

Bishop, Annual Conference Delegates and Guests:

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the awesome staff of the Fiscal Office. I have said before that any credit for the excellent accomplishments of the office really belong to them. I have been out of the office for almost four weeks prior to the annual conference, I would not have been able to do that without the confidence that I have in the professional capabilities of the people standing before you.

Heidi Mitchell is our Controller, BeLinda Carnegie is our Benefits Coordinator, Sharon Beasley is our Accounting Technician and Terri Pickering is my Administrative Assistant.

I am sure I don't say it often enough, but publicly, I want to say thank you for all that you do and I know that the Conference will want to share their appreciation as well.

In the Dilbert cartoon, Wally is approached by the Catbert the Evil Director of Human Resources leader and told it is time for the mandatory Blood Test. Wally protests that he doesn't take drugs. Catbert replies that he is testing to see if Wally is stealing time from the company. Wally says, "How can you test for that?"

Catberts answer is "We test your general health. If it is good, you are not working enough hours!"

I can assure you the Board of Pension did not consult with Catbert in developing the Health Initiative.

On to the Statistical Report:

We began the year with professing membership of 139,918.

We received 2,391 professing members, less than 1% fewer than in 2104.

We removed 795 members by charge conference action, 71% few persons than in 2014.

We corrected our records by adding 196 members and subtracting 817 members.

It is interesting to note that we transferred in from other United Methodist Churches 1,333 and transferred in from non-United Methodist Churches 1, 332. A difference of 1(one)

We continue to win in the “transfer out” of church membership; to Other United Methodist Churches:1,068 verses 626 to Non-United Methodist Churches.

There was 5% increase in reported deaths in members in 2015: 1,680 in 2015 versus 1,588 in 2014. This statistic is what we would expect to see given the aging population in the United Methodist Church.

We ended 2015 with professing membership of 139,871 a less than 1% decrease over 2014.

There was a net loss of 47 members in 2015.

This is an interesting statistic when you consider that churches corrected last years' report by reducing professing membership by a net 621 persons. That means that absent these corrections we would have had a net gain of more than 500 members.

The reported Average Attendance at weekly worship services decreased slightly from 63,781 in 2014 to 62,646 in 2015 a decrease of 1%.

Although not numerically significant, both the Native American and Hispanic/Latino population increased by 4 and 5 % respectively.

There were 1,751 baptisms in 2015. One Hundred sixty one (161) fewer than in 2014.

You may remember that I mentioned that we learned that one of the measures of vital churches is number of small groups centered on Christian formation.

Weekly attendance in Sunday church school continued to decline while the total categories of Christian formation groups showed increases

The number of persons served by community ministries for daycare and/or education increased by 18% from almost 26,000 in 2014 to almost 32,000 in 2015.

Similarly, the number of persons served by community ministries for outreach, justice and mercy increased by 6% from over 485,000 in 2014 to more than 515,000 in 2015.

Over 25,000 children attended Vacation Bible School in 2015.

Reported market value of church property increased by 2%.

Debt secured by church physical assets was reduced by over six million dollars or 7%.

Building improvement and major equipment purchases decreased by 11%.

Turning to benevolence giving in 2015; churches reported giving more than \$1,650,158 to United Methodist causes not given through the Annual Conference Treasurer's office, a 19% increase.

Giving to non-United Methodist cause showed a decrease of less than 1%.

In 2015, churches reported spending \$361 thousand dollars more on programs and on operating expenses.

I want to express my appreciation to the pastors who made an effort to submit timely and accurate reports and to the Administrative Professionals in the districts for their hard work in following up on delinquent reports and for their attention to detail in validating the reports.

Bishop, this concludes my report for the calendar year 2015.

I will publish this report on the conference web site following Annual Conference.