



SINGING THE LORD'S SONG

HISTORICAL REPORTS



Michigan Conference
The United Methodist Church

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AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND

What a joy it is to share with you, the members of the Michigan Conference, as friends and partners in ministry with Africa University. This time of writing to you is truly a bright spot, given the uncertainty and upheaval that have been our shared reality, locally and globally, from the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

I pray that you, your loved ones, and wider church family are keeping safe and remaining hopeful and connected, as you observe the guidelines for protecting each other's health and well-being.

Africa University is deeply grateful to the local churches of the Michigan Conference for investing 82.87 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund apportionment in 2020. Thank you for supporting the ministry of Africa University with such faithfulness and generosity. By giving as you do, even in this difficult time, you are a source of encouragement and strength.

The multilayered impact of COVID-19 and the measures instituted to control the public health crisis it engendered have brought about profound and lasting adjustments how we live, work, serve and connect. For Africa University, these included:

- A shift to online-only teaching and learning from late March through to December 2020. As the only university in Zimbabwe accredited to offer online degrees, AU had the infrastructure and expertise to transition smoothly and break new ground with competence-based student assessment tools.
- Innovation, outreach and service through:
 - The development and distribution of masks and hand sanitizer (of its own design/formulation), that have now been certified and cleared for commercial production.
 - The launch, via a web application, of farm to household delivery of fresh produce, meat and poultry products by the Africa University Dream Farm Trust.
 - Two student-led initiatives – ***Feed a Family*** and ***Ben Hill United Methodist Church Women's Residence Girl Child Support Program*** – that provided medical care, food and school fees assistance to vulnerable families in the wider community. Campus-based and home-based students raised resources, procured supplies and organized safe distribution to families.

Thank you, Michigan United Methodists, for helping to prepare young leaders to be “an aroma that brings life” to a world that needs compassion, healing and wholeness (2 Cor. 2:14-16). Through your prayers and gifts, you are an integral part of the outstanding efforts of the students, lecturers and administrators to remain engaged in disciple-making by example. In a fragile and interconnected world and family of faith, your deep commitment, loving concern and steadfast support matter greatly.

Thank you for aiding Africa University in never missing a day of lectures or a meal or a paycheck.

Thank you for scholarship and financial aid gifts that are making dreams possible for young people who would otherwise never have a chance of pursuing a college education.

Thank you for resourcing Africa University to safely care and provide for the students, faculty, administrators and support staff.

In journeying alongside Africa University in ministry and mission, you are the church in the world – seeding hope and sharing the love of Christ. You affirm that when we are all in it together, God's grace is indeed sufficient. To God be the glory.

James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement
Africa University Development Office

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MINISTRIES, COMMITTEE ON

The Committee on African American Ministries (COAAM) has identified 19 African American churches and 47 African American clergy throughout the Michigan Conference as of December 31, 2021. Therefore, we have tried to account for the needs of these churches and clergy.

In 2020, we began the process of providing grants that would help the clergy and churches get what they needed to help them through the pandemic. The churches were required to have 50% African American membership as identified in the Ezra Database.

We provided PPE grants to 7 churches, Safe and Secure Welcoming Environment grants to 6 churches, and Technology grants to 16 clergy and 8 churches.

The grants provided help for them to be able obtain computers, Zoom licensing, microphones, and other technology needs as well as sanitizing equipment and supplies, masks, and other needed PPE supplies. We helped people to update their signage, church rooms, and other areas of the church to prepare for in-person worship. We received feedback from many of the churches and clergy who received the benefit of the grants because there were able to obtain equipment and licensing that had not been available to them prior to receiving the grants.

We had several training classes for clergy and laity. In addition, we provided financial support to three West Michigan churches and agencies for one final year. We provided support for them in 2019 also.

COAAM is working towards creating webinars and also other helpful ways of providing information and resources for the African American clergy and churches. In 2021, we will continue providing needed grants and resources for the churches and clergy.

Jan J. Brown, Clergy Co-Chair
Simmie Proctor, Laity Co-Chair

BAY SHORE EVANGELICAL CAMP OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH DBA: Bay Shore Camp and Family Ministries

"The mission of the Bay Shore Camp and Family Ministries is to provide an invitation for all people to experience Jesus Christ and to nurture them in their relationship with Him."

Celebration

In spite of COVID-19 and following the guidance provided by the American Camping Association and the State of Michigan, our dedicated staff and volunteers found a way for more than 500 children and youth to attend Bay Shore Summer Camp events in 2020. While overall participation in Bay Shore's events was down, countless people continued to attend all our events, without incidence of COVID-19 through the end of the camp and retreat seasons.

In keeping with our vision of "no child left behind," no child was turned away from camp for inability to pay. In fact, individuals donated more than \$37,000 to help kids go to camp. We are thankful for the countless people who support this ministry with their financial gifts. Aside from those who support our Campership Fund, we give thanks for those who gave in excess of \$270,000 to support our general operating budget. These generous gifts allowed us to navigate the financial wilderness created by COVID-19. We are especially thankful for an endowment that sustains the ministry as well. Bay Shore now has an operating budget of \$1.1 M, 11 year-round staff, and hundreds of faithful volunteers.

History and 2018 Recap

An Evangelical United Brethren Camp at the time of the 1968 merger, Bay Shore established its own 501c3 non-profit when The United Methodist Church decided to close the camp and agreed to transfer it to some faithful constituents. Bay Shore continues as an affiliate ministry of The United Methodist Church by representation on the Bay Shore Board from United Methodist-appointed clergy and laity.

In 2020, Bay Shore offered 16 summer child and youth camp events over a course of 7 weeks. Weeks of camp include athletic camps, arts camps and traditional camps. While summer camp attendance was down, due to COVID-19, those families who still wanted a camp experience for their children took advantage of our "reimagined" events designed to meet strict health and safety protocols. Our weeks of Traveling Day Camps were cancelled, but onsite day camps were added. We look forward to restarting our traveling day camp programs in 2021 and partnering with local churches in this way. We believe there's a future in this collaborative programming with the church.

Family (Assembly) Camp, now in its 109th consecutive year, continues to be well attended. In spite of COVID-19, nearly 400 participate in some portion of the week's events. Inspiring speakers for the adults, engaging programs for the kids and youth, and a wide range of recreational activities draw people of all ages to this multigenerational event. In 2020, for safety's sake, we moved our large worship services outdoors under a tent.

Bay Shore serves a wide array of year-round guests. Many attend our programmed retreats including men's retreats, women's retreats, youth retreats, quilt retreats and craft retreats. And others attend events as guests of others who use our facilities to program their own retreats. Our newest retreat facility, the Amby Lodge, a 13 room, 33 bed lodge with semi-private rooms is our most popular. Rooms are comfortable, typical of a nice hotel and the Lodge has a beautiful great room with kitchen for guest use. Most weekend dates for this Lodge are already committed on an ongoing basis and we are beginning to book week-day events now.

The most important events that Bay Shore offers are free! Twice a year, June and October, Bay Shore offers "Free Family Fun Days." Families are invited to attend. Camping is free. All the recreational activities are free. The June event includes all our popular camp activities including swimming, mini-golf, inflatables, ziplining, laser-tag, arrow-tag, paintball, and barrel train rides. The October event includes popular Fall activities like hayrides and pumpkin painting. Weather dependent, 200-600 people attend these events. COVID-19 impacted our attendance at these events, but families welcomed the opportunity for something to do, in a time when so much had been cancelled.

In December, Bay Shore stages a drive-through Living Nativity that serves hundreds of guests annually. This event is also free, offered as a gift to the community. We've found that this "drive-through" event especially serves the elderly and families with very young children and is an engaging way to relive the Christmas story or to teach to children for the very first time. With COVID-19, we saw a dramatic increase in the attendance at this event with more than 900 people experiencing the Nativity story from the safety of their cars. It was especially fun to have many live animals including sheep with the "shepherds," various animals at the "stable," and camels with the "wise men." What a blessing this event was at the end of a difficult year.

What's Next?

As the nature of our society changes, so must the nature of camping ministry. In the coming months and years, Bay Shore plans to roll out new ways to support the church and the family. Partnering with the local church, traveling day camps will continue to be rolled out to up to 8 locations in 2021. Partnering with schools and community, an outdoor education program is being developed. We plan to continue to develop nature trails, a boardwalk and outdoor worship space in 2021 with the help of the NOMADS. Meeting the changing needs of families, onsite day camps continue to be offered and weekend family camping opportunities are being developed for 2021. The mission remains the same:

"The mission of the Bay Shore Camp and Family Ministries is to provide an invitation for all people to experience Jesus Christ and to nurture them in their relationship with Him."

Jeff Parsons, Executive Director



In 2020 the excruciating decision was made to pause all programs at Camp Michigamme until 2021 due to the challenge imposed by COVID-19. Camp Michigamme is happy to announce the welcoming of a new camp Director, Pete Stahlbrand, who joined us in October 2020. Pete brings 16 years of experience working with nine summer camps throughout New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and even Australia. Most recently he was camp director of YMCA Camp Wiyaka, which was able to be one of three camps out of 160 which opened in New Hampshire in 2020, without incident and following strict guidelines. Camp Michigamme is dedicated to opening in 2021 to the fullest extent deemed safe and will be working closely with state and local officials to ensure that we are in compliance with all the regulations and restrictions that will be required to open safely. We also remain optimistic that our state and local officials are working diligently to combat COVID-19 and by supporting them, we will hopefully be able to enjoy a much less restrictive 2021 when compared to the summer of 2020.

Camp Michigamme 2021 - All Things New

In the spirit of Revelation 21:5, "Look, I'm making all things new!", Camp Michigamme is storming ahead with a re-visioned camp schedule for 2021. Along with the theme of "All Things New," Camp Michigamme will be strengthening our mission of "Utilizing our beautiful natural setting and the spiritual resources available to us to help persons of all ages come into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ to the glory of God," by uniting behind the three mission focuses of:

1. Youth Development
2. Forging Community
3. Extending an Inclusive Ministry to All.

What New Direction to Expect

Our new strategy in 2021 is to revamp our schedule to better fit the needs of both the local UP families and our downstate and Wisconsin families traveling long distances. With the exception of a Senior High Camp, we are transitioning from offering exclusively age-based camps to offering camps where children from the full range of age groups can attend simultaneously. Our intention is to allow families to attend camp on their schedule, instead of ours, allowing large families to send the full range of siblings to camp at the same time and for our long-distance campers to attend multiple weeks in a row to help justify the burden of traveling. Additionally, we will be offering changeover weekends and airport pickups to make logistics easier to attend. We are also aiming to utilize our sister congregation connections from within our Northern Skies district churches, and to forge new relationships with churches from the rest of the Michigan and Wisconsin conferences. Our hope is that by bringing in campers from a wide range of places (gradually over the next five years) we can both provide a beautiful U.P. experience for downstate campers who would normally not get that opportunity, while allowing our "Yoopers campers," who rarely have the opportunity to cross the bridge, the opportunity to meet campers from around the world. We have a lofty five- year goal of increasing our Yooper campers from 200 to 400, and to bring in 200 campers from downstate, Wisconsin, and the rest of the world. Hopefully in the next five years some of those 200 campers from outside the U.P. may even come from emerging Methodist congregations in nations such as South Korea, allowing us to forge an international camp community.

Youth Camp 2021 - \$350 per week

- June 20-26 - Senior High Camp - Grades 9th-12th
- June 27-July 3 - Science Explorations Camp - Grades 1st-12th
- July 5-10 - Survivor Camp (TV Show) - Grades 1st-9th
- July 11-17 - Water Games Camp - Grades 1st-9th
- July 18-24 - Olympic Games Camp - Grades 1st-9th
- July 25-31 - Narnia Camp - Grades 1st-9th
- August 1-7 - Disney Explosion Camp - Grades 1st-9th
- August 8-14 - Super Heroes Camp - Grades 1st-9th

Spiritual Curriculum and a Call for Pastors

You'll notice that each of our weeks have an additional fun secular theme. Some of our secular themes are athletic, some academic, and some just plain fun. Our goal is not for these themes to impose values, but rather to be a starting point for our weekly pastors and/or spiritual leaders to discuss faith. We are always looking for new and excited voices from pastors, not just from the Northern Skies District, but from the entire Michigan and Wisconsin conferences and beyond. If you are up to the challenge of stepping up to be a pastor for a week, please reach out to Camp Director Pete Stahlbrand, at director@campmichigamme.org. We need pastors who care deeply about providing food security, a tolerance for all, and, most importantly, a community expression of love and care. Most of our campers will not be regular church goers and we have an important opportunity to extend the ministry of The United Methodist Church by providing a wonderful experience that will be an outstanding first impression for the Church to hundreds of young people. We are looking for pastors who will step up to the challenge of both striving to speak to a wide range of ages, and to live our Christian values without judgement and with full inclusive speech in the model of Pastor "Mr. Fred Rogers." We very much look forward to meeting new pastors from throughout the conferences and we hope to forge partnerships with pastors who, not only want to help lead camp for a week, but who would like to organize groups of campers to travel up to the U.P. and spend the week with us. It is a genuine goal to build partnerships with downstate, Wisconsin, or beyond congregations to offer camps in this and future summers that will have the goal of being half yooper campers and half "outside the U.P." campers and from any cultural backgrounds. I very much look forward to hearing from y'all soon.

Pete Stahlbrand, Camp Director

CLARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

As part of the Grand Rapids community for the past 115 years, Clark has been serving seniors and their families with an unwavering focus on our mission of **“creating communities of dignity, compassion and respect centered on the lives of older adults and those who care for them.”** Every day we touch the lives of over 2000 people on our campuses as well as our collaborations of home and community-based services. Our residential offerings are in independent, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing. We are proud to say that we have active, vibrant and wonderful communities to serve seniors with an unsurpassed, positive culture and environment.

To meet the needs of residents, enhance quality, and remain focused on our mission, Clark’s strategic direction includes the expansion of independent living. Our intent is to achieve a 70% independent to 30% assisted living mix. We have completed a renovation project on our Franklin Campus which added 22 new upscale independent living apartments. They were fully occupied once the project was finished and have remained at 100% occupancy. There is also an expansion projected underway at our Keller Lake Campus to add 52 more independent living apartments. Programming and services for memory care residents continues to be a high priority and focus. Not only is this critical to fulfilling our mission, but also distinguishes Clark as the leader in dementia care and services in the West Michigan area.

Residential Communities

Clark at Franklin

Our legacy campus, Clark at Franklin, was founded in 1906 through a generous donation by Melvin and Emily Clark. Although the challenges of COVID-19 have had an intense impact, we are still a thriving, ecumenical community that welcomes people with open arms, warm smiles and provides a fun-loving, engaging, and caring environment. Our goal is to inspire meaningful living, with activities and care focused on the mind, body, and spirit of our residents. Living options include independent town homes and apartments, assisted living, specialized dementia care, and skilled nursing.

Clark at Keller Lake

Situated on a 40-acre campus, Clark at Keller Lake is located in a beautiful natural environment with groomed nature trails winding around the lake. It is conveniently located near shopping and dining establishments. Our independent living option includes 22 spacious town homes clustered around Keller Lake. There are two assisted living manors each located on the edge of the lake with large decks overlooking the water. They provide a caring, nurturing and activity-filled environment with specialized services for residents with dementia. Our new building project will include 52 upscale independent living apartments in a unique town square model overlooking Keller Lake. This project is scheduled for completion in the Fall of 2021.

Montessori for Aging & Dementia

Clark has integrated a Montessori program for adults with dementia that is the first of its kind in the United States. People with memory loss often live a life of emptiness with little or no purpose. The Montessori Program offers an exciting, evidence-based approach for setting a revolutionary new standard of excellence in dementia care by providing purpose and creating independence.

Collaborations for Home and Community-Based Services

Atrio Home Care is a collaborative effort of three home health care providers – Clark, Holland Home and Resthaven. Atrio was formed to provide a new level of compassionate, skilled, and quality home care services including a comprehensive range of personal, private duty services as well as skilled home care services.

Emmanuel Hospice is a partnership of four local faith-based senior services organizations, including Clark, that provide dignified end-of-life support to patients and their loved ones. The mission of Emmanuel Hospice is to put the patient’s wishes first and asks the question, *“How do you want to LIVE?”*

TANDEM365 represents an innovative concept aimed at helping older adults navigate the complexities of healthcare while enabling them to remain in their homes. Through customized care coordinated by a team of health care professionals, participants in TANDEM365 have access to the best services and support available with a single point of contact.

Clark Foundation

Philanthropy is a major component of life at Clark giving us the ability to provide services, programs, and projects beyond the scope of operational activities. The Clark Foundation was founded in 1995 in response to the benevolent care needs of residents. Through the generous gifts of donors, financial support is

provided to those residents who, through no fault of their own, have depleted their financial resources. This is the Clark Promise – residents have the peace of mind knowing Clark will always be their home. Other areas of gifting include the Montessori program for Aging and Dementia, Music Therapy, Equine Therapy, life enrichment activities, employee education opportunities as well as support to capital projects and initiatives.

Clark is currently engaged in a \$6 million capital campaign called **Celebrating Clark**. This campaign will provide resources in the following areas: \$3 million to the Keller Lake expansion project, \$2 million to Benevolent Care and \$1 million to Life Enrichment which includes a \$250,000 renovation to the Chapel on the Franklin campus. This chapel is at the center of life for residents with many services throughout the week.

At Clark, we are truly living our mission through person-centered care. Our employee giving program, Clark Colleagues, is a testament to our staff's commitment and belief in the work we do every day. We see an exciting future ahead for fulfilling the needs and desires of the seniors of our community. Our vision and strategic plan are designed to keep Clark vibrant, competitive, and financially healthy.

Brian A. Pangle, President/CEO

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL and DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

2020 is a year that brought tremendous challenge and change to the Michigan Conference.

The year began with news of a negotiated settlement among traditionalist, centrist, and progressive United Methodists called "The Protocol on Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation." The Protocol was created in response to the actions of the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference and the controversy and resistance they caused across the denomination. Convened by the late Bishop John K. Yambasu (d. Aug. 16, 2020) and facilitated by famed negotiator Kenneth Feinberg, the group's agreement provided the framework for the writing of General Conference legislation for separation from The United Methodist Church and the possible creation of several denominations.

In the midst of this denominational uncertainty, a group of Michigan United Methodists, led by the Rev. Jon Reynolds and sponsored by the conference's Liberian Ministry Partners Team, travelled to Liberia in February to renew the covenant between the Michigan and Liberia annual conferences.

Since the submission deadline for legislation had passed, an annual conference would need to vote to send "The Protocol" legislation to General Conference in order for it to be considered by the General Conference at its, then, scheduled meeting in May.

In response to this need, Bishop Bard called a Special Session of the Michigan Annual Conference. The Special Session was held March 7 at Albion College. Gathered, the annual conference debated "The Protocol" and voted to send the legislation to the General Conference. The Michigan Conference was the only conference in the U.S.A. to act on the legislation.

Within days of the gathering, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued several executive orders, culminating in a "shelter-in-place" order on March 23, for the State of Michigan as the corona virus pandemic spread across the world. Thankfully, the Special Session did not result in any further spread of the virus. On March 13, Bishop Bard made the difficult decision to ask churches to refrain from gathering for in person worship through Easter. In support of churches' efforts to shift their worship and ministries online, the Conference Leadership Council approved special grants for local church Zoom licenses. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits declared a six month "Benefit Ministry Share Holiday." The conference staff sprang into action, producing a series of resourcing webinars and creating online Holy Week resources. Bishop Bard led an online Easter Sunday Service shared with churches and broadcasted on social media.

As Easter passed, the deep and long lasting impact of the global pandemic became clear. Many lives were lost, hospitals were stretched beyond capacity, unemployment reached record highs, classroom education shifted to online, the virus showed no sign of slowing. A tough reality emerged – life was not going to return to normal in the near future. Conference/district staff and conference agencies/boards shifted their work to online. Local churches found countless creative ways to engage in mission and ministry – many by providing free masks and increasing their food distribution efforts to answer the public health and economic needs created by the pandemic.

In preparation for a different kind of summer, Kathy Pittenger, Christy Miller White, and Lisa Batten worked with children, youth, young adults, and United Methodist-related non-profit leaders to create resources for online and hybrid VBS, mission teams, and young adult intern experiences. Lisa Batten, Naomi Garcia, and Tim Tuthill offered a webinar series, "COVID-Reset." Laura Witkowski continued to lead Enneagram spiritual formation experiences and assist district lay leaders and the certified lay minister programs in moving online. Sonya Luna restructured the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy into a webinar series for Latinx young people, "LatinXT." Jennie Browne and Dirk Elliott organized an online "Leadership Academy" in August. Mini-grants were offered to support Local Church Christian Education and Community Ministry efforts.

COVID-19 forced the postponement of the General Conference and jurisdictional conferences until Fall 2021. The Michigan Conference's Commission on the Annual Conference also wisely decided to shift the 2020 Annual Conference to an online gathering on July 26-28. Mark Doyal and Nancy Arnold led the Communications Staff, and the Annual Conference Commission leadership organized, and implemented an excellent online Annual Conference.

Summer brought historic flooding, caused by heavy rains and two drained lakes from failed dams on May 19, in the Great Lakes Bay Region of Michigan. Michigan United Methodists responding generously through donations, raising over \$200,000, and volunteering for relief and response efforts. Nancy Money and Dan O'Malley led response and recovery efforts at the conference level, coordinating with UMCOR, state, and community leaders to establish the Michigan Conference's Flood Recovery Project – Great Lakes Bay Region. The project is providing all the Disaster Case Management in the region.

The summer also brought historic nationwide protest for racial justice in response to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd and building on the Black Lives Matter movement. Michigan United Methodists joined local rallies and protests, offered support to the local leaders and organization, and engaged in soul-searching reflections and conversation about white supremacy and racism. Brittney Stephan and Paul Perez organized an online Prayer Vigil on June 9, "All of Us Together: A Prayer Vigil for Racial Justice." Brittney Stephan launched a process to lead conference staff and agency/board leaders through the Intercultural Development Inventory. Bishop Bard, in collaboration with several agency/board leaders, formed the Anti-Bias Anti-Racism Working Group.

After six months of living in a pandemic, fatigue set in the Fall. The warmth of summer gave way to colder and wetter days, signaling the end of outdoor gatherings – a lifeline for churches' worship, fellowship, and community ministries during the summer. Conference and district leaders, in order to slow the spread of the virus, continued to work online. Many charge and district conferences were virtual. The Board of Ordained Ministry met with candidates through Zoom. Gary Step lead the REACH Summit Team to pivot the Annual Leadership Event to an online format.

On August 17, Benton Heisler announced his retirement as Director of Connectional Ministries. Benton served nine years as West Michigan Director of Connectional Ministries and three years in the same role for the Michigan Conference. Bishop Bard expressed gratitude for Benton's faithful service, saying, "He has consistently articulated a vision, expectation, and goal that every local congregation be passionately committed to a relationship with Jesus Christ, and desire to build, repair, and restore people and places of community." Paul Perez, who served as Associate Director of Mission and Ministry, was appointed to the DCM role, and began work on October 1.

On September 10, Amy Mayo Moyle, who served a combined eight years as chair of the Detroit Conference Leadership Team and chair of the Michigan Conference Leadership Council, stepped down from the role. Amy provided the perfect balance between visionary creativity and practical realism, offering compassionate leadership through the creation of the new Michigan Conference and facing an uncertain denominational future. Darryl Totty, pastor of Detroit: Second Grace, was elected the new chair of the Conference Leadership Council.

The year closed with COVID-19 cases surging in November. Bishop Bard asked churches to refrain from gathering during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Conference staff again offered a variety online resources to support church leaders with the shift. In midst of Advent, the announcement of approved vaccines brought a glimmer of hope and celebration for 2021.

At the time of the writing of this report, February 2021, what the futures holds in terms of the global pandemic and for our denomination is still unclear. There are many challenges ahead in the year to come. Yet, through the uncertainty and challenge, Michigan United Methodists remain faithful and act courageous as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Michigan Conference, its staff and leaders, have risen to the challenge of this moment, ensuring the annual conference remains the basic unit, the most essential and functional element of our

connectional polity. We, your newly minted Director of Connectional Ministries and Conference Leadership Council chair, are humbled to serve and lead in such a time as this. We pray you join us on the adventurous journey ahead.

Paul Perez, Director of Connectional Ministries
Darryl Totty, Chair, Conference Leadership Council

2021 MICHIGAN CONFERENCE BUDGET

	2020 - Michigan Budget	2021 - Michigan Budget
<u>A) Clergy Support Budget</u>		
1) District Superintendents	\$ 2,126,446	\$ 2,140,803
2) Episcopal Fund	\$ 568,025	\$ 626,855
3) Ministerial Education Fund	\$ 647,843	\$ 488,952
4) Episcopal Residence Committee	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
5) Equitable Compensation Committee	\$ 120,000	\$ 150,000
6) Clergy Advocacy	\$ 2,000	\$ -
7) Abuse Prevention Team	\$ 10,500	\$ -
8) Clergy Moving Expense Fund	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000
Sub-total Clergy Support Budget	\$ 3,782,314	\$ 3,714,110
Provision for Unpaid Ministry Shares	\$ 597,042	\$ 614,316
Total Clergy Support Budget	\$ 4,379,356	\$ 4,328,426
<u>B) Administration Budget</u>		
1) Council on Finance & Administration	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
2) Treasurer's Office	\$ 734,900	\$ 577,700
3) Jurisdictional Conference	\$ 36,723	\$ 36,723
4) General Conference Delegation	\$ 28,000	\$ 8,000
5) General Church Administration	\$ 227,758	\$ 192,253
6) Area Administration	\$ 556,453	\$ 316,703
7) Operations	\$ 312,783	\$ 302,783
8) Conference Secretary	\$ 18,300	\$ 1,000
9) Conference Statistician	\$ -	\$ -
10) Conference Trustees	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
11) Committee on Archives & History	\$ 45,000	\$ 40,000
12) Committee on Human Resources	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
13) Legal Fees	\$ 55,000	\$ 55,000
14) Contingency Funds	\$ 50,000	\$ -
Sub-total Administration Budget	\$ 2,072,917	\$ 1,538,162
Provision for Unpaid Ministry Shares	\$ 351,459	\$ 256,364
Total Administration Budget	\$ 2,424,376	\$ 1,794,526

	2020 - Michigan Budget	2021 - Michigan Budget
C) Conference Benevolences Budget		
1) <i>Agencies Relating to Christ-Centered Mission and Ministry</i>		
a) Commission on Annual Conference Session	\$ 275,000	\$ 100,000
b) Commission on Communications	\$ 427,000	\$ 1,000
c) Committee on Journal	\$ 11,220	\$ 5,000
d) Board of Justice	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,500
e) Board of Global Ministries	\$ 210,000	\$ 147,000
f) Engage Program Promotion	\$ -	\$ -
2) <i>Agencies Relating to Bold and Effective Leaders</i>		
a) Conference Leadership Council	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000
b) Board of Ordained Ministry	\$ 66,500	\$ 59,900
c) Committee on Nominations	\$ 7,500	\$ 5,000
d) Committee on the Episcopacy	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
e) Protection Policy	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000
f) Clergy Excellence Program Funds	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000
3) <i>Agencies Relating to Vibrant Congregations</i>		
a) United Methodist Men	\$ -	\$ -
b) United Methodist Women	\$ -	\$ -
c) Board of Laity	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000
d) Board of Young People's Ministry	\$ 363,000	\$ 254,000
e) Board of Congregational Life	\$ 533,000	\$ 373,000
f) Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministry	\$ 39,000	\$ 25,300
g) Committee on Asian-American Ministry	\$ 47,000	\$ 30,900
h) Committee on Native American Ministry	\$ 115,000	\$ 80,500
i) Committee on African-American Ministry	\$ 66,000	\$ 44,200
j) Racial & Ethnic Local Churches	\$ -	\$ -
4) Administrative Expenses/Compensation	\$ 2,172,000	\$ 2,645,627
5) World Service Fund	\$ 1,918,093	\$ 1,561,138
6) Pathways Funding	\$ -	\$ -
7) MI Area Camping	\$ 300,000	\$ 100,000
8) Contingency Funds	\$ 25,000	\$ -
9) Assets Released from Restrictions	\$ -	\$ -
Sub-total Conference Benevolences Budget	\$ 6,632,313	\$ 5,467,065
Provision for Unpaid Ministry Shares	\$ 897,947	\$ 743,986
Total Conference Benevolences Budget	\$ 7,530,260	\$ 6,211,051
D) Other Apportioned Causes		
1) Black College Fund	\$ 258,419	\$ 225,959
2) Africa University Fund	\$ 57,833	\$ 50,800
3) Interdenominational Fund	\$ 50,666	\$ 6,759
Sub-total Other Apportioned Causes	\$ 366,918	\$ 283,518
Provision for Unpaid Ministry Shares	\$ -	\$ -
Total Other Apportioned Causes	\$ 366,918	\$ 283,518
Total Conference Common Budget	\$ 14,700,910	\$ 12,617,521
E) Benefits Ministry Shares Budget		
1) Pension/Welfare Payments to Wespath	\$ 3,020,000	\$ 3,020,000
2) Benefits Office	\$ 700,000	\$ 700,000
Total Benefits Ministry Shares Budget	\$ 3,720,000	\$ 3,720,000

BOARD OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The Board of Congregational Life supports local churches in the ministry of discipleship through leadership, information, promotion, and assistance. The board's role is to cast and communicate vision, to set benchmarks and to evaluate. Specifically, the mission of the Board of Congregational Life is to: a) Lead and assist the local churches of the annual conference in their efforts to communicate and celebrate the redeeming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and to invite persons into discipleship through this love; b) Inform the conference and its agencies of the needs and opportunities of small membership churches; c) Interpret and advocate for the unity of the Christian church, while encouraging dialog and cooperation with persons of other religions, starting at the local church level; d) Promote and interpret ethnic local church concerns to the annual conference; e) Collaborate with the director of congregational vibrancy in overseeing any staff and processes related to the development of vital congregations and new church development.

