The 2016 AWFUMC Brochure of Reports

The Great Commission: Sending Disciples

SEND
Seek - Engage - Nurture - Deploy

Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference
Southeastern Jurisdiction
Welcome! We are glad you will be attending the 2016 Annual Conference Session of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. The session will be held at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, AL beginning June 12 - 15, 2016. http://www.awfumc.org/2016annualconference.

Reservations
Visit https://awf-reg.brtapp.com/2016AnnualConferenceReservations if you or members in your group wish to make a reservation for lunch(es), the Spouses Luncheon, the SBC21 Luncheon, the Laity Banquet, volunteer for the UPPER ROOM PRAYER LINE, participate in the Biometric Health Screening (see below), and/or reserve nursery care that is available during a worship service. The online reservation system does NOT register your attendance to annual conference. Attendance is marked and counted at the registration/check-in table inside the host church.

From the Benefits Office
For Clergy participating in the Conference Active Health Insurance Plan, one of the two requirements to avoid a $50.00 personal monthly financial surcharge is to complete a Biometric Health Screening by August 31, 2016. You will have an opportunity to complete the screening at Annual Conference this year. Screenings will take place on Monday, June 13, and Tuesday, June 14, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. This will be a “non-fasting” screening. Laity (this includes clergy family members/dependents) on the Conference Active Health Insurance Plan may also participate in screening but are not required to do so. Individuals (clergy or laity) not on the Conference Active Health Insurance Plan may also participate in the screening (a fee will apply).

Mission Offering
The conference offering will go towards Disaster Relief and Recovery within the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

UMCOR Relief Kits
UMCOR is requesting health kits and school kits. UMCOR kits are distributed globally, and help sustain everyday life for people who lack ready access to essential supplies. Bring your kits to annual conference to the truck in the parking lot at Frazer and Coleman American will ship the kits and supplies on to the Sager Brown depot in Baldwin, Louisiana. Visit http://www.awfumc.org/umcorkitcollection16 for more details.

From the JOURNAL Editor
The 2016 Conference Journal will be available for digital download from the conference website or hard copy purchase from Amazon. Notice of availability and “ordering links” will be announced from the conference office when the Journal becomes available.

From the Conference Secretary
Members of annual conference are encouraged to become familiar with all conference standing rules included in this Brochure of Reports. Specifically Standing Rule 15 and the section entitled Administrative Procedures of the Annual Conference. If you have questions, please contact the conference secretary, David Saliba, at (334) 382-5872.
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2016 Annual Conference **WORKING** Agenda  
The Alabama-West Florida Conference  
**June 12 – 15, 2016**  
Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church, Montgomery, Alabama  
“The Great Commission: SEND Disciples”

**Sunday June 12**

1:00 p.m.  Exhibits, Registration Set Up – Atrium

3:00 p.m.  **Registration Opens - Atrium**  
Cokesbury Bookstore Opens  
Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM) Snack Bar – Servery  
Bishop and Appointive Cabinet Meeting – Parlor  
Tellers Orientation – Wesley Hall

3:30 p.m.  Assistant Secretary Orientation - Wesley Hall

4:00 p.m.  Committee on Petitions and Resolutions room 7201  
Mass Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary

4:30 p.m.  Fellowship of Local and Associate Pastors Meeting rooms 7207/7209

5:00 p.m.  Bishop’s Dinner room 6102  
Memorial Luncheon Set Up room 8114

5:30 p.m.  Board of Ordained Ministry Meeting room 6111  
Mass Choir Meal – Fellowship Hall

6:30 p.m.  **Conference Registration Closes for the Day**  
Mass Choir gathers - Sanctuary  
Opening Worship Processional Gathers

7:00 p.m.  OPENING WORSHIP CELEBRATION – Sanctuary  
Greetings from Host Pastor: Rev. Tim Thompson  
Sermon: Bishop Gregory Palmer, Resident Bishop of the West Ohio Conference  
Music: Mass Choir  
**Mission Offering: AWF Disaster Response and Recovery**

8:30 p.m.  Rehearsal for Ordination and Commissioning Service - Chapel  
Gathering of Pages, Youth Delegates staying at Huntingdon College
Monday June 13
7:00 a.m. Conference Registration Opens (closes at 2:00 p.m.) – Atrium
Experiential Prayer Room
Asbury Foundation Breakfast - 7102

8:00 a.m. Biometric Health Screening (closes at 2 p.m.) - Cokesbury Room
(Persons on Conference Health Plan)

8:30 a.m. Clergy Executive Session – Fellowship Hall
Laity Session – Wesley Hall

9:45 a.m. Break – Preparation for Worship
(Families of deceased clergy and clergy spouses gather in Chapel; members of
annual conference are invited to come by to greet them prior to the memorial
service. AWFC Cabinet and worship participants will gather in Parlor)

10:15 a.m. **ORDER OF THE DAY** - Memorial Service and
Holy Communion – Sanctuary
Liturgist: Rev. Pam Avery
Sermon: Rev. Rurel Ausley

12:00 p.m. General Lunch - Fellowship Hall
Bishop and Cabinet - Parlor
Memorial Service Luncheon - room 8114
Asbury Club Luncheon - North Gym room 8110
Christian Educators Luncheon - room 6107
Wesley Heirs Luncheon - room 6102
Candler Club Luncheon - room 6111
Duke Club Luncheon

1:30 p.m. **CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION** – Wesley Hall
Gathering Music - Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson
Hymn: *And Are We Yet Alive?* UMH #553
Opening Prayer
Welcome from the Host District Superintendent –
Rev. Timothy R. Trent

Opening Business and Organization of the Conference – Wesley Hall
Setting the “bar” of the Conference
Election of secretarial staff
Approval of the 2015 Conference Journal
Adoption of the 2016 Conference Working Agenda
Presentation of the 2016 Consent Agenda
Committee on Resolutions and Petitions (to lie on the table overnight)
Committee on Standing Rules (to lie on the table overnight)
Committee on Nominations
Nominations for Quadrennial Boards
Monday June 13

1:30 p.m. Committee on Episcopacy – Paulette Thompson

Board of Ordained Ministry – Rev. Libba Stinson
Recognition of Commissioning and Ordination classes
Recognition of First-Time Licensed Local Pastors
Recognition of Clergy in Extension Ministries and Appointments
Beyond the Local Church

(Retirees gather in Parlor by 2:30)

3:15 p.m. ORDER OF THE DAY - Recognition of Retiring Clergy – Wesley Hall
Reception for Retiring Clergy

Council on Finance and Administration Meeting

***NO MONDAY EVENING DINNER AT HOST CHURCH***

7:00 p.m. Service of Ordination and Commissioning
First United Methodist Church, Montgomery
Sermon: Bishop Gregory Palmer, Resident Bishop of the West Ohio Conference
Music: First United Methodist Church, Montgomery
Special Offering: Ministerial Education Fund
Reception: Fellowship Hall
First United Methodist Church, Montgomery

Tuesday June 14

7:00 a.m. Conference Registration Opens (closes at Noon) – Atrium
Experiential Prayer Room
COSROW Breakfast - 6111
Deacon Breakfast - 6102
Upper Room Prayer Line – Room 3131
334-495-6360 (9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

8:00 a.m. Biometric Health Screening (closes at 2 p.m.) - Cokesbury Room
(Persons on Conference Health Plan)

CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION – Wesley Hall
Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson
Opening Prayer

Report of the Journal Committee – Rev. Fred Zeigler

Action on Standing Rules – Rev. Fred Zeigler
Action on Resolutions and Petitions – Rev. Kathy Knight
Tuesday June 14
8:30 a.m. Teaching Session: Dr. Kevin Watson - Wesley Hall
Candler School of Theology
‘No Holiness but Social Holiness’: The Theology and Practice of
Wesleyan Small Group Formation

9:45 a.m. Break

10:00 a.m. Teaching Session: Dr. Kevin Watson - Wesley Hall
Candler School of Theology
Reclaiming the Wesleyan Class Meeting Here and Now

11:30 a.m. Connectional Ministries – Rev. Cory Smith
Clergy Spouses (active, retired, surviving) Gathering - 7202/04
Welcome from the host district: Mrs. Linda Trent

12:00 Noon General Lunch – Fellowship Hall
Bishop and Cabinet – Parlor
Spiritual Formation - rooms 7207/7209
Birmingham-Southern Luncheon - room 6111
SBC 21 (Strengthening the Black Church) - room 7208
Young Clergy Luncheon - room 6102

1:30 p.m. ORDER OF THE DAY
Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson

General Conference Report – Steve Furr and Rev. Lawson Bryan

Conference Board of Laity – Steve Furr

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry – Rev. Rob Couch
Greetings: Dr. Edward F. Leonard III, President, Birmingham-Southern College
Dr. Cam West, President, President Huntingdon College

Francis Asbury Award

2:30 p.m. Break

2:50 p.m. Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson
Tuesday June 14
2:50 p.m. Special Awards and Recognitions

Denman Evangelism Award – Division of Evangelism – Rev. Allen Newton
Alice Lee Award – COSROW – Ruth Ann Powers
Local Church Heritage Award – Archives and History – Rev. Pam Avery; Sharon Tucker

Methodist Homes Corporation – Christopher Tomlin

United Methodist Children’s Home (UMCH) - Blake Horne

AWF Special Presentations

Conference Announcements and Recess

5:00 p.m. Laity Banquet - Mary Ellen Bullard Address – Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, June 15
No conference registration

7:00 a.m. Experiential Prayer Room

8:00 a.m. Organization of Conference Boards and Agencies

Administrative Review Committee - room 7201
Board of Congregational Development - room 7203
Board of Ordained Ministry - rooms 7207/09
Commission on Equitable Compensation - room 7205
Ministerial Committee on Investigation - room 7202
Conference Board of Trustees - room 7204
Standing Rules Committee - room 7206

8:30 a.m. CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION – Wesley Hall

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson
Opening Prayer

Report of the Journal Committee – Rev. Fred Zeigler

Action Item: Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits
Rev. Bob McKibben

Task Force on the Work of the Districts – Shirley Woodie

Action Item: Commission on Equitable Compensation
Rev. Matt Mobley
Wednesday, June 15

8:30 a.m. Council on Finance and Administration – Beebe Frederick
   **Action Item:** 2017 Conference Budget
   Statistician’s Report – Frank Dunnewind

   Break

   Report of the Cabinet – Wesley Hall – Rev. Timothy Trent
   Change in Charge Lines
   Property Resolutions

   Closing Business of the Conference
   Where shall the 2017 session be held?
   Courtesies and Appreciation – Rev. Wesley Wachob

11:00 a.m. **ORDER OF THE DAY** – Sending Forth Service - Wesley Hall
   Fixing of the Appointments
   Gathering Music: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson
   Opening Prayer

Noon Adjournment *Sine Die*

***NO WEDNESDAY LUNCH AT HOST CHURCH***
Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer was assigned as Episcopal Leader of the Ohio West Area of The United Methodist Church on September 1, 2012.

Born and reared in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Bishop Palmer is a “child of the church,” the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Herbert E. and Charlotte Sue Hewitt Palmer. Bishop Palmer’s father is a retired United Methodist pastor; his mother (now deceased) was a school teacher in the Philadelphia Public School system. Rev. Herbert Palmer and his wife Peggy reside in Philadelphia.

In 2000, Bishop Palmer was elected to the episcopacy by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference. He was assigned to the Iowa Area where he served until assuming responsibilities in the Illinois Area in 2008. Bishop Palmer served as president of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry from 2004 to 2008 and president of the Council of Bishops from April 2008 to May 2010.

Bishop Palmer has been married to Cynthia for 39 years. They are the parents of two adult children -- Monica, who is a Middle School Administrator in Charlotte, North Carolina and Aaron, who is a manager at a technology company in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Mrs. Palmer is an honors graduate in religion of Duke University. She is a Senior Sales Director with Mary Kay Cosmetics. She has served as a Director of Christian Education and as staff of several Community Action Agencies focused on Welfare to Work projects. She is an outstanding student and teacher of the scriptures and has a strong interest in women’s leadership development.
Before joining the Candler faculty in 2014, The Rev. Dr. Kevin M. Watson taught at Seattle Pacific University and Perkins School of Theology.

His research interests focus on Christian formation and discipleship from a Wesleyan perspective, particularly communal formation, Wesleyan/Methodist Christianity, the history of early Methodism, American Methodism, common misunderstandings of the Wesleyan tradition, and current events in The United Methodist Church.

In addition to writing articles for both scholarly and popular publications, Watson is the author of three books, including Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley’s Thought and Popular Methodist Practice (Oxford Univ. Press, 2014). He is currently working on a history of the development and fragmentation of American Methodism as a theological tradition.

Watson is an ordained elder in Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church, and is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the American Society of Church History, and the Wesleyan Theological Society.

Dr. Watson’s teaching sessions will be Tuesday, June 14, 2016 and titled “‘No Holiness but Social Holiness’: The Theology and Practice of Wesleyan Small Group Formation” and “Reclaiming the Wesleyan Class Meeting Here and Now”.

TEACHING SESSION – WESLEYAN CLASS
MEMORIAL SERVICE

Now in his 19th year, Rurel Ausley is the Lead Pastor at Crosspoint, a multisite United Methodist congregation in the Florida Panhandle. Crosspoint currently has campuses in Niceville, South Crestview, North Crestview, and plans to open the fourth campus this winter. The church has grown in its weekend attendance from 1,000 to over 3,300 in the past 18 years, making it a part of the Leading Edge, a grouping of the 100 largest United Methodist Churches in the nation. Crosspoint has also been recognized as one of the fastest growing large membership UM churches.

Rurel and Crosspoint are very involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo where Crosspoint has built 34 churches and two parsonages in the last five years. Rurel has made 7 trips to Africa in 7 years training pastors for leadership, dedicating churches, and helping them understand the dynamics of the denomination’s General Conference.

An Elder in the Alabama West-Florida Conference, Rurel was elected in 2008 and 2012 by the Alabama West Florida Conference to the denomination’s General Conference and six times to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

Rurel received his B.A. degree in Sociology/Bible from Asbury University (76), and his Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary (80) in Wilmore, Kentucky. It was in seminary that he met and married his wife, Lisa, proving that library romances really do work! Lisa is a graduate of Asbury University (77) and Asbury Theological Seminary (80) and is a Deacon in the UM church, now serving at the Crosspoint, South Crestview Campus. They have three adult sons: Matthew (Kristin), Andrew (Ellen), and Luke, and two grandsons: Levi (20 months) and Benaiah (7 months).
Robert Henry McMichael, III, is a fifth generation Atlantan. A product of the Atlanta Public Schools, Robert is a 1999 graduate of Morehouse College and a 2009 graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

Robert has distinguished himself as a writer, lecturer, vocalist, and organist. He has served in numerous capacities in churches throughout the Atlanta area. He currently serves the Mt. Bethel/St. Philip United Methodist Church in Marietta as Worship Leader.

Robert believes that it is his calling to “Spread the Liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and song.” It is this calling that has sparked Robert to begin writing his first publication With My Whole Heart: Worship as a Lifestyle. Robert believes that worship should be more than a once a week event, rather; it should be the lifeline upon which Christians thrive.

Robert is an active member of several community and civic organizations: the NAACP, the Boys and Girls Club of America, the American Guild of Organists, the Hampton University Choir Director’s/Organist Guild, and the National Academy of Religion. Robert enjoys water sports, reading, writing, and especially cooking. He is the son of former US Marshal Robert and Kathye McMichael. Robert has adopted as his life’s theme, “Love, The More Excellent Way!”

Jarvis R. Wilson was born in Atlanta on July 14, 1961. He is the youngest of three children born to the late Clarence and Gladys Wilson.

A true lover of gospel music, Jarvis began playing the organ in church at age 10. Currently, he serves as Minister of Music at the Israel Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta. Jarvis’ other activities include Director of the Madison Association Youth Choir, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Gospel Choir, the Blend of Men and the QLS Seniors Chorus.
INTRODUCTION
The Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church shall be organized and structured according to the mandates of the latest edition of The Book of Discipline, and shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church. In keeping with those standards, this conference commits itself to the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race and gender (see ¶ 604.1). The following Standing Rules are adopted by the Alabama-West Florida Conference for its own governance and to fit its specific setting for mission and ministry. The Alabama-West Florida Conference shall follow Roberts Rules of Order except where superseded by explicit rules in The Book of Discipline or in these Standing Rules.

1. These Standing Rules shall be implemented, applied or amended as follows:
   A. These rules shall be effective at the end of the annual conference at which they are passed. All rules remain in effect until they are rescinded or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting on the next day after the proposed amendment has been presented in writing.
   B. Any proposed changes in the Standing Rules should be received in writing by the chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules no later than February 1.
   C. Any of these rules, except Standing Rule (SR) 1D, may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at annual conference.
   D. A change in the number of districts may not be made later than the first business session of the annual conference.

OFFICERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
2. The conference secretary and the Journal editor (nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations, see SR 5B) and the treasurer/statistician and the conference registrar (nominated by the Council on Finance and Administration) shall be elected at the first session of the annual conference following the general conference, with tenure of office to begin on December 1, following their election, and to serve for the succeeding quadrennium. (¶ 603.7 and ¶619)

COMMITTEES RELATING TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
3. There shall be a Committee on Standing Rules, composed of the conference secretary, the director of Connectional Ministries (see SR 5A), the conference treasurer, the Journal editor and five at-large members including the chairperson. This committee shall be nominated by the Committee on Nominations (see SR 5B), shall include both lay and clergy, and shall be elected by the annual conference. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
4. There shall be a Committee on Resolutions and Petitions, composed of four clergy and four lay persons, nominated by the Committee on Nominations, which shall consider all petitions addressed to the general, jurisdictional, and annual conferences. After consideration, the committee shall submit the petitions, with its written recommendation and the rationale for each recommendation, to the annual conference for action. Resolutions shall be submitted to the committee by February 15, except in cases where it can be demonstrated by the author of a late petition that the situation which gave rise to making the petition was not apparent until after the deadline for petitions. The committee shall provide copies of all resolutions submitted by February 15 to all voting members present at the conference session. The maker of the late resolution shall supply these copies of his/her resolution if submitted after February 15. No resolution will be received on the last day of the session.

5. A. The leadership, missional and administrative structures of the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall come together at a “common table” or organization known as the “Connecting Our Resources and Empowerment” Team or CORE Team. The means of electing and appointing representatives connected to the CORE Team, which includes boards, committees, councils, commissions and divisions of the Leadership Team, the Mission Team, and the Administrative Team, are spelled out in these Standing Rules (also see SR 24 and following).

B. There shall be a Committee on Nominations, composed of: the resident bishop, who shall be the chairperson; the conference lay leader; the conference secretary, who shall be the secretary of this committee; the director of connectional ministries; the conference treasurer; the conference presidents of United Methodist Men (UMM) and of United Methodist Women (UMW); a United Methodist youth; the eight district lay leaders; the eight district superintendents; the Conference Resource Center program staff; and three at-large members chosen by the bishop with attention given to the need for inclusive representation. This committee shall nominate persons quadrennially to the CORE Team, conference boards, commissions, committees, councils, etc., as listed in these Standing Rules and as needed by other conference institutions (per the bishop’s discretion). Nominations shall be consistent with the most recent Book of Discipline, with attention given to inclusiveness, diversity and expertise. The committee shall submit its nominations as early as possible in the annual conference session. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

6. There shall be a Committee on Courtesies and Introductions, composed of three lay and two clergy members, which shall be responsible for presentation of visitors to the conference, and for a report in the closing session expressing appreciation to persons and groups who have rendered special services in the program.

7. There shall be a Committee on the Journal, appointed quadrennially by the bishop, composed of two members, who shall examine the minutes of daily sessions for accuracy and report the findings to the conference.
8. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall handle expenses of the conference session. There shall be a Conference Administration Fund, the amount to be fixed annually by the Council on Finance and Administration, with assessments for the fund to be allocated annually to individual pastoral charges on the apportioned formula basis. When the Annual Conference makes available lodging for the annual conference session, CFA will establish reasonable fees. When the Annual Conference makes available meals for the annual conference session, CFA will establish reasonable fees. Conference meals for which there is no charge, shall be funded by the Annual Conference Administration Fund. Instructions shall be provided in advance by the conference registrar. The following persons are eligible for this:

A. The presiding bishop and spouse, all clergy members in full connection and all provisional members;
B. All clergy being admitted as provisional members and all transferred members from other conferences;
C. All associate members and local pastors serving pastoral charges;
D. Local and supply pastors scheduled to receive pastoral appointments;
E. Spouses and surviving spouses of clergy who receive GBOPHB annuities;
F. Clergy from other conferences serving within our conference;
G. Lay members of the conference as specified in SR 14 or duly elected reserve lay members, provided the principal lay members are not in attendance;
H. Diaconal ministers;
I. Up to two youth pages selected from each district (lodging expenses to be paid by their district); and
J. At large lay members, distinguished guests, and those specified in SR 14B.

9. The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee:

A. There shall be an Annual Conference Session Planning Committee, composed of the presiding bishop who shall serve as chairperson, the host district superintendent, the conference secretary, the Journal editor who shall serve as secretary of the committee, the conference registrar, the conference treasurer, the chairperson of the Conference Division of Worship, the director of connectional ministries, the conference lay Leader, the host district lay leader, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the chairperson of the Conference Board of Advocacy and Racial Ethnic Ministries, United Methodist youth, and a United Methodist young adult.

B. The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee shall arrange tentatively the program of the annual conference session, and shall submit the program to the opening session for possible amendment and adoption as its agenda. The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper shall be included in the program.

C. A period of recognition of retiring clergy shall be held during the conference session, with a suitable program arranged by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
D. A memorial service commemorating each clergyperson or “surviving spouse” or diaconal minister who died since the last annual conference shall be arranged by the Commission on Archives and History. The Commission shall also provide a memoir of the deceased for publication in the Journal.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

10. The rules of order of the preceding general conference shall govern parliamentary procedure in this conference in all matters not covered by the standing rules. In order to be recognized to address the conference, each person must identify him/herself as to name and the capacity in which he/she is entitled to speak to the session.

11. Reports and resolutions:
   A. All reports and resolutions shall be consistent with the *Guidelines for Reports*; and shall be placed on the conference agenda by the conference secretary in the order designated by the Annual Conference Session Planning Committee. Proposed resolutions and changes to the conference standing rules shall lie on the conference secretary’s desk for at least one business session before being acted upon by the conference.

   B. By a two-thirds vote of those present and voting an agenda item may be taken up out of order for consideration.

   C. All amendments to reports of boards and agencies as printed in the *Brochure of Reports* and all motions arising from the floor of the conference shall be made in writing to the conference secretary.

   D. At the annual conference session, no materials (handouts, etc.) shall be placed on the pews or seats when the conference is in recess, unless a prior majority vote approves an exception to this rule.

12. In order to expedite the business of the conference, the Consent Agenda Committee, composed of the secretary of the annual conference, the chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules, the director of connectional ministries, and the *Journal* editor, in consultation with agencies or individuals presenting reports, recommendations or resolutions, may present in the *Brochure of Reports* a written list of items which shall be known as the Consent Agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda shall be considered as adopted by consent of the annual conference. An individual item may be removed from the Consent Agenda by a written request signed by twelve lay and/or clergy members of the annual conference and presented to the conference secretary prior to the first business session. When a matter has been removed from the Consent Agenda, it shall be placed into the regular agenda at an appropriate time.
13. Election of General and Jurisdictional delegations:
A. Delegates to the general and jurisdictional conferences shall be elected according to stipulations in ¶ 502.4 and ¶ 515 respectively of the Book of Discipline. In compliance with the 2012 Book of Discipline ¶ 35, all eligible clergy shall be listed on the ballot for General and Jurisdictional Elections. They shall serve in all sessions of these conferences held during the quadrennium. In addition to those delegates funded by the general and jurisdictional conferences, the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall pay the expenses of only one more alternate delegate, lay and clergy, to the general and jurisdictional conferences at the rate paid to the delegates.

B. In the election of delegates, the presiding bishop shall appoint four teams of tellers (two clergy teams and two lay teams), each team consisting of one representative from each district, one of whom shall serve as head teller.

C. In the election of these delegates, the ballots shall be furnished to the conference by the conference secretary at the time of voting. No vote shall be valid unless cast on the ballot designated by the presiding bishop.

D. One year prior to an electing annual conference, the Board of Laity shall make plans and policies regarding the lay elections, and give guidance to laity regarding the process of caucusing, nominating and electing the lay delegation. Following the opening session of the electing annual conference, the laity, in their orientation session, will give opportunity for any persons seeking election (whose name has not been put in nomination in advance) to provide a single printed profile sheet for distribution.

E. A general code of ethical standards will be demonstrated by every candidate, lay and clergy. Every individual’s right to exercise his/her voting or political expression should be consistent with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

F. Endorsements of candidates will be made only by individuals and/or local churches, or the district electing caucus.

14. Annual Conference lay members:
A. Lay members to the annual conference shall be elected yearly in the charge conferences. One youth member to the annual conference (age 12-17) (expenses to be paid by their district) and one young adult member (age 18-30) shall be selected from each district. The conference secretary (if lay), the conference lay leader, the director of conference lay servant ministries, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, a United Methodist youth, the conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), a United Methodist young adult, active deaconesses and home missioners under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, district lay leaders, and diaconal ministers, shall be lay members to the annual conference. (For churches with more than one clergyperson under appointment, see ¶ 32 of the Book of Discipline.)
B. In compliance with the disciplinary requirement (¶ 32) to keep lay representation in the annual conference session equal to that of clergy, the conference secretary shall ascertain whether the upcoming session will be in balance with respect to lay and clergy membership as of January 1 each year. If additional lay members are needed, the conference secretary shall add them using the following guidelines:

1. The first eight shall be the district presidents of United Methodist Women. In the event that fewer than eight are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.

2. The second eight shall be the district presidents of the United Methodist Men. In the event that fewer than eight are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.

3. Next, the secretary shall name an additional youth and young adult from each district. In the event that fewer than sixteen are needed, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.

4. Next the secretary shall name full-time lay workers on the professional staff of the Conference Resource Center.

5. Next the secretary shall name the lay members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

6. Next the secretary shall name lay members of the general and jurisdictional delegations (including alternates) in the order of their election.

7. Next the secretary shall name lay persons who are chairpersons of CORE Team boards, commissions, councils, etc., in the order listed in the CORE organizational document, and the at-large members of the CORE Team.

8. Next the secretary shall name lay members of the Council on Finance and Administration.

9. The remainder shall be at-large members divided among the eight districts and selected by each district. In the event that there is a remainder of less than eight, the secretary shall make the determination on the basis of the last reported church membership totals of the districts, moving from the largest downward in scale.

10. If a person is selected by the above process who is already a member of annual conference as the delegate from his/her church/charge, he or she may serve in the new capacity and thus empower the church’s alternate delegate to attend as the voting representative of the charge. The district superintendent and district lay leader of each district may assist in this process in conjunction with their district’s orientation session in preparation for the annual conference.
15. The Conference Journal and Brochure of Reports: Book of Reports
The publication and distribution of The Annual Conference Journal and the Brochure of Reports Book of Reports shall be supervised by the Editorial Committee, chaired by the Journal editor and composed of the conference secretary, the director of ministerial services, the treasurer/statistician, and the director of connectional ministries. The Journal editor shall be responsible for preparation of the Brochure of Reports Book of Reports and its distribution either in printed or electronic form to all eligible persons. Materials and reports to be included in the Brochure of Reports Book of Reports shall be in the hands of the Journal editor NO LATER THAN the last Monday in February. The Brochure of Reports shall contain an order blank for the Journal. The Brochure of Reports Book of Reports shall contain instructions for ordering the Journal. The Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the cost of each Journal including mailing. All names, addresses, reports, resolutions, and/or other materials to be included in the Journal of the Alabama-West Florida Conference shall be in the hands of the conference secretary no later than ten working days after the close of annual conference.

