



*new*  
every  
*morning*

# Historical

Volume 1: Historical Reports

2023 Annual Conference

June 2-4, 2023

Grand Traverse Resort

Acme, Michigan



**Michigan Conference**

The United Methodist Church

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## **MICHIGAN ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENCIES, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS**

(arranged alphabetically)

### **COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES**

The Committee on African American Ministries is composed of members of organizations that are specifically oriented to African American ministries (Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism group; Black Methodist for Church Renewal (BMCR), Urban Youth Alliance/Urban Camp, United Methodist Black Clergy of Michigan (UMBCM), Black Seminarians, Sacred Sisters [NCJ Black Clergy Women]), as well as the Lay Servant/Lay Ministers in the Michigan Conference. We continue to collaborate with other minority ministries.

We have ensured that the African American churches, clergy, and laity are informed of national and jurisdictional events and training with Black Methodist for Church Renewal and Strengthening the Black Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (SBC21). In addition, we sent out notifications to the black churches and communities about training, activities, and other events that are occurring at the district, conference, and national levels. We want the people to be informed about what's available to them, and the people are responding.

We have been able to connect with the MI Conference French Church to assist them in participating in the events and activities in other churches and with our organization. Since many of its church members and the pastors are not from the United States, it has given them exposure to other African/African American churches, what's going on at the conference and district level, and included them in our community activities.

In addition, we have been notifying our constituents of opportunities for spiritual growth, formation, and development, leadership training, retreats, children, and youth activities, including summer camp (Urban Youth Camp).

The Lay Servant/Lay Minister ministry has been successfully recruiting African American laity to participate in its extensive training program.

1. We provided grants that included:
  - \$1,000 to each of the three Freedom Schools
  - \$4,500 to two churches for emergencies
  - \$5,000 to Washington Heights (special dispensation with the Conference and District)
  - \$10,000 + for camp training, tech support event, equipment, spiritual director, food pantry including storage and shelving, technical equipment, jurisdictional BMCR event, bibles, and other training events.
2. We added new members to COAAM team, expanding our team's skill and experience levels.
3. Participated in collaborations with national conference and jurisdictional level agencies – SBC21, BMCR, supported Michigan Conference candidate Kennetha Bigham-Tsai to become Bishop.

We plan to have expanded conversations with our churches and communities to see what they will need as we move into unknown territory after the 2024 General Conference. Financial resources may be reduced, so we will be brainstorming on how to continue to do vibrant ministry in new and different ways. We have been examining the Fresh Expressions and Seed to Harvest initiatives as ways in which our churches can be involved in creative ways of doing ministry.

The Michigan chapter of BMCR will expand its scope and revitalize the ministry under the new leadership of Rev. Neil Davis. UMBCM will be having a vibrant retreat for Black Clergy in May featuring Dr. Kwasi Kena who will be speaking on “Exploring F.I.S.H.I.N.G. (Faith, Intellect, Spirituality, Help to Inspire, Nurture and Growth).” We will be supporting the Together Against Poverty (T.A.P.) program, started in 2018. T.A.P is a collaboration of Gleaners, a few churches, and the Islamic Center of Detroit (ICD) who are working together to expand distribution to other churches who want to become a distribution site.

We are looking forward to what God has for us to do in the coming year!!!

### **COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**

This report outlines two years of activity on behalf of our former chair, Mary Whitman, whose term ended in July 2022. Our thanks to Mary and to Diana Miller who was the interim chair until Melanie Young was elected as chair in October 2022.

Precautions related to the pandemic kept the Commission meeting via Zoom in these years. Our archivists sometimes worked from home as well, making use of digitization of archive materials. Commission meetings are scheduled to continue via Zoom throughout 2023, now mainly to avoid mileage costs.

#### Archival Space

For years, the Commission has been considering solutions to the problem of lack of space for the archives. As our churches close, merge, and disaffiliate, the amount of archive material increases. Our traditional archives spaces have been at Adrian College (former Detroit Conference) and at Albion College (former West Michigan Conference). Each space had its own part-time archivist. We still maintain both archivist positions, although their 2023 compensation is reduced. More on that below.

After the merger of the two conferences in 2018, the Commission made use of the closed Salem UMC building near St Johns for some archival storage, and in 2021, those materials were transferred to a space at the Clark Corners administrative suites in Dewitt. Since 2018, it has been a goal of the Commission to develop a single archives space.

In 2021, Commission members met with representatives from the conference trustees and with Paul Perez, Director of Connectional Ministries. (Perez is the conference staff liaison for the Commission.) They considered space at a former public school building in Albion, and they looked at space within Albion First UMC. When neither of those spaces were deemed viable, they considered space at a closed church in Lansing or the possibility of expanding the space used at Clark Corners. By March 2022, the Commission learned that the expense for consolidating the archives was too great, and the archive materials would have to somehow remain in the three spaces described above. The Commission has consulted with the UM

Foundation for ideas about how to fund the development of archival space that is so desperately needed. The Commission looks forward to working closely with the trustees to address this need in 2023 and beyond.

#### Archivist Compensation

The Commission is dealing with a 50% conference budget cut in 2023. This money is primarily used for compensation for our archivists. The former West Michigan Conference has had a decades-long agreement with Albion College to fund 1/3 of the archivist's salary for 1/3 of their time on conference archives. The former Detroit Conference archivist was on the conference staff payroll. These arrangements have continued, but the budget reduction has cut down the number of work hours. Ironically, this is happening at a complicated and historically significant time of denominational separation when archival work is sorely needed.

#### Disaffiliating Churches

In addition to the usual collection of documents and artifacts from closed churches, the Commission is taking direction from the General Commission on Archives and History to collect documents from any disaffiliating churches as well. The official line is for the disaffiliating church to keep copies of their documents and send the originals to the UMC archives. The Commission is looking to work closely with the Bishop and the Cabinet on this issue.

#### Hosted Convocation

Our Michigan Commission was finally able to host the annual convocation of the North Central Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History in July 2022 in Norway (MI) and Iron Mountain with an excursion to Zeba UMC near L'Anse. This convocation was originally scheduled to take place in July 2020, but was delayed due to the pandemic. The NCJCAH did meet via Zoom in August 2021, and this virtual gathering was coordinated by members of the Michigan Commission.

In these days of scarcity of adequate physical and virtual storage space and funding for it, the Commission is increasing its outreach and communication with the annual conference and with church leaders on various levels. We look forward to working together to maintain our story of faith within the Michigan Conference.

Submitted by,  
Rev. Melanie Young, Chair

### **COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATIONS**

Mark Doyal, Director of Communications.

Following years of a global pandemic, local churches returned to their places of worship in 2022 and the denomination began to pick up the conversation of the future of The United Methodist Church. In January, the CLC provided a grant to produce an online social media campaign to connect unchurched people with online Holy Week services at local United Methodist Churches from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday. The campaign went very well, with a 22.33% increase in overall web traffic. More exciting was the level of secular news media that noticed the campaign and included 22 stories about our return to in-person services during Holy Week. The media had an estimated reach of approximately 2.6 million individuals with a value cost if purchased as paid media of \$25,000.

In winter 2022, what became immediately evident was a systemized effort being made to spread misinformation about the disaffiliation process at local United Methodist Churches in Michigan. Recognizing the need for accurate, transparent, and timely information Michigan Conference communications led an effort to develop an 8-point communications plan. This included plans on the Future of The UMC, the discernment process, Blessing One Another, and information for secular media, in addition to plans for clergy and laity remaining with The UMC, and clergy and laity departing from The UMC. Communications launched multiple web pages and produced written FAQs and videos to keep people informed.

Michigan Communications also revamped the visual experience of the conference website MichiganUMC.org and rebuilt the resource page to facilitate access to hundreds of online resources. Always seeking better ways of reaching our members, Michigan Communications also revamped the online strategy for social media. It resulted in a more than 750+% increase in online engagement in the first month. Unfortunately, communications also lost access to two part-time staff members who developed our social media. We are working to add a staff member in 2023 to conduct this work. Senior Content Editor Mariel Kay DeMoss retired after 50 years of service to the church. We welcomed James Deaton as Content Editor, and he has done a superb job transitioning into this challenging role.

One major initiative in the summer of 2022 was a multi-media marketing plan to raise almost \$500,000 during a *Readers to Leaders* campaign approved at annual conference. Elements included print, video, and news promotion of the campaign. Other summer projects included filming the successful CBS – Church Broadcast School and producing fall Advent materials for a fall release.

Fall initiatives included a successful campaign to attract election workers for the critical mid-term national elections. During the North Central Jurisdictional meeting in Fort Wayne IN, Michigan Communications collaborated with other conference communicators to provide live four-day coverage in November. Coverage included a website, a live feed of the conference, daily videos, and print updates. In June, the conference endorsed Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai as an episcopal candidate. Communications facilitated a direct mail and website campaign, social media posts, media training, and other materials to support her episcopacy campaign. In a historic first, Kennetha Bigham-Tsai was elected in the first round of voting.

The work of Conference Communications reached every single Michigan United Methodist local church community across Michigan and even around the world. Training, information, and communications offered on-demand 365/24/7 had the ability to impact every local church. Each week conference communications reached tens of thousands of persons in more than 50 countries worldwide.

### **CONGREGATIONAL VIBRANCY**

Dirk Elliott, Director of Congregational Vibrancy and Leadership Development

So much has changed over the past few years. Likewise, churches have changed. These changes require new approaches for churches to remain vibrant. The Michigan Conference provides resources and programs to assist churches in becoming more vibrant.

One approach to vibrancy is starting new churches. In the last year, the Michigan Conference has assisted churches in starting three new churches. Two new churches are online campuses.

Tapestry is a digital campus of Berkley/Birmingham First UMC, and Oasis is a digital campus of Plymouth First UMC. The third new church start is another campus of Sycamore Creek Church in Lansing. Sycamore Creek is adopting the former Asbury UMC and renaming it the Eastwood Campus of Sycamore Creek. In addition, churches have started over fifty Fresh Expressions, forms of church that meet outside of the church building and are started to reach non-church attending people.

Churches moving to a single-board governance model (or the Simplified Accountable Structure) provides a significant shift for churches. One of the major benefits is that it helps align what the church does to focus on the mission and vision of the church. The Appointive Cabinet has agreed that the model provided in the book *Mission Possible, third edition* is the only acceptable model for a single board. Every church that transitions to this model should only do so with the help of a coach, which the conference provides.

The Roads to Vibrancy program provides churches with tools, training, consulting, and coaching to assist churches in their desire to transition into healthy churches. Local Church Assessment, Church Unique, and Restoring Relevancy are three tools the conference uses to resource local churches.

Most churches have many people who continue to worship virtually through platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube, Zoom, and other social media platforms. The Congregational Vibrancy Team provides webinars, workshops, and consultations with churches to help them shift to online worship.

The Michigan Conference has a gifted team that specializes in all aspects of vibrancy. The Congregational Vibrancy Team works to help all churches in the Michigan Conference become vibrant, life-giving churches. The Vibrancy Team works with the Board of Congregational Life to make Christ-centered, vibrant congregations.

## **DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRY AND CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

In 2022, the Conference Leadership Council (CLC) welcomed Mary Gladstone Highland, Cora Glass, Devon Herrell, and Nadine Johnson as we said farewell to Judy Coffey, James Cogman, Darryl Totty, and Megan Walther. A special word of thanks to Darryl Totty who served as CLC Chair since 2020 and to Devon Herrell who currently serves as Chair. Additional thanks to Paul Perez who served as Director of Connectional Ministry (DCM) from October 2020 to July 2023 and to Jennie Browne who will take on the DCM responsibilities as part of a restructured Clergy Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministry position beginning July 1, 2023. The primary role of the CLC is to steward the Michigan Conference's vision and strategy. In 2020, the CLC voted to affirm the Bishop's Strategy Task Force's Report as a "living document" and as a set of "strategic directions."

The report identifies the following missional and connectional challenges facing the Conference.

### **Missional Challenges:**

- Long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic
- Struggle to dismantle systemic racism
- Declining religious participation, growth of "no religious affiliation"

### **Connectional Challenges:**



- Outdated organizational models
- Michigan Conference's financial situation
- Denominational restructuring and split

Based on these challenges, the report offered four strategic directions:

1. Sharing God's Love with Others:  
Renewed Passion for Personal Faith Formation and Sharing
2. Building the Beloved Community:  
Intentional Equity and the Dismantling of Systemic Racism
3. Development of Leaders: Equipped to Lead the Conference in its New Priorities
4. Financial Sustainability: Through the Redirection of Financial Resources

Throughout 2022 and the first quarter 2023, the following major developments occurred that were inspired or aligned with these strategic directions:

### **CLC Intercultural Competency**

In January 2022, members of the CLC completed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and engaged in an in-depth discussion on its impact. Overall, this process helped us focus on how we can do our best work together. IDI challenged our thinking about having more intentionality surrounding leadership roles, protecting space for silence and reflection, and taking seriously our desire to make sure all voices are present and heard.

### **Anti-Bias Anti-Racism Education and Training**

The Conference Anti-Bias Anti-Racism (ABAR) Working Group continued its work on the ABAR Education and Training approved by the 2021 Annual Conference. The group created an online curriculum with seven individual modules that was launched March 20, 2023. These modules have been created by clergy and laity serving in the Michigan Conference, emphasizing our Wesleyan heritage and the values we hold as it relates to ABAR work. All persons serving under appointment/assignment are required to complete at least one ABAR Education & Training module per calendar year beginning in 2023.

### **Re-Districting**

The CLC submitted legislation to the 2022 Annual Conference that would reduce the number of districts from nine to seven. Annual Conference Members approved the re-districting. Bishop Bard and the Cabinet worked throughout 2022 to set the new district lines. The new districts, announced January 17, 2023, are: The Central Bay District, the East Winds District, the Greater Detroit District, the Greater Southwest District, the Heritage District, the Northern Skies District, and the Western Waters District.

### **Connectional Ministries and Congregational Vibrancy/Leadership Development**

The Connectional Ministries and Congregational Vibrancy Staff completed consultation work with Ministry Incubators focused on leadership development. The staff selected five leadership development experiences to focus on during 2022-2023 – Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy, Enneagram Journey, Cohorts, Transitional Coaching, and Seed to Harvest.

### **Advocacy Day**

March 23, 2023, the Michigan Conference hosted an Advocacy Day for Gun Safety at the Michigan State Capitol for Michigan United Methodist and other interfaith partners and friends. The day was inspired by the 2022 Annual Conference Resolution on Gun Safety. Over 300 people attended and met or wrote letters to elected officials. The day also included a prayer vigil in the Capitol Rotunda, a press conference and rally on the Capitol Steps, and closing worship

with Bonnie Perry, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, preaching. A special word of thanks to Alice Fleming Townley and Michelle King who provided primary staff support for this event.

### **Zero-Based Budgeting, Strategic Priorities and Staff Restructuring/Reduction**

The CLC and Council on Finance & Administration (CF&A) collaborated on a new Zero-Based Budget Process for the Conference Budget. The CLC formed a Budget and Strategy Committee - comprised of Joel Fitzgerald (chair), Mary Gladstone Highland, Cora Glass, and Paul Hahm – to engage this work. The committee developed Strategic Priorities based on the Strategic Directions approved by the CLC in 2020. The Strategic Priorities were further refined and affirmed by the CLC at their September 2022 Meeting, to guide the Zero-Based Budget Process. The Strategic Priorities are:

- Sharing God's Love with Others – Invest in churches where attention or money will be a value add.
- Building Beloved Community – Invest in the growth of established ministries in marginalized communities where attention or money will be a value add.
- Developing Leaders – Support clergy and laity with new/innovative ministry ideas through coaching and conference support.
- Financial Sustainability – Develop financial support for entrepreneurial appointments and non-congregational fresh expressions.

CF&A, in fall 2022, set a projected \$9.4 million revenue budget for 2024, a reduction of \$2.2 million from 2023's \$11.6 million budget. A steady pattern of decreased local church Ministry Sharing giving was the primary factor for this substantial budget reduction. Other factors include the end of generous grants/loans given through the U.S. Federal Government's Payroll Protection Program and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local churches and worship attendance.

On February 28, 2023, Bishop Bard announced staff restructuring, reductions, and reassignments needed to meet budget projections for 2024. The announcement means 10 fewer program staff positions by January 1, 2024.

On July 1, 2023, staff in both the Connectional Ministries Office and the Congregational Vibrancy/Leadership Development Office will begin the transition of restructuring into a single Program Staff Team, shifting from the current specialist-based model to a team-based model by January 1, 2024. The staggered transitions and the longer lead time will benefit those staff members involved and the future of their ministries.

The Program Staff Team will design, implement, and evaluate a limited number of common initiatives aligned with the Michigan Conference's Strategic Directions and Priorities to meet goals and outcomes set in consultation with the CLC and Conference Directors. Conference leadership will ensure the Program Staff Team's work is carefully aligned with the Michigan Conference's vision of equipping and connecting through Christ-centered mission and ministry, bold and effective leaders, and vibrant congregations. The goal is to ensure that the remaining staff will be able to manage realistic workload priorities.

The Program Staff Team will consist of a lead, an executive assistant, and three additional members. Laura Witkowski will serve as the lead. Sus'ann Busley will serve as the executive assistant. Lisa Batten, Naomi García, and Kathy Pittenger will serve as staff members.

Beginning July 1, 2023, the Director of Connectional Ministry and Director of Congregational Vibrancy positions will end. Administrative responsibilities from these positions will be included in a restructured Clergy Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministry position. Rev. Dr. Jennifer Browne will serve in this role.

Paul Perez, currently serving as Director of Connectional Ministry, has been appointed as Clergy Leader at Detroit: Central UMC beginning July 1, 2023. Dirk Elliott, currently serving as Director of Congregational Vibrancy/Leadership Development, will serve from July 1 to December 31, 2023, as a special assistant to the bishop and cabinet in congregational development.

The Associate Director for Multi-Cultural Vibrancy position will end on June 30, 2023. Brittney Stephan is returning to the Indiana Conference to serve as Associate Pastor at Noblesville: First UMC. The Mission and Justice Coordinator position will continue until December 31, 2023. This work will continue to be led by Alice Townley. The Youth Ministry Initiatives Coordinator position, staffed by Christina Miller White, will end this summer. The Coordinator of Latinx Ministries position, staffed by Sonya Luna, will end this summer.

The CLC is grateful for the faithful service of the departing staff members and the tremendous gifts and skills they shared with the Michigan Conference.

Paul Perez, Director of Connectional Ministry  
Devon Herrell, Chair of Conference Leadership Council

### **COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION**

2022 allowed us to joyfully give grants to churches so they could continue their ministry in their communities with appropriate pastoral leadership, allowing them to be a part of changing lives as they participated in ministry to God's children across the Michigan Conference.

We grieve that there are more churches that are having to request grants. This year the number of churches requesting grants exceeded our budget. With the help of District leadership, who took on some of the grants from their funds, the CEC was able to stay within our budget.

- Grant requests were considered and acted upon in November. A total of 20 charges received grants for a total of \$97,257.50.
- Districts covered grants for 6 charges.
- One Charge re-evaluated their finances and returned their grant.
- The CEC proposed a 3% increase to each category of salaries for 2024.

The CEC went through a leadership change at the end of 2022. Chair Margaret "Peggy" Paige, need to resign as the Chair. We continue to hold Peggy in our prayers.

Mona Joslyn, Chair

## COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) continues to work diligently on managing the finances of the Conference. Although there are ongoing financial difficulties faced by many of our local churches as well as the Michigan Conference, CFA and the Treasury & Benefits staff continue to seek improvement and streamlining of processes and better fiscal controls.

Ministry Shares payments continued to decline in 2022. Of the apportioned \$12,041,677 in Ministry Shares, the amount paid was \$8,739,398 or 24.6%. This is a decrease of \$614,483 from 2021. We worked to offset the shortfall through controlled spending and use of Conference reserve funds. We expect this trend of declining Ministry Share remittances to continue and therefore the 2023 budget was reduced compared to 2022. We anticipate additional reductions in 2024 and beyond.

We must again acknowledge that there are local churches who consistently underperform in Ministry Shares remittances. Also, there are clergy who say they want their churches to pay their full Ministry Shares but the churches they serve exhibit patterns of underpayment over extended periods of time. These actions are inconsistent with *The Book of Discipline*. Paragraph 812 of the *Discipline* states that the payment of the World Service Apportionment is the first benevolent responsibility of the church. Paragraph 340.2.c(2)(e) of the *Discipline* charges elders and licensed pastors with leading their congregations in the full and faithful payment of all apportioned funds. While we do not currently have a recommendation regarding this underperformance, we do recognize that this needs to be addressed to promote accountability among the churches and clergy of the conference. Addressing this will be a key task for CFA going forward.

The Treasury and Benefits staff also accomplished many tasks. In addition to the day-to-day workload of the offices, the staff continues to manage the processes around local church closings and disaffiliations, both of which increased in 2022.

Three of the Treasury & Benefit teams' major accomplishments for 2022 were:

- Completion of the 2021 fiscal year audit
- Transition to Humana Health for retiree insurance, which will result in annual savings of approximately \$2 million
- Implementation of a Zero-Based Budget process for the 2024 fiscal year

In 2023, the Treasury department will implement a new accounting software, Sage Intacct, with the goal of improving internal reporting and accounting accuracy. Treasury and Benefits will also continue to refine financial policies and procedures.

## BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

The Board of Global Ministries is grateful to steward the vision and work of the Michigan Annual Conference as we express the total mission of the church in the context of a global setting.

The Board has identified three priorities as it organizes this work on behalf of the Annual Conference: relationships, storytelling, and spiritual grounding. As the facilitator and holder of the Conference's mission projects, we seek to prioritize the relationships that are built, deepened, and sustained between local churches, community organizations, individual mission-

servants, and our broader global connection. We believe deeply that mission must be reciprocal and bidirectional. No single entity should ever have more power or control in a missional relationship; all partners in mission are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit when working together to live out Christ's teaching to serve one another.

A primary means by which we support our work is through telling our collective mission story and impact. EngageMI is a powerful facilitator that brings together opportunities for service so that the Annual Conference can maximize its collective impact to achieve meaningful change in the name of Jesus Christ. We are also committed to working together to offer training that strengthens each mission-servant and organization's own capacity to reflect on their contributions, share their personal witness of transformation, and encourage others to join them.

Some stories we celebrate for 2022:

- Production of a new EngageMI book after reviewing all our projects and better achieving support and accountability expectations for these program relationships; the EngageMI book won a national communication award!
- Mission Intern Meghan Hartley told many EngageMI stories through MIConnect.
- Support for the Readers to Leaders Campaign, which highlighted two EngageMI projects.
- \$223,908 raised for mission and ministry through EngageMI: an increase of 11% over 2021, 37.5% over 2020, and nearly on-par with pre-pandemic giving!
- 4,435 total gifts worth \$2,067,286 were given to GBGM projects, including General Advance Projects, Missionary Support, and UMCOR, among others! This is TWICE our giving in 2021.