The Board of Congregational Life's divisions (Congregational Vibrancy, Small Membership Church, Christian Unity and Interreligious Relations) met quarterly. In 2020 board members focused on supporting local churches through the pandemic and prioritizing spending in light of reduced Conference monetary resources.

This is my last year as chairperson for the Board of Congregational Life. I am thankful for the opportunity to have helped establish this Board's mission and vision as part of the Michigan Conference.

Sherry Parker-Lewis, Chair

DIVISION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY & INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

The Division on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships has had a prosperous year, but for different reasons than many would expect. The past year has been full of many challenges and out of this has come opportunities to improve upon how we proceed.

Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships has hosted, sponsored, or supported some wonderful events over the past few years. Due to the circumstances of 2020, the majority of these events did not take place. This caused us to analyze and examine what we already were aware of – the process in which we were doing ministry was ineffective and disjointed. With this continually occurring, there was little to no communication across the conference, in our districts, and in our own congregations. There are multiple congregations and many individual members doing outstanding work in the areas of ecumenical and interfaith work. The issue is that this valuable work is often going unnoticed, and therefore having a limited impact on the community they serve and the broader world at large. With our inability to take part in large ecumenical or interfaith activities, our time was used to create a positive change in the overall structure as a division of the Michigan Conference.

Based on the recommendation of the Council of Bishops, with the support of Bishop David Bard plus other conference staff, and the cooperation of our district superintendents, the Division on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships has been restructured. The new structure requests participation of all nine districts by providing district liaisons, and the promotion of events and volunteer opportunities. Several districts have participated, with the assistance of the nominations committee, and the district superintendents. There are now nine members in total, seven being new, and representing six districts. Our first meeting as a newly organized division was held in January of 2021 via zoom. The Michigan Conference is the first in the United States to reorganize their division based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops.

It is our desire to better communicate with one another in order to allow all the valuable ecumenical and interreligious work being done across the conference to be promoted and lifted up as a beacon of light for all to see.

Rodney Gasaway, Convener

DIVISION OF CONGREGATIONAL VIBRANCY

CONGREGATIONAL VIBRANCY TEAM

The Congregational Vibrancy team works to help all churches in the Michigan Conference become vibrant, life-giving churches. We have a gifted team that specializes in aspects of vibrancy.

Dirk Elliott, Director of Congregational Vibrancy

With the introduction of COVID-19, we have added new words to our regular vocabulary, and used other words with much more frequency than before. One of those words is “pivot.” As we all have had to do, the Congregational Vibrancy Team has learned to pivot in 2020.

Congregational Vibrancy was to be the theme of the 2020 Annual Conference. With the move to a virtual Annual Conference, the Vibrancy Team pivoted to providing a series of webinars titled “Shape Something New,” with nationally known speakers such as Jason Moore, Michael Beck, Kay Kotan, and Scott Hughes. We also hosted a two-part webinar, “The ChangeOver Zone,” for pastors moving and churches receiving a new pastor.

The New Start team's vision is “to inspire, equip, and invest in innovative ministries to reach new people.” While we kept our focus on that vision, the approach to starting new churches needed to pivot. With churches not worshipping in-person on a regular basis, there were no new churches started this year. However, two churches adopted new campuses, and they will launch those new campuses once the threat of COVID-19 lessens.

Keeping worship vibrant during this pandemic time is crucial. The Congregational Vibrancy Team spent considerable time assisting churches move to virtual worship services using Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube and other media platforms. The team provided webinars, workshops, and consulted with churches to help them make this needed shift to on-line worship.

Naomi García, Associate Director of Congregational Vibrancy

Coaching Initiative

A few weeks into 2019 a newly formed collaborative gathered. The stated objective was to establish a shared strategy of living our part of the Michigan Conference vision, mission and values. The hesitancy of these selected educators, justice-seekers, community organizers, people-lovers, kind-hearted, strong-willed and relentless disciples of The Divine One was noticeable. With the guidance of guest facilitators, the field staff and supervisors made a way to six expressions of shared objectives. The refined version of one is to support persons in professional ministries, especially those entering ministry transition within the MiConference connection. The dream is the creation of a sustainable MiConference coaching culture that is informative, transformative, developmental, and action-driven. To this end the MiC will train, assign, supervise, support and evaluate ‘highly qualified coaches’ who meet education standards of the International Coaching Federation (ICF). Training includes coaching for resilience, intercultural competence, various organizational roles, transitions, life circumstances and more through consistent compliance with the ICF Code of Ethics. Confidentiality and the distinction of coaching from other helping disciplines is foundational to high quality coaching.

The official launch is 2022.

The lead for the MiConference coaching initiative is Naomi García, Associate Director for change, systems, conflict... 4 good. Naomi began coaching and training coaches during the Michigan Area's Vital Church Initiative. A Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credential with ICF and experience on the Coaching4Clergy faculty, allowed Naomi to begin the first coach training class in the fall of 2019 as a satellite partner with Coaching4Clergy.

As of early 2021 more than 30 coaches are in varying stages of completing the educational requirements. Most are in Michigan. Some are outside the state. Many have been assigned.

Coaching demonstrations and semi-annual ICF-approved coach training are regularly offered in various formats to prime our coaching appetite. Basic Coach Training is a 12-hour introduction for the curious. Coach training delivered in combinations of asynchronous and live-by-Zoom sessions meets requirements for MiConference coach authorization and ICF credentials. For more information check out michiganumc.org, keyword coaching, or contact the MiConference.

The next challenge is creating the spiritual, relational, and organizational will to engage coaching as an integral part of all things United Methodist in Michigan.

Gary Step, Associate Director of Congregational Vibrancy

Two years ago, we launched **Roads to Vibrancy** an umbrella encompassing all processes, programs and resources relating to congregational renewal. The major programs and resources include:



Simple Governance: Churches across the country are exploring new ways to organize their leadership, so that the congregation's members can be unleashed for ministry. Many churches are discovering that a simplified, accountable leadership structure changes their focus from meetings to ministry. In the last few years, we have had over twenty churches move to this new leadership model.

Church Unique: Is a vital discernment process for congregational transformation. Through a series of sessions led by trained facilitators, the local church will get equipped to cast vision, capture culture, and create movement to make disciples of Jesus Christ! Over twenty church have entered the process. Because of COVID-19 we were able to shift to both in-person and Zoom sessions.

Reach Movement: The REACH Movement raises up churches, restores hearts and minds, and equips the church to make Disciples of Jesus Christ. This is done in three major movements.

Each fall, the **Reach Summit** kicks off the year with a retreat designed to move, touch, and inspire. This year with COVID-19 we had to pivot early in our planning stages and create a virtual event. We featured Jake Mulder, who co-rote *Growing Young* and Rachel Gilmore a church planter who works for Discipleship Ministries. We also featured a series of workshops. In 2021 on Oct. 22-23, we have Nona Jones, the author of *From Social Media to Social Ministry* as our featured speaker.

Following the Summit we offer a selection of **REACH Network Groups**. Each group offers focused efforts with other interested church leaders. Led by experts, these groups don't just dive deep, they push you to grow and expand your horizon. This year because of the pandemic we offered a Jubilee year, where leaders could join at no cost. We have over a hundred people signed up for our 2021 Network Groups!

Readiness to Launch (R2L): Last year Cathy Townley (a worship consultant) and I began redesigning the Networks Group called multiply. We create a four-phase process with group cohort teaching including instructional videos on starting a new worship service. Because of COVID-19 we shifted our efforts in March to help churches launch online worshipping communities. We had over 25 churches participate in this process last year with amazing results.

Local Church Assessment: This assessment is meant to help the local church leadership team gather the data and information to help evaluate the ministry potential and vitality of the church. This discovery process may be requested by a local church, a group of churches or at the discretion of the district superintendent. This year we continued to do these assessments via Zoom and in person. Training for new district team facilitators was done over Zoom. This process has helped numerous churches find their next steps towards vitality.

We know it was a difficult year of ministry for everyone. Church leaders made some amazing pivots to continue to be in ministry to the world. Thank you for your faithfulness! As we emerge out of the ashes of 2020 my prayer for 2021 is one of resurrection, hope and healing!

Laura Witkowski, Associate Director of Lay Leadership Development

It is not news to say that 2020 was challenging. This past year was all about resourcing and helping others to move to ministry online. The Committee on Lay Servant Ministries continued their work and classes in a Zoom format and has been very successful in equipping our laity. The Board of Laity welcomed and began collaborating with our new Conference Lay Leader, Annette Erbes. Lay Leadership Development included a variety of workshops with local churches on Spiritual Gifts, Teambuilding, Visioning, and the Enneagram. Almost all of them held online. Ministry Incubators took root in 2020. This program provides resources for lay and clergy in the MI Conf to develop their ministry ideas with the intention to cultivate a culture of innovation. A new 'Seed to Harvest' cohort of incubation is beginning in 2021! Next year also brings a first ever Laity Network Group which includes a series of laity events. We are also looking forward to the launch of a collaboration with Young Adult Initiatives of MI1, a one-year, young adult, mission-focused internship in local churches and non-profits. The Michigan Conference is dedicated to cultivating bold and effective lay leadership in the church, as it is a critical part of building up the Body of Christ!

Christy Miller White, Coordinator of Youth Ministry Initiatives

Throughout this last year, youth ministries have made dynamic changes to continue faith formation journey with youth and families across the Michigan Conference. Youth leaders have navigated to online formats or discovered creative ways to play games in person with safety and fun in mind. Throughout this time of social distancing, we have offered access to resource lists, webinars, and regular online meetings to help youth leaders navigate the ever-changing guidelines that 2020 offered. Some of the creative opportunities available to youth leaders this year have included virtual mission training and connection with our United Methodist ministry partners throughout the state, resource lists and curriculum for online youth groups, instructions for creating boxes/packages to deliver for Easter, Advent, and Christmas, connections with campus ministries and Conference staff, and on-going guidance for safety online and in person. Youth leaders can access resources and ongoing training by connecting with the youth leadership of Michigan on Facebook or email. The area of Youth Ministry Initiatives will continue to strive for new and innovative ways to do ministry with youth in Michigan as we collaborate, enrich, encourage, and support youth leaders and our Michigan youth in the coming year.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAMS**CENTRAL BAY DISTRICT**

The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names. – Chinese proverb
What to call 2020?

Challenging? Uncertain or exhausting? So many descriptive words for the 365 days that made up 2020.

But also...determined. Courageous. Connected.

It was hard. On everyone. Both large and small churches suffered. Suspending in person worship made some churches freeze in time and wait to see what would happen. Other churches wrote letters or took to the internet to keep church going. For everyone, it was hard. Some of our churches doubled their online worship attendance or opened a food pantry to help serve the community. To go meals were given away by the hundreds and "out of the box" worship became a real thing. Worship through Zoom, YouTube and Facebook are the new normal.

The district office also worked to stay connected to those around us. We did a virtual VBS with over 100 children participating. There was an Advent calendar created by the youth in the district and proceeds were collected to help get young people to camp this summer. Already for 2021 there are over 200 signed up for the virtual VBS being planned.

None of us are sorry to be done with 2020, but we finished strong and look to God to lead us forward.

Roger Yerion, District Leadership Team Chair

EAST WINDS DISTRICT

On Friday, March 13th, Bishop Bard requested that all gatherings in our churches be suspended for personal safety as the COVID-19 pandemic began. "Stay home and stay safe," face masks, and social distancing became the standards to follow. 2020 will go down in history as one of the most challenging and difficult years for so many of us. We did not expect to celebrate Easter from our living rooms and kitchen tables. We did not expect to celebrate graduations, birthdays, and retirements with "parades" instead of in person. We did not expect to have to do virtual funeral services and say goodbye to loved ones from care center windows and iPads. It is not what we expected, but it is what we experienced.

"No church?" Most of our clergy and congregations never even asked that question. Instead, with only about 42 hours-notice, they addressed the question, "How will we worship if we can't meet on-site, in person?" A few had already been livestreaming their worship services; most needed to learn how and implement the venture within that short a span of time ... and pulled it off! The 13 different Mission Zone Facilitators met with Rev. Hice over a Zoom videoconference meeting the following week and proceeded to start weekly contact with pastors of churches in their zones, making certain that churches throughout the district were resourced for their full range of ministry and that clergy received care during this time of high stress. Their reports, and those Rev. Hice received from our clergy during the first few months of the pandemic, consistently described the situation across our churches: acquisition of new equipment, new schedules of

worship and midweek Bible study offered online, virtual Christian education, youth group and leadership meetings by the use of videoconferencing. Members of churches joined their clergy in making regular contact with members and people in need. Phone calls were made, greeting cards were sent, activity bags or boxes, meals, and groceries were delivered to homes to keep connected with the congregation or to reach out in the community. Farm workers were given support and education for self-care, food ministries adapted to safe-distancing precautions. Where internet services were lacking, ministry stubbornly persisted by front door delivery of sermons on DVD's, written format sent through the mail; and One Call-Call All phone calls. By the power of God; when there was no way, we found a way. Several church signs proclaimed: "The building is closed but the church is open." The result has been staggering. We have taken stock of online worship attendance and have discovered how wide a reach of ministry we have. Many of our churches have substantially increased average worship attendance, with people who would never have crossed the thresholds of our sanctuaries have started regular attendance online when we, electronically, crossed our thresholds into the world.

The vision of East Winds District is to equip local churches to serve Christ through quality communication, collaboration, and training. Our emphasis is to focus on local churches and local ministry. The district connection equips, encourages, and facilitates locally. Our scope, however, is global. The District Leadership Team has recognized opportunity in organizing district mission teams for engaging ministry with people beyond our home region. Each year we organize a team through Volunteers in Mission to journey to a place where people are in critical need, where we may come alongside them and share in their recovery. Lou and Brenda DuPree, members of the Clarkston United Methodist Church, organized and led our district team this year as we returned to Puerto Rico to engage in hurricane recovery work. Additional and essential work in East Winds District Missions includes Blue Water Free Store and Ministry Center which has had to adjust to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Use of the Ministry Center has begun scheduling and plans have been made for the reopening of the Free Store. Flint Missions has developed significantly with the building of additional hoop houses and continued operation of Asbury Farms, the consolidation of South Flint Soup Kitchen and Flint Recovery with Asbury Community Development Corporation. The consolidation of United Methodist mission endeavors in Flint is expected to strengthen our ministry with the people of Flint. Recovery ministry continues in response to the Flint Water Crisis as learning disabilities, violence, unemployment, housing needs, and continued needs for nutritious foods for mitigating the effects of lead and other heavy metal poisoning continues, even as the need for bottled water eases. Funds from the Bishop's Appeal of 2016 have been transferred to the East Winds District treasury for continued support of this ongoing work.

The events of 2020 not only included a devastating global pandemic, but also occasioned the emergence of significant protests and calls for change in response to centuries of racial injustice; a very volatile political climate; a serious economic recession; and pending separation in the United Methodist denomination. Together, our 91 churches have weathered fierce storms and pressed on to keep our eyes on Jesus while we have cared for all God's children, advocated for justice, proclaimed the Good News of salvation, and worked for peace. Together, we have been the Church and it is our faith and the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ which will sustain us during this difficult time.

John H. Hice, District Superintendent
Rev. Curtis Clarke, District Leadership Team Chair
Bonnie Potter and Cynthia Rossman, District Co-Lay Leaders

GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT

"...do not fear, I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you..." Isaiah 41:10

As we reflect upon the year just past and this once in a lifetime pandemic known as COVID-19, we may be inclined to only recall the challenges that we face. We may remember those who are no longer with us, we may miss "in person" worship and the fellowship that comes with that. We may also realize that terms such as "shelter in place," "self quarantining," "virtual learning," and "working from home" have become part of our new normal. Yes, 2020 was a year of great challenges!

2020 was also a year of great successes and celebrations throughout our Greater Detroit District! Here is but a sampling of what God's people, led by God's vision and empowered by God's Holy Spirit can celebrate together as we continue the journey of faith together:

- Through our District Food Pantry Network (of over 18 congregations), our churches are feeding thousands of families during this pandemic. For example, Eastpointe: Immanuel United Methodist Church offers a food pantry to the community that has grown from feeding 20-30 families per week to

feeding over 100 each week! This has been done with support from across the district churches! Another food pantry ministry: Mount Clemens: First United Methodist Church partnered with Grace Episcopal Church's food pantry to feed others regardless of religious viewpoints!

- A new faith community known as "Graceful Journey Community" has been offering spiritual care and nurture to those afflicted with autism – a community too often overlooked but still precious in the eyes of the Lord! Special thanks to Livonia: Newburgh, Detroit: Calvary and Detroit: Conant Avenue United Methodist churches for their support!
- Speaking of "connectional support": Motor City Wesley is able to continue to minister to and through students at Wayne State University, University of Michigan – Dearborn, and Henry Ford Community College via \$100 "Mission Initiative Grants." These grants are used by college students to share God's grace and love through random acts of kindness encouraging others to "pay it forward" and helping to create a more beloved community.
- Rochester: St. Paul's United Methodist Church donated over 1600 pounds of food in a single day AND purchased a refrigerator/freezer for the Rochester Neighborhood House!
- From Birmingham: First and Troy: Korean United Methodist churches to our smaller congregations like Omo: Zion and Detroit: St. Paul United Methodist churches, personal piety is teaming up with social holiness to impact our communities with God's love and amazing grace!

Yes, 2020 was a year full of challenges but also a year in which God shined through the churches in the Greater Detroit District to meet those challenges! It was a year of discovering new and innovative ways to "do ministry" from having churches holding charge conference virtually and even our district having to have our district conference virtually (a huge shout-out and THANK YOU to our keynoter, Mark Doyal, and hosts, Livonia: Newburg United Methodist Church pastor and staff!!).

Much thanks need to go to Rev. Dr. Charles Boayue, Jr. our "Missionary Visionary," Ms. Dwanda Ashford who keeps things running smoothly in our district office, and Rev. Audrey Mangum who leads our district Hands4Detroit mission efforts. Our thanks go out to the United Methodist Union of Greater Detroit for the leadership and financial support and to our many pastors and faithful laity who continue to trust in God for strength, vision, and grace throughout the year. Lastly, a huge thank you to our District Leadership Team, led by Rev. Dr. Ray McGee, for its work, prayers, skills, and ministry!

2020 was a year in which our district's mission statement, *"Connecting for the next revival,"* resonated throughout our ministries. Together, we in the Greater Detroit District can celebrate the work of the past as we look forward to that which lays ahead!

Ray McGee, District Leadership Team Chair
Charles Boayue, Jr, District Superintendent

GREATER SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

The best laid plans of our District Leadership Team named 2020 a year of District Ministry Share Jubilee. Because we wanted to double down on an assertion made at our organizing conference, namely that the Greater Southwest District existed for the local church, Ministry Shares for every church in our district were set to zero dollars. We envisioned congregations throughout the Greater Southwest District repurposing those funds to engage in new outreach ministries and community mission projects. Our hope was to have congregations share how they invested their District Ministry Shares when we gathered for our district conference in November with the ultimate goal of inspiring people in every church in the district to try something new to offer the people within their reach a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. November arrived but instead of holding a celebratory event our district annual conference was mostly a non-event, marked only by the sending of an e-mail survey seeking affirmation of leadership nominations and budget priorities for the coming year.

Like so many things in 2020, our hopes for new engagement in mission and service throughout our district are marked with an asterisk - "affected by COVID-19 pandemic". Some local churches would assign downturns in membership, worship attendance, and annual giving that same asterisk as a way of explanation. But, almost as many churches reported that 2020's season of sheltering in place offered opportunities that they hadn't imagined. Some began or expanded food distribution ministries. Many took worship online making use of Facebook Live or YouTube for the first time while others experimented with low wattage FM broadcasting to provide live worship. Pastors preached from basement offices, kitchen tables, chairs on their outdoor decks, hay wagons and the beds of pickup trucks. ZOOM became ubiquitous bridging social distance by connecting people in virtual space. Prayer circles gathered outside of homes, care teams dropped off packages on front porches and whole congregations held drive through events to

say good-bye to departing pastors and welcome new ones. The need to connect led some to turn to innovations from a previous generation and phone trees, mailing printed sermons, prayer chains and hand-written notes were employed as means of grace. As some church leaders responded to the threat of COVID-19 by creating alternatives to in-person worship and programs, others were led to develop procedures and implement protocols that would allow people to safely gather.

As congregations adapted, the Greater Southwest District committed itself to support churches by underwriting some of the cost of these adaptations. We made “Fresh Expressions” grants for new ministries. To help churches expand their capacity for online outreach we offered funding to upgrade their existing systems and took first steps to develop a district digital media consultant program. And because our Leadership Team knew the strain months of Corona time was placing on our churches, we earmarked a significant portion of our available cash reserves to be used as sustentation funds.

Because of the faithfulness of United Methodists throughout the district we have had to use only a small portion of those earmarked funds. In many places we have seen the people called Methodist respond to the challenges of 2020 with consistent, even increased generosity. That bodes well for the future. And because of the ways God power and presence has been revealed throughout these months of Corona time we anticipate a future filled with hope- one where the pastors and people of the Greater Southwest District will continue to work together in innovative and inspiring ways so that every congregation offers a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

Dwayne Bagley, District Superintendent

HERITAGE DISTRICT

The Heritage District entered 2020 under the theme of “Church 20/20: Creating a New Heritage.” This started by celebrating the ministry and service of our retiring District Superintendent Elizabeth Hill who led us through our new beginnings. We welcomed LuAnn Rourke as our District Superintendent. Clergy transitions were experienced at nearly 1/3 of our 95 churches. Due to COVID-19, many ended the year still looking forward to their first in-person meeting with their new leaders.

In addition to these clergy changes, many adjustments were required due to the pandemic. To ensure outreach was happening churches moved on-line through Facebook Live, YouTube, Zoom. Some leveraged conference calling and even mailing messages. Our finance team supported this work granting 21 requests totaling over \$34,000. Many of these were for technology upgrades or food pantry needs. Additionally, our leadership team forgave 50% of our district ministry shares but through the churches’ generosity over 80% was received.

Our district conference day also pivoted to Zoom leveraging the conference communication team. It was a good opportunity to virtually showcase a variety of creative musical offerings from around the district. LuAnn Rourke inspired us with words on “Hunger and Hope” – reminding us we have more than we need through Christ. Various voices participated in the liturgy and our key business details were handled. Fall charge conferences also moved to all virtual covering essential business items.

Our UMW Leadership Team worked hard to keep in good communication with the local units with email, smile mail, phone calls, and Facebook. Many local groups did not meet in person but did manage to do projects such as making masks, distributing food to truckers, and providing support to their communities in many other ways. The District Annual UMW Meeting was successfully held on Zoom with 83 in attendance. Local unit officer training held in November had 33 in attendance. Many units were concerned about meeting their Pledge to Mission for UMW but thought of new and unique ways to do fundraisers and when all pledges were turned in our district budget was exceeded.

Our Lay Servant Ministries team also pivoted to Zoom after having to cancel spring in-person classes. Through the year they held 8 classes training 69 participants (nine from other districts). One lay servant was approved bringing our totals to two Certified Lay Ministers, three Certified Lay Speakers, and over 150 Certified Lay Servants.

One of our saddest moments was when we joined with camping ministries and celebrated the lives changed through Judson Collins Center as it was closed. The way the Heritage District has risen to the challenges and created new opportunities through it all during 2020 gives us assurance we will continue to reach out in ministry and mission in 2021.

LuAnn Rourke, District Superintendent
John Seppanen, District Lay Leader
Brad Luck, District Leadership Team Chair

MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT

We have all journeyed through an unusual and difficult season in ministry and life this past year. Our local churches have had to adapt to the challenges of limited in-person gatherings and virtual worship services. Pastors and worship teams of local churches showed great effort and creativity to find ways to keep their congregants connected, and their outreach ministries alive in their communities. This year has been a disjointed one for coordinated district-level activity. In such a time, the district leadership felt it was most important to be a link between the challenges the local churches and leaders were facing and the resources the conference staff team and Bishop Bard were offering.

Here is what we accomplished:

- The district has been able to provide several grants for technological upgrades to improve current – or create new – online services.
- We held our first all-virtual Clergy Praxis session to introduce new clergy, share best ministry practices used during the pandemic, and to offer prayer and support.
- The district conference was integrated into local church charge conferences out of safety concerns.
- Charge conferences were streamlined for the benefit of local churches so that they could focus any gatherings on their own worship and spiritual growth opportunities.
- District communications served mostly as a conduit to bolster important messages of the conference and bishop to provide stability, hope and resources during this challenging time.
- The District Board of Church Location and Building worked with the conference trustees to care for and sell two closed churches: Mulliken United Methodist Church and Owosso: Burton United Methodist Church.
- The District Committee on Ordained Ministry continued to interview candidates for ministry and support local pastors in their callings.

As we look ahead, we are eager to support new innovations in our local churches, equip our laity for effective partnerships in ministry, and engage our clergy in continual growth and leadership development.

Paul Hahm, District Leadership Team Chair
Nona Spackman, District Lay Leader
Jerome R. DeVine, District Superintendent

MIDWEST DISTRICT

Living with the pandemic has caused the Midwest District to journey through a time of reflection and discernment. Events which have unfolded in our nation and in our Conference have inspired us to consider new ways to answer the Lord's call upon our lives and the lives of those in our faith communities. During 2020, the Midwest District continued to support mission programs which are making a difference. These include Mission for Area People, North End and South End Community Ministries, Justice for Our Neighbors and the Pa Wa Ting Native American Elders program. Our District is dedicated to continuing the mission grant program once we are on the other side of the pandemic. The leaders of the Midwest District are also exploring ways to provide more assistance, resources and opportunities for the laity and clergy as we seek to be a vital, vibrant and essential part of our communities. We have begun the difficult work of conversations around racism and bias which continue to affect the relationships we have with one another. We want to improve what it means to provide worship services online. The district has two consultants who are helping local churches with the technology needed to broadcast worship services, Bible studies and devotions. Our work is ongoing as we seek to answer the question: "What more can we do?" And Amen.

Margie R. Crawford, District Superintendent

NORTHERN SKIES DISTRICT

Congregations and pastors of the Northern Skies District showed strength and determination in facing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw a quick pivot to new things like online worship, drive-thru communion, virtual Vacation Bible School, and the first ever virtual district conference as we all learned new ways to stay connected.

Highlights this year include **Camp Michigamme**, welcoming new director Pete Stahlbrand, coming to us with an extensive camping background. Pete is already busy designing new camping opportunities in response to the changes in our world. Although the camp was quiet in the summer of 2020, we look forward to new possibilities at Pete's capable direction.

Also adjusting to new ways of reaching out is our **Lay Servant program**. Now offered online, this successful ministry continues to be active raising up, encouraging, and empowering the voices of new and experienced leaders around our district and beyond. **NMU Wesley** found creative ways to remain in community with students at Northern Michigan University, connecting for online devotions and ecumenical worship, and socially distanced time in their Common Grounds space. Another highlight this year was helping Feeding America West Michigan raise nearly \$50,000 as part of their Collaborative Faith community COVID-19 Response Effort. These funds helped increase the number of mobile food pantry distributions in the U.P.

