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Reports from Conference Ministry Units

Board of Ordained Ministry

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) helps the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church live out its mission through the enlistment, recruitment, credentialing, training, and support of the clergy of the conference. The following are highlights of our work for the year 2016-2017:

Relationship Change Processes: The BOM has completed a three year process of revisiting and revising all processes for avenues into ministry.

Aligning the work of the BOM with the Bishop/Cabinet: The Board Executive Committee continues to meet twice annually with the Cabinet, once in October and once in the summer. In these meetings, we revisit our expectations for clergy leadership and how to best encourage faithful qualities. The BOM Chairs continue to serve on the Bishop’s Human Sexuality Task Force.

Clergy from Other Denominations/Fellowships: We now have a registrar, Brooke Heerwald-Steiner, with direct oversight of the processes around clergy from Other Denominations and Fellowships serving within the Minnesota Annual Conference. We also piloted a program where Board members are a part of the process when Cabinet members meet Clergy from Other Denominations for the first time. Though that meeting is not for approval, we better align our first impressions.

Licensed Local Pastors: The number people licensed for ministry continues to grow across the conference. We celebrate the vibrant, faithful leadership being provided through so many Licensed Local Pastors.

Recruiting: We are broadening our areas of recruiting through engaging the Chairs of the Ethnic Caucuses, the ongoing Eli Project for interns and continued seminary visits.

Cultural Competency: This has been and continues to be an area of continued growth for the BOM. With many BOM members beginning anew, each new member took the IDI and followed up with training from Marj Evans-de-Carpio. Members continue to take Kaleidoscope training. We continue a process of asking questions of ourselves before and after each candidate interview around cultural competency.

New Clergy Leadership Academy, Soul Leaders: As we continue to support the well-being of clergy at all stages of ministry, we have support the New Clergy Leadership Academy, Soul Leaders, retreats for clergy and the new clergy cohort groups.

We find great meaning in serving as the Minnesota Annual Conference as Co-Chairs of the BOM. We rely on the Holy Spirit throughout our meetings and processes. We continue to bathe our interviews in prayer. We are thankful to find the Board members to be faithfully diligent. We are thankful to work with Bishop Ough and the Cabinet. The candidates we interview give us hope for the future of the church.

Pam Serdar and Rhodie Jacobson, Co-chairs

Board of Pension and Health Benefits

The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) is composed of twelve lay and clergy persons, assisted by one consultant, Wespath Benefits and Investments (formerly General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church) liaison and three staff. The CBOPHB Board is responsible for certain benefits for eligible ministerial members who are currently serving or who have served the annual conference and other church workers and lay employees of the annual conference. Those responsibilities include: 1) pensions; 2) protection in case of death or disability; 3) health insurance; 4) medical and dependent care reimbursement; 5) incapacitation funding (pulpit supply); 6) maternity/paternity leave funding and 7) adoptive aid grants.
2016-17 CONFERENCE YEAR HIGHLIGHTS/DEVELOPMENTS/ISSUES:

1. Members of the CBOPHB participated in the Financial Advisory Consulting Team (FACT) study of the Minnesota Annual Conference in 2016. The two recommendations from the FACT report relating to the CBOPHB are:

   Commit to engage in the Economic Projection Process in conjunction with Wespath after the 2016 Annual Conference Session.

   Review health benefits programs for active and retiree members of the Minnesota Conference.

   The CBOPHB started review of the health benefit programs in 2015. A decision was finalized April 2016 to contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota for fully insured retiree supplement medical and prescription drug policies for the Medicare eligible retirees and those on long-term disability with Medicare coverage effective January 1, 2017. Presentations were held in October and November in 6 locations around the state. The cost to participants remains the same as in 2016 with enhanced benefits and a lower out of pocket Rx maximum.

   The CBOPHB has started communication with Wespath to the work on the Economic Projection Process in 2017. The process will assist the conference in establishing a long-term funding strategy based on the conference’s risk tolerance in order to respond to financial needs and competing interests for reserves. A subcommittee met with the Investment Committee to discuss monitoring of benefit reserve assets and asset allocation.

2. In the calendar year of 2016 the benefit reserves funded $1.25 million of cost that provided relief to apportionment and local church expenses. The items funded from benefit reserves include retiree medical subsidy, active medical subsidy, CRSP-match, medical/maternity/paternity leave, medical grant, and benefit office staffing. In the calendar of 2017 the benefit reserves will fund approximately $1.6 million with the addition of the following items that will reduce local church direct cost and keep the apportionments within the ceiling rule for 2017: reducing the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) billing rate to the local church from 3% to 1%, district superintendent and conference staff benefit costs for pension and death & disability plans.

3. The CBOPHB reduced the billing rate to the local church for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP), the death and disability coverage for clergy appointed ¾ time or more, beginning 1/1/2017. The prior billing rate was 3% of compensation (salary + housing), the new rate is 1% of compensation. Following the economic downturn of 2008 Wespath provided a premium holiday to all conferences for two years. The Minnesota Conference provided a 6 month premium rebate to all churches that provided CPP coverage at that time. Wespath has announced a CPP premium holiday for the years 2018 and 2019 due to the mortality schedule change to the RP 2014 indicating longer life expectancy, which increases the time in which death benefits are assumed to be paid. The CBOPHB determined using the remaining reserves from the prior premium holiday and reducing the CPP rate to 1% from direct bill to the local church, the conference can fund the 2017 CPP cost (3% billed from Wespath) and continue the 1% CPP rate through 2021 and possibly beyond. It is understood that completely removing a cost to the local church for a year or two and then bringing it back is more difficult than a continued lower rate over many years.

4. The Pre-82 pension liability of the Minnesota Conference is currently fully funded (114%) as of January 1, 2015, the most recent Final Valuation from Wespath. The Pre-82 funds are committed to the payment of the obligations of the denominational pension plans. They may be used for Pre-1982, MPP annuity contributions, and CRSP-DB contributions for Minnesota Conference clergy pension liabilities or for other conference’s unpaid liabilities to these same plans. In an effort to preserve a fully-funded status, the CBOPHB has recommended the Past Service Rate (“PSR”) be increased at the annual rate of 2% for the foreseeable future. The Wespath Valuation Report for 2017 as of 1/1/2015 indicates the Pre-82 plan for all conferences, on a minimum contribution basis, with a funded ratio of 114%. While Minnesota’s funded ratio is reported at 114% there are 13 conferences with funded ratios of less than 100 percent, and of those, 6 conferences are reported to have a funded ratio less than 80 percent. The Pre-82 plan encompasses all participating conferences; if a conference defaults on its liability all plan assets are available and all conferences are responsible for the liability. The CBOPHB reviews the Valuation reports, the financial climate and the funded status each year to determine when it is prudent to redirect funds from the Pre-82 assets. Wespath has informed all conferences of a change in
assumption to the RP 2014 mortality schedule effective January 1, 2016 for 2018 which increases life expectancy increasing the conference’s liability for Pre-82. The preliminary valuation report as of 1/1/2016 for 2018 reports a funded ratio of 102%, a 12% reduction in funded status from the 1/1/2015 for 2017 due to poor returns in 2015 and increased life expectancy. The Minnesota Annual Conference has reserves if there is an unfunded liability for the Pre-82 service.

5. The Annual Conference 2016 payment to Wespath for the Clergy Retirement Security Program defined benefit component (“CRSP-DB”) was paid on December 31, 2016 from funds collected through direct bill to the local churches. The 2016 contribution to CRSP-DB plan on December 31, 2016 was $1,269,130. Due to the mortality schedule change instituted 1/1/2016 for 2018, the CBOPHB determined using Pre-82 plan surplus to pay the CRSP-DB annual contribution for 2016 was not prudent, which was the procedure since 2007. In the future, payments of the CRSP-DB may be made by using Pre-82 plan surplus as determined each year based on the funded status of the Pre-82 plan and the financial climate. In years when Pre-82 surplus is not available, payments received from local churches will fund the CRSP-DB contribution.

6. For 2014 through 2018 the CBOPHB approved funding the CRSP one-to-one matching component of up to 1% of compensation for clergy contributing to the UMPIP from the conference’s Deposit account invested at Wespath. The total 2016 CRSP-DC Match contribution was $127,841. Over 90% of clergy appointed in Minnesota participated and received CRSP-DC Match contributions. See “Miscellaneous Additional Information” at the end of this report for specific billing information for 2018.

7. General Conference 2012 approved changes to ¶1506.6, stating, “Each Annual Conference shall develop, adopt, and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan or plans for funding all of its benefit obligations.” The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits completed and submitted the Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan for 2018 to Wespath in March 2017 for review and written opinion. The Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan will be submitted to Annual Conference Session for approval annually.

8. The health of MAC Plan participants, health care claims and the financial sustainability of the plan are all considered when premiums are set or plan changes are considered. The trend of health care claims is difficult to forecast. In the past few years claims have been lower or similar to forecast allowing the premiums to remain the same from 2011 through 2017. Financial sustainability continues to be a concern with ongoing investment and healthcare uncertainty. Any health plan group experiences swings in paid claims from year to year and the MAC Plan is no different. While the CBOPHB celebrates the level claims, we remain cautious in our approach to setting premiums or making changes to the plan design. As a self-funded insurance plan, the only sources of funds to pay claims are premiums, investment earnings, and reserves, if any. The CBOPHB approved the use of MAC Plan reserves to fund the “active clergy health subsidy” for 2015 thru 2017, which reduced the conference apportionment budget by $350,000. When the 2018 MAC Plan premiums are calculated, MAC Plan reserves will be considered in the calculation process for the “active health subsidy” prior to finalizing the church and clergy premium portions.

January 1, 2012 the fitness reimbursement program was added to the MAC Plan benefit. The fitness reimbursement program provides MAC Plan participants, who work out at a participating fitness center at least 12 days per month, a financial reimbursement up to $20 per month based on their fitness center monthly membership fee. In 2016, the fitness reimbursement program paid $18,651 in reimbursements to members.

The claims experience along with good reserve levels allowed the Under age 65 premium and the Retired over age 65 premium to stay the same for 2017 as in 2016. When possible, premium increases have been moderated by using reserves, Medicare Part D subsidies and other reimbursements. The following chart shows percentage premium increases since 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Premium Increase For Under age 65</th>
<th>Premium Increase For Retired Over age 65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-5.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 - 17</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preliminary proposed increases for 2018 budget are 0% for Retired over age 65 with Medicare subgroup and 0% for active or retirees Under age 65 depending on medical trend (inflation) and actual claims experience compared to projected experience. The earnings on reserve funds along with claims level in 2016 have increased the financial position of the MAC plan. To keep the MAC Plan financially sustainable, reserve levels will be monitored regularly and careful consideration given for use of reserves to moderate increases in premium.

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MAC Plan update:

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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income**</td>
<td>4,263,874</td>
<td>4,454,255</td>
<td>5,133,768</td>
<td>5,135,013</td>
<td>5,382,805</td>
<td>5,677,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims + Stop/Loss</td>
<td>3,806,492</td>
<td>3,917,905</td>
<td>4,406,160</td>
<td>4,401,454</td>
<td>4,042,308</td>
<td>3,823,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Initiative Programs</td>
<td>68,933</td>
<td>64,192</td>
<td>69,228</td>
<td>70,745</td>
<td>74,884</td>
<td>83,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Fees</td>
<td>276,053</td>
<td>308,020</td>
<td>355,676</td>
<td>339,766</td>
<td>321,946</td>
<td>327,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain/ (Loss)</td>
<td>112,396</td>
<td>164,138</td>
<td>302,704</td>
<td>23,048</td>
<td>943,667</td>
<td>1,443,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Income includes Medicare Part D Subsidy, Stop/Loss recovery for claims incurred above the attachment point, and Early Retiree Reimbursement Program.

9. The Minnesota Annual Conference UMC contracted with Wespath’s Virgin Pulse program starting January 2012. The Virgin Pulse program allows participants the opportunity to earn incentive dollars by meeting quarterly goals. There were 216 enrolled in 2016 with 81 participants that earned at least one financial reward or more. The total rewards and bonuses paid in 2016 was $21,248 of which $8,000 were bonus incentives for meeting multiple quarter goals in 2015. The financial incentives are funded by the MAC Plan. Each participant has the opportunity to earn up to $200 per year ($50 per quarter) when meeting all four quarterly goals.

10. The Federal Government rolled out the Medicare Part D program January 1, 2006. The MN Annual Conference’s MAC Plan prescription drug coverage meets or exceeds Medicare Part D coverage and was approved to receive the federal subsidy starting in 2006 and continuing each year since. The federal subsidy is based on the prescription drug claims for the retired Medicare eligible participants in
the MAC Plan. The subsidy received in 2016 for the 2015 Medicare eligible participants drug claims was $95,366. The federal subsidy has allowed the plan to keep the Retired over age 65 premium increases very small for years 2007 through 2012 with a reduction in 2013 and no change in 2014-2017.

Effective 1/1/2017 Medicare primary retirees were removed from the self-insured MAC Plan coverage and enrolled in Medicare supplement medical and drug plans. MedicareBlue Rx provides prescription drug coverage for all Medicare primary retirees. For retirees whose state of residence is Minnesota, their medical supplement coverage is a Group Platinum Blue (Cost) Plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota. For retirees whose state of residence is not Minnesota, their medical supplement coverage is a Senior Gold Plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota. The change to these new plans provide enhanced benefits to these retirees while reducing potential liability risk to the self-insured MAC Plan due to the prescription drug pricing climate.

11. The conference has an unfunded liability for the retiree health care premium subsidy. PRM Consulting Group, the actuarial firm hired by the Conference, prepared an Actuarial Valuation of Postretirement Medical Benefits with a valuation date of January 1, 2017 for plan year ending December 31, 2017, which reported the Expected Postretirement Benefit Obligation (or present value of benefits) to be $13,043,819 using the RP 2014 mortality schedule and discount rate of 3.8%. While there are no dedicated funds specifically set aside for the postretirement medical liability there are reserve funds available for funding pension and benefit needs.