16. Board Memberships and Trusteeships:

A. With the exception of the Board of Ordained Ministry, no person may serve on more than one quadrennial agency of this conference at the same time. Except as provided by the Book of Discipline, one’s term on a quadrennial agency shall not exceed eight years within any twelve consecutive years. Elected membership on non-quadrennial agencies is limited to no more than eight of any twelve consecutive years, with the exception of the Board of Laity. For the sake of administrative and program continuity, this standing rule shall not apply where existing constitutions require the retiring chair to continue to serve for a period not to exceed two years. The quadrennial agencies are: the Conference Board of Global Ministries, the Board of Discipleship, the Board of Church and Society, the Board of Congregational Development, the Town and Country Commission, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, the Board of Advocacy and Ethnic Ministries, the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Commission on Equitable Compensation, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the Council on Finance and Administration, and the at-large members on the CORE Team.

B. Persons may be enlisted to assist boards and agencies for specific task force responsibilities.

C. No person shall serve on more than one board of trustees or board of directors of institutions or agencies related to this annual conference at the same time. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to mean that persons may not serve concurrently on boards of trustees or directors and as members of quadrennial boards and agencies or ex-officio trustees or directors, where disciplinary provisions apply.
D. Persons who fail to attend and participate in the meetings and programs expected of their elected position for one year without legitimate excuse shall be replaced. The person chosen by the Committee on Nominations to fill the unexpired term may also be elected to serve an additional quadrennium.

E. No person shall serve more than nine consecutive years (three terms) as a trustee of any agency or institution related to this annual conference, nor shall this person be eligible for election again to that board for three years.

17. Organizational stipulations for boards and agencies:

A. All conference program boards, commissions, divisions, and committees, except as provided by the Book of Discipline, shall begin their tenure immediately upon election at annual conference.

B. Every year the Conference Committee on Nominations shall complete its work four weeks before the date set for the regular conference session, in order to inform nominees of their selection and anticipated confirmation.

18. There shall be eight districts in this annual conference.

19. A district conference shall be held annually in each district of this annual conference, with its program year starting in January. The voting membership of the district conference shall be consistent with the directives of the United Methodist Book of Discipline, (¶ 658-659).

20. Each district shall have a District Committee on Nominations composed of the district superintendent as chairperson, and with a membership of three clergy and four lay persons, elected annually. No member may serve for more than three consecutive years with the exception of the district superintendent. The District Committee on Nominations may submit to the district conference the names of one clergy and one lay person for election for each district work area and age-level ministry, and such other persons as are needed for membership to the District Council on Ministries or District CORE Team. Persons to be nominated shall be consulted by their district superintendent prior to the submission of their names. The District Committee on Nominations may fill vacancies with replacements to take office immediately. Such persons shall be confirmed at the next meeting of the district conference (¶ 659.1).

21. Neither a district superintendent nor a paid staff person of the annual conference shall serve as an elected member on a quadrennial board, commission, or committee, except as specifically provided by the Book of Discipline. Vacancies occurring by appointment of members of boards, divisions, commissions and committees to the district superintendency shall be filled by the conference session when such appointments are made.
22. In the allocation of askings on the formula basis, the financial strength of the church shall NOT include monies expended for the following items:
A. Principal and interest on capital indebtedness.
B. Buildings and capital improvements.
C. General Advance Specials and World Service Special Gifts.
D. Conference Advance Specials.
E. Remittances by United Methodist Women to the conference treasurer.
F. Remittances to any authorized conference capital fund campaign.
G. Remittances to the Birmingham-Southern College Scholarship Fund and/or capital gifts.
H. Remittances to Huntingdon College Scholarship Fund and/or capital gifts.
I. Children’s Home White Christmas Offering and Homes for the Aging/
   Fountain of Love offering.
J. Special Day Offerings of the General Church: (One Great Hour of Sharing, etc.)
K. All apportioned funds from the General Church, the conference and the districts.
L. Benevolences paid directly by the local church.
M. Direct billing for pension and health benefits.

23. The treasurer of the annual conference shall make the final settlement regarding apportionments, and disburse all funds to the annual conference boards, commissions and committees or treasurers after the close of the fiscal year, following the guidelines of zero-based budgeting.

BOARDS AND AGENCIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

24. There shall be a Conference CORE Team, as outlined in the “Plan of Organization for the Alabama-West Florida Conference.” Policies or procedures for the CORE Team shall be guided by the most current Book of Discipline. The “Plan of Organization for the Alabama-West Florida Conference” shall be available on the conference website. Other offices, program boards, commissions, etc., as required by the Discipline but not a part of the CORE Team, are also authorized. Also see SR 5.

25. There shall be a Golden Cross fund and offering to aid medical needs of conference members/pastors. The chair of Golden Cross shall be nominated by, and shall report to, the CORE Team Division of Missions.

26. There shall be a Conference Policies and Personnel Committee appointed by the Bishop and approved by the CORE Team. The Committee shall establish uniform and equitable policies and procedures in the employment of Conference Resource Center personnel. It shall be the goal of our annual conference that all conference and district offices maintain reasonably consistent and inclusive policies regarding personnel, as is appropriate to each locale.

27. There shall be a Board of Ordained Ministry as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 635).
28. There shall be a Board of Laity, as described in the Book of Discipline (¶ 631), which shall be composed of the conference lay leader, the district lay leaders, the conference president of United Methodist Women (UMW), an additional officer of UMW, the conference president of United Methodist Men (UMM), the conference scouting coordinator, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries (LSM), an additional officer of LSM, a United Methodist youth, and a United Methodist young adults, and the first elected lay delegate to general conference. Additionally, the following shall serve ex-officio: the presiding bishop, one cabinet representative, and the director of connectional ministries.

29. The conference lay leader shall be nominated by the Conference Board of Laity and elected by the annual conference at the time of quadrennial reorganization. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. The conference lay leader may serve no more than two succeeding quadrennia as the conference lay leader. All other officers within the Board of Laity shall be elected by the board. Vacancies in the office of conference lay leader shall be filled by nomination from the board in the interim, and confirmed at the following annual conference.

30. There shall be an Academy for Congregational Excellence, Inc. as authorized by the CORE Team, composed of officers and board members specified in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Academy for Congregational Excellence.

31. There shall be a Commission on Equitable Compensation as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 625), composed of twelve members, six lay and six clergy, at least one clergy and one lay being from churches with fewer than 200 members. In addition, one superintendent named by the cabinet and a staff person from the fiscal office shall be members.

32. There shall be a Commission on Archives and History as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 641). Eight members shall be elected by the annual conference at the beginning of each quadrennium for a term of four years. Ex-officio members with vote shall include a representative from Huntingdon College, the conference historian (unless receiving compensation), the president of the AWFC Historical Society, the resident bishop, and the conference secretary. The Archivist shall be an ex-officio member without vote. A chairperson, vice-chairperson, and recording secretary/financial secretary, shall be elected by the commission.

33. There shall be a Board of Pension and Health Benefits as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 639), composed of eighteen members elected to 8-year terms, arranged in four-year classes to include representatives of both lay and clergy of both sexes. The Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave shall be constituted as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 652), with efforts made to be inclusive.

34. There shall be an Assembly Grounds Board of Trustees, constituted as authorized by a Corporation Charter from the State of Alabama, record of which can be found on page 112 of the 1958 Journal of our Annual Conference, and all
amendments thereto. The current Articles of Incorporation and bylaws shall be available on the conference website.

35. There shall be a Council on Finance and Administration as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 611), composed of eight lay, five clergy members, and the ex-officio members as specified in ¶ 612. Unless the following are otherwise reimbursed, the CFA shall pay from the Conference administrative budget the reasonable and relevant expenses (as set or approved by CFA) of: the conference secretary’s office; expenses of the Council on Finance and Administration; all expenses of printing, honoraria, and incidental expenses connected with annual conference sessions; expenses of cabinet meetings; expenses of all conference agencies and special committees not participating in the conference benevolence budget; room and board at annual conference of agencies and special committees meeting with the Council on Finance and Administration for the purpose of making budget requests; honoraria of the conference secretary and assistant secretaries for annual conference, the registrar and assistants, the Journal editor; all expenses incurred by the Journal Editor in preparing/printing the Brochure of Reports Book of Reports and the conference Journal.

36. There shall be an Episcopal Residence Committee as provided by the Book of Discipline (¶ 638), composed of the chairperson of the Committee on Episcopacy, the president of the Annual Conference Board of Trustees, the president of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, and two at-large representatives selected by the bishop. Efforts shall be made to keep membership inclusive, and at least two members of this committee shall be women.
CONSENT AGENDA

The following reports indicated by agency name and beginning page number are a part of the CONSENT AGENDA. They will be considered as having passed by consent of the annual conference unless they are removed from the CONSENT AGENDA on Monday, June 13, at the afternoon session. PLEASE READ THE REPORTS CAREFULLY PRIOR TO THE ABOVE DATE. (See Standing Rule Number 12.)

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RESOLUTIONS

A Resolution Calling for Death Penalty Reform in Alabama

“Whoever is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone.” (John 8:7)

WHEREAS, Jesus made it clear with this statement that no one has the moral authority to condemn a fellow human to death, and

WHEREAS, Alabama has executed 56 people since 1983 and currently holds 185 people who have been condemned to death, and

WHEREAS, nearly 40 of these individuals were sentenced by a judge who imposed the death penalty despite a jury’s recommendation for life without parole, a practice currently being applied only in Alabama courts, and

WHEREAS, in the United States in 2015 five Death Row inmates were exonerated, one of whom spent 30 years on Alabama’s Death Row before being freed after prosecutors were persuaded to retest evidence, and

WHEREAS, many of the defendants receiving death sentences are low-income and cannot afford attorneys with experience in capital cases, and

WHEREAS, Alabama lacks a statewide system of public defender attorneys, and

WHEREAS, Alabama is also the only state in the country without a state-funded program to provide legal assistance to death row prisoners, and

WHEREAS, Jesus Himself was the victim of an unjust trial and was unjustly executed as a result, giving rise to the possibility that other condemned individuals may be unfairly convicted, and

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states in Social Principle 164G that “we believe in the resurrection of Christ and that the possibility of reconciliation with Christ comes though repentance,” and that, “this gift of reconciliation is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness,” and “for this reason, we oppose the death penalty and urge its elimination from all criminal codes,”

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, in the love of Christ, who preached nonviolence in all human interaction, calls for a moratorium on all state executions, and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that United Methodists in the Alabama-West Florida Conference who are residents of Alabama be encouraged to contact their state legislators and urge this and other reforms to Alabama’s death penalty laws, and
LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Alabama and every member of the Alabama State Legislature.

Submitted by the Conference Board of Church and Society

Resolution Supporting Harm Reduction for LGBTQ Teens

WHEREAS, according to the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, “We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons,”(¶161 F); and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church has affirmed its commitment to be in ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, and points out that “an individual confronting his or her own minority sexual orientation and/or that of a close family member, friend, or associate often experiences isolation, confusion, and fear when he or she needs information, guidance, and support, and we recognize that teens dealing with questions about sexual orientation are at a greater risk for suicide” (#2041, 2012 Book of Resolutions); and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that LGBT teens who experienced high levels of rejection at home were more than eight times as likely as their peers to have attempted suicide, six times more likely to report high levels of depression, three times more likely to use illegal drugs, and three times more likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases; and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church has also affirmed its opposition to homophobia and heterosexism, and its opposition to “all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual practice, or sexual orientation” (#2042, 2012 Book of Resolutions); and

WHEREAS, even though our church has diverse opinions on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, our challenge is to figure out how to share the Good News and be in ministry together in spite of our differences, we should share a commitment to do no harm, to do good by strengthening families, and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the United Methodist churches of the Alabama-West Florida Conference will educate families about how to respond with love to their youth who share that their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression that may not conform to their family’s expectations; this response includes affirming the value and sacred worth of their youth, maintaining safe spaces and not severing ties with their youth, and demonstrating respect for their youth. It is not necessary for parents to agree with their children in order to demonstrate God’s love.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that where possible, United Methodist churches of the Alabama-West Florida Conference will work with local schools to encourage best practices for creating safe spaces, reducing bullying, and showing gracious love to youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or who question their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Submitted by:
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850-324-9874
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and
Jeremy Rasler, member, FUMC, Pensacola
(this resolution is modeled after the one of the same name that passed last year at the North Alabama Annual Conference, with permission from the author)

RATIONALE for proposed Resolution Supporting Harm Reduction for LGBTQ Teens:

Although there are diverse opinions about theology and polity in our church, especially around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, we are committed to reducing homelessness and to reducing risk and harm to youth.

Dr. Caitlin Ryan has studied the effect of family acceptance and rejection on mental health outcomes for youth and young adults. Some of her most relevant work has been done with conservative Mormon (Church of Latter Day Saints) families. Ryan consistently points out that it is not necessary for most families to change their faith commitments or religious practices to love their children. Parents learn that they do not have to agree with their children to defend their children’s rights, advocate for them against bullying, and support them in loving ways. Her research has helped make the Mormon Church more welcoming to those with whom they disagree.

In her research, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender teens who experienced high levels of rejection at home were more than eight times likely to have attempted suicide, six times likely to report high levels of depression, three times more likely to use illegal drugs, and three times more likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted disease. These risk factors persist well into adulthood. In addition, as many as 40 percent of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Many of these youth are on the streets because their families shut them out of their homes.

Dr. Ryan points out that even families who reject their children most strongly, cutting them off from their friends, shutting them out of their homes, or subjecting them to conversion therapy, do so because they are motivated by love and fear; they do not want their children to be at risk. Yet these very rejecting behaviors lead to the most harmful outcomes.
Recent teen suicides highlight the importance of family support and the dangers of “conversion therapy.” Since families often resort to these tactics because of their religious beliefs, churches have a special obligation to train families in best practices for reducing such harm.

Because of our diverse opinions on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, the United Methodist Church is uniquely positioned to help families, even those with strong religious convictions against homosexuality, to adopt less rejecting behaviours toward their children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

This resolution builds on General Conference resolutions #2041 and #2043 by specifically naming family education and partnering with schools as a key component of reducing harm to LGBT youth.


ACADEMY FOR CONGREGATIONAL EXCELLENCE (ACE)

The Academy for Congregational Excellence, also known as ACE, is a ministry serving the Alabama-West Florida Conference that has a vision of “Effective Leaders, Fruitful Churches, and a Transformed World.” We want to meet the needs of clergy and laity across the Conference to help them grow in their capacity to make disciples of Jesus Christ who will, in turn, become disciple-makers. Good leaders raise up other leaders. This exponential focus will enable us to live into the mission of The United Methodist Church: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In response to surveys from across the Conference, ACE has tried to address the most vital areas where there is need for help and growth. One of our most successful ministries has been the offering of the Becoming a More Effective Leader sessions for the past 3 years. Approximately 113 clergy and laity have enrolled and participated in this course, and the feedback has been very positive. Several pastors brought staff and laity to go through the sessions together.
The 10 sessions held this year (August 2015-May 2016), were led by laity and clergy who volunteered their time to lead the sessions and provide materials for each participant to take home and compile a resource book. The facilitators were excellent and addressed topics that directly spoke to the stated needs from our survey. The cost for the whole course is only $150, and that includes lunch. We appreciate Frazer Memorial UMC providing our place to meet and preparing meals.

The topics covered were:

**Presenting Yourself as a Leader** Dr. Lawson Bryan  
**Organizing & Leading Fruitful Meetings** Rev. Dan Morris  
**Personality Profiles** Barbara Sadler  
**Effective Delegation** Pete Land  
**Team Building** Pete Land  
**Managing Your Time & Your Life** Dr. Shirley Woodie  
**Resolving Conflict in Healthy Ways** Rev. Ron Ball  
**Ordering the Life of the Church** Bishop Paul Leeland  
**Financial Responsibilities & Stewardship** Dr. Karl Stegall  
**From Membership to Discipleship** Panel Discussion

Also, the **Academy for Ministry with Children** is under the ACE umbrella. Designed for persons seeking training in children’s ministry, the Academy for Ministry with Children offers local church workers a two-year cycle of courses toward paraprofessional certification. Pam Barnhardt coordinates this wonderful ministry designed to equip persons to help children understand and experience faith in Christ. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them.” This is the focus of this ministry.

Please go to our website at [www.AWFACE.org](http://www.AWFACE.org) to find information on this ministry, along with many other helpful links. Also, ACE has a Facebook page we would like you to visit and use to communicate with us. We are happy to receive your inspirational thoughts, suggestions, and general comments as we all seek to become faithful disciples and disciple-makers. You can also email Rev. Ron Ball, the Director of ACE, at tball8859@yahoo.com to ask questions or offer information and suggestions.

In addition to these ministries, we also cooperate with **Catapult** events that point us toward being an “externally focused church”. Remember, our call is to “GO” into all the world. This year we hope to launch more ministries that can be taken to your churches and districts to equip clergy and laity to become better spiritual leaders. Information will follow through our website, Facebook, and the AWF Conference website.

We appreciate your prayers and any support you can provide to help ACE go to the next level. If you are having a special event that we can help you with, please do not hesitate to call ACE. This is YOUR ministry and we want to make it effective for each and all. We do believe that every church can be fruitful in
making disciples when we become more intentional in reaching out to others. Together, we can work with God in the transformation of this world which John 3:16 tells us that God “so loves.”

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Ron Ball, Director
The Academy for Congregational Excellence

COMMUNITIES OF TRANSFORMATION

Communities of Transformation (COT) is an innovative ministry with those who live without enough. Yes, without enough money, but also without enough encouragement, enough direction, enough positive role models, enough friendships, enough love… Without enough hope!

COT is a ministry among a diverse gathering of people who have one common goal – to work toward making life better for all members in the community. Intentional and often unlikely friendships are developed, bridging the socioeconomic, cultural, and racial gaps that often divide us. Participants enter a safe and nurturing atmosphere where they can dream about a more stable future for themselves, where they can develop clear goals, and a pathway to a better place.

COT News This Year
The most obvious news may be that Circles of Transformation has recently undergone a name change and is now “Communities of Transformation.”

Other big news is that COT is firmly launched in six communities now – Brewton, Dothan, Eufaula, Mobile, Phenix City, and Selma. During the past year, nearly 500 volunteers were engaged in this ministry initiative in these six communities. More than 13,500 volunteer hours were invested in building hope in the lives of others.

More news is that in spring 2016, Robert Lupton, the author of Toxic Charity, made presentations in the Conference at the invitation of Communities of Transformation. The subtitle of Lupton’s book Toxic Charity is How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse It). Lupton’s message is clear. If we do for others what they can do for themselves, we are causing harm. Bob Lupton is a dynamic speaker and author, and earns the right to speak into these issues, based upon his 45 years of experience in ministry with the poor in Atlanta.

After his time here, Lupton had the following words to say about the AWF’s initiative, Communities of Transformation:

Communities of Transformation is an entirely new way of doing church – a new wineskin to contain new wine that the Spirit is pressing out in this season. No buildings, no pastors, no politics. It is a lay-led movement growing in local soil, connecting diverse neighbors, building relationships that have lasting
and redemptive impact. The movement takes seriously, and quite literally, the Great Command to love God and love neighbor, including neighbors on the sidelines of society. As meals are shared, personal stories presented, prayers and resources exchanged, trust deepens and community happens. Is this not an authentic expression of the Shalom God intended for his earthly family?

Communities of Transformation is grateful for Lupton’s words! It encourages the ministry as we look to the next steps. During 2016, up to six new COT communities will be under development. Nearly all of the COT sites are staffed by an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). VISTA members are always local, and are most often identified by and from within the UMC church. They serve and provide leadership in their hometown, where their chief job is to coordinate all of the volunteers engaged in this initiative. On exception is in Mobile, where that site has been staffed by a young UMC missionary, a Global Missions Fellow.

During this past year, the COT Communications VISTA created a website, CommunitiesofTransformation.org, and initiated a monthly newsletter. Newsletters are archived at the above website. You can also learn more about COT at our Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/CommunitiesofTransformation. If you want additional information, you can contact COT Coordinators, Fred and Laurel Blackwell, at 334.524.3652, or at laurel@awfumc.org.

CONFERENCE CORE TEAM
CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

It has been a joy to serve the Alabama-West Florida Conference as the Director of Connectional Ministries (DCM). I have had the privilege of working in partnership with Bishop Leeland and our Conference Lay Leader, Dr. Steve Furr, the Cabinet and many clergy and lay leaders. I appreciate the synergy of leadership found in working with all of the Conference ministries staff. They include, Traci Herndon, Brittney Herndon, Rev. Dan Pezet, Susan Hunt, Martha Rovira, Sandy Gutting, Amelia Fletcher, Fred and Laurel Blackwell, Rev. Neil McDavid, and our new youth ministry liaison, Rev. Jeremy Steele. This amazing team of leaders enables our Conference to live into the mission of the church, “To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

We have so much to celebrate in our conference. I am amazed to think that the churches in our conference united to save 100,000 lives through Imagine No Malaria Campaign. This deadly disease was in existence in the area of our Conference in the last century and now due to the efforts of so many churches, a deadly disease will soon come to end for many in sub-Saharan Africa. Thank you!

We know that our area of the world is always a place where natural disasters can occur. Many volunteers from our churches have responded to disasters imposed in our area in places like Elba, Century, and Pensacola in recent months. Thanks to
Amelia Fletcher and the many folks who assist in disaster response, your church is making a difference in these communities within our Conference. Thank you!

This year the CORE Team spent time aligning conversation and focus around four areas: 1. Creating New Places for New People and Renewing Existing Congregations, 2. Becoming more intentional about being in ministry with the poor, 3. Supporting the growth of young people in leadership and ministry, and 4. Resourcing our local church leaders to appreciate and reflect the strength of multicultural diversity in our local churches and communities.

In the area of Creating New Places for New People and Renewing Existing Congregations, we noticed that 17 new places of worship began in our Conference in recent years. These new places all look different. Some of the new places are part of a multi-site community, created from an existing congregation. Other new places began as a missionary pastor moved into a community and formed a worshipping community. In our conversations we asked, “What is working well in our Conference?” This has led to a future Conference event that will occur at Crosspoint UMC in Niceville. Crosspoint is producing great fruit for the Kingdom of God through the creation of multi-site places for new people. We look forward to discovering what God will teach our Conference in a training event August 12-13, 2016.

We also began a conversation with Fresh Expression US. A Fresh Expression of church is a distinctive way for churches to reach out to people who may never venture through the doors of a typical church building. It is our hope to host a Vision Day for Fresh Expressions for lay and clergy leaders in the near future.

Under the leadership of Rev. Dan Pezet, the Antioch Project has brought new energy and life to congregations. This partnership in ministry enables churches to move from effectiveness to excellence. As of the this report, Rev. Pezet has engaged 15 congregations with coaching, community demographic information, and invaluable insight in the areas of mission, vision and values for a thriving congregations.

During this year Communities of Transformation went through a re-branding as they continued this ministry of helping our Conference engage in ministry with the poor. This spring Robert Lupton, author of Toxic Charity, met in two locations in our conference understand a new paradigm of ministering with the poor. Following his visit to our Conference, Mr. Lupton shared these observations:

**Communities of Transformation** is an entirely new way of doing church – a new wineskin to contain new wine that the Spirit is pressing out in this season. No buildings, no pastors, no politics. It is a lay-led movement growing in local soil, connecting diverse neighbors, building relationships that have lasting and redemptive impact. The movement takes seriously, and quite literally, the Great Command to love God and love neighbor, including neighbors on the sidelines of society. As meals are shared, personal stories presented, prayers
and resources exchanged, trust deepens and community happens. Is this not an authentic expression of the Shalom God intended for his earthly family?

In February 2016, Rev. Jeremy Steele began serving as the **liaison for youth ministry** for our Conference. In this new role, Rev. Steele will spend time helping coordinate and provide training for youth workers in our conference that will help them grow in personal holiness and professional effectiveness as a youth workers. He will also oversee the Youth Workers Roundtable and be available to coach churches who are interested in supporting the growth of young people in their community.

I am grateful for the **Task Force of Inclusiveness** that was led by Rev. John Brooks and Rev. Sara Shaver from the Cabinet. This important plan of inclusiveness builds upon previous work in our conference and will soon begin helping our churches and communities grow in the appreciation of our multi-cultural Conference area. This work will include resourcing larger churches to employ staff to reflect their community, engaging in summer internships, intentionally developing new leaders and recruiting seminarians of diversity to lead ministries in our conference. This Plan of Inclusiveness will also create a quadrennial training for all conference leaders to grow in their intercultural competency.

Again, it has been a joy to work alongside so many talented and faithful leaders in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. I am thankful for the good work that God is doing through the United Methodist Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Cory Smith
Director of Connectional Ministries

**DISASTER RESPONSE and RECOVERY MINISTRY**

Currently in the Alabama-West Florida Conference there are four recovery operations in progress: 2014 Alabama/Florida Panhandle Floods, Christmas Flooding Coffee County, Alabama and tornado recoveries in Century and Pensacola, Florida. We are thankful for the support of the Conference staff, volunteers, and UMCOR. We have 12-24 months ahead of us again in recovery efforts.

**Event Summaries**

**Alabama/Florida Panhandle Recovery:** Thanks to an UMCOR grant, 5 full-time staff served the people of Baldwin, Alabama and Escambia, Okaloosa/Walton Counties Florida. Based in Gulf Breeze UMC, Lynn Dobry coordinated Florida efforts supported by Eric Schade and Lyle Cooper in case management, volunteer manager K.J. Chafen, and construction manager John Frew. 128 homes were restored in the 18 months of operation. In the last quarter alone 304 volunteers provided 14,199 hours of labor valued at $327,570.00. The Recovery Team was
recognized by the city of Pensacola for their excellence in service and dedication to survivors and our partner agencies valued the talents and resources we provided for the families of Escambia County. The operations will close in March 2016.

Christmas Flooding 2015 Coffee County: Flooding in Elba and surrounding areas occurred Christmas Day. Rev. Michael Lawler led the Methodist response. Thanks to Conference ERT teams much of the initial muck out and cleanup was completed. Lynn Dobry, John Frew, and Amelia Fletcher led a workshop for the long term recovery. Organization and repairs should begin in March, 2016.

Century & Pensacola, Florida Tornadoes 2016: Century experienced an EF2 tornado in February. Homes and business were impacted, but one of the losses was the Century UMC. The sanctuary was a loss and pastor Rev. Janet Lee is helping lead community recovery. Work in the recovery will be a part of our work this year.

Pensacola was also impacted by tornadoes in February. One hundred thirty-eight homes were destroyed or damaged. Assessment is on-going and our response will be with volunteers, leadership, case management, and funding.

Other Programs:
Training and local church preparedness is critical to response and recovery. The Conference has six approved UMCOR trainers and offers Connecting Neighbors to all churches. Our ERT program is evolving and has responded in our impacted areas. District Response Coordinators are the critical link from local community to District to Conference.

The Conference is an active member of both the Alabama and Florida VOAD’s (volunteer organizations active in disaster) and it is in our response and recovery efforts that the blessing of connection becomes even more evident. What an honor it is to serve with the dedicated men and women from all around our Conference.

Respectfully submitted,
Amelia Fletcher, Coordinator
Disaster Response and Recovery

THE TASK FORCE ON THE WORK OF THE DISTRICTS - FINAL REPORT

AUTHORIZATION

The 2014 Annual Conference approved a motion authorizing the bishop to form a task force at his discretion to further discern the restructuring of the district superintendent’s role and the number of districts and superintendents required. In response to this motion, Bishop Leeland appointed a task force of nine members: Rev. Jim Carpenter, Rev. Ed Glaze, Rev. David Hendrix, Mr. Frank Jenkins, Rev. Darren McClellan, Rev. Matt Mobley, Rev. Carolyn Nelson, Rev. Amy Persons-Parkes, and Dr. Shirley Woodie, Facilitator.
The task force was convened in an organizational meeting on February 12, 2015. For the next six months, the task force engaged in a research and discovery process, collecting and processing information needed to make informed recommendations to the annual conference regarding the work of the districts in the Alabama-West Florida Conference (AWFC). More specifically, the task force reviewed the following:

- The responsibilities of district superintendents as specified in the 2012 Book of Discipline.
- A typical annual cycle of activities in which district superintendents in the AWFC participate.
- Responses of AWFC clergy (clergy under appointment to a local church) and laity (lay leaders, PPRC/SPRC chairs, and chairs of administrative boards/church councils) to a task force-developed online survey regarding the role of the district superintendent.
- Comments received from members of the conference regarding the work of the task force.
- Training currently provided for district superintendents in the AWFC.
- Information on existing conference ministries and resources that assist district superintendents in fulfilling their district missional strategist responsibility.
- Demographic information on the eight districts in the AWFC.
- Demographic information from other conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.
- Annual budgets and accounting procedures of seven of the eight districts in the AWFC.
- Estimated costs associated with establishing an additional district in the AWFC.
- Compensation of district superintendents in other conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.
- Members’ reflections on what constitutes fruitful leadership by district superintendents.
- Information from informal discussions regarding the role of the district superintendent and the district office with current and former district superintendents, district administrative assistants, laity, conference staff, and clergy in the AWFC.
- Information from informal discussions with district superintendents and conference staff in other conferences to assess the effects of changing the number of districts in those conferences.
- The 2010 study published by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, entitled The District Superintendent in the United Methodist Church.
- The proceedings of the 2004 called Annual Conference, which led to a reduction in Districts in the AWFC from nine to eight.
- The findings of the 1998-1999 study on the role of the district superintendents in the AWFC.