The expansive beauty and geography of the Northern Skies District lend themselves to natural social distancing, and members of our congregations took themselves out of doors in "God's Country" in any number of creative ways to stay safe and healthy in this challenging year. Thanks to our District Administrator Diana Byar for updating and editing the endless list of resources, helpful links, online worship options, and other opportunities to keep us all moving forward in this unusual time.

Scott A. Harmon, District Superintendent
Kristine Hintz, District Leadership Team chairperson

NORTHERN WATERS DISTRICT

Super Saturday in January was our 2020 kickoff event aimed at equipping churches in Spiritual Gifts Discovery, Disaster Ministry, and Intergenerational Ministry. In February we gathered for a Clergy Retreat at Lake Louise United Methodist Camp. On March 7th we rented a bus traveling from Traverse City to Albion for a specially called annual conference.

And on March 15th I spent an atypical Sunday as DS looking at the websites and Facebook pages of the Northern Waters District's 75 churches. I was amazed that well over three quarters of the churches had some online presence with only a couple days' notice. We began a COVID-19 shut down that we all thought would last until around Easter. Over the next few weeks almost every church developed online worship. The remaining churches were keenly aware that internet in their community would not support video, and that many in their congregations would not have access. So they sent out postal and email worship resources. They discovered phone applications (like One Call Tell All) for daily devotions and weekly sermons. CDs were made and delivered to homes. Shifting gears on how to continue ministries like food pantries happened almost overnight. Churches pooled resources to develop worship, access ZOOM licenses, and cheer each other on.

Over the summer churches engaged in outdoor worship services, continued to check in with the most vulnerable, and improved their online presence. Plans were developed for safe in-person gatherings and church leadership made brave (and often painful) decisions on when to gather and when to refrain.

Lay Servant Classes were moved to an online format, which works well given our district's geography. The fall's charge conferences were a blend of small in-person and ZOOM gatherings. Our district conference was held by email ballots and a YouTube broadcast in January of 2021.

While COVID-19 has been stressful and painful for every church and pastor, as District Superintendent and Lay Leader we continue to be amazed at the strength, creativity, and resilience of the Northern Waters churches as they continue to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jodie Flessner, District Superintendent
Denny Olin, District Lay Leader

COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) of the Michigan Conference undertook its mandate to “Recommend standards for pastoral support and administer funds used to supplement pastoral support in instances where a charge is unable to meet support requirements.” - Michigan Conference PLAN OF ORGANIZATION 4.8.1

Some highlights of the work of the CEC over this year of ministry are:

- Clarifications were added to the online Grant Request form before 2021 applications were processed.
- Grant requests for 2021 were considered and acted upon by the CEC in November of 2020.
- The CEC proposed a 2% increase to each category of base salaries for 2022.
- The Minimum Salary Schedule with notations and other suggestions were submitted to the Conference for consideration and adoption.
- Guidelines for churches considering applying for a grant from the CEC were also offered for adoption by the Annual Conference.
- A budget request was submitted to CF&A for inclusion in the 2022 budget of the Conference.

In fulfilling the responsibilities set before them, the CEC considers it a blessing to be part of the story of how life-changing ministry happens in the hearts and lives of people across the Michigan Conference.

Don Gotham, Interim Chair, CEC

BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES (BGM)

The Michigan Conference Board of Global Ministries is active in interpreting, creating, supporting and coordinating programs that engage our conference and local churches in “ministry with” people and in places around the world. Our deeply committed mission-minded members who serve in a variety of capacities have a far-reaching and powerful effect, gathering and leading volunteers in dynamic engagement.

Dialogue with our conference mission sites is bringing new understanding of their purpose, challenges and successes. We seek better ways to support ministries in order to more faithfully provide help and hope. The new Abundant Health initiative will bring health to the forefront, serving a critical need during and in the aftermath of the pandemic of coronavirus and its variants.

We are especially gratified and inspired by the many EngageMI 2020 reports from vibrant churches that detail creative and exciting mission in progress – from established projects that have grown over the years to the newly born ones.

Global mission involvement continues to have a vital impact while, locally, effective disaster relief is non-stop and long-term. The Board reports that follow describe action in the many areas we address.

Brenda DuPree, Chair

ABUNDANT HEALTH INITIATIVE

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.
—John 10:10

If ever the world yearned for abundant life, it's now. And if ever the church was called to receive and offer abundant life through Christ, it's now.

In 2016, the General Board of Global Ministries launched *Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children*. The initiative was birthed from the success of “Imagine No Malaria,” and was envisioned as “combining the work we have done overseas . . . and bringing it back to the United States . . . thinking about people in our own communities who lack the healthy qualities of life they need to sustain themselves.”

While the Initiative never inspired the kind of fiery energy of “Imagine No Malaria,” The United Methodist Church and countless health agencies across the U.S. continue to steadily follow Jesus’ call to abundant life, understanding it as a call to God’s “shalom:” God’s design of life for all creation that is whole, harmonious, complete, and fully, abundantly well and healthy.

The Conference Board of Global Ministries understands the promise of and call to abundant health as a promise we ultimately make to children. As we seek for ourselves and our world wholeness and health of body, mind, and spirit, we create shalom for the children who follow us – here and around the globe.

Of course, any Abundant Health initiative includes health ministries already thriving: the crucial work of parish nurses, church-promoted education and support for tobacco- and drug-free living, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, and so much more.

But as we emerge from the pandemic seeking to heal our underlying physical health we are called, too, to heal the sicknesses of our systemic racism, our penchant for violence, and our abuse of the good earth. Your Conference Board of Global Ministries believes that a theology of abundant health is a challenge, an invitation, and a pathway to live into the wholeness God intends for all.

We've begun to flesh out wholistic and supportive spiritual practices of abundant health for individuals and congregations to consider. In the meantime, we hope you'll affirm with us the definition of health found in the 2016 Book of Resolutions, #3202:

Christ's healing was not peripheral but central to his ministry. As the church, we are called to the holistic ministry of healing in all its dimensions: spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, social, environmental; and to work toward healthy societies of whole persons.

Further, the health that God wants for humanity both presumes and seeks the existence of justice as well as mercy, the absence of violence as well as the absence of disease, the presence of social harmony as well as the presence of physical harmony . . . [which means that] the basic prerequisites for health are peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity.

In the coming year, we look forward to discovering, creating, and sharing resources; not more programs and tasks, but useful practices and possibilities that help bring healing and wholeness – abundant health – to all.

Julie Liske, CBGM Vice-Chair

GLOBAL MISSION FELLOWS (GMF-US2)

The Michigan Conference hosts Global Mission Fellows. Through this denominational wide program, young adults serve in areas of missional and justice-focused outreach for two years. GMF-US2s, engage with local communities, connect the church in mission, and grow in personal and social holiness over this time.

Lisa Batten, Young Adult Initiatives Coordinator

MISSION INTERN

A summer opportunity for Young Adults to serve in congregations engaging in missional ministries that address children in poverty, creation care, home repair, and volunteer organizing. A variety of sites across the Conference host interns for 8 weeks. In 2020, 16 interns went to sites and helped create COVID-19 friendly alternatives to familiar programming. All the while they learned about justice, conflict management, self-care, and opened themselves to hearing God's call in their life. This program is committed to creating bold and effective leaders while supporting vibrant ministries.

Lisa Batten, Young Adult Initiatives Coordinator

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND - FREEDOM SCHOOLS

Inspired by the work of Ella Baker, CDF Freedom Schools have five essential components: (1) high-quality academic enrichment; (2) parent and family development; (3) civic engagement and social action; (4) intergenerational servant leadership development; (5) nutrition, health, and mental health. In 2020, 12 servant leader interns helped to lead Freedom Schools in the Michigan Conference.

Lisa Batten, Young Adult Initiatives Coordinator

MICHIGAN HAITI COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

This has been a year of learning and marking time in our relationship with the Eglise Methodiste d'Haiti (EMH). The COVID-19 pandemic, the political unrest in Haiti, the US Department of State Level 4 Travel Advisory (Do Not Travel), and the interruption of school and medical services have played havoc with maintaining relationships with our partners in Haiti.

We are grateful for the commitment of longtime Indiana - Hearts for HAITI leader – David Draeger – for a commitment made in January 2020 to spend three years as a volunteer with the EMH serving at the Guest House in Petion-Ville and assisting EMH Bishop Jean Lesly Dorcely as his communications and relationship-building assistant with international partners especially in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. David is a faithful leader and responsible communicator with a firm commitment to helping partners grow in their relationships with our Haiti congregations, schools, medical clinics, etc.

Only a very few, small teams have travelled this past year to Haiti due to the restrictions cited above. However, several teams, groups, and individuals have continued to support ministries and outreach programs throughout Haiti – although at much reduced levels.

Much of the money coming into the Haitian economy comes from outside the country. The largest is from family (the Diaspora) who have emigrated from Haiti and send money home to support family who remain in Haiti. Next is the large NGO's which have major projects active in the larger cities. Third is groups like us – churches and mission groups – who bring people/missionaries who spend money on more local projects and pay for their personal care (food, transportation and souvenirs) while doing mission work in many parts of the country. NGO's and mission teams/churches have been most affected by the US State Department (Do Not Travel) and COVID-19 restrictions.

Haiti and the EMH in particular are in need of prayer and financial support to grow economic opportunities, teacher salary support, quality medical care across the country, and food security which threatens a huge percentage of the population. Thank you for your support of our covenant commitment of our Michigan Conference and the Haiti District of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas! We continue to provide information and mission opportunities for United Methodists across the state.

Thank you for your prayers, interest, and support as we continue our partnership with the Methodist Church of Haiti!

Karl L Zeigler, Chair, Michigan Haiti Covenant Partnership

MI CONFERENCE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS / DISASTER RESPONSE

Leadership Report

Our standard process has been to hold two face to face and four on-line meetings annually with the full District Disaster Response Coordinators (DDRC) Team focusing on training and equipping presentations on Early Response Teams (ERT), Connecting Neighbors and Ministry of Caring sessions with local churches. We started the year with five webinars focused around the state supporting these trainings. Additionally, Plymouth First United Methodist Church hosted a three day Train the Trainer for ERTs, where Joe Chin, David Hutchison, Maddy Hutchison, Karl Ziegler and I (DanO) were trained. Follow-up ERT training plans were in place for April and May. Then the lockdown happened. COVID-19 (C-19) deposited major restrictions on our plans and processes via Executive Orders (EOs), and Zoom meetings have become common place with 10 zoom meetings a week now being normal.

UMCOR sanctioned training has been unavailable. Unfortunately, UMCOR has not made virtual training an acceptable means of expanding our capacity to train able and willing people in any of our outreach ministries. Further, UMCOR has a ban on all training consultant travel along with restricting the days of the month that support people are allowed to be in the office in Atlanta. In an effort to procure much needed training, I have asked for other certified trainers from NCJ conferences but to-date have had no takers to come to Michigan to do a day of training. Going into 2020 we had over 200 trained ERTs and 15 Team leaders. As of February 2021 we will have only 72 ERTs and three Team Leaders certified to do early response to disasters. Four years of capacity building has been decimated. We have been extremely vocal to UMCOR trainers and leadership for the need to allow and provide virtual options for training. There has been talk of coming virtual options for training and certification since July of 2020, but we are losing confidence quickly of any eventual delivery.

District Disaster Recovery Coordinators (DDRCs)

We continue to work with the district superintendents to fill our open positions. Work is underway with DS John Kasper toward developing a Tittabawasee Watershed Disaster Response Team that would support Gladwin, Midland and Saginaw counties. Given the estimated four to six years for the dams to be repaired and upgraded on the Tittabawasee River watershed, there is ample reason to prepare for ongoing disaster response for future flooding. One of the positions we need to fill soon is the Central Bay District Disaster Response Coordinator. We have positive response for the need from Coleman Faith, Midland First and Freeland United Methodist Church. However, no person has stepped forward as of this writing.

2020 priorities have admittedly largely centered on supporting and facilitating Flood Recovery. However, we are positioned to restart quarterly DDRC meetings in 2021.

Current DDRC appointments are:

- Greater Detroit - Dwanda Ashford
- Heritage District - Bob Ankrapp
- Northern Skies - East Randy Hildebrant
- Northern Waters - Dave Stockford
- Greater Southwest - David Morton
- East Winds - Eric Miller
- Central Bay - Open
- Midwest - Dan O'Malley Acting



Substantial time since September has been dedicated toward the support and development of Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRG) in Arenac, Gladwin, Iosco, Midland and Saginaw Counties. We have been involved with developing and coaching Funding Tables, Volunteer Committees, Construction Rebuild Committees, Communications and Spiritual and Emotional Care Committees across the above-mentioned counties. I (DanO) Co-chair the Gladwin Rebuild and Volunteer team with Eva Rohlman of MMCA. Recently I have helped Iosco County with their sample By-laws drawn from the drafts I supported Gladwin and Saginaw counties with.

Additionally, I am working with Mennonite Disaster Services, World Renew, and Lutheran Disaster Services in an effort to have an experienced volunteer couple to work with the Amish in the area for rebuilds for Gladwin. On a personal note, I feel blessed to have some very servant-hearted and focused people working together with me in this disaster. They keep me invigorated on a daily basis even with an average of 12 Zoom meetings a week related to Flood Recovery.

Contaminated, Dry and Saline wells continue to be a problem in Gladwin and Western Midland counties. As of December 2020, there are 350 private homes without potable water due to the loss of the lakes through dam breaches, and the number continues to climb. Unfortunately, rental property quantities are not available as these are not a part of this recovery process. I participate on a FEMA DR4547 team looking at possible potable water systems for both temporary and long-term solutions for that area, which is allowing me to capitalize on previous experience I have working with Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming municipal public works teams in bringing water and sewer to Gaines Twp in the 1985-88 time frame for the Steelcase R&D center. I am also on a Regional group led by FEMA and MSP-DHS looking at long-term economic development in the recovery from the flooding. A large number of rental properties were either destroyed or severely damaged in Gladwin County and Sanford Village in Midland county due to the flooding.

MSP-DHS has received a FEMA Grant for adding up to 19 people to our Disaster Case Management Program for up to two years. This is a first for Michigan. We are looking to temporarily add people in the near term and then bid as a Provider Agency to employ additional people to support the recovery across Arenac, Gladwin, Iosco, Midland and Saginaw counties.

2020 Goals in Review

Goal 1: Build bench strength capacity by objective:

O1 - Certify three new ERT TRAINERS in place by May 2020 "O1"; O1 **exceeded we have five.**

O2 - Train 90 new ERTs "O2" by December 2020; **NOT Met** - C-19 restrictions.

O3 - Re-certify 30 Early Response Team by December 2020; **NOT Met** - We lost 150+ because we could not re-certify people via non-existent ERT virtual training.

O4 - Consolidate and Maintain ERT Equipment trailers by paying for insurance and replacing equipment and supplies as needed by David Hutchison before December 2020 **Consolidation accomplished on March 5.**

Goal 2: Increase effectiveness of District Disaster Response Coordinators through objective:

O1 - Two face to face meetings and four Zoom Meetings per year "O1" per year; **NOT Met.**

O2 - Filling OPEN District Disaster Response Coordinator Positions; Northern Skies, Central Bay, Mid-Michigan and Midwest districts through the district superintendents by MAY 1 "O2"; **NOT Met.**

O3 - Continue holding EP-DR Webinars providing an Overview of UMCOR training modules in EP-DR, ERT, Connecting Neighbors and Ministry of Caring with DDRC's hosting in each district before December 2020 - Being modified to deal with COVID-19 pandemic. **NOT Met.**

Goal 3: Develop Succession and Contingency planning for the EP-DR Leadership and Trainer positions objective:

O1 - Conference Chair, Response and Recovery Coordinators through 2021 "O1" by April 30.

O2 - Current DDRC's by 30 May **NOT Met.**

O3 - ERT Trainer by July1 "O3": **Accomplished with 5 new trainers on March 7.**

O4 - Confirm money available for UMCOR Fall Academy training for Dan O and Nancy in November 2020 UMCOR has revised this to a week of Zoom Meetings so NO COST. Canceled by UMCOR. Virtual Conference Disaster Response Coordinator training was done over four weeks of two hour Zoom sessions, but the content was nothing new for seasoned response members.

In summary, COVID-19 and Mid-MI Flood disaster changed all plans for the year.

Dan O'Malley, Conference Disaster Relief Coordinator
Robert Miller, EP/DR Committee Chair

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

The 2020 year has been filled with challenges for the Michigan Conference VIM training and mission journeys. The Michigan Conference Volunteer In Mission serves local, national, and international ministry/service endorsed by United Methodist partner churches, agencies or non-governmental agencies in cooperation with a local host. Volunteers work as teams/individuals to provide requested support throughout the world.

Clarksville United Methodist Church was able to complete their scheduled mission work in Puerto Rico using \$1,000 in scholarship funds. Michigan Conference sent two individuals as part of the DISCOVERY Peru 12/26/19-1/10/20, a Wisconsin/Michigan/Peruvian Youth initiative. Midwest District also provided funding for Spanish speaking Basic Lay Servant materials/trainer training prior to the DISCOVERY mission.

Holt United Methodist Church sent a domestic mission to Red Bird, Kentucky and planned for a return in April 2020 which did not happen per COVID-19 restrictions. Friendship United Methodist Church had planned for two journeys to Guatemala and have re-scheduled for 2021. Michigan VIM Scholarship fund granted \$1,000 to the Aldersgate United Methodist Church for a Guatemala mission (March 2020). The team has rescheduled to March 2022 and has planned a Virtual Mission for spring 2021.

Mission teams must have a trained VIM leader to receive scholarship funds. Jody Pratt, MI VIM is an approved NCJ trainer and can provide training for team leaders as requested.

Michigan Conference VIM currently offers \$100 for first time mission scholarship participants. Donations from churches/individuals maintain this fund with additional funding welcome. Donations be sent to:

Michigan Volunteer In Mission Scholarships, Line **4413, ATTN: Rick Pittenger

Michigan VIM 2020 also partners with North Central Jurisdiction to establish and assess mission sites. Currently there are four approved sites per NCJ requirements:

God's Awesome People, West Branch United Methodist Church Summer program, Linda Hall Director (Virtual in 2020)

God's Country Community Parish - Newberry Michigan, Randy Hildbrandt Director (limited site work in 2020)

Cass Community Social Services - Sue Pethoud Volunteer Coordinator (Open - no overnight teams)

Motown Mission - Detroit, Amanda Mountain Director (Virtual in 2020)

If programs wish to become an approved NCJ Site please contact Michigan VIM Coordinator, Jody Pratt. We encourage teams to register with NCJ and use the insurance available.

We have a presence on the Michigan Conference web site under the Disaster Relief Coordination page. Mission journeys are posted as requested and information is available.

Contact: Jody A. Pratt MI VIM Coordinator / NCJ Executive Board: prattgj09@gmail@gmail.com

Mission Scholarship Donations **: Line 4413 **Conference Office Attn: Rick Pittenger

Jody A. Pratt, Michigan Conference UMVIM Coordinator

ENGAGE MI

EngageMi is the mission engagement program for the Michigan Conference. EngageMI challenges Michigan Conference congregations to comprehensive missional learning, giving, and action with the goal of encouraging congregations to shift from transactional “ministry to” models to relational “ministry with” vulnerable people and communities. The EngageMI program consists of three focus areas: Learn, Give, Act. Congregations who meet the requirements in all three areas will be recognized as “EngageMI Congregations.” You can find more information about the program online at www.michiganumc.org/engage-mi.

Despite all the challenges that 2020 presented, 87 churches submitted EngageMI reports. Forty-nine churches completed all of three of the focus areas. All the churches told God-filled stories of ministry. Regardless of being closed to in-person worship most of the year, congregations found new creative and intentional means of remaining connected and caring for each other and their communities. Many of the stories told of an unexpected and amazing increase in giving due to the need created by the increase in food insecurity.

Buildings may have been closed to many of the normal congregational activities, but the United Methodists in Michigan are still doing God’s work, locally and globally. All to the Glory of God!

Laurie Kaufman de la Garza, EngageMI Coordinator

GOD’S COUNTRY COOPERATIVE PARISH

God’s Country Cooperative Parish is made up of seven United Methodist churches: Grand Marais, Germfask, McMillan, Paradise, Hulbert, Engadine and Newberry. The Cooperative brings the people of these member churches together, in mutual love and support, to share the love of Christ with all people in our communities.

The year 2020 was, of course, different than any other year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We do home repair with Volunteer in Mission teams. We did host overnight teams but many, many groups did not come this year. We are thankful for those who did and are happy that all have indicated they will return in 2021. We have, though, had a small number of teams who have let us know they will not be coming in 2021 but plan on coming in 2022. We have also had a couple new teams sign up for 2021! We are happy that we should have hot water into the Dunlap Ministry Center so teams who choose to stay there can and will have showers!! We also anticipate having electric hook ups for RVs at the center. Each person on each team allows us to share the love of Christ with more people in our communities. Many team members report they too grow in the love of Christ when serving others.

We also share God’s love with our communities in other ways including: helping with food at Thanksgiving and Christmas and gifts for children at Christmas. Providing warm clothes at the Ministry Center in Newberry and by taking them to schools. Providing gas cards for persons who have to leave the Eastern Upper Peninsula for medical appointments. Helping with household goods as needed, especially after people lose their home in a fire.

The year 2020 saw a change in GCCP staff. The Rev. Tim Callow, who had served Newberry and Engadine United Methodist churches, was appointed to Bad Axe, MI. Virginia Bell retired as director of the parish after seven years and many more as a pastor and lay person in the parish. Thank you, Tim and Virginia, for your faithful service! The Rev. Jackie Roe was appointed by Bishop Bard as pastor at Newberry and Engadine and as Director of the Parish. All changes took effect July 1.

This year we made a video about the parish. It can be viewed on our website at GCCP-UMC.org. There are two versions of the video available to view and use.

The Cooperative is thankful to the MAC for all the support they give us including a new one-year grant to employ a part time Program Ministry Assistant. This has allowed our Church and Community Worker, Randy Hildebrant, more time to do ministry. We are also thankful for the COVID-19 grant which allowed us to rent port-a-johns so we could work on people’s homes but not have to go inside.

We would love to have you come visit or be a volunteer. You can come for a day, a week or however long you like!

For more information or to have our Church and Community Worker, Randy Hildebrant, visit you go to our website at GCCP-UMC.org or contact us at nbyumc@gmail.com, or 906.293.5711.

Jackie Roe, Director, God’s Country Cooperative Parish

HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY, Division of

– see under Board of Young People's Ministries, p. 59 –

COMMITTEE ON HISPANIC / LATINO MINISTRIES

The year 2020 was an unprecedented year, but it gave the Conference Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries an opportunity to pivot. Below is a summary of the work that the Conference Committee on Hispanic/Latino did in 2020, which included creating a strategic plan, a Latinx't Movement Series, resources, and training workshops. The Conference Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries also supported the Hispanic/Latino Ministries and Churches in the conference.

Strategic Plan:

In the summer of 2020, the Rev. April Gutierrez created a strategic plan for Latinx Ministry in the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church for eighteen months July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. This specific time frame reflects the unique moment as the General Conference has been delayed to the fall of 2021 and the National Strategic planning happens in connection with the General Conference. Reflecting the current National Strategic Plan and Strategy of 2017-2020, the focus of this plan will be Latinx young adults in Michigan. To be clear, this is not a comprehensive plan, but rather a particular focus on Latinx young adults for three specific reasons. First, the median age of Hispanic/ Latinos in Michigan (and similarly in the United States overall) is twenty-four. Second, most of our churches, both majority Caucasian and Latino/Hispanic churches have a median age that is significantly higher and is not currently serving Latinx Young Adults reflective of the demographic information overall. Third, the strategy put forth in this document is for a discrete time frame for an unprecedented moment. This plan seeks to respond to an unmet need for a large and growing demographic, Latinx young adults. This plan encourages collaboration across campus ministries, district ministries and reflects the digital shift all ministries have made. The strategic plan focuses on three areas: the Latinx't Movement, collaborations with Wesley Foundations, and a Digital Hub.

The Latinx't Movement:

Latinx't is a program designed to help Latinx youth become leaders in their community and beyond. By addressing and de-stigmatizing leadership qualities that have been overlooked and underappreciated in the past, we can create leaders in ways that we have not before. Our program wants to show that intellectual labor and ability is as important as physical labor and ability by de-colonizing our approach to leadership in the Latinx community.

The goal of Latinx't is to provide online workshops, presentations, and resources centered around leadership that focuses on healing, mental and spiritual health, non-capitalistic professions/careers/hobbies, and an overall state of understanding that does not reinforce our value in the world to be calculated by our physical/manual labor and sacrificing of our Latinx identity/culture/perspective.

Latinx't Movement First Series -

- May 26, 2020 - Rev. April Gutierrez- God Doesn't Want Your Hustle: An Introduction to Sabbath Rest and Resistance for Latinx Young Adults
- June 2, 2020 - Ester Ayers, LMSW, PHD Studies in Chicano Latino Studies, MSU- Testimonies to Heal the Mind Body and Soul with Adventure Therapy
- June 9, 2020 - Naomi García, Michigan Conference Staff, Focus: change, systems, conflict... 4 good- 'who'r ur peeps?: a being reset'
- June 16, 2020 - E. Gonzalez, LMSW, CYT, Amplify Colectivo- Decolonizing Healing and Mental Health
- June 23, 2020 - Jordan Hamilton, Cellist of Last Gasp Collection, and the Southwest Michigan Symphony- Concert
- June 30, 2020 - Rev. Cara Weiler, LMSW, Deacon UMC- Trauma and Resilience

Latinx't Movement Second Series -

- August 4th, 2020 - Sonya Luna- Expressing your Political Voice through Arts and Craft
- August 11th, 2020 - Mayela Rodriguez: Anti-Blackness workshop
- August 18th, 2020 - Elvira - Debunking the American Dream
- August 25th, 2020 - Ivan M.- Mental Health and Spirituality
- Sept 1st, 2020 - Mayela R. - 2nd part of Anti-Blackness workshop

Resources:

Resources for Hispanic/Latino Ministries and the wider church were created for Pentecost, Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month, and Advent. Information in Spanish about COVID-19 was also distributed.

Leadership Trainings:

One leadership training that took place in 2020 was the Expresiones Divinas Día de Visión y Cena Iglesia, that was held over four Saturdays, August 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2020 via Zoom. This training was in collaboration with the New Church Start Committee. Another training that took place was a training provided by Discipleship Ministries featuring the leadership from Centro Familiar Cristiano United Methodist Church and was about the church's model of a virtual VBS program.

Continued Support of Hispanic/Latino Ministries and Churches:

The Conference Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries in 2020 continued to support the Hispanic/Latino Ministries and Churches. There was support for Centro Familiar Cristiano United Methodist Church and their virtual VBS program. The committee supported La Nueva Esperanza United Methodist Church and their transition of pastors. The committee supported the Neighbors Program in the St. Johns area that continues to be in ministry with the dairy farm workers and their families. The committee supported Misión Holland and their work with migrant farm workers. Misión Holland was vital in distributing masks and health kits in 2020. The committee also supported a new faith community that was started online called Nueva Vida.

Rey Mondragon, Committee Chair
and Sonya Luna, Missionary for Hispanic/Latino Ministries

CONFERENCE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Conference Human Resources Committee (HR) Committee remains focused on working to support the Michigan Conference to effectively Equip and Connect through Christ-Centered Mission and Ministry with Bold and Effective Leaders through policy development and interpretation; and advising and facilitating appropriate HR practices. We work to develop and offer the structure for successful employment practices throughout the conference.

During the 2020-2021 conference year the committee met five times to review policy issues and provide interpretations and guidance on conference HR policies. We continue to monitor HR conference policies for those that need to be added and updated. We have assisted conference staff in filling vacancies through serving on interview teams, writing job descriptions, and offering advice on employment status (contractor, salaried and hourly status, etc.).

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the committee began meeting virtually and addressed issues related to employees and the COVID-19 outbreak. A return-to-work policy was written to establish protocols for returning to work during or following the pandemic.

We strive to keep conference HR policies and practices in line with state and federal laws and regulations. Committee members have also advised other agencies and churches associated with the conference on Human Resources practices from time to time.

Ellen Zienert, Chair

BOARD OF JUSTICE

"To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose..." –Ecclesiastes 3: 1

To every thing... First of all I would like to thank the Rev. Paul Perez for his support and leadership as staff liaison to the Board of Justice these many years. We wish him well in his new position as Director of Connectional Ministry and welcome the Rev. Lisa Batten as she begins her tenure with the Board of Justice.

The Board of Justice is currently working to strengthen and empower its four Divisions; the Division of Church and Society, the Division of Religion and Race, the Division on the Status and Role of Women, and the Division on Disability Concerns, into taking on educational opportunities, programs, trainings, and actions that will enable our congregations to step out in a prophetic witness to our communities, our nation, and our world.