INFORMATION RELATING TO THE PENSION PLAN AND COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN ACTIVITY:

1. Pre-82 Pension Information: The Conference has been successful in satisfying the past service pension liability for pre-1982 years of service. This is due to the philosophy adopted in 1985 of “funding in advance” rather than “paying as you go”. As a result of gifts, apportionments, pension campaigns, continuing support of Pension Partners, and investment earnings, the Pre-82 Plan is projected to be in a fully funded position as of January 1, 2015 for 2017, according to the most recent final valuation report issued September 2016 from the GBOPHB. Future changes in actuarial assumptions, earnings or payments could alter this annual projection either up or down. The following partial chart illustrates the progress made since 1982.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pre-82 Pension Liability</th>
<th>Total Liability</th>
<th>Funded Liability</th>
<th>Unfunded Liability</th>
<th>Percent Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>$178</td>
<td>$24,869,910</td>
<td>$9,947,960</td>
<td>$14,921,947</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>30,195,441</td>
<td>24,196,041</td>
<td>5,999,400</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>38,914,290</td>
<td>38,914,290</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>46,113,717</td>
<td>54,136,563</td>
<td>(8,022,846)</td>
<td>117.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>45,316,293</td>
<td>56,439,371</td>
<td>(11,123,078)</td>
<td>124.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>47,446,365</td>
<td>72,574,041</td>
<td>(25,127,676)</td>
<td>153.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>40,626,922</td>
<td>47,372,636</td>
<td>(6,745,714)</td>
<td>116.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>40,315,977</td>
<td>46,619,244</td>
<td>(6,303,267)</td>
<td>115.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>38,222,522</td>
<td>43,608,031</td>
<td>(5,385,509)</td>
<td>114.1</td>
</tr>
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SUMMARY OF PAYMENTS FROM BENEFIT FUNDS ON DEPOSIT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRSP-DC Match</td>
<td>$127,841</td>
<td>$129,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Grants &amp; Pulpit Supply</td>
<td>17,340</td>
<td>49,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiree Medical Subsidy</td>
<td>590,996</td>
<td>599,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$736,177</strong></td>
<td><strong>$779,103</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY OF DEFINED BENEFIT PENSIONS PAID FOR PRE-1982 SERVICE, MPP ANNUITY AND CRSP (Clergy Retirement Security Program)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>392 Retired Clergy Participants</td>
<td>$6,822,827</td>
<td>$6,616,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 Retired Clergy’s Surviving Spouses</td>
<td>1,404,512</td>
<td>1,424,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>533 Total Persons Receiving Pension Benefits</td>
<td>$8,227,339</td>
<td>$8,040,969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability Benefits to Pastors</td>
<td>$213,689</td>
<td>$240,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP Benefits to Children &amp; Spouses</td>
<td>29,122</td>
<td>31,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$242,811</strong></td>
<td><strong>$272,376</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INFORMATION RELATING TO MEDICAL INSURANCE—MAC PLAN

1. **General Information:** The Minnesota Conference in August of 1995 initiated a self-insured medical insurance program administered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota (BCBSM) called the MAC PLAN. BCBSM has arranged a network of health care providers committed to expert, cost-effective care. Use of network providers maximizes cost savings and quality of care provided. Non-participating providers may be used; however, the cost to the participant is greater.

2. **Effective January 1, 2017** retirees over age 65 (Medicare eligible) and long-term disability members with Medicare have been enrolled in fully insured Medicare supplement plans and removed from the self-insured MAC Plan. (see “Conference Year Highlights #10 above)

3. **MAC Plan Rates:** The following charts show rates as of January 1, 2017

COSTS AS OF JANUARY 1, 2016 (Church and Pastor shares after subsidy from reserves)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With ACH*</th>
<th>W/OACH*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$8,029.20</td>
<td>$7,137.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>$16,953.00</td>
<td>$15,069.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ACH=Automatic withdrawal from bank or pension account
# RETIREE & DISABLED RATES BEFORE SUBSIDY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RETIRED PASTORS</th>
<th>ANNUAL PREMIUM</th>
<th>Individual Pays</th>
<th>Conference Pays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retiree or Spouse 65+ &amp; MEDICARE</td>
<td>$3,624.00—Single, $7,248.00—Couple</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiree under age 65</td>
<td>$8,920.80—Single, $18,837.00—Family</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired (clergy and spouse) One over 65/one under 65</td>
<td>$12,544.80—Couple</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISABLED PASTORS</td>
<td>Conference will subsidize 70% of premium for 5 years followed by 50% subsidy. (CBOPHB change July 1, 2005, amended 2009)</td>
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** Subsidy Rules apply (See #3 Retiree Premium Subsidy for specifics)

4. **Retiree Premium Subsidy:** Approved at the 2003 Annual Conference and effective January 1, 2005. Five years of continuous participation in the MAC Plan immediately prior to retirement is required for continuation on the MAC Plan in retirement. Participation in Medicare Part A and B is required for continuation on the MAC Plan when retired and over age 65. The basis for subsidy is the year of retirement, the retirement type (full, early or 20-year rule), and years of service as follows.

**Rules for Retiree Subsidy** (subsidy is per clergy and per spouse on MAC Plan)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full or Mandatory</td>
<td>Lesser of 100% of premium or $320 per month</td>
<td>Lesser of 100% of premium or $160 per month</td>
<td>Lesser of 100% of premium or $4 per month per year of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early (62 years of age or 30 years of service)</td>
<td>Lesser of 100% of premium or $320 per month</td>
<td>Lesser of 100% of premium or $160 per month</td>
<td>Lesser of 100% of premium or $4 per month per year of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 year rule</td>
<td>No Subsidy</td>
<td>No Subsidy</td>
<td>No Subsidy</td>
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For the complete detail of the legislation look in the 2003 Journal, action item 509 on pages 161–164.

Approved action item 205 in the 2016 Journal on page 74 adjusted the years of service used for clergy retiring after 1990 to include the year 2017. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits will regularly review the years of service used for subsidy.

5. **MAC Plan eligibility:** A complete listing of categories of persons eligible for mandatory or optional participation in the MAC Plan was updated and approved by the Minnesota Annual Conference in 2007 and published in the 2007 Journal starting on page 138.

Note: Participation in the health plan is mandatory for certain clergy categories of those eligible. Billing is issued monthly by the MAC Plan. Complete details regarding the coverage and operation of the program are on file with the benefits officer of the Minnesota Conference and with BCBSM. As of January 2017, 235 pastors, lay employees and retirees under age 65 are enrolled in the self-insured MAC Plan plus their dependents. As of January 2017, 321 Medicare eligible retirees, spouses, surviving spouses, and LTD participants with Medicare are enrolled in the fully insured Medicare supplement plans offered by the Minnesota Annual Conference.

**MAJOR MEDICAL BENEFITS** — Aware Network Provider (In Minnesota)

BlueCard Traditional Network Providers (Outside Minnesota)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deductible:</th>
<th>Individual—$1,000</th>
<th>Family—$2,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Out-of-Pocket</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Health Plan**— After deductible pays 80% to Maximum Out-of-Pocket, then 100%. No deductible for office visits for illness or urgent care, and preventative care is paid 100%.

**Prescription Drug**—Step therapy with a tiered system.

**31 day limit**
- $20 Generics
- $40 co-pay or 25% whichever is greater for Brand Formulary
- $80 co-pay or 30% whichever is greater for Brand Non-Formulary
- $120 co-pay or 30% whichever is greater for Specialty Drugs

**90 day limit**
- $40 Generics
- $80 co-pay or 25% whichever is greater for Brand Formulary
- $160 co-pay or 30% whichever is greater for Brand Non-Formulary
- $240 co-pay or 30% whichever is greater for Specialty Drugs

Maximum out of pocket expense of $2,000/year/person and $4,000/year/family. (This is a separate out-of-pocket maximum from the medical plan.)

**Mental Health Care Benefits**—on separate schedule.

**Maximum Lifetime All Benefits**—PPACA eliminated limits.

**OTHER BENEFIT PROGRAMS**

**FLEX PLAN:** A benefit plan established for clergy in the Minnesota Annual Conference on conference medical coverage, and for clergy and lay employees of the Annual Conference office, under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. Participants elect an amount to withhold before tax, which may be used to pay medical, dental, or dependent care expenses. Carryover of unused funds is not permitted. The Flex Plan medical reimbursement maximum was $2,550 in 2016. The 2017 medical reimbursement maximum was increased to the IRS maximum of $2,600 for the plan year beginning January 1, 2017. On September 9, 2014, the CBOPHB approved a motion to fund the monthly participation fee from the MAC Plan reserves and not charge the fee to the participant beginning with the 2015 Plan Year and continuing for the 2017 Plan Year.

**MEDICAL/INCAPACITATION LEAVE COMPENSATION:** See 2011 Journal, page 93 thru 95, for policies and funding of and by Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits relating to medical/incapacitation leave. The CBPHB currently provides pulpit supply for up to 8 weeks when a clergy person, due to impaired health (illness, surgery or accident) is deemed temporarily unable to perform the essential duties of the appointment by the Cabinet.

**MATERNITY AND PATERNITY LEAVE—PULPIT SUPPLY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** See 2005 Journal, Page 125-126, for policies of funding by Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits relating to Maternity and Paternity Leave. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits will provide pulpit supply financial assistance to the church when arranged with the church, the District Superintendent and the Benefits Officer. Compensation to the pastor, pension and medical coverage will be maintained by the church for no less than the first eight weeks of leave.

**ADOPTIVE AID GRANTS:** The Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits provides an adoptive aid payment to active clergy participating in conference medical coverage for the adoption of a child other than a blood relative of either spouse or a legal lawful child from a previous marriage. Blood relatives are defined as...
nephews, nieces, grandchildren, or cousins. The CBOPHB approved at the September 9, 2014 meeting an increase to the Adoptive Aid Grant from $500 to $1,000 effective immediately. A request for payment must be made to the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits within 12 months from the date of adoption. This payment is in lieu of a maternity benefit, which would have been provided under the medical plan. The Board of Ordained Ministry & Cabinet should be reminded annually that this benefit is available to clergy.

**MISCELLANEOUS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The 2018 Minnesota Conference Average Compensation (CAC) is $64,591. The 2018 Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) is $70,202. DAC is defined as cash salary plus housing plus any tax-deferred contributions made on the pastor’s behalf.

The 2018 Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) billing to churches is calculated as follows:

CRSP – DB (defined benefit) = $5,517.36 fulltime appointment  
$4,138.08 ¾ time appointment  
$2,758.68 ½ time appointment

CRSP – DC (defined contribution) = 2% of Compensation (Salary + Housing)

CPP - ¾ and fulltime appointment = 1% of Compensation (Salary + Housing)

*The Wespath legislation adopted by General Conference 2016 changed the Comprehensive Protection Plan eligibility effective January 1, 2017 for ¾ time clergy appointed with a billing rate of 3% of clergy compensation (salary + housing). (see “Conference Year Highlights #3 above)

Clergy pension benefits effective January 1, 2014, with Modified CRSP based on:

- A defined benefit calculated at retirement: 1.0% x DAC x Years of Service beginning 1/1/2014 = Annual Defined Benefit at retirement
- A defined contribution: 2% of clergy compensation (salary plus housing allowance or parsonage value of 25% of salary) to Clergy’s CRSP Defined Contribution account.
- A defined contribution matching contribution of up to 1% of clergy compensation for clergy contributing to the voluntary United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) greater than 0. The matching contribution was a new feature to the CRSP.

**Jean Edin**, Pension/Benefits Officer  
**Katherine Schill**, Conference Board of Pension/Health Benefits Chair  
**Barbara Brower**, Director of Finance and Administration

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**Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is established by *The Book of Discipline* in each annual conference (Paragraph 2512). In Minnesota, the annual conference is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation; the members of the corporation are the same as the members of the Annual Conference. The Board of Trustees serves, for purposes under corporate actions under Minnesota law, as the board of director of the corporation. *The Book of Discipline* entrusts the Board of Trustees with responsibility for receiving, collecting, and holding in trust all donations, bequests and gifts to the Annual Conference; administering such donations in accordance with the grantor and in the interest of the intended beneficiary of such gifts; receiving, holding in trust for and on behalf of the annual conference for use in ministries; investing, reinvesting, buying and selling all funds and property held in trust; and taking all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interest and rights of the Annual Conference in any place and in any matter relating to property and rights to property owned by or on behalf of the Annual Conference.

In its legal capacity as the board of directors of the corporation, the trustees are responsible for authorizing official acts of the Minnesota Annual Conference when it acts as a corporation. Thus, the Board of Trustees acts as the legal representatives of the Annual Conference in its conduct of business buying and selling.
property, protecting the interests of the Annual Conference by procuring and maintaining insurance, participating in legal proceedings to protect the property rights of the annual conference, and authorizing instruments that bind the annual conference, such as deeds, mortgages, guarantees, and investments.

United Methodist polity includes a trust clause whereby all property is held in trust for the denomination. While each local church owns its building and property, the trust clause means that assets are held in trust for the future of United Methodism as part of the covenant relationship that every United Methodist has with one another. This ensures that church property is used and retained by the denomination for the common goal of inviting, forming, and sending Christians to do God’s work in the world. Discontinued church property comes to the annual conference through this trust clause. Legacy resources from discontinued church properties are re-invested for the work of congregational development. Working on behalf of the Annual Conference, the Board of Trustees, along with Congregational Development, assist transitioning congregations at the beginning or end of their life cycle.

A significant event in 2016 was the sale of Historic Wesley Church building, a well-known and well-loved important piece of our history and ministry. We received the Wesley Church building on January 1, 2010. Some excerpts from a study prepared for the Board of Trustees on the use of the building state that, “Wesley Church was declared an historic site by the Minnesota Annual Conference in 1983 and is considered the Mother Church of Minneapolis Methodism”.

When the Board of Trustees take on an obligation like Wesley, the investments may be larger than the Annual Conference can afford but we take seriously the responsibility to care for the legacy of our church denomination. Through the years, the Board of Trustees worked with a number of nonprofits to continue Wesley. They also approved many repairs on the building including a new roof and remodeled bathrooms. The additional needed repairs were estimated to exceed $6 million. All repairs made on discontinued church property are paid for by the Board of Trustee reserve funds and not with apportionment dollars or other funds of the Conference. Therefore, this building was too expensive to hold.

In July 2016, The Board of Trustees agreed to sell the Wesley Church building to a nonprofit, Historic Wesley Center on Grant Street, for a $1 million contract for deed that has a balloon payment due in five years. The nonprofit continues to use the facility for worship, wedding rentals, Wesley Meals, concerts and nonprofit rental space.

The Board of Trustees also worked with Congregational Development to transition the St. Croix Valley Church into Embrace Church. The Conference will continue to own and hold the church and parsonage and lease them to Embrace Church until they meet certain benchmarks determined by Congregational Development. We also facilitate the corporate role for developing new churches such as Uptown church in the former Joyce UMC building. The Board continues to maintain this church and parsonage utilized by the pastor of Uptown Church.

The Board also works closely with our Camping and Retreats Board. This year we actively pursued several conservation easements for our Star Lake property. We also pursued the expansion of our Northern Pines camp. We continue to work strategically to invest funds with camping at Koronis in the tabernacle and we purchased three lakeside cabins in accordance with our strategic plan. We also continue to maintain the land in Sartell (former New Horizons UMC land) and Decision Hills camp in Spicer while they are for sale.

The Board of Trustees also sold the church building in Kelly Lake, MN, maintained the episcopal residence and district superintendent parsonage in Alexandria.

I am grateful to the Board of Trustees for their dedicated service. My thanks to the outgoing members: Joyce Nedbalek, Murray Thurston, and Avra Johnson. My continued thanks to our current members, Jeffrey Larson, Karen Andrew, Craig Lilja, Gordon Orde, Kim Portz, Alan Bolte, Shirley Dubuque, and our newest members Rachel Morey, Justin Halbersma and Bart Seebach.