Following the extensive research and discovery phase, the task force concentrated on analyzing the findings and discerning their implications for the AWFC and its efforts to fulfill the mission of The UMC: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the
transformation of the world. The following questions inherent in the charge to the task force undergirded the analysis and discernment phase:

1. Given the responsibilities of a district superintendent as defined in the 2012 Book of Discipline, is the current number of districts in the Alabama-West Florida Conference (AWFC) adequate to allow district superintendents to fulfill these responsibilities effectively and efficiently?
2. Given the recent trend of reducing the number of districts in other annual conferences, would reducing the number of districts and district superintendents be a desirable option for the AWFC?
3. Given the district superintendents’ responsibility to be the missional strategist for the district, would adding another district or districts be a desirable option for the AWFC?

FINDINGS

Relating to Demographics of AWFC Districts

• Varying demographic factors (geography, concentration of large churches, growth corridors of the conference, sparsely populated rural counties, etc.) make it difficult, if not impossible, to assess and configure comparable workloads among AWFC district superintendents.
• Sixty-four percent of the churches in the AWFC report an average worship attendance of 50 or fewer. The number of churches with an average worship attendance of 50 or fewer ranges from 15 (29% of all churches) in one district to 81 (87% of all churches) in another district.
• The number of charges per district in the AWFC ranges from 43 to 77.
• The number of churches per district in the AWFC ranges from 51 to 101.
• The number of appointed pastors per district in the AWFC ranges from 41 to 84.
• The total church membership per district in the AWFC ranges from 6,541 to 33,596.

Relating to Clergy and Laity Responses to Task Force Survey

• Overall, responding clergy and laity report a fairly high degree of satisfaction in their relationships with their district superintendents. They agree that appointment-making is a high priority for the district superintendents and that having the district superintendent present for the annual charge conference is important. They value their interactions with the district superintendent and offer specific suggestions for strengthening those interactions.
• A vast majority of responding clergy (94%) and a majority of responding laity (57%) indicated that they interact with their district superintendent two or more times per year.
• Responding clergy on average indicated they consider it reasonable to expect the district superintendent to be personally present in their churches 1.9 times per year whereas responding laity on average expect the district superintendent to be in their churches 2.7 times per year.
• A clear majority of responding clergy (83%) and laity (60%) indicated the frequency of their interaction with their district superintendent is sufficient.
A clear majority of responding clergy (75%) and laity (76%) indicated confidence in their district superintendent as mentor and coach. A clear majority of responding clergy (70%) and laity (67%) indicated their district superintendent has sufficient knowledge to effectively advise the bishop in appointment-making. Less than a majority of responding clergy (34%) and laity (45%) indicated that spending more time with their district superintendent would be helpful to them in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. When asked to rank in priority order the importance of eight key roles of a district superintendent, clergy and laity responded as follows:

#1 - clergy and laity: Working with the bishop in appointment-making
#2 - clergy: Serving as missional strategist for the district
#2 - laity: Mentoring and coaching our pastor
#3 - clergy and laity: Presiding over the annual charge conference
#4 - clergy: Coaching my congregation to greater faithfulness
#4 - laity: Recruiting candidates for ministry
#5 - clergy: Serving as my personal mentor and coach
#5 - laity: Coaching our congregation to greater faithfulness
#6 - clergy: Serving as the face of the denomination to my church
#6 - laity: Serving as the missional strategist for the district
#7 - clergy: Recruiting and examining candidates for ministry
#7 - laity: Serving as the face of the denomination to our church
#8 - clergy and laity: Preaching and/or teaching in my/our church

Clergy and laity offered varied responses when asked how the district superintendent could best assist their church in its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Among the frequently mentioned strategies were the following: to communicate successful practices, available tools/resources, and available training; to be the chief encourager in the district; to conduct seminars and workshops for laity and clergy; and to embody, communicate and interpret the vision/mission of the church as a top priority.

When clergy were asked what could be done to help your district superintendent become more familiar with you as a pastor in order to more effectively advise the bishop in the appointment process, the most frequently-mentioned strategies were to meet with small groups of pastors throughout the year and to meet casually with individual pastors in addition to the annual consultation.

When laity were asked what could be done to help your district superintendent become more familiar with your church in order to more effectively advise the bishop in the appointment process, the most frequently-mentioned strategies related to strengthening the communication between the PPRC/SPRC and the district superintendent, and to improving the district superintendent’s knowledge of church leaders, the vision of the local church and the community in which it is located.

Relating to Informal Discussions with AWFC District Superintendents

In informal discussions with task force members, district superintendents report overall satisfaction with their jobs. None of the district superintendents indicated a glaring concern or undue burden related to the current structure of their
responsible. Nor did anyone perceive any discernable benefit to the potential redrawing of district lines. Discussions also revealed that there is a higher degree of acceptance and even enjoyment in performing charge conferences than the task force might have initially assumed. Although district superintendents report that balancing efforts to hear the pastors in the district preach with their own efforts to preach at the churches can be a challenge, the question of whether it is better to preach or to evaluate the preachers may best be determined by the gifts of the individuals involved. In fact, district superintendents emphasize the importance of contextual consideration as a recurring theme for all facets of the superintendent’s work and ministry.

Another notable factor gleaned from conversations with district superintendents is the evident increase in leadership training now required of the superintendents. Such an investment of time and tutelage is appreciated as a means of professional development, but there is some ambiguity over how such newly acquired tools would be best utilized by district superintendents as leaders within the connectional church, or how the training fits specifically into the vision of the Annual Conference. District superintendents report the same is true of the previous incubator groups.

Yet another issue raised in task force members’ discussions with district superintendents is length of tenure in the position. District superintendents noted that, in order to carry out the role of missional strategist for the district, a superintendent needs to remain in place for six years to settle in, build relationships, and implement ministries in the district.

Relating to Functioning of District Offices

• District administrative assistants report a high degree of job satisfaction and a good working relationship with the conference office. At the same time, they report a need for the following: (1) more timely notice and training when changes in forms, database and other operations affecting their work are made at the conference level, (2) regular face-to-face meetings with other district administrative assistants to share best practices relating to their responsibilities, (3) strategies to address the most time-consuming work in the district office: following up with pastors and church personnel who do not meet reporting deadlines or who provide incomplete and inaccurate information in the database and on reports.

• According to the conference treasurer, the responsibilities, work schedules, and compensation levels of persons providing administrative support for a district superintendent vary from district to district. Job descriptions for district administrative assistants are either outdated or nonexistent, and no guidelines exist for determining the work schedules or compensation levels of district administrative assistants.

• The conference does not use a standard chart of accounts for district financial reporting, making an accurate comparison, particularly of costs, among the districts somewhat difficult. The conference treasurer reported that (1) the conference fiscal office provides financial services to the districts but does not control the expenses, (2) many of the income and expenditure line items were created at the request
of a particular district, and (3) some expenses are common to all districts and a consensus chart of accounts would be feasible for those expenses. Given the caveat noted, the task force calculation of costs per district based on the number of local churches ranged from a low of $919 in one district to a high of $2,406 in another district. Total expenditures (Administration and Mission) for 2014 were analyzed for all districts with the exception of the Pensacola District; total expenditures ranged from a low of $85,446 to a high of $141,258.

Relating to Demographic Comparisons of AWFC and Other Conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction (not including The Red Bird Missionary Conference)

Note: Due to reporting differences, some district averages may not be completely comparable among all conferences. Information for comparison was taken from conference websites, and the information was presented in differing forms. Some information appeared to reflect current year information while some reflected prior year data. Therefore, the task force presents the following information only as a very general comparative overview.

• The AWFC averages 57 charges per district while the SEJ averages approximately 69 charges per district. Eleven of the 13 other SEJ conferences have more charges per district than the AWFC.
• The AWFC averages 79 churches per district while the SEJ averages approximately 83 churches per district. Seven of the 13 other SEJ conferences have more churches per district than the AWFC.
• The AWFC total membership is 141,989 while the total membership in the 13 other SEJ conferences ranges from 81,212 to 386,070. Nine of the 13 other SEJ conferences have higher total membership than the AWFC.
• The AWFC averages 17,748 members per district while the SEJ averages approximately 21,276 members per district. Seven of the 13 other SEJ conferences have more average members per district than the AWFC.

Relating to Financial Support of District Superintendents in the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ)

• Based on an April 27, 2015, email sent to the conference treasurers of the fourteen SEJ Annual Conferences to determine the compensation of district superintendents, the following responses were received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Conference</th>
<th>Base Compensation</th>
<th>Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama-West Florida</td>
<td>$114,980</td>
<td>Paid by district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Parsonage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holston</td>
<td>95,010</td>
<td>Paid by district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>80,108</td>
<td>18,000 (If the district has no parsonage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>20,000 housing, $10,000 utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>88,706</td>
<td>Districts pay housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Alabama</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Conference</td>
<td>Base Compensation</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>105,153</td>
<td>28,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Georgia</td>
<td>118,614</td>
<td>32,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>96,101</td>
<td>Information not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Georgia</td>
<td>104,889</td>
<td>20,000 (If the district has no parsonage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>18,000 – 20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>Paid by district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western North Carolina</td>
<td>99,470</td>
<td>Parsonage or Housing Allowance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relating to Effects of Reducing the Number of Districts in Other Conferences

The task force was unable to obtain precise data from other conferences on the impact of reducing the number of districts. Members of the task force contacted individuals in other annual conferences where adjustments in the number of districts have been made. All of these conferences reduced the number of districts, which lowered the cost of operations within the annual conference. However, it was discovered that the cost savings were not nearly as much as originally thought as expenses for travel, administration and additional staffing increased. More than one person said there was less of a connection to “the connection” as the increased work load on each individual district superintendent caused the superintendent to be less involved with pastors and the life of the local church. It was also shared that some district agencies were lost in the transition, and relationships with mission organizations within districts were affected.

Some creative ideas were described, such as eliminating altogether the office space used by the district superintendent with all the administrative functions of the districts housed in the conference office. Also, in one conference that significantly reduced the number of districts, staffers were hired to lead missional activities, conflict resolution and new church development. One conference had district superintendents that managed such functions for the conference as well as handling the normal duties of the district. Some of the conferences were evaluating their decisions and may in the future re-establish some of the districts that were eliminated.

Responses to an inquiry from the AWFC treasurer regarding financial effects of reducing the number of districts in other conferences were varied. One conference representative indicated that there would be a 2/3 cost savings resulting from a reduction but 1/3 would become increases in other expenses. His concern was that less personal contact would be a “big loss.” Another stated that at its 2014 Annual Conference a decision was made to reduce the number of districts from 12 to 9. That conference is still in a transition mode and is seeking information from other conferences making a similar transition. Another conference treasurer reported a reduction in 2011 from 11 districts to 4 districts and included an attachment, addressing primarily the distribution of assets to the remaining districts. There did not appear to be any cost saving information provided.
Relating to Existing Conference Ministries and Responsibilities of District Superintendents

• Support for fulfilling the district superintendents’ responsibilities is available in the AWFC through several emerging conference ministries that provide training and resources for clergy, laity and churches desiring to be more effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Examples include the Antioch Project, an initiative of the Office of Congregational Vitality; leadership programs offered by the Academy for Congregational Excellence; Taking Clergy Mentoring to the Next Level, an initiative of the Board of Ordained Ministry; and Mission Insite and Readiness 360, initiatives of the Office of Congregational Development.

Relating to Feasibility and Estimated Cost of Establishing a New District
(Information provided by the AWFC treasurer)

• Any task force recommendations approved by the conference would be funded through apportionments in the same way that other approved conference ministries are funded.

• The cost of establishing a new district is estimated to be approximately $250,000.00 annually, not including district start-up expenses such as office lease, furniture, equipment, etc.

Conference Expenses
$114,980.00 - Projected 2016 salary for district superintendent
$  10,000.00 - Estimated travel cost
$    900.00 - Estimated cost for cabinet expense

District Expenses
$22,000.00 to $24,000.00 - Estimated housing allowance for district superintendent
$32,593.00 - Outreach/Wesley Foundations (3 districts) - average district apportionments
$68,196.00 - Administration: - average district apportionments - vary from $116,000 to $62,000

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing its findings and reflecting on their relationship to achieving the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, the task force concluded that the current number of districts in the Alabama-West Florida Conference (AWFC) is adequate to allow district superintendents to fulfill the responsibilities specified in the 2012 Book of Discipline effectively and efficiently. Despite the trend toward reducing the number of districts in other conferences, the task force concluded that reducing the number of districts in the AWFC would not lead to significant cost savings, would decrease the time needed for district superintendents to develop effective relationships with pastors and churches, and would increase the workload of the district superintendents to the extent that it would restrict their ability to fulfill all of their disciplinary responsibilities. Finally, the task force concluded that adding a new district or
districts is not a desirable option at this time. Instead, the emphasis in the AWFC should be on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the current conference structure and practices to enhance the capacity of district superintendents to fulfill their responsibilities, including that of missional strategist for the district.

Toward that end, the task force recommends the following:
1. That district superintendents expand efforts to develop closer relationships with pastors by meeting regularly with groups of clergy in district subdivisions for prayer, study, fellowship, and informal discussion of issues and best practices.

2. That district superintendents review the responses of clergy and laity to the survey administered by the Task Force on the Work of the Districts to identify and implement strategies with potential for strengthening relationships with clergy and laity in their districts.

3. That the bishop evaluate current leadership training for district superintendents in the AWFC to determine how and to what extent the training is actually being used and whether it justifies the time commitment, given the scope of district superintendents’ responsibilities.

4. That district superintendents expand use of available technology to minimize time and expense associated with travel to and from meetings.

5. That district superintendents routinely serve a full term of six years before being considered for another appointment (except when in the bishop’s discretion a change is required because of a need in the conference) so that they can more effectively fulfill their responsibility as missional strategist for the district.

6. That district superintendents expand efforts to make clergy and laity in their districts aware of training and resources available through existing AWFC ministries, encouraging them to use the resources to strengthen their ability to fulfill the mission of the church: *to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

7. That the bishop and district superintendents review the outcomes achieved by participating churches upon completion of the first cycle of the *Antioch Project,* and, if outcomes and interest warrant it, submit through the CORE Team a request that the Council on Finance and Administration include in the conference budget funding for an additional staff member and other resources to expand the program to a greater number of churches.

8. That the bishop and district superintendents develop a standard job description for the district administrative assistant position, specifying minimum qualifications and responsibilities and including an “Other Responsibilities” section where responsibilities unique to the particular district can be added.
9. That district superintendents provide opportunities for district administrative assistants to participate as a group at least annually in training programs related to the responsibilities specified in the job description.

10. That district superintendents delegate more authority to district administrative assistants for managing administrative affairs of the district offices, freeing time for district superintendents to supervise and build closer relationships with pastors and churches.

11. That district superintendents and district administrative assistants arrange training annually for those pastors needing assistance in completing charge conference forms and for those persons needing assistance in updating and maintaining accurate local church information in the conference database.

12. That district superintendents expand their work with the conference director of communications to establish minimum requirements for content of district websites and use of social media, including accountability for maintaining and updating information.

13. That the district superintendents adopt the standard chart of accounts provided to the AWFC conference treasurer by the Task Force on the Work of the Districts for financial reporting of revenues and expenditures by the districts.

14. That the Council on Finance and Administration compare the formula used in the AWFC to determine district superintendents’ compensation with methods used in other SEJ annual conferences and assess its effectiveness in the current environment.

In completing its work, the Task Force on the Work of the Districts affirms the significant role of the district superintendents and the district offices in the Alabama West Florida Conference. The task force expresses appreciation to the numerous individuals and groups who provided input and resources for this study. Appreciation is also extended to the members of the task force, who worked diligently to respond faithfully to the charge given to them by the 2014 Annual Conference and Bishop Paul Leeland.

Shirley H. Woodie, Facilitator

**NEW PLACES FOR NEW PEOPLE**

It is my privilege to serve as Director of New Church Development for the Alabama-West Florida Conference. In new church development we relate to the Conference Board of Congregational Development. We are deeply grateful to Sandy Gutting for the excellent work she does overseeing the Office of Congregational Development.
The primary role of new church development is to promote and resource the creation of “new places for new people.” This involves seeking church planters, pastors who have the gifts and graces to plant and lead a new community of faith. We have specific interest in finding planters who can plant and lead congregations that reach out to the ethnic diversity of our conference. This also involves the seeking of church partners, individual congregations or groups of congregations who will come alongside and give support to a new church plant. In addition, new church development involves researching and identifying places where a new church is needed, due to population growth or where there is an underserved part of the community.

New church development is vital to the work of extending our United Methodist gospel witness to those who are not connected to God, faith, or the community of faith. In new church development we are very much aware that new churches tend to connect more with unchurched people than do existing congregations. New churches see their community as their congregation rather than just those who are “members” of the new church. New churches are very intentional in reaching out to the “nevers”, that growing number of people who have never been to church. New churches are very intentional also in reaching out to the “nones”, those who when asked about their religious preference, indicate “none”. New churches are very intentional as well in reaching out to the “dones’, those who for a variety of reasons indicate that they are “done” with church. New churches have fresh mission and vision statements and are primarily externally focused.

We are excited about the ministry of creating “new places for new people.” We applaud the work of those churches that have created and are creating new places to reach new people. Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church has been engaged in this ministry for a number of years and has birthed the new Community Life United Methodist Church this year. Cornerstone United Methodist Church launched a second site in Auburn a few years ago and has now birthed Embrace United Methodist Church this year. Crosspoint United Methodist Church has been serving in two places for a number of years and has now launched a third campus in north Crestview this year. Frazer United Methodist Church has launched a new campus in Pike Road this year. Also, we applaud those churches that have started and are starting new worship services and ministries designed to reach new people.

We are excited about other “new places for new people” being created in our conference as well. Rev. Chris Gilmore is leading a new community of faith in Mobile which launched this current conference year. Rev. Clayton Lassiter is starting a new faith community in the Panama City area, and plans to launch in the new conference year. Rev.’s Elvyn and Bessie Hamilton have launched a new community of faith in Montgomery this current conference year.

Going forward we envision doing more in partnering with those churches who want to create new communities of faith. We also envision working with our districts on developing district new church teams to develop district plans for new church development. We envision, as well, promoting and participating in the Fresh
Expressions movement, a movement that engages existing congregations with a plan for creating new communities of faith, primarily with lay leadership.

Developing new communities of faith is inherent in our Christian and Wesleyan DNA. It is an honor and privilege to serve in this ministry. I would be delighted to speak with any of you about church planting, about partnering to start a new faith community, and about ways existing congregations can create “new places for new people” in their own communities. Please call on me as I may be of service in this regard.

Respectfully submitted,
R. Neil McDavid
Director of New Church Development
Alabama-West Florida Conference
neil@awfumc.org

OFFICE OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

The Office of Congregational Vitality was established to be a resource for local churches of our annual conference as we seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As the Director of Congregational Vitality, I have worked with at least forty-one churches and all eight districts of our conference offering assistance ranging from general consultations to focused demographic studies.

In order to be helpful to as many churches as possible, we are developing a virtual toolbox that churches may draw from as they seek to go wherever God is calling them to go next. The following are a few of the tools that we have developed so far, and we look forward to adding more tools in the next year.

The Antioch Project
The most significant tool currently in the Congregational Vitality toolbox is the Antioch Project. The Antioch Project is a process of partnering with local congregations who want to move from being effective to being excellent. This process consists of completing a study of the church’s history and demographic information, sending a team (known as the Barnabas Team) to visit with the church to hear what God has put on the hearts of its members, drafting a report that gives a church up to five recommendations for the church to pursue for its future, and then providing a coach for each recommendation to help guide the church in completing the recommendations of the report.

In 2015, eighteen churches agreed to participate in the Antioch Project and are now in the coaching phase of the process. As of this writing, we have deployed at least sixty-one clergy and lay persons who have served as coaches, mystery worshipers, prayer initiative leaders, and Barnabas Team members to assist our churches in creating new life cycles of fruitfulness. A special thank you goes to everyone who has helped, including our Spiritual Directors and Lay Servants!
A new group of churches will be invited to participate in the Antioch Project this fall. Churches who are interested in participating in the Antioch Project should ask their pastor to contact their District Superintendent for consideration.

**Mission Insite Demographics**

[www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com)

Our conference has established a contract with Mission Insite so that every church in our conference has access to demographic information of their surrounding communities. We have the ability to map congregation members and compare the church membership to the community in order to identify communities that we reach well and opportunities for reaching new people. To register and explore this software, simply visit [http://www.awfumc.org/missioninsiteregistration](http://www.awfumc.org/missioninsiteregistration) or contact our Administrator of Congregational Development, Sandy Gutting, at sgutting@mchsi.com.

I am also available for demographic consultations with your church and especially enjoy meeting with strategic planning teams to help them explore the potential of reaching new people. Contact dan@awfumc.org for more information.

**Readiness 360 Survey**

Our conference also has a contract with Readiness360, which is an online survey that churches may take in order to assess how ready the church is to do whatever God is calling the church to do next. After church members complete the survey, the church receives a report that helps congregations gain shared, unprecedented insights as to where they are so that any new vision, goal or ministry becomes more achievable. With its ability to gain input from everyone in the congregation and then to synthesize it into a practical report, the **Readiness 360** is a valuable tool for gaining broad agreement on where to start and providing ideas for next steps. The cost for any church to conduct a survey is $169.00.

I am available for any church in our conference who would like to have a conversation about any of these tools or church health in general. It is my pleasure to help in any way that I can!

Rev. Dan Pezet
Director of Congregational Vitality

**WESLEY HEIRS**

Wesley Heirs, a fellowship of Retired Pastors and Spouses of the annual conference, is open to all retired pastors and spouses.

Meetings are held at Blue Lake twice each year for fellowship, fun and inspiration. We meet on the second Tuesday and Wednesday of the months of March and October.
We also have a luncheon meeting on the Monday of Annual Conference following the morning session. We publish two editions of the newsletter each year available by email and by regular mail for those who do not use email. We try to keep in touch with one another and offer prayers of concern when needs are known.

At each of our two meetings at Blue Lake, we have a Memorial Service to honor and remember pastors and spouses who have died since our last meeting. We light a candle as we remember each person and have a message of encouragement brought by one of our conference pastors. We enjoy a Communion service led by one of our group each Wednesday morning. We enjoy free time, table games, special programs, good food and refreshments.

Our special project is to help financially with the Sunshine Camp and the Discovery Camp, both of which meet at Blue Lake. The reports from these outreach projects always warms our hearts.

We have a special place for each retiree and spouse and extend a warm welcome to join this fellowship. If you have experienced the death of your spouse, you will be blessed by this caring fellowship. The date of our fall meeting is October 11-12.

Jim and Bobbie Dannelly
Walter and Dean Albritton
Co-Presidents

**DISTRICT REPORTS**

**BAYPINES**

The Baypines District has had another successful year as we have expanded our ministries and continued to engage our congregants - encouraging them and ourselves to grow as Disciples. We feel like we are better connected as a District than we have been in the past and we feel there is a better spirit among the churches and the clergy. Because our District is so diverse geographically it has always been a challenge to be unified. We feel like we are making great progress on embracing this diversity and in discovering our identity. We are excited to see that people across our District know and care for people in other communities. We are looking to build on the partnerships that we feel exist in the District. We want to encourage our churches to step out and risk new things. We want them to reach out to other churches as we continue to partner together in missions. We want to reach out to our young people and get them more connected to the larger church. In short, we want to be better stewards of our Connection. We are excited about the many things that are going on in the District. Below are some of the highlights from this past year.
The District is in great financial shape and we are excited about that. We are now debt free as a District and our paying of apportionments continues to rise.

As a result, our missional giving also continues to increase. Our District met and exceeded its goal in the Conference’s Imagine No Malaria campaign!

Our United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women continue to be a strong force in our District. They are active and involved in many local, District and Conference projects. As we look to the future, our goal is to have an active UMM and UMW group in each church.

Our Lay Servant ministries are thriving in the District. We have many trained Lay Servants who are active in and provide leadership in their local churches, teach classes, lead various ministries, and even serve as supply pastors of local churches. We recently conducted a Lay Servant training in the District which was very well attended. We praise the efforts of our Lay Servants and the District Lay Servant leadership.

We continued to be involved in the Habitat for Humanity program. We have helped build houses in Brewton, and in Baldwin and Covington counties. We will be participating this year in an ecumenical build in Baldwin County.

Our Missions programs are thriving and we celebrate them. Many of our churches are actively engaged in missions in their local communities, in our state and nation, and to the ends of the earth. This year, we will host a District trip to Costa Rica and a District trip to the Red Bird Missionary Conference, where we sponsor three churches. We are thrilled to be offering these opportunities and we will be looking to establish local projects that can be offered District-wide as well. We are also planning to be able to offer scholarships for young people to engage them in mission work.

Another very exciting accomplishment in our District is our partnership with the San Pedro Mission, serving the Hispanic community in Baldwin County. We have committed financially to the church and we are putting a team in place to help them acquire land for a church building. Our goal is to help them become self-sufficient and a chartered United Methodist Church. We are also working with the pastor to find mentoring resources as he continues his path toward ordination as an Elder.

Finally, several communities in our District are cleaning up from recent devastating tornado damage. Trained Early Response Teams (ERT) from our District are on their way to the Century and Pensacola, Florida, areas as I write this. Our District has many trained and badged ERT’s and always responds quickly and with great compassion. We have great leadership for disaster response at the District level and we will continue to train and equip individual responders and teams.
It has been a great year for the Baypines District, and we are so thankful for the leadership of our new District Superintendent, Rev. June Jernigan. We look forward to moving forward, with her continued guidance and encouragement, as we seek new ways to be transformed Disciples of Christ.

Patrick G. Shubird, Chairperson
District CORE Team

DOTHAN

The Dothan District is very thankful for all the Lord has done in 2015. The Dothan District searched for new ways to minister in our communities. We also worked to equip the churches of the district with the tools they needed to spread God’s love and grace.

The first opportunity of the year was Super Sunday. The Core Team worked diligently to insure that we were providing our congregations with the knowledge they needed for both conducting the business of the church and also preparing them go out and spread the Good News. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Sara Shaver, conducted a very informative session on the work of the PPR committee while Mr. Frank Dunnewind, Conference Treasurer & Director of Administrative Services, met with the chairpersons of the Finance committee of the local churches. These sessions were very well attended and provided the chairpersons with the information that they needed to help them in conducting the business of their respective churches. Rev. Mike Pearson and Rev. Sam Persons Parks both led spirit filled sessions that challenged the members of the district to reach the lost.

Several other educational opportunities were provided throughout the year. The District Lay Leader, Clifford Haynes, held a class to help inform the lay leaders of the local churches of their roles in their churches and the support they are to provide their pastors. The District Director of Lay Servant Ministries, Carolyn Myers, worked diligently throughout the year to make sure that the pulpits were filled and that new Lay Servants were provided with the training needed for their certifications.

In an effort to provide laity and clergy the opportunity to fellowship together, two District Gatherings were held. In July, Grimes UMC opened their doors and welcomed everyone to a picnic that included inflatable bouncy houses and water games for the kids. In September, Headland UMC hosted the District for a time of food and fellowship. Ken Callahan was the keynote speaker and provided words of encouragement.