And a time for every purpose... The Board of Justice continues to offer grants for justice related ministries in Michigan. In 2020 grants were given to Circles Grand Rapids; the Poor People's Campaign, Detroit; and the 2020 Virtual Youth Camp sponsored by the UM Urban Youth Alliance.

Please read the reports from our divisions that follow this report.

George Covintree, Chair

DIVISION ON RELIGION AND RACE

The Michigan Conference Division of Religion and Race continues to have regularly scheduled meetings. The division also meets and report out to scheduled meetings with the Conference Board of Justice. Our focus continues to address Culture Competency as it continues to impact ministry throughout our conference. The division has contacted the Board of Ordained Ministry to request a yearly meeting as the Discipline mandates. These meetings have proved to be fruitful and appreciated by both entities. Our purpose shall be to challenge, lead, and equip those in our United Methodist churches to become inter-culturally competent and insure institutional equity. We continue to advocate conversations as they relate to religion, race and culture. The Division of Religion and Race is committed to seek programs, training and policies that address racial institutional equity and intercultural competency at all levels of the church. We have met and had great conversation with other committees in the conference that share similar focus and ideas to enhance and promote an inclusive and wholesome conference.

Tina (Ernestine) Campbell, Co-Convener
Scott E Manning, Co-Convener

DIVISION ON STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN (COSROW)

Life In Full/ Life In Balance

If we have learned anything from the challenging year behind us, it is that extremes can be a recipe for frustration.

The roles of women have expanded, the family home now serves as an office, daycare, classroom and meeting/conference room.

Women have lost jobs, been furloughed at a higher rate than men. Women faced increased job insecurity, and the fear is COVID-19 has undone years of advancement.

Working couples attempt to divide childcare and chores equally, but the bulk seems to fall on women. Equality for women took a huge hit from COVID-19.

Despite lockdowns easing, there will be long-term impact on women's work and home life. A recent study warned the pandemic could dilute decades of advancement on gender equality. Women are more frequently the ones to give up or lose jobs. The survey goes on to say women are giving up jobs or moving to part time because the juggling became too difficult, and they can't do it anymore.

For some, COVID-19 has increased other structural inequalities, such as disability, class and ethnicity. The situation adds up to a perfect storm, setting women's equality back.

Renew faith and hope every day.

Patricia Bostic, Convener

BOARD OF LAITY

The purpose of the Board of Laity (BOL) is to build awareness of the role of the laity in ministry; provide support and direction for the ministry of the laity at all levels of the church; provide training for lay members to annual conference; and provide organization and support for the development of local church lay leadership. We seek to equip and develop bold and effective lay leadership across the Michigan Conference.

The Board of Laity has been blessed to welcome these new members during this past year: Keith Anderson (Conference Scouting Coordinator), Annette Erbes (Conference Lay Leader), Gordon Grigg (young adult recommended by the Board of Young People's Ministries), Julia Paradine-Rice (President of United Methodist Women), Paul Perez (Director of Connectional Ministries), and Celia Peters (youth recommended by the Board of Young People's Ministries). With many new members to our board, much of our focus has been to build relationship together and to revisit our call and purpose as the Board of Laity.

New areas of focus for the Board of Laity this year included beginning the journey of intercultural development, discerning ways to encourage lay leadership in the local church and gaining knowledge about emerging ministry opportunities with young adults. Under the guidance of Brittney Stephan, Associate Director for Multi-Cultural Vibrancy, we began the process to better identify, understand, plan for, and grow in our own intercultural competence. The BOL is engaging in conversation with the Appointive Cabinet to discern how best to identify and energize our laity so that, as laity and clergy together, we can equip bold and effective lay leadership. We are also learning from Lisa Batten, Young Adult Initiatives Coordinator, as

to the many emerging opportunities in young adult ministry across the conference and are envisioning how the BOL might collaborate with the Board of Young People's Ministries in the future.

The Board of Laity is working diligently to offer new opportunities for laity at Annual Conference. Laity Orientations will be held virtually prior to Annual Conference to share information regarding the purpose of Annual Conference, the role/responsibilities of lay members, knowledge of Robert's Rules/legislative procedures, and more. We are also excited to be planning our first Laity Event to equip laity to claim their call as bold and effective leaders in ministry! An address by a guest speaker, engaging music and devotions, and time for Q and A will be offered. Many thanks to those members of the BOL and Commission on the Annual Conference who are working to bring these new efforts to fruition.

Ongoing goals of the BOL include to develop training for local and district lay leaders, promote lay servant classes, develop laity tools, utilize technology for improved communication, connect local churches with their district and annual conference, and the selection of lay equalization members to annual conference. Members of the Board of Laity also craft articles for MIconnect and MIFaith.

The Board of Laity remains committed to developing bold and effective lay leaders in ministry across the conference as we work in partnership with clergy to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Annette Erbes, Conference Lay Leader

LAKE LOUISE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, CAMP and RETREAT CENTER

VISION

A sanctuary empowering personal growth, faith, and knowledge within community.

Mission

We offer an environment and provide leadership for opportunities promoting healthy relationships, personal wholeness and spiritual well-being.

Ministry

To nurture faith and equip Christian children, youth, families, adults and community leaders to live and work from a place of wholeness, and in so doing, they shall be bearers of promise and hope as they transform the world.

Core Values

- ❖ Sacred space and time
- ❖ Diversity and Inclusiveness
- ❖ Community and Hospitality
- ❖ Knowledge and Understanding
- ❖ Spiritual Growth and Renewal
- ❖ Our Heritage and our Future

Lake Louise came into being in 1934 through the generosity of the Horner family of Eaton Rapids as a gift "to all the Methodists of Michigan." The Horners had acquired a large tract of cut-over timberland after the logging era of Michigan was over. As the Great Depression descended upon the country, the Horners approached their pastor, Rev. Stanley Niles, with the idea of giving 5,500 acres away. The idea of a church youth camp began to take shape. Through the action of a group of visionary people, the plan culminated in the creation of the Lake Louise Christian Community, encompassing a youth camp and creating cottage sites around the lake upon which clergy families could build a place of their own. The Lake Louise Christian Community would hold the land in trust for the two Michigan conferences. Christian camping began at Lake Louise in 1935 and remained uninterrupted until 2020's COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately half of the original gift was sold to the State of Michigan in 1935 to provide for the development of the site. LLCC still holds title to 2,400 acres of the original gift. The land is managed under the Conservation Forestry Act and the Forest Legacy Conservation Easement, providing for the sustainable harvesting of timber and ensuring the undeveloped character of the land and the lake.

Lake Louise continues as an affiliate ministry of The United Methodist Church by representation on the Lake Louise Board of Trustees from United Methodist clergy and laity. Lake Louise is governed by a 16-member Board of Trustees. By Lake Louise bylaws, trustees generally serve three (3) three-year terms, for a total of nine (9) years.

Lake Louise started 2020 off welcoming retreat groups from around the state. We hosted family reunions, a scrapbooking retreat, Boy Scout groups, and youth groups. In the midst of planning for Summer Camp 2020, COVID-19 became a reality that we had to face. Lake Louise made the difficult, but necessary, decision to cancel resident Summer Camps for 2020. However, this opened up a new opportunity for Lake

Louise. We offered our cabins to families for rental. This proved to be wildly popular and allowed people to connect with Lake Louise in a new and different way. We welcomed families that had ties as alumni, current campers, volunteers, cottager community members, and retreat attendees. While we were sad that camp could not go on as planned, we rejoiced in the fact that we were able to make the camp available to so many individuals. Lake Louise looks forward to Summer 2021! Check out our website at <https://lakelouisecommunity.org/camps/considering-camp/> to see all the exciting camps scheduled for 2021.

If all goes as planned, we will have a busy summer working with our Boyne Country Service Project teams. Boyne Country Service Project is a week-long work mission experience for youth and adults. Groups stay at Lake Louise and work each day with community service agencies. This program is very popular and fills up every year.

Lake Louise continues to pursue a scheduled program of facility improvements supported by major gifts from donors, volunteers, and work groups from churches. We are indebted to our work groups and volunteers that helped move many projects along during the Summer of 2020. A true hidden blessing of COVID-19 was our ability to work on projects during the summer. We were able to enhance the waterfront area by adding a boathouse, racks for our kayaks, new docks, and a new pavilion. Volunteers spent countless hours working on building a retaining wall to help combat the ever-rising lake levels. A new bathroom was constructed near Tennant Chapel and many smaller projects were completed.

We look forward to the time that we will be able to host retreat groups once again. We are excited to have clergy, laity, and youth from the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church, regional Protestant and Catholic Parishes and the local community back at our facility in the near future.

Lake Louise is proud of its heritage as a gift given to all the Methodists of Michigan. We remain an asset to churches, clergy, ministry professionals, and community groups seeking a place of rest and renewal in a beautiful natural setting. We invite all members of the Michigan Conference to pay us a visit, to join us for a retreat, to send their children to our camps, and to volunteer as a counselor or work camp volunteer. We are blessed to be partnering with you in this ministry.

Lake Louise ~ a four season destination for your next retreat or gathering!

Neil H. Haney, Executive Director

MICHIGAN AREA COMMITTEE ON THE EPISCOPACY

The work of the Michigan Area Committee on the Episcopacy is defined by the Book of Discipline and is comprised of 10 laypersons and 10 clergy. This year the committee met four times via Zoom.

The committee seeks to be a support group for Bishop Bard, much as a Staff Parish Relations Committee is for pastors in the local church. The committee seeks to share the joys and concerns of the Michigan Area. We are blessed by Bishop Bard's spiritual leadership and for helping to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In addition, the committee prepares to help Bishop Bard as he also assumes responsibilities in Minnesota. The North Central Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee developed a process that included a survey of leaders around the conference in evaluating the bishop. Another responsibility of the committee is assisting the bishop in the upkeep of the episcopal residence.

We also are grateful for the leadership of Reverend John Boley in the role of Clergy Assistant to the Bishop as he retires, and the support of Deana Nelson as Executive Administrative Assistant to the Bishop.

John Wharton, Chair

MICHIGAN AREA LOAN FUND of The United Methodist Church Missions & Church Extension Trust Fund

The Michigan Area Loan Fund, operating since 1969, is a ministry of the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan. The fund is registered with the Securities Bureau of the State of Michigan and is authorized to accept investments from individuals, churches, and other non-profits. As its mission, we provide loan and promissory notes to local churches and ministry organizations throughout Michigan. In the past year, the fund has worked to make loans to churches to purchase or build new parsonages, to remodel ministry spaces and improve ADA access, to refinance existing loans and to handle emergency type of repairs.

Karen Thompson, Senior Director of Loan Services, is available to discuss loans and promissory notes with church leaders. Even during the pandemic, Karen met remotely with church leaders to help them strategize about the church's mission and the most effective financial way to live into this vision. "In the past year, I've seen churches able to sustain and develop online ministry and giving capabilities. Clearly, God is still working through our lives and our churches to help reach those in need and to deliver the message of Jesus Christ."

As a reminder, the Michigan Area Loan Fund is positioned to serve United Methodist churches in Michigan as well as organizations that share historic common bonds and convictions in the Wesleyan tradition. These unprecedented times do not alter our purpose and commitment to the Church. We are committed to serving the broadest constituency possible and look forward to partnering with your local church. If you would like to learn more about investments or church loans, you may visit our website: www.UMFMichigan.org or contact Karen Thompson, Sr. Director of Loan Services (Karen@UMFMichigan.org or 888-451-1929.)

David S. Bell, President & Resident Agent
Karen Thompson, Senior Director of Loan Services



COVID-19 has been a difficult challenge for Michigan Area United Methodist Camping (MAUMC) missionally and financially since February 2020. While health and safety priorities have limited our ability to provide the fee-based events that impact our bottom line, the most important loss has been the ability to "create transformational camp and retreat experiences that develop disciples of Jesus Christ." These outdoor, community-building "times away" are needed now, more than ever, for the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of the people of all ages in Michigan whom we serve.

It is with this in mind that MAUMC continues to provide what we can at Lake Michigan Camp and Retreat, Wesley Woods, Lake Huron Retreat Center and Lakeview Family Campground with health and safety in mind. All events follow strict guidelines from the American Camp Association, CDC, and state and local health authorities. We look forward to a growing ability to do more of these needed experiences in 2021 including summer camp as an opportunity to ReConnect, ReCreate, and ReNew!

On the forward path towards missional and financial sustainability, MAUMC has engaged with Kaleidoscope, Inc., to develop strategic and master plans. The first of these was completed in the spring of 2020 with the recommendation to focus our resources and efforts on Wesley Woods, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. A very difficult decision was made to sell Judson Collins and Lakeview in order to provide the resources needed to undergird the deferred maintenance and master plan improvements at the other sites. A moving de-commissioning service was held at Judson Collins in November 2020 with over 200 people in attendance to reflect on the positive faith forming experiences at this site. Lakeview will continue to be operated until a sale is finalized, hopefully in the spring of 2021.

During 2020 and into 2021 many improvements have taken place at Wesley Woods including a complete renovation of the primary bath house on the hill and of the pool. Renovations have also taken place at the chapel and nurse's house along with thinning of the forest to provide a better eco-system and views of the lake. The master planning process, to be completed in March 2021, is projecting new program areas and further renovations for all three sites.

Conversations have begun with conference leaders, pastors and urban youth program leaders in the Detroit area for ways to continue vital camp and retreat ministries with children, youth, young adults and adults in the eastern part of the conference. Lake Huron Retreat Center continues to offer individual and group retreats on a limited basis.

Note that MAUMC has moved out of the St. Johns office and has begun to work remotely. Other staff reductions, more streamlined accounting and change of software systems have helped us reduce administrative overhead. Please note the new address as PO Box 134.

After a national search, the MAUMC board hired the Rev. David Berkey as its new Executive Director, starting mid-October 2020. Rev. Berkey served under appointment as a pastor in the New York Conference for 15 years before moving to full-time executive conference positions in camping with the Eastern PA, Florida and Cal-Pac conferences. We welcome him as he leads MAUMC's on-going partnership with the Michigan Conference to provide renewing life-changing experiences outdoors through camp and retreat ministry.

We further welcome your support and prayers as we continue the journey of growing disciples of Jesus Christ by providing faith forming camp and retreat experiences.

David Berkey, Executive Director
Stuart Smith, Chair

MICHIGAN AREA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Michigan Area United Methodist Church Historical Society (MAUMCHS) has been incorporated since 1958. The name was changed from Michigan Methodist Historical Society in 1975.

The Society has as their purpose the following:

"To compile, edit, publish, and distribute histories of Michigan United Methodism, its predecessor denominations, and any other historical works that may later demand attention; to solicit, acquire, and administer funds to accomplish such purposes and any other acts as may be deemed necessary to carry out such purposes; and promote, support, and nurture the conference archives."

"Other purposes may include organizing area-wide celebrations of historical events and convocations which may involve participation beyond the board of directors; digitization and distribution of historical materials; awarding certificates of recognition to local churches that are celebrating important milestones, awarding distinguished service awards to individuals and groups within Michigan; recognizing and promoting United Methodist historic sites in the state; helping conference, district, and local church historians and archivists through workshops and information sharing; and such other activities as are consistent with the by-laws of the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church."

The officers are Diana Spitnale Miller - President, Sharon Scott - Secretary, and Della Wilder - Treasurer. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the officers are following other agency protocol and staying place until the end of 2021.

Board Meetings were held in 2020 on March 5 at the Michigan Conference Center in Lansing and on November 5 by ZOOM.

The "Roots and Branches" Historical Convocation was to have been held Saturday, April 18, 2020, at the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant. After publicity went out in the Conference MiConnect on March 10, it had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

No certificates have been presented to churches that had been in existence for 100, 125, 150, 175, or 200 years although some applications had been made. Due to lockdown, it was difficult to get the certificates signed properly. We are hoping to do better in 2021. We congratulate those churches that have been having celebrations in different ways in 2020. We are continuing to work on our list of churches and their years of beginning. Our list will be published on our website. <https://michiganumchhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/>

Our next Roots and Branches Convocation will be Saturday April 17, 2021, by ZOOM. The theme will be "Learning from Past Separations: The Methodist Protestant Church". Our group welcomes historians of churches, those interested in church history and preserving it, clergy and lay, to join the Society. Membership includes receiving news about the Society activities and free registration to our sponsored events.

President Diana Miller was able to attend the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church on November 21, 2020, by ZOOM. Their keynote speaker Anna Louise Bates presented about the Methodists and Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793 which fit what has been happening in 2020. Close to 100 persons were able to attend because of using ZOOM. The new General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, Dr. Ashley Boggan Dreff, was introduced. Mrs. Miller, also a member of that body - GCAH, had been on the search committee that selected her.

Diana Spitnale Miller, President

MICHIGAN COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of Communication Ministry is to witness to the world the ministry of the Michigan Area of The United Methodist Church and enhance the connection of our members through communication so that we might carry out the mission of making and empowering disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The Michigan Communications (MICOM) team is comprised of Director of Communications (DOC) Mark Doyal, Editor/Senior Content Manager Kay DeMoss, Media Specialist Valerie Mossman-Celestin, Executive Assistant Kristen Gillette. In June 2020, Social Media Specialist Paul Reissmann left the team to accept a full-time senior pastor position. Laura Witkowski took over managing daily social media with assistance from Rev. Kathy Pittenger, who authored the daily devotions.

The Communications Commission is faithfully served by Bishop David Bard, Assistant to the Bishop John Boley, Lay Leaders Ann Soles and John Wharton, the Director of Connectional Ministries Paul Perez, and three volunteer members Oneika Mobley, Dillon Burns, and Vicky Prewitt; the organization met four times in 2019/2020. The elected members provide excellent guidance from a local church perspective.

2020 proved to be one of the most demanding years ever in our organization. In addition to postponed General, Jurisdictional, and Annual conferences, the entire year changed drastically when the deadly COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Michigan on March 10, 2020. The seismic disruption caused by this pandemic was historic, forcing the movement to virtual services at nearly all our 650 local churches. The virus led to the shutdown of the Michigan Conference Ministry Center and the need for completely new forms of communication to be innovated overnight and sustained throughout the remainder of the year. The single greatest challenge was the urgent need to provide a breadth of consistent, reliable, well-produced materials online, which considerably stretched the staff and resources of the Communications Team. Thankfully, the support of Conference Trustees, Leadership Council, and other staff allowed us to keep up with these objectives.

Here were some of the key achievements of 2020:

Local Church Communication Training/Consultation

In March 2020, only a small percentage of local churches offered any online worship. Following the pandemic's spread, the Communications Team worked closely with Church Vibrancy and Connectional Ministry to provide weeks of nightly online ZOOM-based training sessions in online worship, congregational care, and other critical topics. Communications produced 8 Webinars in the first 14 days. Throughout the remainder of the year, new training and materials were developed to support local churches online. By year's end, nearly all local churches were able to offer some form of online worship.

Special Called Annual Conference

In February Bishop Bard was asked by the Council of Bishops to foster legislation to General Conference through a Special Called Session of the Annual Conference. In five short weeks, the conference came together and was live-streamed on Saturday, March 7, from Albion College. The gavel-to-gavel coverage of the worship and legislative sessions reached thousands who could not attend. No one knew that just three days later, the Governor would order the entire state shut down, followed by General Conference postponement. Thankfully, no one contracted COVID-19 from attending the session.

Easter and Advent Services

The incredible stress on local churches to produce weekly online worship during the pandemic led to the decision to support congregations by creating worship services and elements for Holy Week. The state-wide Easter Service led by Bishop Bard was viewed live by over 85,000 persons on three platforms. By November, local churches indicated worship elements would also be helpful. Communications produced advent video and audio bumpers and added free music. A children's Christmas Eve Worship Service was produced and downloaded by over 110 local churches and viewed thousands of times. Utilizing a grant from the CLC, communications produced a 6-day online social media campaign with the purpose of connecting unchurched people with online Christmas Eve services at local United Methodist churches. "Spend Christmas at our house" was enthusiastically received by local churches and was able to generate just over 400,000 impressions and more than 12,000 links to local church services.

Virtual Annual Conference

With the state in total lockdown, the Commission on the Annual Conference Session decided to produce the first-ever Virtual Annual Conference. It was the most complicated technical undertaking ever produced by the Communications Team in cooperation with GNTV in Macon, GA. A technical crew of 25 in three

states created the three-day, 19-hour live event attended by 1400 persons and watched live. Members to the annual conference received two hours of live ZOOM training, a legislative guide, and mail-in voting materials. The event included worship, Clergy Session, and eight hours of plenary. The online program was very successful and became one of the models for annual conferences across the denomination.

Online Content/Video

2020 was a massive year for video, with over 175,000 impressions, and more than 93,000 views of conference video products. The year brought an increase of 65% if total viewing up to 133 days, nine hours, and 38 minutes of constant viewing. Communications also launched an online sermon bank to provide pulpit supply to local churches. The top viewed videos were COVID-19 updates from Bishop Bard, with over 10,000 views.

Website

In 2020, website usage grew 63%, to over 198,000 users, with 417,000 sessions and nearly 900,000 page views. Top page views were for new appointments followed by forms, classifieds, news, and local church resources. A new initiative was started to improve the local church's access to resources and freshen the front page was completed.

Social Media

Michigan became the eighth most read Facebook page in the denomination in 2020, up from 12th in 2019 and 16th in 2018. Engagement (share/likes/comment) remains one of the highest in the denomination, regularly beating out the top five United Methodist Facebook pages in the US. The Conference Facebook Group, established in 2018, grew 78% in 2020, with 2041 members. MIUMC Twitter growth followers, up 10% to 597 followers, seeing a continuation of 25-30,000 impressions per month, up from 17,000 in 2018. Communications create more than 85 social media posts per week.

E-Publications

Guided by Editor/Senior Content Developer Kay DeMoss, MIconnect continues to enjoy an open rate of more than 60%, compared to an industry average of 40%. The click-through rate continues to beat the industry standard by more than two times. UM News shared dozens of Michigan Conference stories with more MIconnect stories printed in UM Insight. MIfaith, the new publication targeting those sitting in the pews with interest in stories of faith, mission, and ministry celebrated the first year of publication. Kay DeMoss also organized a new team of free-lance stringers to report on a wide range of stories during the week.

Recognitions & Awards

United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC) was among the thousands of organizations whose usual traditions could not be observed this year because of the pandemic. However, thanks to the blessing of technology, UMAC came together online on May 21, 2020, and Michigan received six honors:

- The Donn Doten Award, the denomination's highest honor for excellence in writing, went to *John E. Harnish*, for, "Breakin' Up is Hard to Do." That entry also received First Place for Writing / Non-Fiction Story; It is significant that a Michigan writer be honored with The Donn Doten Award. The Rev. Donn Doten served the Michigan Area as the Editor of *The Michigan Christian Advocate* until his death in 1982. Doten also served churches in The West Michigan Conference as senior pastor, including Traverse City: Central United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids: Trinity United Methodist Church, and East Lansing: University United Methodist Church.
- First Place for Digital Publications / Electronic Special Publication went to *Paul Perez* and *Lisa Drake Collins* for "EngageMI 2019".
- First Place for Digital Publications / e-Newsletters was awarded to *Kay DeMoss*, *Valerie Mossman-Celestin*, and *Diane Brown*. Note that *John Harnish*, *Glenn Wagner*, *Paul Donelson*, *Anne Soles*, and *Benton Heisler* also were frequent contributors to mifaith in 2019.
- Second Place for Publicity and Advertising / Single Piece awarded to *Mark Doyal* for "How We Share".
- Third Place for Writing / News Article went to *Kay DeMoss* for "See the Footprints of the UMC in Flint."

After five years of leadership with UMAC, Mark Doyal stepped down as Chairperson and was named Chair Emeritus.

Mark A. Doyal, Director of Communications

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE TRUSTEES, BOARD OF

The conference Board of Trustees (“BoT”) is blessed with a consolidated group comprised of former Detroit Annual Conference and West Michigan Annual Conference trustees. We have benefited from a seamless combination and very effective contributing members.

Additionally, the held-properties (from closed churches) and their attendant oversight responsibilities presented a substantial challenge to the board.

Shown below is a high-level summary of activities and focus:

- **Work review:**

- Vice chair George Lewis continues the refinement of developed policies and procedures (“P&P”) for all conference owned offices and parsonages.
- Worked extensively on property tax issue for parsonage(s)...To be determined as to resolving the issue through the appeals process with State of Michigan. This appeal has been heard and awaiting the decision.
- 8 properties were sold (one being donated) in past year, one on LC w/ conference holding title and one local church sale facilitation.
 - Atterberry (Heritage District) Parsonage
 - Mapleton United Methodist Church
 - Owosso-Burton United Methodist Church
 - Arbela United Methodist Church
 - Mulliken United Methodist Church
 - Pleasant Lake United Methodist Church (Under contract)
 - Hidden Springs (DCM Parsonage – Under contract)
 - Ubyly United Methodist Church (in process of donating)
 - Assisted with the Michigan Union the sale of Wayne First United Methodist Church to its tenant
- 5 properties currently listed for sale – a challenging environment for commercial real estate and church properties in particular has arisen from the ‘COVID-19 world’. We know more properties will be added to this inventory due to the economic pressures on the local churches. Efforts are being made to find solutions other than closure which will help with the dispensation process.
- The developed collaboration with cabinet representative DS John Hice of a definitive itemization of roles for conference and district involvement re closed properties is still being absorbed by the districts.
- Working with DCM Paul Perez on conference archive storage options pertaining to physical locations. The concern has grown due to both increased materials from closed churches and limitations of the current facilities.
- Conducted the annual ‘Risk Management’ review with Church Mutual Insurance in a full board meeting. There were no material claim-issues raised and the relationship is solid.
- **MAUMC (the camp board):** BoT’s work last year involved continued substantial interaction with MAUMC management. There are 3 former camp properties listed and the BoT provides assistance where helpful.
- The Dowry legislation in 2019 established a minimum \$250,000 in missional funds per district. Each district is required to, and has, submitted a report detailing the application of funds. These reports will be included in the AC Journal and various highlight articles will be reflected in upcoming MIconnect issues.
- **Summary of closed churches requiring AC affirmative action to formally close with motions in accordance with paragraph 2549 of the 2016 Book of Discipline submitted by Rev. Jerry DeVine. The affirming petitions were distributed to the voting members and returned after adjournment.**
 - Arbela United Methodist Church – November 8, 2020
 - Griffith United Methodist Church – December 31, 2020
 - Pleasant Lake United Methodist Church – September 20, 2020

- **There was one church completing the Withdrawal Agreement terms and will submit appropriate funds in accordance with paragraph 2549 of the 2016 Book of Discipline; individual motions to close and withdraw to be presented by Rev. Jerry DeVine. The affirming petition will be distributed to the voting members and returned after adjournment.**

- Duffield United Methodist Church – June 30, 2021

James LeBaron, Chair

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Michigan Conference Board of Ordained Ministry is no longer so new! Even as the conference itself has settled into a new state-wide identity, so has the body charged with the credentialing of professionals in ministry. In as much as we have all been adjusting to change, none of us could have anticipated the smack upside the head and shoulders that came with COVID-19! In fact, the BOM finished its in-person retreat at Lake Huron Camp and Retreat Center on March 6, 2020, went with elected members of the conference to the specially called Annual Conference on March 7th, then went into “lock-down” with everybody else the next weekend.

While the entire world, and the Church, learned to deal with “out of building” experiences, the board was going through other transitions at the same time. Laura Speiran, the chair through the transition to the new conference, needed to step down for health reasons. After a nine-year stint on the West Michigan BOM in the 90’s, I came onto BOM in 2019 as Chair of the Order of Elders. With Laura’s leadership, serving on the Board was a joy. A first-class planner, a deep spirit, and ultimately a colleague focused on the ministry we do with those seeking credentialing. I offer thanks to her on behalf of the board and on behalf of all the congregations in Michigan that have benefited from clergy who have been well-vetted. As is the case every year, others who have served the board well ended their terms or needed to move on for personal reasons. Julie Greyerbiehl departed last Spring, after having served with care and competence as the Registrar for Provisional Members. I also offer gratitude to Ruby Anderson, Carter Grimmer, Bill Haggard, and Duane Townley for their service to the full board, to interview teams, and to committees of the board.

Because of COVID-19, the Board learned to do its work in a virtual environment. Our 48-member body of laity and clergy became schooled in all the possibilities and limitations of Zoom! After practice work in relationship to the 2020 Annual Conference, in meetings and training with Cabinet and the district committees on ministry, and in a Fall “Retreat” to get acquainted as a new board, we met for the retreat usually done in person at Lake Huron Camp and Retreat Center, by Zoom. BOM teams interviewed full membership candidates, with their support persons, in individual Zoom rooms. While 3D body language and eye contact were missed, the interviews worked quite well, and the Spirit of the Living God did not fail to be present among us.