Finally, we recognize the special imperative we have as the church to base this work in the life, ministry, and Word of Jesus of Nazareth. Attending to our scriptural imperatives to "go and serve" requires deep and lasting spiritual nourishment. We also recognize the unique faith formation needs of our local churches that can be achieved through mission service. It is vital that all of these activities happen in the context of long-term relationships that can be meaningfully sustained; that "do no harm" and are reciprocal and bidirectional in orientation and transformation; and that powerfully tell the story of Christ's perfecting work in us as individuals and in our collective society.

The Board of Global Ministries invites all who hold these values to join us in our work. The EngageMI program is about more than just financial giving – it's about full participation of churches and communities in shared mission. Many churches give directly to projects, which is not reflected in the reported numbers above. EngageMI remains the best forum for learning how to become involved in focused mission work. We will continue to use the MAC website and EngageMI platforms to share about training opportunities, storytelling collaborations, and retreats and programs designed to meet the risen Christ who will strengthen us for this journey.

Finally, the Board wishes to celebrate and acknowledge Brenda DuPree whose leadership of the Board as Chairperson ended during the 2022 appointive year. We give God thanks for Brenda's devotion to the church and her heart for mission and service.

Submitted respectfully,  
Rev. Alex Plum  
Chairperson

### Conference Secretary of Global Ministries

The Conference Board of Global Ministries celebrated several new mornings in 2022. After two years of pandemic interruption, itinerating missionaries returned to the Michigan Conference. In July, Deborah and Lester Dornon visited several United Methodist Churches across Michigan to share about their health ministry work in Nepal. Longtime supporters and new partner churches alike heard stories of God's transformation and mercy and were invited into deeper connection in ministry.

Jane and Larry Kies, longtime mission personnel serving at Africa University in Zimbabwe, also visited the Michigan Conference this year. They shared with Lansing-area churches about their work with students around language learning at our United Methodist University.

The Conference Board of Global Ministries also continued its work of story-sharing with our Michigan Conference. At the last Annual Conference gathering, I had the privilege of hosting a panel highlighting the work of several Engage Michigan project leaders. They shared powerful stories of God's inbreaking mercy and justice as well as words of hope to those wanting to strengthen and renew their work of mission.

The board has been listening to the desire of several congregations to continue creating spaces for connection, support, and co-learning. As a new year dawns in our work, we hope to deepen our commitment to connectionalism of this kind, knowing a response to God's call to love is best done in community.

Audra Hudson Stone, CSGM

### ENGAGEMI!

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

### 2023 ENGAGEMI! CONGREGATIONS

The following churches submitted reports. The congregations that completed all the three focus areas are EngageMI! Congregations and are identified by \*.

**Central Bay District** – Coleman Faith\*, Essexville: St. Luke's\*, Mayville\*, Oscoda, Owendale\*, Pigeon First\*, Pinconning, Saginaw: First, Shepherd\*, Vassar: First\*, Wagarville Community, Watrousville\*, West Branch First

**East Winds District** – Burton: Open Door\*, Capac, Clio\*, Flint: Bethel, Flint: Court Street\*, Flint: Hope, Fostoria\*, Gaines, Grand Blanc First\*, Lexington\*, Mt. Morris, Otisville\*, Port Hope, Port Huron: First\*, Sandusky\*

**Greater Detroit District** – Dearborn: Good Shepherd\*, Detroit: Central, Grosse Pointe\*, Harper Woods Redeemer, Howarth\*, Livonia: St. Matthew\*, Troy: Big Beaver\*, Utica\*, Waterford: Trinity\*, West Bloomfield\*, Wyandotte: First\*,

**Greater Southwest District** – Almena\*, Battle Creek Chapel Hill\*, Bronson: First, Bellevue, Berrien County Lakeside, Centreville\*, Coldwater\*, Colon, Delton: Faith, Ganges, Gull Lake, Kalamazoo: Westwood, Kendall, Newton, Paw Paw, Portage: Pathfinder, Union City, Scotts\*, Sturgis

**Heritage District** – Allen, Azalia, Bellville, Carleton\*, Chelsea: First\*, Dixboro\*, Grass Lake, Hillsdale: First, Homer: Calhoun County, Jackson: First, Jerome, Howell, Lincoln Community, Milford\*, Monroe: St Paul\*, New Hudson, North Lake\*, Northville\*, Oak Grove\*, Reading\*, Saline First\*, Walled Lake\*, Ypsilanti: First\*, Ypsilanti: Lincoln Community\*

**Midwest District** – Byron Center, Carlisle\*, Cedar Springs, Crystal Valley, Edmore: Faith\*, Georgetown, Grandville\*, Hesperia, Leighton, LeValley\*, Lowell: First\*, Pierson: Heritage\*, Rockford, Shelby, White Cloud

**Mid-Michigan** – Bancroft\*, Delta Mills, Grand Ledge: First, Gunnisonville, Holt\*, Laingsburg\*, Lake Odessa: Central\*, Mason: First\*, Morrice, Nashville, Nashville: Peace, Owosso: First\*, Owosso: Trinity, Shaftsbury\*, Williamston

**Northern Skies** – Amasa\*, Crystal Falls\*, Escanaba First\*, Gladstone: Memorial\*, Hancock: First\*, Iron Mountain Trinity\*, L'Anse, Munising\*

**Northern Waters District** – Cadillac South Community, Empire, Grawn\*, Lake City\*, Ludington: United\*, Marion, Traverse Bay

All the churches told God-filled stories of ministry. Many of the stories told of an unexpected and amazing increase in giving due to the needs created by the pandemic. The United Methodists in Michigan are still doing God's work, locally and globally. All to the Glory of God!

Laurie Kaufman de la Garza, EngageMI Coordinator

### **God's Country Cooperative Parish**

Greetings in the name of Christ! God's work in God's Country Cooperative Parish is strong! An impact was made in 2022 on Michigan UMs, many local congregations, and communities across Michigan and beyond. When our 7 churches work together God's impact is stronger. Our congregations have once again, 'post covid restrictions', and have been supporting each other as we gather especially for activities such as fund-raising dinners. Our congregations we once again asked to identify homeowners that could use assistance with primarily safety issues around their home, and we helped the homeowner fill out the application if needed. Almost every week this summer we had a VIM team. These teams work on the projects identified by our churches, and other people. This enhances the community in looks and safety. Each week the VIM team is offered the opportunity to have dinner hosted by one of our 7 churches. Most groups accept and dinner helps the team and congregation build relationships. This year we had a team each from Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. This broadens our base of support and increases tourism in the area, which is always a good thing.

Our top three accomplishments in 2022 include our ramps which were more complicated than normal this year -- and they were built! Now more families can safely exit their home. We also started hosting the monthly Feeding America mobile food pantry. Our parking lot is used for this important ministry of providing food to people in our communities. We have also had a great year with our 'church mouse' (free store). As soon as we open each time there are people

wanting in and our donations of goods are holding steady. We really appreciate all the donations - from across the state! While we have been closed, people are still stopping to ask when we are going to be open!

The fact that the free store is closed brings us to one of the big things we are looking forward to in 2023: heat in the Dunlap Ministry Center!! Final plans are underway to get this to happen soon! This will allow us to host some groups in the winter and to open the free store during the winter months. We also are looking forward to working more with the pastors and congregations of the Newberry Area Ministerial Association, especially around Feeding America and even beyond.

We are very thankful for the many churches and individuals who are a part of this ministry! God's love is definitely shared by and with each person and group who participates in any way in this ministry. Please feel free to contact us to see how you can be a part of God's ministry with GCCP!

Rev Jackie Roe, Director, GCCP, [revjackieroe@gmail.com](mailto:revjackieroe@gmail.com), 906.293.5711

### **Michigan Volunteer in Mission (VIM)**

Jody A. Pratt, Michigan VIM Coordinator

The 2022 Michigan Volunteer in Mission (VIM) Report is written one-year post covid with continuing challenges and continued reductions in mission journeys both domestic and international. The Michigan VIM Program serves domestic and international ministries endorsed by United Methodist Partner Churches and non-governmental agencies in cooperation with a local host. Volunteers work as teams or individuals to provide construction work and support requested by mission hosts while building relationships.

Mission Teams should have a trained VIM Leader, register with North Central Jurisdiction Volunteer in Mission, and provide insurance for all participants. New\*\* as of January 1, 2022, is an insurance clause stating those individuals over 75 years of age must carry their own covid insurance. All other coverage is available until the age of 80. Insurance coverage is available at Level 4 per the US State Department, but coverage has certain restrictions.

Michigan offers three (3) domestic mission sites: Newberry Michigan/GCCP (rural-poverty) – Randy Hildebrant, [rhildebrant@umcmmission.org](mailto:rhildebrant@umcmmission.org), Cass Community (inner city Detroit) – Sue Pethoud, [spethoud@casscommunity.org](mailto:spethoud@casscommunity.org), and Motown Mission (inner city Detroit), [director@motownmission.org](mailto:director@motownmission.org). All sites are open to teams from around the US and request calendaring in advance of team participation.

North Central Jurisdictional Teams 2022\*\* Figures taken from teams requesting insurance (Michigan sent 68 teams purchasing insurance/registering)

Educational Teams – 17

Construction – 140

Disaster Recovery – 149

Health – 6

North Central Volunteers

(Michigan registered 800 volunteers)

Adults – 3,111

Young Adults – 88



## Youth – 493

This reflects Michigan Disaster Recovery Teams requesting insurance and date would be reflected in other reports.

Michigan was invited to participate in Florida Recovery work, but we had no current trained Team Leader, so a team was not sent. One individual travelled with a Florida Team.

Jody Pratt, VIM Team Trainer, is available to train as needed. One class was offered, but canceled for lack of registrations in 2022. Michigan will be offering Early Response Training (ERT) in the upper peninsula (mid-spring 2023) and in June at Grass Lake UMC. Michigan VIM offers a \$150 scholarship and reimbursement for VIM insurance for first-time Michigan Conference Mission Participants. Teams must have a trained Team Leader and apply through the scholarship process with MI VIM Coordinator. Information is also on the Michigan Conference Website, [Volunteers in Mission - The Michigan Conference United Methodist \(michiganumc.org\)](#), or by contacting Jody Pratt, MI VIM Coordinator, [prattjji09@gmail.com](mailto:prattjji09@gmail.com).

Donations to the MI VIM First Time International Missioners Scholarship Fund can be made through the Michigan Conference. Please make checks payable to: Michigan Conference. Please write in memo, MI Volunteers Scholarship/Grant Fund, Line #4413 MI VIM. Please mail to Michigan Conference Center North, Treasury, Attn Rich Pittenger, 1161 E Clark Rd, Ste 212, DeWitt, MI 48820. Scholarship funding is also listed as part of the Engage MI Program.

Building relationships, experience, and living out our mission journey is the call Christ place on our lives. Blessings on your life as you consider a mission journey. Please check the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Website at [UMVIM](#) listing the opportunities around the world or the Michigan Conference Mission Website at [Volunteers in Mission - The Michigan Conference United Methodist \(michiganumc.org\)](#), or contact Jody Pratt, MI VIM Coordinator at [prattjji09@gmail.com](mailto:prattjji09@gmail.com).

### **COMMITTEE ON HISPANIC/LATINO MINISTRIES**

This year the committee had many accomplishments. The Committee had its first online fundraiser during Latino/Hispanic Heritage Month. The fundraiser raised \$221 and spread awareness. The Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy was held on November 5, 2022, at Western Michigan University. Five students attended from La Nueva Esperanza UMC and Lawrence UMC. The Committee did strategy work around the Zero-Based Budget process, and we created a budget for 2024 that encompasses our vision. The Committee submitted legislation to the Annual Conference endorsing the Michigan Drive Forward Bills to allow access to driver's licenses for all residents in Michigan. The legislation passed. The committee also provided grants to La Nueva Esperanza UMC, Centro Familiar Cristiano UMC, Justice for Our Neighbors-Michigan, the New Latino Ministry of Southwest Michigan, and the Hispanic Center of West Michigan. The Committee is also excited about the creation of the New Latino Ministry of Southwest Michigan and the possibilities of this new ministry.

## COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources (HR) Committee remains focused on working to support the Michigan Conference through HR policy development and interpretation; advising and facilitating appropriate HR practices; assisting in the selection and evaluation process. We work to develop and offer the structure for successful employment practices throughout the conference.

As we consider the 2022-2023 conference year, we are assisting the conference staff in meeting the challenge of reorganizing staff to ensure available conference resources are used most effectively. This will continue to be a challenge in the coming year. We continue to monitor HR conference policies for those that need to be added and updated. We have assisted conference staff in filling vacancies through serving on interview teams, writing job descriptions, and offering advice on employment status (contractor, salaried and hourly status, etc.), ensuring that our outplacement processes meet legal requirements and conference priorities.

Major accomplishments included:

1. Advising conference staff on the development of new job descriptions.
2. Advising conference staff on performance-related issues.
3. Reviewing and revising outplacement procedures and benefits.

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

Rev. Ellen Zienert, Chair, Conference HR Committee

## BOARD OF JUSTICE

*Speak up for those who have no voice, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9*

The Board of Justice (BoJ) is composed of four Divisions: Church and Society, Religion and Race, Status and Role of Women, and Disability Concerns (see their Division reports below).

The Rev. George Covintree is the chairperson of the Board of Justice (BoJ). The Rev. Dale Milford (Religion and Race) and Patricia Bostic (Status and Role of Women) are the co-chairs of the board. Rev. Alice Townley, Conference Mission and Justice Coordinator, is the board's staff liaison. The Rev. Brittney Stephan serves as staff liaison for the Division on Religion and Race, the Rev. Christie Miller-White as staff liaison for Disability Concerns. Each division has its own chairperson/convener and has broadened their membership beyond the members on the BoJ. Two task force/working groups have been established by the board within the Division of Church and Society: the Gun Safety Working Group, chaired by the Rev. Heather McDougall-Walsh; and the Task Force Promoting Justice in the Middle East, chaired by Randie Clawson.

Division of Church and Society: the Rev. Albert Rush, Chairperson

Division on Religion and Race: Ernestine Campbell and the Rev. Dale Milford,  
Co-Conveners

Division on the Status and Role of Women: Patricia Bostic, Chairperson

Division on Disability Concerns: the Rev. Michelle King, Chairperson

Two of our Division chairs serve on the Bishop's Anti-Bias Anti-Racism Working Group: Ernestine Campbell (Religion & Race) and the Rev. Albert Rush (Church & Society).

Your Conference Board of Justice has endeavored this past year to live out our calling found in Proverbs 31:8-9; to speak out and to encourage and empower others to speak out on social justice issues that affect our communities, our state, our nation, and our world. Our focus continues to be the strengthening and empowering of each of our four divisions into strong voices for social justice. In addition, this year we have centered our efforts on advocacy and network building within our congregations and across the state.

The Board has provided regular articles for MIConnect. It continues to promote Peace With Justice Sunday (50% of this special offering stays for Michigan Conference projects). Due to limited financial resources, we decided to hold off on allocating grants this year. We used funds from our operating budget to support Justice for Our Neighbors and add a part-time staff position for the Gun Safety Working Group.

The Board of Justice was part of a broad-based interfaith coalition in support of abortion rights and Proposal 3 in November's election.

We have sponsored two Conference Lunch and Learn sessions. One sponsored by the Division on the Status and Role of Women on Women and the New Normal, the other by Church and Society and the Gun Safety Working Group on Turning Prayers into Action. We worked with a grass roots effort of pastors and laity to bring and pass a resolution on Preventing Gun Violence to Annual Conference. It called for the creation of an Advocacy Day in Lansing at the State Capitol, an ongoing working group under the Board of Justice and joining the End Gun Violence Michigan Coalition.

Our concentration toward the end of the year and as the new year begins has been on Advocacy Day, March 22, 2023, and the training events and planning leading up to that day. As noted, we added a part-time staff person, the Rev Michelle King, to work with our Conference staff and the Working Group to bring about this statewide gathering of United Methodists in Lansing to advocate for gun safety.

In closing I would like to lift the Board members whose terms ended in 2022: Ken Dowell and the Rev. Scott Manning (R & R); Mary Bashill and the Rev. Kristie Hintz (SROW); and the Rev. Frederick Sampson (Disability Concerns). Your presence and support, leadership and skills have been much appreciated and treasured. Well done. Thank you.

George Covintree, Chairperson

### **Division of Church and Society**

As, I write this report, we are in the midst of another mass shooting and only a couple weeks away from seeing a video of an unarmed man of color beat to death by four police officers in Memphis TN. Therefore, my report begins with the fact that much work needs to be done to help our Church and Society lament, pray, and grieve, as we move towards actions that will allow the Michigan Conference's voice to be heard.

What we have done in working with the Michigan Conference Board of Justice (BOJ) we were able to pass legislation at last year's Annual Conference to advocate for Gun Safety Laws. The legislation called for us to set-up a Michigan Conference Gun Safety Coalition, which has met

monthly since July of 2022. Rev. Heather McDougall is the chair of that coalition. The coalition has set-up an Advocacy Day task force that has planned to have United Methodist's (UM's) from all over Michigan come on March 22, 2023, to Lansing and meet face to face with their legislators. In an effort to advocate for Gun Safety laws. It is our hope and prayer that that event will be a blueprint of how we as UM's can take action with our legislators on any issue that may be voted on by our Annual Conference.

In addition, we were able to have zoom gathering of many of the local churches Church and Society committee representatives. It is my desire that we continue to grow our network of people working to support all our churches efforts in making a difference in our Society.

### **Division on Disability Concerns**

The Division on Disability Concerns continued to meet throughout 2022 to discuss ways we can live out our mission of providing resources, education, inclusion, and advocacy within the Michigan Conference so that we can work towards the full participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the church. Members on the Board of Justice serving on this Division include Rev. Michelle King, Rev. Ameer Paparella, Greg Hicok, and Norma Hood. Rev. Christy Miller-White served as our conference staff liaison. Other active members of this division include Carmen Burke, Sarah Powless, Jenn Woytkiw, and Bethany Maciejewski.

As a Division, we wrote a letter to the Commission on Annual Conference sharing our concerns regarding the accessibility of Annual Conference 2022, particularly for people with compromised immune systems. We also came up with a plan to periodically write articles for the MICConnect newsletter to raise awareness around various disability related topics. The first of these articles was published in September 2022 and focused on suicide prevention. The Division started compiling a list of funding resources to give to churches who request assistance with finding funding to make their churches more accessible. We will continue working on that list and on other ways that we can equip local churches for this work in the coming year.

### **Division on Religion and Race**

The Division of Religion and Race (DORR) has the responsibility to provide resources through collaboration and training to enable the work of the local church ministry area of Religion and Race, with particular emphasis placed on pastors and congregations involving in cross racial/cross cultural ministry.

The Division of Religion and Race has met and consulted with the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet to ensure racial/ethnic inclusion and equality in the recruitment, credentialing, and itineracy processes of the Annual Conference. Paragraph 643 of the 2016 Book of Discipline states: *The Executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and cabinet shall meet at least once per year in joint sessions with the commission on Religion and Race to create and address long-term plans for identifying, and developing clergy leaders who will serve the growing racial and ethnic populations of the church.*

To complement and enhance our work, Convener Tina (Ernestine) Campbell serves on the Bishop's ABAR (Anti Bias/Anti Racism) committee. This committee seeks to equip the Michigan Conference to lead in a way that recognizes the desire to live as a Beloved Community and is informed by our Methodist history in the abolitionist movement.

The committee on DORR has completed its meeting dates for the Conference year and does meet regularly while extending invitations to other conference agencies seeking to integrate concepts of intercultural competency and explore the agenda of the United Methodist Church.

Convener Tina Campbell participated in the District Lay Servant training by teaching one of the classes which focused on the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church.

The committee will attend Advocacy Day in Lansing in March to collaborate and engage in a learning session as it relates to gun violence.

The future goals of the committee are to engage more with ABAR and to assist with training effective leaders in the local United Methodist Church. We seek to explore the training and workshops offered by GCORR that aligns and supports the ministry of this committee.

*In His Peace!*

*Tina Campbell, Convener*

### **Division on the Status & Role of Women**

*“This New Day Is Too Dear, With ITS Hopes And Invitations, To Waste a Moment On Yesterday”*  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Status & Role of Women advocates for full participation of women in the total Life of the Church and Community. The past year found the Commission going deeper into how the role of women has been affected by the “NEW NORMAL”.

We hosted a Lunch & Learn, where members from National COSROW spoke on the issues currently affecting roles and status. The team is including equal compensation for women in our studies and workshops this year. Another project we will be discussing is Soul Care. We focus on being positive and expecting positive outcomes. We learned fear never builds the future, but hope does.

Best Regards,  
Patricia Bostic

### **BOARD OF LAITY**

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

The year of 2022 was a very active time as members of the Board of Laity endeavored to empower bold and effective lay leadership. In February we hosted a Winter Webinar for Michigan Conference laity with the theme “Fulfilling the Great Commission: We are All Ministers”. Keynote speaker Sharon Appling encouraged, empowered, and equipped laity to boldly claim their call, share their story, and “radiate the love of Christ as hope”.

The Board of Laity continued the practice in 2022 of offering two virtual Laity Orientation sessions for Lay Members to Annual Conference to share key information, direct participants to conference materials/websites, form connections, and answer questions prior to annual conference. These online sessions, led by members of the Board of Laity with support from members of the Commission on Annual Conference Session, were well attended and provided laity with the tools needed to serve as effective, informed lay members to annual conference.

Annual Conference 2022 provided the opportunity for our friend in Christ from the Florida Conference, Derrick Scott III, to join us in person as our keynote speaker for our second Laity Event. Derrick reminded and called laity to be the “Gospel on the ground” as we live out our call as resilient disciples. He challenged laypersons to create and “hold sacred, slow, and open space” to hear people’s stories and journey with them from Mourning to Dancing. We heard the call to invite young adults, clergy, and even ourselves to answer the question “How is it with your soul?” and be resilient, bold, followers of Jesus Christ.

As the Board of Laity seeks to support the new ways ministries are dawning, we celebrate the gifting of 8 BOL Resource and Training Grants in 2022. We look forward to hearing updates this spring from the following mini-grant recipients as to how their ministries are emerging and how God’s faithfulness and assurance has been evident and experienced through these ministries: Troy First UMC, Sycamore Creek Church, Harper Woods Redeemer UMC, Big Beaver UMC, Clinton UMC, Marshall UMC, Cadillac UMC, and Conant Avenue UMC. From small group studies for targeted groups to CORE (Communities Organizing for Racial Equality) Workshops to Amplify Media curriculum subscriptions to exploring call to ministry to Women of the Bible studies and training, we pray for these emerging ministries that God’s love will shine brightly.

