commission. Because unused funds requested in prior years have accumulated in the Equitable Compensation Fund reserve account, CF&A is not recommending additional funding through the 2018 budget.

Council on Finance and Administration

Rick Beadnell, Chair

The conference year was one of beginnings. We started it with a new Bishop, a new Director of Stewardship and Finance, a new President of the Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A), and many new members on the Council. It has quickly become clear that CF&A is passionate about making sure that the way we spend our conference resources is closely aligned with the priorities set by our Area Cabinet and Ministry Leadership Team.

CF&A would like to thank the conference employees who make up our Office of Stewardship and Finance under Treasurer Dan Wilson-Fey's supervision. This is a small, dedicated group of hardworking people who handle a myriad of finance and accounting challenges. Previous audits have acknowledged the quality of bookkeeping and accounting that are taking place.

Looking back on calendar year 2016

Several factors contributed to a successful budget year in 2016:

- 121 of our 191 churches paid 100% or more of their apportioned share
- The percentage of apportionments paid to conference grew to 82%, up from 78.5% in 2015
- Our spending plan was based on this 2015 percentage
- Stewardship of our budget stakeholders, who came in under the spending plan

Meanwhile, we paid our General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference apportionments at 100% in 2016, in spite of the 18% gap between what was apportioned to our churches and what was received.

The audit of the 2016 calendar year books is underway and the results will be reported at our Annual Conference.

Quick peek at the first quarter of calendar year 2017

The 2017 apportioned budget approved by our last Annual Conference is \$3,746,156. CF&A established a spending plan based on projected apportionment payments at 80%, which amounts to \$2,997,046. First quarter 2017 apportionment payments are about 2% behind 2016's first quarter results.

The Investment Subcommittee is working to complete the divestiture from Caterpillar, HP, and Motorola as directed by our Annual Conference. This has been completed in cases where the Conference had a private pool of funds where we controlled what investments were purchased. It has taken longer to be able to divest in cases where we were members of a non-private pool of investments. Such is the case with our investments in Wespath through the Northwest United Methodist Foundation. Wespath has gone out of its way to try to accommodate our requirements with new funds that will be available to us in the June timeframe.

Looking forward to calendar year 2018

Back in November, CF&A began to work on its budget plan for 2018. All budget stakeholders were asked to submit written budget requests and narrative reasoning by January 5th. The response was excellent, and we proceeded to a series of budget information sessions where CF&A was able to ask questions of the major stakeholders for an even better understanding. The work culminated in a budget meeting with Bishop Stanovsky in early April.

CF&A is recommending to the Annual Conference an overall budget of \$7,401,666. This is a 2.3% increase over 2017, and includes a 2% cost of living increase for employees. Remember that apportioned revenue is only one part of the revenue picture. Other parts include direct billed pension and health benefits, grants, sale of closed churches, reserves and miscellaneous income.

CF&A is recommending an apportioned budget of \$3,363,533. This represents a **decrease of 8.8%** from 2017.

CF&A Goals for 2018 and beyond

- Work diligently with the revitalized MLT to ensure that we are spending funds in line with the priorities that have been established for our Conference
- Continue to strengthen the processes around developing the budget
- Work to decrease the apportionment to payment gap
- Create a narrative budget to help tell the story of our priorities and spending
- Communicate with churches and members to help them understand what they are getting for their apportioned dollars
- Examine the possibility of going to an apportionment calculation based on church income rather than on expenditures
- Faithfully steward the financial resources of the Annual Conference.

**ANNUAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

1. Between sessions of the Annual Conference, the Council on Finance and Administration shall implement a spending plan based upon anticipated receipts and projected expenses.
2. The first 200 miles to the Annual Conference session will be exempted from mileage reimbursement.
3. Lay Members entitled to reimbursement under Conference Rule 1.030 will be reimbursed for housing and meals while attending the session; the maximum amount of reimbursement is set at \$453.08 for 2017.
4. The Oregon-Idaho Conference Council on Finance and Administration is authorized to borrow up to \$500,000 on an open line of credit to cover essential and authorized expenditures during intervals dictated by cash flow needs. Interest on such borrowed funds will be paid from the "Contingency" reserve fund.
5. The General Fund is maintained and administered by the Council on Finance and Administration. The General Fund reserve (balance) provides working capital (cash flow) for the operation of the Conference, emergencies, and for unexpected needs that arise from time to time. The annual net operating results in the budget funds not otherwise designated will provide the basis for the General Fund reserve. The General Fund reserve needs to be large enough (\$1.3 million) to support several months of operating expenses for the Conference – to act as a cash flow.
6. The following organizations are given permission to solicit funds among the churches of the Conference without quota:
 - Willamette University
 - Pacific School of Religion
 - Alaska Pacific University
 - Rust College
 - United Methodist Campus Ministries of the Conference
 - Willamette View Foundation
 - Willson House, Salem
 - Clergymates Emergency Fund
 - Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
 - Northwest United Methodist Foundation
 - Oregon-Idaho United Methodist Minister's Retirement Fund
 - Partnership with Liberia Annual Conference
 - Oregon-Idaho Camp and Retreat Ministries

Board of Ordained Ministry **Clay Andrew, Chair**

The Board of Ordained Ministry continues its work to recruit, nurture, prepare and credential gifted and called people for ministerial leadership in our annual conference. This season in the life of our conference and denomination brings both challenges and opportunities to the Board's work. In every area of our connectional life and ministry, rapidly changing cultural, economic, and ecclesial realities challenge us to discern new ways to minister to our world.

Over several years, the Board has been engaged in an ongoing conversation about the future of ministry and ministerial leadership in our conference and in the United Methodist Church as a whole. As a result of that conversation, the Board submitted legislation to the 2016 General Conference, which clarified the Board's role with all areas of ministerial leadership (e.g., Licensed Local Pastors, Certified Lay Ministers, et. al.), and would have changed the name of the Board of Ordained Ministry to "The Board of Ministerial Leadership." The General Conference did adopt that legislation, although it was significantly altered in the committee process. Nonetheless, some of the language suggested by our Board (but not including the name change) was adopted at General Conference. (See Paragraph 635.2.a in the *Book of Discipline* to see those changes.) The Board remains committed to leading our denomination in thoughtful, prayerful conversation about ministry and ministerial leadership.

We are grateful that our candidate class for 2017 includes one person recommended to the clergy session for ordination and four people recommended to the clergy session for commissioning. These excellent candidates are already serving us well and will continue to bring life-giving leadership as they grow in their gifts for ministry and service.

In the coming months, the Board will be re-invigorating the mentoring process, continuing to develop the Candidacy Summit and Orientation to Ministry, and will continue exploring ways to address the challenges of ministry leadership in our unique setting. The Board will continue to work with the Bishop and the Cabinet, the District Committees on Ordained Ministry, and the other boards, agencies and councils in our conference to nurture excellence in ministry in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

Conference Board of Pensions **Danna Drum, Chair**

The Conference Board of Pensions (CBOP) oversees the health and wellness benefits and pension and welfare plans for annual conference clergy and lay staff. Over the last year, the CBOP has focused on three areas: 1) Develop recommendations for changes to the health insurance plan to increase plan choice for participants and help achieve greater cost containment for the annual conference, participants and ministry settings, 2) Update the current Health Reimbursement Account Benefit for Retired Clergy, and 3) Evaluate current financial reserves to assure the CBOP remains adequately funded to meet its obligations to active and retired clergy well into the future.