As I write this, we are still waiting for a full ramp-up of the COVID-19 vaccines and we are just a few weeks away from a March Zoom Interview Retreat for provisional members. And so, the cycle goes. The work in-between includes on-going revisions of policies and procedures, bettering-up work with clergy in appointment transition, becoming anti-racist and increasingly culturally aware so that English as first language is NOT the instant assumption made about our candidates, working to reconcile more costly psychological evaluations with a shrinking budget, working with the bishop in recruiting gifted and called laity and clergy to become a part of the board, and more.

While leading the Michigan Conference Board of Ordained Ministry was not on my radar a year ago, I am enriched in being a part of a group so keenly aligned in the assessment of new clergy for the State of Michigan. I offer my deepest gratitude to Jennie Browne and Debbie Stevenson in giving me every assistance as I wiggled into this saddle of leadership. The work they do in the Office of Clergy Excellence is a gift to us all. My final thought is that, even as we live in uncertainty as a world, humbled by a virus we have not been all that willing to control, we live, too, in an uncertain time, as our denomination continues to await a clear picture of what we will look like in the future. I am buoyed by the fact that God continues to gift and call persons to professional ministry, some coming to Michigan Conference United Methodism to be affirmed in the living of that call. Fresh winds continue to blow around us, friends. We are blessed!

Barry Petrucci, Chair

ORDER OF DEACONS

Deacons are ordained to word, service, compassion and justice and are charged with connecting the Church and the world. We all do it differently. Some are Christian educators, some musicians, and some concentrate their time in the area of pastoral care while others lead in service in the world. Some of us work within the Church and others work beyond the Church in the community. We typically gather in February and again at Annual Conference to share our stories and best practices in our areas of expertise.

As we continue to seek those called to the Order of Deacon, look for: an increased presence throughout Michigan as deacons serve in geographical groups within the community, deacons visiting other congregations (when asked) to assist with Communion, preach and provide an example of the way they answer the call to ordained ministry, and a newly designed Michigan deacon website so that others can see what we do.

Deacons continue to offer themselves as servant leaders within the Church and beyond in the name of Christ.

Sue Pethoud, Chair

ORDER OF ELDERS

In this year of quarantine, the Order of Elders has looked for ways to create life-long learning in colloquy groups for conference Elders. A short-term study pilot group is being created, focusing on best practices and case studies. Following the pilot group's completion, each participant will then launch a new group, benefitting other Elders.

M. Christopher Lane, Chair

OFFICE OF CLERGY EXCELLENCE

As with all other conference offices, the physical location of the Office of Clergy Excellence (OCE) was rarely used by the staff during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to adhere to COVID-related safety restrictions. I work almost exclusively from my home office while Executive Assistant Debbie Stevenson works primarily from her home, checking in at the DeWitt office about once/week. Some of our work involves paper files that are stored in a secure file room at the office, but because of Debbie's careful attention, this arrangement caused no significant delays to our work. We expect that the post-COVID-19 "new normal" will be a combination of working from our homes and at the conference offices.

A substantial majority of the work of the OCE continues to be devoted to providing administrative assistance to the Board of Ordained Ministry. 2020 saw a transition in the position of BOM Chair, as Rev. Laura Speiran retired from the role in March and Rev. Barry Petrucci moved into that role. I am grateful for Laura's tireless attention to issues of justice and equity, as well as her concern for administrative detail and follow-up. Barry brings strategic planning skills and organizational vision to the role. These are especially helpful as I transition in July 2021 to a role that combines board work with that of Clergy Assistant to the Bishop.

Much of the OCE's work that related to the Board of Ordained Ministry in 2020 had to do with assisting in the transition to functioning in the new online-only world. Debbie and I worked with board leaders and members to "translate" in-person events such as the DCOM Training, Interview Weeks, Residency program, and Candidacy Summits to the Zoom platform. A particular challenge was how to conduct the psychological assessments that are necessary for clergy credentialing and are frequently part of other types of clergy status changes using a secure, online format. Special thanks is due to BOM member Ms. Sharon Appling who continues to devote an extraordinary amount of her time and expertise to making this happen.

Despite the significant interruption of work resulting from the pandemic, the Office of Clergy Excellence was still able to provide opportunities for spiritual and vocational growth to the clergy of our conference. With the help of a grant from the Conference Leadership Council, we sponsored three online workshops in 2020: a 4-session workshop on Spiritual Economics in August, and a 3-session workshop on Christmas through Jewish Eyes in the late fall, both led by Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peters; and a multi-day workshop on Sustaining Leadership in times of change in the fall, led by Sarah Hescheles and Rev. Nathan Kirkpatrick. A second version of the latter will take place in March 2021.

In addition, I worked with Director of Communication Mark Doyal and other members of the Directors Table and conference staff to produce online resources for the use of conference clergy and worship leaders. This included a webinar on Online Pastoral Care, online Advent resources, and (in 2021) online Lenten worship services.

I continue to be grateful for my colleagues on the Directors Table and the Full and Appointive Cabinets. While we do not always see eye-to-eye, the prevailing ethos of our work culture is that of cooperation and collaboration. Despite the pandemic, and even motivated by it, we work together to live into the mission

and vision of the Michigan Conference. Now that the new conference has been in *de facto* existence for 2 ½ years, we are all better at seeing how our individual parts fit together and how they might be able to do so more effectively. For example, the work of the Office of Congregational Vibrancy overlaps in many ways with the work of the Office of Clergy Excellence. Recognizing this is a part of the rationale for the planned 2021 transition from a full-time Director of Clergy Excellence to a role that combines the part-time Clergy Assistant to the Bishop with a part-time BOM administrative officer role. (The title is not yet finalized.)

As we move toward that transition, OCE Executive Assistant Debbie Stevenson has steadily taken on more responsibility for a myriad of BOM-related administrative tasks. She is the expert on the complicated details of the board's work, and I hear regularly from candidates, board and district committee on ministry members, conference staff members, denominational colleagues, and outside vendors how much they appreciate her genuine hospitality, calm demeanor, and excellent administrative skills. While my role will be changing and the amount of time I am able to devote to board work will necessarily decrease, Debbie's will be increasing in both scope and authority. I know the board leaders and members are grateful for that, as am I!

The combination of a Clergy Excellence-type position with that of the Assistant to the Bishop (A2B) is not unusual in our denomination and makes sense in a number of ways, including a financial one. I have a steep learning curve ahead of me and know that I will be relying on the expertise and grace-filled generosity of Bishop David Bard and current A2B Rev. John Boley. Trusting in their support, as well as, of course, that of God's constant, creative, and empowering spirit, I look forward to all that 2021 holds.

Jennifer Browne, Director of Clergy Excellence

BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS (CBOPHB)

I. MICHIGAN CONFERENCE BENEFITS

The Michigan Conference is blessed in its ability to provide a strong and valuable ministry of caring through its benefits programs.

Benefits Ministry Shares

Benefits Ministry Shares are billed monthly to every local church to fund current conference retirement and welfare plan liabilities as well as all ministries through the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits/Benefits Office. The amount of the Benefits Ministry Shares is calculated using a fixed percentage of each church's clergy compensation. The percentage is determined on an annual basis and adjusted to reflect appointments of half time or less, retiree appointments, or District Superintendent Assignments.

Health Care

The CBOPHB reaffirms its commitment to providing a comprehensive, sustainable group health care plan for actives and retirees while constantly assessing the financial realities required by all. Health insurance expenses are billed monthly.

II. PRIOR YEAR BENEFITS-RELATED BALANCES

Billings generated by the CBOPHB are directly associated with current liabilities for clergy/employee benefits or deferred compensation. Any payments not reimbursed to the CBOPHB by the local church or other agencies, by default, are absorbed by the CBOPHB and ultimately the annual conference for the expenses incurred. Therefore, permanent records of outstanding balances for retirement plan contributions, welfare plan premiums and health care expenses are kept on file by the CBOPHB with the intention to recover the balances in the future.

The following list includes the balances on record as of February 11, 2021 for both BMS and health insurance premiums. Payments subsequently remitted in 2019 may not be reflected in the totals below but may be confirmed with the Benefits Office.

Despite the effort of the CBOPHB in 2020 to provide temporary financial relief to all local churches through a six month BMS payment holiday, a record amount of Benefits Ministry Shares were left unpaid last year. Historically, BMS receipts have been remitted from 97%-99% annually. In 2020, over \$158,000 was not remitted leaving the rate of receipt at 91.35%.

If left unaddressed, these balances must become part of a local church's financial plan when a local church considers building expansion, merger, separation, or closure. Please contact the Conference Benefits Office for further details, to confirm outstanding balances, or to discuss payment options for prior year amounts.

Outstanding Prior Year Benefits-Related Balances					
Conf. No.	Church	Benefits Ministry Shares	Health	Total	% of total balances
Northern Skies District					
31001	Algonquin	628	0	628	
31002	Amasa: Grace	154	0	154	
31005	Calumet	141	0	141	
31007	Crystal Falls: Christ	6,015	0	6,015	
31012	Ewen	192	0	192	
31013	Faithorn	70	0	70	
31017	Greenland	101	0	101	
31018	Gwinn	433	0	433	
31021	Houghton: Grace	596	0	596	
31022	Hulbert: Tahquamenon	100	0	100	
31025	Ironwood: Welsey	104	0	104	
31030	Manistique: First	1,160	0	1,160	
31042	Paradise	100	0	100	
31045	Republic	462	0	462	
31046	Rockland: St Paul	372	0	372	
31049	Saint Ignace	0	1,688	1,688	
31051	Trenary	92	0	92	
	Total Northern Skies District	10,720	1,688	12,407	0.83%
Northern Waters District					
32002	Alba	597	0	597	
32006	Ashton	260	0	260	
32008	Baldwin: Covenant Cmnty	122	0	122	
32010	Bear Lake	2,962	4,242	7,204	
32011	Bellaire: Community	1,419	0	1,419	
32012	Boyne City	3,211	19,508	22,719	
32015	Cadillac	1,133	0	1,133	
32016	Cadillac: South Community	279	0	279	
32017	Central Lake	256	0	256	
32018	Charlevoix	226	0	226	
32019	Charlevoix: Greensky Hill	12,747	13,477	26,224	
32020	Chase: Barton	246	0	246	
32029	Free Soil-Fountain	975	0	975	
32030	Gaylord: First	813	0	813	
32033	Grayling: Michelson Mem.	1,065	0	1,065	
32034	Harbor Springs	240	0	240	
32036	Hersey	271	0	271	
32039	Houghton Lake	0	4,375	4,375	
32040	Indian River	2,601	6,295	8,895	
32041	Kalkaska	1,147	0	1,147	
32044	Kewadin: Indian Mission	1,500	0	1,500	
32045	Kingsley	994	29,313	30,307	
32046	Lake Ann	7,235	0	7,235	
32049	Leory	580	0	580	
32052	Luther	80	0	80	

32054	Manistee	1,259	0	1,259	
32055	Manton	709	0	709	
32058	Mesick	617	10,539	11,156	
32061	Northport: Indian Mission	156	0	156	
32062	Norwood	480	0	480	
32064	Onaway	608	0	608	
32068	Roscommon: Good Shepherd	600	0	600	
32069	Scottville	942	0	942	
32070	Sears	1,773	0	1,773	
32073	Traverse Bay	1,125	0	1,125	
32075	Traverse City: Mosaic	1,041	16,851	17,892	
	Total Northern Waters District	50,450	104,600	155,050	10.31%
Central Bay District					
33003	Arenac County: Christ	1,441	0	1,441	
33004	Auburn	1,292	0	1,292	
33008	Bentley	25	0	25	
33009	Birch Run	1,096	0	1,096	
33010	Blanchard-Pine River	1,253	0	1,253	
33011	Burt	250	0	250	
33013	Caseville	2,139	0	2,139	
33014	Cass City	0	1,785	1,785	
33018	Coomer	183	0	183	
33019	Dale	271	0	271	
33021	Elkton	6,431	0	6,431	
33022	Essexville: St Luke	1,565	0	1,565	
33024	Farwell	700	0	700	
33032	Harrison: The Gathering	83	0	83	
33042	Mayville	1,000	0	1,000	
33044	Midland: Aldersgate	2,158	0	2,158	
33047	Millington	650	0	650	
33049	Mt. Pleasant: Chippewa Indian	360	0	360	
33050	Mt. Pleasant: Countryside	900	0	900	
33052	Mt. Pleasant: Trinity	900	0	900	
33059	Pinconning	1,128	0	1,128	
33060	Pinnebog	2,658	0	2,658	
33066	Saginaw: Ames	648	0	648	
33069	Saginaw: New Heart	490	4,025	4,515	
33071	Saginaw: Swan Valley	920	0	920	
33072	Sanford	525	0	525	
33073	Sebewaing Trinity	0	4,435	4,435	
33076	Standish: Community	11,260	0	11,260	
33083	Weidman	968	0	968	
33085	Whittemore	44	0	44	
33086	Wilber	655	0	655	
33087	Winn	300	0	300	
	Total Central Bay District	41,165	14,013	55,178	3.69%
Midwest District					
34003	Amble	600	0	600	
34004	Barryton: Faith	440	0	440	
34006	Berlin Center	292	0	292	
34007	Big Rapids: First	1,388	0	1,388	
34009	Bowne Center	154	0	154	

34010	Bradley: Indian Mission	4,903	0	4,903	
34013	Caledonia	0	1,986	1,986	
34015	Cedar Springs	600	0	600	
34017	Cooperville	1,736	0	1,736	
34020	Dorr: Crosswind Cmnty	667	0	667	
34023	Fenwick	33	0	33	
34033	Grand Rapids: La Nueva Esperanza	334	35,984	36,318	
34037	Grand Rapids: South	1,026	0	1,026	
34044	Hesperia	450	0	450	
34045	Holland First	5,421	0	5,421	
34046	Holton	682	0	682	
34050	Kent City: Chapel Hill	6,545	9,975	16,520	
34054	Lowell: First	2,607	0	2,607	
34055	Lowell: Vergennes	0	3,702	3,702	
34057	Marne	1,095	0	1,095	
34059	Mecosta: New Hope	693	0	693	
34061	Montague	1,435	0	1,435	
34062	Muskegon Heights: Temple	0	1,851	1,851	
34064	Muskegon: Crestwood	960	2,510	3,470	
34067	Newaygo	9,527	3,125	12,652	
34069	Palo	33	0	33	
34071	Parmelee	239	0	239	
34072	Pentwater: Centenary	286	0	286	
34074	Ravenna	3,765	0	3,765	
34077	Salem: Indian Mission	10,882	3,135	14,017	
34078	Sand Lake	48	0	48	
34079	Shelby	7,276	37,565	44,841	
34083	Standwood: Northland	1,589	0	1,589	
34086	Vickeryville	33	0	33	
34088	Wayland	1,043	0	1,043	
34091	Wyoming Park	246	0	246	
	Total Midwest District	67,029	99,834	166,862	11.16%
Mid-Michigan District					
35006	Bath	501	0	501	
35008	Breckenridge	656	0	656	
35010	Carland	2,933	0	2,933	
35015	Corunna	20,899	0	20,899	
35021	East Lansing: University	2,782	0	2,782	
35022	Eaton Rapids: First	321	0	321	
35023	Elsie	1,282	0	1,282	
35025	Fowlerville: First	1,342	0	1,342	
35026	Fowlerville: Trinity	489	0	489	
35032	Hastings: First	813	0	813	
35035	Henderson	173	0	173	
35039	Kalamo	322	0	322	
35041	Lake Odessa: Central	1,565	0	1,565	
35044	Lansing: Central	1,575	0	1,575	
35046	Lansing: Grace	1,288	0	1,288	
35047	Lansing: Mt Hope	0	3,086	3,086	
35049	Leslie	464	0	464	
35055	Millville	1,694	0	1,694	
35060	Nashville: Peace	72	0	72	
35061	New Lothrop: First	250	0	250	

35068	Pittsburg	8,120	0	8,120	
35069	Pompeii	67	0	67	
35073	Robbins	466	0	466	
35075	Shepardsville	605	0	605	
35080	Sunfield	538	0	538	
35081	Vernon	5,999	0	5,999	
35082	Wacousta Community	0	3,273	3,273	
	Total Mid-Michigan District	55,217	6,359	61,576	4.12%
	East Winds District				
36006	Bad Axe: First	550	0	550	
36008	Buel	1,842	0	1,842	
36009	Burton: Christ	12,297	0	12,297	
36015	Clio: Bethany	1,432	0	1,432	
36017	Columbiaville	208	0	208	
36022	Dryden	486	0	486	
36023	Duffield	79	0	79	
36025	Elba	162	0	162	
36027	Flint: Asbury	6,833	0	6,833	
36028	Flint: Bethel	525	0	525	
36029	Flint: Bristol	3,685	0	3,685	
36031	Flint: Charity	33,003	0	33,003	
36034	Flint: Hope	1,843	0	1,843	
36043	Halsey	994	0	994	
36044	Harbor Beach	725	0	725	
36047	Imlay City	11,341	0	11,341	
36054	Leonard	1,766	0	1,766	
36056	Linden	625	0	625	
36057	Marlette: First	0	1,751	1,751	
36060	Melvin	730	0	730	
36063	Montrose	695	0	695	
36064	Mt. Morris: First	0	45,821	45,821	
36065	North Branch: First	74	0	74	
36067	Omard	113	0	113	
36078	Richmond: First	6,342	0	6,342	
36080	Saint Clair: First	4,442	0	4,442	
36089	Thomas	78	0	78	
36093	West Forest	518	0	518	
36094	West Vienna	518	0	518	
36096	Yale	1,480	0	1,480	
	Total East Winds District	93,385	47,572	140,957	9.43%
	Greater Southwest District				
37001	Allegan	1,328	0	1,328	
37006	Bangor: Simpson	2,833	0	2,833	
37007	Battel Creek: Baseline	75	0	75	
37010	Battle Creek: Christ	244	22,032	22,276	
37012	Battle Creek: First	2,868	1,003	3,871	
37014	Battle Creek: Newton	71	0	71	
37016	Battle Creek: Washington Hts	1,376	0	1,376	
37019	Berrien Springs	543	0	543	
37026	Burr Oak	325	0	325	
37034	Constantine	500	0	500	
37037	Dowling: Country Chapel	2,391	0	2,391	

37038	Edwardsburg: Hope	550	0	550	
37042	Galien	271	0	271	
37043	Galien: Olive Branch	271	0	271	
37054	Kalamazoo: Northwest	264	0	264	
37055	Kalamazoo: Sunnyside	8,753	0	8,753	
37056	Kalamazoo: Westwood	1,985	0	1,985	
37058	Lacota	78	0	78	
37059	Lawrence	5,624	0	5,624	
37061	Marcellus	230	0	230	
37063	Martin	372	9,429	9,801	
37065	Monterey Center	545	0	545	
37069	Niles: Portage Prairie	1,000	0	1,000	
37071	Notawa	54	0	54	
37073	Oshtemo: Lifespring	7,709	15,179	22,888	
37076	Parchment	1,530	0	1,530	
37077	Paw Paw	3,579	50,376	53,954	
37080	Pokagon	1,953	0	1,953	
37084	Saugatuck	192	0	192	
37086	Scottsdale	187	0	187	
37090	Sodus: Chapel Hill	1,237	1,790	3,027	
37091	South Haven: First	613	0	613	
37093	Saint Joseph First	0	7,322	7,322	
37094	Stevensville	873	4,219	5,092	
37097	Three Rivers: Center Park	130	0	130	
37099	Three Rivers: Ninth Street	179	0	179	
37101	Union City	0	27,601	27,601	
37102	Vicksburg	1,447	0	1,447	
37103	White Pigeon	250	0	250	
	Total Greater Southwest District	52,429	138,951	191,380	12.80%
	Heritage District				
38003	Allen	577	0	577	
38004	Ann Arbor: Calvary	1,536	0	1,536	
38006	Ann Arbor: Korean	97,397	0	97,397	
38008	Azalia	270	0	270	
38010	Blissfield: Emmanuel	722	0	722	
38014	Calhoun County: Homer	336	0	336	
38015	Camden	97	0	97	
38023	Concord	1,587	0	1,587	
38024	Deerfield	4,157	0	4,157	
38029	Erie	5,415	0	5,415	
38030	Frontier	200	0	200	
38034	Hartland	950	0	950	
38035	Highland	809	0	809	
38037	Hillside	372	0	372	
38044	Jackson: Trinity	631	0	631	
38045	Jackson: Zion	80	0	80	
38047	Jonesville	548	0	548	
38052	London	1,564	0	1,564	
38053	Lulu	930	0	930	
38054	Lyon Lake	19	0	19	
38055	Macon	240	0	240	
38061	Monroe: Calvary	731	0	731	
38065	Montgomery	97	0	97	

38066	Morenci	14,128	6,106	20,234	
38067	Napoleon	274	0	274	
38073	Novi	620	0	620	
38074	Oak Grove	0	7,835	7,835	
37075	Petersburg	569	0	569	
38076	Pickney: Arise	11,404	0	11,404	
38077	Pleasant Lake	685	0	685	
38083	Salem Grove	460	0	460	
38085	Samaria: Grace	8,594	0	8,594	
38088	South Rockwood	711	0	711	
38090	Springville	1,297	0	1,297	
38096	Wellsville	1,943	0	1,943	
38102	Ypsilanti: St. Matthew's	275	0	275	
	Total Heritage District	160,225	13,941	174,166	11.65%
	Greater Detroit District				
39005	Bloomfield Hills: St Paul	263	0	263	
39010	Detroit: Calvary	35,373	0	35,373	
39011	Detroit: Cass Community	45,862	0	45,862	
39012	Detroit: Central	3,145	0	3,145	
39013	Detroit: Centro Familiar Cristiano	8,825	10,502	19,327	
39014	Detroit: Conant Avenue	18,423	0	18,423	
39015	Detroit: Ford Memorial	4,534	0	4,534	
39017	Detroit: Mt. Hope	33,603	0	33,603	
39018	Detroit: Peoples	37,388	45,556	82,944	
39019	Detroit: Resurrection	16,828	0	16,828	
39020	Detroit: Scott Memorial	780	0	780	
39021	Detroit: Second Grace	7,781	0	7,781	
39022	Detroit: St. Paul	30,991	20,380	51,371	
39023	Detroit: St. Timothy	15,729	10,557	26,286	
39026	Eastpointe: Immanuel	520	0	520	
39034	Garden City	4,276	0	4,276	
39036	Harper Woods: Redeemer	565	0	565	
39037	Hazel Park: First	788	0	788	
39038	Howarth	359	0	359	
39040	Livonia: Newburg	828	0	828	
39043	Madison Heights	4,138	0	4,138	
39047	Mt. Vernon	951	0	951	
39049	Omo: Zion	204	0	204	
39051	Pontiac: Grace & Peace Community	1,935	17,439	19,374	
39052	Pontiac: St. John	2,571	0	2,571	
39053	Redford: Aldersgate	3,857	0	3,857	
39054	Redford: New Beginnings	5,306	0	5,306	
39060	Royal Oak: First	1,593	0	1,593	
39061	Southfield: Hope	10,360	0	10,360	
39067	Troy: Korean	6,368	0	6,368	
39070	Washington	101	0	101	
39071	Waterford: Central	3,077	0	3,077	
39072	Waterford: Four Towns	15,350	0	15,350	
39073	Waterford: Trinity	0	731	731	
39074	Wayne-Westland: First	517	0	517	
39076	Westland: St. James	31,223	0	31,223	
	Total Greater Detroit District	354,409	105,165	459,574	30.74%

Closed Churches					
	Melvindale New Hope	3,087	12,501	15,588	
	Flint: Faith	36,705	0	36,705	
	Port Huron: Washington Avenue	4,241	0	4,241	
	Whitmore Lake: Wesley	6,467	0	6,467	
	Shelby Twp New Hope	2,949	0	2,949	
	Saginaw: State Street	2,773	4,325	7,098	
	Litchfield	751	3,940	4,691	
	Total Closed Churches	56,973	20,766	77,739	5.20%
	CONFERENCE TOTALS	942,002	552,887	1,494,889	

III. STEPS TO RETIREMENT

The following information should be examined by anyone contemplating retirement within the next 10 years.

1. Review the *2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, ¶357, pertaining to retirement.
2. Attend a pre-retirement seminar within 10 years of retirement.
3. Confirm your service record with Wespath Benefits & Investments to assure that it is accurate. This is especially important with respect to pre-1982 service and the post-2006 Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) Plans since these benefits are calculated based upon years of service. Often it takes significant time to correct a special situation or service record error.
4. Confirm your Social Security record to be certain that all payments have been properly credited. The Social Security Administration is not required to correct errors over 3 years old.
5. Notify in writing the following persons by January 1 for the following year's July retirement season:
 - A. Resident Bishop
 - B. Your district superintendent
 - C. Rev. Don Emmert, Director of Conference Benefits & HR
 - D. Rev. Mark Erbes, Chairperson of Committee on Conference Relations of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM)
6. Once your intention to retire is confirmed in writing by the Office of the Bishop, the Benefits Office notifies Wespath Benefits & Investments and materials are sent directly to the participant from Wespath detailing retirement plan payment options. A pension projection is available anytime through the Wespath at 800-851-2201 or www.wespath.org (Benefits Access).
7. Review and update all beneficiary designations on your Retirement and Welfare Accounts at Wespath Benefits & Investments.
8. **Health Insurance**
 - A. Review the conference eligibility and cost sharing requirements for health care coverage in retirement. It is the subscriber's responsibility to understand the specific rules relating to eligibility for coverage in retirement prior to the subscriber's retirement date.
 - B. If you are retiring at age 65 or older, you are eligible for Medicare. You (and your spouse if Medicare eligible) must enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B effective the date of your retirement to qualify for the Conference Retiree Group Coverage. If you opted out of Social Security, you must arrange to purchase Medicare Benefits in order to be eligible for coverage under the Conference Retiree Group Coverage. Send photocopies of Medicare cards for you and your spouse to the Conference Benefits Office as soon as they become available. This is essential in order to coordinate health care coverage and avoid lengthy delays and/or denials of medical claims.
 - C. If you are retiring earlier than age 65, you (and your spouse) must enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B when reaching age 65 in order to continue health coverage through the conference. Send photocopies of Medicare cards for you and your spouse to the Conference Benefits Office as soon as they become available. This is essential in order to coordinate health care coverage and avoid lengthy delays and/or denials of medical claims.

IV. CONFERENCE HEALTH CARE POLICIES

Introduction: This section describes the provisions and requirements of the Michigan Conference group health care plans. All available benefits are at all times subject to and may be limited, denied, or terminated based on applicable underwriting provisions, contract terms, eligibility rules, and premium payment requirements. All required submissions, underwriting, and payments must be remitted in a timely manner.

It is the subscriber's responsibility to understand the specific rules relating to eligibility for coverage both while active and in retirement. Questions may be directed to the Conference Benefits Office or submitted in writing to the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits. Do not rely on verbal responses to questions raised in informational meetings or provided by representatives other than the Board of Pension & Health Benefits.

ACTIVE GROUP HEALTH CARE PLAN

Enrollment/Effective Date of Coverage: Health Care eligibility begins the first day of a new appointment/hire, change in appointment/employment status, or a life-qualifying event (i.e. loss of other health coverage), provided all required submissions, underwriting, and payments have been remitted in a timely manner. All available benefits are at all times subject to and may be limited, denied, or terminated based on applicable underwriting provisions, contract terms, eligibility rules, and premium payment requirements. It is the responsibility of the subscriber to submit enrollment forms within the required timeframe. ***If the enrollment process is not completed within 30 days of eligibility, the subscriber must wait until the next open enrollment period.***

Eligible Subscribers: Active Plan eligible classes include the following:

(Full-time for health coverage eligibility is defined as regularly working at least 30 hours per week)

1. Full-time Clergy (Ordained Clergy and Local Pastors) under Episcopal appointment with the Michigan Conference as the responsible agency for providing benefits.
2. Full-time Lay Employees of the Michigan Conference and its approved, related agencies.
3. Full-time Lay Employees of a local church (including District Superintendent Assignments) until the employee turns age 65 provided the local church lay employee policy offers health care to all eligible full-time lay employees. All conference eligibility requirements must be observed. The local church is the responsible agency for all lay employee health insurance premiums. Premium-sharing schedules may be determined by local church employee policies, but must meet employee affordability requirements as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
4. Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Lay Employees on Medical Leave receiving disability benefits, provided the subscriber was enrolled in the Michigan Conference Group Active Health Care Plan at the time they were granted Medical leave.
 - a. The subscriber must enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B at the date of first eligibility.
 - b. The subscriber is responsible for submitting a copy of the subscriber's Medicare card to the Conference Benefits Office at the time of Medicare enrollment to assure the proper coordination of benefits.
5. Dependents of deceased Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Lay Employee subscribers provided the dependents were enrolled in the group active health care plan at the time of the subscriber's death.
 - a. Dependents of a retired subscriber will continue health coverage under the same eligibility and funding provisions as the subscriber.
 - b. A surviving spouse that remarries will continue to receive the health care benefit. However, the new spouse is not eligible for coverage.
6. Enrolled dependents of deceased Local Church employee subscribers as allowable by the health care plan if continued coverage is a provision of the local church employee policy, and if the local church maintains responsibility for the health insurance premiums.