Additional ministry efforts on the horizon for the BOL include a conference-wide CLM program and continued dialogue with members of the Board of Ordained Ministry around healthy transitions for clergy and congregations at times of changes in appointment.

We are grateful for the service of new members of the Board of Laity who have joined us in the last year: Ron Blaisdell as Conference Scouting Coordinator, Dawn Levey as Mid-Michigan District Lay Leader, and Lori Roof as Greater Southwest Co-District Lay Leader. As our districts become seven in number and accommodate changes in district lines, the Board of Laity is mindful of how that will impact our work while also raising up ministry opportunities that are “new every morning”. The BOL is most appreciative for the gifts of those whose time with us will conclude at the end of June: John Seppanen as Heritage District Lay Leader and Paul Perez as Director of Connectional Ministry. They have blessed us beyond measure with their gifts and passion for ministry, call to serve others in mission, and commitment to share God’s love.

The Board of Laity celebrates the ministry of the laity as the “Gospel on the ground” (as Derrick Scott reminds us) and seeks to support, equip, encourage, and empower the many laypersons in the Michigan Conference who faithfully serve with grace, love, and mercy to make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.

Annette Erbes  
Conference Lay Leader and Chair of the Board of Laity

## **BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

2022 was another year of the Board of Ordained Ministry learning to do its work in new and, I think, creative ways. Looking at ways to maximize resources, the BOM moved its traditional Fall Organizing Retreat to the 24 hours before Annual Conference at the Grand Traverse Resort facility. This meant that the full Board was in place to do final “tweaks” before Clergy Session and the celebration of Retirees.

At Clergy Session the Board recommended one Associate Member, two Provisional Deacons, seven Provisional Elders, three Full Deacons, and fifteen Full Elders. All of these were confirmed by Clergy Session. The work of Clergy Session was streamlined with the first-time use of a consent calendar for more “proforma” items in the Clergy Session Business of Annual Conference. In addition to Associate, Provisional and Full Members the BOM carried the work and recommendation of the District Committees on Ministry to the Clergy Session. We celebrate all those who have completed Course of Study and serve the congregations of Michigan so very well.

In the evening, after Clergy Session, we celebrated the 40-some retirees who have served so faithfully for so many years. Rev. Tim Zeigler, a member of the BOM, MC’ed a fun night of music, poetry, video testimonies of lives and ministries well-lived. A reception with desserts and drinks followed the event.

Membership on the Board of Ordained Ministry is in four-year terms, with a two-term run being common and a three-term run being possible with the approval of the Bishop. In 2022-23, we celebrated the ministries of, and said farewell, to Lay Representative Jean Mackey. The Conference owes Jean a debt of gratitude for her time with the Board.

The Board of Ordained Ministry continues to be about working with individuals who feel the call of God in their lives, to discern whether that call is, indeed, within The United Methodist Church at this particular time. We understand that this is a sacred trust given to us by the Michigan Conference through Bishop David A. Bard. The work we are about would not be possible without our deep trust in the work of the Holy Spirit as our support and strength in discernment. On behalf of the BOM, I thank the members of the Michigan Annual Conference for the trust you place in us.

Barry Petrucci, Chair

### **Order of Deacons**

Deacons are called and ordained to word, service, compassion, and justice and are charged with connecting the Church and the world and as I explained just yesterday to those exploring their call at the Candidacy Summit, one would need to follow a deacon around for a week to see just what that means.

Some are appointed to churches where they are Christian educators leading adults, children and youth in the deepening of their faith or musicians that coordinate the music for and prepare others to share their talent in worship. Some concentrate their time in pastoral care and do home and hospital visits. Others, many others, lead in service in the world through nonprofits, social work, teaching, or other service careers.

We typically gather in the winter and again at the Annual Conference to share our stories and best practices in our areas of expertise. After three years of canceling, trying to meet on Zoom and ultimately canceling again, we will gather in person with the bishop in March.

As we continue to seek those called to the Order of Deacon, I am encouraged. I have had more calls from individuals and district superintendents both looking for clarification on the role of a deacon and how to get started in the process during this year than I have had in the last three combined and pastors and SPRC chairs are calling to ask if a position they have open might be right for a deacon. Though this is a good thing, it reminds me that we, as deacons, are a mystery.

Not enough laity, or clergy for that matter, really understand the call of a deacon and how deacons can follow that call in so many ways. We'd like to change that. Invite a deacon to visit your congregation. Ask one of us to preach, to assist with Communion or to speak with a group about how we are answering God's call. As in a lot of things in life, it is hard to understand how something can happen if there are no examples.

Sue Pethoud, Chair

## **CONFERENCE BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS (CBOPHB)**

### **I. MICHIGAN CONFERENCE BENEFITS**

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

#### ***Benefits Billings (BB)***

Benefits Billings (BB) are billed monthly to every local church to fund current conference retirement and welfare plan liabilities as well as all ministries through the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits/Benefits Office (CBOPHB). The amount of the Benefits Billing is calculated using a fixed percentage of each church's clergy compensation. The percentage is determined on an annual basis and adjusted to reflect appointments of half time or less, retiree appointments, or District Superintendent Assignments. The monthly BB amount will be based on a flat rate for a local church with no appointment or assignment.

#### ***Health Care***

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

On January 1, 2023, the group retiree health program moved from a BCBS self-insured plan to a fully insured group Humana PPO (retirees under age 65) and Humana Medicare Advantage plan (age 65+). The decision was enacted after a thorough comparison that indicated an expected net savings for the plan of over \$2 million per year for the next two years. Given additional enhancements in coverage and lower premiums, a majority of our retirees will also experience lower out-of-pocket costs in 2023. For retired individuals experiencing a significant, adverse effect due to the plan change, the CBOPHB continues to work together with those individuals to develop viable alternate provisions.



**II. PRIOR YEAR BENEFITS-RELATED BALANCES**

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

Historically, BB receipts have been remitted from 97%-99% annually. The CBOPHB is pleased to report that 2022 receipts were significantly better than in 2021. The 2022 rate of receipt was 98.0% with an approximate unpaid balance of \$70,000, compared to 94.75% (\$187,000 unpaid) in 2021.

The following list includes the balances on record as of February 28, 2023, for both BB and health insurance premiums. Payments subsequently remitted in 2023 may not be reflected in the totals below but may be confirmed with the Benefits Office.

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

<b>Outstanding Prior Year Benefits-Related Balances</b>					
<b>Conf. No.</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Benefits Billings</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total balances</b>
<b>Northern Skies District</b>					
31001	Algonquin	532	0	532	
31005	Calumet	141	84	225	
31007	Crystal Falls: Christ	10,144	1,415	11,559	
31012	Ewen	342	0	342	
31013	Faithorn	65	0	65	
31016	Grand Marais	161	0	161	
31019	Hancock: First	654	0	654	
31022	Hulbert: Tahquamenon	100	0	100	
31025	Ironwood: Welsey	104	0	104	
31034	Michigamme: Woodland	615	0	615	
31045	Republic	942	0	942	
31046	Rockland: St Paul	372	0	372	
31052	Wakefield	158	0	158	
	<b>Total Northern Skies District</b>	<b>14,330</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>15,828</b>	<b>0.92%</b>
<b>Northern Waters District</b>					
32002	Alba	597	0	597	
32010	Bear Lake	2,962	4,242	7,204	

32012	Boyne City	3,211	19,308	22,519	
32018	Charlevoix	235	0	235	
32019	Charlevoix: Greensky Hill	12,750	13,302	26,052	
32020	Chase: Barton	500	0	500	
32029	Free Soil-Fountain	780	0	780	
32030	Gaylord: First	813	0	813	
32033	Grayling: Michelson Memorial	1,375	0	1,375	
32038	Horton Bay	195		195	
32040	Indian River	2,601	6,120	8,720	
32044	Kewadin: Indian Mission	3,963	0	3,963	
32045	Kingsley	544	0	544	
32046	Lake Ann	8,810	0	8,810	
32049	Leroy	283	0	283	
32054	Manistee	1,259	0	1,259	
32055	Manton	7,399	0	7,399	
32058	Mesick	2,018	10,539	12,557	
32059	Millersburg	160	0	160	
32062	Norwood	1,446	0	1,446	
32064	Onaway	608	0	608	
32070	Sears	1,938	0	1,938	
32072	Spratt	175	0	175	
32073	Traverse Bay	1,165	0	1,165	
	<b>Total Northern Waters District</b>	<b>55,786</b>	<b>53,511</b>	<b>109,296</b>	<b>6.34%</b>
<b>Central Bay District</b>					
33004	Auburn	1,292	0	1,292	
33006	Bay Port	463	0	463	
33008	Bentley	25	0	25	
33009	Birch Run	2,596	7,296	9,892	
33010	Blanchard-Pine River	2,970	0	2,970	
33011	Burt	375	0	375	
33013	Caseville	1,104	0	1,104	
33014	Cass City	941	1,744	2,685	
33018	Coomer	183	0	183	
33021	Elkton	5,131	0	5,131	
33024	Farwell	1,100	0	1,100	
33023	Fairgrove	0	175	175	
33047	Millington	1,300	0	1,300	
33049	Mt. Pleasant: Chippewa Indian	840	0	840	
33050	Mt. Pleasant: Countryside	2,330	0	2,330	

33052	Mt. Pleasant: Trinity	2,719	0	2,719	
33054	Oscoda	562	0	562	
33060	Pinnebog	2,920	0	2,920	
33066	Saginaw: Ames	2,108	0	2,108	
33069	Saginaw: New Heart	490	8,225	8,715	
33076	Standish: Community	11,260	0	11,260	
33080	Vassar: First	1,748	0	1,748	
33086	Wilber	551	0	551	
	<b>Total Central Bay District</b>	<b>43,008</b>	<b>17,440</b>	<b>60,448</b>	<b>3.51%</b>
<b>Midwest District</b>					
34003	Amble	295	0	295	
34004	Barryton: Faith	1,400	0	1,400	
34007	Big Rapids: First	1,988	0	1,988	
34009	Bowne Center	154	0	154	
34010	Bradley: Indian Mission	10,697	0	10,697	
34012	Byron Center	281	0	281	
34013	Caledonia	6,423	0	6,423	
34017	Coopersville	4,135	0	4,135	
34020	Dorr: Crosswind Community	667	0	667	
34029	Grand Rapids: Cornerstone	0	1,437	1,437	
34033	Grand Rapids: La Nueva Esperanza	9,923	61,934	71,857	
34037	Grand Rapids: South	498	0	498	
34038	Grand Rapids: Trinity	575	0	575	
34039	Grand Rapids: Vietnamese	6,362	0	6,362	
34043	Hart	563	0	563	
34049	Ionia: Zion	1,584	0	1,584	
34054	Lowell: First	2,607	0	2,607	
34055	Lowell: Vergennes	0	3,702	3,702	
34057	Marne	6,104	0	6,104	
34064	Muskegon: Crestwood	1,655	0	1,655	
34067	Newaygo	8,204	3,125	11,329	
34068	North Muskegon: Community	588	0	588	
34069	Palo	33	0	33	
34072	Pentwater: Centenary	286	0	286	
34073	Pierson: Heritage	0	1,763	1,763	
34074	Ravenna	3,765	0	3,765	
34075	Rockford	0	462	462	
34077	Salem: Indian Mission	16,676	3,135	19,811	
34079	Shelby	6,935	37,565	44,500	

34081	South Ensley	103	0	103	
34082	Sparta	0	1,907	1,907	
34088	Wayland	1,043	0	1,043	
	<b>Total Midwest District</b>	<b>93,544</b>	<b>115,030</b>	<b>208,573</b>	<b>12.11%</b>
<b>Mid-Michigan District</b>					
35008	Breckenridge	1,640	0	1,640	
35010	Carland	2,838	0	2,838	
35012	Chapin	432	0	432	
35015	Corunna	20,899	0	20,899	
35023	Elsie	2,094	0	2,094	
35025	Fowlerville: First	1,342	0	1,342	
35028	Grand Ledge: First	1,703	0	1,703	
35029	Gresham	185	419	604	
35048	Lansing: Sycamore Creek	0	7,903	7,903	
35055	Millville	1,694	0	1,694	
35060	Nashville: Peace	72	0	72	
35066	Owosso: Trinity	432	0	432	
35068	Pittsburg	8,120	0	8,120	
35073	Robbins	466	0	466	
35075	Shepardsville	1,089	0	1,089	
35080	Sunfield	917	0	917	
35081	Vernon	7,907	0	7,907	
	<b>Total Mid-Michigan District</b>	<b>51,830</b>	<b>8,322</b>	<b>60,152</b>	<b>3.49%</b>
<b>East Winds District</b>					
36008	Buel	1,842	0	1,842	
36009	Burton: Christ	12,297	0	12,297	
36013	Central Lakeport	150	0	150	
36021	Deckerville	150	0	150	
36022	Dryden	486	0	486	
36027	Flint: Asbury	55,763	0	55,763	
36029	Flint: Bristol	2,681	0	2,681	
36031	Flint: Charity	33,003	0	33,003	
36046	Holly: Mt Bethel	439	0	439	
36047	Lamb	257	0	257	
36054	Leonard	1,381	0	1,381	
36056	Linden	625	0	625	
36060	Melvin	635	0	635	
36061	Memphis: First	142	0	142	

36064	Mt. Morris: First	0	40,721	40,721	
36067	Omard	2,049	0	2,049	
36069	Orthonville	2,121	0	2,121	
36072	Port Hope	1,575	0	1,575	
36078	Richmond: First	6,342	0	6,342	
36080	Saint Clair: First	3,090	0	3,090	
36085	Snover: Heritage	3,675	0	3,675	
36089	Thomas	545	0	545	
36094	West Vienna	518	0	518	
39095	Worth Twp: Bethel	60	0	60	
36096	Yale	1,680	0	1,680	
	<b>Total East Winds District</b>	<b>131,506</b>	<b>40,721</b>	<b>172,227</b>	<b>10.00%</b>
<b>Greater Southwest District</b>					
37003	Arden	780	0	780	
37006	Bangor: Simpson	2,833	16,073	18,906	
37010	Battle Creek: Christ	244	22,032	22,276	
37012	Battle Creek: First	2,868	1,003	3,871	
37016	Battle Creek: Washington Hts	1,500	0	1,500	
37019	Berrien Springs	821	0	821	
37021	Bridgman: Faith	1,935	0	1,935	
37026	Burr Oak	600	0	600	
37032	Coloma	570	0	570	
37034	Constantine	250	0	250	
37037	Dowling: Country Chapel	5,302	7,404	12,706	
37039	Fennville	0	10,050	10,050	
37041	Galesburg	130	0	130	
37044	Ganges	104	0	104	
37055	Kalamazoo: Sunnyside	8,753	0	8,753	
37056	Kalamazoo: Westwood	1,985	0	1,985	
37058	Lacota	450	0	450	
37059	Lawrence	5,624	0	5,624	
37061	Marcellus	305	0	305	
37062	Marcellus: Wakelee	691	0	691	
37063	Martin	1,685	16,833	18,518	
37065	Monterey Center	7,189	0	7,189	
37069	Niles: Portage Prairie	13,180	0	13,180	
37071	Nottawa	27	0	27	
37073	Oshtemo: Lifespring	7,709	15,179	22,888	
37077	Paw Paw	5,266	39,506	44,772	

37080	Pokagon	4,990	0	4,990	
37085	Schoolcraft	0	6,700	6,700	
37086	Scottdale	192	0	192	
37087	Scotts	171	0	171	
37091	South Haven: First	613	0	613	
37093	Saint Joseph: First	0	3,396	3,396	
37101	Union City	0	39,703	39,703	
37102	Vicksburg	1,447	0	1,447	
37103	White Pigeon	250	0	250	
	<b>Total Greater Southwest District</b>	<b>78,464</b>	<b>177,878</b>	<b>256,343</b>	<b>14.88%</b>
<b>Heritage District</b>					
38001	Adrian: First	2,197	0	2,197	
38003	Allen	40	0	40	
38004	Ann Arbor: Calvary	1,536	0	1,536	
38006	Ann Arbor: Korean	97,397	0	97,397	
38014	Calhoun County: Homer	187	0	187	
38024	Deerfield	4,764	0	4,764	
38028	Dundee	5,963	0	5,963	
38029	Erie	5,415	0	5,415	
38030	Frontier	200	0	200	
38034	Hartland	950	0	950	
38044	Jackson: Trinity	3,156	0	3,156	
38052	London	1,344	0	1,344	
38062	Monroe: Faith (First)	0	175	175	
38066	Morenci	14,128	3,176	17,304	
38067	Napoleon	274	0	274	
38071	North Parma	575	0	575	
38073	Novi	3,367	0	3,367	
38076	Pinckney: Arise	25,344	0	25,344	
38083	Salem Grove	1,660	175	1,835	
38090	Springville	1,155	0	1,155	
38096	Wellsville	1,640	0	1,640	
38102	Ypsilanti: St. Matthew's	275	0	275	
	<b>Total Heritage District</b>	<b>171,567</b>	<b>3,526</b>	<b>175,094</b>	<b>10.16%</b>
<b>Greater Detroit District</b>					
39010	Detroit: Calvary	42,870	0	42,870	
39011	Detroit: Cass Community	45,862	0	45,862	
39012	Detroit: Central	2,208	0	2,208	
39013	Detroit: Centro Familiar Cristiano	15,161	60,148	75,309	
39014	Detroit: Conant Avenue	18,967	0	18,967	
39015	Detroit: Ford Memorial	4,534	0	4,534	

39018	Detroit: Peoples	40,706	47,131	87,837	
39019	Detroit: Resurrection	17,453	0	17,453	
39021	Detroit: Second Grace	9,443	6,491	15,934	
39022	Detroit: St. Paul	31,481	20,380	51,861	
39023	Detroit: St. Timothy	17,169	10,557	27,726	
39030	Ferndale: First	971	8,870	9,841	
39034	Garden City	4,276	0	4,276	
39036	Harper Woods: Redeemer	565	0	565	
39038	Howarth	185	8,575	8,760	
39043	Madison Heights	3,742	0	3,742	
39045	Madison Hts: Vietnamese Ministry	7,944	0	7,944	
39047	Mt. Vernon	951	0	951	
39051	Pontiac: Grace & Peace Community	1,935	17,439	19,374	
39052	Pontiac: St. John	1,400	0	1,400	
39053	Redford: Aldersgate	2,949	0	2,949	
39055	Riverview	0	710	710	
39061	Southfield: Hope	10,360	0	10,360	
39070	Washington	810	0	810	
39072	Waterford: Four Towns	16,347	0	16,347	
39073	Waterford: Trinity	250	4,262	4,512	
39076	Westland: St. James	33,158	0	33,158	
	<b>Total Greater Detroit District</b>	<b>331,697</b>	<b>184,563</b>	<b>516,260</b>	<b>29.97%</b>
<b>Closed Churches</b>					
6096	Shelby Twp: New Hope	2,949	0	2,949	
9550	Melvindale: New Hope	2,557	12,501	15,058	
32075	Traverse City: Mosaic	1,041	13,218	14,259	
33070	Saginaw: State Street	2,773	4,325	7,098	
34032	Grand Rapids: Genesis	0	350	350	
34050	Kent City: Chapel Hill	0	9,975	9,975	
34085	Twin Lake	7,185	0	7,185	
34086	Vickeryville	33	0	33	
36023	Duffield	0	15	15	
36033	Flint: Faith	36,705	0	36,705	
36075	Port Huron: Washington Avenue	4,241	0	4,241	
37007	Battle Creek: Baseline	525	0	525	
37054	Kalamazoo: Northwest	575	0	575	
38051	Litchfield	871	3,940	4,811	
38053	Lulu	3,087	0	3,087	
38077	Pleasant Lake	517	0	517	
38098	Whitmore Lake: Wesley	6,467	0	6,467	
38103	Jackson: Community	650	0	650	
39017	Detroit: Mt. Hope	33,603	0	33,603	
39054	Redford: New Beginnings	334	0	334	

	<b>Total Closed Churches</b>	<b>104,113</b>	<b>44,324</b>	<b>148,437</b>	<b>8.62%</b>
	<b>CONFERENCE TOTALS</b>	<b>1,075,845</b>	<b>646,814</b>	<b>1,722,659</b>	

### **III. STEPS TO RETIREMENT**

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

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



become available. This is essential in order to coordinate health care coverage and avoid lengthy delays and/or denials of medical claims.

#### **IV. CONFERENCE HEALTH CARE POLICIES**

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

#### **ACTIVE GROUP HEALTH CARE PLAN**

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

***Eligible Subscribers:*** Active Plan eligible classes include the following:

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

1. Full-time Clergy (Ordained Clergy and Local Pastors) under Episcopal appointment with the Michigan Conference as the responsible agency for providing benefits.
2. Full-time Lay Employees of the Michigan Conference and its approved, related agencies.
3. Full-time Lay Employees of a local church (including District Superintendent Assignments) until the employee turns age 65 provided the local church lay employee policy offers health care to all eligible full-time lay employees. All conference eligibility requirements must be observed. The local church is the responsible agency for all lay employee health insurance premiums. Premium-sharing schedules may be determined by local church employee policies, but must meet employee affordability requirements as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
4. Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Lay Employees on Medical Leave receiving disability benefits, provided the subscriber was enrolled in the Michigan Conference Group Active Health Care Plan at the time they were granted Medical leave.
  - a. The subscriber must enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B at the date of first eligibility.
  - b. The subscriber is responsible for submitting a copy of the subscriber's Medicare card to the Conference Benefits Office at the time of Medicare enrollment to assure the proper coordination of benefits.

5. Dependents of deceased Clergy and Conference/Related Agency Lay Employee subscribers provided the dependents were enrolled in the group active health care plan at the time of the subscriber's death.
  - a. Dependents of a retired subscriber will continue health coverage under the same eligibility and funding provisions as the subscriber.
  - b. A surviving spouse that remarries will continue to receive the health care benefit. However, the new spouse is not eligible for coverage.
6. Enrolled dependents of deceased Local Church employee subscribers as allowable by the health care plan if continued coverage is a provision of the local church employee policy, and if the local church maintains responsibility for the health insurance premiums.

***Eligible Dependents:***

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

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

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

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

***Funding of Active Health Care Policies:***

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

***Termination:***

1. A subscriber may voluntarily terminate a subscriber's health insurance policy by submitting a request in writing to the Conference Benefits Office.