Robert Braudt, Chair


**Church and Society**

The Church and Society Team of the Minnesota Annual Conference seeks justice in a variety of social issue contexts. Since January we have revised our Peace with Justice Grant guidelines and application form. We approved a grant to Earthkeepers. We support educational trips such as the July mission trip to Washington, D.C. and the General Board of Church and Society. We also provide support for workshops that address social justice. We are looking for ways to help local congregations who are interested in acting for social justice.

*Gail Chalbi, Chair*

**Commission on Archives and History**

- The Commission on Archives and History (CAH) met quarterly in 2017. We are pleased that the Conference Archivist (Kathy Spence Johnson) the Conference Historian (Thelma Boeder), and the Conference Secretary of Memoirs (David Laechel) are all active on the Commission.
- We welcomed a new member, Randy Koppen; Cindy Yanchury withdrew.
- At our first meeting we had our annual review of our Book of Discipline duties.
- We continued to promote the 15 official Conference Historic sites. A complete listing is available on the conference website.
- We registered Koronis Ministries (Historically “Lake Koronis Assembly Grounds”) as a “Historic Site” of the General Commission on Archives and History.
- We continue our supportive role on the First Finnish Fellowship which promotes the site of First Finnish Methodist Episcopal Church, Salem, near Moose Lake. Thelma Boeder, the Conference Historian and a member of our commission, serves as the convener of the Fellowship. This year a miniature model of the building was constructed and donated to the Moose Lake Depot and Fires of 1918 Museum.
- In April, we sent a letter to the MN Delegates to the General Conference from the MAC urging that they support the continuance of a General CAH.
- The Commission assisted in marking the 2016 Annual Conference session as its 160th Anniversary. We produced a time line along the wall of the conference center and provided hand-held fans for outdoor events (thanks to a grant from the UM Historical Society of MN) that had historic images showing the ways our conference has been missional.
- We sent three delegates to the Jurisdictional Convocation of the CAH hosted at Iowa in July. Two other members also attended. We offered to host the 2019 Jurisdictional Convocation of the CAH in MN.
- The Commission supports the UM Historical Society of MN, and a number of the Commission members serve as leaders in the Society. The Historical Society is currently inactive and leaders are discerning its role and function in the future.
- We agreed to open our archives to a Swedish genealogical company ArkivDigital who will be scanning the records of some of our early Swedish Methodist Conference churches to share on their website.
- We placed the General CAH historical marker on Jacob Fahlstrom’s gravestone.
- We drafted a plan of action for any historic site that has a change in ownership or situation that might affect our ability to promote it as a historic site.
- We provided nine clergy grave markers to families for clergy who passed away in 2016.
- We engaged in some deeper discussion exploring ways for offering local churches support in compiling their histories and keeping their records. We agreed to promote UM Heritage Sunday ideas among the MAC churches.

*David Werner, Chair*

**Commission on Religion and Race**

The Minnesota Commission on Religion and Race (CORR) continues to encourage and empower the Minnesota conference to build capacity and to be contextually relevant. We appreciate and follow the ministry model developed by the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR), which is centered on three focus areas: Intercultural Competency, Vital Conversations, and Institutional Equity.
During the past year, we accomplished the following:

- **Blessed Ramadan.** In partnership with the MN Council of Churches, we distributed 300 signs to clergy and laity to wish our Muslim neighbors Blessed Ramadan.

- **Prayer at Annual Conference 2016.** We offered a prayer of lament at Annual Conference 2016 in recognition of the one-year anniversary of the shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME.

- **Prayer Vigil.** In response to the police shooting of Philando Castile, we offered a prayer vigil that was attended by 200+ people. The vigil included songs, stories, and a time of prayer at the St. Anthony police department. MN CORR was appreciative of the Bishop’s statements following the deaths of Jamar Clark and Philando Castile.

- **If It Matters Do Something.** We hosted Rev. Dr. Willis Johnson, Rev. Shawn Moore, the Camphor Chorale, and spoken word artist Joe Davis at an all-day learning event attended by 75+ people. Dr. Johnson discussed his experience with anti-racism work in a faith-based community in Ferguson, Missouri. Rev. Moore presented his work on racial reconciliation and led us in exercises on power and privilege.

- **Intercultural Competency.** We continued our emphasis on developing culturally competent leaders. We offered the seminar “Fundamental Skills for Building Inclusive Community” two times during the year. The seminar is based on material developed by the Kaleidoscope Institute and facilitated by KI catalysts and rising associates Richard Webb, Marj Evans-de-Carpio, Marquita Stephens, and Rev. Donna Dempewolf. Each person who participated was given the opportunity to complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and to receive an individualized development plan. Additionally, the IDI was given to the ELI interns, along with a one-hour training session on intercultural competency.

- **Black Methodists for Church Renewal.** We are beginning to reform our relationship with Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR). Richard Webb was able to attend their 50th anniversary, “Celebrating a Legacy of Faith, Hope, and Renewal: More Rivers to Cross, More Milestones to Reach.”

- **Pre-conference Event.** We partnered with GSCROW, UMW, and NAMAT on a pre-conference learning event, “Re-forming our Neighborhoods: Becoming Pentecost People.”

- **Community Engagement.** Several members of the committee, along with many others, participated in local and regional demonstrations and conversations for racial justice and institutional equity (including the Standing Rock Clergy Call). Significant systemic work remains to be done in our urban cities, suburbs, and rural communities. The MN CORR desires to partner with other clergy and laity in the Minnesota Conference who seek to name racial injustices and work for racial equality.

In 2017-2018, we intend to continue our focus on implementing the General Commission on Religion and Race ministry model, which includes intercultural competency, vital conversations, and institutional equity. Our focus will be solidifying a systemic approach to developing intercultural competence, while also exploring a developmental approach to developing racial competence for individuals, congregations, and conference-wide. Other initiatives include hosting a conference-wide event next fall, and developing a relationship with colleagues in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

We join with the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR), which is tasked with empowering the Church to pursue racial equity and cultural competency to build a stronger, more vibrant UMC.

*Donna Dempewolf and Richard Webb, Co-chairs*
2016 was an important year for women of the United Methodist Church since it was the 60th anniversary of full clergy rights for women. COSROW recognized this important event by:

- Gathering stories from MN clergywomen and developing a booklet of their stories and pictures.
- Distributing at the 2016 MN annual conference printed copies of the booklet entitled, “Stories in Celebration of 60 yrs. of Full Clergy Rights for Women in the MN Annual Conference of the UMC.”
- Distributing ribbons to clergywomen noting the number of their years in ministry.
- Encouraging the continuation of telling clergywomen’s stories through the MN annual conference website.

COSROW’s pre-conference seminar, held June 20, 2016, was on the topic of domestic violence. A disturbing statistic is that 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence in their lifetime. Other groups assisting with the pre-conference seminar included the MN UMW and MN Parish Nurses Association. Pre-conference speakers included directors of women’s shelters in both Duluth and St. Cloud, as well as a survivor of domestic violence. Discussions followed the speakers, and revolved around what churches and individuals can do to help both victims and survivors.

Monitoring of the MN annual conference took a different form since the format of the conference was structured so that more young people would be in attendance. Monitoring took on the function of recording reactions, reflections and anecdotal stores rather than numeric data.

David Weiss, author of *When God Was a Little Girl*, was a guest speaker at the COSROW fall meeting. The possibility of the book being part of the UMW reading program is being explored.

COSROW supported the following ministries during 2016: Reimagining, Breaking Free, MN Women’s Consortium & the Religious Coalition as well as providing a scholarship for a woman to attend Mission u.

The MN COSROW co-chairs attended the GCSRW meeting in Nashville, TN, in Nov., 2016. An emphasis of the meeting was legislation Paragraph 4, Article IV which was passed by the 2016 General Conference. It now needs to be presented at each UMC annual conference throughout the world in order to be part of the UMC constitution. The legislation provides non-discrimination language to be added into the UMC Constitution (it already is in the Book of Discipline). The proposed language adds gender, age, marital status and ability to the non-discriminatory clause in the membership section of the UMC’s constitution. The legislation needs approval of 2/3 of those voting in order for it to be adopted into the UMC constitution.

*Debra Collum and Faye Christensen*, Co-Chairs

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**Director of Camping and Retreat Ministries**

**2016 Minnesota United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministry highlights:**

- Welcome Leslie Hobson as Director at Northern Pines Camp
  - In August of 2016, after spending the summer months serving as interim director of Northern Pines Camp in Park Rapids, Leslie Hobson became your newest camp director. Leslie has served the camping ministry in numerous ways over the years including as a camp dean, board member, Integration Specialist coordinator, capital campaign staff, and with the camp Minnesota Foundation
- Operations ended in the black
  - For the second year in a row your camp and retreat program ended 2016 financially in the black. Success is attributed to unified financial system, newly established financial controls and review process, staff management, review and establishing rates based on actual costs, and real-time access to accurate data and information
- Camp Chill Fundraiser
  - In February, Bishop Ough and several other Minnesota United Methodist leaders plunged into the icy waters of Lake Koronis to raise funds for camp scholarships. Together, we raised over $23,000 in 2016/2017 and a total of $44,000 since Camp Chill began in 2015
Central office staffing transitions
- In March of 2017, camping registration support and customer service shifted to a centralized focus. This decision came after the resignation of our Dakotas camping coordinator as well as the time and attention needed to hire and train a new staff person during the busy spring registration season. Camping and conference leaders are currently assessing staffing and ministry needs and anticipate hiring a new area camping staff person based out of the Dakotas conference in the fall of 2017.

Kowakan
- We are happy to welcome Levi and Lara Ziegler as program leaders for Kowakan Adventures, the Boundary Waters Wilderness arm of Camp Minnesota. Levi and Lara come with a wealth of camp and ministry experience and a deep love of the out-of-doors as avid hikers, canoers, and nature enthusiasts.

Camp Ambassadors
- In November of 2016, the camping ministry contracted with Rachel Devereaux, long-time camping leader, to fill a seasonal role as the Area Camp Ambassador Coordinator. Rachel worked in collaboration with camping administrative office staff, campsite directors, and the Area Camp and Retreat Ministry Director, to lead and implement an updated and enhanced outreach that identified and strengthened relationships with local church representatives (Camp Ambassadors) who encourage their churches and communities to attend an area United Methodist Camp.

Strategic Ministry Plan Updates:

Koronis
- Tabernacle
  - Design completed. Reviewing phased building options
  - $1M committed using proceeds from sale of camp property, Fundraising on-going
- Purchase of three cabins along lakeshore
- Dock replacement plan in place
- First floor retreat center update at Koronis completed

Northern Pines
- Significant repairs and replacement of nearly every septic and sewer system
- Demolition of three facilities
- Cabin Replacement – fall 2017

Star Lake
- Members of the Minnesota Conference’s Board of Trustees voted in 2016 to pursue selling conservation easements over individual parcels of Star Lake Wilderness Camp land

Other Updates and Reminders:

Shared Area Mission, Core Values, Outcomes
- **Mission:** Inviting campers and guests to experience Christ, creation, and community through camp and retreat ministries
- **Core values:** Providing sacred places apart, nurturing Christian faith and discipleship, teaching creation care and appreciation, partnering with United Methodist churches and agencies, extending Christian hospitality and community, developing principled spiritual leaders, and inspiring and equipping lives for love and justice
- **Desired outcome (continued from earlier established outcomes):** Disciples and leaders who hear and respond to God’s call to share their faith, love and accept everyone, serve others, and trust God

Campwise
- Dakotas and Minnesota Camps utilize Campwise, a widely-used camp and retreat software program, for camper and guest registration, data management, and reporting

Site advisory teams
- Campsites continue to develop and strengthen their site advisory teams. These site advisory teams allow volunteers an opportunity to participate in the camping ministry in the areas they love most, provide direct feedback to our site directors and staff, and extended the reach of each site. People interested in serving on a site team should contact the director of the site.
Governance

- The Dakotas and Minnesota conferences’ camp and retreat ministries combined their strengths and leadership and have come together to form a joint governance council. This new arrangement will expand the camping-related offerings for United Methodists in each conference as well as sharing of best practices to create the strongest possible area camp and retreat ministry. The new Camp and Retreat Council is made up of equal representation from each conference and meets quarterly.

Other areas your camping ministry continues to uphold highest priorities in consistency, quality, and effectiveness are:

- Accreditation safety standards
  - All three locations are accredited by the American Camp Association
    - camping industry safety standards and best practices
- Risk Management
  - camper and guest safety and security
  - staff training
  - property/facility review
- Marketing and Outreach
  - Local Church Camp Ambassador outreach continues to grow
- Staff continuing education and professional development
- Camp Minnesota’s Integration Specialists (I.S.) program was recently shared nationally and continues to grow

Camping statistics and additional highlights - see 2016 missional report

Thank you for your continued support of Camp Minnesota, the Camping and Retreat Ministry of the Minnesota Annual Conference. Thank you for making sure that the children, youth, families and adults in your church and community know about camping opportunities! Your support and encouragement helps ensure that Koronis, Northern Pines, Kowakan, and many off-site programs and events can continue to be places where God meets with people. An experience at one of your Minnesota United Methodist Camps has changed the lives of generations of our Annual Conference leadership. Thank you - you are appreciated!

“Camp Gives Kids a World of Good!”

Keith Shew

The past year has been a time of transition for the communications ministry area. In December, we said goodbye to Communications Associate Amanda Willis, who left to pursue another career path. Amanda’s tremendous graphic design skills set a new bar of excellence within the annual conference, and her skills were an incredible asset that will be greatly missed. On April 1, we welcomed Karla Hovde as our new communications specialist. Karla is skilled in graphic design, video, and social media—and she recently spent a year working for a nonprofit in Bangladesh. Despite the staff transition, it’s been an incredibly busy and productive year. Here’s a look at some key initiatives over the past year:

- **Breakthrough communications workshop:** On April 1, communicators from Minnesota, the Dakotas, and United Methodist Communications teamed up to offer a “Compelling Communication” workshop to United Methodists throughout Minnesota. The workshop equipped participants with best practices and practical tips to help their churches reach new people and better engage with members through strategic and purposeful communication. The daylong workshop included sessions on marketing and branding, social media, e-newsletters, photography, and live streaming. Roughly 50 people attended in person, and 21 sites participated remotely via live streaming. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Each year, the conference offers several “breakthrough” workshops to help churches experience breakthroughs in the areas of growing in love of God and neighbor, reaching new people, and healing a broken world. All of the workshops are live streamed so that people can participate without driving long distances. Big thanks to our Technology Coordinator Laura Miles and Event Coordinator Gail Johnson, who coordinate the live streaming at these events.
• Local church website offering: This spring, all Minnesota churches were invited to create a website through Brick River, a company that specializes in annual conference websites and that recently began offering local church websites as well. In addition to training churches on how to create their websites, the Minnesota Conference agreed to pay for each website for the first three months. Three local churches took advantage of this offering and are in the process of building their sites. A lot more churches indicated interest but weren’t quite ready to dive in, so we’re exploring the possibility of extending this same offer later on in the hopes that more churches (especially those without a current website) will take advantage of it. Research shows that eight out of 10 people check out a church’s website before visiting for the first time; a website is a critically important tool for every church.