Eligible Dependents:

1. Spouse.
2. Children and Legal Dependents under age 26.
3. Qualifying Adult Children with disabilities. (Per insurance regulations, Adult Children with disabilities may not continue on the conference plan after the subscriber is deceased.)

Changes in Eligibility: All changes in appointment, employee, or family status that affect eligibility in health coverage must be submitted within 30 days of the date the change occurs, otherwise loss, lapses, or gaps in coverage may occur. Subscribers are responsible for providing family status changes (including marriages, births, adoptions, legal guardianships) in writing to the Conference Benefits Office. A delay in notification could mean a delay or denial of coverage until the next open enrollment period.

Working Aged 65: Active Clergy under eligible Michigan Conference Appointment and Conference Lay Employees in Conference/Related Agency employment retain eligibility status in the conference active group health care plan.

1. The conference active group plan continues to be the subscriber's primary coverage.
2. Subscribers and dependents must enroll in Medicare Part A at the time they turn age 65, but are not required to enroll in Medicare Part B until the effective date of the subscriber's retirement.
3. The subscriber is responsible for submitting a copy of the subscriber/dependent Medicare card to the Conference Benefits Officer at the time of Medicare enrollment to assure the proper coordination of benefits.

Funding of Active Health Care Policies:

1. Active Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Employees: Health insurance premiums are shared by the salary-paying unit (Michigan Conference, Conference Related Agency, or Local Church) and the subscriber according to the contribution schedule as established by the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits action.
2. Disabled Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Employees: Health insurance premiums are paid by the Michigan Conference to the extent established by CBOPHB action.
3. Dependents of deceased Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Lay Employee subscribers: Health insurance premiums are paid by the Michigan Conference to the extent established by CBOPHB action.

Termination:

1. A subscriber may voluntarily terminate a subscriber's health insurance policy by submitting a request in writing to the Conference Benefits Office.
2. Health insurance policies are terminated the date of a subscriber's termination from an eligible Clergy Appointment or Conference/Related Agency employment.
 - a. Coverage for terminated employees cannot be extended since COBRA coverage is not offered through the Michigan Conference.
 - b. Under special provisions of the CBOPHB, a policy will be extended for up to one year for a clergyperson appointed to an eligible leave of absence status. Eligible leaves of absence include Medical Leave and Sabbatical Leave only.
3. Health Insurance policies for a local church employee are terminated effective:
 - a. The termination date of local church employment. Coverage cannot be extended since COBRA coverage is not offered through the Michigan Conference.
 - b. The first of the month in which the subscriber turns age 65.
4. Health Insurance policies will be terminated for non-payment of premiums according to the following schedule:
 - a. Policy may be terminated at six months in arrears.
 - b. In a delinquency situation involving a clergyperson appointed to a local church, a repayment plan must be submitted to and approved by the Executive Committee of The Board of Pension & Health Benefits to extend coverage past the six-month period.
 - c. A terminated policy may be reinstated within 30 days of termination if the outstanding balance has been remitted in full.

Waiver of Coverage:

1. **Mandatory Enrollment:** The active group health care plan is generally a mandatory plan for all eligible appointed clergy. Appointed clergy may waive coverage if they have alternate health care coverage given any of the following situations:
 - a. Spouse's plan
 - b. Military plan
 - c. Former employer plan
 - d. Medicaid plan
2. Enrollment of eligible dependents is optional as determined by the subscriber.
3. Eligible Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Lay Employees that waive conference health care coverage must have a Waiver of Coverage form on file in the Michigan Conference Benefits Office.
4. Persons waiving coverage have opportunity to enroll themselves and eligible dependents in the conference health care plan annually during open enrollment or at the time of a life-qualifying event.

RETIREE GROUP HEALTH CARE PLAN

Introduction:

This section describes the provisions and requirements of the Michigan Conference retiree group health care plan. All available benefits are at all times subject to and may be limited, denied, or terminated based on applicable underwriting provisions, contract terms, eligibility rules, and premium payment requirements. All required submissions, underwriting, and payments must be remitted in a timely manner. ***It is the subscriber's responsibility to understand the specific rules relating to eligibility for coverage in retirement prior to the subscriber's retirement date. Questions may be directed to the Conference Benefits Office or submitted in writing to the Board of Pension & Health Benefits. Do not rely on verbal responses to questions raised in informational meetings or provided by representatives other than the Board of Pension & Health Benefits.***

It is crucial that clergy who have served appointments during their career in Extension Ministries or another Annual Conference are knowledgeable regarding years of service credit, coverage, and cost sharing in order to effectively plan for retirement.

Eligibility and Cost Sharing:

1. Grand-parented populations have been established for clergy members/conference employees of the former Detroit and West Michigan Conferences for all current retirees and all active participants who are eligible to retire by January 1, 2024. "Eligible to Retire" refers to the definitions as defined by the *2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.
2. Grand-parented populations will follow the provisions of their respective former conference that were in place December 31, 2018 in determining post-retirement eligibility and cost sharing. Individuals may contact the Conference Benefits Office to confirm eligibility and specific cost sharing at the time of retirement.
3. Post-retirement health care eligibility and cost sharing for participants not included in either grand-parented population are determined per the health care policy as established by the CBOPHB.

Termination:

1. A subscriber may terminate their health insurance policy during retirement at any time. However, the termination is non-revocable and a subscriber cannot re-enroll at a future date.
2. The health insurance policy of a retired ordained minister whose clergy membership is terminated with the Michigan Conference for any reason will be terminated the effective date of the termination of the subscriber's clergy membership.
3. Health insurance policies will be terminated for non-payment of premiums according to the following schedule:
Policy may be terminated at six months in arrears.
 - a. A terminated policy may be reinstated within 30 days of termination if the outstanding balance has been remitted in full.
 - b. Since termination of a retiree policy is permanent following the 30-day window for reinstatement, subscribers in a delinquency situation are strongly encouraged to initiate communication with the Executive Committee of The Board of Pension & Health Benefits to negotiate a realistic repayment schedule prior to the date of termination.

The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) is authorized by the Michigan Annual Conference to negotiate, compromise, submit to arbitration, or retain legal counsel regarding any claims for benefits that may arise under the Michigan Conference Benefits Plans. This includes the current Michigan Conference Group Health Care Plan, the Michigan Conference Lay Employee Retirement and Welfare plans, the United Methodist Clergy Retirement and Welfare Plans, as well as other plans instituted in the future. The CBOPHB will be considered the final appeal and have final authority to decide any issue in the event of a dispute or disagreement by a participant.

Presented by The Michigan Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits
Rev. Dr. Steven J. Buck, President
Rev. Donald J. Emmert, Director of Conference Benefits & HR/Interim CFO

PROTECTION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM
(aka MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PROTECTION POLICY TEAM (MiC PPT))

The Michigan Conference Protection Policy Team, in the past year, has focused on distributing the information about Safe Gatherings training and authorizing program to all the United Methodist churches in Michigan. Letters were sent to all the district superintendents requesting them to highlight the importance of training all volunteers in their churches who serve in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults to be authorized through the Safe Gatherings program or their local protection policy. For churches who do not currently have a policy they are directed to the conference website, resources. Our team has suggestions for a church policy including the addition of safe practices for virtual gatherings. We also offer the support of the team members.

Our goal is to have materials which are appropriate for the changes in ministries for children, youth and vulnerable adults due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have added a list of suggested changes to local church policies, on our resource page on the conference website. The next step is to add these changes to the Conference Protection Policy which requires approval at the next annual conference.

With the responsibility for training and approving volunteers for conference and district events being handled by Safe Gatherings, and currently more infrequent district and conference events, the work of the MiC PPT is greatly diminished. In the future we will continue to hold our required meetings virtually once a quarter.

Team members: Phyllis Hart, Mike Darby, Marguerite Zawisiak, Ruth Sutton, Rev. Dan Colthorp, Beth Pelkey, Rev. Kathy Pittenger, Conference Children's Initiatives Coordinator, Rev. Christy White, Conference Coordinator of Youth Ministries, Aritha Davis, Conference Administrative Assistant, and Judy Herriff, Facilitator.

Judy Herriff, Facilitator



Increasing everyone's ability to succeed in a diverse community.

As it was for everyone, 2020 was an unusual year for us at UMCH—but it was also a year filled with growth and unexpected opportunity.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we began the year planning for our expansion project and taking the first incremental expansion step for our child development center, increasing our available seats from 65 to 100. We also launched a new CDC curriculum and assessment tool. Our new curriculum, High Scope, is play-based, child-centered, and emphasizes active learning so that young children can enter school ready to learn.

We rolled out the COR Advantage assessment tool which aligns with our new curriculum and other community standards to ensure the successful transition of our children to K-3 enrollment. We also invested in professional development for our CDC staff to help them successfully implement the new curriculum and assessment tool and provide the best possible care for children.

When the pandemic hit and we faced mandated facility closures, support from the UMW and other donors allowed us to be nimble and creative to continue meeting the essential needs of UMCH clients. We began doing regular check in calls and supply deliveries for children in the CDC and their families; we hosted virtual engagement activities and academic support for youth in nine public schools; and we provided meals, delivered supplies, and coordinated frequent wellness checks for seniors.

In mid-June, we reopened the CDC at about one third of our previous capacity to allow for enhanced safety measures and increased available seats to about half of our normal capacity in September. We have continued to offer meaningful remote programming to all of the age groups we serve throughout the year, and hosted some programming in person in safe settings as restrictions permitted, such as an outdoor walking club for seniors during the autumn months. While adjusting programming and daily operations in the midst of a global pandemic was a challenge, UMCH was able to continue providing support for our clients, as well as strategize opportunities for our future and continued growth as an agency.

During this time, we also secured the first round of start-up funding for our planned Fresh Market, which will help meet a significant need in SECA for access to affordable, fresh produce. UMCH has been working to renovate a portion of our building at 900 Division (the future site of our expanded facility) as the home to our Fresh Market. UMCH is promoting pick-up of produce boxes currently, with the storefront opening planned for in-person shopping in the spring.

Additionally, UMCH has been able to increase community partnerships, in order to better serve our clients through new and/or expanded programming. Key partnerships include:

- In partnership with Family Promise of Grand Rapids, we are converting our former First Step House into housing for single mothers and their children to assist with the expansion of Family Promise's shared-housing pilot program.
- Supported by Heart of West Michigan United Way, UMCH has collaborated with Family Promise's Family Engagement Model. Through these funds, UMCH is able to provide support to CDC families and students with an on-site social worker.
- UMCH is also partnering with Community Rebuilders and Family Promise to pilot a drop-in care room for their respective clients. Both are collecting data to understand the needs of permanent care.

The uncertainty of the pandemic forced us to slow down our planning process for our transformation project during the first half of the year, but we are encouraged by the progress we've made these last few months. In September of 2020, Kristin Rahn-Tiemeyer joined the UMCH team as Development Director to provide leadership for our fundraising efforts in partnership with the CEO, COO, and Board of Directors. We received exciting news in late September that the State of Michigan had allocated \$1 million in the state budget to support predevelopment expenses for our project – a budget provision that passed with bipartisan congressional approval.

We encourage you to visit www.umchousegr.org and take a first-hand look at all that is happening at UMCH. Through our efforts we focus on honoring and respecting our tradition, but look forward to an exciting, dynamic future. We hope you share our journey as we continue to transform the organization.

Eric J. Williams, Chief Executive Officer
Carla Moore, Chief Operations Officer

UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN

We are grateful to be a partner in ministry with the local churches and constituents of the Michigan Conference. We look forward to serving alongside the Church in 2021 and beyond. No matter the course of The United Methodist Church, our Foundation is strategically aligned to continue our ministry with all churches and ministry organizations in the Wesleyan tradition. Our mission to help faithful people live generous lives in unwavering even during these uncertain times. As we reflect on this past year, here are some of our significant highlights:

While 2020 was an unprecedented year in many ways, it also was an unlikely robust financial year. The Balanced Fund of our UMF Collective Investments Funds of Michigan LLC provided a strong annual return of 15.16%, outpacing its benchmark by over 2%. Investors repeatedly realize that our commitment to socially responsible investment principles, highly competitive investment fees, solid investment returns, and comprehensive stewardship ministry make us a valued ministry partner. In fact, we invest more assets than any other United Methodist Foundation in the North Central Jurisdiction and are among those leading the National Association of United Methodist Foundations.

We awarded numerous scholarships and grants in 2020. Several of these scholarships garnered matching funds from other scholarship programs and were directed to seminary students. Beatrice Alghali, a seminary scholarship recipient, offered us this encouraging word, "My special gratitude to your entire team for the compassion you put into your work. You change lives. Your support has a long-term impact on me, my family, and the people whom I will be serving. May God continue to use you to build God's Kingdom in such a special way!"

We are committed to addressing the overwhelming issue of student loan debt faced by so many pastors and are exploring ways to reduce this burden. Look for a new, low-interest student loan refinance program to be launched in 2021!

We awarded the 2019 Wayne C. Barrett Steward Leader Awards to the following churches:

- Clarkston United Methodist Church
- First United Methodist Church in Saline
- Hartford United Methodist Church
- Utica United Methodist Church

In July, we welcomed the Rev. Dr. Sherry Parker-Lewis to our staff. She has a dedicated history of pastoral leadership and prior experience in education. She has combined these two vocations in her new work. She has already led a number of focused coaching cohorts for clergy and church leaders. She joins Rev. Jeff Regan in providing direct stewardship and leadership services to local churches.

Our posture of listening and helping builds trust among leaders during tumultuous times. We have been talking with Appointive Cabinet members and the Clergy Excellence Office about clergy leadership development and increasing a coordinated response to clergy regarding personal finance and clergy tax-related issues with the Treasurer's Office. While this past year has proven challenging in so many ways, our ministry continues to broaden and strengthen. We are anxious to partner with even more local churches and ministries across the state.

David S. Bell, President and Executive Director

UNITED METHODIST RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES and UMRC FOUNDATION

United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) has been a leader in caring for older adults since its faithful founding in 1906. The **UMRC Foundation** was created in 1998 as the 501 (c)(3) fundraising arm supporting Benevolent Care for residents who have outlived their savings, as well as growth opportunities for the organization. UMRC Foundation's mission is to promote the wellness, dignity, and independence of seniors by supporting the residents, staff, and communities UMRC serves.

On March 1, 2019 UMRC affiliated, under shared governance and leadership, with Porter Hills Presbyterian Village, Inc., a faith-based senior living organization based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As a result of this affiliation, UMRC is the sole shareholder of Porter Hills. Together, **UMRC & Porter Hills** represent the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a commitment to cutting-edge care, these faith-based organizations and their affiliates combine to serve more than 6,700 older adults each year, from 24 locations and service lines, across 22 counties in Michigan's lower peninsula. These include market rate and affordable independent and assisted living options, skilled nursing care and rehabilitation, specialized dementia and Alzheimer's care, cognitive behavioral therapy, physical and occupational therapy, home health care, Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), as well as partnerships in care navigation and hospice services. ***In embracing our Christian mission and guiding beliefs, UMRC & Porter Hills is welcoming of ALL, and we reaffirm our commitment to caring for the needs of a growing population of older adults.***

A year ago, we could not have predicted how different the world would look by March 2020. COVID-19 has been devastating to older adults, care partners, and families, bringing isolation, death, and heartache. Masks, social distancing, PPE – these words have all become part of our daily vocabulary. The pandemic has completely changed life as we know it. Yet, together, we have shown perseverance and resilience. One thing is certain – we will never again take for granted the ability to give a hug, share a laugh, or shake a hand. As the first vaccine doses arrive, we are filled with hope for the year ahead.

Through it all, UMRC & Porter Hills has shown it is a stronger organization when all its members – leadership and boards, frontline team members, the older adults and families we serve, and our friends like you who generously support our work – are united as one. We are so proud of each of our constituents who have been there to help ensure the health, safety, and well-being of older adults and our frontline healthcare heroes.

Since our affiliation in March 2019, UMRC & Porter Hills has accomplished much to align our organizations to provide exceptional care and service to older adults, and plans continue which will further align and restructure our boards in the coming year. These efforts have included streamlining policies and incorporating best practices at our communities across the state; refinancing debt while interest rates are at all-time lows; and developing new mission, vision, and guiding beliefs statements that will boldly lead us to a world in which all are empowered to age well. All the while, UMRC & Porter Hills remains steadfastly committed to our deep faith-based roots. This bedrock of faith on which we were founded continues to chart our course for the future.

New Mission Statement: Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives.

Vision Statement: A world in which all are empowered to age well.

Our Guiding Beliefs: Based on our founding principles, and guided by the teachings of our faith-based heritage, we believe in: ***Integrity, Wellness, Inclusiveness, Stewardship, Excellence, and Community.***

The UMRC Foundation and Porter Hills Foundation have also worked closely together over the past year to develop consistent policies and initiatives that focus on the health and well-being of older adults, and the education and retention of our outstanding team members. These include:

- **Benevolent Care:** the heart of all we do, to ensure that eligible residents who outlive their financial resources always have a loving home at UMRC.
- **Team Member Support Services:** offering competitive ***Staff Scholarships*** to support our outstanding UMRC team members in reaching their career and educational goals, with priority given to direct care team members and those with financial need; and ***Emergency Aid***, a limited fund to lend a helping hand to team members who experience an unplanned emergency causing temporary financial hardship.
- **Life Enrichment:** helping the older adults we serve at UMRC find their purpose, follow their passions, and live life to the fullest.
- **Capital Improvements:** transforming existing buildings and constructing new ones that provide the utmost in personal comfort and amenities for Michigan's growing population of older adults.

As COVID-19 struck in March 2020, the Foundations worked together to launch the ***Not All Heroes Wear Capes*** campaign to support the heroic efforts of our 740 direct care team members. Led by two anonymous matching gifts of \$250,000 each, generous friends and donors gave over \$1.1 million to provide for emergency needs of our frontline team members and their families.

In spite of delays created by COVID-19 and restrictions to outside visitors and workers, we are delighted to report the completion of the **Kresge Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center** on our historic Chelsea campus. Prior to the pandemic, we were delighted to help our Kresge residents move into their new private rooms with personal showers, with neighborhoods based on the **Action Pact Household Model** of person-centered care. Little did we know then how important this would be to keep our residents as safe and healthy as possible as the COVID-19 pandemic began. So many times, we have remarked on how thankful we are that our Kresge residents are now benefitting from the vision of our board members and the generosity of our donors. The private rooms, bathrooms, and air handling systems which resulted from this project have made a crucial impact in minimizing the potential spread of infection.

Through it all, we are especially proud that Kresge Center has maintained its **5-star quality rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**, indicating the excellence and commitment of our care teams. UMRC & Porter Hills was also recognized in 2020 as a ***Best and Brightest Company to Work For®*** in both Metro Detroit and West Michigan by the National Association for Business Resources.

Our **PACE** centers across the state have pivoted this year to provide more home-based care, including increased use of telehealth, to our PACE participants, keeping these older adults as safe, healthy, and living as independently as possible in their own homes. This year, we were also able to expand the **Thome PACE Day Health Center** to serve more older adults in Jackson, Hillsdale, and Lenawee counties, thanks to \$1,250,000 in grants received from the Edward N. and Della L. Thome Memorial Foundation and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

We are grateful for our faith-based history which continues to guide the future of UMRC & Porter Hills. Thank you for your prayers and support in helping us provide loving communities, care and services for older adults. We look forward to meeting with churches and affiliate groups over the coming year, whether via Zoom or in person when it is safe to do so, to share the good work you are helping accomplish on behalf of older adults and their families.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission of service to older adults.

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UNITED METHODIST UNION OF GREATER DETROIT
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2020 began like an ordinary New Year!

There were fireworks in Australia, kisses and champagne at midnight, and a countdown in Times Square, as millions of people watched the ball drop. It was a joyous New Year, filled with possibilities and hope. No one knew that life would change so dramatically by March.

It began as a blip on the evening news from a far off place, “Wuhan, China.” Then it became a storm in the hospitals of New York City and a startling reality in the halls of Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. In outstate Michigan, people were saying they are glad they didn’t live in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb counties, and they weren’t referring to traffic! What do you do when the world stops for a global pandemic, and you live in one of the epicenters in Michigan?

Every one of us will remember how we are living through these days of COVID-19. Change is the new normal! One can even see it in the United Methodist churches, where teams have been scrambling to learn how to utilize technology to stream their worship experiences, provide educational programming and receive financial support. Wow - I am amazed at all the new possibilities emerging for ministry. And yet, remembering all the wonderful people we have lost to COVID-19.

One new element though, of self-discovery, does stick out in my mind. For the very first time, family members have told me emphatically that “I AM OLD.” And without any hesitation, announced that if I HAD to go out, then wear a mask, practice social distancing, and don’t forget to wash your hands. I might be retired but most days I feel younger than my age. How about you? Maybe that helps our youthful selves get up in the morning with a smile, but now I don’t go out without my mask, and who can tell if you’re smiling? 😊

Celebrating One Hundred Years of Ministry!

On October 24, 2019, 250 United Methodists gathered at Birmingham First United Methodist Church to celebrate one hundred years of the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Union. It was a many-faceted evening that began with a delicious dinner and great fellowship around the table, and, of course included an annual business meeting, which culminated in approving new Union By Laws and Articles of Incorporation for the 21st century. David Vaughan, part of the Ann Arbor First United Methodist Church Leadership Team, touched hearts with his musical invitation to “All Rise,” and Bishop Laurie Haller of the Iowa Annual Conference, reminded us that one of the blessings of the United Methodist Union of Greater Detroit is that we focus on our mission to empower congregations and mission agencies to serve the least, and the lost of their communities. For a hundred years, the Union has focused on the big tent of shared ministry, helping congregations reach their communities for Jesus. Let us remember the tag line on the Union website “Connected to the Past, Creating the Future Together, Leaving a Legacy.”

As theological differences threaten to divide our denomination, Bishop Haller lifted three significant questions the Union will need to reflect upon as it seeks to minister in the future.

1. Can the Union continue its engagement in shared ministry in the midst of the uncertainty of the future of United Methodism?
2. How can the United Methodist Union of Greater Detroit envision and plan for the future?
3. Is division more important than the ministry we hold in common?

I hope the Union will answer these questions with the same kind of faith and commitment as our ancestors did. May our future be rooted in another century of witness and faith, in the name of Jesus. *Now on to our ministries...*

New Church Development

The Union continues to work closely with the office of Congregational Vibrancy and other groups to provide grants for new church starts.

- The French Ministry New Church Start is now in its third year as it continues to meet at Embury United Methodist Church in Birmingham. The Union has agreed to provide another year grant of \$87,000 to support the pastoral ministry of co-pastors, Rev. Gertrude Mukalay Mwadi and her husband, Rev. John Kabala Llunga Ngoie. This fulfills the usual three-year commitment that the Union makes to a new church start. In addition, a French Church Ministry Team has been created by the Michigan Annual Conference to assist this congregation in the development of their ministry.

Support through Loans

Another facet of our ministry involves making loans to churches and other United Methodist Church ministries.

- The Union has a long history of supporting capital improvement projects at Cass Community United Methodist Church. Both the flat roof of the church and sanctuary sloped roof needed numerous repairs. The flat roof needed to be replaced with an EPDM adhered system. The Union extended a loan of \$38,287.70 to address these roofing issues.
- For the last several years, the Union, at the request of the Greater Detroit District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Charles Boayue, Jr., has extended financial assistance to St. Timothy United Methodist Church in the form of a loan. The current balance of the loan is \$82,271.53. This is being provided to assist this congregation as they consider the options of merger, closing, or even redevelopment by the Michigan Annual Conference. Even in the midst of COVID-19, discussions about their future continue.

The Union continues to extend loans to churches at the very competitive rate of 4.5%. We work very closely with congregations who are experiencing financial issues and we are committed to providing support and assistance.

Grants for Ministry

Even in the midst of COVID-19, the Union works hard to respond to emergency needs and reinvests its resources in churches and special projects. Our support makes a difference in the ministries that actually happen in the Greater Detroit District. We seek to partner with churches that have a vision, develop a plan and are willing to implement it. The Union provides financial support to make that vision a reality.

- Grants were extended to Central Familiar Cristiano and Utica United Methodist churches to provide a virtual summer program for children and youth. Both programs utilized interns to support their online activities and volunteers to deliver materials and food.
- The Urban United Methodist Camp received a grant for a one-week virtual camp. The closing of Judson Collins United Methodist Camp motivated their leadership team to select Michindoh, a wonderful Christian camp in southern Michigan for 2021. The Union provided the deposit for next year's summer camp.
- United Methodists love music! Unfortunately, in 2018, St. Paul United Methodist Church in Detroit had to eliminate their live musician's position because of financial constraints. They began to utilize recorded music, with words displayed upon a video system. This style of musical presentation had a negative effect on this congregation's worship experience and growth possibilities. The Union extended a one-year grant to add live musicians to their worship experience and special events.

501(c)(3) Designation

The formation of the Michigan Annual Conference created some unique challenges for the United Methodist Union. New policies and requirements instituted by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCF&A) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) made it almost impossible for us to continue using the General Church United Methodist 501(c)(3) designation. If we had decided to seek a general church 501(c)(3) designation, we would have had to surrender our independence and allow the Michigan Annual Conference to nominate 60% of our Board of Trustees. The Union decided, instead, to seek its own 501(c)(3) status. This required hiring an attorney, Renard J. Kolasa (former Chancellor of the Detroit Annual Conference) to guide us through this process. It was a two-year adventure, filled with numerous forms, questions, and the development of new incorporation papers and by-laws for the Union.

On July 2, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service issued a favorable IRS tax exemption ruling for the Union. And I gave a great sigh of relief! I am deeply appreciative of the many people who assisted us with the various aspects of this adventure: especially Connie Perrine, our Office Manager; Renard Kolasa and his staff; our former Conference Treasurer, David Dobbs, who intervened with GCFA on our behalf; Rev. Don Emmert, our Conference Director of Benefits and Human Resources, who worked with Ron Coleman, the Wespath representative to the Michigan Conference, to lobby Wespath on behalf of our Union employees; and I wouldn't want to forget our Trustees, who helped us to review and rewrite our incorporation papers and by-laws. Let's hope that everything is in order for the next 100 years for the United Methodist Union. 😊

Looking Forward

The work of the Union continues all year long, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as we grapple with issues and challenges that local churches face. Presently, we are working on numerous financial and building issues related to the merger of Mt. Hope and Conant United Methodist churches. We are also investigating the possibility of a new roof for Motown Mission's Foundry House and anticipating working in 2021 with the Conference Board of Trustees on several issues.

As we look towards 2021, we are fortunate to have an outstanding Board of Trustees, wonderful professional consultants and an outstanding office staff. It is a privilege to be part of such an effective team.

The work of the United Methodist Union plays a significant part in the life of the Greater Detroit District. It is unfortunate that our Board of Trustees has not been able to meet in person this year, but I am pleased that our mission has continued. I pray that God will continue to guide and uphold the ministry that has been entrusted to us.

Carol J. Johns, Executive Director



GUIDING MEN'S MINISTRY IN CHRIST SO OTHERS MAY KNOW CHRIST!

A good number of years ago I was at a national conference from which I recall one of the keynote messages. The theme of the address was, "May You Live In Interesting Times." The speaker stated his title quotes the Chinese's "greatest curse they can put on anyone." Simply put, may you live in a time of change. Looking at this past year with the pandemic, we may understand this claim and agree, but what will you say when God guides us through, and what will you say when we use what we learned from the pandemic when we can move forward? I see change as an opportunity, and through prayer and transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit, the world's greatest change agent, bring about hope and kingdom building.

I have learned so much of the programs and initiatives prepared by the General Commission of United Methodist Men and shared through the National Association of Conference Presidents since last March that I am assured that there is reason to see direction and inspiration that gives me hope that United Methodist Men, with the proper leadership at the local churches and districts, can realize a transformation of the heart for God. Through this transformation the men, families, churches, and communities will be blessed. Our General Secretary, Gil Hanke, has reported speaking to a UMM wife who said, "I don't know what you are doing, but keep it up."