Health Insurance

Health insurance benefits continue to be provided through the Wespath HealthFlex Program. Claims experience continues to concern the CBOP; in 2016, claims paid totaled over 155% of premiums paid; thus, premiums will see an overall increase of seven percent in 2018. To increase plan choice and help with cost containment, the CBOP recommends the annual conference move to Wespath's HealthFlex Exchange program in 2018.

Participants will have six different plans from which to select as well as dental and vision coverage options. Both currently offered plans will continue to be available through the HealthFlex Exchange. Participants will receive a defined contribution, funded through a combination of a blended rate billed to local ministry settings and approximately \$100,000 in CBOP reserves. Participants will select the insurance

plan that best meets their needs and pay any additional premium costs beyond the defined contribution. If a participant selects a plan with a premium cost lower than the defined contribution, the balance of the defined contribution will be credited to a Health Savings Account or Health Reimbursement Account, depending on the plan chosen.

Health Reimbursement Account Benefit for Retired Clergy

The Board of Pensions is in its fifth year of providing a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) benefit for retired clergy. While the stipend amounts will remain unchanged in 2018, the CBOP recommends the following updated HRA eligibility policy:

Participation: Retiree must have been enrolled in the active HealthFlex program in the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area (Oregon-Idaho, Alaska and Pacific Northwest) for at least 5 years of the last 10 years prior to retirement and a member of the Oregon-Idaho Conference at the time of retirement.

Years of Service Eligibility:

1. "Years of Service" is defined as years of service with pension and benefit claim upon the denominational pension plans (Pre82, MPP & CRSP).
2. Years of Service applies to years served as clergy under appointment within the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area effective September 1, 2012.

Retirement Prior to Age 65/Medicare Eligibility:

1. Clergy retiring with 40 or more years of service will be eligible for the HRA stipend, however, the stipend may not be used to pay health insurance premiums until the retiree is enrolled in Medicare.
2. Clergy retiring with less than 40 years of service may opt to remain on the HealthFlex "active" insurance plan and pay the total cost of the premium until s/he reaches the age of 65 and is enrolled in Medicare. Or the retiree may opt to find other coverage outside the HealthFlex active plan and then apply for the stipend once s/he reaches the age of 65 and is enrolled in Medicare.

Clergy Couples: For clergy couples in which both clergy persons qualify for the subsidy, the years of service of the spouse with the highest level will be used to determine the couple subsidy regardless of who was officially listed as the participant at the time of retirement unless calculating the subsidy for each individual clergy person as singles results in the greatest benefit.

2018 HRA Benefit for Retired Clergy	Single	Couple
Retirees with more than 20 years of pre-82	\$2,163	\$4,326
Retirees who retired before January 1, 2011:		
At least 5 but fewer than 10 years of service	\$618	\$1,236
At least 10 but fewer than 20 years of service	\$1,236	\$2,472
At least 20 but fewer than 30 years of service	\$1,545	\$3,090
30 or more years of service	\$1,854	\$3,708
Retirees who retired after December 31, 2010:		
At least 10 but fewer than 20 years of service	\$927	\$1,391
At least 20 but fewer than 30 years of service	\$1,236	\$1,854
30 or more years of service	\$1,854	\$2,781

Note: Years of service apply to years of service in the Oregon-Idaho, Pacific Northwest and Alaska Conferences with pension and benefit claim upon the conference or Wespath. The HRA stipend cannot be used to pay for health insurance premiums if the retiree is not enrolled in Medicare. If the retiree is enrolled in Medicare, the stipend can be used to offset Medicare or Medicare supplement premiums. According to the IRS, if a retiree is not enrolled in Medicare, the stipend can only be used to pay medical, dental or vision out-of-pocket expenses but not premiums.

HEALTH BENEFITS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

The CBOP presents the following health benefits recommendations to the 2017 Annual Conference Session for consideration and action:

1. The Conference Board of Pensions, in consultation with the Council on Finance and Administration, is authorized to adjust the Conference Budget for Health Insurance Premiums and the monthly billed amount between sessions of the Annual Conference, if necessary, due to the receipt of new premium rate information from Wespath.
2. The Conference Board of Pensions is authorized to adopt new eligibility policies as required by Wespath for the HealthFlex Program. These policies may include procedures for the cancellation of coverage due to various circumstances. The effective date of these policies will be determined as required by Wespath.
3. The Conference Treasurer is authorized to bill \$1294 per month to local churches and 100% of the premiums to other participants' ministry settings to support the defined contribution toward health insurance benefits. Participants will pay any difference between the defined contribution amount and the total premium for the plan and benefit options they select.
4. The CDHP C2000P2 with vision exam coverage and no dental coverage will be the default plan. The Defined Contribution for active HealthFlex Exchange participants in 2018 will be as follows:

Single Participant	\$8652
Participant + Spouse	\$16,092
Participant + Family	\$20,568
5. The retiree health insurance plan is a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) stipend based on the number of years of service in the Oregon-Idaho, Pacific Northwest and Alaska Conferences per the eligibility policy and table above.
6. The following Health Insurance policies will be continued:
 - a. No premium subsidy or stipend will be granted to participants retiring prior to the age of their Medicare eligibility. They shall be responsible for the full payment of their health insurance premium. Those who are eligible to retire under the forty-year rule (§357.2c) will be granted an exception to receive the retired subsidy or stipend for their medical expenses. Upon reaching the age for Medicare eligibility, and enrolling in the Medicare program, the clergy member shall be eligible for conference subsidy or stipend based on the then current schedule as approved by the annual conference.
 - b. The conference shall pay 100 percent of the premium payment for those persons eligible for benefits under the CPP Disability program. After one year the conference will pay the premium for the participant and 50 percent of the premium for the spouse and/or family.

Pension and Welfare Plans

Due to changes made to retirement benefits by previous General Conferences, there are three retirement plans for which the Conference Board of Pensions has responsibility: the Pre-82 Pension Plan, Ministerial Pension Plan, and the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). Depending on when clergy began their service, they may receive retirement benefits from one to three of these plans. CRSP was most recently modified in 2013. Funding for CRSP is supported through direct billings to local congregations at 13 percent of the pastor's compensation. All three plans are still fully funded.

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides clergy death benefits, survivor children benefits, minimum surviving spouse benefits, and long-term disability benefits. CPP funding is also directly billed to the local churches or to the appropriate salary-paying unit.

The CBOP continues to be fully funded for these plans, but with changes in the actuarial tables for the industry, we are currently working with Wespath to complete a comprehensive review of all CBOP reserve funds to determine if any funding needs to be adjusted to assure we can meet all future liabilities for these benefits.