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

**Waiver of Coverage:**

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

### **RETIREE GROUP HEALTH CARE PLAN**

**Introduction:**

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

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

***Eligibility and Cost Sharing:***

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

***Termination:***

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

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

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

## **PROTECTION POLICY TEAM**

Submitted by Beth Pelkey, Chairperson

We celebrate that this team has been able to keep continuity within Safe Gatherings and Protection Policy information not only for the conference and districts throughout the state, but also in the local church. We have been able to maintain a resource for those within the church to keep up-to-date on their Protection Policies to keep all children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe throughout the Conference. The Michigan Conference website has continually been updated to reflect the most updated resources for those who need information. Fortunately for our team, we have two very qualified staff persons serving our team that can direct people where to go for answers to their questions and/or answer questions themselves. Throughout the year, those two, in addition to the rest of the team, have fielded many calls and questions. By doing so, we are able to confidently report that components of safety are in place for conference and district events and those working on those events are properly trained.

As we move forward in the new Conference Year, and with changes taking place within the Conference, we have recommended that our duties could be best served through the Young People's Ministry team. They have the resources to continue our work, maintaining that the Conference, Districts and even the local churches have the resources needed to care for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We will be pleased to resource this team, if there are areas in which they need guidance to complete the work that needs to be done.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The conference Board of Trustees ("BoT") enjoys the blessing of active participation of six clergy and six laity trustees, plus a voting clergy liaison from the Cabinet. We currently divide our responsibilities between four main focus areas: Conference Properties, Closing Churches, Administration, and Disaffiliations.

Meeting quarterly, we gather in person and/or virtually making participation more complete and inclusive. As our focus areas indicate the responsibilities and issues are significant, including such matters as conference assets, BSA settlement, disaffiliation, financial stress on congregations and difficult decisions to bring a church's ministry to a close.

When churches close, the BoT must provide oversight of those properties until such time as they are sold or re-engaged in alternative ministries. The challenge to congregations during the Pandemic has exacerbated the decline that had already been noted.

### **Work review:**

Vice Chair Rob Long has given oversight to the conference owned offices including negotiating a 2-year lease renewal for Clark Corners Suite 212, a lease of Suite 208 for archives and storage on a month-to-month basis, meeting our office and storage needs at a substantial reduction in cost. Further, he negotiated a discontinuance of Suite 210 and the Mid-Michigan District Office in Suite 216, following the district moving to working virtually.

George Lewis provided oversight for conference parsonages and with Rob Long's assistance did substantial work in preparing parsonages for changes in District Superintendents.

The Closed Churches Team, led by Deb Federau along with David Apol facilitated the sale of the following churches or parsonages:

- Lulu UMC
- Wheatfield UMC
- Monroe Calvary UMC
- Fenwick Circuit UMC's (Fenwick, Palo, & Vickeryville) and parsonage
- Redford New Beginnings UMC
- Griffith UMC – sale pending

The following properties are currently listed for sale, and we know more properties will be listed in this inventory as economic and cultural pressures continue to take their toll on local churches. We celebrate that some of these situations have resulted in mergers and other creative solutions, and we continue to seek other alternatives than closure.

- Griffith UMC
- Dimondale UMC
- Mohawk Ameek UMC
- Jackson Zion UMC
- Ubyly UMC

We are aware of several other potential closings that may occur prior to Annual Conference 2023.

DCM Paul Perez and Rob Long continue to work with Archives and History to develop a plan and location for caring for archival materials. With church closings on the rise, the need for space increases. The potential of digitizing much of the material offers an option, but not without significant cost. How these costs will be covered following either methodology remains to be seen.

Conducted the annual 'Risk Management' review with Church Mutual Insurance in a full board meeting. There were once again no material claim-issues raised and the relationship continues to be solid.

The BoT Disaffiliation team is led by John Hice, Angie Anger, and John Boley, who serves as a special assistant to the Bishop caring for the disaffiliation process as churches make the decision to disaffiliate. More than 125 churches have requested information on the cost of disaffiliating at this time, and upwards of 30 churches have voted to disaffiliate and are in consultation with John Boley on completing the process, which includes paying the associated costs. It has been the goal of the BoT trustees to be gracious in calculations of costs for the equity component, even making available a waiver for those who have paid their ministry shares for the past three years at 100% and apply for it from the Board.

#### Actions needed at Annual Conference

Summary of closed churches (known at this report date) requiring AC affirmative action to formally close with motions in accordance with ¶2549 of the *2016 Book of Discipline* to be submitted by the Rev. Marjorie Crawford. The affirming petitions to be distributed to the voting members and returned after adjournment.

- Bentley UMC – Effective August 7, 2022
- Dimondale UMC – Effective January 31, 2023
- Fenwick Circuit – Palo UMC, Vickeryville UMC, Fenwick UMC
- Jackson Zion UMC – Effective April 26, 2023

- Mohawk Ameek UMC – Effective February 8, 2023
- Saginaw Ames UMC – Effective July 1, 2023
- Wheatfield UMC – Effective September 1, 2022

Approximately thirty (30) churches have voted to disaffiliate and are in process of completing the Disaffiliation Agreement terms with intent to submit appropriate funds in accordance with ¶ 2553 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*. Individual motion to close and disaffiliate will be presented by Rev. Margie Crawford. The affirming petition will be distributed to the voting members and returned after adjournment.



You may have heard the drum roll at the end of February when United Methodist Women announced our new name – United Women in Faith (UWF)! Yes, we have a new name and a new logo to state our openness more clearly to ALL women, not just United Methodists. Even though our name changed – we continued to do what we have been doing for 150+ years, putting our faith, hope and love into action.

In 2022 our local units continued to engage in mission with their local communities, packing free lunches and weekend backpacks, serving funeral dinners, sewing school bags and diapers for Midwest Mission kits, making pasties, and many, many other activities, in addition to financial support to improve the lives of women, children and youth. Although fundraising remained challenging for our local units in 2022, we met 100% of our pledge, sending in over \$229,000 in Mission Giving to support the national and international ministries of United Women in Faith.

May 19-22, 40 women from the Michigan Conference attended the United Women in Faith Assembly in Orlando, Florida. It was a time of celebration, worship, education, sisterhood, and action! Twelve women arrived a day early to participate in the Ubuntu Day for hands-on mission activities with local organizations that serve women, children, and youth in the Orlando area. We were thrilled to celebrate Michelle and Bill White from the Michigan Conference commissioned as a Deaconess and Home Missioner at the event. In addition to those in-person, 50 women attended virtually, a first ever option for Assembly. Whether in-person or virtual, all were moved by the experience of coming together as a global sisterhood.

Mission u returned to in-person events in 2022. We hosted 48 attendees at the Lake Huron Retreat Center in August with another 8 participating virtually. This hybrid event option was very successful and lays the groundwork for ways we can make this event more accessible to ALL in our vast conference in future years. In October we had 40 participants at our Mission u event at Gaylord UMC. These transformative educational opportunities are sponsored by United Women in Faith as our gift to the church.

Our Charter for Racial Justice Committee granted four \$300 grants during 2022 to local units to pursue racial justice activities. These projects included an urban and suburban unit coming together to sponsor a theatrical production by the Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, a road trip to

the Jim Crow Museum at Ferris State University, and a speaker facilitating a panel discussion to build relationships across lines of race and ethnicity. Each of the grant recipients made a short presentation at our Conference Annual Celebration in October. We are continuing these grants into 2023 and our leadership is excited about the possibilities these grants are opening for our local units.

In the fall all our District Annual Meetings were able to be held in person, as well as our Conference Annual Celebration which was held at Westwood UMC in Kalamazoo. Our keynote speakers were from Justice for Our Neighbors. The event was truly a celebration of once again being able to come together!

The new United Women in Faith website sums up very well who we are: “We’re a sisterhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation. Driven by God’s love and united in sisterhood, we work to improve the lives of women, children, and youth. Every day, we show up. We take action. We get it done. And we invite you to join us”. Sisterhood, faith, action. In 2023 we will continue to draw our circle wider and be intentionally invitational!

### **BOARD OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S MINISTRIES**

The Board of Young People’s Ministries continues to mourn the loss of connection and community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a board, we noticed that we had less requests for funding this year than in years past, and we mourn the loss of opportunities for faith development. We continue to mourn the fact that young people are not always fully integrated in the life of their church, and often their voices are silenced or pushed to the margins. We mourn that this silencing often pushes young people out of the church. We have faced challenges as a board, as we’ve sought to bring aboard more young people, but the constraints of our current organization do not resonate with how youth and young adults operate. We also faced the challenges of budget cuts, as we had to think creatively about how we work to fund ministries that are important to the faith development of young people across our Conference.

And, yet, we have still been able to dance. We dance because we have a fairly healthy budget that allows us to support a number of ministries. We dance because we have become a new home for ministries like the Mission Intern Program, and we have helped create new ministries, like Seed to Harvest. We dance because, despite the challenges we may face, this Conference is a leader and example for Young People’s Ministries. We dance, with hopeful feet, so that we continue to see young people not just as the future of the church, but also as the present. We dance, with hopeful feet, so that more young people can feel inspired to join in the ministries we offer, or start new ministries. We dance, with hopeful feet, because the Spirit of God is still playing music for us to dance to. The creativity of God has not stopped flowing in the Michigan Conference. And so, we continue to dance, with hope, toward the future to which God is leading us.

Through our work of funding, we helped to spark new ministries, like the Seed into Harvest incubation ministry. We helped to close out the pilot class with Ministry Incubators, while investing in the first class under the new Seed to Harvest program. This ministry connects Young Adults with entrepreneurial ministry ideas to a team that can help them take their idea from a seed to a bountiful harvest. We hope that this encourages young people in our Conference to be brave enough to try new ways of sowing God’s love in this world.



We also helped to fund the Growing Young REACH network group's time with Jake Mulder and Yulee Lee, believing that it was important the clergy and laity within the REACH group hear both of their voices. The time spent with Jake and Yulee were engaging and inspiring. It is our hope that through this REACH group churches and local church leaders feel better equipped to face the challenge of growing the church.

Through our Division of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, we continued to work with Wesley Foundation groups, which foster faith in college students. Colleges continue to be places where Young Adults are concentrated the most, and so continued support of the Wesley Foundations is vital and important for the Church.

Our Board impacts local churches, the denomination, and the world, because investing in Young People's Ministries, from youth to young adult, means that we are investing in the present and the future of the church. We get to work with young people to make sure their hopes, visions, and dreams are being heard. The ministries we support foster their faith, creativity, and desires for the future. We are a Board of dreamers that looks at the realities of the present and thinks of ways we can move the Church to the future. We dedicate ourselves to uplifting and empowering the voices of young people across the Conference, and that cannot help but have an impact.

One of our major accomplishments in 2021 was ending our year with a balanced budget. We are very careful to work within our means, trying our best not to overspend but also spending all that we have. We think of our budget in terms of opportunity, rather than constraint.

Which leads into our next accomplishment, and that is we don't say "no" to people who come to us with requests. We try our best to fund how we can, giving a little even if it doesn't match their full request, and we also point those who come to us in the direction of other sources they can draw from. We support the requests that come to us in a variety of ways, making sure that those who do come to us feel like we are an ally, rather than an obstacle.

Finally, we are proud that we are a board that regularly meets, not only to discuss funding requests, but also dream of what we can do in the future. How can we, as a Board, support Young People better? How can we connect with Young People? How do we foster our connections with Young People? How do we act as an ally within the system for Young People in our Conference? Though we are a funding board, we also try to think beyond that, so we can also be an advocacy board, a creativity board, and an educational board.

### **The Wesley Foundation at CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (CMU)**

The Wesley Foundation at Central Michigan University (Wesley at CMU) is a historic, United Methodist campus ministry in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. At Wesley at CMU, we value openness and authenticity and commit ourselves to building God's beloved community on earth. Our hope is for all people to know themselves as God's beloved and to go be God's love in the world. This year, we celebrated the dawning of a "new normal" in our community. In Fall 2022, CMU launched its school year with a fully open campus after many months of pandemic restrictions, and did so with the largest student body since 2010.

Wesley responded to this "new morning" with renewed energy and commitment to building God's beloved community at CMU. Worship was recharged with new music, free community lunches were hosted by new partner churches in the UMC, and community-building events created connections with both new and returning students.

Several programs were also relaunched and reimagined in this new dawn. For the first time since the pandemic began, Wesley at CMU hosted a fall retreat for young adults in our church. 18 to 30-year-olds from Mount Pleasant and across Michigan gathered for three days to reflect on the climate crisis and its unique impacts on young people. We discussed God's love for the whole of creation and prepared ourselves to respond to God's call to transformative action.

Wesley at CMU also renewed its relationships with our district churches this fall. Thanks to the partnership of the Central Bay District leadership, Wesley accompanied District Superintendent John Kasper to each of the district conference meetings, providing worship and student-led music for those gathered. Bonds of support and friendship were renewed and reenergized after several years of gatherings modified by pandemic.

The end of 2022 was also energized by the announcement of new and exciting programs in 2023. As the new year dawns, we look forward to a spring break service trip with our partners at Ferris State Wesley House, the launch of a support group for our LGBTQ+ students, and the return of our third-annual bread baking retreat.

We give thanks for the many ways God's love encounters us each morning at CMU. We receive a new year with openness to God's prompting and hope for what dawns next in our beloved community.

Audra Hudson Stone, Pastor and Director

### **Northern Michigan University Wesley Campus Ministry (aka NMU Wesley)**

Greetings from the shores of Lake Superior! NMU Wesley is a collective community of students and ministry leaders. We strive to walk alongside one another in faith and in life as we grow and develop. We ask questions and seek answers, we welcome all to be with us just as they are, and we support one another through the highs and the lows of college life. Our motto is "Love Everyone" and we seek to embody this through intentional expansive community that allows young adults to explore and live out their faith in everyday actions and words. We are grateful for the support of DHECM, Marquette Hope, and individual donors that allow NMU Wesley to thrive.

In the 2022 Spring semester, we took a service trip over spring break to Appalachia Service Project (ASP). We had enough students and leaders to form two work crews and we learned together how to build porches and ramps for two families within the communities of southwest Virginia. We laughed and prayed, we cried and sang, we hammered and sawed, we measured twice and cut at least twice. It was a life changing experience for the students and the leaders as we stepped outside our comfort zone and into construction mode. We cherished the opportunity to get to know the families and the ASP staff as well as the communities we were serving in. Several of our students were so impressed with the all women staff, commenting that they were inspired by the leadership and knowledge of the women who were only a year or two older than them.

NMU Wesley has enjoyed partnering and collaborating with the Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (USA), and Episcopal Campus Ministries at NMU. We run all our events together and share the space that Marquette Hope United Methodist Multi-Site Faith Community provides us; a space we call CommonGrounds. CommonGrounds space doubles as CommonGrounds Coffee House which is our extension ministry in partnership with the Lutheran Campus Ministry where we offer

a space to hang out, study, and relax with free coffee, free wi-fi, free snacks and occasionally pups to love on.

Our staple programs include Sunday Dinner and Devotions - a homecooked meal with a student or ministry leader run devotion time; Thursday afternoon/evening gatherings for conversations, scones and a book study that we call Fika, a Swedish word and tradition meaning to gather with friends for meaningful conversations and a warm beverage; Theology on Tap – gathering at a local brewery for theological conversations on various topics or scripture; Time with Brene or Bob – book studies and discussions about the content; Outdoor Adventures – hikes with pups on the miles and miles of trails surrounding Northern; Bible Study – a back to basics approach for all to help us better understand our relationship with the Bible and its history.

We had a wonderful ecumenical winter retreat for young adults in early Feb of 2023 and this was our second year of attending and helping lead the program. We are planning two amazing trips this spring. A service trip down to Florida to help with Hurricane Ian recovery efforts over spring break and a spiritual pilgrimage to Iona Abbey in Scotland in May after the semester wraps up.

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

### **United Campus Christian Fellowship**

This year, 2022, marked the official launch of United Campus Christian Fellowship ([www.uccfmi.org](http://www.uccfmi.org)), an important step forward in our ministry. Partnering with our siblings in Christ and co-workers in campus ministry from the Presbyterian Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Wesley Fellowship at GVSU has created a multi-campus, multi-denominational campus ministry, serving students, faculty, and staff at Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids Community College, and Kendall College of Art and Design. After several years of discernment and discussion and collaboration, we are excited to be part of this distinctive model of campus ministry.

This year our student focused activities have been a mixture of in person and virtual depending on college and university guidelines as well as student preferences. Our students continue to adjust and re-adjust to on campus life in 2022. By hosting a variety of opportunities including small groups, the Listening Post (a drop in site for compassionate, non-judgmental listening), Random Acts of Lunch, Advent and Lenten devotional opportunities, and multiple fellowship activities we helped students connect and reconnect with us, with each other, and with their faith.

We continue to be the only LGBTQ affirming and celebrating campus ministry on our three campuses. Our commitment to fostering interfaith understanding and cooperation is another distinctive mark of our ministry.

As life continues to change and evolve in a pandemic shaped world with its social justice challenges and opportunities, our calling to be with students, to offer safe places to explore their faith, and to be trustworthy companions during their college careers is more crucial than ever. We appreciate the steadfast support of the Michigan Conference and its congregations and individuals.

And thank you, Michigan Conference, for supporting United Methodist campus ministry in 2022!

### **The Wesley Foundation at the University of Michigan**

Greetings to you from your Wesley Foundation at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor! As we returned to in-person activities here on campus, this year has been a time of reconnecting and rebuilding. It has continued to be a time of pivoting and redesigning ministry for in-person ministry with the safety and health of our participants in mind. This time has taught us the vital importance of community and our connection with one another.

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

Our weekly programs include worship, Bible studies, small group studies, service opportunities and fellowship. We celebrate that we have the technology and facilities available to us to meet the needs of students in our community as well as those engaging from a digital space. Indeed, the world is our parish!

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

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

Our students have engaged in mission and service opportunities to explore ways to become active volunteers in our community. We have worked with Clean Water for the World, Huron Watershed Council, Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary, Alpha House, and other agencies to help care for our community and world. We have also partnered with the Maize & Blue Cupboard on campus to help combat food.

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

*~ Rev. Tim Kobler, Chaplain*

### **Division of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (DHECM)**

The DHECM is part of the Michigan Conference structure under the Board of Young People's Ministries. At the time of the writing of this report, our current members include the following: Rev. Lisa Batten, Rev. Katie Fahey, Dr. Sarah Hercula, Rev. Mary Ivanov, Rick Miller, Rev. Brian Steele, and Jennifer Wheeler.

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

- Michigan UM campus ministry on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/umconcampus/>
- #withWesleyMIUMC campaign: <https://www.withwesleymiumc.org/>
- Loans and scholarships: <https://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships>
- Michigan Conference website: <https://michiganumc.org/resources/wesley-foundation/>
- Division of Higher Education direct giving: <https://secure.subsplash.com/ui/access/XF4RHD/#/>

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

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

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

The DHECM supports and has a relationship with the following eight Michigan United Methodist campus ministries:

- Central Michigan University (Wesley@CMU)
- Ferris State University (Big Rapids Wesley House)
- Grand Valley State University (United Campus Christian Fellowship)
- Michigan State University (MSU Wesley Foundation)
- Wayne State University (Motor City Wesley)
- Northern Michigan University (NMU Wesley)
- University of Michigan (Wesley Foundation at UMich)
- Western Michigan University (Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo)

Each campus ministry's individual report is also in this volume of the *Conference Journal*. Adrian College and Albion College are our two UM-related colleges in Michigan.

Local churches report information about their college and university students as part of the annual Church Conference process. These reports directly contribute to a resource our Michigan United Methodist campus pastors use to make personal contact with our United Methodist students in their new social and spiritual environments.

We appreciate the partnership we have with local churches to extend the ministry of the Church to our students. With the support of local churches, the United Methodist Church prepares and equips campus spiritual communities of support and encouragement for them to follow God's leading in this next stage of their lives.

As of the date of this report, 37 churches have shared 191 students attending 62 different colleges and universities. We encourage all congregations—and especially congregations with

college and university students—to celebrate United Methodist Student Day, which raises funds to support loans and scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students.

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

Rev. Dr. Jack Harnish received the 2022 Francis Asbury Award. Throughout his many years of ministry, in addition to publishing three books, he served as the Associate General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; on the Boards of Trustees of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Adrian College, and the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary in Estonia; and on the Detroit Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry.

As the DHECM, we committed to raising \$5,000 in addition to the ministry shares we receive through the Conference budget. **This year we exceeded our goal and celebrated the additional funding opportunity of organizing and running the Annual Conference snack bar.** The snack bar was very successful in 2022, and we look forward to making it even more fun and interactive in the coming years. We are grateful to our individual donors and to those who participated in the golf outing fundraiser at the Annual Conference for their continued financial support. For the first time, we were included as an EngageMI project recipient.

To support the financial responsibilities of our campus ministries, we contacted our District Superintendents to find local church auditors who could evaluate each ministry's finances. We adopted two types of audit plans for our ministries, which are in the process of being implemented.

A second accomplishment took place in January–March 2022, when we explored the renewal of campus ministry at Saginaw Valley State University and Delta College. Toward this effort, we developed a proposal and reflection questions to guide potential host churches or campus ministry leaders. We were grateful for important conversations with District Superintendents John Kasper and Margie Crawford. While this effort did not lead to further actions in 2022, we organized our efforts and resources to be ready to pursue future opportunities.

A third accomplishment is our ongoing spiritual practice of opening each meeting by sharing what we celebrate in our campus ministries, based on the current reports the directors submit. This practice provides positive momentum into our meetings and consistently reminds us of how caring, prophetic, creative, and expansive our ministries truly are.

One view of campus ministry is that it is a perpetual new church start. Our students, campus pastors, and local Boards of Directors all focus on the creation of a spiritual community with each academic year, if not each academic term, as new students find their ways to our doors and others graduate, moving into the next stage of their lives. This reality represents both an opportunity and a challenge!

One promising effort that is dawning is the production of a legacy giving promotional video featuring older donors who use the Qualified Charitable Distribution for the annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from retirement accounts. We hope to expand the idea to include other videos featuring people of all ages who have chosen to make financial commitments to

Wesleys, illustrating various opportunities and motivations for giving in addition to featuring the impact this giving can have.

Campus ministry in Michigan celebrates and supports people who are coming of age—those who are discovering and exploring who God is calling them to be—and the dedicated, creative persons serving them on our campuses.

We praise God and thank you, Michigan Conference, for supporting personal and direct ministry with the most concentrated populations of young adults in our culture.

Peace,  
Rev. Jeff Williams, Michigan DHECM Chairperson  
Dr. Sarah Hercula, Michigan DHECM Recording Secretary

## **DISTRICTS OF THE MICHIGAN ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

(arranged alphabetically)

### **CENTRAL BAY DISTRICT**

Last year we began this report with, “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. 2021 we are glad you are over.” We were glad to put 2021 behind us. But 2022 has come with its own bests and worsts. While the pandemic continued to occasionally raise its ugly head, it was no longer the beast it had once been. Our churches began to worship in person and begin to assess what had been left behind that should be re-engaged or not, what had begun because they were forced to but turned out to be a really good ministry endeavor, and how to continue to look into the future in new and amazing ways in order to live into the mission of making disciples of Jesus.