Space constraints in this report will not allow me to speak of all the affiliates and partners, of all the programs in place that will help not only the men and their families, let alone the church, community and beyond, so I select one as an example. Reintroduction of John Wesley's Class Meetings this past year is spreading the seed of growth through transformation now as it did during the Great Awakening. George Whitfield, the evangelist that led the Great Awakening, stated that he preached to far more people than John Wesley. Yet he said he had one regret. The regret is not realizing that Wesley's Class Meetings influenced so many more lives and will create change far longer than his sermons ever will.

Michigan UMM can benefit from this and other programs and initiatives now. Currently, however, we have an unresolved challenge. First, we need the local church UMM to be active, motivated, and inspired. One key link needs to be fixed between the Conference UMM and the local church. The missing link is the districts that do not have UMM leadership. Your Jurisdictional and Conference UMM are willing to train inspired District men to lead your District teams once staffed. Our mission is to support spiritual growth among men, helping men to mature as disciples as they encourage spiritual formation in others. Our goal is to empower the ministry of Jesus Christ through men within the congregations of The United Methodist Church. If you know men with a heart for leading men, please direct them to me. Together we can reignite this powerful ministry once the link is repaired.

Don Archambeau, UMM President



2020 started off with great plans for a year of learning, spiritual growth and fellowship. Instead, it became a year of change leading to creativity as we moved forward. Most in-person events were canceled. Mission u was one of those events, but the study was so appropriate for the time, that Rev. Devon Herrell proceeded to do it as an on-line event. Many units and individuals took advantage of that.

In order to continue doing UMW Conference business, we purchased a ZOOM permit. Diana Spitnale Miller became our host and got quite proficient at it. She also is our webmaster and stepped up the information and videos found on the Michigan Conference page. The ZOOM meetings reduced the travel expenses and were very well attended. We were able to do much business in a shorter amount of time. The fellowship was greatly missed, but we found other ways to keep in touch.

Many of our conference women found creative ways to occupy their time. A plethora of face masks were made and donated locally and further. Items for the Haiti Baby Box mission were made as well as school, layette, and personal hygiene kits for the MidWest Mission Distribution Center. Days for Girls received many homemade items also.

The church food banks, which many of our women serve on, got creative so that those needing assistance could still receive it. This kept many busy as some sites were short staffed.

UMW promotes learning through a national reading program. With little else to do, more reading was done and good books were frequently discussed at "meetings." There were/are many good books on the list.

The National offices located in NYC got creative and developed many Faith Talks. These informative webinars were free to participants. Most of them can still be found on the National Website: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org. Various topics were: Wage inequality, Dismantling Racism, the Church and Politics, Paid Family and Medical Leave, and Faith and Worship to name a few. Many, many women joined in these virtual learning times.

The National Council of Churches annual meeting was held via ZOOM as well as the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. I was able to attend both meetings. What a wonderful experience.

By the time October rolled around, the Conference UMW was well versed in ZOOM. Tracey Weaver Brame, a lawyer and dean at Cooley Law School on the Western Michigan University Grand Rapids Campus joined us to speak about the School to Prison Pipeline. She shared her experience with these problems and some ideas to reduce the flow of troubled black children. In order to keep the Conference up to date, we asked for videos from United Methodist Community House, God's Community Country Parish and JFON Kalamazoo and posted those on the website: www.umwmichiganconference.org. Leadership Counterpart training was done the night before the Annual meeting. There was great attendance to the training, so we will keep that in mind going forward.

Even though most units were not able to meet in-person most of the year, they stayed strong. The UMW across the Michigan Conference were still able to surpass their pledge. The money sent to National will allow the work of United Methodist Women to continue putting faith, hope and love into action by serving women, children and youth around the world.

WalthaGaye Leavitt, Vice President

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES, BOARD OF

Across the United Methodist Connection, the Michigan Conference has come to be seen as a "Premier Conference" when it comes to Young People's ministries. For over 25 years the Michigan Conference (and its predecessors) have engaged in a number of fruitful Young People's Ministries that have helped Young People recognize God's call in their life, whether that call was to ordained ministry, engaged lay ministry, non-profit service, or a plethora of other callings. We have built partnerships with seminaries, like Wesley in Washington DC and Garrett-Evangelical in Evanston, IL. Young People's ministries are vital in the Michigan Conference, and the Board of Young People's Ministries continues to support the spiritual formation and leadership development of Young Adults (18-35) and Youth (13-18) across the Conference.

2020 was certainly a year of both challenge and creation. Many of the ministries we supported had to find a way to serve Young People in middle of a pandemic. For many, this meant providing a virtual space for Young People to gather. There were multiple spaces provided throughout 2020. In the Spring, weekly meetups were scheduled in order to give Young Adults a space to gather, speak with one another, and participate in spiritual formation. Young Adults also participated in an online retreat with Irish poet Padraig O' Tauma in April. Throughout the summer and early fall, Young People gathered for a weekly exploration of the Enneagram.

Young People ministries also turned an eye toward anti-racism, looking to address the very real ways that systemic racism affect our society, world, and church. Spaces were created to help Young People on their anti-racist journeys, from gathering to create anti-racist resources for Advent and Lent to finding ways that spiritual practices can help engage anti-racist work.

We also continued to support CDF-Freedom Schools, Kalamazoo First United Methodist Church, EncounterMICall Interns, trauma informed workshops, Mission Interns, Global Mission Fellows, and so much more. One accomplishment we are proud of is our collaboration with Wesley Foundations across the Conference and their #WithWesleyMIUMC fundraising campaign. The Board of Young People's Ministries matched some of the funds that were raised. Through our CLC grant we helped to support ministries such as Motown Mission in Detroit and the CDF-Freedom Schools. Two new ministries were formed in 2020, the Ministry Incubators program and Latin'xt. Both of these ministries equip Young People to lead the Church into the future.

Our Board continues to find ways to support those who need funding, believing that we are here to help empower ministries for Young People across the Conference. Below are highlights of the ministries we support:

Mission Intern Program: A summer opportunity for Young Adults to serve in congregations engaging in missional ministries that address children in poverty, creation care, home repair, and volunteer organizing. A variety of sites across the Conference host interns for 8 weeks. In 2020, 16 interns went to sites and helped create COVID-19 friendly alternatives to familiar programming. All the while they learned about justice, conflict management, self-care, and opened themselves to hearing God's call in their life. This program is committed to creating bold and effective leaders while supporting vibrant ministries.

EncounterMICall Intern Program: A collaboration between Wesley Campus Ministries and local churches or non-profits, Young Adults are matched with a site where they serve 10 hours/week over 32 weeks (fall and spring semesters) assisting in various programs. The interns receive bi-weekly one on one mentoring at their site and bi-weekly small group leadership formation facilitated by their Wesley Director. This year we had 11 interns matched with sites across the Conference.

Ministry Incubators: This year the Michigan Conference participated in the Ministry Incubator Program, which helps to inspire new ministries and engage churches in new ways. A group of 11 Young Adults presented their ideas for ministry and entered into an 18 month long program that equips them to carry out ministry. In the future, the Michigan Conference is hoping to create a similar program that focuses on supporting the work of Young People across the Conference.

Latin'xt: Young People's Ministry across the Conference is committed to making space for all people to thrive. This year we helped to support Latin'xt, a ministry dedicated to building the capacity of Campus Ministers in order to launch Latinx specific ministries and work in ministry with Latinx students on campuses. Latin'xt provides mini grants to help support ministries with a focus on engaging Latinx young people.

Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools: Inspired by the work of Ella Baker, CDF Freedom Schools have five essential components: (1) high-quality academic enrichment; (2) parent and family development; (3) civic engagement and social action; (4) intergenerational servant leadership development; (5) nutrition, health, and mental health. In 2020, 12 servant leader interns helped to lead Freedom Schools in the Michigan Conference.

Global Mission Fellow US2: The Michigan Conference hosts Global Mission Fellows. Through this denominational wide program, young adults serve in areas of missional and justice-focused outreach for two years. GMF-US2s, engage with local communities, connect the church in mission, and grow in personal and social holiness over this time.

The Division of Young Adult Ministry serves to create opportunities for Young Adults to engage in personal and social holiness. This year Young Adults were given a variety of ways to connect with one another over a virtual space, through weekly meetups and special retreats. Groups of interested persons come together to plan events and ministry opportunities for Young Adults in the conference. This Division is dedicated to making sure Young Adults are given space at the table in order to shape the Church for this moment and the future.

The Division of Youth Ministry is designed to provide resources and opportunities for our Conference Youth and Youth programming. It is also designed to give Youth leadership positions across the conference, while providing spaces for them to voice their hopes and dreams for the present and future of the Church.

The Division of Higher Education and Campus Ministry: The Division of Higher Education and Campus Ministry supports the various Wesley Foundations across the Conference. Wesley Foundations are vital ministries, because they reach the highest concentration of Young Adults across Michigan, at college campuses. This year Wesley Foundations found new and innovative ways to connect with college students as they faced the COVID-19 pandemic. This year we supported Wesley Foundations in their #WithWesleyMIUMC fundraising campaign, in order to continue these vital ministries. This year we also hired two Wesley Directors. Audra Hudson was hired as the Wesley Director at Central Michigan University. James Magee was hired as the Wesley Director at Michigan State University.

The Board of Young People's Ministries is committed to support the myriad of programs that engage Young People across the Conference. We move forward into 2021 finding hope in the creative ways these ministries have brought Young People together, in order to survive the realities of a global pandemic. We are hopeful that in the upcoming year the Michigan Conference will continue in its dedication to Young People, a dedication recognized across the denomination. And we re-dedicate ourselves to providing opportunities for Young People to grow in leadership, boldness, vibrancy, and discipleship.

Elizabeth Hurd, Chair

DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

Good morning and thank you, Michigan Conference, for supporting the creative, energetic, and inspiring work of Michigan United Methodist campus ministry in 2020!

The Division of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (DHECM) is part of the Michigan Conference structure under the Board of Young People's Ministries. Our members are Rev. Lisa Batten, Blair Hunt, Rev. Katie Fahey, and Rick Miller. Bonnie Garbrecht concluded her service with DHECM in June. We greatly benefited from her background as a former Adrian College Trustee and her insights about the breadth and depth of campus ministry. We will welcome Jennifer Wheeler to the DHECM in 2021.

These are our current social media outlets in addition to the individual campus ministries:

- Follow Michigan UM campus ministry on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/umconcampus/>
- #withWesleyMIUMC campaign: <https://www.withwesleymiumc.org/>
- Loans and Scholarships: <https://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships>
- Michigan Conference website: <https://michiganumc.org/resources/wesley-foundation/>

In The United Methodist Church, campus ministries are **extension ministries of the Church** and are among its most significant disciple-making communities.

¶ 120. The Mission – The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches and **extension ministries of the Church** provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs (The Book of Discipline 2016, Part IV, The Ministry of All Christians; **emphasis added**).

The Michigan Conference Division of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (DHECM) advocates for campus ministry throughout the Michigan Conference connectional structure to secure primary financial resources and provide accountability and evaluation for our UM campus ministries. We help our intentional UM campus faith communities make bold and effective young adult leaders and disciples for the Church and the world by promoting the healthy spiritual and social development of young adults on campus.

The DHECM supports and relates with these eight Michigan United Methodist campus ministries. Their individual reports are on the following pages.

- Central Michigan University (Wesley@CMU)
- Ferris State University (Big Rapids Wesley House)
- Grand Valley State University (Wesley Fellowship)
- Michigan State University (Wesley at Michigan State University)
- Motor City Wesley (Wayne State University)
- Northern Michigan University
- Wesley Foundation at the University of Michigan
- Western Michigan University (Wesley of Kalamazoo)

Adrian College and Albion College are our two Michigan UM-related schools.

Local churches prepare a report of their college and university students as part of the annual Church Conference process. The DHECM receives those reports as a partner with local churches in caring for these students as they continue their spiritual development beyond the local church. Thank you for participating in this process. As of the date of this report, 48 churches have shared 439 students attending 92 different schools or military service. This database is used by our Michigan campus pastors for their outreach ministries.

Our Campus Pastors/Directors provide reports for each of our meetings and our opening devotions are based on their reports. This practice maintains our connection with the direct, personal, prophetic, and inspiring work they do.

We welcomed these new campus pastors/directors during 2020:

- Audra Hudson at Wesley@CMU
- James Magee at Wesley at Michigan State University
- Rev. Jeremy Simpson at Wesley of Kalamazoo

With welcoming our new campus pastors, we are grateful for the ministries of Rev. Charlie Farnum (Wesley@CMU since 2006) and Rev. William Chu (Wesley at Michigan State University since 2011). Rev. Jeremy Simpson joined Rev. Jessica Davenport as Co-Director and Pastor at Wesley of Kalamazoo.

As noted in last year's report, Rev. April Gutierrez was hired as the Chaplain at Adrian College and started serving in January 2020. DHECM provided financial support to Adrian for her ministry and then contributed to her compensation for three months when she was laid off. During the year, Rev. Gutierrez resigned due to COVID-19 conditions.

After deciding to suspend program ministry funding for Grand Valley Wesley Fellowship as of June 30, 2019, we reassessed their status at our November meeting and recognized the positive efforts they have made to re-establish their ministry. We decided to restore partial funding in 2021 and continue to monitor their progress.

In the Fall of 2016, we embarked on a bold fund development project with Network for Good to offset the large budget cut we received at that time. We made the Network for Good services available to our campus ministries. While they were helpful and insightful, we realized in 2020 that we had not integrated their services to continue getting the value of our subscription. We, therefore, concluded our subscription with them in September.

A creative alternative to ending the Network for Good subscription came from our campus ministries in the form of a fund-raising campaign that launched a couple of weeks ahead of our virtual Annual Conference. The campaign is called withwesleymiumc.org and our eight campus ministries exceeded their donor and donation goals, gaining 105 new donors and \$3,214/month in donations!

We developed a new grant application process for distributing our Conference budget funds and continued reimbursing our ministries for their payroll processing costs which started in 2019. Our approach to site assessments is being revised due to the impact of COVID-19 with the consideration of setting a two-year cycle.

The Francis Asbury Award is an annual recognition chosen by the DHECM. From the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), "the award recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to fostering the church's ministries in higher education at the local, district, or annual conference level of the church. The award is named for Bishop Asbury and is based on his admonition to the people called Methodist to erect a school in the vicinity of every church."

Rev. Charlie Farnum was selected as the 2020 Francis Asbury award recipient. With the gathering restrictions of this year, we were unable to formally present the award to Rev. Farnum. Among his contributions to higher education ministries were his 14 years of service leading Wesley@CMU, his commitment to Wesleyan principles of stewardship and financial insight, creation of curriculum for Michigan UM campus ministries, a strong commitment to collaboration among the ministries, and his clear advocacy for young adult ministries throughout The United Methodist Church.

Thank you, Michigan Conference, for your recognition and support of our disciple-making, leader-developing communities of faith among the most concentrated population of young adults in our culture. I invite you who live in the vicinity of one of our campus ministries to consider serving on the local board for that ministry. The relationship you and your congregation have with a ministry can bring mutual blessings in our shared mission of Christ's outreaching love.

Jeff Williams, DHECM Chair

THE WESLEY FOUNDATION at CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (CMU)

The Wesley Foundation at Central Michigan University (Wesley at CMU) is a historic, United Methodist campus ministry in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. At Wesley at CMU, we strive to be an open, authentic community committed to transformation in Christ's way of loving justice. Our hope is for all students to know themselves as God's beloved and to love God, neighbor, and creation in turn.

Wesley at CMU enters its ninety-fourth year of ministry in a season of transition. In July 2020, Audra Hudson became the acting director of Wesley at CMU, succeeding the thirteen-year leadership of Rev. Dr. Charlie Farnum and the six-month interim directorship of Rev. Chuck Kaleszewski. We are grateful for Charlie and Chuck's faithful service to our campus community and excited for this new chapter in Wesley at CMU's history.

Alongside this transition in leadership, ministry at Wesley at CMU has shifted in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to keep our community safe and well, our programming has been reimaged for online and outdoor space. Weekly worship has moved online with the help of prerecorded music from our Wesley Band, spiritual practice has kept us connected each week over Zoom, and our large, centrally located property at CMU has allowed us to remain in (socially distant) relationship with our community outdoors. Other programs – including our weekly community meals, swing dancing, and quarterly interfaith dinners with other CMU religious organizations – have, unfortunately, been put on hold until we can safely return to in-person gathering. We are eager for when these ministries can resume.

Student leaders have been an essential part of this shift at Wesley at CMU. They have risen to the challenge of building community amidst pandemic and have created several, creative ministry opportunities for their peers. Art-making events, hikes in the nearby arboretum, a service project in support of our local nursing homes, and a student storytelling event around mental health are just a handful of the many ways student leaders have built community this year. Their creative talents and diverse spiritual gifts have contributed greatly to Wesley at CMU's resilience in this time.

This shift to online gathering has also forged deeper connections between Wesley at CMU and our community partners. Over the last year, Wesley at CMU has collaborated with the Wesley Foundation at the University of Michigan and Clean Water for the World to host a year-long book study around environmental justice. This work and partnership will culminate in a spring Water Summit and virtual 5K in support of water projects in our region and world. Connections have also been made between local church partners and campus student groups around faith, justice, and service. We are learning that collaboration and community are essential in such uncertain times.

As we continue to navigate this challenging season, we move forward with hope and excitement for the ways the ways that God will continue to invite our community to love, justice and life abundant. We give thanks for your ongoing prayers and support as we strive to accept that divine invitation again and again.

Audra Hudson, Director and Pastor

WESLEY HOUSE AT FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY (FSU)

Overview of the Ministry

"Pivot!" can be heard yelled through the halls of the Ferris State Wesley House, usually when you least expect it. Whether one is building a campfire for fireside worship, cooking taco meat for lunch on the lawn, or leading a small group study – when we hear the yell, we know that something unexpected has happened and our plans will have to change. 2020 was the year of pivoting, of changing plans suddenly. We returned from our Spring Break mission trip to the onset of the pandemic, and things started changing rapidly. When

every student on campus was laid off at the same time, the Wesley House's food pantry, in its fifth year of service suddenly became a hub of activity and help in an uncertain time. In just under 48 hours our teams had adjusted to both meet the needs and figure out how to do online ordering and grocery pick up. Organizations and donors came alongside us to help us ensure that FSU students got what they needed to weather the uncertain times.

Our leadership team planned through the summer. Our back up plans had back up plans, every event or series had an "and if we're not in person" contingency plan as well as a rainy-day plan. We learned to get too attached to specific events or dates and instead invest in the fellowship, the connection, the learning, the growth, and the community. Then through the fall and winter we did our best to follow all the state, church, and university guidelines for meeting in person and staying home. We have changed our plans so many times in 2020, that it's hard to keep track of which way we're going. But through it all, the way we are going is onward and God has been so faithful to us.

The FSU Wesley House has grown through the pandemic, in number of students participating, in ways students can lead and learn, in ways we serve our community, in depth of knowledge and in love of the Lord. What felt like an impossible year also ended up being a year of learning to lean into where God was calling us, despite of what was comfortable or normal for us.

We are so thankful for the countless people who have helped make this ministry possible, even through these strange seasons. We love and give thanks for our 13 covenant partner churches, who even when they were meeting online, still prayed for us and supported us. We rejoice in our strong connections to both the Northern Waters and Midwest districts and long to be gathering with them again soon. We cherish our time spent on zoom calls, in parks and on lawns, and in recorded worship services, still getting the opportunity to share about what your gifts are doing in the lives of young adults through the ministry of the Wesley House. Our ministry is wild and unpredictable, but it's not possible without the support of people and churches who pray over, believe in, cheer for, and invest deeply in the gifts, talents, faith, and futures of young adults.

Thank you so much for pivoting with us.

Kim Bos, Campus Pastor and Program Director

WESLEY FELLOWSHIP AT GVSU

Vision: Wesley Fellowship at GVSU (Grand Valley State University) is an inclusive community enabling individuals to grow in faith and social justice.

Mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by welcoming and affirming, equipping, challenging, the mind, heart and spirit.

Values: Open Doors, Open Hearts and Open Minds, Inclusive, Accepting, and Committed to social justice.

Our Purpose: We are a campus ministry at Grand Valley State University, which is committed to the United Methodist Wesleyan traditions and actions of social justice and the inclusiveness of all people; the spiritual formation and soul tending of students, staff and faculty; and missional experiences which include reflection on the actions.

As it has been for everyone, this past year was a challenge. Respecting college and university pandemic rules, we have not physically been on any campus since mid-March 2020 and have moved our ministry entirely online.

While we continue to offer students the opportunity to gather via Zoom, we have discovered that most of our students are weary of virtual meetings. Over the course of the year, we have assessed and adapted how we engage students. We have reduced, but not eliminated, online events, such as group meetings. We have increased our efforts at offering support and encouragement in ways that don't necessarily require active participation at designated times. Our virtual and online efforts included:

A Virtual Chapel created and maintained by our Wesley intern. <https://gvwesley.org/virtual-chapel/>

A more robust and intentional social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) presence that moves beyond meeting announcements to offer resources for spiritual growth and support.

A few times each semester we check in with each student individually via phone call, text or email.

We hold a short service of prayer each Wednesday on Facebook Live and Instagram Live.

We offered virtual opportunities for one-on-one conversations, "Coffee Time" gatherings, game night, and Bible study.

During Advent we sent students several items to help them mark the season – a bookmark to color, seeds to plant, etc. We offered daily reflections of music, art, scripture, video Bible reflection and social justice ideas on our social media focused on Mary's Song throughout Advent.

In collaboration with several campus ministries in west Michigan, we offered students "An Invitation to Rest: A Service of Lessons and Music" on Facebook Live.

Thanks to a grant from the Board of Young People's Ministry, beginning in the summer of 2020, we have been able to send anti-racism books to 17 students at five different colleges and universities.

Our collaborative ministry with True North Campus Ministry, a Presbyterian Church (USA) campus ministry continues. In this time of pandemic, we have discovered new ways to engage in ministry together and with colleagues in campus ministry in west Michigan.

Just before campuses closed we were able, because of our collaborative ministry, to connect Plainsong Farm and Ministry, a food and Christian discipleship ministry, with the Grand Rapids Community College Food Pantry. Through this connection, the Food Pantry received \$2000 worth of fresh produce, in spite of the logistical difficulties caused by the pandemic. Food insecurity is a serious problem for college students, and particularly Community College students, and especially in difficult times such as these.

We continue to be the only progressive, mainline, LGBTQ affirming Christian campus ministry at GVSU; and in partnership with True North Campus ministry we are present in ministry at Grand Rapids Community College, and Kendall College of Art and Design.

We hope we will be back on campus in fall 2021.

Nancy Janisch, Director

WESLEY at MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU)

The Wesley Foundation at Michigan State University is one of the oldest Wesley Foundations in Michigan. However, with the current COVID-19 Health Crisis, Michigan State University was one of the only universities to shut down before the school year started, and heavily restricted students returning to campus. As such, nearly all students involved in the Wesley Foundation at MSU were scattered all throughout the state.

However, we have taken it upon ourselves to use this time to re-define exactly what Wesley at MSU is, and how we want to approach it in the future. Key to our rebranding was to continue to develop a Wesley that the students were proud of and have an increasingly active role in forming its identity. Part of that was to completely relaunch our website using student talent and involving weekly student input: <https://msu-wesley.org/>. We re-established ourselves on social media with regular updates. Launched a new Patreon to offer additional and more interactive ways to donate to Wesley at MSU. The subject matter for our discussions is now mostly student generated and strives to be active and relevant in our current culture.

Finally, we as a community created a new Wesley at MSU slogan, "Open, Accepting, and Affirming." Open in that we strive to be a community that is available to all college aged young adults, not just those currently attending university. Accepting in that we offer a safe space where we welcome and appreciate everyone from all perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. Affirming in that we work to support and uplift each person as they continue to develop in the faith.

With our new foundation set in place, and with Michigan State University still heavily restricting the student population, we are working hard to develop working relationships with the churches in our district. By offering a community for many who have been isolated during this health crisis, we hope to continue to be a source of life, joy, support, and discipleship for all who need it.

James Magee, Director

MOTOR CITY WESLEY

Motor City Wesley students and friends are at work imagining and creating projects for God's goodness in the world. With each \$100 mini-grant students receive, they make \$300 worth of impact in and around Detroit. Through our weekly "Evenings" video meditations and monthly online Trivia Nights students explore the theological depths of the Christian faith empowering their creative work. And, with investments this year in anti-racism and intentional community living, Motor City Wesley invites young people (and the local congregations who support them) into ever deepening lives of justice-oriented discipleship. This model of engagement has helped us grow our monthly participant numbers by 5-10% even during the COVID-19 crisis. This same pandemic has also served to focus students' minds as they respond with efforts to support quarantined dorm residents, lift up young people training as first responders and resource homeless

shelters in desperate need. We thank the Michigan Conference, the churches of the Greater Detroit District and everyone who cares about campus ministry across Michigan for your support. Conspire with us at motorcitywesley.org

Carl Gladstone, Director

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY WESLEY (aka NMU Wesley)

Greetings from the shores of Lake Superior! NMU Wesley has had an interesting year in 2020 as we navigated the pandemic and shifted from only in person events to only online events back to some in person and some online as was safely possible. Prior to the pandemic, we enjoyed half of the winter semester through Sunday night Dinner and Devotions, hiking adventures, and the Morning Grind, a unique book study over a cup of fresh coffee in CommonGrounds, the student run coffee house extension ministry. We also experienced our first joint winter retreat with the Lutheran and Presbyterian Campus Ministries to kick off the winter semester. We also managed to prepare for and go on our spring break service trip to the Yakima Valley in Washington. We spent time on JustLiving Farm in Toppenish. We helped out with the livestock and farm chores and dove into deep conversations about faith, church history, indigenous peoples, land theology and justice. This trip occurred on the cusp of the outbreak in Seattle and while we made it home safely, it made for anxious travel with all the unknowns. Upon returning, almost immediately life changed. Classes went online, students left Marquette in droves, choosing home over dorms to weather the unusual and trying times. We shifted what we could to online format to stay connected and in community despite the geographic differences.

The Fall semester found NMU as one of the few universities that choose to open for face to face instruction. This allowed for a short window of interaction with new students and returning students before we were again for safety forced online for all our activities. The bright spots of the fall included a new crew of regular students who choose CommonGrounds as their space to recoup away from campus and the dorms. We also had a student led weekly online gathering focused on the intersection of our faith and current events in our nation. To help aid in the amount of travel students did back home, NMU chose to end the fall semester prior to Thanksgiving and the last four weeks of the fall semester were also spent on lockdown. Despite the lockdown, we kept in touch through online opportunities and finals week care packages. All in all, NMU Wesley has weathered and continues to weather the COVID-19 storm with as much grace and passion as we can muster.

NMU Wesley's motto is Love Everyone and we seek to embody this through intentional expansive community that allows young adults to explore and live out their faith in everyday actions and words. We are grateful for the support of DHECM, Marquette Hope, and individual donors that allow NMU Wesley to thrive.

If you have a young adult who is considering attending NMU or is already attending NMU, we would love to get connected with them and welcome them to the NMU Wesley community. Reach out to Erica Thomas, NMU Wesley Campus Ministry Director at wesley@mqthope.com or 805-710-4752 or head to www.mqthope.com/NMUWesley

Erica Thomas, Campus Ministry Director

WESLEY FOUNDATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Greetings to you from your Wesley Foundation at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor! As for all of us, 2020 has been a challenging year of ministry in a time of pandemic. It has been a time of constant pivoting and redesigning ministry for a digital presence wherever our students may be. We are celebrating 138 years of ministry.

We are a pluralistic community academically, theologically, by age and interest. All students from the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Concordia University and Washtenaw Community College are welcome. We are a community of persons committed to caring, sharing, serving, learning, and growing with each other regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital or economic status, disability, or other human differences. Our common bond is God's love shown through Jesus Christ.

We seek to be a spiritual home by providing a welcoming and nurturing environment on the university campus and in the digital world. Through worship, fellowship, study, and service we seek to build an open and diverse Christian community.

Our weekly programs include worship, Bible studies, small group studies, and virtual or socially distanced service opportunities.

We continue to forge partnerships with area local churches to help meet the growing needs of our community. Through student interns, service projects, collaborative study opportunities, worship experiences, and social justice efforts, our students and local church leaders have had the opportunity to learn from one another and to combine our resources for effective ministry.