Recognitions

The Board of Pensions recognizes the following persons:

For retirement at the 2017 Annual Conference Session

Kathleen Boyes
 Robert Scott Harkness
 Phillip Kearse
 Ardis Letey
 Peggy Luckman
 Karen Nelson
 Stephan Ross
 Timothy Stover
 Brenda Wingfield

The following clergy are on Medical Leave with Benefits

Margaret Lofsvold

PENSION AND WELFARE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference Board of Pensions presents the following pension and welfare plan-related recommendations for your consideration and action:

Pension and Welfare Plans

1. Effective January 1, 2018, the Pre-82 (MRPF) past service rate for ordained clergy and local pastors shall be \$615 per service year, with 70 percent continuing payment to the surviving spouse, and that Addendum A of the Clergy Retirement Security Program be so amended.
2. Concerning the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP): The Conference Treasurer will bill each local church for CRSP at the rate of 13 percent of the pastor's compensation (including cash salary plus utilities and housing allowance [25% of cash salary if parsonage is provided]) for eligible clergy. Cash salary includes deductions from payroll and any contributions toward social security. Local churches served by retired clergy are exempt from this billing.
3. The Conference Treasurer will bill each local church (with a pastor appointed three-quarter time or full time) at a rate of 3.0 percent of the pastor's plan compensation for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) for eligible clergy.
4. The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference meeting in Portland, Oregon, June 14-17, 2017, approves the Addendum: Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired, Disabled, or Former Clergypersons of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.
5. The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference meeting in Portland, Oregon, June 14-17, 2017 approves the 2018 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan for the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference, as submitted by the Conference Board of Pensions and approved by Wespath.

Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

2018 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan Summary

The *2016 Book of Discipline* ¶ 1506.6 requires that each annual conference develop, adopt and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan for funding all of its benefit obligations. The funding plan shall be submitted annually to Wespath for review and be approved annually by the annual conference, following the receipt and inclusion of a favorable written opinion from Wespath. This summary document is only a portion of the information contained in the actual signed funding plan. As such, it might not contain all the information required for a comprehensive view of the benefit obligations of the conference. You may request the full contents of the 2018 comprehensive benefit funding plan from the conference benefits office.

ADDENDUM:
**Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired, Disabled, or
Former Clergypersons of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference**

The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, terminated, 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"); and

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; and

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

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as an 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, severance, 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 Wespeth, during the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018, to each active, retired, terminated, 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, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from Wespeth and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespeth 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, a terminated, 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 an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled Clergyperson's pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal (and, in most cases, state) income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2), and regulations thereunder, to the least of: (a) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (b) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (c) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. Each clergyperson or former clergyperson is urged to consult with his or her own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing allowance exclusion.

**BOARD OF PENSIONS
INFORMATIONAL DATA**

Denominational Average Salary (DAC)

1993 - \$31,520
 1994 - \$33,017
 1995 - \$34,832
 1996 - \$36,602
 1997 - \$37,084
 1998 - \$38,298
 1999 - \$39,700
 2000 - \$40,805
 2001 - \$42,233
 2002 - \$42,930
 2003 - \$45,717
 2004 - \$49,325
 2005 - \$50,931
 2006 - \$52,394
 2007 - \$54,081
 2008 - \$56,044
 2009 - \$58,226
 2010 - \$60,341
 2011 - \$61,716
 2012 - \$62,781
 2013 - \$63,867
 2014 - \$65,186
 2015 - \$66,295
 2016 - \$67,333
 2017 - \$68,876
 2018 - \$70,202

Conference Average Salary (CAC)

1993 - \$24,665
 1994 - \$25,639
 1995 - \$26,788
 1996 - \$28,005
 1997 - \$28,685
 1998 - \$29,298
 1999 - \$31,275
 2000 - \$32,672
 2001 - \$33,990
 2002 - \$34,689
 2003 - \$37,196
 2004 - \$43,536
 2005 - \$43,983
 2006 - \$45,287
 2007 - \$46,616
 2008 - \$48,824
 2009 - \$49,931
 2010 - \$51,153
 2011 - \$52,409
 2012 - \$53,534
 2013 - \$54,376
 2014 - \$55,674
 2015 - \$56,981
 2016 - \$57,672
 2017 - \$59,206
 2018 - \$58,941

Past Service Rate For Local Church Pastors

1992 - \$269.45	2007 - \$451.00
1993 - \$281.50	2008 - \$488.00
1994 - \$293.00	2010 - \$514.00
1995 - \$302.00	2011 - \$524.00
1996 - \$311.00	2012 - \$536.00
1997 - \$321.00	2013 - \$544.00
1998 - \$331.00	2014 - \$557.00
1999 - \$341.00	2015 - \$570.00
2000 - \$352.00	2016 - \$585.00
2001 - \$363.00	2017 - \$600.00
2002 - \$375.00	2018 - \$615.00
2003 - \$387.00	
2004 - \$398.50	
2005 - \$411.00	
2006 - \$425.00	

The Rules Committee **Steve Mitchell, Chair**

We are in the process of reviewing and updating our rules to match paragraphs in the *2016 Book of Discipline* and to update rules as needed according to current Conference practices. We will give a full report at the 2018 Annual Conference session.

Please contact me or any member of the Rules Committee with any issues or questions regarding Conference Rules.

Safe Sanctuaries Team Report **Warren Light**

“God cares for all. God suffers when children, youth, and vulnerable adults suffer. The United Methodist church was founded by John Wesley who taught: First, do no harm. Do all the good you can. Stay in love with God . . . [we] recognize that staying in love with God requires safe sanctuary for the Vulnerable and support for survivors of sexual violence. This [policy] is a core missional statement . . .” Template for Risk Reduction and Prevention Policies for Local Ministry Settings

Budget support in 2016 enabled the Team to lead trainings for over 30 churches, lead Safe Sanctuary worship, review policies of over 20 churches, and empower young adults to lead in this work. A Spanish translation of the Template [Policy] is being created as of this writing.

More follow-up with local ministry on policy writing, training, and events will be forthcoming. We encourage anyone with questions or ideas to contact us through your District office.

After six years of leading the team, Warren will be off the Safe Sanctuaries Team starting July 1, 2017. We have made some great progress during this time. New leadership will create new perspectives for growing in our work. Thank you.

Statistician's Report **Ted Wimer, Conference Statistician**

We keep records of what is going on in each of our congregations. One reason is to help the local church see trends for how effective our local ministries and missions are. On a broader view, there are indicators which help us find areas of vitality in our Annual Conference. The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) collects these numbers from all of the Annual Conferences and compiles the data for the General Boards and Agencies in order to see trends and to plan ahead.

Even though all of the churches have not completed supplying their data, we can see some trends in the data. The 2016 total Professing Membership in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference was 24,400; a 4% decrease from 2015. During this period we saw a similar percentage decrease in the number of “Constituents,” a measure that had been increasing for several years. Worship attendance decreased approximately 7%. The number of persons participating in Christian formation groups increased overall during 2016, with the majority of the increase (8%) in the “Children” category. Sunday School attendance and VBS both decreased in 2016, as did other classes numbers; except for “ongoing classes for learning (all ages) other than Sunday School” which increased by 9%!

The number of persons served by community outreach is up by 5%, to 293,620 persons. The number of “persons engaged in mission” increased by 50%, to 11,333! The Number of People served by community ministries for Daycare increased 7%. These indicators show our overall emphasis on Local Church vitality through community outreach continues to grow. However, the number of UMVIM Teams sent decreased from 16 to 12; and the number of churches sending specific team members decreased!

For 2016 the membership in the UMW decreased by 6% to 2,863, while the amount they paid for local church and community work similarly fell. The UMM membership and amount paid for local church and community work both decreased by 6%.