• Online video conferencing: In early 2016, the Minnesota and Dakotas Conferences jointly contracted with Blue Jeans, an easy-to-use online video conferencing service that allows conference leadership and ministry teams to have remote meetings from anywhere. Usage within the first year was significant. From March 2016 to March 2017, there were 1,081 meetings across the Dakotas-Minnesota Area, with the average meeting lasting about 40 minutes. Many conference groups are finding this service to be valuable and convenient, and it is providing a huge cost savings in the form of reduced travel. Blue Jeans works well with the DAVID system that the conference has been using for several years for remote meetings (there are several DAVID sites throughout Minnesota, and groups can go to those sites to connect face-to-face through a television screen with people at other sites).

• E-newsletters: We continue to use two e-newsletters to help people throughout the conference stay connected and informed: MN Bulletin Board (which comes out every Tuesday and includes upcoming events and opportunities) and MN Connect (which comes out every Thursday and includes news, feature stories, ideas, and inspiration). At the beginning of each month, we also share a wrap-up e-newsletter that contains links to the top articles from the past month and a bulletin insert containing news and tidbits specifically geared toward people in church pews; the idea behind the bulletin insert is to facilitate deeper connection between individual congregations and the conference.

• Social media: Social media continues to be a significant vehicle to help the conference stay connected on a daily basis. As of April 5, 2017, 1,865 people “like” the Facebook page (up 565 from a year ago), and 2,068 follow the conference on Twitter (up 368 from a year ago). These channels allow us to reach different people than those who receive information through our conference website or e-newsletters. In June 2016, the conference also started an Instagram channel that’s helped us to reach additional people—particularly those between the ages of 18 and 29, as that’s Instagram’s biggest user demographic. As of April 5, 2017, our Instagram channel had 177 followers. We also experimented with Snapchat, another social media platform, during the 2016 Annual Conference. Conference attendees could purchase a customized “geofilter” (with that year’s conference theme and logo) over the top of any “snaps” (photos or videos) they posted during the event. Our filter was very popular and got lots of use!

• Outreach: We continue to work with individual churches to assist them with their communications strategies and media outreach, and we pitch stories to the media about newsworthy happenings that help tell the story of the United Methodist movement in Minnesota. Thanks to proactive outreach, Arlington Hills UMC in Maplewood was featured in a Star Tribune article after opening its building to Karen refugees looking for a religious home, and Delano UMC was featured in an article about “Ashes to Go” thanks to its pastor’s efforts to impose ashes out in the community on Ash Wednesday.

• Print and video projects: We use a variety of printed pieces to help churches and individuals stay informed about key opportunities and progress throughout the year. Projects include quarterly newsletters for the Reach • Renew • Rejoice capital campaign, the Camp Minnesota summer catalog and related materials, annual conference session materials, a missional report that highlights key conference initiatives (a “missional toolkit” is also debuting in 2017), and a wide variety of brochures and promotional materials (for workshops, internship program The ELI Project, etc.). We continue to work closely with the Dakotas Conference communicators to produce several high-quality and inspiring videos each year. These videos typically debut at Annual Conference and are shown by local churches after returning home.

• Accolades: In March, we earned 10 awards from the United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC), comprised of communicators from across the denomination:
  • Donn Doten Award of Excellence/Best in Class: “Northern Light’s ‘love letter’ to Orlando reaches United Methodist pastor”

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• 1st place feature story: “Northern Light’s ‘love letter’ to Orlando reaches United Methodist pastor”
• 1st place e-newsletter: MN Connect
• 1st place single piece publicity & advertising: 2015-2016 Missional Report
• 2nd place website: www.minnesotaumc.org
• 2nd place print publications: Quarterly Reach • Renew • Rejoice “Breakthroughs” newsletter
• 2nd place video: The ELI Project promo
• 3rd place single piece publicity & advertising: Camp Minnesota 2016 catalog
• 3rd place video: “Serving lunch and living the gospel in LaCrescent”
• Honorable mention special publications—2015-2016 Missional Report

We are here to serve you and always love to hear from you. Please let us know if you have story ideas, or if there are particular resources or tools you’re looking for. We’ll do whatever we can to equip you to reach new people in your community.

Christa Meland

Director of Ministries

Our focus for this past year was Living Generously—Unleashing God’s Gifts! I have seen those gifts unleashed in so many ways!

• We were awarded a $1 million dollar Lilly Grant to address the economic crisis facing clergy. It was a gift to be invited to apply for the grant, and the generosity of a collaboration of Val Walker (MN Foundation), Sheri Meister (Dakotas Foundation), Rebecca Trefz (Dakotas Director of Ministries) and myself to write the grant made it possible. We are excited that Diane Owen has stepped into the role of Program Director for the grant and believe this gift will be multiplied as the programs and grant processes are developed.

• A new team—the Journey Toward Vitality Lead Team—was formed to guide us the primary challenge of the FACT report process: increase the urgency around our evangelistic task. A group of people were invited to make a commitment to this team and generously said yes to lead in this arena! Dave Nuckols, agreed to serve as Conference Co-Lay Leader, with a primary task of leading this team with me.

• We were able to add two key positions to our staff through reconfiguring positions. Jody Thone came on board as our Director of Leadership Development, and Joelle Anderson returned to our staff in a new capacity: Connectional Ministries Project Coordinator. Both women bring extraordinary gifts and passion to this work.

• We launched a new model for Clergy Covenant Groups, building on a Wesleyan model for sharing life and ministry together. I give thanks for the leaders who stepped up to offer their time and gifts to lead these groups.

• We redesigned annual conference session, moving it to mid-June, with an emphasis on engaging younger people. We spent significant time building relationships and creating space for dialogue. A powerful Spirit was present and the Party in the Park was a hit!

• Janet Beard, our Conference Secretary and myself, worked through the entire Policy and Procedure Manual to re-organize and edit it. In and of itself, that does not seem exciting, but it has been one of those things on the to-do list for many years, and to have a partner to take it on in order to get it done has been huge!

• Robert Kutter, our co-lay leader has served so ably the past four years, helping to re-boot lay speaking ministries in our conference. He will be completing his term at this annual conference and we say thank you!

• We continue to give thanks for the generosity of all those individuals and churches who are making their financial commitments to our Reach, Renew and Rejoice Campaign. Because of you, 12 churches have been able to participate in transformational processes in 2016-17.

• There is so much more I could share: the wisdom and gift of mentors in our Clergy Leadership Academy, the gift of time and space for those who participated in the Soul Leaders retreat series, the investment of youth leaders and camp counselors in connecting our kids to Christ, the engagement of our clergy and congregations in witnessing for justice whether that was in St. Anthony or at Standing Rock, and that just names a few. There are so many ways that together we are making a difference by sharing generously of our gifts!
I am honored to lead a talented and dedicated staff and to journey with clergy and congregations as we all seek to grow in our love of God and neighbor, reach new people and heal a broken world!

_Cindy Gregorson_  
**Director of New Church Development**

New places for new people to know and follow Jesus. We are pleased to report that the Spirit has been doing new things in and through our connection over the last year. Here is a brief overview:

**SPROUTING:**
The Beloved began public worship in fall 2016 with Shawn Moore as pastor developer. The Beloved has a strong focus on racial reconciliation and has developed a relevant presence in St Paul during a time of critical community need. They are ministering out of the former Epworth St. Paul church.

Centennial St. Anthony Park launched late 2016 with Whitney Sheridan as planter pastor working closely with Eric Bjorkland as worship leader. Whitney and Eric worked hard to reach into the local community to connect with new people while enfolding SAP attendees and Centennial individuals. The repurposed building of St. Anthony Park UMC breaths a new welcome to that community.

North Summit Church launched early 2017 with Josh Meyer as planter pastor. North Summit is reaching significantly into the millennial community. Josh reports many people who have found Jesus through a church that they can relate to. North Summit is currently nested and worshipping at Blaine UMC.

The Well in Rosemount (formerly Rosemount UMC) is a now a multi-site congregation launching its new Apple Valley congregation at the local theatre in February 2017. With nearly 70 people supporting the effort, this new campus is helping to create new mission-focused DNA in both congregations. Nate Larson provides campus leadership for The Well Apple Valley.

**GERMINATING:**
The seeds are deep into the soil in a variety of places with three planting leaders. Jesus Purisaca is developing Iglesia Pedro Viva in Minneapolis and Toubee Vang is developing Robbinsdale Hmong UMC. Tyler Sit is developing New City Church in Minneapolis. We give thanks to God for these leaders who are responding to the Spirit in the ways that will connect with their mission focus making new room for new people.

**GROWING:**
The following are congregations that continue to develop and grow to maturity as they press into missional effectiveness:

Crossroads Elko New Market led by Gordon and Melissa Duel; Embrace St. Croix, led by Austin Walker; Uptown Minneapolis led by Jeremiah Lideen; Northern Light Anoka led by Cullen Tanner; Homestead Rochester led by Luke and Bethany Nelson.

In addition to this listing, we celebrate a variety of congregations that are multiplying their impact by starting new services to reach new people. Thanks be to God!

_Ben Ingebretson_  
**Episcopacy Committee**

The functions of the conference Committee on Episcopacy are to support the bishop of the area in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, with special reference to the area where the bishop has presidential responsibility, to be available to the bishop for counsel, to assist in the determination of the episcopal needs of the area, and to make recommendations to appropriate bodies and to keep the bishop advised concerning conditions within the area as they affect relationships between the bishop and the people of the conference agencies. (see Book of Discipline, paragraph 637 for a full description of the committee’s responsibilities). We pray that God will work through us as we engage in these tasks together.
In 2016/17 we continued our pattern of meeting in the Fall with the Dakotas Committee on Episcopacy, and in the Spring on our own. Fall 2016 we met in Mitchell, SD in fall 2017 we will meet in Minneapolis.

Providing support and encouragement for Bishop Ough and for Char is an important focus of our work. We were happy and grateful to the North Central Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy for assigning Bishop Ough to the Dakotas Minnesota Area for another quadrennium. We trust that Bishop Ough will continue to lead us with a strong missional focus, a willingness to try new things, an openness to the Holy Spirit’s movement in our midst and an unflagging commitment to leading our Conference in effective disciple making for the transformation of the world. We are grateful for all the strategic and leadership gifts he brings and for his passion for churches to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ by growing in their love of God and neighbor, reaching new people and healing a broken world. We thank Char for her enthusiastic support of Bishop Ough and of our Conference. We appreciate the ways she continues to minister to and with clergy spouses/significant others. In addition to his responsibilities in this Episcopal Area, Bishop Ough is the President of the Council of Bishops. We are proud that our bishop is leading the Church in these difficult times with his steady, non-anxious presence, an open heart and mind and the ability to be both prophetic and pastoral at the same time. We encourage the Bishop to continue to find ways to care for himself and his family amidst all these responsibilities, and we offer our prayer support to him as he continues in this leadership role in our denomination.

Finally, our committee celebrates the ministry and work of Sheilah Kyburz, Administrative Assistant for the Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church. For over twenty-five years, Sheilah has served in the Minnesota Conference Episcopal Office. She has dedicated her whole heart, mind and soul to serve with efficiency and excellence, all the while being gracious, kind and hospitable. We thank her for deep commitment and willingness to support all the additional tasks that came with Bishop Ough becoming President of the Council of Bishops, and most of all, we want her to know how much we appreciate her.

Judy Zabel, Chair

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**Finance and Administration**

The finance and administration area of the Annual Conference provides accounting, budgeting and reporting, investment management, personnel and benefits administration, oversight for historical records of churches and the conference, stewardship of resources for the conference, property and risk management, and the means by which funds are transmitted from churches in Minnesota to mission and ministry sites around the world.

**Shared Ministry:**
As a connectional church, apportionments are the foundation of our shared ministry. In 2016, congregations within the state collectively remitted 87.7% of the requested apportionments—slightly down from 89.1% in 2015 but about even with the four-year average of 87.8%. We received $5.9 million in apportioned revenue on a total apportioned amount of $6.7 million. Nearly 75% of our churches paid the their full apportionment this year. We are especially grateful to those churches who consistently and faithfully pay their full apportioned amounts and to those who have increased their giving of apportioned funds.

We utilized $190 thousand of investment reserve funds to pay the 2016 General Conference apportionments of $1.6 million in full. Since we generally receive 25% of remittances at year-end, reserves are necessary to cash flow operations of the Annual Conference throughout the year and to maintain discontinued church property until sold.

**Non-apportioned giving and Love Offering:**
Minnesota United Methodists have a strong history of generosity and last year gave $1.5 million above and beyond apportionments to various ministries and causes. This mission giving included the conference's Reach • Renew • Rejoice congregational development initiative, General Conference Advance Specials, Minnesota Conference Advance Specials, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Imagine No Malaria, Special Sundays, and the Minnesota Conference Love Offering.

Donations to the 2016 Love Offering, an annual offering that Minnesota churches take annually to support missions, totaled $96,400. The Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services received 40 percent of that
total, the United Methodist Committee on Relief received 10 percent to cover the cost of shipping more than 13,000 health kits that Minnesota churches assembled and prepared, International Child Care in the Dominican Republic received 40 percent, and Volunteers in Mission scholarships received 10 percent.

The finance and administration department serves with a variety of Boards, Councils, and Action Teams. We continue to work with these teams to implement recommendations received through the Financial Advisory Consulting Team (FACT) process. These recommendations include strategic planning and budgeting and engaging in an economic projection process with the General Church regarding health and retirement benefit reserves.

**Capital Facilities Development & Finance Commission**

The primary purpose of Capital Facilities is to support financing and refinancing of church buildings, church building construction or expansion projects. The commission provides this outreach ministry in the form of loan guarantees that add the credit of the annual conference to that of local churches. The cost to the local church is .25% of the amount guaranteed.

The collateral to support the loan guarantee program comes from four sources in this order: cash and marketable investment assets of Capital Facilities; the Permanent Church Extension Fund; conference-owned property; and the pledges of 234 local churches.

At December 31, 2016, Capital Facilities had four loan guarantees in place with a total value of approximately $1,768,200. Capital Facilities provided support to North Branch UMC during the year. Finally, Capital Facilities members acted as resources to other churches that were evaluating refinancing alternatives.

The commission members have a broad background in finance and related disciplines and should be viewed as a resource for churches contemplating capital projects. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Gail Alexander at (651) 457-5686 or citymaple@earthlink.net, or Barbara Brower at (612) 230-6135 or barbara.brower@minnesotaumc.org.

As noted above, the commission’s ability to provide loan guarantees is dependent upon pledges from local churches as collateral. By supporting this program with pledged collateral, local churches can leverage scarce financial resources with very little likelihood of incurring any expense. Churches should consider this as an outreach/mission project without the need of spending cash.