Our Board of Directors continues its focus on our long-range goals and how to expand our ministry of development. We continue to prioritize projects and develop plans for fundraising and endowment development for sustainable ministry.

We are focused on ways to help students discern God's call in their life. We seek to help students to better understand their gifts and graces and how to implement them in faithful ways in their communities. Through service learning, reflection, internships, and mission events, the students in our community can better discern who they are designed to be and what God is calling them to do.

Our students have been planning virtual mission and service opportunities and exploring ways to become active volunteers in our community. We have worked with Clean Water for the World, Detroit Hives, Motown Mission, and other agencies to help care for our community and world. While spring break was cancelled this year, we held a virtual 5K Run/Walk for Water Justice to raise funds for water justice efforts in our community, state, and world.

I am excited to see the many ways that God is working in the lives of these young people and look forward to seeing them help proclaim the nearness of the realm of God. Let us continue to lift them up in prayer, and strive to work together to support them as they seek out their calling in life and faith. We thank you for your prayerful support!

Tim Kobler, Director/Chaplain

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS



BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY – Boston, Massachusetts – www.bu.edu/sth/

Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

I am grateful for my first opportunity to thank you for your moral, prayerful, and material support of the Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH). Like many institutions, this past year at BUSTH has been largely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, outrage over enduring racial injustices in our country, and concern over rising white supremacy in our nation. Our work at BUSTH is to prepare religious leaders to encounter and engage complex challenges such as these. A year like 2020 makes the School's historic and ongoing commitments to social justice even more relevant. Below are some BUSTH highlights from 2020. We remain hopeful in our continued partnership with you in the work and witness of the School toward advancing social justice, fostering compassionate communities, and shaping wise leaders for a hurting world.

BREAKING NEWS:

- **Virtual Learning:** Our faculty, staff, and library successfully pivoted to fully remote learning in Spring 2020 upon the COVID-19 lockdown, which continued through the summer terms. Fall 2020 offered a hybrid approach to learning, due to Boston University's "Learn *from* Anywhere" initiative, which included a comprehensive on-campus testing program and strict COVID-19 precautions to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff. Students were given the most flexibility, with allowances to learn in-person in socially distanced and masked classes or in the comfort of their own homes via Zoom. The redirection to online learning served as an opportunity for BUSTH faculty to develop new online pedagogical proficiency and positions the School for greater engagement with current conversations concerning best practices in distance, hybrid, and online learning options for students worldwide.
- **Students:** We continue to increase and celebrate diversity in our student body, creating opportunities for in-depth exchanges and a rich virtual community life. Our Fall 2020 entering class was among our largest classes ever, with 128 new students enrolling in September, despite the fact that recruitment had to transition to be fully online.

- **Faculty:** We celebrated *dean emerita* Mary Elizabeth Moore's 12-year service to the School as she stepped down on December 31, 2020. The institution will be forever grateful for her historic tenure as its dean. The new dean G. Sujin Pak began her appointment on January 1, 2021. Dean Pak is known for her commitments to academic rigor, social justice, and United Methodism, which made her a wonderful fit for the deanship of BUSTH at this time. In the coming months, the School plans to appoint a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of Ethical Leadership.
- **Lilly Endowment Grant for Thriving Congregations Initiative:** BUSTH was awarded a nearly \$1 million, four-year grant to work with urban congregations responding to trauma. The project will be focused on responding to congregants who are continually shaped by and reacting to compounding domestic and global traumatic events, such as systemic racism, gun violence, homelessness, or immigration stressors.
- **Scholarships:** We continue to offer free tuition to United Methodist registered candidates for ordained ministry. Building student scholarships and housing opportunities remain key priorities. BUSTH also offers leadership fellowships to support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality studies: Raíces Latinas, Sacred Worth, Indigenous Studies, Korean Studies, Women in Leadership, and Black Church Studies.
- **Online Lifelong Learning:** Through a generous grant from BU's Digital Education Incubator, BUSTH began to offer online mini-courses, workshops, and reading groups for interested professional and spiritual enrichment of alumni and other religious leaders. Inaugural groups covered topics such as religious Afro-futurism, spirituality through the writings of Howard Thurman, and rituals and practices of grief in a time of pandemic. To learn about or participate in the next BUSTH Lifelong Learning offerings, visit bu.edu/sth/oll.
- **Theology and the Arts Initiatives:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our traditional exhibits moved to an online space. The art of John August Swanson is available at <https://butheoartsgallery2020.wordpress.com/john-august-swanson-social-justice-artist>.
- **Development:** BUSTH's "On a Mission" campaign surpassed all expectations when it concluded in September 2019, raising \$29.4 million – well beyond the \$15 million goal set in 2010. These funds reflect broad support from alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students, with a far-reaching impact on the School's ability to pursue its mission. More than 2,800 donors, including 1,927 alumni (a 50% alumni participation rate), contributed to our campaign.

PARTNERING FOR MINISTRY AND TRANSFORMATION:

- **Doctor of Ministry:** The DMin in Transformational Leadership flourishes with lively student cohorts that are interfaith, broadly ecumenical, culturally diverse, and global. The model includes intensives, online courses, and faculty mentoring.
- **Ecumenical partnerships:** We now have four denominational Communities of Learning: Wesleyan/Methodist, Episcopal/Anglican, United Church of Christ, and Unitarian Universalist.
- **Partnership with Hebrew College:** Together we are able to enrich interreligious learning through joint courses and public events, and also co-sponsor *The Journal of Interreligious Studies* and the *State of Formation* for emerging leaders.
- **Chaplaincy education:** BUSTH and the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab received a grant to support the joint project "Innovations in Chaplaincy Education," which will seek to redesign courses on chaplaincy in higher education, and centralize education for chaplaincy curricula, including competencies needed for chaplains or other professionals in spiritual care.

TAKING ACTION GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY:

- **Campus action:** Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing. BUSTH is the first certified Green School in BU and is active in the Green Seminary Initiative.
- **Internships in global service and peacemaking:** Students participate in apprenticeship ministries across the world.

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE:

- Faculty, staff, and students are active in #BlackLivesMatter efforts to seek racial equality, and in collaborative services to support people suffering the consequences of immigration practices or disability inequities.
- In Town Hall meetings, the community has deep conversations on issues that divide, seeking to develop capacities for relating across difference and to create a community based on the dignity of all.

BUSTH celebrates transformational leaders of The United Methodist Church. Your legacy and witness and your partnership give us hope and courage for the future.

G. Sujin Pak, Dean



CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY – Atlanta, Georgia – www.candler.emory.edu

Since our founding in 1914, **Candler School of Theology at Emory University** has educated more than 10,000 students, shaping thoughtful, principled, and courageous leaders dedicated to transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ. We continued our work even through this most difficult year, with the coronavirus continuing its march around the world, a reckoning for racial injustice rolling across our nation, and a toxic, divisive political atmosphere challenging our civic life. Perhaps there has been no better year than this to underscore the importance of faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world – the type of leaders we form at Candler.

Though our mission remains unchanged, the pandemic has necessitated many changes in how we undertake that mission: We have shifted classes online, redesigned syllabi to support optimal online learning, developed new ways to worship and experience community together in the virtual sphere, and discerned which new habits and modalities have promise for enriching our work even after the pandemic ends. Through these efforts, we and our students have gained deep experience in being flexible, adaptable, and creative as we respond to the demands of ever-changing contexts – experience that not only serves us well now, but will continue to serve us and our ministries far into the future.

Candler is one of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, yet true to the Methodist tradition of ecumenical openness, we enthusiastically welcome students from 44 denominations, with 46% of MDiv students coming from the Wesleyan tradition. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 483 from 12 countries and 37 states, 44 percent persons of color (U.S.), and a median age of 27 among MDivs. This diversity is a rich blessing, and this year we created a new staff position of assistant director of student life for diversity, equity and inclusion to foster understanding and ensure we are responsive to the needs of our diverse student body.

We offer six single degrees (MDiv, MTS, MRL MRPL, ThM, DMin) and ten dual degrees. Our Doctor of Ministry degree is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry while completing their degrees. Our new Chaplaincy concentration is now among our most popular, and our Teaching Parish program enables students to serve as student pastors in local churches throughout the southeast, learning firsthand about shepherding a congregation; this year, there were 36 participants.

Alleviating student debt through generous financial aid remains among our top priorities. In 2019-2020, we awarded nearly \$6.6 million in financial aid, with 100% of MDiv and 98% of all students receiving support. All MDiv students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church receive full-tuition scholarships, and all MDiv, MTS, and master of religious leadership students who are enrolled part-time or more receive a scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition for the length of their program.

The demands of the pandemic did not diminish Candler's robust schedule of events. Candler's Black Church Studies program celebrated its 30th anniversary with a yearlong slate of online lectures and panel discussions, now available at vimeo.com/candler. We also launched The Candler Foundry to make theological education accessible to all, through short and semester-length courses taught by Candler faculty, videos and discussion guides to spark conversation in groups or one-on-one, and Facebook Live panel discussions connecting theology with current issues in the world. View the latest offerings at candlerfoundry.emory.edu.

Candler's ability to fulfill our mission of educating faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world depends upon your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of our denomination. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu.

Jan Love, Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics

DREW

DREW UNIVERSITY THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL – Madison, New Jersey – www.drew.edu

As with most other schools in the northeast of the U.S., Drew University evacuated its campus in early spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Drew Theological School faculty and staff adapted to this challenge with resilience, compassion, and creativity. The Theological School faculty put their courses all online, led development workshops for faculty across the university, and, in order to accommodate our many international admits who would not be able to enter the United States for fall 2020, designed an asynchronous Master of Divinity program. As a result of this work, the Theological School welcomed 147 new students, its largest entering class in a decade, with an enrollment of 380 for the current academic year.

Our chapel team has also led the way in creating online worship experiences that connect the Drew community now across the globe. All degree programs at the Theological School include interdisciplinary courses that demand out-of-the-box thinking, apprenticeship training that addresses real-world issues, and modes of learning that promote adaptability and innovation. Our MDiv and MATM degrees include a required gateway year, vocational pathways, and experiential learning that develops and deepens adaptive leadership skills. The curriculum features a team-designed and taught interdisciplinary sequence of core courses reflecting the integration of the theological disciplines and practices characteristic of the life of faith.

The faculty have also articulated shared values that are infused across the teaching and learning at Drew: a commitment to anti-racism; gender and sexual-identity equality; eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and interfaith understanding and cooperation. Drew cultivates pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, and thought leaders who go all over the world to take their place as the next generation of faith leaders and change agents.

Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, Interim Dean



DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL – Durham, North Carolina – www.divinity.duke.edu

Edgardo Colón-Emeric, the Irene and William McCutchen Associate Professor of Reconciliation and Theology, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Director of the Center for Reconciliation will become Dean of Duke Divinity School (DDS) July 1, 2021. Dean Gregory L. Jones will leave DDS to become president of Belmont University.

Duke Divinity School (DDS) continues to discern fresh strategies to respond faithfully and wisely to the changing church and the world. The disruptions, challenges, and injustices of 2020 occupied enormous attention as the school adapted to different modes of teaching/learning and interacting while also managing financial challenges both to DDS and Duke University.

DDS announced a new hybrid version of its Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program that will give students the opportunity to earn the M.Div. degree without relocating to Durham, N.C. The hybrid learning curriculum combines remote coursework with week-long residential intensives, where students connect in-person. The first cohort will begin coursework in fall 2021.

DDS welcomed the largest incoming class in school history with 257 new students from 35 different states and seven countries, including China, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, South Korea and the United States. Our Master of Arts in Christian Practice (28 students) and Doctor of Ministry (52 students) programs received record enrollments. The Master of Theology (13 students), Master of Theological Studies (34 students), and Doctor of Theology (6 students) had strong enrollment. Our new Certificate in Theology and Health Care will enroll 6 students, all of whom are TMC Fellows. Across all degree programs, 31 percent of the

incoming class identified as a race/ethnicity other than white. Black students made up 21 percent of all students, Asian students, 5 percent; and American Indian students, 2 percent. 45 percent of students in the incoming class were female, and 55 percent were male. The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program gained 113 new students. Students from minority groups comprised more than 25 percent of incoming M.Div. students, with black students making up 19 percent. Female students made up 46 percent of incoming M.Div. students, while males were 54 percent. There were 30 denominations represented in the M.Div. entering class, with 30 percent affiliated with The United Methodist Church. Nondenominational students made up 16 percent of the new M.Div. students; Baptists, 16 percent; and Anglican-Episcopalian, nine percent.

2020 also witnessed an expansion of DDS's partnerships, including the Kern Family Foundation partnership with the Office of Wesleyan Engagement to provide accelerated pathways for undergraduate students to pursue the Master of Divinity degree at Duke. DDS welcomed its first cohort of students at Martin Methodist College, taking classes at Duke. The Americas Initiative, a fellowship of organizations, scholars and practitioners convened by the Center for Reconciliation, is working on peacebuilding among Latin American and Latinx communities, particularly those of Indigenous and African descent. The five-year Black Pastoral Leadership Collaboration, begun in the fall of 2019 and jointly funded by DDS and the Provost's Office, is working to harness the research and experiential wisdom of Black pastoral leaders nationally through a leadership school and practical theology archiving project.

DDS sought to reckon in deeper and broader ways with systemic racism and injustice, particularly in light of the overlapping pandemics of COVID-19, economic crisis, and mental health challenges, and the school sought opportunities to strengthen its partnership and racial justice work across Duke University. A Story Listening and Gathering project solicited past or present students, faculty, and staff to share stories of how race and racial discrimination affects daily life at DDS with a goal of understanding the experiences of the community and to inform the school's broader anti-racism efforts. A new Race and the Professions Fellowship, in partnership with the Kenan Institute for Ethics, and the Churches Promoting Recovery Project, in partnership with the Theology, Medicine, and Culture Initiative, provided new opportunities for students to deepen their vocational formation and reimagine community transformation beyond campus.

DDS hired eight new faculty members in 2020. Peter Casarella is a Professor of Theology and has published widely on medieval Christian Neoplatonism, contemporary theological aesthetics, intercultural thought, and the Hispanic/Latino presence in the U.S. Catholic Church.

Sarah Barton is an Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Theological Ethics whose scholarly work is focused in theological ethics, with special attention to theological anthropology, disability, liturgy, and pastoral care. She has a joint faculty appointment as assistant professor of occupational therapy at Duke University Medical Center.

Quinton Dixie, Associate Research Professor of Church History and Black Church Studies, specializes in American religious history and has written on a wide range of topics, from the African American Civil Rights Movement to the history of Black Baptists in the U.S.

Zebulon Highben is Associate Professor of the Practice of Church Music at Duke Divinity School and Director of Chapel Music at Duke University Chapel, and his research interests include hymnody, liturgy, music and exegesis, the musical heritage of the Reformation.

Alma Tinoco Ruiz is a Lecturer in Homiletics and Evangelism and Director of the Hispanic House of Studies. She is a practical theologian whose work centers on the intersection of homiletics, pastoral care, and evangelism and she is a provisional elder in The United Methodist Church.

Janet Martin Soskice is the William K. Warren Distinguished Research Professor of Catholic Theology and for the past 30 years was on The Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. Her work lies at the intersection of Christian theology and philosophy.

Norbert Wilson is Professor of Food, Economics, and Community, and his research explores food issues such as access, choice, and food waste. He is an ordained vocational deacon in the Episcopal Church USA.

Wylin D. Wilson is an Assistant Professor of Theological Ethics, and prior to joining the Duke faculty, she was on faculty at the Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics and was a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School. Her research focuses on religion, gender, and bioethics, including rural bioethics and Black Church studies.

L. Gregory Jones, Dean



GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – Evanston, Illinois – www.garrett.edu

For 168 years Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has been in service to the Church and the Methodist connection through the formation of Christian leaders in ordained and lay ministries. A result of the union of three historic institutions (Garrett Biblical Institute, Evangelical Theological Seminary, and the Chicago Training School), Garrett-Evangelical is located in the center and at the heart of the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston, IL.

One of the official 13 seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Garrett-Evangelical is perennially listed as one of the Seminaries that Change the World and boasts one of the finest theological faculties in the world. With a global student body, that also represents every region of the United States, Garrett-Evangelical is proud of its diverse and vibrant community of learning and of its enduring commitment to training skilled, bold and articulate leaders who share the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Rooted in our Wesleyan, Methodist, and Evangelical United Brethren origins, today's Garrett-Evangelical is also international and ecumenical in spirit and is committed to equipping students to proclaim the good news of the Gospel, to foster deep spirituality in the lives of the communities and persons they serve, to lead with cultural competence and commitment to racial equity and justice, and as agents of transformative change for the wellbeing of all persons and creation.

Garrett-Evangelical continues to offer a broad array of degree programs that equip students for leadership in congregations, healthcare settings, community organizing and public theology, counseling, and scholarship and teaching in the classic theological disciplines and practices. 57% of Garrett-Evangelical students pursue congregational leadership following graduation, and our pastoral care and counseling programs also increasingly attract a large portion of our student body.

This year Garrett-Evangelical also welcomed a new president. The Reverend Javier A. Viera, an elder in the New York Annual Conference, assumed the presidency on January 1, 2021 after having served six and half years as Dean of Drew University Theological School. Dr. Viera will also serve as professor of Education and Leadership. He succeeds Dr. Lallene Rector, who served as president for seven years, and after a year-long sabbatical she will return to her position on the seminary's faculty as a professor of psychology and religion.

Garrett-Evangelical continues to extend its service to the church through its centers and institutes which are focused on equipping leaders with the resources necessary to thrive in ministry and public leadership, and on influencing the moral, theological, and ethical conversations in the public square. This year we launched the Institute for Ecological Regeneration which seeks to help churches and local communities address the global climate crisis with theological and ethical integrity and creativity. It joins the Styberg Preaching Institute, the Center for the Black Church Experience, the Stead Center for Ethics and Values, the Ruben P. Job Institute for Spiritual Formation, the Hispanic-Latinx Center, and the Asian/Asian-American Ministry Center as vital hubs of spiritual innovation and theological renewal for the good of the Church and the world.

Javier A. Viera, President

**METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO** – Delaware, Ohio – www.mtso.edu

Thank you for this opportunity to bring you news from MTSO.

MTSO preserves learning and community despite COVID-19

Confronted by the challenges of a pandemic, MTSO's students, faculty and staff joined together to preserve a learning environment and a sense of community. In March 2020, the school announced that Spring Semester and summer classes all would move online. A virtual commencement was held for the class of 2020, featuring submitted video of individual graduates, as well as faculty members in full regalia. Addressing the graduates, President Jay Rundell said, "The pandemic has prepared you in ways that you might not realize. There will be surprises in the future. You now know how to adapt."

Fall 2020 classes began in a "hyflex" format, blending online learning and optional campus-based classes. As the virus became more widespread in mid-October, the school pivoted to all-online learning, extending the online-only format through the 2021 Spring Semester. During all COVID-related adaptations, MTSO's tradition of Tuesday chapel services continued – in person and distanced when possible, online when necessary. In addition, the dining hall staff offered free Thanksgiving dinners for pickup to students and employees, and continued to provide to-go lunches on a regular basis. Student organizations and study groups have continued to meet virtually. Most recently, plans were made to hold the 2021 commencement virtually.

Full-tuition scholarships extended to those pursuing United Methodist candidacy

MTSO and the school's generous donors pledged to extend a full-tuition pledge to all prospective students who are pursuing United Methodist elder or deacon candidacy. The MTSO admissions staff is happy to answer questions at 800-333-6876 or admissions@mtso.edu.

\$1 million Lilly Endowment grant will promote thriving in ministry

In December 2020, MTSO received a grant of \$995,731 to help establish "Spaces for Thriving: Cultivating Authentic Pastors for Small Membership Churches and Communities of Color." The project is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry, an initiative that supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they create or strengthen programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry. The central goals of MTSO's project are to improve pastoral thriving through attention to well-being, authenticity in vocation, and connections to fellow pastors.

Danny Russell, Director of Communications

**SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY** – Leawood, Kansas / Oklahoma City, OK – www.spst.edu

Saint Paul School of Theology, a seminary of The United Methodist Church, is committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry. We are one institution, online and on-campus, in Kansas and Oklahoma.

This past year, we have all faced new challenges amid these unsettled times. Saint Paul School of Theology began the 2020-2021 academic year offering students an online option for all courses. With many students choosing to attend class solely online, our Student Council created a monthly "Chat & Chew" where students, faculty, and staff come together to eat lunch and talk about life, seminary, and ministry. In addition, Rev. Rod Newman, our Oklahoma Campus Chapel Coordinator, crafts a weekly Community Prayer to provide encouragement and faithfulness as the school seeks to provide spiritual formation in new ways.

Kansas Campus Chapel Coordinator Dr. Casey Sigmon took worship to new technological levels by introducing our weekly online worship service via Zoom, bringing our separate campus chapel services together for one service where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere from wherever they are. Along with our featured alumni worship preachers, the community was blessed this fall by the presence of Musician in Residence Hannah Rand, from The Many, who led the music each week for worship. In Spring 2020, Odell Talley, Director of Music for Swope Parkway United and organist for Zion Travelers Missionary Baptist, served as Musician in Residence. For those who cannot join us live, chapel recordings are available on the Saint Paul YouTube channel.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue to contribute to the academy, church, and society. This year, we have added new adjunct professors, including Rev. Dr. Carol Cook-Moore and Rev. Dr. Tiffany Nagel Monroe both of the OKUMC, Rev. Dr. Robert Turner of Vernon Chapel AME, United Methodist Deaconess Cindy Johnson of Rio Grande Conference, Rev. Adam Hamilton and Debi Nixon both of Church of the Resurrection, Rev. Chebon Kernell of the UMC Native American Comprehensive Plan, and Rev. Dr. Shannon Fleck of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches.

The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology continue to maintain high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and engagement. Their many activities and publications over the past year are so numerous that space permits only the sharing of selected highlights.

1. Dr. Jim Brandt, Professor of Historical Theology, will publish "Schleiermacher's Christian Ethics" in the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Schleiermacher, which will appear in 2022 from the Oxford University Press.
2. Dr. Nancy Howell, Professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion and Oubri A. Poppele Professor of Health and Welfare Ministries, continues her service on the Executive Committee of the International Society for Science and Religion, working on several committees advancing the aims of the Society.
3. Rev. Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, will see the publication of his book, Reading and Interpreting the Bible with Global South Christians: A 21st Century Model for Europe and North America Christendom, by Wipf and Stock Publishers this summer. He has also written four Commentaries on 2 Corinthians and Ephesians which appeared on WorkingPreacher.org in April.
4. Dr. Hal Knight, Donald and Pearl Wright Professor of Wesleyan Studies, continues his work as a contributing writer in *The Missouri Methodist* magazine.
5. Dr. Kristen E. Kvam, Professor of Theology, serves as co-chair for the American Academy of Religion's Program Unit "Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions." Over the last several months, she has conducted invited presentations to the Great Plains United Methodist Church Clergy and its Clergy Excellence in Liminal Time Conversations and the Fall Theological Conference of Central States Synod (ELCA) on October 14, 2020.
6. Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education, continues to contribute regularly to WorkingPreacher.org and served as the keynote speaker at the Wesleyan Liturgical Society in Kansas City in March 2020. Her scholarly writing will appear in the Preaching the Manifold Grace, Vol. 2, edited by Ronald J. Allen and published by Wipf and Stock.

This year, we have faced several challenges that turned into opportunities for new recruiting spaces and partnerships to enhance students' seminary experience. With the change from in-person to virtual events, Rev. Shannon Hancock, Director of Admissions and Communications, has expanded her reach to prospective students by participating as a virtual exhibitor at online conferences. Rev. Hancock engages with prospective students via apps such as Whova and HopIn to highlight Saint Paul's unique course delivery system and formative community.

In February, Saint Paul held the 2021 Slater-Willson Lecture online featuring Rev. Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre. His lecture, "Why Do They Come?" explored the political, economic, and social causes of our current immigration crisis. Before the lecture, Rev. Dr. De La Torre participated in a student-led forum, entering a conversation centering around the practical aspects of ministry and immigration. Later in April, Saint Paul

Evangelical Society, led by Dr. Hal Knight, hosted a lecture given by Dr. Sammy G. Alfaro, Associate Professor of Theology at Grand Canyon University and Pastor of Iglesia Nuevo Dia (New Day Church), on the "Pastoral Strategies for Ministering Among Latinx Immigrant Communities." And for the first time, on May 22, Saint Paul held a virtual commencement celebration with videos, cap and gown photos, online congratulatory messages from friends and family, and a commencement address by Rev. Chebon Kernell. The class of 2021 had 22 graduates, including 16 Master of Divinity and 1 Doctor of Ministry graduates. Due to the pandemic, for safety concerns, Saint Paul has postponed our 60th Anniversary Celebration. However, we have rescheduled the event for Friday, October 22 and look forward to coming together as a community for a safe, in-person gathering.

For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, Saint Paul Course of Study (COS) School educated 255 individual students, 40 of which were new students, with a total registration of 520 classes and offering a total of 51 courses. Due to COVID-19, the school quickly pivoted its course offerings and delivered lessons in both asynchronous and synchronous online formats. In Winter 2019, Saint Paul began a hybrid (online and on-campus) schedule for six courses. Although for 2021, this went fully online, plans to increase the number of hybrid course offerings are in development.

Saint Paul Board of Trustees added three new members to their ranks: Bishop James D. Tindall, Sr., Pastor Emeritus at Metropolitan Spiritual Church of Christ Kansas City; Ms. Sharon Cleaver, Senior Director of Marketing, Communications, and PR for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City; and Mr. Rogers Strickland, Founder/CEO of Strickland Construction.

Through a Board initiative related to diversity and inclusion, Saint Paul created a working group on Native American theology and ministries comprised of Native theologians and church leaders. Their efforts are focused on how the church and academy can work together toward healing generational trauma related to the spread of Christianity and the genocide of Indigenous North Americans.

As we have happily reported in past years, Saint Paul is financially sound and operates with a balanced budget. The changes made these last years have established a solid financial foundation for years of sustainability. We continue to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology, scholarships, and emergency assistance to students. Our significant investments in technology have recently allowed our staff, faculty, and students to transition to a fully hybrid educational delivery model providing a safe learning environment during the pandemic. Our faculty was uniquely adept at managing technology in the classroom before the pandemic, making the transition to all online courses a smooth process.

With the Board's assistance, led by Board Chair Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, the seminary focuses on its mission. Our trustees work to continuously enhance and evaluate the strategic plans in place to guide us into the future. Perhaps most importantly, we have learned much and grown closer as a community due to the pandemic.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking more to answer the call. We are a seminary that offers online and on-campus classes with a flexible schedule to help our students manage pastoral leadership demands in the 21st century. We are grateful for your support of our students and our seminary. May we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for healing in these unsettled times and for generations to come.

President Neil Blair, Saint Paul trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and students thank you for your prayers and support.

Neil Blair, President



UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – Dayton, Ohio – www.united.edu

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" – Isaiah 43:19

It appears God is doing some new things at United Theological Seminary, even in the midst of health, racial, and political crises.

God is doing a new thing at United financially. United continues to make progress toward its goal of becoming debt-free by the Seminary's 150th anniversary on October 11, 2021. Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of alumni/ae and donors, less than \$1 million remains of the original \$4 million mortgage debt. After the mortgage is paid in full, the Seminary plans to convert those mortgage payments into money for student scholarships.

God is doing a new thing in enrollment. Over the last five years, United's Doctor of Ministry program has grown by 48%, from 170 students in the 2016-17 academic year to 251 in 2020-21. In Fall 2021, Dr. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, will become the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, upon the retirement of Dr. Harold Hudson who has been a vital leader at the Seminary for 17 years.

God is doing a new thing with partners in church renewal. In the 2020-21 academic year, United has partnered with Fresh Expressions US and the Mosaix Global Network to introduce two new Houses of Study. These houses oversee specialized tracks in the Doctor of Ministry and Master of Divinity programs.

Rev. Dr. Michael Beck is director of the Fresh Expressions House of Studies, bringing experience from his positions as Director of Re-Missioning for Fresh Expressions US and Cultivator of Fresh Expressions for the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church. The Mosaix House of Studies is under the direction of Dr. Harry Li, Senior Pastor of Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas and senior consultant with the Mosaix Global Network.

God is doing a new thing with the establishment of The Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center. Beginning in 2021, the Innovation Center honors the ministry of Bishop Bruce Ough by providing a hub of learning for church leaders seeking the framework, support, and courage to introduce the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new and creative ways. Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey joins United as the inaugural director of the Innovation Center.

United's prayer is that United Methodists will perceive the new things that God is doing in our communities, congregations, and ministries as we strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Kent Millard, President