The total Number of Households giving to the local church decreased by 8% to 12,158, while the Total Income Received for Budget/operations of the local churches only dropped 1% to \$25,681,516! The amount paid by the local church on All Expenditures decreased by 19%. The Market Value of Church property (buildings, land & equipment) increased slightly as did the Value of other Church Owned Assets (bank accounts, securities, etc.). Debt secured by Church Physical Assets decreased by 10%; and Other Debt decreased by 39%. Income from Building-Use Fees increased by 4% in 2016. The income from Sale of Church Assets increased by 120%.

Giving directly to UMC Causes increased by 12%. The amount given to Non-UMC Benevolent/charities increased by 8% in 2016.

Looking at individual local churches as well as background trends over the time period 2009-2016 there is one indicator which is very interesting. Many local churches continue to support their operations even though their membership has declined. One conclusion is fewer people are feeling called to do more. If these loyalties are generational, then this may indicate future downturns in several areas.

To see all the statistics for 2016 – for individual churches as well as totals by District & the entire Annual Conference – look in your Annual Conference Journal – the very back of Volume 2.

Report of the Conference Treasurer & Benefits Officer

Dan Wilson-Fey

I want to begin with a word of thanks to every local church Treasurer, Finance Secretary, Finance Committee member, and Pastor in our Annual Conference, for the careful and extremely important work of faithfully receiving, caring for, and properly disbursing the gifts and offerings entrusted to them for the mission of Christ through the work we share in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The care with which you take on these important and complex tasks inspires me. Thank you so much.

It was just a year ago that you were celebrating the ministry of former Conference Treasurer & Benefits Officer, Belinda Denicola, as you welcomed me into this position. I join you in giving thanks to Belinda for the work she did, and for her excellent passing of the baton to me.

I will say this has been a year with a *very* steep learning curve. In a year of many changes – change of Bishop, change of Camp Retreat Ministries Executive Director, change of Treasurer/Benefits Officer and others – I give greatest thanks to those who have provided stability to us all, particularly Sandra Reinemer, Assistant Treasurer and Controller; Lisa Pronovost, Assistant Benefits Officer and HR Manager; Jerryn Johnston in Accounts Payable; and Sally Blanchard, Office Manager and Annual Conference Manager. They, along with newcomer Andrea Cooper in Accounts Receivable, comprise the stellar team with whom I am privileged to work.

Since June of last year, I have been working closely with and providing support to these Conference leaders:

- Rick Beadnell, Chair of CF&A
- Danna Drum, Chair of Conference Board of Pensions
- Larry McClure, Chair of Conference Board of Trustees
- Daryl Blanksma, Chair of Equitable Compensation Commission
- Janice Gratton, Interim Chair of Conference Personnel Committee

You have read their reports, including their recommendations to us all. I commend and thank them for their fine work, and for the ways they have helped orient me to the work they do.

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I also serve as Treasurer of the United Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund and the Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries, and I am the building supervisor for the Conference Center.

The items on which I am required to report are found elsewhere among these reports; I direct your attention to them for the details of our overall financial health, which is good, despite the challenges we all face.

Most of all, I want to thank every lay person in our churches who join with all other lay persons and clergy who work together, and generously support, the sharing of Jesus' message of abundant life for all as our common task. You inspire me more than you know. It is a privilege to serve with you. I look forward to a great and transformative year ahead!

Conference Board of Trustees Larry McClure, President

Church Properties Held in Trust

During this past year, your Conference Trustees have been or will be assuming responsibility for four churches whose congregations have voted to close since our report in the 2016 Journal: Dillard-Winston (May 2016), Jason Lee, Salem (April 19, 2017), Pine Grove-Odell (June 12, 2016).

Pending their sale or another option, as of April 2017 our Oregon-Idaho Conference remains responsible for the following properties closed in prior years, thanks in some cases to volunteer United Methodist laypersons providing property management:

- Bennett Chapel is leased to Imago Dei, a non-denominational church in Portland
- Capitol Hill property was successfully sold to Portland Habitat for Humanity
- Dillard-Winston church and parsonage are being listed for sale
- Dundee is leased to Word of Faith Fellowship previously worshiping in Newberg
- Laurelwood was sold to Mt. Scott Learning Center which is making payments as scheduled
- Sunnyside still remains busy with various community ministry partners and anticipates a fresh UMC start
- Woodlawn remains occupied with leases, including Albina Head Start

Property Management

As the Annual Conference is finding itself increasingly in the real estate and property management business, Trustees have authorized a part-time contract with a commercial real estate broker who is moving to semi-retirement. He will assure that all necessary paperwork and procedures have been followed as defined by the Discipline, annual conference rules, and local/state legal requirements. He will also help keep an eye on properties that we have leased or transferred to other entities or that are in the process of being sold.

Guidelines for Closing a Church

Leaders at all levels are reminded that there is now a set of guidelines to assist local churches and District Superintendents facing difficult decisions on maintaining aging buildings, changing demographics, and declining memberships. These checklists for discontinuation, abandonment, or merger of local church property clarify what has to happen before, during, and after the process. Word for the wise: always organize and maintain church records since these will eventually be sent to the Conference Archives in Salem after a church closure. And develop a habit of recycling unused equipment, materials, and long-stored stuff!

Local Church Trustees are also reminded to physically examine their property deeds and not rely on previous Charge Conference reports which may have indicated the trust clause is included, and to ensure that United Methodist is included in the name of your church. The Conference Treasurer can provide suggested wording when amending and re-recording the deed with county officials.

Conference Insurance Program

We appreciate those local churches that provided the declarations page from their current insurance policies as part of fall charge conferences. A Conference trustee is compiling and analyzing these reports.

Conference Center

Before remodeling plans and permits can go forward, ownership of three lots under the Conference Center with neighboring First United Methodist Church is still being resolved. Consolidation of Greater Northwest Area Episcopal functions in the Seattle-Tacoma area has opened up some additional office space in Portland but has not solved a pressing need for meeting space. Portland First UMC and other local churches are not always able to accommodate Conference needs, particularly when using teleconferencing technology to save travel time and money. In the meantime, our dedicated Conference staff continue to “make do” with sudden breakdowns in heating and electrical systems. An architectural firm is poised to undertake a feasibility analysis of engineering and infrastructure issues that would impact remodeling.

United Methodist Retirement Center in Salem

Pursuant to Paragraph 2517 in the Book of Discipline, and after two years of careful work by the Board of the United Methodist Retirement Center and representatives of the Board of Trustees, the governing documents of the United Methodist Retirement Center in Salem, Oregon (known as Willson House and Jason Lee Manor) have been amended. The Board has clarified its legal relationship with the Annual Conference, which ended in 1988. United Methodists may still serve, but a membership quota on the Board is no longer required. Our historic connection is still honored. Founded as a mission by Methodist women in 1910, United Methodist Women (UMW) have had close ties with this senior independent living and residential care facility. Local UMW units have long provided support and hospitality to the residents, which will continue in the future. The Center, doing business as Willson House, will operate as a private, non-profit organization, without reference to the United Methodist Church in its branding.

United Methodist Ministers’ Retirement Fund

Arvin R Luchs, Board President

On April 6, 1909 at the direction of the Oregon Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, six leaders—half lay and half clergy—petitioned (then) Oregon Secretary of State F. W. Benson to incorporate “...an irreducible fund....the income of which shall be applied annually to the support and maintenance of the Conference Claimants....”