In early February, our Clergy, Spouse, and Family Support Team sponsored a Clergy Retreat at the Bay Shore Camp and Retreat Center with a focus on Clergy Self Care. It was a great time of reflection, inspiration, and retreating allowing those who attended to return with a sense of rest and care.

The new “normal” of virtual connection has become more familiar. Many of our churches are now live streaming via Facebook and/or YouTubing Sunday worship services. Some have regular attenders from counties, states, and countries away. God is blessing the proclamation of the Word and the fellowship of worship in ways never before realized possible. At the district level, many meetings that would otherwise require driving distances are now held via zoom for better utilization of time and mileage with in-person meetings as needed.

With 2022 Annual Conference voting to decrease the number of districts in the conference, the leadership and staff began discerning what would need to take place once the new districts and boundaries had been established and announced. We are grateful there will still be a Central Bay District. We are looking forward to the new opportunities and yet saddened to give over churches and pastors we have come to love dearly, even though we know they will be well served in their new districts.

As the district looked to its future, we recognized the need to focus more specifically on ministry to the youth of the district. We added Jennifer Lane as Director of Youth Ministries, part-time, to our staff position. Jennifer joins Teri Rice, our Executive Administrator, Tina Karnath, our Director of Children's Ministry and assistant administrator, and Vicki Bork, our Treasurer. I proudly say, we have a fantastic district staff. Plans for a district-wide seminar have been put on hold, likely till fall 2023, due to the many pieces and parts necessary to implement the new district. With God as our guide and stay, we look with great anticipation to what lies before us as, together, we make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world.

DS John G Kasper

### **EAST WINDS DISTRICT**

In the East Winds District, our churches are awakening from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Sanctuaries are gradually refilling as our churches continue the means of electronic communication and livestreaming that they learned during the long quarantine. Adjustments that we made in our local missions during our two years of restrictions became more effective. In many cases, we have alleviated the suffering of more people in our communities than we did before. Clergy and church leaders are exploring ways to effectively reach people in our communities, building relationships and inviting people to Christian community in the Body of Christ.

We have felt deep grief with the loss of family and friends, in our congregations and in our communities. We have experienced loneliness and isolation with having to be separated from each other, creating uncertainty, confusion, frustration, and disappointment. Our lives have been in an upheaval and at times we have even felt anger towards each other with the possibility of a denominational split and the possible loss of churches within the district from disaffiliation. We have a job to do. Regardless of the future direction of the denomination, we have disciples to cultivate and nurture.

We have coped by means of our perseverance, our creativity, and because of faith in God. We learned how to ZOOM, not only for meetings, but also for Bible studies, book studies, Sunday School, and VBS. We reached out to one another and worked to stay connected by sending cards, calling, and texting. We didn't give up, we didn't give in. We gave drive-by birthday parties and dropped off groceries and Christian education kits. We helped with food pantries, drive up soup-to-go meals, sack lunches, and fish fry dinners. We have even offered a non-perishable dry bag ministry with a breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We continue to pack our Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes. We are connecting with our communities with corn hole tournaments, softball games, roller skating, and antique tractor plowing. We have given out back packs with school supplies or food for the weekend.

We still have difficulties. We're not back all the way yet. We are seeing growing membership with younger adults in our congregations. God has blessed us by what we have been through and what we have endured. We have a renewed faith, a deepening faith. We have renewed expectations. We need to keep things going and show the love of God.



We are preparing to resume our East Winds District hands-on mission work. This year we plan to be in mission in North Dakota's Spirit Lake Nation, on July 22-30, 2023. The trip is being coordinated by Rev. Carol Blair Bouse, EWD Coordinator of Applied Missions.

We made available grants for new ministries, for ongoing programs and for special needs. We also made available loans to local churches to finance "bricks and mortar" projects. We are committed to our vision of equipping churches.

As the Michigan Conference has gone from 9 to 7 districts, our district will make adjustments to welcome churches into our district. We closed our district office in March 2022, operating remotely and transferring document to digital media. We will be celebrating the retirement of our District Superintendent Rev. John Hice on May 21, 2023.

We have done well in extremely challenging times. As we move into another season of transition, there is promise, opportunity, and resolve among our members as we continue to equip churches to serve Christ through quality communication, collaboration, and training.

Rev. John Hice, East Winds District Superintendent  
Carol Kandell, East Winds District Leadership Team Chairperson  
Bonnie Potter and Cynthia Rossman, East Winds District Co-Lay Leaders

### **GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT**

What a difference a year makes! 2022 was a year of change for the Greater Detroit District. From a completely online Martin Luther King Jr. celebration in January hosted by Farmington Orchard UMC to an in-person Clergy Breakfast in December at Scott Memorial UMC, our district remained faithful and flexible throughout change. Perhaps the greatest change we had this year was when we received word we would welcome a new District Superintendent.

After 7 years of service as our DS, Rev. Dr. Charles Boayue would be stepping down to be appointed as the interim Senior Pastor of Birmingham First UMC. Rev. Boayue lead us through a change in district borders and a pandemic all while keeping us grounded in our faith and moving forward with the work of the district. On June 30, 2022, we said, "Farewell" to Rev. Dr. Boayue in a Farewell Celebration at Troy Korean UMC, our first in-person district gathering since the pandemic began. In attendance were leaders of the Greater Detroit District, Bishop David A. Bard, and our soon-to-be new DS, Rev. Dr. Darryl Totty. It was an uplifting celebration with music, speeches, and joyful fellowship.

Two months later, on August 28, 2022, we filled the sanctuary of Farmington Orchard UMC and watched online, to welcome and install our new District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Darryl Totty. It was a joyful day showcasing the wonderful diversity of the Greater Detroit District with African Drummers, Vietnamese Singers, Bagpipes, and a Mariachi Band! Participants included Bishop David A. Bard, District Superintendents from across the Conference, and guests from all around the district.

Change continued with the hiring of two new staff members. Rev. Beth Titus, our Director of Justice and Mission Engagement, fully retired. After a brief search, Susanna Webber was hired in August to fill this position. Also in August, we hired Adrienne Trupiano-Stepaniak as our Media Specialist. Both are welcome additions to our district staff and jumped right in and got to work.

Our District Conference also saw change as the District Planning Committee decided to separate the District Conference and the District Workshops that previously had taken place on the same day. The District Conference took place on September 17, 2022, at Big Beaver UMC in Troy and was attended by both in-person and online participants. Rev. Totty was the guest speaker and choirs from The French UMC and Centro Familiar Cristiano UMC offered musical selections. The District Workshops were planned for the following February and March to offer more opportunities for people around the district to participate as the workshops will be offered at four churches in the district and will vary in topic. All workshops will be recorded and will be live streamed.

Susanna's first project was Hands with Detroit held October 1st at Cass Community Social Services. Many "hands" gathered to spend the day working on projects around the Detroit area. For those churches who were unable to attend, a new offering allowed them to participate as well. These churches had the option of making different types of kits for Cass to have on hand to give to their clients. These included snack bags and personal hygiene kits as well as a few others. Adrienne has been increasing our social media presence as well as working towards better communication between the district and our churches.

None of the above events and gatherings could happen without our faithful and committed group of Laity. Ruby Anderson and Ken Dowell have served as our District Lay Leader and District Associate Lay Leader. Both have worked diligently to make sure our laity are well represented at all gatherings. Their biggest challenge each year is making sure we have all the Lay Equalization Members for Annual Conference positions filled so the Greater Detroit District is well represented at Annual Conference. This was somewhat of a challenge this year as many folks were not quite ready to resume in-person Annual Conference, but their hard work paid off and all delegate positions were filled. Both Ruby and Ken serve on several district committees including the Board of Directors for the district. Since most of our charge conferences are still online, they have had the immense privilege of being able to participate. Ruby said she counts this as a wonderful experience and enjoys greeting each congregation. The Greater Detroit District is grateful for both Ruby and Ken and the work they do for our district.

2022 was a year of change. Overall, the change was good and welcomed. As we look forward to 2023, we anticipate churches joining our R3 revitalization program, workshops equipping both clergy and laity for the work of the church, as well as events celebrating the many different cultures of our district. With God's guidance and steadfast love, the Greater Detroit District will continue serving the people both in our churches and in our communities. May God be praised by our work. Amen.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Alicea L. Williams, Deacon, President of the Greater Detroit District Board of Directors

Ruby Anderson, Greater Detroit District Lay Leader

Rev. Dr. Darryl Totty, District Superintendent, Greater Detroit District

### **GREATER SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**

Throughout what has been our first post-pandemic year the work of the Greater Southwest District has refocused on the mission we set out with when the new Michigan Annual Conference came together in 2019. Since that beginning our District Leadership Team has framed the primary task of the district this way: "To organize, equip and engage the people called United Methodist in Southwest Michigan so that every church offers a foretaste of the Kingdom of God." In setting every priority, developing every annual budget, and scheduling

each district-wide event our operating principle is that the district exists for the local church not the other way around.

With that principle as our guide, we have been intentional about the support of local congregations, keeping that aim at the center of our work. Toward that end we have disbursed funds directly to local churches in the form of sustentation grants for struggling churches, ENGAGE grants to support ongoing ministries and Fresh Expressions grants for churches with a vision to try something new. Much of the “dowry” granted to our district when the Michigan Annual Conference started has been dedicated to providing the sustentation grants named above. These were disbursed during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis to help our congregations navigate the financial challenges of this unprecedented season.

In addition to this crisis response, we have been extending the ministry of our congregations by investing in Michigan Annual Conference ministries that leave a legacy through raising-up new generations of leaders. Specifically, we have provided significant support to Michigan Area United Methodist Camping and the Kalamazoo Wesley Foundation. We celebrate these partnerships even as we recognize that these ministries, like everything in the United Methodist sphere of influence, are in a state of transition from what has been toward what might yet be. With a vision of what might yet be guiding us our District took a step forward in faith this year and in partnership with the Michigan Annual Conference began a Latinx Community Outreach Ministry. Its focus is on Van Buren County, and we are hopeful that the seeds being planted by two pastors at work there may produce fruit beyond even our wildest imaginings.

That we are in a liminal season has been acknowledged by the Michigan Conference as evidenced by the fact that “mourning” has featured prominently in Annual Conference themes the past few years as we have been invited to “turn mourning into dancing” and to consider those things that might be made “new every mourning”. While it would be easy to join in a lament over those things that have been, but which are no longer- especially in a time when churches are leaving the connection through disaffiliation, and receipt of ministry shares no longer supports the robust Annual Conference staffing that all have benefitted from- we have chosen to take our cue from the book of Revelation and “hold fast and strengthen the things that remain”.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dwayne Bagley  
Greater Southwest District Superintendent

### **HERITAGE DISTRICT**

2022 has been a year of renewed hope after following a couple of years of separation and stress caused by COVID. As relational creatures, we have longed for the opportunity to be face to face with our brothers and sisters in Christ. As we returned to gathering in-person, still with caution, we experienced joy with the healing in our hearts, minds, and souls.

Psalms 30:5 reminds us that, “Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” District Lay Servant Classes were held in both the Spring and the Fall, with both in person and online classes. There were 72 registrations for the Spring and 38 registrations in the Fall. The District Leadership Team approved that all classes would be free to all participants and paid for by the district as an investment into the Lay Servants that work in their churches.

Another way the District invests in churches is through Connectional Grants. In 2022, nineteen churches applied for Connectional Grants and were approved for a total of \$18,450. These grants help provide funding for things like Technology upgrades, Mission Outreach Projects, Community Outreach Programs, and Church Building Upgrades as examples.

We were excited this last year to offer a Mission Trip Opportunity to the youth of our District. There were 11 youth and 4 Adult leaders that went for a week to Cass Community Services to learn about the services they provide by working in those areas. They served face to face with those who benefit from the many programs Cass Community offers to the poor, homeless and those in need. The youth as well as their leaders learned from this experience.

Throughout 2022, Heritage District offered classes to churches online.

- “Be a Generous Church Leader”, led by Rev. Dr. Sherry Parker-Lewis.
- “How to Implement a Single Board Governance”, two sessions, led by Rev. Dirk Elliot.
- “Best Practices for Accountable Finance Teams”, led by District Lay Leader John Seppanen and Rick Gorham. There were 50 registrants.
- SPRC Workshops, two sessions, led by District Superintendent LuAnn Rourke. There were over 50 registrants.

We were able to come together once again in-person for a District Picnic at the Dixboro Village Green on September 18<sup>th</sup>. There were around 75 persons from the far corners of our District that came to see those they had not been able to be with in a few years as well as welcoming our new pastors to the District. The weather was wonderful and the fellowship was wonderful. We were blessed to have music provided by Dixboro’s Joyful Noise and Plymouth’s Impact Band. Thank you for their great music. Food was provided for all: Ice Cream with the fixings, Apple Donuts, and Apple Cider.

We look forward to what 2023 has in store.

Rev. LuAnn Rourke - Heritage District Superintendent

Rev. Bradley Luck - Heritage District Leadership Chair

John Seppanen – Heritage District Lay Leader

### **MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT**

The 2023 Annual Conference theme is “Morning to Dancing.” The Mid-Michigan District Leadership Team celebrates the strengths of our local churches and their willingness to innovate and adapt to changing environments in a post-pandemic reality. The role of the district has primarily been to encourage and resource those innovations, and not layer additional expectations on clergy and laity who have given of their time and leadership to reach their communities with the grace, compassion, and love of Christ.

The work of the Mid-Michigan District Board of Missions, in collaboration with the Mid-Michigan District Leadership Team impacted Michigan United Methodists, our local churches, and/or local communities in 2021 primarily through the distribution of over \$192,000 in grants. Highlights of those grants are:

- Up-front funding for the “Blessing One Another Video”
- Parsonage emergency repairs, matching grants
- Appointment stabilization support / equitable compensation grants
- Nursery and Café Worship renovation projects grants
- Urban ministry new campus launch preparations grant

- New ministry initiatives grants to reach new populations

### **Additional Accomplishments Of the Mid-Michigan Missions Board 2022-23**

1. Approval/Disbursement of \$177,550 in new ministry grants in the Mid-Michigan District
2. Development of standards for the approval and disbursement of a full range of ministry grants for the District.
3. Development of the Special Ministry Grants as our parting gift to the faithful churches of the District.

The Board of Missions would also identify #3 above as our contribution to the “New Every Morning” conversation. New things are dawning even as the sun sets on our work as a Missions Board. Our legacy is the hope and promise emerging from our investment in new ministries across the District, ministries that

- focus congregations in transformational, Christ-centered ministry in their communities,
- identify, equip, and deploy bold and effective leaders,
- lead to more vibrant congregations.

The Mid-Michigan District was created out of two former conferences and four former districts. Together we have faithfully run this leg of the race and now pass on the baton as our local churches, clergy and laity, and district leaders enter into four districts of the one Michigan Conference and the Mid-Michigan District ceases to be.

Blessings on the journey,  
 Rev. Suzanne Goodwin, District Leadership Team Chair  
 Dawn Levey, District Lay Leader  
 Rev. Lori Sykes, District Board of Missions Chair  
 Rev. Dr. Jerome (Jerry) DeVine, District Superintendent  
 Sarah Gillette, Executive Assistant  
 Betsy Mauk, District Treasurer

### **MIDWEST DISTRICT**

As we continue to live out our mission to provide mission with witness, we continue to seek ways to connect and support vital ministries of Jesus Christ for the laity, pastors, and faith communities of the Midwest District.

During the past year, congregations have been exploring ways to engage in and renew relationships with persons who previously attended in person, are attending online and those who are searching for a church home.

The District continues to support missions and ministries dedicated to helping others. Among those receiving funds annually are the Native American Elders Program (NAEP), Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) and Community House. As District leaders continue to address the question: “What more can we do?”, we have created technology grants to help defer the costs of streaming online worship. Online presentations were created to provide information about the Simple Accountability Structure (formerly known as Single Board Governance) and the duties and responsibilities of the Staff Parish Committee).

During this past year, the District Leadership Team has focused on the support & transition of our churches and clergy as we continue to move into a post-pandemic world. The goal was to identify areas of pressure points that are common across our churches and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Areas the MW District Leadership Team continued to hear as common challenges centered around four main topics: 1) 2024 General Conference; 2) Apathy of congregants in a post-pandemic world; 3) technology constraints for rural churches; and 4) desire for community missional focus. In September, a district-wide survey of all clergy to narrow the specific problems common to clergy in our district. The survey provided valuable data identifying four top issues and opportunities:

- Congregants have not returned to in-person worship (50% response rate)
- The next generation is not attracted to or are leaving our churches (43% response rate)
- Uncertainty and anxiety of 2024 General Conference (40% response rate)
- Lack of resources to meet the needs in the communities around us (35% response rate)

In all, more than 75% of the clergy participated in the survey and findings were presented at a District Forum in November. Group breakouts confirmed the sentiment and identified a high desire for clergy clusters to be formed to collaborate and share best-practices to address these challenges. This has set the vision for 2023 as we begin the hard work to tackle these issues together by drilling deeper into the problems identified. The 2023 target is to establish action plans that will help encourage our congregants of all ages to see the value of in-person worship and community, clarify the impact of 2024 GC and provide clear steps for churches as we transition to the future, and identify and collaborate to meet community needs and share in the burden of community care.

Submitted in Christ's Holy Name,  
Rev. Dr. Margie R. Crawford, Midwest District Superintendent  
Deb Hodges, Midwest District Lay Leader  
Alejandro Fernandez, Midwest District Leadership Team Chair

### **NORTHERN SKIES DISTRICT**

In the Northern Skies District, we celebrated the 100-year anniversary of Camp Michigamme. It was wonderful to gather in that beautiful lakeside environment to share memories, greet friends old and new, and imagine what the future might bring. Our District Conference was also incorporated into the day-long festivities.

Many things feel new in our life and ministry together. With the closing of our brick-and-mortar District Office, our District Superintendent Rev. Scott Harmon and Executive Assistant Diana Byar have met this challenge. They have been gracious and intentional in their work of keeping us all connected. Our pastors continue to be invited to meet for a virtual "coffee house" book study led by Rev. Harmon. Ministries such as our District United Women of Faith, Lay Servant training, and God's Country Cooperative Parish continue to be ways to weave us together, and in each of our ministry areas, something new is dawning all the time.

Pastors and laity of the Northern Skies District are looking forward to welcoming our brothers and sisters into an expanded District in 2023. Although our geography separates us by more than half the land mass of the state of Michigan, we envision a future where we are of one heart and mind, and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in northern Michigan.

## MICHIGAN CONFERENCE-RELATED AGENCIES

(arranged alphabetically)



Disaster Case Management, the activity that After the Storm provides, is a client-centered approach to assisting survivors of natural disaster achieve their long-term recovery goals. Disaster Case Managers meet with clients for assessment and setting goals, help clients in accessing federal, state, and local assistance, coordinate home repair and rebuild projects, and refer to other social services as needed.

Over the past eight years, the Michigan Conference provided Disaster Case Management in communities impacted by flooding across the State of Michigan including Northwest Detroit (2014 and 2019), Midland, Houghton/Hancock, and the Great Lakes Bay Region (GLBR). In each case, the Michigan Conference collaborated with community leaders, non-profit organizations and municipal, county, State and FEMA officials.

As a result of the growing number of disasters in our state, the Disaster Case Manager work grew beyond the capacity of the Conference to manage and administer. After The Storm was established to provide the necessary and focused governance and management required to both continue and scale-up Disaster Case Management work across the State. After the Storm has its own EIN and is separately incorporated in the State of Michigan on a membership basis with the Michigan Conference serving as the sole member.

The Great Lakes Bay Region project was completely funded by a \$1.5 million dollar FEMA Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP) Grant received by the State that was then awarded to the Michigan Conference to act as the provider agency. The project consisted of sixteen staff members providing Administrative Support, Disaster Case Management, Volunteer Management, and Construction Management. This project was completed in October of 2022 and was able to impact over 600 residents.

In response to the 2021 flooding in Southeastern Michigan, the Michigan Conference hired two Disaster Case Managers with funds donated to the Michigan Conference Disaster Response Fund. Conference and District Leaders were active in assisting the State of Michigan and FEMA Staff in establishing community bases long-term recovery groups in Detroit, Dearborn, and Western Wayne County.

The State of Michigan applied for (and was awarded) a \$19 million FEMA DCMP Grant for Southeastern Michigan. The State put the project up for bid in early February, and After the Storm received this contract from the State of Michigan. We currently employ 19 staff, and subcontract with two community non-profits (St. Vincent DePaul and Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency). This project affects over 100,000 people in the Metro Detroit area who were touched by the disaster.

Following the tornados that wrecked many parts of Gaylord in May, After the Storm was sought out to provide Disaster Case Management. Funding for the case managers was provided through the Otsego Community Foundation. The Gaylord Tornado Project lasted approximately eight months and impacted over 100 residents through rebuilds of their homes, short term housing and repairs to damaged living spaces.

Nancy Money, Executive Director  
[afterthestormmi.org](http://afterthestormmi.org)



Rejoice! Camping and retreat ministry has returned, post-COVID, with a strong and hopeful future!! We were blessed to be able to hold summer camps and retreats throughout 2022. This included youth and young adult camps at Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center, youth and family camps at Lake Michigan Camp and Retreat, and retreats at Lake Huron Retreat Center.

Overall, we saw an increase from 291 to 453 in summer camp participants from 2021 to 2022 at our programs for children, youth, and adults. The participants came from 100 United Methodist Churches with 107 volunteer staff coming from 18 churches. This further demonstrates how Michigan United Methodists of all ages have found rest, renewal and inspiration from time well spent at Lake Huron Retreat Center, Lake Michigan Camp and Retreat, Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center, and our other trip and partner programs. They continue to invite friends and neighbors to accompany them, learn more about our faith, and join in the journey of finding transformative experiences at camp.

This increase in attendance was meaningful despite the challenges in finding and retaining staffing at all our camp locations. We were fortunate, however, to have five interns on staff for the entire summer camping season. These young adults came to us through participation in the conference's Summer Mission Intern Program which provided us with resources to cover many gaps in our staffing during weeks of camp. They worked tirelessly throughout the summer, applying current skills and learning new ones, while maintaining and deepening their faith in Jesus Christ and the importance of camping ministries.

In reflection, we accomplished a lot during 2022. In addition to hosting and leading camps and retreats, we completed the following key strategic items during 2022:

1. We completed significant infrastructure improvement projects at all three of our camp locations, including a complete overhaul of the Retreat Center at Wesley Woods allowing retreat guest to have more functional and comfortable rooms during their stay, bathroom renovations and building insulation improvements at the Lake Michigan camp dining hall allowing this facility to be used throughout the year, and roofing and heating and cooling improvements at Lake Huron providing enhanced comfort to our retreat guests. All these projects were included within our detailed master plan and came in at our below budget.