Much like the other groups of the Dothan District the United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women worked very diligently throughout the year. The UMM saw an increase their charter groups. They also welcomed in a new District President, Brandon Deloney, to fill a position left vacant by Bro. Frank Moore as he
took the same position at the Conference level. The UMW also had a very productive and busy year as they worked to be a shining light our communities. This is a small group of women who are dedicated to the women, children, and youth in need.

Rev. Michael Lawler of Elba First UMC was also added to the Dothan District Core Team in 2015 as the Disaster Response Coordinator. His services were put into action as his congregation and many others from his community were hit by the rain filled winter storms. Under his leadership the Dothan District reached out to those that were negatively affected by the storms. The Dothan District supported him with both financial gifts and labor to help the Elba community attempt to return to a state of normal.

Submitted by
Clifford W. Haynes
Dothan District Lay Leader

MARIANNA/PANAMA CITY

The Marianna/Panama City District is filled with churches of every size. We are proud to say that we have one church in our district (Woodlawn) that was listed as one of the fastest growing churches in United Methodism and we have very small churches. Whatever the size, the people in each church consider themselves a loving, welcoming congregation. I have had the opportunity to worship or preach in all but a handful of these churches and I have witnessed the love of Christ in each church family. I am thankful for both the clergy and laity that are dedicated to being a strong witness for Christ in the communities of Marianna/Panama City District.

Happenings this year:
• We reached our “Imagine no Malaria” goal and collected over $106,000, saving over 10,613 lives. This is no small thing. We are proud to join the rest of the Alabama-West Florida conference in saving over 100,000 lives. What a great blessing for all.
• We led the Conference in the highest percentage of Connectional Mission (Apportionment) giving again this year. We plan to keep moving ahead in this ministry.
• District Day was held on January 24, 2016. Lynn Haven UMC hosted the event. We elected new officers and had the opportunity to visit with the churches from around the district. Dr. Bryars led the SPR training, and District Lay Leader, Juddy Stephenson met with the local church lay leaders. Rev. Amy Persons-Parkes led a group in Spiritual Formation and Prayer. Dr. Cory Smith, Dr. Jeremy Pridgeon, and Rev. Dan Pezet from the Conference Staff were also on hand to lead classes. We are grateful to each one for their participation.
• The District Day continued once again for a second year with an evening District Youth Rally held at the Fusion Center of the Lynn Haven UMC. Youth and Youth Leaders from around the district joined together for an evening of fun, fellowship
and worship. The highlight of the evening was that many youth committed themselves to Christ in a profession of faith or for a deeper walk.

- The Lay Servant Ministry continues to be one of the strongest programs of the district. We have held several trainings in our district. These committed laity are always willing to answer the call when one of our local churches needs someone to fill the pulpit. We have also seen several of our lay servants step up to accept the supply pastoral leadership where clergy is needed. We appreciate the outstanding work of Mary Whitehead who led this ministry for several years before passing the leadership to the new chair Linda Hornsby.

- We are proud of those laity who have heard the call to full time Christian Service and have either entered Seminary or pursuing the Corse of Study to become a Local Pastor. This District seems to have a culture of the call where many people hear the Lord leading them to serve.

- The Marianna/Panama City United Methodist Women continued to offer strong leadership to the conference and district. They participated in several events throughout the year. Highlights are always the Conference Day and District Day. Linda Hornsby has done an outstanding job leading this group. This year, with her new responsibilities with the Lay Servant Ministry, she has passed this leadership to Karen Fillman.

- The homeless are not forgotten by our district. The Panama City area has a very hands-on ministry with a Saturday morning breakfast. Local United Methodist churches take turns preparing the meal and serving the homeless. There is also an effort to find the needs of those that visit and to provide as much as possible. The leadership hopes to expand those provisions in the future. This program also attracts many volunteers from around the community.

- We appreciate the leadership of Juddy Stephenson who has served as our District Lay Leader for the past quadrennium. It has been a great pleasure working with Juddy. We welcome our new lay leader Ms. Cameron Winton who is a staff member at the Woodlawn UMC.

Respectfully Submitted,
Larry Bryars, District Superintendent
Marianna/Panama City District

MOBILE

The Mobile District celebrates God’s greatness and love, expressed to us in countless ways. As we celebrate this past year in the life of the district, we praise God for what he has accomplished, and humbly give thanks for the opportunity to join in his work. Below are but a few highlights of what was a tremendous year.

The business of the district was addressed in January at our District Conference hosted by Dauphin Way UMC. In the opening session we were introduced to Fresh Expressions as a way to reach new people in new places. District Superintendent Doug Pennington led an important training session for Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee members and District Missioner Don Woolley led a session on Missional Community Engagement.
Two new church plants were launched in the Mobile district. Heart UMC is an African American church led by Pastor Chris Gilmore. Juan 4:16 is a Hispanic church with two sites, both led by Pastor Irving Santos. We rejoice in these efforts to reach new people in new places, and celebrate that both churches are off to a great start.

The United Methodist Women, as always, have demonstrated a profound commitment to the mission of God. With 23 local units, representing 573 members, they raised over $55,000 to support the work of the Church locally and across the globe. They joined together for a number of studies and hands-on projects fostering spiritual enrichment, helping the poor and marginalized, advocating for justice, and addressing the persistent problem of racism. The UMW, by example, consistently challenge the broader Church to greater faithfulness. We are grateful for their leadership.

The Open Doors Resale Store has built on the success of last year and distributed over $76,500 to support local ministries of the United Methodist Church in the last twelve months. Initiated by Rev. Charles Fail, the store is managed by Audrey Bryan and staffed by a host of volunteers from across the Mobile District. In the brief time since its opening, the store has already contributed over $157,000 to well deserving ministries!

The North Mobile Planning Council truly models United Methodist “connectionalism.” Their monthly Singspiration is a time of singing and fellowship, with different churches serving as the host each month. Additionally, they celebrate their pastors each year at a well attended pastor’s appreciation banquet. Incredibly, their annual White Christmas Dinner raised over $19,200 this year for the United Methodist Children’s Home. This represents nearly $50 per member!

Our Young Adult Mission Fellows from the General Board of Global Ministries continue to do a remarkable job in our district. Marcharkelti McKenzie (from North Carolina) and Katy Wrona (from Pennsylvania) have lived in Christian community with local college students thanks to housing provided by Crawford UMC, and have played a vital role in launching a number of ministries in our district. We are grateful to Mac and Lisa Tichenor of the QuadW Foundation, as well as several of our churches, for providing financial support. We are thankful as well to a number of pastors who sacrificially give their time to make this partnership such a success.

The Mobile District is glad to report the successful launch of “Communities of Transformation” in Mobile. This effort to break the cycle of poverty has already proven fruitful and plans are being made to expand the effort in the months and years to come. We are grateful for Katy Wrona’s leadership locally and for the guidance of Laurel and Fred Blackwell from the Conference. A wonderful group of volunteers make this ministry possible. We celebrate their faithful service and the incredible difference this ministry is making in the lives of participants.
The “Imagine No Malaria” campaign was a great success in the Mobile District. We finished the campaign reaching 109% of our goal. With a total of $109,180, up to 10,918 lives have been saved in the fight against malaria. The Mobile District is glad to have done its part in this Conference-wide, denomination-wide effort.

No report would be complete without recognizing the tireless efforts of agencies such as the United Methodist Inner City Mission, the Dumas Wesley Community Center, the Babies First program of the United Methodist Children’s Home, the Metro Jail Ministry, and Raise the Roof. These ministries are on the front lines of the effort to help those in need, serving populations that are frequently marginalized. Additionally, the University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation continues to do a tremendous job of serving college students in our area. We are grateful for their work to disciple young people and deploy them to serve God both locally and globally. For all of these organizations, we thank the Directors, staff, board members, and countless volunteers who make these vital ministries possible.

The QuadW Missional Internship welcomed eight college students to the Mobile District last summer. This ministry continues to be a great blessing to churches in our district. We are thankful to the QuadW Foundation, local churches, and many volunteers who make this program such a transformative experience for all involved. Launched by the Mobile District in 2009, the program has expanded to seven sites around the country last year with plans to launch additional sites in 2016.

Behind the scenes, the district’s Board of Mission and Church Extension, District Committee on Ministry, and Core Team served faithfully to advance the mission of God. We are grateful for their work to advance the mission of God in the Mobile area and beyond.

The real heroes of our district are the pastors and members of each of our local churches. Day in and day out, they serve God, care for one another, and minister to the people of their communities. Each Sunday across the district, the word of God is rightly preached and the sacraments duly administered. God is passionately praised through ancient hymns and modern music. Members grow in their knowledge and love of God through small groups, Sunday school classes, Confirmation, and Bible Studies. Fellowship and laughter are shared over countless meals. Both infants and new believers are baptized and welcomed into the life of the Church. Marriage ceremonies are conducted; the sick and shut-ins are visited; and the lives of those departed are celebrated with confidence in the resurrection to come. Throughout the year, the hungry are fed, shelter is provided, godly counsel is offered, and the good news of Jesus Christ is shared with a lost and hurting world. By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the cause of Christ is advanced among us. The people called Methodist of the Mobile District have been blessed by God and have faithfully embraced the calling to bless others in his name. For all of this, we give thanks. To God be the glory!

Respectfully submitted,
Don Woolley, District Missioner and Doug Pennington, District Superintendent
MONTGOMERY-OPELIKA

Several promising movements have begun in the Montgomery-Opelika District during this Conference year. These include the following:
Cornerstone Church in Auburn gave birth to the new Embrace United Methodist Church on January 10. Frazer Church launched a new campus at Pike Road on February 7. Both of these new ministries are off to great starts!

Three of our churches are involved in the Antioch Project. Trinity in Opelika had their Barnabas Weekend in September. Mt. Zion in Smith’s Station had their Barnabas Weekend in October. Both of these churches are receiving coaching as they live into the visions that emerged during their Barnabas Weekends. Luverne Church will have their Barnabas Weekend in May.

A Communities of Transformation ministry was launched in Phenix City. All of the United Methodist Churches in the area are participating in this ecumenical effort to covenant with persons who are committed to finding a way out of chronic poverty.

Our District finished its Imagine No Malaria initiative by raising $207,028. This was the highest amount of any district and was 115% of our district goal.

Our District Incubator Team completed its year of covenant-keeping and discernment. The Incubator Team deployed several persons to work in their local churches on disciple-making ministries. It also launched a District Disciple Team. This team is working to create operational teams in churches that are committed to establishing viable disciple-making pathways. The goal of this work is to help churches be intentional and effective in seeking, engaging, nurturing, and deploying disciples of Jesus.

Three of our senior pastors will enter into retired status at Annual Conference this year. Gary Daniel will retire from Brantley/Brunson’s Chapel. George Mathison will retire from Auburn. Tim Thompson will retire from Frazer. These three elders have offered a combined total of 114 years of service to our Conference. Meanwhile, sixteen of the pastors serving in our District are in their first appointments in our Conference.

A new District Core Team was elected for the next four years. Among its members is Chuck Gambrell, our new District Lay Leader. Chuck follows George Mingledorff who served faithfully for the past quadrennium.

Montgomery-Opelika District Office
MONTGOMERY-PRATTVILLE

The Montgomery-Prattville District experienced a good year of growth in fruitful ministries during the 2015-2016 Conference year. We are grateful for the leadership of our District Superintendent, Rev. John Brooks, and the members of our District CORE Team. There is much to be thankful for and to celebrate in our District.

Some of the highlights from this year are:
- **Our Lay Servant Ministries** continues to be active and growing in our District. Many of our Lay Servants provide leadership in the local church, teach various classes, lead various kinds of ministries, and a number of our Lay Speakers fill pulpits on a regular basis. We give thanks for all of our Lay Servants and the work they do in our District. We give thanks for Helen Edwards, our Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries, as she completes her eighth and final year as the leader of this ministry.
- In May 2015, we held a joint annual conference orientation session with the Montgomery-Opelika District at Dalraida UMC. We are thankful for the cooperation of Montgomery-Opelika District Superintendent Robbins Sims and Lay Leader George Mingledorff in allowing our two Districts to partner together on a number of occasions.
- Our District hosted Lay Servant Ministry Training in August 2015 at Dalraida UMC. Over 50 lay servants from around the Conference attended. We are thankful for the wonderful instructors we had for the weekend: Judy Reiter, Dr. Cory Smith, Dr. Chris Perry, Rev. Jackie Slaughter, and Dr. Robbins Sims.
- We held District Conference in November 2015 at First UMC in Montgomery. On that same day, we led our Local Church Academy. We are grateful for Dr. Lawson Bryan and the ministers and congregation of First UMC for their gracious hospitality in hosting this event.
- Our District continued the strong work of its United Methodist Women under the leadership of its president, Cathy Givan.
- We continued our support of the United Methodist Children’s Home by partnering with the Montgomery-Opelika District for our annual banquet. We are thankful to Dalraida UMC for hosting this wonderful event. We were happy to have Dr. Blake Horne and Robert Powell with us as they shared many of the great things happening with the ministry of the Children’s Home.
- We continue to support the work of The Source – A New Community of Faith led by Reverends Elvyn and Bessie Hamilton. We were delighted to see the start of a regular Sunday service in 2016 being held at Auburn University, Montgomery.
- We continue to support the work of River City Church in their fifth year as a restart. Rev. Joshua Manning and the congregation at River City continue to breathe new life into the downtown area of Montgomery.
- 63.37% of our District churches paid 100% of their apportionments last year. We will continue to work with our churches to bring that number up to 100% for all 98.
- We had excellent participation in the Imagine No Malaria campaign. While not all of our churches and pastors participated, we are delighted to report that our District exceeded our goal. Our full participation was 16,549 lives saved (138%).
• We are thankful for Communities of Transformation. This ministry provides such a vital ministry within our Conference. Within our District, Selma is one of the cities in our Conference where Communities of Transformation is making a real difference.

• We are in prayer for our General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegations. Dr. Lawson Bryan and Rev. John Brooks from our District are delegates to General Conference. Susan Hunt, Dr. Paulette Thompson, Rev. Jackie Slaughter, and Dr. Rob Couch from our District are delegates to Jurisdictional Conference.

• We give thanks for the work of our District Administrative Assistant Ashley Epler. This year, we said goodbye to Tori Johnston and welcomed Courtney Albrecht as our Communications Director. We give thanks for the faithfulness of both Tori and Courtney.

These are just some of the highlights from this past year. Space doesn’t permit us to share all that God is doing each day in and through the people of the Montgomery-Prattville District. We are so thankful for the 98 churches, 67 pastors, and 16,091 members that are a part of our District. We look forward with anticipation for all that Christ has in store for us this next year as we together seek to live out our mission of “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

Respectfully submitted,
David Bowen, District Lay Leader
John Brooks, District Superintendent

PENSACOLA

The Pensacola District comprises 50 connected congregations in Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties in Florida and part of Baldwin County in Alabama. This has been a fruitful year for the Pensacola District.

Here are some of the events which took place in 2015:
• Several churches pulled together for the annual “Great Night of Singing,” which included a 250-voice choir.
• Three of our congregations, Richards Memorial, Bellview and Gonzalez, are participating this year in the Matthew Initiative, a church revitalization program.
• Meltdown, the annual youth retreat in Panama City Beach, was attended by about 800 youth and adults in late January. We are grateful to Rev. Stuart Worth and the dedicated team of youth directors and Wesley Foundation students who put this event on each year.
• Our Lay Servant Ministry is very active under the leadership of Bruce Knecht. They are serving at the Haven as well as doing pulpit supply and other ministries. It has been noted that we have more lay servants than clergy in our district!
• Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries (PUMCM) had a banner year in providing for the needs of the community. For example, 18,859 meals were prepared, the thrift store generated $19,235 while providing over $12,000 in clothing and household vouchers, and Celebrate Recovery averaged 55 persons
weekly. PUMCM also provided housing for six disaster recovery teams who had come to work on homes damaged by flooding.

- Our Clergy Welcoming Event was held at Crestview First UMC this summer.
- Our District Conference was held November 1st at Navarre UMC.
- Concurrent with District Conference, the District Fused Youth Rally met at the Soundside campus of Gulf Breeze UMC. Although rain effected attendance, 18 churches were represented, with 234 students and approximately 60 adults. Everyone that came had great fun, fellowship, worship, and heard an inspiring message.
- The Clergy Christmas party was held December 1st at First UMC in Pensacola.

We experienced a change in District leadership in July, when Dr. Jeremy Pridgeon departed and Dr. Tim Trent assumed the position of District Superintendent. We are grateful for the ministry of both these men and, as always, for the support of Mrs. Mary Hernandez, the Pensacola District Administrative Assistant! We look forward to continued opportunities to worship, study, and serve together as we seek to bear witness to the love of Christ here on the Gulf Coast.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Weant, Chairperson
Pensacola District CORE Team

LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry

The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry relates to the Wesley Foundations and Colleges of our Annual Conference. Currently our Conference has six Wesley Foundations being served by full-time clergy and one Wesley Foundation that is considered a part-time unit. We have Wesley Foundations at: Alabama State University, Auburn University, Troy University, Tuskegee University, The University of South Alabama, The University of West Alabama (part-time), and the University of West Florida. Our two Conference colleges are Birmingham-Southern College and Huntingdon College.

In a time when many annual conferences are reducing their presence and influence on college campuses, we are grateful that the Alabama-West Florida Conference is forging ahead in campus ministry in new and exciting ways. Ministry at our seven Wesley Foundations is strong and vibrant. Beginning in July of 2015 The University of West Florida/Pensacola State College Wesley Foundation became a full-time unit. Rev. Stuart Worth, who has led the Wesley Foundation there for many years, was appointed to serve there full-time. Currently Rev. Dr. Brian Miller is chairing an exploratory committee to analyze the campus of Auburn University Montgomery to determine if it is the right time to start a Wesley Foundation there. The Board has also been in communication with the Board of the University of West Alabama Wesley Foundation about the possibility of it becoming a full-time unit.
Creative ministry is happening through our campus ministries. The Auburn Wesley Parish is a unique partnership between the Auburn Wesley Foundation and five small congregations located near Auburn. Rev. John Weaver and Rev. Tony Jeck work with Auburn students to lead and staff these congregations. Many of the students who have participated in this project have received a call to ministry as a result of their work with the Parish. Huntingdon College just received a $600,000 grant from the Lily Foundation to support their Huntingdon Leadership Academy. The academy brings 11th and 12th grade student leaders to Huntingdon for a week of leadership training and spiritual formation. These are just a couple of the many creative ministries happening in and through our campus ministries.

Methodism started with John and Charles Wesley as they formed the Holy Club at Oxford. Methodism started as a campus ministry. We are grateful for the people and churches of the Alabama-West Florida Conference who still value campus ministry so highly today. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to represent Christ and the people called Methodists on so many college campuses in our Conference. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the Church in these places.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Rob Couch, Chair
Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry

Birmingham-Southern College

Dr. Edward F. Leonard III was installed as the college’s 14th president on August 22, as he welcomed the Class of 2019 and opened the academic year 2015-16. Just hours before, he had been distributing water, unloading cars, and moving students into residence halls!

Leonard, who received his bachelor’s degree in philosophy at William Jewell College, his MBA from Saint Louis University, and his Ph.D. in educational administration from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, was previously president of Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas.

“Dr. Leonard has admirably decided to forgo a formal inauguration, and combining the two events allows us to induct both our new president and our incoming class into the BSC family,” said Bruce Rogers, chair of BSC’s Board of Trustees. “It’s a great sign of his commitment to stewardship for our college.” “I am very proud to become a Panther!” Dr. Leonard said. “Birmingham-Southern is such a great liberal arts institution with a rich history, and I know it has the capacity to soar even higher. We must build on the college’s current strengths and boldly engage the future and audaciously blaze a path that will put BSC on a national stage.”
Dr. Leonard and his wife, Sheila, have two sons: Quade, 12, and Thomas, 5; he volunteers with their swim team and is a Cub Scout den leader. He is chair of the Council of College & University Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the Kansas Independent College Association and serves on several boards of directors, including the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America.

The Class of 2019, the third largest in the college’s history, brought more than 470 students from across the US and the world to a diverse student body now from 33 states and 19 countries. 85% of students are residential.


Birmingham-Southern College also welcomed a new chaplain, Rev. Julie Blackwelder Holly, to campus in June.

Rev. Holly is a native of Madison, Ala. After graduating from Birmingham-Southern in 2001 with a BA in psychology, Holly attended Duke University’s divinity school, graduating in 2004. She has served as associate pastor at Huffman, senior pastor at Discovery in Hoover, and as associate pastor at Canterbury.

“I am very excited to be back on campus and looking forward to getting to know the students,” said Holly, who credited BSC faculty and staff--and especially the late Dr. Robert C. Morgan, a 1956 alumnus who served as bishop-in-residence— for turning her toward the ministry. “Those folks were all there to listen to me and guide me and if I can do just a small portion of what they did for me for the students who are there now, I will be thrilled.”

She is married to Rev. Mike Holly, who is currently senior pastor at Bluff Park United Methodist Church. They have two children, Lena and Davis.

The college’s chaplaincy is an endowed office and restricted to a United Methodist full elder. The chaplain oversees the college’s Office of Religious Life, which provides a program of balance, depth, and substance appropriate to and in support of the college’s mission, including opportunities for worship in a wide range of faiths, study, pastoral care, and interfaith dialogue.

A note to the conference from Julie:
Following the four year ministry of Rev. Jack Hinnen, I began my ministry as Chaplain and Director of Religious Life at Birmingham-Southern in June of 2015 after serving in local churches for 11 years in the North Alabama Conference. In my first semester of service with the students and all members of the BSC campus community, I focused on developing relationships and learning the varied factors involved in campus ministry. In my second semester, I am continuing these important aspects of learning to serve effectively with college students. I am also setting some additional goals and making new plans.
Included in my role at Birmingham-Southern is the general oversight of Religious Life on campus, the leading of weekly Campus Worship at Yeilding Chapel, and supporting the Wesley Fellowship. Our plans for Religious Life are to continue cultivating understanding and cooperation among the faith groups and denominational groups on campus through educational opportunities, fellowship, and shared service projects. Through our Campus Worship at Yeilding Chapel, we are working to increase active participation among our student body and we are forming new small groups that will take a closer look at Bible teachings covered in worship and provide accountability among peers so that we can further develop the work of fostering lives of Christian discipleship. I am working to connect more with local United Methodist churches to work on stronger partnerships with our Wesley Fellowship group. My goal is to strengthen connections between our students and UM congregations by partnering with churches in service projects, having church members provide meals for our Wesley students, and inviting church leaders to lead occasional programs for our students related to discipleship and church leadership. My hope is that all this will allow students to develop stronger relationships with local churches and to gain a greater sense of what it means to be a church leader in the UMC; all while giving local churches more of an opportunity to be part of the development of young UMC leaders.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve both the UMC and the community of Birmingham-Southern College!

Rev. Julie Holly

You are invited to follow Religious Life at BSC on facebook or read more at http://www.bsc.edu.

Submitted by,
Laura B. Sisson, Director
Church Relations

Huntingdon College

Huntingdon College invites pastors and youth ministers who serve churches in the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church to sponsor high school juniors and/or seniors to participate in the Huntingdon Leadership Academy, June 22-24, 2016.

The Huntingdon Leadership Academy (HLA) is designed to help students discern the various ways they may live out God’s calling in their lives. During HLA, students will meet other United Methodist youth who are serious about discerning their spiritual and professional gifts. The Huntingdon College Office of the Chaplain, Huntingdon College faculty in the Department of Religion, and local United Methodist clergy will facilitate the three day retreat. Learning sessions will be interspersed with worship and fellowship activities. The cost for participation is $75 per student. To register online, visit www.huntingdon.edu/huntingdon-leadership-academy.
Who should come?
High school juniors and seniors who have the gifts and graces for ministry—whether as deacons or elders, missionaries, music ministers, children’s or youth pastors, worship leaders, or lay leaders, among the many ways to minister—are encouraged to attend this retreat!

For more information, contact the Huntingdon College Chaplain, The Reverend Woods Bradshaw Lisenby, chaplain@hawks.huntingdon.edu or 334/833-4474, or President, Dr. J. Cameron West, hcpres@hawks.huntingdon.edu or 334/833-4409.

WESLEY FOUNDATIONS

The Wesley Foundation at Alabama State University (ASU)

This year has been a wonderful experience for the Wesley Foundation at Alabama State University. Our student leaders have been enriched through service, fellowship and discipleship opportunities on and off campus. Although this year is a bitter sweet time for me due to loosing several seniors who have been integral to program, we have used this season in our lives to provide opportunities of growth for our graduating seniors. They have been afforded the opportunity to attend leadership trainings that equipped them to lead in program planning, program facilitation and implementation. Watching these soon to be graduates matriculate from freshman to seniors as student participants in the Wesley Foundation gives me greater confidence in collegiate ministry programs like the Wesley Foundation.

My heart is overwhelmed with joy as I think on the many opportunities offered to my students here at the Wesley Foundation at Alabama State University. Several churches have engaged our students in their faith communities by offering internships and summer jobs. For this I am truly grateful! These students will never be the same. Their exposure to your ministry projects and programs has enhanced their ability to perform more effectively in their school and work environments. I have witnessed a change in their confidence to tackle tasks simply because your churches have entrusted their ministry spaces to them, which has allowed them to blossom beautifully into the young men and women of God they were called to be.

This year marks my fourth year as a campus minister at the Wesley Foundation at ASU. Although this year is the first year that I am releasing a class of students that have grown with me their entire four years, I am excited about what God has planned for our organization in the near future. We are ready for more mission projects, more fundraisers, more empowerment forums and yes, even more fellowship meals. Again, on behalf of the board of directors, we thank you dearly for your support, gifts and love!

Sincerest Regards,
Charity Starr Mitchell, Director/Campus Minster
The Wesley Foundation at ASU
Auburn Wesley Foundation and Cooperative Parish

Over the past year our ministry to reach out to Auburn University’s campus with the love of Christ has been filled with many blessings and much fruit. And over this past year we have expanded our Cooperative Parish ministry by adding the Notasulga UMC and a new minister to assist in the work. Our clergy team of Rev. John Weaver, Rev. Tony Jeck and Rev. David Goolsby juggle many demands to help this creative ministry model develop. With a student council of six students, a leadership team of approximately 30 students and 14-16 discipleship leaders on the student side of our ministry, Wesley is a busy place. Then add five small membership Churches, a developing Parish Council and 4 student pastors to the mix and one quickly sees the ministry hub is spinning quickly. Thank you, Alabama West Florida Conference, Bishop Leeland and Dr. Robbins Sims for supporting this mission and ministry.

Student Ministry

Program Ministry (weekly)
• Prayer Breakfast – Tuesday 8:26 am
• Worship At Wesley – Tuesday 8pm
• Graduate Student Lunch & Devotion - Wednesday Noon
• Christian Vet Fellowship Lunch & Devotion – Wednesday Noon (Support)
• Thursday Night Dinner- 6:30 pm
• 6 Bible Studies – Thursday 7:30 pm
• Freshman Community- Thursday 7:15 pm
• 13/14 Discipleship Groups
• Intramural Sports
• Worship Bands (2 groups)
• Men’s/Women’s Waffle House

Regular Events (not weekly)
• Retreats (Women’s, Men’s, Winter, Conference, and Freshmen)
• Game Day 5th Quarter
• Social Events (4 or 5 per semester)
• Holy Week
• Seminars- (topics vary)

Mission / Service

Local
• Super Mission Saturdays- Home Repair with ARM
• Tutoring- Our House
• Monthly Food Bank w/ Loachapoka UMC
• Gleaning
• Work Week Service Fundraisers

National
• Christmas Mission (Raise the Roof, Mobile, AL)
• Spring Break Mission TBA
• Youth Caravan Summer 2016
• Children’s Caravan 2016
Mission / Service
International
• Mexico, May 2016
• Honduras, May 2016

Auburn Wesley Parish - Directed by Rev. David Goolsby
• Parish East, Lead Pastor Rev. Tony Jeck
  • Gold Hill UMC and Pepperell UMC
  • Quad W Ministry
  • Student Pastors Conner Feemster and Stephan Margeson
• Parish West, Lead Pastor Rev. John Weaver
  • Armstrong UMC, Loachapoka UMC and Notasulga UMC
  • Student Pastors – Paige Holaday and Riley Newton

Auburn Wesley Foundation Staff
Director/Campus Minister – Rev. David Goolsby
Associate Director/Campus Minister – Rev. John Weaver
Worship Pastor – Rev. Tony Jeck
Director of Administration, Alumni and Development – Patricia Stevenson
Administrative Assistant and Director of Worship Arts – Stephanie Jeck
Ministry Interns - Paige Holaday, Hilary Rizk, and Davis Rhodes

Thank you for your support.