**Council on Finance and Administration**

*The Book of Discipline* says, “The purpose of the council shall be to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the Annual Conference (Paragraph 612.1). The council worked on many activities this year including:

- Paid 100% of our general conference apportionments for 2017 using approximately 190 thousand from conference reserves
- Participated on the Financial Advisory Consulting Team – we continue to work on various recommendations from their report including enhanced budgeting on an annual and five-year basis using strategic planning model and work toward increasing unrestricted liquid net assets
- Approved conference-wide appeals and Special Asking’s
- Reviewed the annual audited financial statements
- Developed the 2018 budget and uncollectible amount
- Released prior year’s unpaid apportionments
- Approved clergy housing allowances

We also have members serving as liaisons to conference committees including Greg Johnson, Chair of the Audit Committee and Chair of the Investment Action Team and Steve Richards Chair of the Budget Process Team. Our thanks to those churches that shared in the connection this year through apportionment
payment. Our collection rate for apportionments was 87.7% for 2016, down slightly from 89.1% in 2015. The uncollectible amount for 2017 is budgeted at $725,000 or 11% of the budget. The majority of apportionment funds received from local congregations stay within Minnesota to plant new churches, revitalize others, provide training, workshops and internships and support other outreach efforts.

**Episcopal Residence Committee**
The current Episcopal residence received minor routine maintenance in 2015. Upkeep needs of the property continue to be monitored regularly and addressed as needed.

**Investment Action Team**
Conference Reserves and Investments

Invested funds as of end of 2016 totaled $62.6 million, up from $57.9 million at the end of 2015. The Conference portfolio had an asset allocation of approximately 65% equities, 33% fixed income, and 2% cash. The Conference continues to make socially-responsible investments. The Conference weighted average investment returns were 8.23% in 2016 similar to market returns. The Conference utilizes several investment monitoring criteria and the Investment Action Team reviews these funds quarterly.

During this past year, the Investment Action Team reviewed several proposals for investment management for funds not held by Wespath. A majority of the conference funds that are held for retirement and healthcare are invested with and continue to be invested with Wespath. For other Conference funds, the Investment Action Team interviewed a number of managers and selected Baird and Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation.

There are three generations of clergy pension and retirement plans being administered by the conference; each is funded above 100%. Retirement and health reserves are at a level that allows them to be used to cover approximately $1.3 million of expenses that used to be apportioned to the local churches. The operating reserve is funded at a level that meets current requirements.

**Conclusion**
We are grateful to the many volunteers who work diligently in this ministry. It is an honor and joy to serve on these teams.

*Barbara Brower*, Director of Finance and Administration  
*John Mitchem*, Chair of Council on Finance and Administration  
*Greg Johnson*, Chair of Investment Action Team

**Higher Education Ministry Team**

The Minnesota Conference Higher Education Ministry Team continues to seek to find ways to help college students encounter a God large enough to move from the Sunday School room to the college classroom, the college dorm, and the workplace. It means helping young people find out what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ as a young adult, making important life-decisions.

The work of this team is described in great detail in paragraph 634 of *The Book of Discipline*, but the short version of our work is that we exist to support and coordinate work in campus ministry within our conference, and to help connect campus ministries to local United Methodist congregations. We met four times in 2016.

Among our accomplishments for the year:
- Continued focus on adding new members to our team
- Used our small budget to support campus ministries including the Wesley Foundation at the University of Minnesota (the recipient of a significant portion of our budget) and the campus ministry at the University of Minnesota, Duluth;
- Presented the Asbury Award to Rev. Laurie Boche at the 2016 Annual Conference
• Facilitated scholarships related to the United Methodist Student Day offerings which are now administered directly by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
• Heard updates from campus ministries
• Said congratulations and goodbye to our long-time chair the Rev. David Bard as he was elected Bishop.

In 2017 we are implementing a new grant application process to provide financial assistance to campus ministry units and congregations in ministry with college students. Funded ministries will address critical issues related to college students in their local context, with an eye toward spiritual development as a necessary component of academic, emotional, relational and personal development.

The intention is that grants will be awarded to new ministries or existing ministries engaged in new initiatives that demonstrate the potential, capacity and commitment to reach new people, grow in love of God and neighbor and heal a broken world.

Mariah Furness Tollgaard, Chair

Human Resources Team

The Human Resources Team continued their work with conference staff to help the MN Annual Conference equip for the changing ministry needs of our conference. We saw some of our key staff retire after many strong years of service and we had new members join our staff to direct our conference ministry. Reflecting on staff feedback, performance reviews and input from conference leadership, we can confidently affirm that our conference staff is highly efficient, creative and has adapted well to a continually changing ministry field. We are proud of our staff and the hard work that they perform on a daily basis.

The HRT meets on an annual basis with two of our key conference leaders- Cindy Gregorson, Conference Director of Ministries and Barb Brower, Conference Treasurer. Cindy and Barb have the responsibility of the day to day supervision of our conference staff. The HRT also meets regularly with the Bishop to consult on performance reviews and make decisions regarding conference staffing, salaries and benefits.

This year the HRT completed a review of the conference employee handbook, consulted on the new Lily Grant, hired Judy Thone as the new Leadership Development Director. We also reviewed and recommended the HRT 2018 budget for the Annual Conference.

As a means of showing our appreciation to our hard working conference staff, the HRT also planned a summer staff outing that was well received and quite fun.

As part of the reevaluation of conference structures and administration, the HRT has elected to fold our ministry responsibilities into those of the Committee on Finance and Administration following the 2017 Annual Conference.

Tom Biatek, Chair

Investing in Congregations Granting Team

The Investing in Congregations Granting Team began in the fall of 2007 for grants that were issued for ministry in 2008. The intent of these grants is to assist congregations who have the desire and capacity to begin new and innovative ministry. Rather than providing a long term subsidy for ministry, the grants are intended to provide seed money for a new venture, encouraging churches to take risks in making strategic and timely investments in our conference imperatives to:
- Reach New People
- Cultivate Spiritual Vitality
- Heal a Broken World.

Team members include: Amy Jo Bur (chairperson), Mike Faust, Dottie Mau, Linda McCullough, Rachel Warner, Lyndy Zabel (conference staff), and staff support from Gail Johnson. Thank you to each of the team members. Each conducted their ministry with enthusiasm, wisdom, and diligence. Thank you especially to the four new team members who answered the call to serve in this way.
Grant applications were received for both grants and microgrants, from each of the districts of the annual conference and for a wide variety of projects (ranging from homeless shelter, to youth staffing, to racial reconciliation ministry, to pollinators, to recovery ministry, and many more.) It was inspiring to read the exciting, innovative, and high quality applications that we received.

Grant applications were evaluated on the following criteria:
- The church has a strategic congregational ministry plan and this effort fits into the overall plan.
- The grant is not just the last minute, bright idea of a select few in the congregation, but the concept and implementation has been well thought out and is owned by the leadership of the congregation.
- The congregation and pastor have the leadership capacity and competency to implement this effort.
- The ministry demonstrates creativity, innovation and experimentation appropriate to the context.
- The grant is being used for ministry and/or staffing, not capital expenses.
- For the renewal of a grant, the congregation has demonstrated measurable results from the previous year of the grant.

For those churches requesting more than $2500, these additional criteria are applied:
- The congregation has a long term plan and capacity for the funding of this ministry beyond the grant.
- The effort has specific benchmarks to mark progress and clear, measurable outcomes.

Grants were approved for a total of $198,050 for calendar year 2017.

The following congregations were approved for microgrants during 2017:

The following congregations were approved for grant renewals during 2017:

The following congregations were approved for new investing in congregations grants during 2017:
Corcoran: Immanuel UMC, Detroit Lakes UMC, Hopkins Korean Evangelical UMC, La Crescent UMC, North Branch: Main Street UMC.

Amy Jo Bur, Chair

Lay Ministry Action Team

Lalty of the Minnesota Annual Conference are called to become a vital expression of the conference scriptural imperatives to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people and heal a broken world. The Lay Ministry Action Team (LMAT) is responsible for offering opportunities for laity to create, improve and expand spirit-driven ministry in the local church. The LMAT offers training opportunities for laity through classes and workshops through the year and throughout the conference.

One of the most successful trainings was the weekend-long retreats for equipping lay persons as certified lay speakers. The retreat format provides laity the opportunity to complete six courses on lay speaking that includes written reports, a video of speaking and an interview by a team from the LMAT. Members of the Lay Ministry Action Team conducted many lay speaker interviews in 2016 to complete the process for lay speaker certification. Over 50 lay people are now listed as certified lay speakers who are equipped to do pulpit supply in churches across the conference.

A class on Aging and Ministry was offered in the fall of 2016 along with opportunities for laity to attend several Breakthrough Workshops throughout the year. In early 2017, Ministry Discernment Retreats were held to help lay people discern their call to ministry whether that be as a lay servant, lay speaker, a Certified Lay Minister, a licensed local pastor, a deacon or an ordained elder.

The LMAT is made up of a dozen laity from around the state including a Conference Co-Lay Leader, the Conference Director of Leadership Development, and one pastor.

Janet Beard and Bob Kutter, Co-Chairs
Mission Promotion Team:
Mission Promotion Team continues to heal a broken world through ministries of compassion and justice. Together, churches in our conference participate in thirty-three local, national and international hands-on volunteer projects, help support eighteen United Methodist missionaries, respond to disasters through UMCOR, advocate for justice for women and ethnic minorities, and continue our long-standing relationships with OC Ministries, Compatible Technology, Emma Norton Services, Project Ag Grad, Simpson Shelter and Wesley Meals.

Highlights of the past year include:
- The reformation of a conference Church and Society Team
- Formation of a Haiti-MAC Coalition
- Formation of a Laos/Thailand - MAC Coalition
- Thirteen new school-church partnerships
- New family VIM trips to Spirit Lake Ministry Center in North Dakota
- Over $92,000 given through the Love Offering to help support refugee resettlement in MN, children with disabilities in Dominican Republic, and VIM scholarships
- Over 15,000 health kits assembled and sent to refugee camps in the Middle East
- Welcoming Emanuel Adeyemo, our new Project Ag student
- MAC Mission Summit at Northfield UMC
- Receipts of over $50,000 in support if our missionaries
- Receipts of over $62,000 in support of Conference Advances

Thanks to Mission Promotion Team members and all of those in our local churches who seek to live out the love of God, and daily be the hands of feet of Christ!

OC Ministries:
OC Ministries enters its twenty-eighth year of ministering to minds, bodies and souls in Jamaica, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This year also saw the addition of teacher training in Haiti. Highlights of the year include the beginning of the United Methodist Secondary School in Baiwala, Sierra Leone, sponsorship of 150 students, harvesting of avocados in Jamaica, support for pastors in West Africa, several wells dug, and delivery of tens of thousands of meals from Feed My Starving Children. Our first ever "annual" fundraiser gala in October was exciting and successful, featuring MPR's Kathryn Wurzer and Reverend Athlone Harrison from Browns Town, Jamaica. We thank everyone for their continued support!

World Beat Connection:
Volunteers from around the state and country played two dozen fundraising concerts in Minnesota and the Caribbean. Musicians in Jamaica joined us on our annual tour to Browns Town. All musicians at every level are welcome to join us on our tours.

Lyndy Zabel, Director of Missional Impact

Youth Ministry Team

It was another great year for youth in the Minnesota Annual Conference!

Last June, there were two options for students to participate in Annual Conference. A leadership track was added for high school students. Students participated fully in the conference, but also had a chance to get together with other students, process what they were experiencing, ask questions, and talk about what it means to be called to ministry. Students also Stormed the Conference. The leaders of Storm Camp provided a Stormlike experience for middle school and high school students to serve the St. Cloud area during Annual Conference. Teams of students spent two days painting and landscaping for people in St. Cloud, ending their experience serving communion at closing worship.

For the third year in a row, The Event was held the first weekend in November with over 300 middle school students and leaders enjoying a weekend at Cragun’s Resort in Brainerd. The weekend was packed with
worship, learning and most importantly, FUN! The theme this year was #blessed, and speaker Chris Carr inspired students to think about all the ways they are blessed and what it looks like to bless others. Through breakouts, students created blessing bags with supplies for people experiencing housing insecurity for winter, as well as created Instagram Stories about what they think it means to be blessed, and participated in group building games where they were able to bless each other.

The new element added to The Event this year was our internship program. Six high school students assisted in running The Event. Their responsibilities included assisting with hospitality, worship, breakouts and building relationships with participants. The interns were able to get some hands on leadership experience, learn about leadership from all The Event adult leaders and were able to process what they were learning about themselves throughout the weekend.

The annual Confirmation Gathering was held the first weekend in March at Good Samaritan in Edina. One hundred Confirmation students and leaders from across the conference gathered to learn about what it means to be a disciple. Students were encouraged to look at discipleship through a covenant discipleship lens, highlighting worship, justice, devotion and compassion. Experts in these areas from across Minnesota shared with students what those facets looked like in their own lives.

We are so excited for the ways we have seen God at work in the lives of young people throughout the conference in the last year and look forward to seeing that continue in the next year!

_Erica Koser and Lindsey Nuehring_, Co-Chairs
Reports from Affiliated Organizations

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)

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

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

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

EDUCATION
- The Collegiate Ministry Office at GBHEM hosted Imagine What’s NEXT, a three-day event for young adults ages 18-26 to discern their call of lay or clergy leadership and learn ways to connect that God-given call through the work of the church. Nearly 700 students participated in NEXT, an increase of nearly 40 percent from prior years.
- The Young Clergy Initiative funds innovative projects across the church to attract young people to ordained ministry. The $7 million initiative has funded more than 75 projects. A biennial event, Exploration provides a platform for young adults ages 18-26 to hear, discern, and respond to God’s call to ordained ministry. In 2015, 475 attended Exploration. The 2017 event will take place in Portland, Oregon, November 3 – 5.
- The agency has a Global Methodist Education Network that includes more than 1,000 institutions of higher education around the world. GBHEM supports Schools, Colleges and Universities across the U.S. The Schools, Colleges, and Universities Office at GBHEM hosted 30 of the school’s presidents at the CEO Meeting of the Council of Independent Colleges in Orlando, Florida in January 2017. In addition, the office hosted 35 presidents at the National Association of Schools & Colleges of The United Methodist Church (NASCUMC) winter meeting in Washington, D.C.
- Global Education and New Initiatives at GBHEM provides technical assistance, financial support, scholarships and recruitment aids for five target regions across the globe: Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, Europe and the U.S. Global Education works with the United-Methodist related schools, particularly institutions of higher education and theology schools. In addition to schools, the office supports international and regional associations, as well as oversees the Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development.
- The Black College Fund invests in the hopes and dreams of those students attending United Methodist-related historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The Black College Fund distributes 95 percent (on average more than $9 million) of all funds received equally to the 11 HBCUs. The fund provides for faculty development, infrastructure maintenance, and for students who need financial support and scholarship, helping the HBCUs to keep tuition and fees competitive. The Black College Fund was pleased to announce that five of its HBCU’s enrolled 22 Hispanic students as part of the Latino student access program in 2016.
- The agency works with the Commission on Central Conference Theological Education (CCTE) to distribute grants for the theological education of pastoral leaders in the Central Conferences. The 2012 General Conference established a $5 million CCTE fund, and more than 250 grants have been awarded across 22 countries to date. Due to its impact, the fund was doubled at the 2016 General Conference. New grant recipients were announced in March 2017.
- In 2016, GBHEM’s Office of Loans and Scholarships awarded 2,025 students with more than $3.1 million in scholarships and 406 students with more than $1.9 million in loans. The loans and scholarships are open to United Methodist students and seminarians who are seeking to further their education.
- GBHEM reestablished its publishing ministry in 2016 to engage, nurture, and advocate for the intellectual life of The United Methodist Church. Through this ministry, GBHEM produces academic resources for the constituencies of the agency, including single-author and multi-author works, as well as edited volumes. More than 10 new and revised books have been released under the publishing ministry.
MINISTRY

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

- Individuals pursuing licensed and ordained ministry find the resources they need to overcome challenges and barriers sometimes encountered when responding to God’s call in GBHEM’s Candidacy Office. The office coordinated a successful Board of Ordained Ministry Quadrennial Leadership Development in fall 2016. In addition, the office revised the BOM Handbook following General Conference along with the conference relations resources for the 2016 Book of Discipline. The Candidacy Office is also developing an eight-year Clergy Assessment Process and GBHEM’s Effective Ministry Assessment (EMA) leadership development tool.