2. We also began the work on developing an annual campaign fund to allow our organization to become a financially self-sustaining entity going forward. In recent years, financial support from the Michigan Annual Conference has lessened and is expected to stop going forward. The unfortunate closing and sale of other camp locations has blessed us with a source of funds to re-invest and improve the infrastructure at our existing camp locations, however, we are still challenged with generating enough revenue to cover our operating costs. This annual campaign will help bridge this gap, allowing us to stand on our own and provide unique and meaningful camping experiences to all those who visit our sites.
3. Finally, we started the process of reviewing and reassessing our mission statement and branding to allow us to be meaningful and relevant going forward. We have finalized the restating of our core message (who we are), which reads as follows:

“United Michigan Camping is a network of outdoor recreation and retreat sites that offer a variety of experiences for all ages, races, and genders. Our locations are sacred spaces where guests feel accepted, welcome, and free to explore their faith. We offer natural refuges with lakefront and wooded destinations where we strive to the needs of every guest.”

Our work will continue in reviewing our values and promises (who we are), our products and services (what we do), our approach and process (how we do it) and what makes us unique. This is a time intensive project, and we look forward to sharing this new message to all of you in the coming months.

Looking forward to the 2023 summer camping season, our youth and young adult program offering will be “Fruitful Faith – A Spirit Filled Life!”. This program is based on the official United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries Association summer curriculum developed by the Inside Out Christian Resources, created by an ecumenical development team of writers and editors. Like 2022, we will be continuing our partnership with the Detroit Urban Camp by resourcing their annual event and local church day camp training and support through the summer internship program.

We will also continue our investment in our camp locations with the construction of two new bathhouses at Lake Michigan, continued improvements on the existing structures at Wesley Woods including the reworking of the kitchen space in the dining hall, and further improvements to the guest rooms at Lake Huron. To increase and improve our outdoor activities, we will be making improvements to the pool and pool house at Wesley Woods while creating a new disc-golf course at Lake Michigan, which is being funded totally by hole sponsorship and outside donations.

We continue to be excited about our future and are already seeing the improvements of our infrastructure investments and our staff’s relentless work with increased bookings at all our locations for the upcoming 2023 camping season. We are truly blessed, but know the road ahead of us is challenging. Our belief is camp and retreat experiences are needed now, more

than ever, and we are uniquely positioned to provide quality, safe, transformative experiences to Michigan United Methodists and others now and in the years to come. We thank you for your support and know God is with us on this journey.

Stuart Smith, Board Chair  
Michigan Area United Methodist Camping  
First UMC, Jackson, MI

Rev. David Berkey, Executive Director  
Michigan Area United Methodist Camping  
St. Johns, MI

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

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

#### **Celebration**

Despite the lingering challenges of Covid-19, our dedicated staff and volunteers made a way for more than 800 children and youth to attend Bay Shore Summer Camp onsite events in 2022. While attendance remains lower than pre-covid levels, countless people continued to attend our summer camp events and year-round retreats. Our Family Camp event is growing back after Covid, with increased attendance by younger families with children.

2022 was the second summer for our travelling day camp ministry, Bay Shore’s “Day Camp on the Road.” “Day Camp on the Road” provides an opportunity to extend the reach of Bay Shore’s mission, and it helps local churches connect with their community in a new way, but it also helps develop the young adults who lead the program into leaders for their local church. We served 324 day campers at 10 churches across the Michigan Conference.

Bay Shore Camp was blessed with an estate gift in 2021 that included 107 acres, a 20-acre lake and a complex of buildings, just 20 minutes from our main location. This second campus has been named, “Faith Quest.” In 2022, we operated a day camp event and some family play days at the location. Improvements to the property infrastructure continued throughout 2022 as we prepared to continue rolling out day camp ministry and a faith-based outdoor education program in 2023. We’re calling the outdoor education program, “Creation Quest” and in 2022, we received a \$30,000 grant to help fund the start-up of “Creation Quest.”

In keeping with our vision of “no child left behind,” no child was turned away from camp for inability to pay. In fact, individuals and organizations donated more than \$88,000 to help kids go to camp. We are thankful for the countless people who support this ministry with their financial gifts. Aside from those who support our Campership Fund, we give thanks for those who gave in excess of \$132,000 to support our general operating budget. These generous gifts allowed us to navigate the continued financial wilderness created by Covid-19, inflation, supply chain issues and staff shortages. We are especially thankful for an endowment that sustains the ministry as well. Bay Shore now has an operating budget of \$1.3 M, 12 year-round staff, two campuses and many, many faithful volunteers.

#### **History and 2021 Recap**

An Evangelical United Brethren Camp at the time of the 1968 merger, Bay Shore established its own 501c3 non-profit when the United Methodist Church decided to close the camp and agreed

to transfer it to some faithful constituents. Bay Shore continues as an affiliate ministry of the United Methodist Church by representation on the Bay Shore Board from UMC appointed clergy and laity.

In 2022, Bay Shore offered 14 summer child and youth camp events over a course of 8 weeks. Weeks of camp include athletic camps, arts camps, traditional camps, and day camps. Summer camp attendance was still down from pre-Covid levels, but more than 800 children and youth still attended camp. In its second year, our weeks of traveling day camps experienced growth, serving 224 campers, partnering with 10 churches across the Conference. It's clear there's a future in this collaborative programming with the church.

Family (Assembly) Camp, now in its 111<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, continues to be well attended. Over 500 people participated in some portion of the week's events. Inspiring speakers for the adults, engaging programs for the kids and youth and a wide range of recreational activities, draw people of all ages to this multigenerational event. This continues to be a well-attended event with children and youth nearly outnumbering the adults.

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

The most important events that Bay Shore offers are free! Twice a year, June and October, Bay Shore offers "Free Family Fun Days." Families are invited to attend. Camping is free. All the recreational activities are free. The June event includes all our popular camp activities including swimming, mini-golf, inflatables, ziplining, lasertag, arrowtag, paintball, archery and barrel train rides. The October event includes popular Fall activities like hayrides and pumpkin painting. Weather dependent, 200-600 people attend these events. These free events are one of the ways we introduce new people to the Bay Shore ministry.

In December, Bay Shore stages a drive through Living Nativity that serves hundreds of guests annually. This event is also free, offered as a gift to the community. We've found that this "drive-through" event especially serves the elderly and families with very young children and is an engaging way to retell the Christmas story or to teach to children for the very first time. Several hundred people attended this event again this year. It was especially fun to have many live animals including sheep with the "shepherds," various animals at the "stable," and camels with the "wise ones." We offer a free "reception" that includes food and beverages, crafts for kids and fellowship for those interested.

### **What's Next?**

It still remains to be seen how Covid-19 will reshape camp ministry. We're certain that camp ministry will be impacted. We're already beginning to experience changes. In the coming months and years, Bay Shore plans to roll out new ways to support the local church and the family. Partnering with the local church, traveling day camps will continue to be rolled out to up to 12-16 locations in 2023. Partnering with schools and community, the outdoor education program is being launched. Meeting the changing needs of families is a priority. The new campus will boast a new Day Camp facility, with even more kids and family programming

planned for the future. The main campus will continue to host overnight camps, our historic Family Camp and new family camping opportunities. The mission remains the same:

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

Jeff Parsons, Executive Director  
Bay Shore Camp and Family Ministries

## **LAKE LOUISE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER**

### *Vision*

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

### *Mission*

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

### *Ministry*

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

### *Core Values*

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

Lake Louise came into being in 1934 through the generosity of the Horner family of Eaton Rapids as a gift “to all the Methodists of Michigan.” The Horners had acquired a large tract of cut-over timberland after the logging era of Michigan was over. As the Great Depression descended upon the country, the Horners approached their pastor, Rev. Stanley Niles, with the idea of giving 5,500 acres away. The idea of a church youth camp began to take shape. Through the action of a group of visionary people, the plan culminated in the creation of the Lake Louise Christian Community, encompassing a youth camp, and creating cottage sites around the lake upon which clergy families could build a place of their own. The Lake Louise Christian Community would hold the land in trust for the two Michigan conferences. Christian camping began at Lake Louise in 1935 and until 2020’s Covid Pandemic remained uninterrupted. In 2021 we restarted our camping program and remain committed to offering a place for camp and retreat ministries to occur for generations to come. Approximately half of the original gift was sold to the State of Michigan in 1935 to provide for the development of the site. LLCC still holds title to 2,400 acres of the original gift. The land is managed under the Conservation Forestry Act and the Forest Legacy Conservation Easement, providing for the sustainable harvesting of timber and ensuring the undeveloped character of the land and the lake.

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

Lake Louise was excited to welcome 373 campers to one of our residential weeks of camp in 2022. As we continue to rebuild after the downturn caused by COVID, we see hope in the new campers and returning campers we have on our site each week. Check out our website at <https://lakelouisecommunity.org/camps/considering-camp/> to see all the camps scheduled for 2023. And check back often to see what we are planning for the future!

We are overjoyed to have clergy, laity, and youth from the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church, regional Protestant and Catholic Parishes and the local community returning to Lake Louise for various retreats. We had the pleasure of hosting 3 Boyne Country Service Project groups during 2022. Our Boyne Country Service Project groups stay at Lake Louise and work each day with community service agencies. We are pleased to be able to continue offering this project in 2023 and are looking at ways of expanding when we offer Boyne Country Service Project to year-round programming.

In the spring of 2022, we restarted our annual tree planting program. We welcomed 25 individuals to a place in the woods for the day and planted 1,000 white pines in our forests. In 2023 we are expanding the event into a Make-A-Difference Day. We will plant trees, clean our section of Adopt-A-Highway, and work with other non-profits in our area to give back to the community we are in.

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

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

Neil H. Haney-Executive Director

### **MICHIGAN AREA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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

The purpose of the Society is:

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

Other purposes may include organizing area-wide celebrations of historical events and convocations which may involve participation beyond the board of directors; digitization and distribution of historical materials; awarding certificates of recognition to local churches that are celebrating important milestones, awarding distinguished service awards to individuals

and groups within Michigan; recognizing and promoting United Methodist historic sites in the state; helping conference, district, and local church historians and archivists through workshops and information sharing; and such other activities as are consistent with the by-laws of the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church.

We relate to the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church. We are now a Society member of the Historical Society of Michigan. The officers are Diana Spitnale Miller - President, Sharon Scott - Secretary, and Della Wilder - Treasurer. Due to the Covid Pandemic, the officers are following other agency protocol and staying in place until the middle of 2024.

Board Meetings were held in 2022 on March 3 and on November 3 by ZOOM. Both times the Conference Commission on Archives and History met with us. We share several members and were repeating business items.

After several years of successful Roots and Branches Historical Convocations in the spring, we did not have one in 2022 and will not have had one in 2023. We hope to have one in 2024. Since 2017, we have been presenting certificates to churches, recognizing longevity for 100, 125, 150, 175, or 200 years. In 2022, we sent certificates to three churches 150 years old and one church 100 years old. We are continuing to work on our list of churches and their years of beginning. Our lists of certificates given are published on our website.  
<https://michiganumchistoricalssociety.wordpress.com/>

If we have missed an anniversary for your church, let us know. Contact information is available on the website under the Board of Directors.

Our group welcomes historians of churches, those interested in church history and preserving it, clergy and lay, to join the Society. Membership includes receiving news about the Society activities and free registration to our sponsored events. A membership brochure is available on our website.

Diana Spitnale Miller, President

## OTHER AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS

(arranged alphabetically)

### BRIO LIVING SERVICES AND UMRC-PORTER HILLS FOUNDATION

**Introduction:** Brio Living Services, formerly United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) and Porter Hills, has been a leader in caring for older adults since its faithful founding in 1906. I am delighted to share our accomplishments over the past year to serve older adults through our 24 locations and service lines across lower Michigan. Thank you for the prayers and support of the Michigan United Methodist Church Conference.

On March 1, 2022, UMRC and Porter Hills announced a new name and brand for our corporate umbrella: **Brio Living Services at MyBrio.org**. With UMRC and Porter Hills team members working together during the toughest possible circumstances during COVID-19, our organization

was ready to begin looking forward again. Unifying under one name was an important step, and we believe the name, Brio Living Services, embodies the important work we do of bringing life and vibrancy to older adults and their families. “Brio” means enthusiastic vigor, vivacity, verve—the very aspects of joyful living that we aim to bring to the older adults in our care. Our faith-based mission, vision, and guiding beliefs remain:

**Mission:** Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives.

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

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

Each year, Brio Living Services serves approximately 8,000 older adults across Michigan. Our faith-based, nonprofit organization encompasses not only traditional, market-rate residential communities for older adults, but affordable living, and home- and community-based services as well. Brio Living Services serves the most economically diverse population of older adults in the state. In fact, 20 of our 24 locations and service lines provide care for low-income older adults. Brio Living Services is proud to help older adults at all income levels to live their best lives.

Our home- and community-based services account for 68% of the older adults we serve, helping them live as independently and safely as possible in their own homes and communities. This includes over 1,200 older adults each year through our five PACE, or Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, sites across the state. PACE serves the psycho-social, medical, and supportive needs of low-income, nursing home-eligible adults, ages 55 and up. Most participants are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid and pay no additional fees for PACE services, which include: comprehensive medical, occupational and physical therapy, pharmacy needs, nutrition and meals, health education, social and recreational activities, and door-to-door transportation.

Last April, we announced the opening of our expanded clinic space at our Thome PACE Day Center in Jackson with a capacity of 250 PACE participants thanks, in part, to grants from the Edward N. and Della L. Thome Memorial Foundation and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc. In October, Huron Valley PACE welcomed Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure and U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12) for a visit to its Day Health Center in Ypsilanti. In January 2023, our LifeCircles PACE, with sites in Holland and Muskegon, held a virtual Dementia Fair, which hosted over 450 attendees across the country, thanks to a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund.

Brio’s GREEN HOUSE® Homes skilled nursing community in Grand Rapids also received statewide attention in August, hosting a visit from AARP Michigan State Director Paula Cunningham and AARP Associate State Director-Government Affairs Melissa Seifert. Said Cunningham, “AARP has long been a strong advocate of the Green House® model which elevates warmth, respect, and more personalized care as the golden standard. Brio Living Services is a shining example of that ideal and what it means to age with dignity and respect in a genuine home environment.”

Brio Living Services continues to be ***EAGLE-accredited by the United Methodist Association***, the only faith-based accrediting body in the world. With its focus on ministries of older adults and children, EAGLE, or Educational Assessment Guidelines Leading toward Excellence, follows a rigorous self-assessment and peer-reviewed accreditation process that offers a faith-based distinction and sets us apart among other U.S. senior living agencies.

Our organization was proud to receive accolades as a **Best and Brightest Company to Work For®** in West Michigan for the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Best and Brightest is a national program that honors organizations that “display a commitment to excellence in operations and employee enrichment.” In addition, Brio Living Services was recognized as a Best and Brightest Company to Work For® in the Nation and was among the Top 101 in the Nation in terms of scoring. Brio Living Services also received **Certified Age Friendly Employer™** (CAFE) designation by the Age-Friendly Institute. CAFE is the nation’s only certification program that identifies organizations committed to being the best places to work for employees aged 50+.

Recruiting and retaining excellent workers, particularly those who provide direct care, continues to be a lingering effect of COVID-19 and a challenge across the healthcare and aging services sectors. At Brio Living Services, we have implemented a **Commitment Bonus** program to support retention efforts of our workforce, particularly caregivers and those who provide direct support services. In addition, our UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation raises funds for **Team Member Support Services**, including competitive **Scholarship** opportunities for our team members to advance in their educational and career goals, and **Emergency Aid**, assisting team members who are experiencing a crisis or emergency causing financial hardship. These emergencies run the gamut—from unexpected car repairs caused by hitting a deer, to more serious emergencies such as a house fire or death in the family. Since 2014, 225 Scholarships have been awarded, totaling approximately \$500,000, and 157 team members have received Emergency Aid with over \$131,000 provided.

Brio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation are excited about the new things that are dawning as we work to achieve our vision of a world in which all are empowered to age well.

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation continues to raise funds for four initiatives:

- Benevolent Care Fund
- Team Member Support Services
  - Scholarships
  - Emergency Aid
- Capital Improvements
- Life Enrichment programming for older adults.

The cornerstone of our Foundation is, and always will be, Benevolent Care, ensuring that qualified residents in our Assisted Living and Memory Care centers always have a home where they are loved and cared for like family. In 2022, the Foundation was blessed to receive an **anonymous matching gift of \$5 Million** toward the General Benevolent Care Endowment Fund supporting our residents at our historic Chelsea Retirement Community. While we have five years to match this \$5 million, as of December 31, 2022, we are already over the \$3 million mark! Thank you to churches and affiliates in the Michigan UMC Conference whose gifts have helped us toward our goal, and which benefit the lives of older adults who have exhausted their savings. We hope our church partners will continue to bless the lives of older adults and help us achieve our \$5 million match.

Brio Living Services is undergoing **strategic master planning** for renovations and construction projects at our flagship campuses, including Porter Hills Village, Cook Valley Estates, and Chelsea Retirement Community. The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is a key part of this



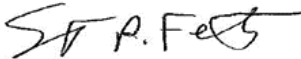
planning and fundraising to help bring these plans to fruition, thanks to gifts from our generous donors.

As the numbers of older adults continues to rise in the next decade, Brio Living Services continues to explore **opportunities for growth**, while keeping our faith-based mission and vision top of mind. Currently, Brio Living Services is exploring the potential to partner with Ohio Living, a Presbyterian senior living organization that serves older adults across Ohio.

It is with mixed emotions that we report that Wendy Brightman has resigned from her post as President and CEO of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation after ten years of outstanding, compassionate, and faithful service on behalf of the older adults we serve. However, she has taken the position of CEO for the Herrick Foundation, and we look forward to continuing to work with Wendy in her new role where she will be able to help support the needs of even more older adults statewide.

We are grateful for our faith-based history which continues to guide the future of Brio Living Services. Thank you for your prayers and support in helping us provide loving communities, care, and services for older adults. We look forward to meeting with churches and affiliate groups over the coming year to share the good work you are helping us accomplish on behalf of older adults and their families. Thank you for your commitment to our mission of service to older adults.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Fetyko

President and CEO, Brio Living Services

Interim President and CEO, UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation

Ph: 734.475.1020

E-mail: [sfetyko@umrcph.org](mailto:sfetyko@umrcph.org)

Website: [MyBrio.org](http://MyBrio.org)

### **CLARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES**

As part of the Grand Rapids community for the past 117 years, Clark has been serving seniors and their families with an unwavering focus on our mission of **“creating communities of dignity, compassion and respect centered on the lives of older adults and those who care for them.”** Since our humble beginnings in a house on Sherman Street, Clark has become a premier Life Plan Community in Grand Rapids. Today we are called home by 370 residents on two campuses who are served by 240 dedicated employees. Our residential offerings are in independent, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing. We are proud to say that we have active, vibrant, and wonderful communities to serve seniors with an unsurpassed, positive culture and environment.

In February 2022, the Clark Governing Board unanimously agreed to affiliate with BHI Senior Living in Indianapolis, Indiana. This decision was made to allow Clark to fulfill and expand our mission while ensuring our long-term stability and growth. BHI’s commitment to Clark is unwavering and in full alignment with our culture and values. “As a faith-based, non-profit organization, our first priority is always to do what is best for the people we serve. We believe in responsible stewardship of resources — from making sure all our communities are consistently maintained and updated, to employing the sound financial practices that have made BHI one of

the most well-respected, financially stable senior living organizations in the Midwest.” – John Dattilo, CEO

BHI is a faith-based, non-profit organization with a mission that will align seamlessly with Clark’s. Clark will maintain its brand and identity as a subsidiary of BHI. The Clark Foundation will continue to operate independently to fulfill its Clark Promise for current and future residents.

Also, the covenant relationship with The United Methodist Church is the cornerstone of our faith-based legacy and will remain intact. Bishop David Bard is in full support of the affiliation and looks forward to continuing the relationship for years to come.

This affiliation will result in the following strategic goals:

- Maintaining the Clark name, brand, and legacy
- Continuing the 117-year covenant relationship with the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church
- Deepen financial strength to ensure services and facilities for future generations
- Strengthen and deliver high-level, quality, compassionate care
- Extend services to more seniors in Michigan

## **Residential Communities**

### **Clark at Franklin**

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

### **Clark at Keller Lake**

Situated on a 40-acre campus, Clark at Keller Lake is located on beautiful natural environment with groomed nature trails winding around the lake. It is conveniently located near shopping and dining establishments. Our independent living option includes spacious 23 town homes clustered around Keller Lake. There are two assisted living manors each located on the edge of the lake with large decks overlooking the water. They provide a caring, nurturing and activity filled environment with specialized services for residents with dementia. Our new building project includes 52 upscale independent living apartments in a unique town square model overlooking Keller Lake. This exciting property welcomed our first residents in October 2021.

### **Montessori for Aging & Dementia**

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

## **Collaborations for Home and Community-Based Services**

**Atrio Home Care** is a collaborative effort of 3 home health care providers, Clark, Holland Home and Resthaven. Atrio was formed to provide a new level of compassionate, skilled, and quality home care services including a comprehensive range of personal, private duty services as well as skilled home care services.

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

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

### **Clark Foundation**

Philanthropy is a major component of life at Clark giving us the ability to provide services, programs, and projects beyond the scope of operational activities. The Clark Foundation was founded in 1995 in response to the benevolent care needs of residents. Through the generous gifts of donors, financial support is provided to those residents who, through no fault of their own, have depleted their financial resources. This is the Clark Promise – residents have the peace of mind knowing Clark will always be their home. Other areas of gifting include the Montessori program for Aging and Dementia, Music Therapy, Equine Therapy, life enrichment activities, employee education opportunities as well as support to capital projects and initiatives.

Clark recently completed a \$4 million capital campaign called **Celebrating Clark**. This campaign provided resources to the following areas: Keller Lake expansion project, Benevolent Care and Life Enrichment.

We are also very excited and inspired by a successful renovation project to the Chapel on the Franklin campus. This chapel is at the center of spiritual life for residents with many services and events held throughout the week. We are grateful for all the financial support from residents, families, BHI and community donors for this \$500,000 endeavor.

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

JoAnn Abraham  
Clark Foundation, President



United Methodist Community House (UMCH) is all about community. Since 1902, UMCH has supported children, youth, adults, seniors, and families in our neighborhood to help increase their opportunities to succeed.

UMCH has four core program areas that help community members of all ages to thrive: Early Childhood Education, Youth Development, Senior Programs, and The Fresh Market at UMCH. Located in Southeast Grand Rapids in the 49507 zip-code, UMCH is committed to serving a diverse population and offering innovative, culturally relevant services that are responsive to community needs.