Grace and Peace,
David Goolsby, Director

Troy University Wesley Foundation

The vision of the Troy University Wesley Foundation is to fully experience God’s love and to reflect God’s love to all creation.

The mission of the Troy University Wesley Foundation is to fully express God’s love by providing a safe community for all students. The mission assists to introduce or maintain Christianity as a priority for undergraduate and graduate students.

Program Ministry
The Troy Wesley Foundation helps students to experience God’s love in community with each other throughout the week. For the last decade, Thursday night dinner has been a signature weekly event at the Troy Wesley. Through this fellowship dinner, we share the love of Christ with students and staff. Local churches or other groups make meals for students to enjoy. This dinner is offered to all students and staff on campus free of charge and is often the way new students become active at the Troy Wesley. We believe that in space students, some of whom are not Christians, are able to see the living Christ. One way they experience this is through student led devotion and prayer time each week. As they become more active in the
Wesley, they are able to experience the love of Christ through Bible studies, worship services, and more. They are able to live out Christ’s mission to their local community through local and international missions. In the often lonely years of college, students are able to be part of an amazing community that is centered in love and mission of Jesus Christ.

We have also started a Bible Study & Worship on Wednesday nights where we serve the sacrament of Holy Communion. The students have named this time Kairos. In the fall we go through a book of the Bible in a verse by verse study. In the spring our conversations are more topical. We are blessed to have a student led worship band that leads us in worship every week. We have grown numerically but more importantly, our students are growing spiritually. They are asking hard questions and studying to find those answers.

Our student leaders facilitate small groups and prayer groups. We have 3 of those groups currently running.

**Missions**
The Troy Wesley students are very involved in serving others through mission work on campus and far from home. We keep our eyes opened for ways to serve our local area.

**Stewardship**
Students continually found ways in the last year to work together to best utilize their God-given gifts. Students planned fellowship and outreach events, completed service projects, cooked meals, provided worship music, led small groups, made relationships, and fundraised to support the Troy Wesley. We parked cars at football games. Our tenth annual golf tournament took place in the spring at the Troy Country Club. Our board of directors got really involved in fundraising in the last year as well. They are now excited to be holding their “Taste of Heaven” fundraiser each fall. “Taste of Heaven” brings in the best cooks from the neighboring churches as they compete for the best recipe. This is not only a fundraiser but a way that local churches have been able to fellowship together and rally around the Wesley. As they give, people are asked to pray for the Wesley Foundation that we are continuing to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World.

**What our students are saying**

“Instead of just expecting to be filled every week, the Wesley requires me to serve.”

“The Wesley means a community of believers that are friends and want to know Christ better and make him know. It is family because you have accepted us into part of the family. It is the swing on the front porch – a place of peace.”

“The Wesley has kept me grounded in my faith and kept me coming back when I was tempted to wander.”
What our students are saying
“*My Wesley family encourages me to be my best self. They believe in me in ways I do not believe in myself.*”

“The Wesley has strengthened my faith by giving me a place where I can not only attend and be poured into by others but I can also contribute and pour into others. The Wesley provides me with an opportunity to help and lead.”

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the students and staff of Troy University. Our presence on campus positively impacts the lives of many young people as we strive to reflect God’s love to all creation. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue our ministry at Troy University.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Brown, Director,
Troy University Wesley Foundation

**Tuskegee University Wesley Foundation**

This has been an honor to serve as the Interim Campus Director for the great Tuskegee Wesley Foundation. I am in complete gratitude to the ground work and foundation that has been paved spiritually by all the previous ministers before me.

This past semester has been one full of lessons helping me to grow spiritually and emotionally. I have been challenged to give nothing but my very best in all that I do for this ministry. It has both been a privilege and an honor to serve in this capacity. We remain in prayer as the Wesley continue to grow as I honestly believe for a building with access to all our needs. As we remain true to the vision that God has called us to, we continue to be active in the community involving ourselves and partnering with local churches and ministries to bring about a change on this campus as well as our surrounding community.

We currently have weekly Bible study, a weekly fellowship meal, as well as, consistent monthly participation in community service activities:
• Participation with Alabama Rural Ministries
• Safe Haven
• Macon County Food Bank
• Various Events/Activities sponsored by local, university, and surrounding organizations

Last semester in our partnership with ARM, we have been able to help in the construction work of the First Tuskegee UMC. And in the past, the Wesley has been able to travel during break on mission trips. All of our activities give us a better insight on what it means to be a disciple and follower of Jesus Christ.

As we develop relationships, our future plans include:
• Continuing partnership with local community organizations
• Establishing new connections with more local churches  
• Stronger Discipleship groups  
• A foodbank for students  
• Fall and Spring Retreats  
• Global/Local Missions

In the midst of all this we still take the time to rest and fellowship together as a family through various recreational activities. Though we may vary from others we are all very passionate about the work that we do on campus and for each other. We strive to be who God has called us to be. We continue to move forward in prayer and ministry as we minister to the students of this great university. Through the NEXT Grant given to us, we will be gearing up for our leadership conference in February. We thank you for all your prayers and support, as we continue to be God’s best.

Tuskegee University Wesley Foundation

University of South Alabama (USA) Wesley Foundation

The University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation continues to invest in Mobile’s college student population in order to grow God’s Kingdom globally. We desire for all students to find purpose, meaning, and abundant life as authentic disciples of Christ and to be sent out on mission for Christ. It is a privilege to be helping to shape the next leaders of our communities and church. This is done in part by helping students to GROW their faith in Christ, CONNECT with other students in Christian fellowship, and SERVE their neighbors in response to the love of Christ.

Grow
Wesley helps students grow their faith through Bible studies, worship services and small groups. Our main event is our Tuesday Night Bible Study. At this event we desire for students and God to connect through a variety of things like scripture, prayer, discussion, sermons, conversations and reflective exercises. We desire for students to be a part of smaller accountability and en-couragement groups. These are groups that gather regularly in order to help students to grow in their faith.

Connect
If students are to remain or become Christians in college, then Christian fellowship is vital! We do all kinds of things (usually fun) to encourage students to connect with each other (and in Christ). We regularly engage our campus through various forms of outreach. We are thankful to have a great asset for outreach and ministry in our building! We are so grateful to have a “home-base” that we can use to do ministry as to launch students out into ministry!

Serve
Wesley students believe in loving their neighbors. We desire and equip students to be in mission every day wherever they are. We want mission to not just be
something that we do, but who we are. We give students opportunities to get out of their comfort zones and experience God in different contexts. This is done through opportunities on the local, regional and international levels. Throughout the year we work with UM (and other) agencies to love out neighbors here in Mobile.

**Board of Directors**

USA Wesley has a healthy board that meets every other month. Along with normal board responsibilities, our board organizes two big fundraisers a year. One fundraiser is to help us with programming, the other is to help us manage the mortgage on our building. We are very thankful to both, the Mobile and Bay Pines District Superintendents that support us and help us with these fundraisers! We are blessed to have some great leadership on our board that regularly check in on the ministry. This board has worked very hard to reduce the debt we have on our building, and to keep our finances in a healthy place. We are thankful to the board for all they do.

Our 2016-2017 Board of Directors Officers includes: Cris Smith (Board Chair), Joe Long (Vice Chair), Jade Davis (Treasurer), Destiny Dunn (Secretary), Scott Weldon (Finance Chair), Brent Cumbest (Property Chair), Joe Long (Personnel Chair), Paula Duke (Program Chair), and Elisa Kennedy (Nominations Chair).

**Class of 2017:** Trip Sullivan, Kimberly Ingram, Jenni Hendrix, Scott Tindle, Brennan Peacock, Zach Brining, Paula Duke, Joe Long, and Scott Weldon.

**Class of 2018:** Hanes Swingle, Michael Brown, Melissa Smith, Kristen O’Keefe, Len Hurston, Steven Roberts, Jade Davis, Kim Feagin, Destiny Dunn, and Howard Munn.

**Class of 2019:** Judy Burnham, Brent Cumbest, Kim Doss, Elisa Kennedy, Amanda Messer, Amy Mitchell, Matt O’Riley, Cris Smith, and Harold Williamson.

USA Wesley is thankful to the pastors and laity that make up the AWF Conference for its amazing support! Specifically we thank the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry for its continued support and investment in the church’s future!

Peace,

Johnny Peters, Director / Campus Minister

South Wesley

**University of West Alabama (UWA) Wesley Foundation**

The University of West Alabama Wesley Foundation is the United Methodist College Campus Ministry located just off the UW A Campus in Livingston, Alabama.

Our 2015-16 theme verse continues to come from 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up just as you are doing.” This ministry is definitely encouraging as we live together, pray together, and share God’s Word with each other daily. We are a 10-room residence facility and Campus Ministry to all students on the UWA Campus.
The UWA Wesley Foundation is an active, ongoing fellowship for all and all feel welcome at the Wesley 7 days a week. Our signature event is “Mondays At the Wesley,” that provides dinner and student-led Bible study and fellowship each and every Monday night during the school year at the Wesley Foundation. Approximately 35-40 students come each week for this main event. A local church or group from the Demopolis UMC District or Livingston Community has provided our meals each week, therefore, this event touches the lives of our students as well as helping the surrounding area see and feel all that God is doing at the Wesley.

In addition to “Mondays at the Wesley,” we participate in monthly missions and campus activities as we share God’s love with students and the surrounding community. Our local missions have been Food Drives for the Sumter County DHR, “Coloring With Kids” in local schools, participating in the Sumter County Relay for Life, collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, collecting pennies for the Boys and Girls Club and more. This school year, we added the Shoebox Ministry of Operation Christmas Child and collected 77 shoeboxes for children in need globally as we partnered with Brewersville UMC. On Campus, we once again participated in the Homecoming Parade, played “Oozeball” (volleyball in the mud), helped the freshmen move in on “MoveIn Day” and continued to help students in need through our Student Food Pantry.

Many lives are impacted through the ministries of the UWA Wesley Foundation ... through giving the “gift of time” in our “Coloring With Kids” local mission, to every hand that receives a flyer and invitation to join us at our weekly “Mondays At the Wesley,” to anyone who encouraged our participation in the Homecoming Parade, to the many volunteers who bring dinner each week to the Monday night students and Wesley residents, to the hungry souls fed through the Food Drives, to the children overseas who received a shoebox for Christmas and prayerfully, all students who come to experience the presence of God in and through the Wesley.

We thank the Alabama/West Florida Conference and churches within for your continued support of God’s mission and ministry at the UWA Wesley Foundation.

Teresa Seevers, Director
UWA Wesley Foundation

University of West Florida (UWF) and Pensacola State College (PSC)

Highlights of this year
1. We are reaching new students with the message of Christ and lives are being changed.
2. Rev. Stuart Worth, the campus minister, was moved from his two point charge and campus ministry position to be the full time campus minister for UWF and PSC.
3. Sent over 20 students to work and host the Meltdown Retreat to over 800 youth and leaders.
4. Continued our Wesley Mentor program: sending college students out to work weekly with local youth ministries.
5. Our band played and our students spoke and our minister preached at several local churches spreading the love of Christ and the ministry of Wesley.
6. Stuart was nominated to the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (BHECM) as the liaison for the conference campus ministers.
7. Still in conversation with UWF about building a facility on campus but due to their new football program all non football construction has been put on hold.

Basic structure
We have times of fellowship, worship, and study every Monday and Thursday night on the campus of UWF. This year we found a bigger and better classroom to meet in that is more worship friendly. Although our students are very busy we have many fun outings like camping trips, cookouts, mission projects, and beach parties. For the first time this year the campus ministries of our conference held the Leap leadership event and our leaders were very encouraged and enriched. We are also heavily involved in district youth events helping host Fused and Meltdown.

What you can do to help
1. Please keep the students and leaders of Wesley in your prayers.
2. If you come across young people coming to college in the Pensacola area let us know about them.
3. Now that this Wesley unit is full time please consider supporting us financially as an Advance Special.
4. Invite Stuart, one of his students, or their band, to come worship at your church.

Rev. Stuart Worth, Campus Minister
UWF/PSC Wesley Foundation

UWF/PSC Wesley Foundation Nominations Report:
Class of 2016: Jenny Ziegler Medley, Laura Weant, Myron Smith, Jeremy Smith, Ashley Meyers
Class of 2017: Sandra Thompson, Clint Jernigan, Jim Hurd, Beth Herndon
Class of 2019: Hugo Garnier, Patrick McBride, Susan Edmonston, Ebb Hagan, Casey Malone, Matt Hull, Caroline Hare, Matt Dailey, Kathryn Knight, Jennifer Precht, Patrick Carnathan, Nathan Pooley, Rick Branch

Conference Lay Leader
For those of you who have been Methodist for any period of time, you know that the end of every four years (we Methodists refer to them as a quadrennium) brings a great deal of change. Many people fear change. But change is a part of life. It’s an opportunity for new leadership, new ideas and new possibilities. In 2012 as I was stepping down after 12 years of service on the board of the Medical Association of
the State of Alabama, as part of my final words I said the following:

You came here thinking you would change the world and in the process you were changed and thereby the world is now a better place.

Rumi, a poet and theologian said, “Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”

Our Board of Laity will also change as we bring forward new leadership.

We are deeply grateful to the following district lay leaders who completed their dedicated service in January 2016:

Baypines: Michael Ard
Marianna/Panama City: Juddy Stephenson
Montgomery-Opelika: George Mingledorff III

We welcome the following new members of the Board of Laity:

Baypines: Mandie Kinsey
Marianna/Panama City: Cameron Winton
Montgomery-Opelika: Chuck Gambrell

An updated listing of the district lay leaders as well as the entire Board of Laity can be found at http://www.awfumc.org/districtlayleaders.

I also will end my 8 years of service as Conference Lay Leader at this Annual Conference. It is been a great honor to serve you and our Lord in this position. Whether it was standing in front of General Conference delivering the Laity Address in 2012 or serving as president of the Association of Annual Conference Lay leaders, I think you and Jesus Christ for this opportunity to serve.

So do not fear the change ahead. Instead embrace it. And, most of all, continue to seek to change and reinvent yourself every day into the image of Christ.

Steve Furr
Conference Lay Leader

**Lay Servant Ministries**

The mission of Lay Servant Ministries is to equip God’s people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Jesus Christ. Each of us is gifted by the Holy Spirit to be a servant in God’s kingdom. Lay Servant Ministries helps us discover our gifts through educational opportunities, that will enhance us to build our skills, and enable us to be effective leaders in our church, and through Lay Servant Ministries, we can become better disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
During the last year our District Directors of Lay Servant Ministries were busy and successful, training new and experienced lay servants and working with the clergy of our Conference. To date we have a total of 495 Certified Lay Servants and Lay Speakers in our Conference. Last year we filled 775 pulpits. Our Lay Speakers spoke in 273 different Churches in our Conference. We provided Lay Servants for nursing homes, Prison Ministries and to lead Bible Studies in many local churches. We held Lay Speaker Training classes in 7 of our Districts, representing 21 courses offered for beginning and Certified Lay Servants and Lay Speakers.

The Conference Committee of Lay Speaking would like to thank Bishop Paul Leeland, our District Superintendents and our Clergy. We are thankful for all the support we receive from them and we appreciate the opportunity to serve with them in the ministry of Lay Servants.

I thank you for all you are doing the the Lord and our Conference and the Lay Servant Ministries. God does not always call the equipped. But he does equip the called. Our Lay Servants and Lay Speakers are equipped, trained, certified, and waiting with a servants heart to be invited into your church.

God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

In His Service,
Helen Edwards, Conference Director
Lay Servant Ministries
Alabama West- Florida Conference

Conference Committee of Lay Servant Ministries:
Directors:
Baypines:  Peggy Duck Branch
Demopolis:  Lynn Adams
Dothan:  Carolyn Myers
Marianna/Panama City:  Linda Hornsby
Mobile:  John Sellers
Montgomery-Opelika:  Pat Caylor and Elizabeth Whatley
Montgomery-Prattville:  David Bowen
Pensacola:  Bruce Knecht
At Large Members: Beverly Maddox, Rev Steve Kopp, Judy Reiter, Edna Williams, Dr. Steve Furr, Candi Mckim, Mike Arnold, Gloria Murphy, Glenn McEntyre, and John Stegall

United Methodist Men (UMM)

The United Methodist Men of the Alabama-West Florida Conference have worked diligently in 2015 to implement our mission of supporting spiritual growth among men, and helping men to mature as disciples as they encourage spiritual formation in others.
Our yearly Men’s Advance was held in April of 2015. Our theme was “What If The Journey Came Without a Map?” David Murrow, a bestselling author and humorist, was the guest speaker. David has written several books on the topic of men’s ministry to include “Why Men Hate Going To Church”, and “The Map: The Way of All Great Men.” Mr. Murrow presented three lively interactive sessions on men’s ministry. His main topic included why so many men’s programs are failing and why men just don’t seem interested in church programs. A second theme focused on “The Map” and how God turns common men into great men and what to expect in the man’s spiritual journey.

A new UMM award, the Joe Garris Sr. Outstanding Men’s Ministry Award, was established to recognize the vision and leadership of Joe Garris, the first AWF Conference UMM President. The award is presented annually to a UMM Unit for their service in promoting men’s ministry in their church and the AWF Conference. The first recipient was the Andalusia First United Methodist Church. Additionally, the Conference United Methodist Men have established an annual presentation of The Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to be presented at the Laity Banquet during the AWF Annual Conference. The first recipient was former Conference UMW President Ruth Ann Powers.

Our support of Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly, our conference campground, continued as we completed the replacement of the aging bunk beds in two of the three campgrounds. Bed linens were provided for the camp’s new queen size family bedrooms and a new backdrop for the archery range was provided by the Providence UMC UMM. The Blue Lake Methodist Camp continues to be one of the well-supported projects of UMM.

Our Upper Room Living Prayer ministry continues to be a central piece in our spiritual development and mission work. In 2015, the AWF Conference United Methodist Men provided $3,600 to the Upper Room Prayer Center. In addition to supporting this vital ministry with our gifts, we have encouraged churches to establish new prayer groups to answer the prayer line. Chuck Christian, former Conference Prayer Advocate, accepted a new leadership position in the UMM Cabinet as EMS Advocate with the responsibility of encouraging support and contributions to the UMM Evangelism, Mission, and Spiritual Life program. His efforts have been responsible for increased contributions throughout the conference and resulted in the AWF Conference leading all conferences in contributions.

Activities of the UMM charter groups are varied and include Prayer Ministry, Bible Study, Lectionary Study, support of EMS Ministry, support of Boy Scouts, Blue Lake Methodist Camp improvement projects, local church Youth Program support, church Trustee project support, community outreach, district Pastor Appreciation Banquets, support of the Upper Room Living Prayer Center, fellowship outings and dinners, and Men’s Ministry support to churches.

We rejoice in the work of our local units and their pastors to strengthen and renew the men’s ministries programs in the local church. Through their efforts, activities
in local churches have grown, new men have been invited to share in discipleship, and new charter units have been added to the conference. Our goal is to empower the ministry of Jesus Christ through men within the congregations of the United Methodist Church.

Frank Moore, Conference President
United Methodist Men

**United Methodist Women (UMW)**

The Alabama-West Florida Conference of United Methodist Women is a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

There are several events United Methodist Women have participated in down through the years. Part of this is historic, part expected, but all because we love getting together to conduct the work of our organization, renew old friendships and make new ones while carrying out our Purpose.

During January many of our members participated in the COSROW event as it is extremely important for all the women of the church, both lay and clergy, to support each other. Following that we held an exciting and worship filled weekend at our Spiritual Enrichment Retreat.

Annual Conference was a very exciting time as we not only were able to have a display table of materials we use in our work but I was allowed to address the body of the conference about what our members are doing at the local, national and international level. Being able to talk about the great work United Methodist Women are doing is truly a blessing.

One of the best educational systems in the church today is Mission u. Cutting edge issues of a Biblical, social and geographical nature are intensely studied and participants are then leaders who are prepared to go back into their churches and lead these same studies at the local level. What a wonderful way to keep current on issues facing society and the church.

Wrapping up the events of the year was our Annual Meeting in October. The gym at Blue Lake literally came alive with scripture, preaching, song and some rather unique entertainment (with a message about upcoming events).

Throughout the year the Conference Mission Team worked long and hard to arrive at a very detailed and workable strategic plan. This plan will be implemented over a two year period in order to make the changes easier on the local, district and conference officers. Beginning in 2017 our annual meeting will be held in the spring and our spiritual enrichment retreat will be in the fall.
It is the goal of the Conference Mission Team to work with every church in order to have an active unit. Whether you want to meet face to face, via chat rooms or Skype we are here to assist you and provide guidance along the way.

We strongly encourage you to participate in the Reading Program. These books can be purchased at various public book stores and many are also now offered as e-books as well as through the Resource Center. Please get a copy of the reading program list and make sure you are moving forward with your sisters and brothers by studying areas that have a tremendous impact on our world and our church.

I have saved the best for last! The Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women gave $119,174.13 pledge to mission in 2015. Just think of all the great work that will be done with your contributions.

F. Lynn Hamric, Conference President
United Methodist Women
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM REPORTS
CONFERENCE BOARD OF PENSION and
HEALTH BENEFITS

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits offers quality health-care, disability, pension, retirement, financial planning, long-term care and death benefit coverage to the clergy and churches of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

With the continued uncertainty in the health-care environment the Board continues to give careful attention to our resources as we look toward the future. Our greatest resource is confidence in God’s abundance and goodness.

Your Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall be prudent in long-term planning, and we shall be optimistic in our management of the Board’s important benefits programs. We are committed to the goal of sustainable churches, a sustainable Alabama West Florida Annual Conference, and a sustainable United Methodist Church.

Report 1 – Health Insurance

The Board works hard to provide excellent health care coverage to our clergy and lay participants through a partially self-funded insurance plan, administered by Blue Cross – Blue Shield of Alabama. Montgomery lay member Mike Horsley serves as chairperson of the Insurance Sub-Committee of the Board. The cost of this health insurance plan is covered by participant premium equivalents, church direct billing, and apportionments. While contributions to the Clergy Retired Benefit Stabilization Fund are presently suspended, it remains a part of our funding plan to guarantee the financial strength of our Health Insurance Plan and to help offset the unfunded liability for retiree benefits. The Board’s health insurance reserve investment fund market value as of December 31, 2015 was $6.12 million. The Board of Pension also maintains an Operating Reserve Fund at the United Methodist Foundation with a balance of $500,000.

In order for the plan to remain viable and available to all, participation by eligible clergy must be mandatory. The only exemption being when the clergyperson can provide satisfactory evidence that he/she is covered by a spouse’s group plan or that he/she is covered by a military or government retirement health plan. Clergy who are 65 years of age or older, not in retirement status and serving under a 75% or full time appointment will remain on the active insurance plan with premium equivalents being direct billed to the church. No premium reduction is applied. Spouses of clergy not in retirement status and serving under a 75% or full time appointment may remain on the active plan.

A surviving spouse who was on the active plan at the time of the pastor’s death may remain on the plan and receive a premium equivalent reduction of 2.9% per service year over five years. When the spouse reaches age 65 and is Medicare eligible,
he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium equivalent reductions. Should the surviving spouse remarry coverage will no longer be available.

A divorced spouse and dependents of a pastor who were on the active plan at the time of the divorce may remain on the active plan but must pay the established premium equivalent for themselves and their dependents. Should the divorced spouse remarry coverage will no longer be available.

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits seeks to increase the insurance reserves each year in its efforts both to maintain fiscal strength and stability in our insurance program and to offset the unfunded liability associated with providing post-retirement medical benefits to current and future retirees. The board established a target of $4,464,990 for 2016 and will recalculate the target annually. The Conference unfunded liability for retiree health benefits was estimated in 2015 to be approximately $26,000,000. The 2015 study results are included in Report 2.

The Group Health Benefits Plan is not a form of entitlement. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits reserve the right to amend the active and retired plan of benefits and the eligibility needed to qualify. With the approval of the Annual Conference the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits may eliminate either or both of these plans.

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) health benefit provisions amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the Internal Revenue Code and the Public Health Service Act to require group health plans to provide a temporary continuation of group health coverage that otherwise might be terminated. The law generally applies to all group health plans maintained by private-sector employers with 20 or more employees, or by state or local governments. The law does not apply to plans sponsored by the Federal Government or by churches and certain church-related organizations.

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act and the health insurance policies available under this act, participants leaving the conference health insurance plan have multiple options for continuing their health insurance coverage, often at lower cost. While providing COBRA coverage was optional in the past, Board of Pension and Health Benefits believes that it is no longer necessary and not in keeping with our commitment to faithful stewardship of Annual Conference funds.

Conference health care coverage is available for lay employees of local churches, and the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits encourages every church with lay employees to consider adding this important benefit. For information on premiums and enrollment requirements, please contact the Conference Fiscal Office.
### 2015 HEALTH INSURANCE RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Balance</strong></td>
<td>$ 508,286.18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apportionments</td>
<td>$ 1,200,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Premiums</td>
<td>$ 4,599,443.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>$ 3,307,378.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay</td>
<td>$ 1,201,417.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>$ 90,647.68</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$ 4,599,443.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBSF</td>
<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refunds on Claims</td>
<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinsurance</td>
<td>$ 317,102.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc Rctps</td>
<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total receipts</strong></td>
<td>$ 6,116,546.31</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Available</strong></td>
<td>$ 6,624,832.49</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Claims</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescipt</td>
<td>$ 1,107,985.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$ 2,470,114.46</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Clergy</strong></td>
<td>$ 3,578,099.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>retireee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medsupp Claims</td>
<td>$ 756,986.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prescipt</td>
<td>$ 275,798.68</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>$ 1,074,016.54</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Lay</strong></td>
<td>$ 1,349,815.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 2015 Claims and Admin</td>
<td>$5,684,901.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinsurance Premium Paid</td>
<td>$ 260,030.07</td>
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<td>Dental Premium Paid</td>
<td>$ 244,460.64</td>
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<td>Premium Refunds</td>
<td>$ 11,716.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACA Fees</td>
<td>$ 55,287.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary Transition Costs</td>
<td>$ 9,540.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund Operation</td>
<td>$ 50,465.28</td>
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<td>Salary</td>
<td>43,625.00</td>
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<td>Pension</td>
<td>3,462.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
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<td>FICA</td>
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<td>Supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$ 24,940.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td>$ 6,341,341.07</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Available over Expense</strong></td>
<td>$ 283,491.42</td>
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Report 2 – Report of Actuarial Valuation of Post-retirement Medical Benefits of Employees and Retirees

In response to the direction of the 2000 General Conference, every two years the Alabama-West Florida Conference retains an outside consulting firm to calculate the liabilities associated with providing postretirement medical benefits to current and future retirees in accordance with the terms of its existing plans and contribution arrangement. The report in Exhibit 1 was prepared by AON Hewitt Consulting, based on conditions existing as of January 1, 2016.

The full report presents actuarial liabilities for the plan, as well as the applicable expense and liability amounts that would exist in the conference-reported plan financial information in accordance with the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards Nos. 106 and 132.

In addition, cash flow information is presented which projects the future claims and participant contributions for the current group of active and retired participants, along with the resulting employer costs. Cash flows, liabilities, and the net periodic post-retirement benefit costs have been calculated based on conditions existing as of the January 1, 2016 measurement date.