- Course of Study and Specialized Theological Education provides resources for local pastors to gain the education and training needed for service across the church, with courses available in Spanish. The office launched Portuguese Course Study programs in 2016 and will continue to expand. GBHEM launched three new education options for part-time pastors in December 2016: an Extension of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO) located at United Theological Seminary, a satellite Course of Study program with Saint Paul School of Theology in Hays, Kansas, and a pilot Escuela de Cursos de Estudios (ECE), a Spanish Course of Study, in Denver, Colorado. Chaplains and pastoral counselors are credentialed through the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, which provides resources for chaplains and counselors serving inside and outside the walls of the church. UMEA supports those working in 25 ministry settings such health care, military, prison, workplace, marriage and family, specialized and more. The office is completing the second pilot initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of a hybrid Clinical Pastoral Education program sponsored by GBHEM.

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

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

GBHEM Office of Communications

Minnesota Council of Churches

A Tradition of Innovation

- Community Engagement, which includes Respectful Conversations, Taking Heart Ramadan Dinners, #BlessedRamadan, Black Clergy Speakers Bureau, Native American Relationships.
- Refugee Services, which includes case management, education, employment and immigration.
- Advocating Justice, which includes Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, Minnesota FoodShare, Racial Justice.
- Supporting the Faith Community, which includes operating the Minnesota Church Center, Congregational partnerships, Volunteer Opportunities and News for the Common Good
2016 Report
25 denominations are members of Minnesota Council of Churches. Over the last year we:

- Gathered bishops and executives of almost one million constituents for prayer and discernment in retreat, prayer breakfasts, and board meetings.
- Reached a cumulative 2,531 Minnesotans participating in 87 Respectful Conversations on topics ranging from “race” relations to guns to processing the election.
- Welcomed 459 refugees from 17 countries
- Organized Bishops and executives from Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim communities for historic press conference in support of refugees.
- Brought 1,100 Christians and Muslims together in relationship at 20 cross-cultural Ramadan Iftars.
- Helped 192 uninsured Mankato Community Residents apply for state health insurance programs.
- Witnessed to the good work of the body of Christ in 93 media articles.
- Promoted peace with over 3,000 #BlessedRamadan lawn signs.
- Coordinated a cycle of 54 ‘Mother’ Emanuel AME prayer vigils hosted by congregations from 16 different traditions each week.
- Helped 94 refugees secure employment.
- Joined Minnesota FoodShare to raise $7.9 million for food shelves and 5.2 million pounds of food in the March Campaign.
- Partnered with 11 congregations that co-sponsored Refugee Families.
- Successfully advocated for $1.5 million to train law enforcement and health care in human trafficking awareness.
- News for the Common Good reached over 3,500 congregational decision-maker subscribers every other week.

Rev. Canon Peg Chemberlin, CEO

Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries, MN Chapter

Since its inception in 1990, the Minnesota Chapter of Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) has endeavored to be a vital link of help and encouragement between the members of the administrative staff of the greater United Methodist Church. As a GCFA-sanctioned organization, PAUMCS continues to provide a supportive base of professional development, continuing education, individual growth and spiritual enrichment for persons (paid or volunteer) in church support.

In April 2016, we held a Retreat with the theme “Spiritual Photography” at UMC Camp Koronis in Paynesville Minnesota. Pastor Michelle Hargraves and Professional Photographer Janet Campbell attended and taught us about photographic subjects, techniques for getting a good photograph and the act of photography as a spiritual discipline and worship. We practiced our new knowledge on the campgrounds at beautiful Lake Koronis.

Our Annual Meeting and workshops were hosted by Mounds Park UMC on October 24, 2016. Pastor Tyler Sit from New City Church spoke to us about developing a unique theme and logo for our church asking us – “What are we great at doing at OUR church?” He helped us to think about how we market or brand our church in meaningful ways. In the afternoon, Pastor Dennis Alexander led us in Communion. We then had a round-table discussion with administrators representing a small, medium and larger UMC church recommending what is working well in the communications areas for their churches followed by questions. May 4-6, 2017, we are planning to send at least 4 members from the Minnesota PAUMCS chapter to our national PAUMCS convention - “Feel the Spirit in the Windy City” - being held in Chicago.

PAUMCS is open to all who are in a position supporting the United Methodist Church. In the 2016-2017 membership year we had 47 members from across the conference. This included 8 new members and 7 national members. Our hope is that every church would encourage their support staff to be members by sponsoring them to connect to this “vital link” ministry. Connect with us online at www.minnesotumc.org/paumcs or become part of our Facebook group: MN PAUMCS.

Laura Ann Miles, President
Resources, from great ideas to streaming video to curriculum, are a key support for healthy, vital communities of faith. The Resource Center for Churches connects you with outstanding resources that spark your imagination and enrich your ministry.

Lay leaders, faith formation staff, and clergy of the churches of the Minnesota Annual Conference United Methodist Church contact us to consult, access resources, and share wisdom. We gather the recommendations of our users across denominations to lift up outstanding web, video, print and other resources for all areas of church life. Here's our FAQ. (http://rcc-mn.org/2015/12/14/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-rcc/)

Early in 2016, the RCC began publishing a weekly post. Six New Things (http://rcc-mn.org/tag/six-new-things/) allows you to scan timely resources of all types quickly and easily, following a link or two that may interest you. These posts are available by email, and easily accessible and searchable from our homepage. (http://rcc-mn.org/) You can also see them on our Facebook. (https://www.facebook.com/resourcecenterforchurches) Response from our users has been enthusiastic; we hope this is an innovative and convenient way to call great resources to your attention.

The events of 2016 led us to lift up new resources on racism and privilege, immigration and refugees, Islam, bullying, creation care, and other issues of faith and justice. We publish concise lists of the best resources for topics and seasons at rcc-mn.org. Contact us to consult on resources that fit your context.

Through Minnesota CEF (Christians Engaged in Faith Formation), we highlight current resources for those ministering with young people. We serve as the planning hub for The ConNext Summit 2017, which will focus on Original Blessing in faith formation with children and youth.

Christa Meland, your Director of Communications and President of our Board, has been a creative and wise voice in developing the RCC and spreading the word about us: thank you.

The Resource Center for Churches is deeply grateful for all your support. Every time you contact us, whether you visit, email, check Six New Things or recommend us to another leader at your church, you enlarge our network and deepen the wisdom and experience we share. Blessings on your ministries in the coming year! We hope to be a lively partner for you and your church.

Elizabeth Bougie, Director

United Methodist Foundation

In October, 2016, the Foundation sponsored a stewardship seminar,” The Joy of Generous Giving; A Call to Financial Stewardship” led by Dr. David Bell, President of the Michigan Area United Methodist Foundation. The seminar was live-streamed from Cross Winds UMC, Maple Grove, and enabled people from churches across the state to participate from remote locations.

Through a $1 million grant received from the Lilly Endowment, beginning in summer, 2017 the Foundation will actively participate with the Dakotas-Minnesota Area to implement a holistic model of building financially healthy congregations led by clergy who have developed their own financial management and stewardship skills. The program design will incorporate the Wesleyan principles of Earn, Save and Give to lead, teach and model.

Nineteen Legacy Giving and three Estate Planning Seminars were presented in local churches and three successful capital campaigns were held during the year. MUMF staff consulted with Finance Committees in 14 local churches to plan Annual Budget campaigns.

Under the direction of Val Walker and Jack Fistler, the Foundation has produced newly written materials for a Legacy Giving program that are available to local churches. Included is information about wills, bequests, charitable gift annuities, charitable trusts, etc. The Foundation also offers a Planned Giving Information Kit in addition to creating a new booklet outlining a year-round planned giving emphasis for local churches. Be sure to
visit the Foundation website, www.mnumf.org, which contains information concerning investments, planned giving, seminars, annual budget consulting, capital campaigns, and programs for Finance and Stewardship Committee information and training.

The Foundation continues to participate in the “Dollars for Scholars” Endowment program with the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation. In 2016, we provided scholarship assistance for eight persons who are training for Christian ministry at UM institutes of higher education and seminaries.

The Foundation continues its advantageous partnership in the Pooled Investment Fund with the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation. The first quarter of 2017 was very strong for the Foundation and all our rates of return have been positive. As of 4/1/2017, the investment portfolio amounted to $26,595,000. MUMF invests funds for 176 churches, boards and agencies within the MN Annual Conference. You can view all of our fund performance listed on our website.

The Foundation wishes to express its appreciation for your continuing support as we seek to provide programs, materials and services to local churches and conference agencies. Our prayer is that your church will experience renewed spiritual vitality through renewed growth in financial stewardship.

Val Walker, Executive Director

United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women (UMW) of Minnesota are among approximately 800,000 members nationally whose mission is fostering spiritual growth, developing leaders, and advocating for justice. In the Minnesota Conference there are approximately 7,000 individual members in 262 units (of the 343 churches) in Minnesota. Minnesota Conference UMW consists of the Conference Executive Team and committees that meet four times a year, plus district executive teams that meet four times a year to conduct UMW business. Each District UMW has officers responsible to be Shepherdesses to all the local UMW units in Minnesota.

Cindy Saufferer from Morristown, Minnesota, continues to make Minnesota proud as one of 25 Directors of the National Organization of UMW. We are proud that she served the following committees and boards for 2016: Reading program, Planning and Assessment, Acts of Repentance working group, General Board of Global Ministries, and Emma Norton Services. She was elected Secretary of National UMW.

Several Conference and District leaders attended the North Central Jurisdiction meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan from June 24-26. We are proud that our own Theresa Riecke was elected Vice President of North Central Jurisdiction for 2017-2020.

The 2016 Minnesota Conference Mission u & Mission u Too were held at St. John’s University near Collegeville on July 12-15 for the weekday event, and July 16 for Mission u Too. The three mission studies for 2016 were Spiritual Growth: The Bible and Human Sexuality Issue study, Social Justice: Climate Justice, Geographic: Latin America-People and Faith. Also offered were a Children’s Study: God’s Extravagant Garden, Climate Justice and a Youth Study: Joining Voices for Climate Justice.

The Minnesota Conference UMW 43rd Annual Gathering was held Saturday, October 8, 2016, hosted by First United Methodist Church of the St. Cloud Region UMW (Big Waters District) in Sartell, MN. Approximately 200 United Methodist Women were on hand to hear Cindy Saufferer and Larry Mens discuss the Document of Discovery. New officers were elected and new and continuing officers were installed. Minutes from 2015 Annual meeting will be emailed for approval. The 2015 financial report was presented and was sent to audit on December 15, 2016. A budget for 2017 was approved. The Minnesota Conference Pledge to Mission for 2017 is $190,000 and Emma Norton Goal for 2017 is $53,000.

The Minnesota Conference UMW Program Committee led a Leadership Development Retreat for District UMW officer training November 5-6, 2016, at Kelly Inn in St. Cloud. Yvette Richards, immediate past president of UMW National was the presenter.

We continue to support the only National United Methodist Institution in Minnesota - Emma Norton which houses 50 women at the Emma Norton Residence in St. Paul and Emma’s Place in Maplewood that houses 13 single parent families with 3 or more children each.

Minnesota Conference President, Sandy Meyer, represented UMW:
- on the Emma Norton Services Board, Executive Committee, and chaired the UMW/UMC Committee
- at Annual Conference in St. Cloud June 21-23. She also attended the pre-session sponsored by Committee on Status and Role of Women (COSROW) She attended the COSROW meeting and took part in workshops. Several people stopped by her display table and inquired about UMW.
• at the Jurisdiction Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI June 24-26
• on the Financial Advisory Consulting Team (FACT) committee of the Minnesota Annual Conference United Methodist Church.
• at the World Federation Meeting in Houston, Texas August 29-31
• at Church Women United Annual Meeting at Rosemount UMC on September 10
• at the Church Women United Common Council (proxy for state president who could not attend) and 75th Anniversary in Louisville, KY October 11-15
• at Leadership Development Days in Tempe, AZ November 18-20

Sandra Meyer, President (2016-2019)
Africa University ended 2016 poised to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and eager to embrace new opportunities for transformative ministry over the next 25 years.

It is a great joy to recognize and thank the Minnesota Conference for a 100 percent investment to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2016. Seven of the 11 conferences in the North Central Jurisdiction led by example, giving to the AUF at 100 percent or higher for the second consecutive year. In 2016, the tremendous commitment to connectional giving of local churches enabled 34 of the 56 United Methodist annual conferences in the United States — up from 32 in 2015 — to invest 100 percent or more of their asking to the AUF.

The university community acknowledges, with heartfelt appreciation, the many ways in which the Minnesota Conference has been active, faithful, and generous in helping Africa University to realize its mission. Through Africa University, the Minnesota Conference helps young people to discover and sharpen their gifts for leadership. Students are equipped and they respond to the call to transform the world. Thanks to your generosity, the mission of the global United Methodist Church is alive in the contributions of the university’s 7,000+ graduates.

More than 90 percent of these graduates are still in Africa, serving communities in 32 countries. Currently, more than two dozen Africa University graduates are missionaries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, under the auspices of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. Young people who would otherwise be on the margins are actively bringing God’s grace, peace and abundance to the lives of others.

Over the past year, your Africa University has continued to evolve and serve by:

- Restructuring its academic units in order to remain relevant and provide a broader-based education to meet new demands in the African workforce.
- Providing leadership formation experiences and learning for more than 1,400 students from 26 African countries. (Contrary to the norm for African higher education institutions, women represented more than half of the student body.)
- Generating new knowledge and capacity to support peacebuilding in Burundi, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Somalia, Nigeria and Uganda; and to improve food security, human rights, and leadership for the African continent.