They started with seed money of just \$3,500 and in the 108 years since it has grown to over \$2 million. Over the years the Conference, its boundaries, and the way pensions are provided have changed dramatically. Nevertheless, that fund—now called “The United Methodist Minister’s Retirement Fund”—has persevered in its mission. In January of 2016 nearly \$98,000 was divided equally among retired clergy of our Conference, their surviving spouse or dependent children. Another distribution is in process.

The Fund’s Board of Directors—elected annually by this Conference—has been engaged in a multi-year effort to evaluate all facets of our operation. After an extensive review and competitive bids we have moved the assets of the Fund to the care of our denomination’s highly regarded Wespath Investments. They will be part of the \$21 billion portfolio Wespath manages, which includes UM clergy pension assets. We anticipate a long-term, fruitful relationship. The Board expresses its thanks and appreciation to Rob Closs along with (more recently) Jason Buell who have provided capable professional service to the Fund for more than 20 years.

Annually we invite contributions to the fund from active and retired clergy and lay members of our local churches. This is a concrete way for all of us to honor those who have served and ensure the future vitality of this effort. A gift is an excellent way to honor your congregation’s pastor, celebrate the ministry of a retiring pastor, or remember those who have died. Sometimes it’s appropriate to give a gift in memory of a mentor or to honor the inspiration of particular persons, or to show appreciation for their special role in an individual’s life or the community. Donations can be sent to the Conference Treasurer for the UMMRF

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and are tax deductible. Each year our Conference Journal publishes the names of those who have been honored or memorialized by significant contributions.

Thank you to the members of the UMMRF Board for their faithful service and to all who contribute to support and honor those who have made a difference in our lives and our Conference and now enjoy retirement.

District Reports

Cascadia District

Steve Sprecher, interim superintendent

This has been a year of transitions in the Cascadia District. I write this as a superintendent who has been “on the job” for only three months, and will be leaving the role in another three months.

In this role I have felt blessed by several things. First, I have felt blessed by the great work that Peg Lofsvold did in four and one-half years leading and helping to shape the district. I am especially glad to see several areas where a variety of cooperative efforts between churches have been initiated and are growing in vitality.

I have also been blessed to experience quite a number of inspiring ministries throughout the district led by so many committed and capable clergy and laity. I have always enjoyed visiting in local churches to see how the Good News is being shared in very real ways.

I have also been blessed to have Tim Overton-Harris announced as the incoming superintendent. Tim has strong gifts of leadership and experience which will serve the district well.

I have also overseen the closure of two churches this year, Jason Lee in Salem and Clatskanie, but was fortunate to be able to join the celebrations of over two hundred years of combined ministry and presence. I was also blessed to be able to oversee the birth of two new ministries, Jason Lee Hispanic Center and congregation in Salem, and a new church start in Bend.

I can attest that the Holy Spirit is alive and well in the Cascadia District. Thank you for the opportunity to walk alongside you, however briefly.

Columbia District

Erin Martin, District Superintendent

Lydia Henry, District Lay Leader

“I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

Isaiah 43:19

This year, God has been doing a new thing in the Columbia District, making a way for us in the wilderness, offering water to us in the desert. Last fall, we began the year of ministry together with a day-long Clergy Colloquy at Alton L. Collins Retreat Center where together we literally crossed a threshold leaving old things behind and opening ourselves up to a future unafraid. With the assistance of Systems Analyst, Diane Rheos, we considered the cataclysmic shift from modernity to postmodernity and the effects of that shift on our ecclesial organization. We named the necessary move from hierarchy and top-down authority to a whole different way of being together, inviting collaboration, welcoming story-telling and embracing vulnerability. We organized into Navigation groups, communities of practice arranged by geographic proximity charged with “navigating” the changes ahead of us in mutual support and encouragement.

Then, as a District, we entered into a season of combined Charge Conferences in order to embody our new shared commitments. Together, and sometimes in clusters of four to five churches, we worshipped together, ate a meal together, reflected more deeply on the Columbia District Strategic Plan together and celebrated our emerging new connections. The combined Charge Conferences were such a joy and success that, as Superintendent, I intend to continue with them this coming fall.

The spring was devoted to going deeper theologically together with both clergy and laity in the Columbia District. In February, we hosted a District Laity event entitled, “Post-Modern Film and Post-Modern Faith.” Through the lens of the cinema, Professor Bryan P. Stone from Boston University led us in a Friday evening gathering at the Bagdad Theater and in a Saturday discussion on how film can help us mediate the particular cultural shifts of postmodernity and to recognize the implications of those shifts on the new expressions of our Christian faith. It was a weekend of stimulating conversation, fun and fascinating movie clips, and an engaging time to hear from each other how certain films have provoked our faith.

In March, we welcomed Dr. Jason L. Byasee, professor of preaching from the Vancouver School of Theology, to speak to the clergy about the art and craft of preaching. Focusing on “God as Word” and “God as Image,” we gathered at Faith UMC in Troutdale to explore the challenges of speaking for God in a post-Christian world. Again, it was an encouraging day of shared conversation and worship. Both the clergy and lay learning events were specifically articulated goals that we accomplished in this first year of our District Strategic Plan, and we remain committed to annual opportunities to “go deeper.”

Under the direction of our Lay Leader, Lydia Henry, we have now constituted a Columbia District Laity Development Team, and in April, they sent out a survey across the District to hear from you directly to help them chart their course as a Team of addressing your hopes and challenges in the new landscape of our ministry. We also constituted a District Missional Strategy Team in February to do the overarching work of future thinking and planning for the District. Simultaneously, we are launching four new church starts and redevelopment projects this year, two of those projects (Woodlawn and Wilshire) are in inner NE Portland and two (SE Portland Parish Project and Sunnyside) are in inner SE Portland. These projects are the result of deep discernment and intentional community engagement as we seek to stimulate change and growth.

Taken together, we have accomplished a staggering amount of change in a relatively short amount of time as we lay the groundwork for continued life and revitalization in our midst. I give God thanks for you, the clergy and laity of the Columbia District, as you partner with me in this extraordinary Spirit-inspired Wesleyan Movement for the 21st century.

Crater Lake District
John Tucker, District Superintendent
Kay Burdick, Administrative Assistant
Teri Watanabe, District Lay Leader

When I became the District Superintendent for the Crater Lake District last July, I had the following three goals:

1. Improve Clergy Morale
2. Establish Greater Inter-Church Connections
3. Change Conference Culture

When it comes to improving clergy morale I find that empathy and connection are the best remedies. I have succeeded in establishing good partnerships with many of the clergy but have failed others. I tend to do nothing simply because it was done that way before which means that some good practices got ignored (colloquies) while other good practices got created (think tanks). I have attempted to reduce shame and increase accountability by giving clergy a chance to define their pastoral style rather than have their superintendent and Cabinet do it for them. This process has led to some clarifying conversations with clergy, Staff-Parish Relations Committees and within Cabinet. Establishing greater inter-church connections is something that could help our churches share resources

during times when individual congregations are struggling. These kinds of cooperative endeavors are being explored by churches in the Eugene area and I hope to expand that exploration to other parts of the district. Team pastoring experiments are also on the horizon so that more congregations benefit from the variety of strengths made present when multiple clergy work together.