Please contact the Fiscal Office at 888-873-3127 if you would like to review the report in its entirety. In this report (Number 2, Exhibit 1), we summarize the information provided through the valuation. Currently there is no formal funding plan established, although the Board of Pension and Health Benefits seeks to use any revenues over expenditures in the health insurance program to build up reserves and to underwrite this liability. We fund the annual retiree health costs through apportionments and individual monthly premium equivalents.
## Exhibit 1 - Summary of Results

### Financial Information

The following table summarizes the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 106 (FAS 106) results of the programs. The Net Periodic Postretirement Benefit Cost is the expense the Plan Sponsor must record in their financial statements for the fiscal year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Accumulated Postretirement Benefit Obligation</td>
<td>$20,284,167</td>
<td>$19,469,538</td>
<td>$19,691,805</td>
<td>$18,850,846</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Expected Postretirement Benefit Obligation</td>
<td>$27,607,324</td>
<td>$27,061,546</td>
<td>$26,332,244</td>
<td>$25,970,062</td>
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<td>(4) Succeeding Year Cash Flow Projection</td>
<td>$618,238</td>
<td>$569,805</td>
<td>$593,413</td>
<td>$546,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Fair Value of Assets</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Irrevocable Trust</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Allocated for Benefits</td>
<td>$5,576,927</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$4,065,668</td>
<td>$3,358,088</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Recognized Under FAS 106</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) APBO at Expected Return (7.00%)</td>
<td>$13,554,748</td>
<td>$12,973,795</td>
<td>$13,693,617</td>
<td>$13,062,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) (Accrued)/Prepaid Benefit Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Beginning of Year</td>
<td>($22,889,513)</td>
<td>($20,107,632)</td>
<td>($17,151,094)</td>
<td>($14,271,841)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Net Employer Contribution in Year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$576,195</td>
<td>$554,255</td>
<td>$546,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) (Financial Statement Expense)</td>
<td>($3,445,339)</td>
<td>($3,358,076)</td>
<td>($3,510,793)</td>
<td>($3,426,178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) End of Year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>($22,889,513)</td>
<td>($20,107,632)</td>
<td>($17,151,094)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Charge/(Credit) to Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>($2,605,346)</td>
<td>($638,094)</td>
<td>$2,540,711</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9) Discount Rate</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Health Care Trend Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Initial</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Ultimate</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Year Ultimate Trend Attained</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Expected Return on Assets</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Valuation Data

The following data table summarizes the covered plan population included in this valuation and the last valuation that data was collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/1/2015</th>
<th>1/1/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Number of Participants and Dependents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Active Employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Clergy</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Lay</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Total</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Retirees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Clergy</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Lay</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Total</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Dependent Spouses</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Total</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Source of Data

(1) Data was collected as of January 1, 2015 and is supplied to us by the Employer and a third party administrator.

(2) Although we believe these to be accurate and complete, the data and financial information have not been audited by us.
Report 3 - Post-Retirement Medical Benefits for Retirees

Purpose of the Plan: This is a retiree health plan designed to supplement the amounts Medicare pays for some hospital, medical, and surgical services. The Plan is not designed to cover all the expenses that Medicare does not pay. You must be eligible for Medicare and enrolled in Parts A and B of Medicare in order to receive any benefits under the Plan. The Plan is self-insured by the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church. This means that the Conference pays for all claims out of its own assets and does not buy an insurance policy to pay benefits under the Plan. Blue Cross is responsible for administering claims under the Plan; Blue Cross does not insure the benefits under the Plan.

Eligibility: Retirees

• All clergy who retire from active service in the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference and are eligible for Medicare have access to the plan for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses. The clergy member must have been actively serving in the conference for five (5) years immediately prior to retiring. A clergy member, who is eligible to enter the program but chooses not to enroll and remains outside of the program for twelve (12) months, will give up their eligibility in the MEDSUPP for themselves and their spouse.

• Upon reaching age 65 and being Medicare eligible, the spouse will go on the Medicare Supplement Plan at the full Medicare Supplement premium equivalent. Once the clergy participant enters retirement status, appropriate premium equivalent reductions will be applied for both the clergy and spouse as outlined below.

• Annual conference employees who have been continuously employed within the Alabama-West Florida Conference for 20 years and are at least age 65, in retirement status, enrolled in the active insurance plan at least five (5) consecutive years immediately prior to retirement, have access to the plan for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses. A conference employee, who is eligible to enter the program but chooses not to enroll and remains outside of the program for twelve (12) months, will give up their eligibility in the MEDSUPP for themselves and their spouse.

• Local church lay employees who have been continuously employed within the Alabama-West Florida Conference for 20 years and are at least age 65, in retirement status, enrolled in the active insurance plan at least five (5) consecutive years immediately prior to retirement, have access to the plan for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses. Premiums must continue to be paid by the church on church check. A lay employee, who is eligible to enter the program but chooses not to enroll and remains outside of the program for twelve (12) months, will give up their eligibility in the MEDSUPP for themselves and their spouse.
Premium Equivalent Reductions
• To be eligible for a premium equivalent reduction for themselves and their spouses, clergy and annual conference lay employees must be enrolled in the conference active insurance plan for at least 5 years prior to retirement and have 5 or more years of service in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Years of service for clergy are as recorded by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Years of service for annual conference lay employees are as recorded in their employment records. Retired local church lay employees are not eligible for premium reductions.

• Participants retiring on or before July 1, 2016 with 5 to 28 years of service will receive an 80% premium reduction for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.

• Participants retiring on or before July 1, 2016 with 29 to 34 years of service will receive a 2.9% premium reduction for each year of service for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.

• Participants retiring on or before July 1, 2016 with 35 or more years of service will receive a full premium reduction for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.

• Participants retiring after July 1, 2016 with 5 to 34 years of service will receive a 2.9% premium reduction for each year of service for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.

• Clergy members retiring after July 1, 2016 with 35 or more years of service will receive a full premium reduction for themselves and their Medicare eligible spouses.

• With respect to married individuals that are each clergy with appointments in the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, each such clergy must satisfy Medicare and Plan eligibility requirements and premium reductions will be applied to each such clergy and not because of their status as a spouse of a clergy.

Premium Equivalent for Appointed Retired Clergy (under age 65)
Church’s Premium Payment: Equal to the premium equivalent for the active plan established annually by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Premium Equivalent for Appointed Retired Clergy (age 65+)
Church’s Premium Payment: Equal 80% of the premium equivalent for the Medicare Supplement Plan established annually by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Clergy’s Premium Payment: Premium equivalent minus premium reduction.

Clergy Spouse: Premium equivalent minus premium reduction.
Pastors Retiring Prior to Age 65:
Retired pastors who have not reached the age of eligibility for Medicare and have 30 or more years of service as recorded by the General Board of Pension can remain on the active plan with a premium reduction of 2.9% per service year. Their dependents may continue on the active coverage by paying the full premium equivalent established by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. When the clergy member reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions. When the spouse reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement plan and any appropriate premium reductions as well. In the case of clergy couples without dependent coverage, individual clergy persons will be eligible in their own rights and premium reductions will be applied as individuals not as spouses of a clergy.

Pastors Retiring Under the Twenty Year Rule:
Retired pastors who have not reached the age of eligibility for Medicare and have 20 or more years of service but less than 30 as recorded by the General Board of Pension can remain on the active plan but must pay the established premium equivalent for themselves and their dependents. When the clergy member reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions. When the spouse reaches the age 65, he or she will have access to the Medicare Supplement plan and any appropriate premium reductions as well.

Pastors on Clergy Medical Leave:
Clergy on Clergy Medical Leave and receiving Comprehensive Protection Plan disability benefits must qualify for Social Security Disability, and elect Medicare, on or before the end of their 24th month following the receipt of Comprehensive Protection Plan disability benefits.

Once qualified for Medicare, clergy on Social Security disability have access to the Medicare Supplement Plan and any appropriate premium reductions.

Clergy on Clergy Medical Leave and receiving Comprehensive Protection Plan disability benefits who are not eligible for or choose not to elect Medicare coverage, may continue active coverage by paying the full monthly premium equivalent.

Retiree Benefit Stabilization Fund
Contributions made by clergy to the Retiree Benefit Stabilization Fund (RBSF) remain in suspension. The RBSF will continue to be maintained for present and future use.
Report 4 – Pension

The Reverend Nancy Watson chairs the Pension sub-committee of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The Board continues to be delighted by the fine work of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church. With assets exceeding $20 billion and over 91,000 active and retired participants, the General Board ranks in the top 100 pension plans in the country and is the largest faith-based not-for-profit financial service organization in the world. In addition, the General Board acts as a socially responsible investor and participates actively in shareholder advocacy, proxy voting, portfolio screening, and community investing. The General Board is the largest denominational investor in affordable housing programs for low- and moderate-income families in the nation. To date, they have allocated nearly $1 billion to affordable housing and community development investments.

Many current and future retirees find that their pension benefit is derived from several different plans. While the number and variety of plans make calculating pension benefits confusing, the various plans offer a certain level of security due to the diverse ways in which retiree pensions are funded.

1. The Pre-1982 plan bases the pension payment for a retired person on the number of years served with pension credit prior to 1982 and the Past Service Rate (PSR). The Board of Pension set as its goal to offer a sustainable PSR increase in future years. In 2016 the PSR is set at seven hundred-twenty eight dollars ($728) per service year for retired clergy and five hundred-ten dollars ($510) for surviving spouses. For 2017 the Board proposes a past service rate of seven hundred twenty-eight dollars ($743) per service year for retired clergy. The total rate for surviving spouses is proposed to be five hundred twenty dollars and ten cents ($520.10). The Annual Conference adjusts the pension benefits of those living in Conference provided retirement homes by a reduction of $50.00 per month for clergy and $35.00 per month for surviving spouses.

2. The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) was the mandatory retirement plan for clergy serving from 1982 through 2006. Under this plan, the Conference Board of Pension contributed 12% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) on behalf of each eligible clergy person under appointment. Benefits at retirement are based upon specific decisions made by the retiring participant.

3. By mandate of the 2004 General Conference, beginning in January 2007, the General Board of Pension replaced the MPP with the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), which has two components – a Core Defined Benefit Plan and a Core Defined Contribution Plan. The Core Defined Benefit Plan determines a pension benefit using the following formula by multiplying 1.25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) in the year of retirement by the number of years of credited service after 2006. The Core Defined Contribution Plan determines the pension benefit from the defined contribution of 3% of the participant’s plan compensation. Clergy appointed to less than full time service
and Part Time Local Pastors are credited for service in increments of 25%, 50% or 75%. By mandate of the 2012 General Conference benefits under this plan stopped accruing on December 31, 2013. Participants will lose no earned benefit.

4. The 2012 General Conference modified the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The January 2014 plan retains the two components – a Core Defined Benefit Plan and a Core Defined Contribution Plan. The Core Defined Benefit Plan determines a pension benefit using the following formula by multiplying 1% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) in the year of retirement by the number of years of credited service after 2013. The Core Defined Contribution (DC) Plan determines the pension benefit from the defined contribution of 2% of the participant’s plan compensation. In addition the conference will match participant’s voluntary personal contributions to The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) up to 1% of the participants plan compensation and deposit those matching funds into the participant’s CRSP DC account. Clergy appointed at not less than 75% of full time service and Part Time Local Pastors appointed at not less than 75% are required to participate in the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Clergy appointed at less than 75% are not eligible to participate in CRSP, but may, and are encouraged, to participate in the UMPIP.

5. The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is a voluntary defined-contribution plan for personal contributions and rollovers made by clergy and lay employees.

When the recommendation of the Alabama-West Florida Conference Commission on Equitable Compensation is approved and in cooperation with the cabinet, the Conference Board of Pension sets the following appointment salary service standards for 2017:

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<td>1</td>
<td>Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or greater than $36,500 will serve at 100% and are eligible for pension and health insurance benefits, unless appointed by the Bishop and the Cabinet to less than 75%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or greater than $27,375 but less than $36,500 will serve at 75% and are eligible for pension and health insurance benefits, unless otherwise appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet to a lower percentage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or greater than $18,250 but less than $27,375 will serve at 50%, unless otherwise appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet to a lower percentage, and are not eligible to participate in CRSP or the health insurance plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elders, Provisional Members, Associates Members and Local Pastors at or greater than $9,125 but less than $18,250 will serve at 25%, unless otherwise appointed by the Bishop and Cabinet to a lower percentage, and are not eligible to participate in CRSP or the health insurance plan.</td>
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Retiring pastors may expect their pension benefits to come from multiple plans – Pre-1982 based on years of service with pension credit before January 1, 1982 and the PSR or the Defined Benefit Service Monies (DBSM) whichever provides the greater annuity payment, MPP based on defined contributions from 1982 through 2006, supplemented by PIP and UMPIP contributions, CRSP based on the number of service years between 2007 and 2013 and the DAC in the year of retirement and CRSP based on the number of service years after 2013. Because of the change in plans, it is important for participants to verify that the pre 2014 appointment information, including appointment percentages for less than full time appointments, listed in the *Journal of the Alabama-West Florida Conference* each year is correct. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits will assume that the Journal information is correct unless a correction is submitted in writing and verified within the conference year in which the Journal is printed.

The Cumulative Pension and Benefit Fund served as a voluntary defined-contribution retirement plan through 2006, funded through employer contributions made on behalf of deacons (prior to 2006), diaconal ministers, and lay employees of local churches. This fund is now part of the UMPIP plan.

Information from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is available online at www.gbophb.org.

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits recommends that the apportionment line item for Conference Claimants Fund be set at $700,000 (12.5% decrease) for 2017. Since pension liabilities are tied to the Conference Average Compensation and market results of General Board of Pension plan assets, future increases in the Conference Claimants Fund line item may track with these variables and GBOPHB actuarial projections.

We call attention to ¶622 of The 2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church relative to the requirement that the apportionment for the pension and benefit programs be paid in proportion to the payment of the pastor’s salary by the local church. The Discipline gives the church treasurer the primary responsibility for the application of proportional payment. If the church treasurer fails to do this, the pastor is then required to adjust his/her cash salary.

**Report 5 – Central Conference Pension Initiative**

The Alabama-West Florida Conference continues its support of the Central Conference Pension Initiative. As of December 31, 2015 churches, districts, and individuals have given over $487,000. This figure includes gifts and pledges from churches and individuals in the conference. Churches are encouraged to give at a level of $1 per member per year. Active and retired clergy are encouraged to give to their brothers and sisters in need around the world. The United Methodist Church is experiencing its greatest growth in many of the Central Conferences, where pastors labor under difficult and often dangerous conditions and retire after a lifetime of service with no income. Many are forced to beg for assistance in their retirement
and often go without food several days each week. Our effort is part of an initiative across the church to respond to the plight of our retired Central Conference clergy by raising $20–25 million to establish a sustainable pension program. Many thanks for your gifts and support.

**Report 6—Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program**

This Supplement One is applicable to the Alabama-West Florida Conference and is effective January 1, 2007. It replaces any previously executed Addendum A (or Attachment 1) and shall be in effect until amended by the Annual Conference in accordance with the provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security and the Comprehensive Protection Plan revised January 1, 2007.

CPP contribution base shall be the active participant’s plan contribution for a plan year not to exceed 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation.

The CPP contribution rate shall be 3% of the contribution base of each active participant. [CPP Section 4.01(a).]

The CPP church contribution shall be made monthly to the plan by the Annual Conference in accordance with the Plan Document. Such CPP church contributions shall be transferred monthly from the deposit account of the Alabama-West Florida Conference by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The Annual Conference shall maintain an amount in its deposit account sufficient to provide for the monthly transfer of the church contributions on behalf of its active participants. The Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits is hereby authorized, at its discretion, to arrange with The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for active participation in CPP by persons who are eligible under special rules but not automatically included as active participants. [CPP Section 3.03. (a)]

All full and associate members appointed to Sabbatical Leave shall continue to participate in CPP, provided the Conference makes the required contribution based on 3.4% of the DAC. [Disciplinary Paragraph 350; CPP Section 3.02(a).]

All full, associate, and probationary members granted a Leave of Absence may be continued in CPP provided the Conference makes a contribution of 4.4% of the DAC. [Disciplinary Paragraph 352, CPP Section 3.02(a)] The Conference will direct bill the members who choose to continue participation.

All full, associate, and probationary members granted family leave may continue in CPP, provided the Conference makes the required contribution based on 4.4% of the DAC. [Disciplinary Paragraph 353; CPP Section 3.02(a).] The Conference will direct bill the members who choose to continue participation.

The surviving spouse benefit will be 70% of the participant’s formula benefit.
Report 7—Alabama West Florida Annual Conference
Comprehensive Funding Plan for Plan Year 2015

The 2012 General Conference established a requirement for Annual Conferences to develop a comprehensive funding plan to identify both liabilities and resources. The Conference Board of Pension has both developed the plan and submitted it to the GBOPHB for review. At this time we are waiting for the favorable opinion letter from them. It will be published in the 2016 Journal following annual conference. If you would like to see the complete plan, contact the Fiscal Office at 888-873-3127.

Report 8—Claimants’ Memorial Fund

We recommend the continuation of the Claimants’ Memorial Fund, such funds being invested by this board with the interest being used for the benefits of the conference claimants. Individuals and groups are invited to make voluntary contributions in any amount as memorials to deceased ministers, members of minister families, or lay persons. Checks should be made payable to the Alabama-West Florida Conference and sent to the conference treasurer, Montgomery, with the name or names of the persons being memorialized. Families of those so memorialized will be notified that a memorial gift was received.

Report 9—Special Appointment Pension Responsibilities

In keeping with ¶1506.3.a, and 4, of the 2012 Discipline, we recommend that those clergy appointed to extension ministries be approved for pension responsibility on this Annual Conference in the following full time appointments: the director of the Assembly Grounds, the director of the Mobile Inner City Mission, the director of each Wesley Foundation, the Chaplain at the United Methodist Children’s Home, the Director of the Pensacola Urban Ministry and the Pensacola Hispanic Ministry provided such appointments are made as members of this Annual Conference under ¶344.1a(1) and 346.1 of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The district superintendents, clergy appointed to the Conference Connectional Ministry, Ministerial Services, and the Fiscal Offices are approved with pension responsibility on this Annual Conference.

We recommend that special appointments to the United Methodist colleges and universities and other general agencies shall be listed as with pension responsibility on the institution or agency.

We recommend that chaplains in the Armed Forces be listed with pension responsibility on the chaplaincy of the military service.

We recommend that clergy under appointment as approved evangelists, area appointments and other special ministries shall be listed with pension responsibility on this Annual Conference only upon payment to the Conference Claimants Fund an amount equal to 14% of the DAC as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.
By special arrangement those clergy on leave of absence or probationary members appointed to attend school may qualify for the Comprehensive Protection Plan by a personal payment of 4.4% of the DAC to the Conference Claimants Fund.

We recommend that special appointments to non-Methodist institutions shall be listed without pension responsibility on this Annual Conference.

We recommend that all missionaries shall be listed with pension responsibility on the General Board of Global Ministries.

**Report 10 – Depositories**

We recommend that the official depository for pension funds shall be the same as that designated by the Conference for other Conference funds as well as the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church.

**Report 11 – Pensions for Lay Employees**

We strongly endorse the UMPIP and the Lay Long Term Disability Plan administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for lay employees of United Methodist local churches and agencies. In keeping with ¶258.2g (12) of the *2012 United Methodist Book of Discipline*, we recommend and urge our churches to use these plans provided by the General Church to provide pension equal to at least 3% of compensation and death and disability coverage for our lay persons who serve our churches.

Churches and agencies should contact the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, 1901 Chestnut Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025, (800) 851-2201 for information on becoming plan sponsors for the UMPIP for lay employees.

**Report 12 – Full Time Service as a Requirement for Pension Credit Pre-1982**

We call attention to the following provisions relative to full time service, rendered prior to January 1, 1982, as a normal condition for pension credit which appears in ¶1506.3 of the *2012 Discipline*.

A. Full-time service of a ministerial member or a lay pastor shall be required as a normal condition for pension credit; provided, however, that such credit may be granted for part time service by a three-fourth vote of those present and voting in the Annual Conference, on recommendation of the conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

B. Full-time service shall mean that full time is devoted to the work of a pastor by one who has not attained the mandatory age of retirement for a Conference member, who is not attending school as a regular student, who is not substantially employed in non-pastoral work; and whose cash support per annum from all church
sources is not less than the schedule of equitable compensation adopted by the Annual Conference for those in this person’s classification.

It should be noted that service of either a ministerial member or lay pastor is without pension credit if it is not full-time service as defined, except in cases of approved part-time service.

**Report 13 – Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the Alabama – West Florida Annual Conference**

The Alabama–West Florida Conference (the “Conference”) adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the “Church”), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church (“clergypersons”);

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

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

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the “Discipline”), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (“GBOPHB”), during the year 2017 by each active, retired, or disabled clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such clergyperson; and

THAT the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits
accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, or a disabled clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled clergyperson’s pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: It should be noted that the above applies only to the clergyperson and not to the surviving spouse. The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a clergyperson’s gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2) and regulations there under to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the clergyperson’s employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. If you need further information concerning this exclusion, please contact your CPA or the Conference Fiscal Office.

**Report 14 – Special Grants**

The Conference Board of Pension recommends that the following monthly grant be made for the 2016 Conference year:

Oakley W. Melton, III $300.00

**Report 15 – Homes for Claimants**

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits owns 13 living units for persons who retired from the conference prior to 2003. Ms. Beth Gordon is chairperson of the Homes sub-committee of the board. No additional assignments of homes to retirees will take place, and homes are being sold as they are vacated. Home sales proceeds are placed in the Homes for Claimants account for homes operating expenses.

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Occupants</th>
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<tr>
<td>AUBURN</td>
<td>803 Cahaba Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rev. and Mrs. Jamie Pickard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOPOLIS</td>
<td>1508 Powe Road</td>
<td>Sold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOTHAN</td>
<td>913 Clearmont Drive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Linda Arledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACKSON</td>
<td>432 Golfview Drive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Jake B. Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE</td>
<td>3508 Pepper Ridge</td>
<td>Sold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3636 Vista Ridge</td>
<td>Rented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTGOMERY</td>
<td>821 Bridleway Court</td>
<td>Rev. Jon C. Couey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3708 Duquesne</td>
<td>Rev. and Mrs. Leonard Shults</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>813 Hatcher Street</td>
<td>Mrs. Carolyn Wilson</td>
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Report 16 – Policy for Claimants Home Occupants

Should an occupant of a claimant’s home choose to relocate from a claimant’s home the following policy will apply:

Documented moving expenses not to exceed $2,000 will be reimbursed.

A grant not to exceed $3000 will be given to offset documented closing costs for the purchase of a home or documented rental deposit for an apartment, town home or assisted living facility.

The moving expenses and grant will be available to clergy persons or a surviving spouse occupying a claimant home. It is not available to family members when the home is vacated as a result of the death of a clergy person or surviving spouse.

Report 17 – Need-based Housing Grants

By direction of the Annual Conference, the Board began selling vacant homes in 2003. Beginning in 2005, the Board began offering need-based housing grants for retiring clergy. To qualify an applicant must be:

A clergy person who retires with a minimum of 20 years full-time service with pension credit in the Alabama-West Florida Conference and is receiving his/her pension.

An un-remarried surviving spouse of an active clergy person with a minimum of ten (10) years full-time service in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. He/she must have been married to the qualified clergy person during the years of qualifying service. Exceptions may be considered in the case of death prior to 10 years of service.

The surviving spouse of a retired clergy person who was married to that clergy person at the time of his/her retirement.

Clergy Persons who are placed on Clergy Medical Leave by the Annual Conference.
APPLICATION PERIOD:
Clergy that retire June 1, 2003 or thereafter may apply for a grant any time subsequent to their retirement. Surviving spouses may apply within one year of the date of death of the clergy person. Clergy persons who are placed on Clergy Medical Leave by the Annual Conference may apply within one year of being placed on Clergy Medical Leave or they may apply subsequent to retirement, provided they retire on or after June 1, 2003.

To be considered for a grant, the applicant and spouse’s post-retirement earned income from all sources must be equal to or less than 1.25% of the denominational average compensation (DAC) in the year of application.

Applicants must submit a Board of Pension and Health Benefits Financial Statement, along with the most recent 1040 Income Tax Form including all schedules. Applicants must also complete an interview with a Grant Committee appointed by the Board of Pension.

Grants are intended to assist retiring clergy to obtain housing. The money granted to applicants should be used to aid with some form of housing such as down payments, closing costs, rental deposits, etc. Grants are awarded on a one-time basis up to $3,500, as set forth herein. Grants will be disbursed within 30 day after approval by the Grants Committee.

Grants are not guaranteed but will be awarded based upon the Grant Committee’s discretion considering financial need, circumstances, available grant funds and the totality of the overall circumstances.

Amendments
These guidelines maybe amended from time to time by simple majority of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Report 18 – Other Retirement Services
The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits offers other outstanding services to active and retired clergy, including free financial planning services through EY (Ernst and Young) and Voluntary Supplemental Life Insurance through UNUM. For more information on these services, please contact Frank Dunnewind at the Conference Fiscal Office.

Report 19 – Alabama-West Florida Conference Policy on Medical and Disabling Conditions Leave and CPP Disability Benefits
(Approved June 2005)
TERMS:
Medical Leave: A conference relations status of a clergy member who is unable to perform his or her ministerial work because of a physical or emotional impairment, the conference may grant medical leave upon recommendation of the conference boards of ordained ministry and pension.
CPP Disability Benefits: Benefits paid by the Comprehensive Protection Plan to clergy persons who are determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to be eligible for these benefits and are on medical leave.

Medical Leave is granted to clergy who are members of the annual conference who are unable to perform their ministerial work because of incapacity due to health matters and disabling conditions. It is not a status that is used to solve appointment problems.

The 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church References:
¶357 Medical Leave Due to Medical and Disabling Conditions that Prevent Performance of Ministerial Duties
1. When clergy who are members of an annual conference (¶ 370) are unable to perform their ministerial duties because of medical and disabling conditions, upon recommendations of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions, and by a majority vote of the executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual conference who are present and voting, they may be granted annual medical leave without losing their relationship to the annual conference; provided, however, that such leave may be granted or renewed upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case by the joint committee on clergy medical leave of the annual conference, or the party responsible for managing clergy medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference’s policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions. This relationship may be initiated by the clergy member or cabinet with or without the consent of the clergy member through the Board of Ordained Ministry. When medical leave is given without the clergy member’s consent, reasonable accommodation shall be offered whenever possible. When a clergy member is granted medical leave by the annual conference, if the medical evidence has not yet met the standards for the receipt of benefits as set forth in the Comprehensive Protection Plan, section 5.04, the conference board of pensions may authorize payment of the benefits in the amount that would otherwise be payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The payments shall be made by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits as a charge to the annual conference granting the medical leave. If payments from the Comprehensive Protection Plan are subsequently approved, the annual conference will be reimbursed for benefits already paid, not to exceed the amount otherwise payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. Each medical leave granted by the annual conference shall be recorded in the conference minutes.
2. When clergy who are members of an annual conference are unable to perform their ministerial duties between sessions of the annual conference on account of medical conditions, with the approval of a majority of the district superintendents, after consultation with the executive committee of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive committee of the conference board of pensions, a medical leave may be granted by the bishop for the remainder of the conference year; provided, however, that such leave may be granted upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case including accommodation provisions by the joint committee on clergy medical leave of the annual conference,
or the party responsible for managing clergy medical leaves in accordance with the annual conference’s policies, which will report its findings to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions. When a clergy member is granted medical leave by the bishop, if the medical evidence has not yet met the standards for receipt of benefits as set forth in the Comprehensive Protection Plan, section 5.04, the conference board of pensions may authorize payment of the benefits in the amount that would otherwise be payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The payments shall be made by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits as a charge to the annual conference granting the medical leave. If payments from the Comprehensive Protection Plan are subsequently approved, the annual conference will be reimbursed for benefits already paid, not to exceed the amount otherwise payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan.

3. When clergy members on medical leave provide medical evidence that they have recovered sufficiently to resume ministerial duties, or are able to return through reasonable accommodation, in consultation with the appointive cabinet, upon recommendation of the joint committee on clergy medical leave or the conference relations committee, and with the approval of the executive committee of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they may receive an appointment from a bishop between sessions of the annual conference, thereby terminating the medical leave. Such appointment shall be reported immediately by the cabinet to the conference board of pensions and to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Such termination of leave, together with the effective date, shall also be recorded in the minutes of the annual conference at its next regular session.