The ongoing support of the Minnesota Conference is of vital importance to Africa University. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary, we invite the individual members as well congregations and districts of the Minnesota Conference to celebrate their journey with Africa University. Engage in a season of daily prayer for Africa University. Join Africa University’s honorary alumni association. Consider hosting a special “AU@25” event or Africa University Sunday in your local church or area. Use your event to increase awareness of Africa University’s ministry and invite attendees to each give at least $25 each in honor of the 25th anniversary. Let the celebrations spur a renewed focus on and greater engagement with the ministry that is Africa University.

Thank you, Minnesota United Methodists, for your unwavering response to the continuing call to faith, hope, and renewal in the world.

James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

Boston University Theological Seminary

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) travels with you in the vital journey of seeking God, building knowledge, and equipping leaders for the church and society. We celebrate our students, alums, and church partners, who join hands in serving God and building toward transformed communities.
BREAKING NEWS:

- **Congregations**: We welcomed Jonathan Calvillo as a new faculty member in sociology of religion, leading us toward better understanding of congregations and faith identity. See also our website of congregational resources: http://www.bu.edu/cpt/current-projects-2/congregational-research-and-development/.

- **Doctor of Ministry**: The DMin program in Transformational Leadership is soaring with deeply committed student cohorts who are widely ecumenical, culturally diverse, and increasingly global. The blended model includes intensives, online courses, and close work with faculty mentors.

- **Scholarships**: We multiplied funding for student scholarships and housing, including the Vincent Machozi Scholarship for African students who seek to cultivate ministries of compassion, justice, & peace in their homelands.

- **Religion and Arts Initiative**: The Initiative sponsored a hymn-writing contest this year, complementing the photography contest last year and STH’s rotating art exhibits. The current exhibit focuses on ecological healing: “Sense of Place” by women print-makers from Ecuador and Maine.

PARTNERING FOR MINISTRY AND TRANSFORMATION: Preparing students for ministry means meaningful partnerships with the local spiritual community.

- **Congregational courses**: Courses in congregations with church leaders and students learning together.

- **Religion and Conflict Transformation Clinic**: Internships, workshops, and projects that foster justice and reconciliation.

- **Travel seminars**: Courses engaging local communities on Arizona-Mexican border and in Cuba, Germany, and Indonesia.

- **Ecumenical partnerships**: Continuing close work with UMC, AME and other Wesleyan denominations, while building strong programs with the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ.

- **Partnership with Hebrew College**: Joint courses and public events, plus co-sponsoring *The Journal of Interreligious Studies*. The focus is on enriching theological education and developing religious leaders who are faithful and wise.

TAKING ACTION GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY:

- **Campus action**: Work with Boston University to improve accessibility and sustainability: to provide full access for all persons (a work in progress) and to live sustainably with the planet.

- **Internships in global service and peacemaking**: Student-initiated internships for service with communities across the world, and for just peacemaking projects with international organizations.

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE: Celebrating differences while joining together for action.

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

- **Deep conversations**: Faculty, students and administrators have led deep conversations on issues that divide, but with respectful listening that builds community life and communal action.

OTHER NOTABLE HEADLINES:

- Our own Associate Dean Pamela Lightsey was featured in Boston University’s 2016 Annual Report for her pursuit of justice, empowerment, and change.
• Our graduating senior, Rev. Mariama White-Hammond (AME) led the Boston Women’s March, and some 75 STH faculty and students marched, calling for social and ecological justice as we build new futures in the United States.

• Students of all theological and social orientations are asking and then acting: “What can I do to make this world better?” “How can I witness to my Christian faith?”

As BUSTH looks back on 2016, it celebrates transformational leaders who have loved God and cared mightily for God’s world. Their living legacy gives us hope and courage for the future.

Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean

Candler School of Theology

For more than 100 years, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has prepared real people to make a real difference in the real world. Since our founding in 1914, over 10,000 students have graduated from Candler, where they have been shaped as thoughtful, principled, and courageous Christian leaders dedicated transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

One of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is also one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, a top-tier research institution offering extensive resources and a rich context for study. Our location in Atlanta provides a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of the 21st century. Simply put, there is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

In order to keep pace with the needs of the church and the world, Candler offers 17 degrees: seven single degrees and ten dual degrees pairing theology with bioethics, business, international development, law, public health, or social work. One of our newest degrees is a Doctor of Ministry that is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry as they study and apply what they learn in real time. We’ve also partnered with the University of Georgia’s School of Social Work to create an MDiv/MSW where students learn to maximize their effectiveness by combining pastoral skills such as spiritual counseling with social work practices such as family therapy and community assessment.

Our student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. 475 students are enrolled, with 51 percent women, 34 percent people of color (U.S.), and a median age of 30. Students represent 39 denominations, with half coming from the Methodist family. 83 percent of students are seeking a degree to prepare them as ministry professionals.

Candler has a deep commitment to alleviating student debt and employs a multi-pronged approach to tackle this issue. In 2016-2017, we awarded nearly $5.75 million in Candler scholarships, with 95 percent of MDiv students receiving aid and the average scholarship covering 73 percent of tuition. Plus, our comprehensive “Faith & Finance” program teaches money management skills that serve our students now and will continue to serve them—and the churches they lead—well into the future.

In fall of 2016, Candler welcomed to the faculty Larry Goodpaster as Bishop-in-Residence, and Kendall Soulen as Professor of Systematic Theology. Also this fall, three Candler alumni began their terms as newly elected bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction: David Graves 90T in Alabama-West Florida, R. Lawson Bryan 75T 85T in South Georgia, and Sue Haupert-Johnson 95T in North Georgia.

Candler draws considerable strength and inspiration from its relationship with The United Methodist Church. Our ability to fulfill our mission of educating faithful and creative leaders for the church’s ministries in the world depends upon your support, gifts, and prayers. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of our denomination. Visit us in person in Atlanta or online at candler.emory.edu to see firsthand how Candler prepares real people to make a real difference in the real world.

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics
In 2016-2017, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is focusing on the following priorities:

- Supporting the local church in addressing economic challenges and engaging young adults as active members of the church.
- Furthering our commitment to public theology with the launch of the Garrett-Evanston Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools Program and the Hispanic and Latino/a Center’s installation of the Cátedra Paulo Freire.
- Re-imagining lifelong learning as a new “Connectional Learning” program that provides opportunities to meet learners where they are with the type of education they need when they need it.
- Engaging faculty scholarship in the design of new courses for a new MDiv curriculum beginning Fall 2017 and in celebrating faculty publications.

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL CHURCH IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary received two Lilly Endowment awards this fall. A $750,000 grant will support clergy education in theologically informed financial and business practices. We believe that strong leadership in the financial health of a congregation is critical to its vitality. The grant is part of Lilly Endowment’s National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. To help clergy meet these economic challenges, Garrett-Evangelical has created a multi-dimensional program, “Leading Vibrant Congregations: A Collaboration of Faith and Finance.” To read more about the program, visit: www.garrett.edu/FaithAndFinance.

The $1.5 million grant will assist congregations in launching or mentoring new ministries that will attract young adults – a population that congregations today are struggling to reach. The grant is part of Lilly Endowment’s newly announced Young Adult Initiative 2016. With this grant, Garrett-Evangelical becomes one of 12 innovation hubs around the country helping churches create informed and meaningful ministries for millennials. Read more about “Holy Yearnings, Holy Listening, Holy Partnerships: A Peer-to-Peer Young Adult Ministry Initiative” at www.garrett.edu/YoungAdultInitiative.

PUBLIC THEOLOGY

This year, Garrett-Evangelical opened the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools® program in partnership with the Evanston community. The CDF Freedom School's program is a six-week, high-quality, literacy-rich program free to underserved children proven to curb summer learning loss and help close achievement gaps. Last summer, we had thirty-five children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade who participated. These scholars were from Evanston’s Fifth Ward, a ward of primarily black and brown people and the only ward in Evanston without its own elementary school. The program was a resounding success. Parents saw their children fall in love with reading and excited to go to the school each day. And, we were excited to learn in January, the Garrett-Evanston CDF Freedom Schools Program was approved for summer 2017.

We are driven to increase enrollment of Hispanic and Latina/o students. Dr. Débora Junker, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Hispanic Center, has revived the work of the Center including new volunteer activities and “lunch and learn” discussions. In 2016, the Center installed the Cátedra Paulo Freire, which promotes educational events, research activities, and the enrichment of dialogue among students, faculty, religious leaders, and community members. The Cátedra is a resource for Latino/a communities encouraging their engagement and interaction with the realities and contexts of the Latino/a population in the U.S., and at the same time enhances relationships with the Garrett-Evangelical community.

CONNECTIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING

At Garrett-Evangelical, we understand every person has a unique learning path. Education and training needs vary based on the journeys of the career and vocation in which you may find yourself. Considerations for physical location, ability to travel, learning preferences, time, and budget are important when undertaking learning, whether for degree purposes or for lifelong learning purposes. That’s why we designed “Connectional Learning” to meet you where you are and to connect you with the education you need when you need it.

Connectional Learning is our language for building an extended learning community that connects: personal learning interests with accessible non-degree educational resources; professional development needs for knowledge and skills with continuing education units; and diversity of learners to a variety of delivery formats.
(on and off-campus; online; hybrid). Check our Connectional Learning site often for the latest regional offerings, online courses, webinars, and faculty blogs: www.garrett.edu/ConnectionalLearning

FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP
In light of all that is happening in the world today and our commitment to put faith into action for the wellbeing of all persons and creation, we have redefined the focus, requirements, and targeted outcomes of our Master of Divinity degree. The new MDiv curriculum will begin fall 2017. The faculty has designed a number of new courses for this curriculum that prepare leaders for ministry in contemporary cultural and social realities, including attention to race, gender, class, and sexuality, as well as the personal and vocational development of the student.

We are also pleased to share the following faculty publications that may be of interest to you:

- Nancy E. Bedford, Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology, Galatians: A Theological Commentary on the Bible
- Wonhee Anne Joh, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Critical Theology against US Militarism in Asia
- James L. Papandrea, Associate Professor of Church History: Handed Down: The Catholic Faith of Early Christians; Seven Revolutions: How Christianity Changed the World and Can Change It Again; The Earliest Christologies: Five Images of Christ in Postapostolic Age
- Stephen G. Ray, Jr., Neal F. and Ila A. Fisher Professor of Systematic Theology, Awake to the Moment: An Introduction to Theology
- Jack L. Seymour, Professor Emeritus of Religious Education, Teaching Biblical Faith
- Mark R. Teasdale, E. Stanley Jones Associate Professor of Evangelism, Evangelism for Non-Evangelists
- Brent P. Waters, Jerre and Mary Joy Stead Professor of Christian Social Ethics: Just Capitalism; Christian Moral Theology in the Emerging Technoculture

Lallene J. Rector, President

ABOUT US
Garrett-Evangelical is the result of the interweaving of three institutions:

- Garrett Biblical Institute, the first Methodist seminary in the Midwest, was established in 1853 by some of the same church people who founded Northwestern University.
- Chicago Training School, established in 1885, was an important force for women in ministry and for developing service agencies throughout Chicago. Chicago Training School merged with Garrett Biblical Institute in 1934.
- Evangelical Theological Seminary, located in Naperville and founded as a seminary of the Evangelical Church (later the Evangelical United Brethren) in 1873, joined with Garrett Theological Seminary in 1974 to form Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Hamline University

As I complete my second year as Hamline University’s 20th president, I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for everything that Hamline means to, and does for, this community and the world. The passion and commitment to “do all the good we can” is deep and genuine. Our faculty are distinguished in their academic disciplines and care deeply for their students, whose well-being (academic, social, and emotional) always comes first. More students than ever are choosing Hamline—not only because of our expanded Honors Program but also because of many other “high-impact learning” opportunities—career internships, study abroad, collaborative research, writing- and speaking-intensive courses, service-learning opportunities—which prepare them exceptionally well for success in the top graduate schools and careers.

Our Wesley Center for Spirituality, Service and Social Justice, led by Chaplain Nancy Victorin-Vangerud, continues to exceed expectations in community service:

- Again this year, Hamline University was named to the national President’s Community Service Honor Roll with over 156,629 hours of service to the community (representing curricular and co-curricular programs) and for the third year, achieved “Distinction” in the category of Interfaith Service. Signature
programs include the LEAP into St. Paul with 32 community sites, MLK Jr. Day of Service, Community Service and Gap Year Service Fairs.

- At Hamline Elementary School across the street, we live into the vision that “college begins in kindergarten,” connecting children with our university theater, arts, creative writing, swimming, and the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Over 55 of our students tutor at the school’s America Reads and Counts program, and 40 serve as buddies in the Hand in Hand program. A new Math and Coding Literacies program through our math department joins 10 other academic class pairings.

- We continue to see the good fruit of our connections with the UMC here in Minnesota and nationwide. Wesley staff member Nur Mood, “Better Together” student leader Andrew Banker, and Chaplain Victorin-Vangerud attended the “Called to be Neighbors: United Methodist Higher Education Convening on Interfaith Cooperation” at Oklahoma City University. The team presented on “Interfaith Strategies for UM Campuses: What Makes Hamline Interfaith Programs Successful.” As a result of our participation, we proposed (and received) a United Methodist Innovation Grant for $3,000 in partnership with the national Interfaith Youth Core. These funds will support Student Affairs staff training, a student leadership development retreat, and a resourcing event with the St. Paul Interfaith Network (SPIN).

Our partnership with Hamline Church is growing, and our collaborative Hamline SPROUT Garden was recognized by Mayor Chris Coleman with a 2017 Sustainable Saint Paul Award in the category of “Local Food Organization.” Last summer, student interns Joseffa Smith and Hannah Hoeger, working with the children and youth of the church, raised 1,000 lbs of food, which was shared with the Hamline Midway Elders home program. Hamline Church also hosts several ministry and communications student interns, as well as student childcare workers. In winter, 14 students participated in the first overnight Bread Baking Retreat led by Rev. Bryce Johnson and Ross Safford. Students also participate in the community pizza baking events, Sacred Pop and Sacred Poetry evenings.

Hamline University served as the host site for the annual fundraiser and celebration for the Wesley Foundation at the University of Minnesota, in connection with Rev. Cody Nielson. This year, the Hamline A Cappella Choir performed in worship at Hamline Church UM, Richfield UMC, Centennial UMC and Hennepin Avenue UMC. The Hamline Gospel Choir performed in worship at Camphor Memorial UMC, Hamline Church, Living Spirit UMC, and Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church.

In its 13th year, the McVay Youth Partnership, led by Jane Krentz, has allowed Hamline to live out its commitment to social justice and community service and strengthened the effectiveness of the churches in their communities. The after-school program has had great impact on the academic success of urban youth, and some have gone on to attend Hamline and, in turn, become McVay mentors. This year, over 50 Hamline students were McVay Fellows, Associates and Interns, serving up to 200 youth each week. Sites include Arlington Hills UMC (since 2008); Liberty Plaza Resource Center (since Jan. 2005) with partner Dayton Ave. Presbyterian; Mounds Park UMC (since Sept. 2013) with partner Faith UMC (St. Anthony Village) and, since fall 2016, Washington Technology Magnet with partner Hamline Church. This summer the McVay Partnership will offer 5 weeks of programming at all sites for urban youth.