If we improve clergy morale and establish greater connections between churches, conference culture will also be transformed. In my opinion, we parallel play side by side in silos more than we play cooperatively together due to clergy insecurities and congregational possessiveness. We can do better on both fronts.

I have found the churches and clergy of the Crater Lake District to be open and willing to take risks. I am learning so much from the laity and clergy, as well as my colleagues on Cabinet, that I feel increasingly embarrassed by my ignorance. I have made mistakes for which I ask forgiveness. We have a great task before us in communicating a gospel that resonates with a culture that thinks it has heard it before or thinks that the gospel has nothing to offer. I believe we can be agents of transformation if we can become bigger as people and as a conference. What else has Jesus called us to do?

Sage District
Gwen Drake, District Superintendent
Terri Bartish, District Administrative Assistant
Josh Bynum, District Lay Leader

This is my sixth year as a District Superintendent; my first year as the Sage District Superintendent. Sage District has 54 churches, one Hispanic Fellowship, one new church start, two active campus ministry settings, and two United Methodist Camps. These ministry settings are divided into four geographical areas: Northeast Oregon, Treasure Valley, Magic Valley, and Eastern Idaho. Each area is assigned a coordinating elder to help with clergy colloquy, charge conferences and other concerns as needed when the district superintendent can not be present.

My goal this year was to go to every church to listen to what they are doing in mission and ministry. I asked each of them why they are the church in this community and who they think they will be in five to ten years. I have only a few congregations left to visit as of mid-April.

I am thrilled to report that Shared Ministry Apportionment giving improved to 73.5%, an improvement of almost 10%. We had several churches unexpectedly make it to 100%. My challenge to congregations is to improve another 10% in 2017.

The strongest churches are in Eastern Idaho and Boise. Many of our small churches are served by Lay Assigned Pastors and Certified Lay Ministers. The area of the most concern for me is the Magic Valley, mostly the area of Twin Falls. This area has grown in population while the congregations continue to remain steady or decline. The question is: How do we reverse this trend in this strategic area? Another strategic area may be Caldwell. This area is growing and the church has declined to half-time.

We have one new church start in Boise called Crosspoint, served by Dana Hicks. They started in May 2016 and are presently worshipping regularly since February 2017 with around 50.

I have met many exceptional United Methodist people and congregations who are making a difference in their community.

General Church Agencies

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. Nearly 700 students participated in NEXT, an increase of nearly 40 percent from prior years.

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. A biennial event, **Exploration** provides a platform for young adults ages 18-26 to hear, discern, and respond to God's call to ordained ministry. In 2015, 475 attended Exploration. 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. The Schools, Colleges, and Universities Office at GBHEM hosted 30 of the school's presidents at the CEO Meeting of the Council of Independent Colleges in Orlando, Florida in January 2017. In addition, the office hosted 35 presidents at the National Association of Schools & Colleges of The United Methodist Church (NASCUMC) winter meeting in Washington, D.C.

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. Global Education works with the United-Methodist related schools, particularly institutions of higher education and theology schools. 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, helping the HBCUs to keep tuition and fees competitive. The Black College Fund was pleased to announce that five of its HBCU's enrolled 22 Hispanic students as part of the Latino student access program in 2016.

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. The loans and scholarships are

open to United Methodist students and seminarians who are seeking to further their education.

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 10 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 pursuing **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. The office coordinated a successful Board of Ordained Ministry Quadrennial Leadership Development in fall 2016. In addition, the office revised the BOM Handbook following General Conference along with the conference relations resources for the 2016 Book of Discipline. The Candidacy Office is also developing an eight-year Clergy Assessment Process and GBHEM's Effective Ministry Assessment (EMA) leadership development tool.

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, and a pilot Escuela de Cursos de Estudios (ECE), 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. UMEA supports those working in 25 ministry settings such health care, military, prison, workplace, marriage and family, specialized and more. The office is completing the second pilot initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of a hybrid Clinical Pastoral Education program sponsored by GBHEM.

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).

Universities and Seminaries

Africa University

James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

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 Oregon-Idaho Conference in helping Africa University to realize its mission. The Oregon-Idaho Conference maintained its strong support, investing 100 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 last year. A total of 34 of the 56 United Methodist annual conferences in the United States invested 100 percent or more of their asking to the AUF. The Western Jurisdiction led by example and achieved its very best showing for the AUF to date—99.70 percent.

The ongoing support of the Oregon-Idaho Conference is of vital importance to Africa University because the university draws its mandate, energy and capacity to transform lives from The United Methodist Church.

Therefore, we invite each of you, as members of the Oregon-Idaho Conference, to set aside time in 2017 to celebrate your journey with Africa University. Please participate in the observance of the university's 25th anniversary. Encourage your congregation to remain steadfast and aim to invest 100 percent of its asking to the AUF and other general church funds in 2017. 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.

Celebrate your role in making Africa University all that it is today and all that it will be in the future. Remember that regardless of the challenges that arise, United Methodists sustain this ministry together — praying, loving and sharing our blessings — and there is no other way that we could do it!

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 full-time students each year.
- Generating new knowledge and capacity to support peacebuilding and to improve food security, human rights, and leadership for the African continent.

Thanks to your generosity, the mission of the global United Methodist Church is alive in the contributions of the Africa 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 (GBGM).

Without Africa University, "I am sure that I would not have the mental maturity and spiritual growth that I have now," said Albert Wakili, an AU graduate who is a Global Mission Fellow. Wakili is currently serving as a youth and children's worker at Blanchardstown Methodist Church in Dublin, Ireland, one of the newest and most ethnically diverse congregations in Irish Methodism. Wakili plans to return to Nigeria later this year, when his two-year term with the GBGM ends.

Thank you for your unwavering witness in response to the call to faith, hope, and renewal in the world. We pray that blessings continue to abound for all who serve in ministry in the Oregon-Idaho Conference.

Boston University School of Theology **Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean**

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:

- **Congregations:** 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: <http://www.bu.edu/cpt/current-projects-2/congregational-research-and-development/>.
- **Doctor of Ministry:** 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.
- **Scholarships:** We multiplied funding for student scholarships and housing, including the Vincent Machozi Scholarship for African students who seek to cultivate ministries of compassion, justice, & peace in their homelands.
- **Religion and Arts Initiative:** 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.

- **Congregational courses:** Courses in congregations with church leaders and students learning together.
- **Religion and Conflict Transformation Clinic:** Internships, workshops, and projects that foster justice and reconciliation.
- **Travel seminars:** Courses engaging local communities on Arizona-Mexican border and in Cuba, Germany, and Indonesia.
- **Ecumenical partnerships:** Continuing close work with UMC, AME and other Wesleyan denominations, while building strong programs with the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ.
- **Partnership with Hebrew College:** Joint courses and public events, plus co-sponsoring *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:

- **Campus action:** 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.
- **Internships in global service and peacemaking:** 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.

- **Standing with Standing Rock:** Several BUSTH students and alums joined indigenous peoples at the Oceti Sakowin Camp in North Dakota to protest the pipeline on sacred Sioux land.
- **Deep conversations:** 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.