Paragraph 635.2(k): “Conference Board of Ordained Ministry
“The duties of the annual conference board of ordained ministry shall be...
   k) To interview applicants and make recommendation concerning: (1) changes from the effective relation to a leave of absence or retirement; (2) return to the effective relation from other relations; (3) honorable location; (4) readmission of located persons and persons discontinued from probationary membership; (5) sabbatical leave; (6) medical leave; (7) appointment as a student; (8) termination; and (9) changes to or from less than full-time ministry.

“The board shall keep a record of these changes and the reason behind them and place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference maintained by the secretary of the conference.”

¶652. “…The annual conference may establish a joint committee on clergy medical leave (JCCML). If the annual conference establishes such a committee, it should be composed of at least two representatives each from the Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions, who may be elected by those boards at the beginning of each quadrennium and at other times when vacancies occur, and a district superintendent appointed from time to time by the bishop to represent the cabinet. The joint committee shall be encouraged to include in its composition a person with a disability, preferably someone under appointment. Unless and until other members are elected, the chairperson and registrar of the Board of Ordained
Ministry and the chairperson and secretary of the conference board of pensions, or others designated by them, shall be authorized to represent their respective boards. The committee shall organize at the beginning of each quadrennium by the election of a chairperson and a secretary. If the annual conference does not establish a joint committee, the annual conference’s established policy and process for managing clergy medical leave nonetheless should involve the Board of Ordained Ministry, the conference board of pension and representation from the cabinet.

The duties of the annual conference, with respect to clergy medical leave, or the joint committee on clergy medical leave, or its equivalent, shall be:

a) To study issues related to clergy medical leave in the annual conference.
b) To provide for a continuing personal ministry to any clergy on medical leave of the conference and to aid them in maintaining fellowship with the members of the conference.
c) To provide advice and support to and, where appropriate advocacy for, clergy on medical leave in (i) applying for and securing disability benefits from the Comprehensive Protection Plan and government programs, (ii) exploring possible sources of interim financial assistance before disability benefits can be obtained, (iii) establishing rehabilitation and return-to-service programs, and (iv) assessing the need for and providing reasonable accommodations.
d) To make recommendations to the Board of Ordained Ministry, the conference board of pension, and the cabinet on matters related to clergy medical leave, including steps for the prevention of the need for medical leave, the process of granting medical leave, benefits, grants or other assistance, and programs of rehabilitation.
e) To cooperate with and give assistance to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits in its administration of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, the Comprehensive Protection Plan and other benefit plans for clergy on medical leave, and to the extent applicable assist with the disability benefits and other benefits provided under those plans.

**Going on Medical Leave**

1. When an eligible clergyperson requests CPP Incapacity Benefits.
2. Application is requested from Conference Pension and Benefits Officer or General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB).
3. Application is completed:
   a. Form A, Applicant Information for Long-Term Disability Benefits is completed, signed by the applicant, and mailed to the GBOPHB.
   b. Form B, Attending Physicians Statement is completed by the applicant and the physician, signed by the Physician and mailed to the GBOPHB.
   c. Form C, Clergy Disability Benefits Application is completed and signed by the applicant including the Authorization to Release Information to the General Board page and mailed to the District Superintendent.
4. The District Superintendent signs Form C, acknowledging that the individual is applying for disability benefits and mails it to the Conference Pension and Benefits Officer.
5. The Conference Benefits Officer signs Form C, acknowledging that the individual is applying for disability benefits.

6. The Conference Benefits Officer contacts by phone or email each member of the JCCML to alert them to the fact that the individual is applying for CPP Disability Benefits and signs Form C for the Chair of (JCCML) The Conference Pension and Benefits Officer mails Form C to the GBOPHB.

7. Form F: The District Superintendent must state, in writing, that the Bishop has or will grant the individual clergy medical leave. The District Superintendent must also indicate one of the following:
   a) The applicant will be granted clergy medical leave ONLY if disability benefits are approved from the CPP and if approved the date incapacity leave will begin.
   b) The applicant has been or will be granted medical leave and the conference deposit account should be charged for conference disability grant in the amount of:
      • 40% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC)
      • Greater of 70% of plan compensation or 40% of DAC (standard CPP benefit)
      • Other (specify amount)
   c) The applicant has been or will be granted medical leave without benefits and the date incapacity leave will begin.

If the conference deposit account is to be charged with CPP benefits (option b), the conference Pension and Benefits officer will coordinate approval with the Executive Committee of the conference board of pension and health benefits.

Form F is signed by the Conference Pension and Benefits Officer and mailed to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

The Conference Pension and Benefits Officer will provide a copy of Form F to the board of ordained ministry Executive Secretary to insure that the board of ordained ministry takes appropriate action. Because of HIPPA privacy regulations, it will be the standard position of the JCCML to recommend to the board of ordained ministry the status recommended by UNUM.

**Coming Off Medical Leave**

Among the reasons a participant will no longer receive CPP disability benefits are the following:

1. If a participant becomes disabled on or prior to the date he/she attains age 60, and is receiving disability benefits in the Conference year in which he/she attains age 65, and the disability continues, then the benefits will terminate on June 30 following the person’s 65th birthday anniversary (if the final day of the regular session of such person’s conference falls in the month of May or June, or, otherwise, on the last day of the month in which the closing day of such Conference session occurs) ¶5.04 d. (7) CPP Plan Document.

2. If the participant becomes disabled after age 60, and the disability continues, then the benefits will terminate on the earlier to occur of (i) June 30 following the end of a five year period from the date the disability was determined to have begun (if the final day of the regular session of such person’s Conference falls in
Mayor June, or, otherwise, on the last day of the month following the end of such five-year period in which the closing day of such Conference session occurs; or (ii) June 30 following such person’s retirement date (if the final day of the regular session of such person’s Conference falls in Mayor June, or, otherwise, on the last day of the month in which the closing day of such Conference session occurs).

¶5.4 d. (8) CPP Plan Document.

3. If the individual provides medical evidence that they have recovered sufficiently to resume ministerial work, or are able to return through reasonable accommodations a request must be submitted to the Bishop and the Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave.

The JCCML, through the Conference Pension and Benefits Officer, may request a referral through the Disability Management Alternatives for the name of a physician available and competent to provide an Independent Medical Evaluation of the individual’s request. Because of HIPPA privacy regulations, the JCCML will request only a recommendation from the physician as to the individual’s ability to resume work and will follow the physician’s recommendation as to making a recommendation to the board of ordained ministry. Alternately, and at the discretion of the JCCML, the recommendation of UNUM regarding continuation of CPP Disability Benefits may form the recommendation of the JCCML to the board of ordained ministry.

Having received the recommendation from the JCCML, the Board of Ordained Ministry will conduct the interview required in ¶635.2 (k).

If an individual receives an appointment between sessions of annual conference, the cabinet must report the appointment immediately to the conference board of pension and the GBOPH. Such termination of medical leave, together with the effective date must also be recorded in the minutes of the annual conference at its next regular session.

Part-Time Appointments
If an individual seeks a part-time appointment in anticipation of coming off incapacity leave the following information is required:
1. The appointment cannot last longer than 12 months.
2. The written recommendation of the individual’s doctor. The operative word is recommendation. That is, the doctor believes that it is in the medical best interest of the individual to begin part-time service and is encouraging and cooperating with the return to part-time service.
3. The number of hours that the individual will work.
4. When the appointment will start
5. Will the person serve a church as the only pastor or will the individual serve as an associate of a church?

Approved: Board of Pension and Health Benefits - 01/12/2005
Board of Ministry - 03/01/2005
Report 20 – Death Benefit Program

Since January 1, 1995 the conference has participated in The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits’ Basic Protection Plan, now Clergy Supplemental Life. Clergy Supplemental Life is an additional death benefit added to the regular death benefit provided by the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) in which each full-time clergy, with a base compensation and housing equal to 60% or more of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC).

2017 Death Benefit for Active Participants
Active Participant CPP death benefit $50,000.00
Active Participant Clergy Supplemental
Life death benefit (under age 70) $25,000.00
Active Participant Clergy Supplemental
Life death benefit (70 or older) $16,250.00

2017 Death Benefit for Retired Participants
For clergy who retired before January 1, 2013 30% of DAC in the year of death
For clergy who retired after January 1, 2013 $20,000.00
Retired Participant Clergy Supplemental
Life benefit $ 5,000.00

For additional information related to other death benefits visit http://www.awfumc.org/pensionhealthbenefits.

Submitted by
The Reverend Doctor Robert C. McKibben, Chair
Board of Pension and Health Benefits

CONFERENCE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REPORT 1 – Fund Balances

The Board of Trustees of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference holds in trust all properties of the Annual Conference. The real properties held are the following: The Episcopal Residence: 3291 Lancaster Lane, Montgomery and the Annual Conference Office building at 4719 Woodmere Blvd, Montgomery. The Board is the Trustee for the following bequests (cost value as of December 31, 2015):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUND</th>
<th>COST VALUE</th>
<th>BENEFICIARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Norris Allen Fund</td>
<td>$ 213,416.33</td>
<td>Board of Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hattie B. Norred Fund</td>
<td>$ 93,666.78</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. C.B. Gilmore Fund</td>
<td>$ 163,743.51</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lowndesboro Trust</td>
<td>$ 7,248.48</td>
<td>Lowndesboro UMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mary Lloyd Reynolds</td>
<td>$ 97,763.86</td>
<td>Board of Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. J.B. Skinner Estate</td>
<td>$1,025,386.16</td>
<td>Children’s Home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Board of Trustees holds these funds in trust, with the revenues being used as directed by the donors.

We call attention to the resolution adopted by the Annual Conference of 1988, which designated the Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation as the official depository for discretionary endowment funds owned by the Annual Conference and its related boards and agencies. Local churches are encouraged to use the Foundation for endowment funds in order to insure proper management and fiduciary accountability.

**REPORT 2 - Signature Authority**

Report has not changed and can be found in the 2015 Journal, beginning on page 406.

**REPORT 3 - Designation of UMC Owned Property as Cultural, Historical, or Architectural Landmark**

Report has not changed and can be found in the 2015 Journal, beginning on page 406.

**REPORT 4 - General Trust Guidelines**

Report has not changed and can be found in the 2015 Journal, beginning on page 406.

**REPORT 5 - 15 Passenger Vans**

Report has not changed and can be found in the 2015 Journal, beginning on page 406.

**REPORT 6 - Parsonage Standards**

The *Book of Discipline* states, “Housing provisions shall comply with Annual Conference housing policy and parsonage standards.” In order to establish a housing policy and housing standard the Annual Conference recommends three options available for the local church. The Annual Conference does not put one option above the other. The options are co-equal, depending upon the local situation.

The Charge Conference shall review the recommendations of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s) of a local Charge in consultation with the District Superintendent, the Charge shall choose one of these three options.

**OPTION ONE**

Housing Allowance: Any congregation considering a housing allowance shall consult with the District Superintendent to understand all the positive and negative aspects of housing allowances. Before implementing a housing allowance, a congregation must obtain the District Superintendent’s permission. The congregation must present a tentative draft budget for the first two years and demonstrate the impact of the change on the overall fiscal health of the congregation. If the congregation decides to sell an existing parsonage, the church
leadership shall follow the Discipline guidelines for selling the parsonage and using the proceeds of the sale.

Upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees with approval by the Finance Committee, the Charge Conference shall provide an annual housing allowance. The housing allowance shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration of the pastor(s).

OPTION TWO
Upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees with approval by the Finance Committee, the Charge Conference shall provide a parsonage that furnishes only major appliances, installed floor covering and window dressing.

OPTION THREE
Upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees with approval by the Finance Committee, the Charge Conference shall provide an adequately furnished parsonage, with quality furnishings, that complies with these standards:

REQUIRED MINIMUM STANDARDS
In addition to the Discipline requirements for parsonages the following is required for all parsonages, in the Alabama -West Florida Annual Conference.

• Electrical wiring that meets code and is sufficient to meet today’s needs for electricity.
• Climate control - both heating and air conditioning

Rooms:
• Living Room or Great Room
• Dining Room or eating area large enough for at least 8 people
• Kitchen
• 3 bedrooms
• 2 baths
• Indoor laundry area
• Shelter for 2 vehicles
• Secure storage area

Equipment:
Good quality, dependable appliances:
• Stove
• Microwave
• Dishwasher
• Refrigerator with freezer compartment
• Washer and dryer
• Hot water heater of at least 60 gallons
• Wired for basic cable or satellite dish service
• Maintained smoke alarms
• Current fire extinguishers for kitchen and other required areas
• Vacuum, if there are carpets

If no lawn service and pastor is expected to maintain lawn the following are minimum requirements:
• Gas mower
• Trimmer or weed eater

Furnishings:
• Quality window coverings in neutral colors that insure privacy
• Quality floor coverings in neutral colors that is durable and easy to maintain

Maintenance:
• Regular pest control inspection and treatment
• Annual termite inspection and treatment
• Landscaping and maintenance thereof should be representative of the neighborhood.
• Regular schedule for painting both on the outside and inside of the house as needed. Any needed repairs should be done in a timely manner
• Annual carpet cleaning
• Regular maintenance and cleaning of chimneys if one exists

CARE OF THE PROPERTY
1. The pastor and family should care for the parsonage as good stewards for the Lord’s property, carefully avoiding undue wear and tear, but at the same time they should “be at home” in the parsonage, knowing that the home and furnishings are to be used with inevitable and expected depreciation.
2. The pastor and family are responsible for the repair or replacement of furnishings when, through negligent use of furnishings, breakage results, but ordinary wear and tear, such as is expected when a house is lived in, is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees/Parsonage Committee.
3. The church shall provide an adequate amount of insurance of the building, furnishings, and equipment and for public liability. The minimum amount of insurance carried on the parsonage should be equal to 80% of the replacement value of the building, furnishings, and equipment. All clergy families are responsible for insuring all of the family’s personal items.
4. There shall be a plan identifying repairs, replacements or additions that need to be made to the parsonage. All broken and worn-out furniture or equipment should be removed.
5. The Board of Trustees in consultation with the parsonage committee shall keep the parsonage and furnishing in good repair. They shall furnish the clergy family with a list of those church members who can do minor repairs and the names of repair companies with whom the church does business. A list of procedures to follow when repair work is needed should also be given to the clergy family.
6. Regular pest control inspection and treatment, annual termite inspection and annual carpet cleaning should be budgeted.
7. The pastor and spouse should be consulted in the selection of furnishings and equipment.
8. If the vacating parsonage family had pets they shall be responsible for having the house and yard treated for fleas and other parasites before moving. They shall also be responsible for having the carpeting and upholstery cleaned and must vacate the house early in order to allow for this process to occur.
9. Each pastoral charge should place an amount in the budget annually for normal maintenance and repairs to the building, furnishings, and equipment or the replacement of same if necessary.

REPORT 7 - Policy Statement Concerning Sexual Misconduct by Clergy of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc.

Report has not changed and can be found in the 2015 Journal, beginning on page 409.

REPORT 8 - Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards

INTRODUCTION

One mission of The Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference Board of Trustees is to support the work of the local church. At each meeting the members keep in front of them the question, “How will this action help the local church?” Our prayer is that the revised Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards will help the local church accomplish its ministries while ensuring the safety of our children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults. We encourage clergy and laity to read this policy and make it an essential part of the operations of your local church. If you have any questions you may contact any member of the Board of Trustees.

I. THEOLOGICAL BASIS. The theological basis of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards (SSPMS) is grounded in the following:

A. Children are important! Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me . . .” (Mark 9.37, all Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version). We ought to offer hospitality and protect children. Jesus said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18.6; Mark 9.42).

B. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that “. . . children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse.” Id, ¶162C.

C. Members of the United Methodist Church regularly pledge commitment to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be “. . . surrounded by steadfast love, . . . established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal” (Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44).

D. ¶2702 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012 names child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment as chargeable offenses for both clergy and lay members.
II. DEFINITIONS. The following definitions shall be used in establishing, applying, and interpreting the SSPMS:

A. Abuse
1. Physical abuse occurs where a person intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult.
2. Emotional abuse occurs where a person speaks violently or cruelly to a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult, or otherwise exposes a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult to violence or emotional cruelty.
3. Neglect is abuse which occurs where a person endangers the health, safety, or welfare of a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult by failing to act in a reasonable manner.
4. Sexual abuse occurs where an adult or another older or more powerful youth has sexual contact with a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult.

B. Personnel
1. Governing body refers to the local church leadership approved and elected by the annual Charge Conference of the local church and in compliance with The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012 (¶ 243, 244, and 247). Examples may include Church Council, Administrative Board, Board of Stewards, etc.
2. Authority figure is a person who is the primary leader of any youth, children, or at-risk or vulnerable adult activity and such person is required to be twenty-one (21) years of age or older.
3. Assistant is a person who gives help to and is directed by an authority figure in the course of any youth, children, or at-risk or vulnerable adult activity including, but not limited to, volunteers, interns, camp counselors, and Vacation Bible School workers. Such an assistant must be at least twelve (12) years of age. However, in order to count for satisfying requirements of the two adult rule (¶ II.C.1, below,) such assistant must be an adult as herein defined.
4. Adults are all persons who have attained the age of majority (19 years in Alabama and 18 years in Florida).
5. Floater is an adult who acts as an assistant to an authority figure to monitor covered activities or events (¶ II.C.2, below,) in order to comply with the two adult rule (¶ II.C.1, below,) when achieving such compliance by use of two non-related adults is unfeasible.
6. Children are all persons from infants through the fifth grade or sixth grade, as determined by each local church in order to conform with grade-level practices of its local area schools regarding classifications of elementary schools and middle or junior high schools.
7. Youth are all persons in the sixth-grade or seventh-grade through the twelfth-grade, as determined by each local church in order to conform with grade-level practices of its local area schools regarding classifications of middle or junior high schools and high schools.
8. At-risk or vulnerable adults are adults with physical, mental, and/or developmental impairment or disability.

C. Activities
1. Two adult rule is a core principle regarding the supervision required for covered activities and overnight events. This rule means that a minimum of two
adults who are not related to each other should be utilized in all programming with children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults. However, when unfeasible to staff at buildings and outdoor areas with two non-related adults, there should be at least an additional adult serving as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas where such programming occurs. Visual and physical access means either an open door or door with a window that provides a line of sight enabling the floater to see into a room or other building space and to see fully outdoor sites where covered activities or events take place.

2. Covered activities or events for purposes of this document include all church programming for children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults.

3. Overnight events are a type of covered activity or event which extends through the evening and which may include summer camps, retreats, mission trips, and lock-ins.

   a. Room sharing limits means that adults staying with young people during overnight events must be the same gender as the young people and that such adults must not be alone in a lodging room with a young person at any time and must not share a bed with a young person unless he/she is an immediate family member or guardian of such young person and of the same gender.

   b. Immediate family member or guardian room sharing exception means that an immediate family member or guardian of a young person who is chaperoning an overnight event is permitted to share a room and bed with his/her child no matter the gender as long as no other young people are sharing the room.

4. Transportation

   a. Transportation is a covered activity whenever such transportation is provided in a church-owned or leased vehicle (car, SUV, van, bus, etc.) or when a church staff member is the driver of or present in any vehicle used for such transportation. This provision shall not apply to multi-vehicle caravanning transportation. Two adults are not required to occupy each of the private vehicles in a caravan.

   b. Any such transportation provided for a church-sponsored or church-hosted program of day-care, pre-school, or after-school care that is licensed under the laws of Alabama or Florida shall abide by and conform with the respective state laws and regulations, if any, applicable to such a transportation function.

III. POLICY STATEMENT. In covenant with all United Methodist congregations and the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, we endeavor as follows:

A. We shall strive to provide for physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults.

B. We shall strive to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be “. . . surrounded by steadfast love, . . . established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal” (Baptismal Covenant II, The United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44).

C. We shall strive to prevent physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults involved in any ministry sponsored by our Annual Conference or our local congregation.

D. We shall strive to provide and facilitate the use of reasonable care and effort in caring for the children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults involved in any
ministry sponsored by our Annual Conference or our local congregation.
E. We shall strive to minister to and act in the best interests of persons who are
experiencing abuse or who have been victims of abuse in the past.
F. We shall strive to be aware of and comply with our legal responsibilities
regarding the types of abuse addressed in this document.
G. We shall strive to screen all current and future staff, and all volunteers for every
program that involves children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults.
H. We shall strive to acknowledge, respond to, and investigate all questions or
reports regarding alleged abuse.
I. We shall strive to adhere to biblical church discipline, particularly as recognized
in ¶ 2702 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012, which
names child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment as
chargeable offenses for clergy and lay members.
J. We shall commit to observe the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum
Standards.

IV. STANDARDS: THEIR ADOPTION. Local churches within the Conference
may adopt their own Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards, provided
such standards equal or exceed in strength of protection for children, youth, and
at-risk or vulnerable adults the minimum standards here stated. In the absence
of such local church action, the minimum standards that shall be utilized in
implementing and applying the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards
undertaken in the above-stated covenant with other United Methodist congregations
and the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
shall be as follows:
A. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION. Implementing the Safe
Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards (SSPMS) at a local church shall be the
responsibility of the Pastor in Charge, the governing body, and a permanent Safe
Sanctuaries Committee (SSC) organized in compliance with the local church’s
governance process.
B. SAFE SANCTUARIES COMMITTEE. A Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SSC)
shall have the responsibility for developing local church safe sanctuaries policies
and minimum standards and procedures; communicating with and educating the
congregation concerning those policies and procedures; recruiting, screening,
and training paid staff and volunteers; conducting site inspections and making
recommendations; retaining records; and regularly reviewing conference policies
and procedures, applicable state laws, and the insurance policy provisions and
insurer requirements. Such periodic training and education on Safe Sanctuaries
Policy and Minimum Standards and procedures provided by the Alabama-West
Florida Conference shall be attended each quadrennium by the local church
Pastor in Charge and SSC chairperson or other SSC designated member. Further,
it is recommended that attendance at such conference-wide training include at a
minimum designees from the local church who will be personally coordinating
and conducting safe sanctuaries training for employees and staff within the local
church.
C. MEMBERSHIP OF SAFE SANCTUARIES COMMITTEE. The membership
of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SSC), in addition to its chairperson, shall
include, but not be limited to, the Pastor in Charge, Governing Body chairperson, Lay Delegate to AWF Annual Conference, Lay Leader, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee chairperson, Board of Trustees chairperson, and may include, if such offices and positions exist, Youth Director, youth leadership team representative, Children’s Director, children’s leadership team representative, Day Care Director, After School Program Director, and one or two at-large lay members.

D. **ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING.** The following accountability and reporting measures shall be developed and employed:

1. **Congregational Accountability.** The SSC shall report to the Governing Body of the local church congregation at least annually and at such other interim times as circumstances relating to its responsibilities may require. In addition, the SSC shall regularly inform the Governing Body and the congregation at large concerning its efforts to recruit volunteers. Also the Governing Body and congregation shall regularly be informed and reminded by the SSC of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Minimum Standards content, and the Standards, Qualifications, and Screening requirements under the SSPMS that are applicable to employment of paid staff and to granting permission for service by volunteer workers. The SSC shall periodically announce and publicize that a church member may at any time upon request to the Pastor in Charge or his/her designee review and/or obtain a personal written copy of the complete policy document.

2. **Infractions/Incidents Accountability.** Actions or conduct concerning any personnel and covered activities as defined in this SSPMS document that are observed by or otherwise brought to the attention of a person (paid staff member; volunteer worker; parent or other relative of a child, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adult; church member, church visitor, or guest; etc.) which is reasonably believed to be an infraction or incident in violation of this SSPMS should be promptly reported to the Pastor in Charge and to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee chairperson, or in the absence of either or both to their designated staff church employee. Resources and instructions for reporting suspected infractions or incidents constituting abuse (whether of child, youth, at-risk or vulnerable adult) proscribed by this policy document should be conspicuously posted in and about the local church buildings and campus.

E. **QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR SERVING CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND AT-RISK OR VULNERABLE ADULTS FOR VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL.** The qualifications for volunteer service in a local church with duties and responsibilities that include serving children, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adults shall be as follows:

1. Must have demonstrated an active relationship in the local church where service will occur for a minimum of three months prior to being permitted to serve as an authority figure.

2. Must be competent to work effectively in the served activity as an assistant in the judgment of the supervising staff member or supervising authority figure.

F. **SCREENING AND BACKGROUND.** The local church shall obtain background checks on all persons serving with children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults. Such persons shall be subject to the following requirements and actions:

1. Complete an Application/Commitment form.

2. Be interviewed by the director of the ministry or program to be served.
3. Have experience and qualifications necessary for the staff position or volunteer service sought.
4. Attend training by the church or annual conference in maintaining the SSPMS; or in the event of an unforeseen circumstance requiring use of a substitute worker who has not had such training, that substitute worker must be briefed on the SSPMS by the director or other supervisor before beginning work.
5. Consent to initiation by the local church of the following background check(s):
   a. Multi-state criminal and sexual offender check based on social security number.
   b. Motor vehicle records check (for those who will be transporting children, youth, or at-risk or vulnerable adults). The Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference recommends background checks be run through the Trak-1 Company or other reputable screening company. A background check will be valid for five years unless the individual has been absent for twelve (12) months or longer.
6. The process for conducting the above described background checks and for handling the results received shall include the following:
   a. Authority to initiate requests for criminal/sexual offender and motor vehicle background checks (see ¶ IV.F.6, above,) shall be limited to the Pastor in Charge or to his/her designated senior non-cleric staff employee.
   b. Upon receipt of background checks documents/data, whether favorable or unfavorable, its confidentiality shall be maintained. For such background check reports concerning a staff member, secure distribution will be made only to the Pastor in Charge, the SSC chairperson, and the Staff-Parrish Relations (Pastor-Parish Relations) Committee chairperson. For such background check reports concerning a volunteer, secure distribution will be made only to the Pastor in Charge and the SSC chairperson. For both categories of persons further actions shall be taken in accordance with provisions in Section G below.
G. UNFAVORABLE REPORTS
1. The individual who has been the subject of a background check, the results of which are unfavorable, shall be so informed in writing with a Notice of Unfavorable Background Check form (see Conference website for forms).
2. If an unfavorable report concerns a volunteer applicant, the Pastor in Charge and another church leader (laity or staff) chosen by the Pastor in Charge shall meet with the volunteer applicant to review and discuss the report.
3. If the unfavorable report concerns a staff applicant, the Pastor in Charge and Staff-Parish Committee chairperson shall meet with the staff applicant to review and discuss the report and shall thereafter take such personnel action as shall be deemed appropriate.
4. Review of unfavorable reports containing any history of criminal charges or convictions or of any reported non-criminal conduct nevertheless suggesting potential unfitness for employment or volunteer status may take into consideration the following factors:
   a. The nature and seriousness of the crime or conduct
   b. The relationship of the crime or conduct to the purpose and nature of the church job or program for which employment or volunteer status is sought
   c. The age of the person at the time of the commission of the crime or conduct
   d. The time elapsed since the person’s crime or conduct
5. Any background check reported charge, conviction, or conduct that deals with
sexual abuse or child abuse shall bar the person from working as an employee or volunteer with children, youth, and/or at-risk or vulnerable adults.

6. Documentation of the employment or volunteer decision made shall be placed in the person’s application or employee personnel file.

H. RECORD RETENTION.

1. Records from the screening process including Application/Commitment interview forms and information from prior employment, references, and background checks shall be maintained in personnel and application files by individual name for each staff member/volunteer.

2. Both paper and electronic media records shall be kept safe and secure.

I. TRAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS. The local church, within fourteen (14) days of employment or the beginning of volunteer service, shall provide training regarding safe sanctuaries policy, minimum standards, and procedures to such new workers who will work with children, youth and/or at-risk or vulnerable adults. Additionally, regularly occurring (at least annual) continuing education for safe sanctuaries training is required of all such workers (new and old). Attendance at all training programs shall be documented and retained in personnel files of the attendees. Upon completion of the training, attendees will sign an acknowledgement they have received the training and understand the SSPMS. The training should include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The definitions and signs of child abuse and reporting of child abuse
2. The church’s policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them (i.e. two adult rule, sign-in and sign-out sheets, procedures to follow if an accident occurs, procedures to follow for reporting an alleged incident of child abuse, information on state child abuse laws)
3. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics
4. Appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child, youth, and at-risk or vulnerable adult events
5. Definitions of appropriate interpersonal boundaries (ways of touching students, appropriate language, etc.)
6. All forms used by the church for application, background checks, reporting, and teacher files

V. REPORTING AND CHILD ABUSE INTERVENTION RESOURCES.

Child abuse reporting requirements and procedures for the states of Alabama and Florida and a list of child abuse intervention resources are provided in this section.