As we reflect on 2022, we look back on some of the accomplishments that we are most proud of:

- UMCH engaged with Generations United to assist in implementing our intergenerational engagement programming. The mission of Generations United is to improve the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational collaboration, public policies, and programs for the enduring benefit of all.
- UMCH has continued to experience success with our Family Engagement collaboration with Family Promise and is looking to expand this case management approach into our older adult programming.
- The *Parents as Partners* engagement group is continuing to expand. This parent-led advisory council addresses issues related to program operations, protocol, and quality. It also helps parents to develop a sense of belonging or community throughout the entire parent base.
- For the last four years, UMCH has been on a journey to understand what “*excellence*” means and how do we demonstrate it in our operations. We have hired a consultant to help us explore this concept with our staff, board, and clients. Our intent is to conceptualize a strategy and measurements to gauge our progress toward this elusive goal. What we do know is that the better we can define it, the better we can attain it.

As we look forward to 2023, we are excited about implementing our transformational vision. The ‘Creating a Place to Belong’ campaign is a visionary plan to transform and improve the lives of children, families, and seniors throughout Kent County.

Our plan includes creating a new space across from our current location in the SECA neighborhood of Grand Rapids. There we will do more than just expand our existing high-demand programs. We will create something new that has been missing in our broader community.

We will lean into our expertise of serving our community’s youngest and oldest. We will address the gaps to meet their unique needs. And in the process, we will inform intergenerational research by collaborating with community and academic partners.

As we embark upon our major expansion project and innovative plan to ensure more children thrive, more families can work, and more seniors can be healthy in mind, body, and spirit, we are grateful to have the United Methodist Church alongside us.

There is a lot to look forward to—and believe us when we say we’re just getting started.

Thank you for being our partners in transformation,

Eric Williams  
Co-Chief Executive Officer

Carla Moore  
Co-Chief Executive Officer

## UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN

Since 1926 the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan has been coming alongside congregations to help them live into their purpose. 2021 was no exception! Despite the continuation and challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, we sought to provide innovative resources and traditional services to enrich the mission of the Church.

We recognize that building the financial strength of local churches is of paramount importance. This ministry has been and continues to be at the very core of our ministry. We partner with an increasing number of account holders to provide value-aligned investment counsel. In fact, our assets under management have grown by more than 2.5 times over the past decade – now exceeding \$155,000,000. In addition, the permanent funds which are comprised of trusts, legacy gifts, and other designated contributions have proliferated to an all-time high of \$11,500,000.

This past year was a strong year for investment performance. UMF Collective Funds of Michigan LLC persuasively outperformed its respective benchmarks. The Balanced Fund, our most popular, value-aligned investment choice, gained nearly 15% in 2021. The Stock Fund (+22.12%) and the Bond Fund (+0.87%) rounded out a year of solid advancement. One of our goals is to partner with local churches by offering unparalleled ESG investments which strictly adhere to Wesleyan social principles.

We were excited to provide several dozen first time grants to smaller congregations. These virtual technology grants supported online worship efforts and totaled nearly \$24,000. This past year was another banner year for our seminary scholarships. By providing over \$100,000 in scholarships, we helped a diverse community of future and current pastors avoid debt and meet their educational goals. Without our generous support as a matching partner, some students would not be able to pursue their academic goals. As Beatrice Alghali commented, “You change lives. Your support has a long-term impact on me and the people whom I will be serving.”

One of our most innovative partnerships last year was a joint venture with Bishop David Bard, the Appointive Cabinet, and Dakotas Wesleyan University. We sponsored a highly intensive learning cohort, *Stewarding the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Taught by DWU faculty, this academically and practically rigorous course strengthens the ability of pastors to lead mission-focused, financially healthy, congregationally engaged churches. Moreover, participants are halfway toward receiving an MBA upon completion of this course.

We also expanded resources last year by offering more leadership coaching and by increasing our online learning cohorts. The *Generous Church Leadership Course* is designed to help pastors and church leaders think about stewardship and generosity ministry from a holistic perspective. In addition, we introduced a new resource, *Saving Grace: A Guide to Financial Well-Being*. This six-session, Wesleyan rooted class, mentors participants in the creation of a faith-based personal spending plan.

We remain poised to grow our services in 2022. We will be expanding our online worship resources to include offering invitations, generosity-based litanies, and stewardship-themed sermon outlines. These online resources will complement our very popular lectionary-based offertory prayers. Furthermore, we will expand our robust capacity to award grants and scholarships by tipping the \$500,000 mark in 2022. We also will introduce a generosity audit for local churches. This service will focus on adopting best practices for local church financial stewardship and may include a comprehensive consultation with Horizons Stewardship and

their Next Level Generosity platform. Finally, we have entered the developmental stages of piloting the Foundation's *Financial Well-Being Initiative for Pastors* which will include as its centerpiece a low-interest student loan repayment plan. Visit our website regularly to learn more about these and other opportunities. [www.UFMMichigan.org](http://www.UFMMichigan.org)

### **MICHIGAN AREA LOAN FUND**

The Michigan Area Loan Fund, operating since 1969, is a ministry related to the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan. The loan fund experienced steady growth in investor accounts during the 2021 year and a related increase in total assets to over \$24 million. Loan activities slowed during this same period, which is reflective of the overall cautious environment and pandemic challenges churches are navigating. The fund is positioned to serve and provide loans to churches in the Michigan conference as well as organizations in Michigan that share historic common bonds in the Wesleyan tradition.

Loan activity is expected to increase as churches review their plans for updating and renovating facilities and equipment. Loans are also available for technology upgrades or new ministries launches. The Loan Fund is one resource among a continuum of Foundation resources designed to help churches develop critical capital campaign strategies, successful stewardship campaigns, or sustainable, value-aligned investments. All of these services, including loan borrowing and investing, are services to assist congregations in achieving their ministry goals.

Karen Thompson, Sr. Director of Loan Services, is eager to learn about your ministry plans and to discuss the ways in which loans and promissory notes can be a part of your church's effective financial stewardship. If you have a "What if?" question or are curious to know more about the Loan Fund, please contact Karen at [karen@umfmichigan.org](mailto:karen@umfmichigan.org) or 888-451-1929. You can also learn more about investment offerings, loans, and financial services by visiting our website: [www.umfmichigan.org](http://www.umfmichigan.org).

David S. Bell, President and Resident Agent  
Karen Thompson, Sr. Director of Loan Services

### **UNITED METHODIST UNION OF GREATER DETROIT**

Sitting at my desk in the United Methodist Union offices at Metropolitan United Methodist Church in Detroit, I am keenly aware of the ebb and flow of life. All around us in the New Center area, development is happening that I hope will bring new possibilities to this part of the city and a positive response to poverty and homelessness that is part of many people's lives.

Our world continues to change. From astounding weather to a divisive political climate, we are living in extraordinary times. Everyone I know wants things to return to normal. Unfortunately, I am no longer sure exactly what the normal is ... even in the life of the church. What will life look like in the future? Only God knows for sure. At the Union, we are called to be part of the mission and ministry of the Greater Detroit District. At times, that means we are challenged to walk where we cannot see and must trust that God continues to be at work in local congregations throughout the Union.

The Union office at Metropolitan United Methodist Church will continue to be open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. Mail service has improved but we still occasionally struggle

to process loan payments, receive ministry shares, and reconcile other financial issues. The gracious understanding of our district churches is still encouraged. Please contact Connie Perrine at her home: 248-827-7110, or Rev. Carol Johns on her cell phone: 248-417-9673, with your questions or concerns.

Now on to our Ministries.

### **New Church Development**

The Union continues to work closely with the Office of Congregational Vibrancy to provide grants for new church start-ups and those that were extraordinarily challenged by the pandemic.

- The Union is working with Congregational Vibrancy to help sustain Graceful Journey Community Church, a new church start. The goal of this faith community is to provide ministries and worship opportunities for special needs individuals and families. This unique population has often felt unwelcome in other church settings. Graceful Journey Community Church began in the fall of 2019 and was averaging 14 families in attendance when five months later a COVID-19 lockdown began. It was particularly devastating to this new church. The Union is continuing to evaluate how we can be of support to this vital ministry.

### **Support through Loans**

Another facet of our Ministry involves making loans to churches and other United Methodist church ministries.

The year of 2021 was not kind to St. Paul United Methodist Church in Bloomfield Hills. Storms and excess water from above and below ravaged their building causing significant damage. Several contractors were hired to replace two roofs and do water remediation. Unfortunately, a great deal of additional interior water damage was created by one of the contractors. Instead of paying that contractor and waiting for them to repair their work, the church decided to put the insurance money for the interior church damage into an escrow account. They are presently seeking a legal remedy through the courts. The United Methodist Union extended to them a loan of \$51,300 to complete the repairs in the interim. One of our Union Trustees, Clayton Savage, continues to work with them as a consultant.

- In late 2021, the Trustees of First United Methodist Church, Wyandotte discovered a portion of the church roof was leaking. They decided to put together a major Capitol Facilities Plan that included a new roof on the entire church building and made numerous interior repairs. In addition, they will replace exterior doors, a door wall, and upgrade electrical issues. This church has an excellent financial history with the Union and was extended a ten-year loan of \$170,000.
- The Union has worked very closely with Grace United Methodist Church in New Baltimore regarding facility issues. Their current balance for infrastructure projects is \$158,052.19. The Union extended \$135,000 of additional funds to replace roofs on both the parsonage and the church, as well as three furnaces and four air conditioning units. These two loans have been combined for a new total balance of \$293,052.19.
- In 2020, Conant Avenue United Methodist Church merged with Mt. Hope United Methodist Church. Conant Avenue assumed responsibility for the maintenance and security of the large Mt. Hope facilities. That church building was put up for sale. The Union paid for all the utilities and other costs related to those facilities for several years. Mt. Hope was sold in October on a land contract and the Union was

reimbursed. Conant Avenue has a current improvement loan with the Union of \$30,622.79. The Union extended to them an additional \$31,000.00 to replace their boiler. Conant Avenue now has a combined loan of \$60,622.79.

### **Grants for Ministry**

The Union continues to work hard to respond to emergency needs and reinvests its resources in churches and special projects. Our support makes a difference in the ministries that happen in the Greater Detroit District.

- Utica United Methodist Church has a wonderful history of reaching out to their community. For more than a decade, they have been developing and implementing a Christian education summer program that assists and engages students and their families. The Union extended a summer program grant to them to support this vital ministry.
- For many years, the Union has supported a summer program at Conant Avenue United Methodist Church. Stepping out in faith, their Leadership Team has been working with Grace Community United Methodist Church to bring the federal program - Children's Defense Fund Freedom School - to their community. This has been a very successful outreach experience for both and makes a real difference in the lives of many children. The goal of a Freedom School is to increase literacy and enhance the ability of a child to have a positive learning experience in the educational process. Each church adds an intentional Christian emphasis in an afternoon camp style program. Both Conant Avenue United Methodist Church and Grace Community United Methodist Church received significant grants from the Union for this ministry.
- The Union has a long history of investing in ministry to the immigrant community. Since 2012, we have extended an annual grant of \$5,000 to Dearborn First United Methodist Church as part of their ministry as a JFON (Justice for Our Neighbors) Clinic that serves the Downriver and Detroit areas. The Union has extended a three-year grant of \$5,000 per year for a total of \$15,000.
- The Union extended a grant to Urban Methodist Youth Camp for a one-week on-site camp experience at Michindoh Christian Camp in southern Michigan. The use of a non-UMC camp was precipitated by the sale of Judson Collins.

### **Young Leaders Initiative Foundry House**

The Union has had a relationship with the Young Leaders Initiative since it began in 2005 when Reverend Carl Gladstone and Reverend Jeff Nelson approached the Union about creating a new mission endeavor. One of its goals was to create an urban work mission program that eventually became Motown Mission. The Union provided several three-year grants to support this successful mission program.

In 2013, Young Leaders Initiative purchased Foundry House from Central Detroit Christian Community for one dollar. Through the years, the Union provided grants and loans to support the renovation and repair of this housing facility. In 2021, the Board of Motown Mission decided to no longer be in the housing business. In 2021, they voted to give the Union the deed to the Foundry House in lieu of foreclosure. The Union authorized a loan in 2020 to provide a new roof and additional carpentry for the Foundry House. Unfortunately, COVID-19 altered the timeline of the completion of the project and impacted the costs of the materials and labor. Clayton Savage, a Union Trustee, and his team assumed responsibility for this project and completed it



in June 2022. All permits were approved by the City of Detroit. The building was put up for sale in August and sold for \$198,000. When all closing expenses were paid the Union received \$191,165. This may seem like a significant amount, but the Union invested far more financial resources in the Foundry House. This project could not have been completed without the leadership and dedication of Clayton Savage. Thank you, Clayton, you are a blessing!

### Looking Forward

The work of the Union continues all year long as we grapple with issues and challenges that local churches face. Presently, we are working on building infrastructure issues with Farmington First United Methodist Church, with Graceful Journey Community Church as they develop a sustainable funding plan and continue to work with the Michigan Annual Conference Board of Trustees. I would not want to close without expressing my appreciation for those leaving the Board; Linda Conger, Rev. Dr. Ray McGee, and Jane Johnson who passed away this year. We are fortunate to have an outstanding Board of Trustees, wonderful professional consultants, and a competent, gracious staff. Connie Perrine, our Office Manager, has provided outstanding customer service to many churches this year as they work with the Title Company.

The work of the Union plays an important role in the life of the Greater Detroit District. It is my privilege to be the Executive Director and share in the ministry that God has entrusted to us. Thank you for your participation as we seek to be a blessing in the name of Jesus.

Grace & Joy, 😊



Rev. Carol J. Johns  
Executive Director

## UNITED METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS (arranged alphabetically)

### BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

I am profoundly grateful for your partnership, prayers, and support in these challenging times. A year like 2022 makes even more relevant BUSTH's historic and ongoing commitments to peace and justice in equipping transformational leaders. We remain hopeful and vigilant in our continued partnership with you.

#### BREAKING NEWS:

- **Students:** Our academic year 2022-23 entering class was among our most diverse, with 88 new students enrolling, 34% of whom are international students.
- **Faculty:** In September we welcomed three new faculty members: James McCarty, Assistant Clinical Professor of Religion and Conflict Transformation; Eunil David Cho, Assistant Professor of Spiritual Care; and Peng Yin, Assistant Professor of Ethics.
- **New Online Degree First Cohort:** BUSTH's first fully online master's degree—the Master of Religion and Public Leadership (MARPL)—welcomed its first students in fall

2022. MARPL seeks students who wish to be prepared for leadership roles that creatively engage the challenges of public life. Learn more at [bu.edu/sth/marpl](http://bu.edu/sth/marpl).

- **Faculty Research:** Prof. Filipe Maia was awarded a Louisville Institute book grant in April, and Prof. Luis Menéndez-Antuña was awarded a grant from the Catholic Biblical Association in August. Other large grants continue to move forward, including the Trauma Responsive Congregations Project led by Prof. Shelly Rambo and supported by the Lilly Endowment, and the Positive Psychology and Formation-Based Flourishing grant led by Prof. Steven Sandage and supported by the Peale Foundation.
- **Scholarships:** This year, we announced free tuition for all residential master's candidates. We continue to offer free tuition to UMC-registered candidates for ordained ministry and leadership fellowships that support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality studies. New funds include the Research & Teaching Fund and Affirmation & Empowerment Fund as well as the following endowed funds: DEI, Theology & the Arts, and Doctor of Ministry.
- **Accreditation Visit:** BUSTH just welcomed the United Methodist University Senate Review team on February 1-3 for our re-accreditation visit.
- **Online Lifelong Learning:** BUSTH offers online courses for professional and spiritual enrichment of religious leaders. Recent offerings include "Ethics and Video Games," and "Spiritual Mending for Helping Professionals." To learn more, visit [bu.edu/sth/oll](http://bu.edu/sth/oll).
- **Development:** Recent accomplishments include endowing the Faith and Ecological Justice Fund, and new funding for student scholarships and academic programs.

#### **COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE and COMPASSION:**

- BUSTH's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers webinars on timely inclusion efforts, such as "[Increasing Participation of Students of Underrepresented Backgrounds](#)."
- This year's [Lowell Lecture](#) topics explore the spiritual dimension of artistic expression. This fall, Dr. Emmett G. Price III highlighted the brilliant resilience and demonstrative hope of Black folk through the lens of two exceptional spiritual beings: Nina Simone and John Coltrane. A diverse panel response fostered rich conversation.
- Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing. BUSTH is the first certified Green School at BU and is active in the Green Seminary Initiative.

With faith and gratitude,  
G. Sujin Pak, Dean

### **CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

Since 1914, **Candler School of Theology at Emory University** has educated faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United Methodist Church, Candler holds true to the Methodist value of ecumenical openness, enthusiastically welcoming students from more than 42 denominations, with nearly half of Master of Divinity students coming from the Wesleyan tradition, including United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, and others. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 417 from 16 countries and 33 states, and 43% persons of color. This diversity is a blessing, enriching our life together and providing a "learning laboratory" for ministry in the 21st century—ministry that cultivates

community across difference, welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies Christ's love in and among us.

Candler offers six single degrees and ten dual degrees, most of which are available in hybrid or online formats so students can remain rooted in their home communities as they pursue their degrees. Our new hybrid Master of Divinity blending online classes and in-person intensives launches in Fall 2023, and our successful Doctor of Ministry—with its high 87% completion rate—is 90% online. Hybrid and online options are also available in the Master of Religious Leadership and the Master of Religion and Public Life programs. Plus, Candler's Teaching Parish program allows student pastors to earn contextual education credit as they serve their churches. We are excited that these flexible learning formats make a first-rate Candler education possible for even more people who are called to ministry.

Alleviating student debt through generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2021-2022, we awarded \$7.3 million in scholarship support, with 100% of MDiv students receiving aid. All MDiv students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receive full-tuition scholarships, and all MDiv, MTS, MRL, and ThM students receive a scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition. MDiv students also complete a financial literacy program to strengthen their financial and budgeting skills and reduce debt.

Candler was recently honored as one of 16 theological schools to receive a "Pathways to Tomorrow" grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The \$5 million grant will support Candler in establishing a set of initiatives to create an interconnected continuum of offerings for the education of pastoral leaders. This will position Candler as a hub of theological learning with multiple entry points, including The Candler Foundry, our innovative program to make theological education accessible to the public, the United Methodist Course of Study, undergraduate classes, and a new venture, La Mesa Academy for Theological Studies. Set to launch in Fall 2023, La Mesa Academy will offer diplomas in pastoral leadership via a two-year hybrid program with courses in Spanish and English. An optional third year of study will be offered to those aspiring to continue to a graduate professional degree at Candler.

This year, we welcomed the Rev. Dr. Brett Opalinski as Assistant Dean of Methodist Studies, a position made available by the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Anne Burkholder. Brett is an elder in full connection in the Florida Annual Conference and most recently served for nine years as senior pastor of Christ Church United Methodist in Ft. Lauderdale. In addition to other pastoral appointments, he has held a variety of leadership roles in the Florida Conference, including chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry. He is deeply committed to working with students in discerning their call, spiritual formation, and guiding them through the commissioning and ordination process.

Candler's ability to fulfill our mission to provide the church with the faithful and creative leaders it needs depends upon your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this essential ministry in the life of our denomination. We invite you to visit us online at [candler.emory.edu](https://candler.emory.edu).

—Jan Love

*Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics  
Candler School of Theology, Emory University*

### **DREW UNIVERSITY THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL** **Edwin David Aponte, Dean**

Drew educates and mentors pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, thought leaders, and change agents. In Fall 2022 Drew welcomed 77 new students, and as of February 2023 Drew has a total enrollment of 408 students. Many Drew students are just beginning their ministry, while others come to graduate theological education with substantial ministry experience. The latter reflects a growing trend among all theological schools in the United States and Canada. During 2022, Drew classes met on campus in Madison, New Jersey, but also some classes met exclusively online, while other met in hybrid fashion, i.e., partially online, partially in-person. This was also the case with chapel worship. This reflects both our ongoing emergence from the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, but also Drew leaning into what it means to be a global school with a global student population. With 35% of students coming from 28 different countries Drew Theological School is truly global and diverse in theology, vocations, age, as well as racial, ethnic, national, and international identities. Drew's interdisciplinary degree programs foster out-of-the-box thinking, provide real-world apprenticeships, promotes adaptive leadership skills, and encourages innovation through a team-taught core courses reflecting the integration of the theological disciplines and practices characteristic of the life of faith. The faculty articulated shared values are infused across the teaching and learning at Drew: a commitment to anti-racism; gender and sexual-identity equality; eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and interfaith understanding and cooperation. The Theological School has seen an increase in United Methodist students. Moreover, Drew has many United Methodist Global Fellows who chose to pursue education for ministry at Drew. UMC graduates are serving in conferences across the United States as well as in our regional conferences in Greater New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and New York Annual Conference.

### **DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL**

Duke Divinity School has been blessed to be part of the fresh work of the Holy Spirit this year and to participate in “little Pentecosts”—signs and foretastes of the hope we profess and the calling we follow. In his Opening Convocations sermon, Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric said: “If Duke Divinity School is to keep on its Pentecost journey, it needs to devote itself to being guided by the marker of mercy. Our motto of *Eruditio et Religio* only makes sense when we add mercy. ... How we care for the needy is the measure for the apostolicity of our studies, the holiness of our communion, and the power of our prayers.”

The school has continued in its commitment to form ministers of the gospel who will seek God's justice and mercy. Our faculty have been leaders in the Duke Climate Initiative participating with colleagues from the Nicholas School for the Environment in the event “Pastoral Care for Climate Change: Weaving Together Science and Theology for Justice,” at the Duke University Marine Lab in Beaufort, N.C. Divinity faculty have also co-taught a university course titled “Let's Talk about Climate Change,” and welcomed 30 young faith leaders from various religious traditions and places worldwide to understand better how to engage their faith communities in the fight for our climate.

The Office of Black Church Studies, which has been commemorating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, hosted “Justice Ministry Reimagined: Reentry Simulation” for pastors, students, and lay leaders to learn more about how to support people reentering the community after incarceration. We launched the Prison Engagement Initiative with the Kenan Institute for Ethics. Divinity faculty

taught a “Trauma Engaged Duke” seminar and led the project team Developing Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning. These programs and events complement the ongoing work of field education and ministerial formation that puts Duke Divinity students in contexts ranging from rural churches to hospital chaplaincy to farm ministry, and many more.

This fall, we welcomed 226 entering students from 35 different states and eight other countries, including Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and South Korea. The Master of Divinity program gained 130 new students, with 88 residential students and 42 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled 13 new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 28; Master of Theology, six; Master of Theological Studies, 22; the Doctor of Theology welcomed six new students to campus, and one special student has enrolled. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed four residential students to campus and 16 in the hybrid program. Across all degree programs at the Divinity School, 30 percent of the incoming class identified as a race or ethnicity other than white. Black students made up 18 percent of all students; Latinx students, six percent; Asian students, five percent; and American Indian students, one percent. Fifty-seven percent of students in the incoming class are female.