Candler School of Theology

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics

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 to 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. 475 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 Hauptert-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 candler.emory.edu to see firsthand how Candler prepares *real* people to make a *real* difference in the *real* world.

Claremont School of Theology **Jeffrey Kuan, President and Professor of Hebrew Bible**

Claremont School of Theology (CST) is experiencing a true **season of sustenance and growth** – sustaining the gifts we have been given while we plan and pray for more growth.

Last year, we laid out for you our strategic plan, “Leveraging Our Past to Build our Future,” a plan that set a course through 2020, based on three goals: promoting transformative education; engaging local and global communities; and achieving long-term institutional stability. This year, we are thrilled to share with you that we have already reached some of those goals.

Promoting Transformative Education

In Spring 2017, we welcomed our largest-ever incoming Spring class which boosted our total enrollment to 414 students. Our original hope was to “break 400” in Fall 2019. We reached that goal 30 months ahead of schedule.

In the last three years, the number of students seeking their Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree more than doubled, spurred by the growth of Hybrid/Online programs. Our Hybrid D.Min. program is growing consistently as well, and the highest number of denominationally-affiliated students at CST is from The United Methodist Church at 24 percent.

In Fall 2017, we will welcome students to our newly designed Master of Theological Studies (MTS). This program is ideal for those who want a theological education to enhance their ministry as lay people and for our UMC ministry candidates following the Deacon path.

Engaging Local and Global Communities

Our president, the Rev. Dr. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, stood with the presidents from our interfaith partnerships – Bayan Claremont, University of the West, and the Academy for Jewish Religion, California – in speaking out against hate of any kind regarding anti-Semitic actions in our nation and against the federal program targeting our Muslim brothers and sisters.

Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae remain active in local and global efforts to understand our neighbors and our own “otherness.” They planned and participated in marches, conversations, and symposia at houses of worship, with other schools of higher education, and alongside those of many traditions. This, we believe, is what helps our students and graduates truly understand the world they serve.

Achieving Long-Term Institutional Sustainability

In September 2016, CST welcomed our new Vice President for Advancement and Communications, the Rev. Sharalyn Hamilton. Rev. Hamilton is leading Trustees, Staff, and Faculty in efforts to fortify our financial future. These efforts include hosting events in Cal-Pac and Desert Southwest to strengthen ties, renew old friendships, and worship together.

Additionally, CST’s focused visit from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) – through which we receive accreditation – went very well. WASC is impressed with our course offerings, our stellar faculty, and our record-breaking increase in enrollment. It is, however, imperative we establish a more sustainable financial model to continue to receive their accreditation in the future. Our Board and President are exploring every option available to achieve financial sustainability for generations to come.

Farewell

This year, CST bid “Farewell” to our bishop-in-residence, Bishop Charles Wesley Jordan, who served us for 15 years. To celebrate his ministry of pastoral care and leadership, we created a scholarship to support African American students who plan to follow him into congregational ministry. Longtime CST Library Director of Circulation, Elaine Walker, also retired after 38 years, and Dr. Jack Coogan, Professor of Communication Arts and CST alumnus, retired after 50 years of teaching and enriching the CST

community.

We also said “Goodbye” to some dear CST friends who passed away recently, including Professor Emeritus Allen J. Moore, who served as professor, associate dean, and dean at various points in his career at the School, and Professor Emeritus James McConkey Robinson who joined our faculty in 1958.

Thank you

CST values its connection to The United Methodist Church. Our dedication to “preparing our graduates to become agents of transformation and healing in churches, local communities, schools, non-profit institutions, and the world at large” is made possible through your love, prayers, and gifts. Thank you for supporting Claremont School of Theology as we continue to grow.

Stay connected to CST as we continue **Creating a Difference for the World We Live In**. Visit us at www.CST.edu or on Facebook and on Twitter @CST_News. Sign up for our monthly e-newsblast at <https://cst.edu/cst-newsletter/>

Rust College of Holly Springs, Mississippi Pearlene Carter, Chair David L. Beckley, President

Established in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Church on a former slave auction site, Rust is the oldest one of 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities established after the Civil War by the Methodist Church still in existence today serving more than 1,000 students annually from Mississippi, 22 states and six foreign countries. Rust’s Mission continues to be in tune with the church’s overall philosophy – *doing no harm, doing good and staying in love with Jesus Christ* as we serve the young people who look to Rust as their bridge to a better tomorrow through education.

Rust College Religious Life is a diverse community providing the administration, faculty, staff and students sacred space to be fellow travelers on a journey of faith that leads to transformation of the individual and the world. The Office of the Chaplain oversees religious life activities, coordinates training for student ministers, and provides counseling for administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Informed by Christian tradition, Rust College religious life strives to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ to a diverse higher education community. Grounded in the Wesleyan tradition, religious life is the place where *“Tomorrow’s Leaders are Students Today.”* Students *who will be and do “all the good they can, by all the means they can, in all the ways they can, in all the places they can, at all the times they can to all the people they can, for as long as they can.”*

Highlights for 2016-2017 year include:

- The College ended the 2015-2016 fiscal year with a balanced budget for the 50th consecutive year.
- Rust College received a \$145,000 grant from the Hearin Foundation to support needy students seeking financial aid. The total grant equaled \$580,000, over a four year period.
- The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation has provided a grant of \$140,000 to the Rust General Scholarship Fund for 2016-2017.
- Dr. Gemma Beckley, Chair and Professor of Social Work, received the Mississippi Humanities Teacher of the Year award.
- Rust College students won first place at the Southern Conference on African-American Studies Quiz Bowl in Atlanta, GA on February 10, 2017.
- As a part of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Rust College juniors, Savahn Jordan and Jasmine Dean, were recognized as 2016-17 Historically Black Colleges and Universities All-STARs.
- Awarded a \$10,000 Legacy’s Tobacco Free Campus Initiative Grant from the American Legacy Foundation.

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- Awarded a \$25,000 Grant from the Global Health Unit of Global Ministries for the Rust Health Explorers Program.
- Awarded a \$1,000,336.00 from the Lilly Endowment UNCF Career Pathways Initiative for a Career Pathways Initiative Implementation Grant.

As you, our friends of the United Methodist Church, continue to uphold your promise of educational opportunity established many years ago, we, the members of the Rust College family, will uphold the promise made by our founder, Rev. A. C. McDonald in 1866, “to do not hothouse work” but will work to build men and women morally, spiritually and academically sound. We are thankful to you for your prayers and financial support. Your continued support is essential as we endeavor to build a stronger legacy for this generation and those in years to come who will look to Rust and our great church for higher educational opportunities.

The College expresses thanks for the dedication and leadership of the following Trustees from the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference: Bishop Elaine Stanovsky.

United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio **Kent Millard, President**

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.¹ 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.² 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.

¹ Fall 2016 headcount of masters’ and doctoral students enrolled in courses.

² According to the 2014 United alumni/ae survey.

Reports Received After the Annual Conference Deadline:

Conference Board of Global Ministries/Outreach Jim Frisbie, Conference Secretary of Global Ministries

Our Global Ministries Team is continuing to expand and deepen its ministry with and through the local churches of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference. We continue to support local churches with missionary itineration, connections for disaster response, opportunities for mission and ministry, United Methodist Volunteer in Mission teams, and our global connection through the General Board of Global Ministries, which links us with fellow United Methodists around the world.