Finally, there were notable opportunities for study, discussion and spiritual growth this year. The Mahle Endowment in Progressive Christian Thought supported the weekly Spirituality Scholars program with 10 students, who were also involved with the Mahle Symposium in “Healing, Wholeness, Holiness: Religious Responses to Trauma and Illness.” Dr. Shelly Rambo from Boston University gave the keynote: “Resurrection in the Afterlife of Trauma: Making Sense of the Wounds that Mark Us.” Workshop leaders included Dr. Monica A. Coleman, Rabbi Eric Weiss, Dr. Sherry Jordon, Rev. Kathi Austin Mahle, Rev. May Kay Sauter, Prof. Julie Neraas, Dr. Rolf Jacobson, Rev. JoAnn Post, and John Hermanson. The Mahle Endowment also hosted New Testament scholar Dr. Bart Ehrman from the University of North Carolina on campus for three days, as well as a two-week hosting of local artist John Noltner’s new photographic installation “American Stories: A Peace of My Mind”.

Fayneese Miller, Ph.D., President
Established in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Church on a former slave auction site. Rust is the oldest one of 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities established after the Civil War by the Methodist Church still in existence today serving more than 1,000 students annually from Mississippi, 22 states and 6 foreign countries. Rust’s Mission continues to be in tune with the church’s overall philosophy – doing no harm, doing good and staying in love with Jesus Christ as we serve the young people who look to Rust as their bridge to a better tomorrow through education.

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

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

Highlights for 2016-2017 year include:

• The College ended the 2015-2016 fiscal year with a balanced budget for the 50th consecutive year.
• Rust College received a $145,000 grant from the Hearin Foundation to support needy students seeking financial aid.
  The total grant equaled $580,000, over a four-year period.
• The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation has provided a grant of $140,000 to the Rust General Scholarship Fund for 2016-2017.
• Dr. Gemma Beckley, Chair and Professor of Social Work, received the Mississippi Humanities Teacher of the Year award.
• Rust College students won first place at the Southern Conference on African-American Studies Quiz Bowl in Atlanta, GA on February 10, 2017.
• As a part of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Rust College juniors, Savahn Jordan and Jasmaine Dean were recognized as 2016-17 Historically Black Colleges and Universities All-STARS.
• Awarded a $10,000 Legacy’s Tobacco Free Campus Initiative Grant from the American Legacy Foundation.
• Awarded a $25,000 Grant from the Global Health Unit of Global Ministries for the Rust Health Explorers Program.
• Awarded a $1,000,336.00 from the Lilly Endowment UNCF Career Pathways Initiative for a Career Pathways Initiative Implementation Grant.

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

The College expresses thanks for the dedication and leadership of the following Trustees from the Memphis Annual Conference: George Holden, Leon Medin, and Dr. George Menshik (Emeritus).

Dr. David L. Beckley, President
Saint Paul School of Theology

Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary of the United Methodist Church committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry. We are one institution with two campuses, in Kansas and Oklahoma.

This past 2015-2016 academic year, Saint Paul enrolled 168 students from 15 annual conferences and 5 countries on both campuses. The Course of Study School at Saint Paul served 194 students in three midwest locations. Course of Study will expand course offerings to Hays, Kansas beginning Fall 2017.

Rev. Neil B. Blair became president of the seminary July 2016. Blair is a 1980 Master of Divinity graduate of Saint Paul and an ordained elder. He most recently served as the Executive Director for Institutional Advancement for the UM General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Saint Paul School of Theology and Oklahoma City University partnered to offer a 3+3 accelerated degree program. Under this arrangement, OCU students will complete 3 years of undergraduate studies in the pre-seminary track and begin their 4th year as an MDiv student at Saint Paul School of Theology. Students prepare for ordination/entry into ministry in six years instead of the usual seven, while earning both B.A. and M.Div. degrees. The accelerated program saves students time and money.

Saint Paul and The Academy for Spiritual Formation have partnered to offer a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Prophetic Witness and Service with an emphasis in Spiritual Formation. This is the first time a seminary has worked with The Academy for Spiritual Formation, a ministry of The Upper Room, to co-develop an advanced degree.

Saint Paul is also partnering with the Academy to host a 5-Day spiritual formation retreat with the theme “Draw the Circle Wide”. The summer retreat includes community and individual reflection about how spiritual disciplines help develop our listening and global language of love. Dr. Amy Oden, Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, is a lead organizer.

Rev. Casey Sigmon served as a visiting professor in a year-long professorship as part of the Vanderbilt program in Theology and Practice. Sigmon co-taught a preaching class with Dr. Mike Graves this fall and a course entitled, “Preaching in the Digital Age” based on her dissertation research this spring.

Saint Paul now offers a Certificate in Theological Formation. The certificate is 24 credit hours of courses all taught by Saint Paul faculty. Classes may be completed entirely online or through a combination of online and on-campus offerings.

Dr. Angela Sims' work in oral history preserves the memory of elder African Americans in her recently published book, Lynched: The Power of Memory in a Culture of Terror. Collaborative faculty books include Transforming Community: The Wesleyan Way to Missional Congregations by Saint Paul professor Dr. Hal Knight and Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr. and Coming Full Circle: Constructing Native Christian Theology by Saint Paul professor Dr. Elaine Robinson and Rev. Steven Charleston.

Saint Paul trustees, faculty, staff, and students thank you for your interest, prayers and support.

Rev. Neil Blair, President

United Theological Seminary – Twin Cities

School Status
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities is an approved seminary by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church to train clergy for ordination in the United Methodist Church. We continue to partner with the Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa Annual Conferences in recruiting and training clergy for various vocations. United welcomed Dr. Lewis P. Zeidner who has been installed as the 9th President of the Seminary. Dr. Zeidner’s professional career spans over 35 years as a psychologist, healthcare executive, entrepreneur, and executive consultant. Dr. Zeidner serves as both President and Professor of Psychology at United. Dr. J. Samuel Subramanian (Elder, Iowa Conference) who has been serving as Assistant Professor of New Testament Theology has been promoted to Associate Professor of New Testament Theology. Dr. Subramanian
who has more than 18 years of pastoral ministry experience in the United Methodist Church is currently teaching the United Methodist History and Polity. Dr. Demian Wheeler (a graduate of Iliff School of Theology and Union Theological Seminary) who has been a Louisville Institute Scholar has been appointed as Assistant Professor of Philosophical Theology and Religious Studies. Dr. Pamela Ayo Yetunde who grew up as a United Methodist has been appointed as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling and Director of Interfaith Chaplaincy. Rev. Sara Wilhelm Garbers has been appointed as Director of Spiritual Formation.

**Students**

We have currently 25 United Methodist students at various stages in their theological education and ministerial formation. We have admitted an international student in the M.Div. degree program from the Philippine Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Our UM students participate in a Spiritual Journey program especially framed for United Methodist piety, lead community worship, and engage in small group study.

**The United Methodist Center**

To nurture and grow in the connexion, the UM students meet monthly at the United Methodist Center with Dr. Subramanian and Dr. Mark Sundby (Elder, Wisconsin Conference), Professor in the Practice of Leadership and Director of the North Central Ministry Development Center. These meetings are designed to instill the Methodist ethos and provide guidance and spiritual nourishment in the ministerial formation.

Together with Hamline University (a UM-related Institution), the UM Center organized a public lecture on “A Plain Account of Integral Ecology: A United Methodist Affirmation of Laudato Si” given by Dr. Timothy Eberhart (Elder, Dakotas Conference), Assistant Professor of Theology and Ecology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL. We invited Bishop Bruce Ough from Minnesota Conference to speak on “Adoptive Leadership.” We hosted a public lecture with Dr. John Cobb, Jr., a leading UM Process Theologian, on the theme, “John Wesley’s Theology for the Future.” We organized a study group for all UM students, faculty, staff, and the public to articulate “A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership for the 21st Century”. We invited Rev. Kathi Austin Mahle, a Judicial Council Member, to speak to our students enrolled in the UM History and Polity course.

**Chapel**

Together with Chaplain John Lee, the UM students conduct and coordinate chapel and luncheon discussions. Invited preachers at Chapel have included: Rev. Dr. David Bard (Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church – Duluth), Rev. Cynthia Williams (District Superintendent, River Valley District), Rev. Judith Zabel (Senior Pastor, Hennepin Avenue UMC), Rev. Gloria Roach Thomas (Senior Pastor, Camphor UMC), Rev. Stacey Smith (Senior Pastor, St. Paul AME Church), and Rev. Kathi Austin Mahle (Elder and a Former Judicial Council Member). Dr. Fayneese Miller, President of Hamline University delivered our commencement address, May 1, 2016.

**Curriculum**

United received two grants from ATS. The first grant is an Innovative Grant from ATS. This grant will be to develop a pilot program to implement the use of life story narratives into the Formation program and to test the hypothesis that there is a link between redemptive sequences and generativity. The second grant from ATS will be to train faculty on assisting students with the process of narratives and redemptive sequences.

We invited Rev. Susan Nienaber, District Superintendent, Big Waters District, to teach a course on Leadership. We offered a new course on Theology of John Wesley in the Summer Term, taught by Dr. Subramanian. Both our students and the public greatly benefited from it. We are planning to offer the same next summer.

We are so happy and proud that Rev. Dr. David Bard, a United graduate, has been elected as Bishop of the United Methodist Church from the NCJ Conference, July 2016. Bishop Bard currently serves as Bishop for the Michigan Episcopal Area. We are grateful that our graduates are servings as church pastors, church planters, social workers, bishop, chaplains, and many other ministries. We thank you for your continued support.

May God bless you, your family, and your ministry.

**Dr. J. Samuel Subramanian**, Associate Professor of New Testament Theology  
**Dr. Sharon M. Tan**, Academic Dean/Vice-President for Academic Affairs
At Wesley Theological Seminary, we are building on 135 years of faithful preparation of church- and world-changing leaders by continuing to innovate and grow. We are excited to partner with you in the ministry to which God has called you now – and wherever you may be called in the future. Keep reading for good news that you can use…

**So you can grow as a leader (and share with others)**

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

The new [Wesley Theological Seminary Lay Academy](http://www.beadisciple.com/wesley/) offers 11 online courses covering a variety of topics including Methodist identity, early church history, Christian ethics, interfaith relations, and the intersection of faith and science. Laypeople can earn a certification in Wesleyan Studies by completing six of the courses online, or can choose to take courses individually for personal education and enrichment. [More information about the Wesley Lay Academy and the certification in Wesleyan Studies can be found at http://www.beadisciple.com/wesley/](http://www.beadisciple.com/wesley/).

Two new certificate programs allow individuals to take specialized classes without pursuing an entire degree. The [Certificate in Faith and Public Life](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu) explores the foundations of public theology, religious freedom, and civil discourse through graduate courses. The [African American Church Studies certificate](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu) is a non-degree option for local church leaders who want to enrich their ministry in African American communities. For more information, contact admissions@wesleyseminary.edu or visit [www.wesleyseminary.edu](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu).

**So your congregation can live more fully in God’s mission**

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

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

The newest component of the Institute for Community Engagement is Wesley’s [Center for Public Theology](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu). Under the leadership of Distinguished Professor of Public Theology Mike McCurry, this center is equipping pastors, seminarians, people of faith, and the media to create spaces for civil dialogue at the intersection of religion and politics. The Center is also providing events, workshops, and resources to help faith leaders lead faithful, prophetic, open dialogue in their communities. [To see upcoming opportunities, visit https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/](https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/)

The [Luce Center for Arts and Religion](http://www.luceartsandreligion.org) remains the only seminary-based program uniting arts and theology. The Luce Center invites the public to artist talks with each new exhibit and has regular classes and workshops with visiting artists. [For information on past and upcoming opportunities visit luceartsandreligion.org](http://www.luceartsandreligion.org).
If you’re a current or future seminarian
Wesley’s Master of Divinity degree can now be completed via online, weekend, short-term intensive, and weeknight courses in 5 years. This format is designed to be more accessible to those with busy ministry, work, and/or family commitments throughout the region.

The new African American Church Studies Master of Divinity specialization gives contextual preparation for the unique opportunities and challenges our future leaders may encounter in African American churches, while the Public Theology specialization allows master’s degree students to gain skills for community leadership and advocacy.

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

Talk to someone at (202) 885-8659 or admissions@wesleyseminary.edu about how Wesley’s degree programs equip people to lead others to loving God and neighbor.

If you’re a pastor, alumnus, or just want to keep up on the news
Wesley’s Doctor of Ministry program continues to offer the most practical and spiritually renewing tracks in theological education. We are excited to announce the launch of our third track based in Cambridge, England: Holiness, Effective Ministry and Engagement with the World, beginning in January 2018. Other 2018 tracks include Art and Theology, Church Leadership Excellence and Soul Care for Pastors, Chaplains and Clinicians. Find out more or apply now at https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/

The Lewis Center for Church Leadership moves to an exciting new phase in its 14-year history with the transition of leadership from founding director, the Rev. Dr. Lovett Weems Jr., to new director, Wesley faculty member, the Rev. F. Douglas Powe, Jr., effective July 1, 2017. Dr. Weems will continue to be part of the Lewis Center as part-time Senior Consultant, continuing his ground-breaking work in denominational conference resourcing. Meet Dr. Powe and Dr. Weems in a video discussion at https://www.churchleadership.com/news/lewis-center-announces-a-new-director/ Please save the date – September 28-29, 2017 – and join Wesley in celebrating the outstanding academic contribution of founding director the Rev. Dr. Lovett Weems, Jr. More information to come about this celebration at www.churchleadership.com.

Wesley faculty members continually develop resources to advance theological scholarship and help Christians grow. This year we have celebrated new books by Drs. F. Douglas Powe Jr., Eileen Guenther, Shively Smith, Ryan Danker, Denise Dombkowski Hopkins, and Joseph Bush. In the past year, we have welcomed a new Professor of Preaching, the Rev. Dr. Veronice Miles, and a new Chapel Elder and Visiting Professor of Worship, the Rev. Gina Campbell, and we are excited to announce the appointment of Dr. Rick Elgendy as Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics and Public Theology.

Stay in Touch
Ready to join in our mission? Wesley provides more than $2 million dollars annually in scholarships to our students thanks to the consistent support of graduates, congregations and friends of the seminary. Find out more about how you can be part of the future of Wesley at https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/support/

We invite you to stay in touch through the year and learn more of the latest developments at Wesley by signing up for our monthly electronic newsletter, eCalling, at www.wesleyseminary.edu/ecalling.

Thank you for journeying with us through this update! We look forward to continuing to serve you and your community as we seek to live into God’s dream together. Blessings to you on a fruitful and faithful annual conference. We thank you for your service and hold you in prayer as you continue in ministry, wherever that may be.

The Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson, President