There were 33 denominations represented in the M.Div. entering class, with 30 percent affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Baptists made up 17 percent of the incoming students; Anglican-Episcopal students, 12 percent; and nondenominational students, 12 percent. Dean Colón-Emeric said: “It is with the guidance of the acts of the apostles, their communal praxis, that the Divinity School continues to build that most delicate and often discredited of structures: an ecumenical community, a community that boldly professes the Apostles’ creed, a community where Christians from estranged churches study together, a community of generous, joyful Pentecost orthodoxy.”

The school continued to build on its rich tradition of ecumenical engagement, with Dean Colón-Emeric participating in the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission Dialogue meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican. Student Eliza Love, M.Div.’23, was awarded the \$10,000 Bossey Institute scholarship from the United Methodist Church Council of Bishops to attend the World Council of Church Ecumenical Institute. The Houses of Study at Duke Divinity School—Methodist House, Anglican Episcopal House, Presbyterian/Reformed House, Baptist House, Office of Black Church Studies, Asian House, and Hispanic House—all enrich the Duke Divinity community through theological formation, student support, dynamic lectures, and robust programming.

The school has also welcomed new leaders who bring their gifts to the work of advancing the mission to serve Christ and the church. Three new associate deans have accepted appointments: Daniel Castelo, William Kellon Quick Professor of Theology and Methodist Studies, as associate dean for Academic Formation; Jung Choi, a consulting professor and director of the Asian House of Studies, as associate dean for Global and Intercultural Formation; and Sangwoo Kim, a consulting professor and senior director of the Methodist House of Studies and the Wesleyan Formation Initiatives, as associate dean for Vocational Formation. Linda Coley, who earned an M.Div. from Duke Divinity along with M.S., M.B.A., and Ph.D. degrees, has also joined as the executive director for the Ormond Center.

Several new programs demonstrate Duke’s sustained commitment to connecting with churches and ministers. The Ormond Center launched the Community Craft Collaborative to create resources for equipping lay and congregational leaders. The Certificate in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation (CCTR), facilitated by leading scholars and practitioners in

the fields of conflict transformation and reconciliation from Duke University and other institutions, provides a timely learning opportunity for pastors and other church leaders seeking theological and practical skills to foster reconciliation in their congregations and surrounding communities. The Clergy Health Initiative supports healthy practices for vibrant ministry. The research and programming from other Duke Divinity initiatives, including Theology, Medicine, and Culture; Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts; Leadership Education at Duke Divinity; and Thriving Rural Communities, continue to provide numerous opportunities to bear witness to God's creativity, compassion, and care for communities and congregations.

Our Convocation & Pastors' School (CPS) returned to an in-person format for the first time since the start of the pandemic with the theme, *Creativity & Courage: From Trauma to Tough Hope*. The presenters—professional dancers, visual artists, musicians, and scholars—guided participants in facing brokenness and sin honestly, as they offered glimpses of "the beauty of holiness." *NY Times Best Selling Author & Associate Professor of Christian History, Kate Bowler led a live taping of her Everything Happens podcast to kick off CPS with over 1000 registered participants.*

Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church and partnership with this annual conference. We celebrate the expansion of our connection to UMC colleges through a partnership with Wesleyan College in Macon, Ga., to enable qualified undergraduates to take master's level course through the Duke Accelerated Pastoral Formation Program. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as we join the leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing men and women for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at [www.divinity.duke.edu](http://www.divinity.duke.edu).

Respectfully submitted by Edgardo Colón-Emeric  
Dean of Duke Divinity School

**METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO**  
**[www.mtso.edu](http://www.mtso.edu)**

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

**International Institute on Theology and Disability meets at MTSO**

MTSO was pleased to host the four-day international Institute on Theology and Disability in June 2022. Founded in 2010, the institute celebrates, explores, and investigates the ways that disability impacts many dimensions of religious life; theology and practice mutually inform and support one another; and diverse perspectives enrich and inform theological formation and religious practice.

**MTSO and WomanPreach! share \$1 million Lilly Endowment Grant**

Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded MTSO a grant of \$1 million to support prophetic preaching through a partnership with WomanPreach! Inc. The grant period extends from Nov. 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2027. WomanPreach! was founded 12 years ago by MTSO Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs Rev. Valerie Bridgeman, Ph.D., who serves as the organization's CEO. It provides practical training and nurturing community spaces that empower preachers across the country. Begun as a way to train women, WomanPreach! has since grown to include

programming for people of all genders. Its numerous programs include the biennial Jarena Lee Preaching Academy, a week-long intensive academy that equips women of the African Diaspora to speak in their own prophetic voices; Sophie's Table: A Conversation Among Siblings, an all-genders program that amplifies voices of people of marginalized genders, women and children; and Chloe's Circle, which gathers women from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to sharpen preaching that reflects a commitment to justice based in God's call through Jesus.

### **Mount Union joins MTSO to offer 3+2 Program**

The University of Mount Union and MTSO have begun offering incoming college students a 3+2 program, leading to a Master of Arts in Social Justice degree in five years of study rather than the six years typically required. Students will begin the program at the University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio. After completing the program's requirements at Mount Union, they are eligible to begin two years of study at MTSO, where they will finish requirements for a Mount Union bachelor's degree and earn an MA in Social Justice degree from MTSO. Students in the 3+2 program are eligible for MTSO's exceptional scholarships.

Respectfully submitted,  
Danny Russell, Director of Communications



Educating tomorrow's leaders by offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning courses at a FLEXible schedule, Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary serving a diverse community committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through rigorous academic life. Grounded in the academic study of faith and ministry, theology is practiced in a traditional classroom and in remote spaces. Our contextual curriculum features Ministry Collaboration Groups, Practicums, Spiritual Formation Retreats, and Seminars. Students learn from dedicated faculty, experienced pastors, and community leaders about best ministry practices leaving our graduates with the tools and first-hand experience necessary to meet the needs of a changing world.

We continue to implement the changes the last few years have integrated into our daily lives. Our weekly chapel service utilizes a hybrid format, where participants may join in-person or online, allowing staff and students to come together as one institution where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere from wherever they are. In addition, Saint Paul offers weekly Spiritual Formation allowing students to engage in spiritual practices led by Rev. Jen Logsdon-Kellogg. Some practices will take us outdoors or to other sacred spaces, and others will have us connect with community leaders.

Saint Paul welcomed over 30 new students for the 2022-2023 academic year. Enrollment remained solid for the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree program with promising growth on our Oklahoma campus. With COVID-19 restrictions lifted yet monitored, prospective students returned to in-person visits on both campuses, experiencing community meals, worship, and the newly implemented "Hammock ministry" on the Oklahoma campus. The Admissions team continues to expand travel to meet new students, including the Carolinas, Washington, D.C., and various parts of Texas.

This year we have focused on strengthening the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry by creating two specializations: Women, Society, and Church; and Social Justice and Advocacy. In each case, the student takes 22 hours of MACM required courses, and then the remaining 12 hours of the degree are comprised of courses focusing upon the specialization. The two existing specializations, Prophetic Witness and Service; and Deacon Ministries, will continue to be offered as well. The Women, Society, and Church Studies specialization is also available in the MDiv program, as is a specialization in Wesleyan Studies.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue contributing to the academy, church, and society. This year, we welcomed Rev. Dr. Sharon Betsworth as our new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean and Professor of New Testament. The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology maintains high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and engagement. Over the past year, their many activities and publications have been so numerous that space permits only sharing selected highlights.

- Rev. Dr. Sharon Betsworth co-authored a journal article with Julie Faith Parker, "'Where Have All the Young Girls Gone?' Discovering the Girls of the Bible through Childist Analysis of Exodus 2 and Mark 5–7," in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 38, no. 2 (Fall 2022).
- Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education, was the keynote speaker for the United Methodist Church Missouri Preaching Academy "Offering the Word to a Digital World." She published "Failure to Discern the Online/Hybrid Body: A Captivity of the Eucharist" for the special issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission: Eucharist and Online Worship: Toward Extended Theological Reflection*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2023) and published the chapter "Liturgical Authority and the Table in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" in *Liturgical Authority in Free Church Traditions*, edited by Sarah Johnson and Andrew Wymer, Calvin Worship and Witness Series.
- Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, Assistant Professor of Ethics, Church, and Society, led a "Race, Liberation, and Political Economics" series at Second Presbyterian. He also spoke at The Open Table KC on "Race, Liberation, and Economics."
- Dr. Amy Oden, Adjunct Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, was a guest speaker at numerous events around the country this year, including at a Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation in Oklahoma, the Beyond Conference in St. Louis, and the Academy for Spiritual Formation in Alabama.

In October, Saint Paul hosted a forum on "Innovative, Creative Ministry" featuring alumni Matt Austin '18, Fabian Gonzalez '20, Bo Ireland '18, Matt Patrick '18, & Abby Peper '22, with each sharing their personal stories of innovation in ministry. In November, Saint Paul Evangelical Society, led by Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, hosted a forum given by Rev. Mike Slaughter, former lead pastor at Ginghamburg Church, on "Spiritual Awakening: the here and the not yet." Later in the year, the Evangelical Society hosted a lecture featuring Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns, Visiting Professor of Pentecostal Studies and Director of the Global Pentecostal House of Study at United Theological Seminary. And on May 12, Saint Paul again held a hybrid commencement celebration via Zoom, allowing graduates to come together from both campuses with attendees viewing from around the country. During the ceremony, we honored the 2023 Distinguished Graduate Award Winner and Commencement Speaker Bishop Delores J. "Dee" Williamston.

Saint Paul Board of Trustees changed leadership this year as long-time faculty and board member Rev. Dr. Tex Sample concluded his term as chair of the Board. Dr. Amy Hogan, Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education at Ottawa University, has



succeeded him as chair. Dr. Hogan possesses a deep reservoir of experience in teaching, research, and accreditation. In response to President Neil Blair's announcement that he will retire on December 31, 2023, Dr. Hogan appointed a search committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and trustees charged with identifying Saint Paul's next president. The search committee is currently conferring with Saint Paul's constituent groups to prepare the position prospectus that will describe Saint Paul's needs and aspirations to candidates.

In September 2022, Saint Paul School of Theology hosted a review team from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), one of Saint Paul's primary accreditation agencies, as part of the Seminary's regular reaffirmation cycle. On November 18, 2022, the Higher Learning Commission notified Saint Paul that the Commission "continued the accreditation of Saint Paul School of Theology with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2028-2029." The Seminary's Board of Trustees also devoted considerable time to improving its governance capacity. For example, in April 2022, trustees invested a significant portion of their meeting in a facilitated Emotional Intelligence and Trust-Building workshop. The workshop was led by Gail Parker, a noted management consultant who has worked with clients such as KPMG, Goldman Sachs, and Disney, among many others. In October 2022, former executive director of the Association of Theological Schools, Dan Aleshire, offered an overview of demographic and enrollment trends in the nation's seminaries, focusing on how those trends affect institutions' diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. As these activities suggest, the Board remains deeply committed to enhancing its capabilities to guide Saint Paul effectively and knowledgeably.

We are happy to report that Saint Paul School of Theology is financially sound. We operate with a balanced budget, no debt, and an endowment 9-10 times the size of our annual expenses. As always, we continue to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology, scholarships, and evolving academic programs to students. As of the close of 2022, over one hundred alumni and friends of Saint Paul contributed more than \$60,000 to create the Tex and Peggy Sample Endowed Scholarship Fund honoring the life and work of Tex and Peggy Sample. Sustainability has been our focus over the past five years, and we have achieved our goal. Investments in our future bring exciting new opportunities for our students, staff, and faculty. Our significant technological investments have allowed us to maintain a hybrid educational delivery model providing a flexible working arrangement for our students.

We are continuing to enhance our partnership with Zoom and Neat. Late last Spring, in conjunction with our Neat Board electronic whiteboards and Neat Bars, we implemented Neat's newest product, their Neat Bar Pros, in our large classrooms. These new bars are designed to offer a superior video and audio experience in large spaces and the ability to output to multiple large screens to enhance the overall classroom experience significantly. We have rolled out additional Zoom Room Neat Boards in numerous common areas to encourage ad-hoc use of the technology for breakout groups and other miscellaneous meetings between our two campuses and remote students. One of the best features of this technology is its ability to receive automatic real-time over-the-air features upgrades. Several significant enhancements have rolled out this past year, including improved voice cancellation, Zoom Room Breakout Groups, real-time Closed Captions with transcripts, and updated use of AI to split each in-classroom student into their individual zoomed-in Zoom window. In addition, our Neat equipment continuously monitors several environmental factors within our classrooms; air quality, temperature, humidity, VOC, and CO2, as well as being able to tell if the classrooms are occupied and how many individuals are in the room. We can also monitor the audio/video quality and network connectivity in each of our classrooms, as well as the connection quality for all remote students attending the class. We are excited about the additional enhancements that

will come to our classrooms from Neat and Zoom over this next year and look forward to our continued partnership with Neat and Zoom on this groundbreaking technology.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover more and answer the call. We are grateful for your support of our students and our seminary. May we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for generations to come.

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

### **UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Dayton, OH

United Theological Seminary celebrated rising enrollment in the 2022-2023 academic year. In the previous year, 464 students were enrolled at United; in 2022-2023, the seminary is serving 541 students, a 17% increase. A diverse community of many denominations, races, and nationalities, United welcomed students from 36 states, 21 countries, and 43 denominations, with 42% of students identifying as United Methodist. \* The Seminary prepared 103 Course of Study students\*\* and served 10 students through the Hispanic Christian Academy, a 3-year online course of ministry program for Hispanic/Latino lay pastors and leaders serving United Methodist congregations.

#### **Houses of Study**

In large part, this enrollment growth is a result of the seminary's House of Study initiative, which is supported by a \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. As of 2022-2023, the Seminary has established five Houses of Study that are equipping master's students for the unique ministry needs of the communities, movements, and denominations in which they serve:

- Fresh Expressions, directed by Dr. Michael Beck;
- Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship, directed by Bishop Lisa Weah;
- Global Methodist, directed by Rev. Gregory Stover;
- Global Pentecostal, directed by Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns;
- and Hispanic, directed by Dr. Jorge Ochoa.

The largest of these communities is the Hispanic House of Study (Casa de Estudios Hispana), which is meeting a need for Hispanic/Latino pastors and church leaders ready to pursue a Master of Divinity in their native language. Nearly 50 students from across the United States and Latin America, including students from Mexico, Cuba, Columbia, and Peru, started in the online program in the 2022-2023 academic year.

As United continues to expand its offerings to support church leaders, it is preparing to launch three new Houses of Study in the 2023-2024 academic year: a Korean House of Study, taught 100% in Korean for Korean-speaking students, led by Dr. Seok Jae Jeon; an African Methodist Episcopal Zion House of Study led by Bishop Eric Leake; and a Global Lutheran House of Study led by Dr. Richard Blue, Dr. Tom Thorstad and Dr. Dan Landin.

### Doctor of Ministry

The Seminary is also seeing growth in its Doctor of Ministry program. In 2022-2023, the Doctor of Ministry program has grown to 250 students, an increase of 32% over the past five years. \* Doctoral students at United are actively engaged in ministry and seeking to become more effective leaders for the Church through a Doctor of Ministry degree. Students identify a need within their congregations or communities, and with the support of a peer group, mentor, and United faculty, they develop a model of ministry to address the challenge.

### Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center

Launched in Fall 2021, the Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center, directed by Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, is connecting with pastors, ministry leaders, and congregational members hungry to bring God's renewal to their faith communities. In the past year alone, the Innovation Center has engaged more than 1,000 participants through more than 40 live webinars, training events, and courses. The Innovation Center has also partnered with The Center for Spiritual Formation, a connectional ministry of the Susquehanna Conference of The United Methodist Church, to offer a two-year online training course for those called to the ministry of spiritual direction. In addition, the Center is partnering with two United Methodist conferences to provide its Breakthrough Prayer Initiative training for all clergy in these conferences. Through these and other new opportunities, the Innovation Center seeks to set the stage for the increased vitality of leaders and congregations everywhere.

Dr. Kent Millard  
President

\* *Student data represent 2022-2023 headcount enrollment, as of March 1, 2023.*

*Denominational figures represent those who responded.*

\*\* *Course of Study figures represent the most recent four terms.*

## Wesley Theological Seminary Annual Conference Report 2023

Wesley Theological Seminary continues to grow and thrive through research, innovation, and equipping Christian leaders for real-life ministries.

### ***Course offerings and support that respond to students' needs***

Get the education you need in the format you want.

- Pursue your call in a dynamic community within the corridors of power in Washington, DC, or earn a degree through flexible hybrid and online options from your home! Learn more: [wesleyseminary.edu/study/](https://wesleyseminary.edu/study/)
- Our **FlexMA** is a 36-hour flexible M.A. degree for those preparing for bi-vocational or specialized ministries. Learn more: [www.wesleyseminary.edu/flexma/](https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/flexma/)
- **Wesley offers specializations** in African American church leadership, public theology, military chaplaincy, and certifications in Christian studies, children and youth ministry and advocacy, and health ministry. Learn more: [wesleyseminary.edu](https://wesleyseminary.edu)

Wesley provides \$2 million annually in scholarships, including **full-tuition scholarships** for master's applicants recommended by alums, campus ministers, or Christian service ministries; **Next Call in Ministry scholarships** for students working 10+ years in a non-ministry setting; and **Generación Latinx Scholarships** for emerging Latinx leaders in ministry.

Wesley's **Doctor of Ministry programs** includes relevant tracks such as Church Leadership Excellence, Soul Care, Global Church Leadership, Howard Thurman, and the ground-breaking track on Trauma, Moral Injury, and Christian Life. Journey with a cohort of leaders with online classes and hybrid week-long intensive sessions. Learn more: [wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/](http://wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/)

***Research projects support congregational thriving and envision future ministry.***

Over \$11 million in Grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. undergird Wesley's research into and support of congregational thriving and innovation.

- In collaboration with Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology, Wesley Theological Seminary is developing professional courses and certificates for pastors.
- The **Wesley Innovation Hub** brings together diverse congregational cohorts to learn and practice ministry innovations that engage young adults for social change. Learn more: [wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/](http://wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/)
  - The Wesley Ministry Innovation Fellowship is a one-year, cohort-based experience with community formation, spiritual direction, graduate-level courses, and hands-on experience leading innovation. Each innovator earns a stipend and four graduate academic course credits. Learn more: [wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/design-fellows/](http://wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/design-fellows/)
- **The Lewis Center for Church Leadership's Religious Workforce Project** offers multi-denominational research into current and future needs. [Visit religiousworkforce.com/](http://visitreligiousworkforce.com/)

***Enrich your congregational outreach and explore new dimensions of ministry.***

**The Lewis Center for Church Leadership** conducts leading-edge research for the local church. Find the **Leading Ideas e-newsletter** and **Leading Ideas podcast**, a weekly resource for over 20,000 leaders, at [churchleadership.com](http://churchleadership.com).

The **Community Engagement Institute** embraces a vibrant vision to be the premier center for churches and faith-based organization engaging their communities.

- The online **Health Minister Certificate Program** prepares congregations for public health work in their parishes. Contact: Dr. Tom Pruski, [tpruski@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:tpruski@wesleyseminary.edu).
- The **Center for Public Theology** creates spaces for civil dialogue at the intersection of religion and politics. Visit [wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/](http://wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/).

**The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion** explores the intersection of the arts and theology. Visit [luceartsandreligion.org](http://luceartsandreligion.org).

**Stay connected**

Contact us at (202) 885-8659 or [admissions@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:admissions@wesleyseminary.edu). Follow us on social media—Facebook [wesleyseminary](https://www.facebook.com/wesleyseminary), Instagram [@wesleyseminary](https://www.instagram.com/wesleyseminary), LinkedIn [wesleytheologicalseminary](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wesleytheologicalseminary), and Twitter [@WesTheoSem](https://twitter.com/WesTheoSem).

The Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson  
President, Wesley Theological Seminary

## UNITED METHODIST GENERAL BOARD of HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY: AFRICA UNIVERSITY

United Methodists worldwide celebrated an ‘Ebenezer’ moment in the ministry of Africa University in 2022, marking 30 years of faithfulness, generosity, growth, and impact within and beyond The United Methodist Church.

God’s presence and provision in the life of Africa University are evident, thanks to the prayers and generous support of the Michigan Conference. Thank you! The Michigan Conference invested 77.04 percent of its share of general church giving to support the day-to-day operations of Africa University. At 83.7 percent overall in 2022, giving to the Africa University Fund (AUF) remained resilient in all five jurisdictions in the United States. Supported by strong missional engagement and investment by Michigan United Methodists and church members across the denomination, Africa University embraced new opportunities as it emerged from pandemic-related restrictions in 2022.

**Enrollment:** Strategic recruitment and retention initiatives, including blended learning options, technology upgrades, and additional mental health support and financial aid, helped Africa University achieve a total enrollment at 2,791 students in August 2022. Female students comprised 58 percent of the student population and 23 African nations were represented.

**Academic Growth:** Africa University launched its first new academic unit in almost twenty years—The School of Law—with a pioneer cohort of 20 students pursuing the Bachelor of Laws (Honors) (LLBS) degree program. The institution has five new undergraduate and graduate programs approved for implementation by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), the national accreditation and quality assurance agency.

**Infrastructure expansion:** Construction of a new residence hall for female students at Africa University is ongoing. Funding to build and equip the facility was provided by the East Ohio Conference (EOC). The EOC’s **Teach \* Reach \* Bless** campaign raised more than \$1.5 million.

Africa University’s year-long 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary program culminated in October 2022 with a gathering of more than 3,000 people at its main campus in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Amidst the commemoration and joyful thanksgiving livestreamed to the world, the Rev. Dr. Peter Mageto was formally installed as the fifth vice chancellor (president) of the institution. Mageto, a Kenyan and academician specializing in theological ethics, echoed the gratitude of the students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni of Africa University for the incalculable sum of answered prayers that are the Africa University story. His inaugural address highlighted the optimism and commitment to purpose that are the foundation of the university’s unfolding vision.

“Today, Africa University turns 30. The number 30 is, in itself, a blessed figure. Thirty was the age of our Lord Jesus Christ when he commenced his ministry here on earth. It gives us great faith to be walking resolutely towards the fourth decade,” Mageto said.

Thank you, Michigan Conference, for nurturing change leaders and building an enduring legacy through the ministry of Africa University. Let us continue to journey together—learning, leading, and serving God, all the time, everywhere.

*James H. Salley, President and Chief Executive Officer, Africa University (Tennessee) Inc.  
& Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement, Africa University*