We continue to see a steady stream of itinerating missionaries visiting churches and church groups. Roz Collins is our Itineration Coordinator and a valuable link with the work of United Methodist Women.

Dan Moseler continues as our Disaster Response Coordinator, linking us with other religious and non-profit organizations preparing for and responding to emerging needs in our communities. Dan has prepared and established on the conference website a comprehensive Disaster Response Guide that every pastor and lay leader needs to review and have readily available.

Becky Platt has developed effective systems of training and deployment for both UMVIM and Early Response Teams. She will be focusing more and more on the ERT aspect of this work, coordinating effectively with her counterparts in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference.

Lowell Greathouse continues to be a valuable link for our team with both Hispanic Ministries and his role as Mission and Ministry Coordinator.

Two developing areas of our work are the Connecting Neighbors program and the Abundant Health Initiative.

The Connecting Neighbors program is a specific process whereby a congregation can engage in study, planning, and implementation of ways that they as a church can respond to the emerging needs in a community. It is ministry and outreach at its most basic and essential level! The Lake Oswego United Methodist Church has taken the lead on this under the leadership of Sally Blanchard and can provide a model for other congregations to get involved.

The Abundant Health Initiative is an emphasis of the General Board of Global Ministries that was presented and passed at General Conference in May 2016. As a response and follow-up to the success of Imagine No Malaria, GBGM has challenged our denomination to a grand goal of impacting the health and wellbeing of a million children. Thomas Kemper, General Secretary of GBGM, is calling for 10,000 churches to commit to programs and efforts that positively improve the lives of children and their mothers both in their local communities and around the world.

Emilie Kroen has organized a team to initiate and implement this effort in Oregon-Idaho. It will build on the work we have already done through Imagine No Malaria and expand that effort to include local actions that change lives for the better in our communities.

As a Global Ministries Team we continually stretch ourselves and our imagination to embrace the call of Christ to "Go into all the world." That mission begins in our homes and on our doorsteps, and embraces an increasingly diverse world. This is our calling, our ministry, our purpose and our mand

Holy Land Task Force **Dee Poujade, Chair**

The Holy Land Task Force was created at Annual Conference 2013. Current task force members are Dee Poujade, chair, Alex Awad, Betty Cobb, Janine DeLaunay, Babs Eggleston, Liz Jacob, Karen McAlister, Jan Nelson, and Claudia Roberts. The initial charge of the Task Force was to identify and study companies affecting the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territory in harmful ways, and to develop information sheets on companies that conduct their business in a manner harmful to Palestinians. .

At Annual Conference 2014 the Task Force was given a further mandate to strongly encourage churches, ministry settings and/or districts to provide a study based on “Kairos Response.”

In 2015, the OR-ID Annual Conference passed a resolution directing that the Annual Conference’s financial bodies “divest all Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference funds from stock held in Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett-Packard, and continue to exclude these companies from the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference investments until these companies end their involvement with the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine.” The Holy Land Task Force is proud to join the Conference Council on Finance and Administration in reporting that this task is now nearing completion. Task Force members have been told that Westpath credits the activism of the OR-ID Annual Conference for its work in developing investment funds that are free from these three companies

The Task Force continues to provide educational resources and speakers to local churches and other venues as requested. The Kairos Document (<http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/files/English.pdf>) and Working for a Just and Lasting Peace in Palestine and Israel, (http://umc-gbcs.org/content/general/Working_for_a_Just_and_Lasting_Peace.pdf) are recommended as “primers” for those wishing to learn more about this issue.

Task Force members are willing and eager to help coordinate educational programs on Palestine/Israel in any way that is needed. Additionally, United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR), a national group working to support an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, has many excellent resources for individual or group study (www.kairosresponse.org).

We look forward to working with the churches of the OR-ID Annual Conference in seeking peace and justice in the Holy Land

Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C. **David McAllister-Wilson, President**

At Wesley Theological Seminary, we are building on 135 years of faithful preparation of church- and world-changing leaders by continuing to innovate and grow. We are excited to partner with you in the ministry to which God has called you now – and wherever you may be called in the future. Keep reading for good news that you can use...

Wesley’s Lewis Center for Church Leadership continues to be the internationally respected go-to resource for actionable best practices for clergy and laity. The center’s free Leading Ideas e-newsletter provides well-researched, discipleship-growing ideas to more than 17,000 people. Sign up for Leading Ideas at <https://www.churchleadership.com/category/leading-ideas/>.

The new Wesley Theological Seminary Lay Academy offers 11 online courses covering a variety of topics including Methodist identity, early church history, Christian ethics, interfaith relations, and the intersection of faith and science. Laypeople can earn a certification in Wesleyan Studies by completing six of the courses online, or can choose to take courses individually for personal education and enrichment.

Two new certificate programs allow individuals to take specialized classes without pursuing an entire

degree. The Certificate in Faith and Public Life explores the foundations of public theology, religious freedom, and civil discourse through graduate courses. The African American Church Studies certificate is a non-degree option for local church leaders who want to enrich their ministry in African American communities. For more information, contact admissions@wesleyseminary.edu or visit www.wesleyseminary.edu.

Wesley has received a grant of \$1.5 million from the Lilly Endowment to help congregations design innovative ministries that support and enrich the religious lives of young adults. Through this grant, 20 local congregations will be selected to work with Wesley as an innovation hub that brings together church leaders, young adults, experts and practitioners for conversation, education, and exchange of ideas. The ultimate goal will be to help each congregation launch new partnerships with young adults, ages 23 to 29. Congregational applications will be open July 1 - October 31, 2017. For more information, contact the Rev. Beth Ludlum at bludlum@wesleyseminary.edu.

The Institute for Community Engagement at Wesley Downtown continues to help the church turn itself inside out. The Institute at Wesley now offers an innovative online Health Minister Certificate Program from Heal the Sick, an initiative to prepare congregations for public health work in their parishes. Some scholarships are available for this program. Please contact Tom Pruski at tpruski@wesleyseminary.edu for more information or to register for future certificate classes.

The newest component of the Institute for Community Engagement is Wesley's Center for Public Theology. Under the leadership of Distinguished Professor of Public Theology Mike McCurry, this center is equipping pastors, seminarians, people of faith, and the media to create spaces for civil dialogue at the intersection of religion and politics. The Center is also providing events, workshops, and resources to help faith leaders lead faithful, prophetic, open dialogue in their communities.

The Luce Center for Arts and Religion remains the only seminary-based program uniting arts and theology. The Luce Center invites the public to artist talks with each new exhibit and has regular classes and workshops with visiting artists. For information on past and upcoming opportunities visit luceartsandreligion.org.

Wesley's Master of Divinity degree can now be completed via online, weekend, short-term intensive, and weeknight courses in 5 years. This format is designed to be more accessible to those with busy ministry, work, and/or family commitments throughout the region. The new African American Church Studies Master of Divinity specialization gives contextual preparation for the unique opportunities and challenges our future leaders may encounter in African American churches, while the Public Theology specialization allows master's degree students to gain skills for community leadership and advocacy.

Wesley continues to offer our 36-hour Master of Arts and a 60-hour Master of Theological Studies to equip those called to ordained deacon ministries or to other ministries beyond the pulpit.