A. Reporting abuse or alleged abuse in Alabama. Alabama’s mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting law states that all school teachers and officials, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, members of the clergy as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report, or cause a report to be made of the same, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority. When an initial report is made to a law enforcement official, the official subsequently shall inform the Department of Human Resources of the report so that
the department can carry out its responsibility to provide protective services when deemed appropriate to the respective child or children.

B. Reporting abuse or alleged abuse in Florida. All cases of suspected abuse must be reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. Initial reports should NOT be made to the county/local branch of the Florida Department of Children and Families. The Florida Abuse Hotline may be reached at 1-800-96-ABUSE. Reports may be faxed in; however, the preferred option for the Florida Department of Children and Families is for persons to call the Florida Abuse Hotline and talk to a Hotline counselor.

C. Child Abuse Intervention Resources. Below are child abuse intervention reporting resources and contacts for use by the local church.

1. National Child Abuse Hotline 1(800) 4-A-CHILD
2. Florida Child Abuse Hotline 1(800) 96-ABUSE
3. County Department of Human/Children Services
4. Area Child Protective Services; for Alabama, the appropriate county Department of Human Resources (DHR)
5. National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse 1(312) 663-3520
6. Parents Anonymous 1(800) 421-0353
7. Alabama Sex Offender Registry http://community.dps.state.al.us
8. Florida Sex Offender Registry www.flsexoffender.net

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ALABAMA - WEST FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WHEREAS, the 2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church provides that the Annual Conference shall have the authority to determine the manner in which proceeds from the sale of abandoned church assets may be distributed; and

WHEREAS, the Conference Trustees hereby recommend to the Annual Conference that it adopt certain policies and procedures pertaining to discontinued and abandoned church property, real, tangible, and intangible, including, but not limited to, church buildings and furnishings, parsonages and any other church-owned furnishings, cemeteries and records relating thereto, membership, baptismal, and other historic records, Christian and church insignia, and gifts held in trust, assets of any endowment foundations or invested funds; and

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved and recommended by the Board of Trustees of the Alabama - West Florida Conference that the following policies and procedures be adopted during the next business session of the Annual Conference of the Alabama - West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church:
Report 9 - POLICIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF DISCONTINUED OR ABANDONED LOCAL CHURCHES AND THEIR ASSETS

The Annual Conference of the Alabama - West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby establishes the following policies and procedures for the distribution of proceeds of discontinued or abandoned churches and their assets. In all instances regarding the disposition of the assets of a local church as a result of discontinuance or abandonment of a local church, the current United Methodist Book of Discipline shall be consulted and followed along with these policies and procedures, which are designed to provide for the orderly gathering and disposition of said assets:

A. Discontinued Churches

1. The district superintendent initiates the process for the assessment of a local church’s potential following the steps prescribed in the current Book of Discipline.
2. Upon reaching the conclusion that a local church no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized, the district superintendent shall initiate the process by which the local church may be declared or may declare itself discontinued.
3. When remaining members are available, a charge or church conference will be held for the purpose of approving discontinuance.
4. If there is a cemetery cared for by the trustees of a local church, the local church trustees shall arrange for the incorporation of a Cemetery Association, either among themselves or including other interested persons in the community, and the cemetery shall be deeded to said Cemetery Association. In so doing:
   A. A separate survey of church and cemetery property will be required.
   B. The conveyance of the cemetery property must be approved by the church conference or charge conference prior to the conveyance.
5. Any action to discontinue a local church requires an affirmative vote of the presiding bishop and a majority of the district superintendents and the district board of church location and building.
6. When a local church is discontinued according to the above procedures, the district superintendent, relying upon his or her sole discretion in the best interest of the Conference and in compliance with applicable church and civil law, shall be responsible for, and is the legally authorized representative of the Conference for: a) transferring remaining members to other United Methodist Churches, b) obtaining the deed to the property and a legal opinion as to any reversion restrictions in the deed, c) determining which group or persons will be responsible for the upkeep of the building and maintaining insurance premiums, and d) making recommendations for the future use of the property to the Annual Conference. If no recommendation is made, it shall be deemed abandoned consistent with ¶2549.2(b) of the 2012 Book of Discipline.
7. District Superintendents will present resolutions for the discontinuance of churches during the next business session of the Annual Conference.
B. Abandoned Churches

1. A local church that is already discontinued, may be further declared to be abandoned. The change in status from “discontinued” to “abandoned” may be made by local church/charge conference action, or at the recommendation of the district superintendent.

2. The following groups must approve the change in status: the presiding bishop and a majority of the district superintendents and members of the district board of church location and building. Upon approval of the change in status from discontinued to abandoned, the district superintendent will so notify the Conference Board of Trustees.

3. It is understood that this change in status means that the church and its assets are available for future sale or disposal by the Conference Board of Trustees.

4. The district superintendent or his/her designee and the Conference Board of Trustees shall cooperatively care for the following details: a) appoint a committee to conduct an immediate inventory of all local church assets; b) prepare a final accounting of outstanding financial obligations of the local church, to include any monies owed to the Conference, including but not limited to, any accrued direct bill obligations and current year apportionments that have not been paid; c) consult and follow the most recent Checklist for the Discontinuance or Abandonment of Local Church Property prepared by the GCFA Legal Department, d) provide all building keys and security codes, if any, to the Conference Board of Trustees, e) remove sacred objects of special value, church insignia and symbols, f) secure the buildings and exercise control over access thereto, and g) secure any gift, legacy, devise, annuity or other benefit that becomes available to the Conference as a result of a church’s becoming abandoned.

C. Sale of Abandoned Churches

1. The Conference Board of Trustees and the district superintendents shall cooperate in the sale of abandoned churches. The following steps must be followed:
   
   (a) An independent appraisal be secured, the cost of which will be deducted from the sale proceeds.
   
   (b) All listing agreements shall include the following wording: “The seller is required by The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church to give consideration to other denominations represented in the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union. The seller reserves the right to reject offers from independent church organizations not connected with the Commission.”
   
   (c) The Conference Board of Trustees may hire a real estate agent to list the sale at fair market value, and must provide necessary insurance, utilities, and upkeep of the property pending the sale, the cost of which will be deducted from the sale proceeds.
   
   (d) All written offers for purchase must be directed to the Conference Board of Trustees.
   
   (e) For an offer to be accepted, a majority of the Conference Board of Trustees must accept the offer by affirmative vote and authorize all deeds and other legal documents for the transfer of the property.
(f) The Conference Board of Trustees shall request a written statement from the presiding bishop indicating that the ad interim sale of the abandoned church property has been executed in conformity with ¶2515 of the 2012 Book of Discipline.

(g) The Conference Board of Trustees shall report all sales of abandoned church property in a given year at the next business session of the Annual Conference.

D. Distribution of Net Proceeds from the Sale of Abandoned Churches

1. The Conference Board of Trustees shall distribute the net proceeds from the sale of abandoned churches pursuant to ¶2549.3, ¶2549.5, and ¶2549.7 of the 2012 Book of Discipline and this policy.

2. All proceeds from the sale of abandoned churches located in non-urban centers, as defined in ¶2549.7, shall first be applied to satisfy any and all financial obligations of the abandoned church, including, but not limited to, unpaid pension and health benefits for the current year, any unpaid apportionments for the current year, and any other short-term or long-term liabilities incurred by the abandoned church. The remaining funds shall be distributed as follows:

   A. One half of the net proceeds shall be distributed to the Emerging Ministry Account of the district trustees in the district where the abandoned church was formerly located. Said proceeds shall be held in trust for use by the district for missional purposes, including, but not limited to places for United Methodist worship, ministry, or faith development; provided, however, in the event that the district trustees fail to use said proceeds in accordance with this provision within three years of receipt, or fail to receive an extension from the Conference Trustees, the said proceeds shall revert to the Conference Trustees to transfer to the Board of Congregational Development to use for new church starts and congregation revitalization within the Conference.

   B. The remaining half of the net proceeds shall be transferred by the Conference Trustees to the Board of Congregational Development to use for new church starts and congregational vitalization within the Conference.

3. All proceeds from abandoned churches in urban centers of the Conference, after all financial obligations of the abandoned church, including, but not limited to, unpaid pension and health benefits for the current year, any unpaid apportionments for the current year, and any other short-term or long-term liabilities incurred by the abandoned church, shall be distributed to the respective district trustees’ Emerging Ministry Account to be used by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Cabinet in the Urban Center in which the sold property is located; provided, however, in the event that the district trustees fail to use said proceeds in accordance with this provision within three years of receipt, or fail to receive an extension from the Conference Trustees, the said proceeds shall revert to the Conference Trustees to transfer to the Board of Congregational Development to use for new church starts and congregation revitalization in Urban Centers within the Conference.

4. The Conference Treasurer shall provide quarterly financial reports to the Conference Trustees and to the Cabinet on the Conference Property Fund with income received and disbursements made for the Conference Property Fund,

REPORT 10
CONFERENCE - WIDE INSURANCE PROGRAM
(UNITED METHODIST INSURANCE)

In September 2006 the Board of Trustees joined United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust (PACT) by insuring all of the annual conference owned property and operations. In 2007 the Annual Conference adopted, but did not make mandatory, a resolution to establish PACT as the conference-wide insurance carrier for all of the churches and ministries of this annual conference beginning January 1, 2008.

In 2011 the denomination’s top financial agency (GCFA) became the single owner of the PACT program. The General Council on Finance and Administration approved a plan to allow the United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust Company to buy out the 12 annual (regional) conferences and two general agencies that then owned the company. The new entity became United Methodist Insurance (UMI)

In 2015 fifty-two churches and agencies were insured by UMI through the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

The Conference began 2015 with a balance of $284,349.55

We received income of $431.00.

We ended 2015 with a balance of $284,780.55

We will continue to offer the UMI coverage to churches in the Alabama-West Florida Conference via the UMI partnership which began January 1, 2010, with the Church Insurance Agency Corporation (CIAC). The Church Insurance Agency Corporation is the Episcopal Church equivalent of UMI, that is, a captive that has provided ministry protection for the Episcopal churches in the US for over 100 years. CIAC will provide UMI the program administration services, including billing and endorsement changes. Their Alabama-West Florida representative, Mr. Paul Stephens who lives in Nashville, has proven to be of benefit to the local churches of the annual conference. He can be reached at (615) 599-6830 his cell phone number is (615) 477-1583 or pstephens@cpg.org.

REPORT 11 - MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Book of Discipline 2012 ¶2533.2 requires local church trustees to annually review and report on the adequacy of local church property and liability insurance coverage “to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly
protected against risks.” Since 1797, the Book of Discipline has provided that the property and assets of local churches are held in trust for the benefit of the denomination. Inadequate insurance puts local church property and assets at risk; including the denomination’s trust interest therein. Therefore, Trustees of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, representing the denomination’s trust interest, have adopted the following minimum insurance requirements for local churches:

**COMMERCIAL PACKAGE POLICY**, to include the following minimum limits:

- **Buildings, Organs & Contents Insured to Replacement Value, “All Risk” Coverage**
- **Fine Arts** $25,000
- **Comprehensive General Liability** Occurrence $1,000,000 Aggregate $3,000,000
- **Pastoral Counseling Liability** Occurrence $1,000,000 Aggregate $3,000,000
- **Hired and Non Owned Auto Liability** Occurrence $1,000,000 Aggregate $3,000,000
- **Employee Benefits Liability (EBL)** Occurrence $1,000,000 Aggregate $1,000,000
- **Medical Payments** $10,000
- **Sexual Misconduct Liability** Occurrence $1,000,000 Aggregate $2,000,000
- **Crime / Employee Dishonesty** Occurrence $25,000

**DIRECTORS & OFFICERS (D&O) POLICY**, including the following minimum liability limits:

- **Directors’ & Officers** $1,000,000
- **Employment Practices Liability (EPL)** $1,000,000 (including Sexual Harassment)

**WORKERS’ COMPENSATION POLICY**, including supply clergy

- **Bodily Injury by Accident** Each accident $1,000,000
- **Bodily Injury by Disease** Policy limit $1,000,000

**UMBRELLA POLICY (Excess Liability)**

*An Umbrella policy is suggested but not required*

This excess policy must extend over Commercial General Liability, Pastoral Counseling, Employee Benefits Liability, Owned Auto, Hired & Non-Owned Auto and Workers Compensation. A higher per occurrence limit may be appropriate based on specific risk characteristics such as church size and/or scope of operations and ministries.

- **Per Occurrence Limit** $1,000,000 (minimum) Aggregate $1,000,000

Submitted by,
Reverend Jeff Wilson, President
Conference Board of Trustees
COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION (CEC)

“It is the purpose of the commission on equitable compensation to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference by: (a) recommending conference standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; (c) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations; and (d) submitting an arrearage policy to be adopted by the annual conference.” (¶625.2, 2012 Discipline)

The CEC assists congregations which have potential for growth to become capable of financially supporting a full-time pastor, and assure that all full-time appointed pastors in the AWF Conference receive minimum salary. The CEC recommends the following guidelines for all churches/charges in our conference that apply for a subsidy grant:

1. Only full-time pastors, certified by the Board of Ordained Ministry (district and conference levels as applicable), approved by the annual conference, and appointed to a church or charge are eligible for a CEC subsidy grant. No associate pastor, part-time local, or supply pastor shall be eligible for a subsidy grant. The amount of equitable compensation a pastor may receive is based upon the taxable cash salary prior to any voluntary employee reductions such as a 403(b) plan or written cafeteria plan plus utility exclusions, excluding a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage. Full-time local pastors without a parsonage must receive a housing allowance to bring their total plan compensation up to 60% of the denominational average compensation so that they will be eligible for Comprehensive Protection Plan benefits.

2. No pastor shall receive a subsidy grant from CEC when the pastor receives income from any other church source if that income plus salary from the charge is more than minimum salary. No pastor serving outside the bounds of our conference shall be eligible to receive equitable compensation.

3. For a pastor to receive an equitable compensation subsidy grant, the church/charge must pay at least 80% of minimum salary for the year in which CEC a subsidy grant is provided, and have paid at least 50% of the previous year’s apportionments. Direct Bill health insurance and pension payments shall be waived for charges upon their initial approval for a CEC subsidy grant, if no outstanding arrearage exists. Each succeeding year of receiving a CEC subsidy grant, churches/charges must make progress toward providing full clergy compensation according to the following schedule to qualify for a continued subsidy grant. Percentages listed below apply to the approved minimum salary for the calendar year in which a subsidy grant will be received:

   Year 2:  85% of minimum salary and 100% apportionments paid
   Year 3:  90% of minimum salary, and 100% apportionments paid
Year 4: 90% of minimum salary, 100% apportionments, and Defined Contribution portion of Direct Bill paid

Year 5: 95% of minimum salary, 100% apportionments, and complete Pension portion of Direct Bill paid

After five years of receiving a CEC subsidy grant, a church/charge may be approved for a sixth year of exemption from the Health Insurance portion of the Direct Bill if the charge is paying 100% of minimum salary, 100% of apportionments and 100% of the pension portion of the Direct Bill.

4. Churches/charges applying for a CEC subsidy grant that are already paying above 80% of minimum salary shall be expected to make appropriate progress toward becoming self-sustaining in accord with the schedule in Paragraph 3.

5. The CEC recognizes that occasionally circumstances will demand special consideration. The district superintendent of the applying church/charge should assess such cases and present rationale for a subsidy grant to the CEC. Churches/charges must be willing to participate in a formal congregational development effort offered by the annual conference.

6. District superintendents are required to review all equitable compensation situations in their districts to ascertain the necessity for assistance and, whenever possible, seek to reduce the need for a CEC subsidy grant. The district superintendent shall be responsible for the accurate completion and submission of subsidy grant applications to the CEC. The secretary of the CEC shall not issue a check order for an equitable compensation subsidy grant until all criteria have been met as determined by the CEC.

The CEC recommends a minimum salary of $36,500 for all full-time appointed clergy for 2017.

Equitable Compensation Disbursements for 2015

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<th>Amount</th>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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</tr>
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Arrearage Policy

1. In the event that the local church treasurer becomes aware that the church will be unable to provide to the pastor full payment of a regularly scheduled payroll, housing allowance installment, or full payment for regular directly billed benefit payments such as pension and health care, the church treasurer shall immediately notify both verbally (within 24 hours) and in writing (within 3 days) the pastor, lay leader, and chairs of S/PPRC, finance, trustees, and the church council of the impending arrearage. Upon receipt of such notice, the chair of S/PPRC and/or the pastor shall immediately (within 3 days) notify the DS of the impending arrearage. It is the pastor’s responsibility to keep copies of all written notifications and to provide additional written confirmation to the DS when an arrearage has taken place. Failure to document salary or benefit arrearages may result in a loss of compensation and/or forfeiture of pension and benefits.

2. Upon receipt of notice of an impending arrearage, the chair of S/PPRC shall immediately (within 24 hours) call a meeting of the pastor, lay leader, and chairs of finance, trustees, and the church council to discuss the financial situation and seek remedies to prevent an arrearage from occurring. Such remedies might include drawing from invested funds, an emergency appeal for special giving from the congregation, or emergency grants or loans from the District or Conference. In accord with Discipline ¶624, such remedies cannot include a reduction in the pastor’s compensation until the beginning of the next conference year.

3. If after consultation with the lay leader and chairs of S/PPRC, finance, trustees, and church council it becomes apparent that the church may be facing a long term financial crisis, the chair of S/PPRC shall notify in writing the pastor and DS that: (a) a CEC subsidy grant is necessary to maintain compensation for the remainder of the conference year, (b) a change in pastoral compensation may be necessary at the beginning of the following conference year, or (c) a change in pastoral appointment as deemed necessary by the bishop and cabinet.

4. If the local church becomes delinquent in the pastor’s compensation (i.e. more than 30 days), then the district superintendent shall notify the CEC, which on its own initiative may send a representative to meet with the local church and pastor to seek resolution of the issue, or develop a payment plan with the local church/charge so that the pastor receives full payment of compensation by the end of the conference year. The district superintendent shall be invited to participate in this process.

5. If the local church is already receiving a subsidy grant, the CEC may: (a) determine if all subsidy grant funds allocated to the church were used to pay the pastor’s salary, (b) examine the original subsidy grant application to determine if the amount requested was reduced, (c) require an outside audit of all church funds in compliance with GCFA Guidelines, (www.gcfa.org). The CEC shall notify the district superintendent in writing of its findings and recommendations.
6. If a local church becomes delinquent in the payment of the pastor’s direct billed pension and benefits (i.e., more than 30 days), then the conference treasurer shall notify the conference benefits officer, the district superintendent, and the CEC. On behalf of the conference, the benefits officer and/or DS shall develop a written payment plan with the local church so that the conference receives full payment of pension and benefits by the end of the conference year.

7. *Discipline* ¶ 2542.1 makes clear that no real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged to pay for the current or budgeted expenses of a local church (including arrearages), nor shall the principal proceeds of a sale of any such property be so used. This provision shall apply alike to unincorporated and incorporated local churches.

8. In extreme and unresolved circumstances, the local church and/or pastor may petition a session of the annual conference for assistance in payment of the arrearage, after completing the required financial audit of the church.

9. It is the responsibility of the pastor to provide evidence of an arrearage by providing documentation such as: treasurer’s reports, charge conference reports of adopted compensation, check stubs, W-2 forms, and a Certification of Payment Form signed by the pastor, S/PPRC chair, trustee chair, treasurer, and church council chair.

10. The statute of limitations for filing a claim for funds from the annual conference (i.e., notification to the DS) for any salary arrearage is one year from the date of the initial arrearage. Once an appointment ends, the pastor no longer has claim on the local church for compensation funds (¶ 342.4, *Discipline*).

Rev. Matt Mobley, Chairperson
Commission on Equitable Compensation

**COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**Report No. 1 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Purpose: To develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

1. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall be organized in accordance with paragraph 610 and 611 of the *2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* and Standing Rule No. 35 of the *2012 Journal of the Alabama-West Florida Conference*.

2. The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall meet prior to Annual Conference and during session as needed. A fall and winter/spring meeting of CFA shall be held. The president of the Council may call other meetings.
3. All persons interested in presenting a request to CFA are invited to do so or to attend any of the Council meetings. All Council meetings shall be open to all interested persons, except when, by majority vote, the council elects to meet in executive session.

4. The Committee on Investments within CFA shall be responsible for reviewing, approving, and supervising all banking relationships of CFA with special attention given to investments including those of conference agencies.

5. The Committee on Audit and Review within CFA shall have responsibility for reviewing audits of all agencies receiving funds from the Annual Conference.

6. The Regions Bank shall be designated to serve as the conference depository to receive funds and keep specified records.

Report No. 2 - CONFERENCE OFFICERS

The Council on Finance and Administration shall be responsible for budgeting and for the work of the conference officers as listed in Standing Rule No. 2.

A. Conference Secretary
   The conference secretary fulfills the responsibilities prescribed by the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and the Standing Rules of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

B. Conference Fiscal Officer and the Fiscal Office
   1. The responsibilities of the Fiscal Office shall include: Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services; Statistician; Conference Benefits Officer and Executive Secretary of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits; and other responsibilities assigned by the Council on Finance and Administration.

   2. The Fiscal Officer shall keep records, make reports, and handle all financial transactions of all conference agencies.

   3. The Fiscal Office shall prepare reports as required by the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), and mail copies to persons who may need such reports.

   4. All apportioned district and conference funds shall be channeled through Regions Bank and records kept by the Fiscal Office of the Conference.

   5. The Fiscal Office shall disburse all checks pertaining to every fund and keep proper files of the copies of the check orders from the secretaries authorizing the issue of such checks. Copies of the checks issued shall be filed after having been charged against the account upon which they have been drawn.

   6. The Fiscal Office shall tabulate, church by church, fund by fund, the information given on the remittance blanks for the conference depository.
C. Journal Editor - Conference Journal and Brochure of Reports

1. The Journal Editor shall chair the Editorial Committee (Standing Rule No. 15), and be responsible for the publication and distribution of the Annual Conference Journal and the Brochure of Reports for the Annual Conference.

2. All boards, commissions, committees and other agencies submitting reports to be included in the Brochure of Reports must have the reports in the hands of the editor no later than the last Monday in February.

3. The Journal Editor shall have authority to edit reports but not to change the meaning of any part of any report.

4. Standing Rule No. 15 shall be followed in distributing the Brochure of Reports. It shall be the responsibility of the district superintendents to supply the names and addresses of lay members no later than the last Monday of February. Additional copies shall be made available to the conference registrar.

5. All memoirs (including photographs) must be in the hands of the editor by the closing of the last business session of the annual conference. Responsibility for this material shall reside with the Commission on Archives and History.

6. All material to be included in the Journal (other than those in 5 above) must be in hands of the editor not later than ten (10) working days after the close of the Annual Conference.

7. The Annual Conference Journal shall be distributed according to Standing Rule No. 15. Instructions for ordering the Journal will be provided in the Brochure of Reports.

D. Conference Registrar and Registration Policies

1. The Conference Registrar shall have full responsibility for interpreting the eligibility of those covered under Standing Rule No.8 for entertainment at the Annual Conference Session. This may be appealed to the Council on Finance and Administration.

2. The Conference Registrar shall supervise registration of and assignment of rooms to Annual Conference delegates and handle calls for persons attending sessions.

3. Chairpersons of boards and agencies who are not elected delegates and attend the Annual Conference in order to give reports shall have their expenses paid by their own board or agency.

4. All physical preparation for Annual Conference shall be under the Registrar’s supervision in cooperation with the Dais Committee, Worship Committee, and host facility staff.
5. No materials will be allowed on the registration table other than that necessary for registration. Other arrangements should be made to distribute materials through the site manager.

6. Use of dining halls, rooms, or areas shall be determined by the site manager. Fees for dining rooms shall be paid by the group using such rooms.

7. Space and/or rooms to be used for displays shall be assigned by the site manager and no other. Space shall be assigned on a first come basis.

8. Commercial displays will be allowed only in a room assigned and publicized for this purpose, with the exception of Cokesbury, which will continue to have a room assigned only to it.

9. Special needs, such as hymnals, altar furnishings, projectors, etc., shall be arranged through the site manager at least two weeks before conference. Needs arising during Annual Conference, which could not be anticipated, will also be arranged through the site manager.

**Report No. 3 - BONDING REQUIREMENTS**

Paragraph 618.1 of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church gives CFA responsibility for the fidelity bonding of the conference treasurer. CFA recommends that the present policy of bonding be continued through the United Methodist Insurance. Paragraph 618.2 of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church gives CFA the responsibility of requiring all agencies and boards for which the conference treasurer does not serve as treasurer to have fidelity bonding of there is such amounts as it deems adequate.

In order to avoid the depositing of conference funds in any one bank in excess of the insured limits, CFA shall serve as the clearing house for all agencies in the Annual Conference making deposits in any bank, either savings or checking accounts. Bank accounts shall not be opened by any agency without approval by CFA. No agency shall permit the total amount deposited in anyone bank to exceed insured limits without CFA approval.

**Report No. 4 - BUDGETING, FUNDING, and AUDITING PROCEDURES**

1. All boards and agencies are required to cooperate with the conference treasurer in the development of detailed financial reports of the income, expenditures, remaining balances, and audits.

2. Program budget requests shall follow the prescribed procedures established by the CORE Team.

3. Agencies may request, or be asked, to meet with CFA to clarify their budget request or report.
4. The Conference Resource Center and all boards and agencies receiving funds from conference benevolences with budget amounts approved by the Annual Conference shall be allowed to draw funds or make expenditures on a monthly basis as needed. Funds available monthly for the program boards will be those approved by the CORE Team from the available pool. Funds available for the Conference Resource Center will be based on the benevolence receipts of the current year. Agencies of the Annual Conference that require monthly support will receive 1/12 of the approved allocation each month. Any expenditure more than the amount approved by the CORE Team in any Conference program board account shall be cleared with the President of CFA and the Director of Connectional Ministries.

5. All expenditures from the Interest on Investments Account shall be approved by a majority vote of CFA.

6. Each Agency, whose records are not kept by the Fiscal Office, is required to bond its treasurer and provide a certificate of insurance to CFA. Such agency shall provide a copy of its audit and other reports to CFA as deemed necessary by CFA. (¶618.2 of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church) Reports to CFA shall be in such detail, and provided at such times, as the Council shall direct.

7. CFA may withhold conference funds from any agency or board that fails or refuses to present proper bonds or audits. Such withholding shall continue until proper requests are met.


**Report No. 5 - ZERO-BASED BUDGETING**

The following proposal for “zero-based” budgeting is presented by the Council on Finance and Administration (the original proposal was adopted by the Conference on June 1, 1988):

1. All program area budgets of Annual Conference boards and agencies will begin the year with a zero balance.

2. The annual budgets for program boards and agencies shall be prepared on a “zero-base.” It is intended that all programs, projects and functions, old and new, be analyzed and reevaluated regularly and systematically by the CORE Team. Groups requesting budgeted funds shall be required to justify those requests in detail to explain why money is needed, specifically what it will be used for, the resulting benefits, and what would result if the request were denied.

3. At the end of the fiscal year, the unused balances for each board and agency shall be transferred to a reserve account, which shall be designated the “Mission and Ministry Fund.”
4. The Mission and Ministry Fund shall consist of the following:
   a. Funds remaining in the CORE Team Missional Giving Fund at the end of
      the year;
   b. Funds which may be budgeted for the Mission and Ministry Fund
   c. Funds received from terminated activities which remain unused for those
      activities when transferred by the CORE Team
   d. Interest earned from sources as may be provided by the Council on Finance
      and Administration
   e. Funds from other sources that may be deposited by any board or agency or
      group within the Annual Conference.

5. Additional use of Mission and Ministry funds by program boards and agencies
   or for other program purposes of the Annual Conference shall be approved by a
   majority vote of the CORE Team.

**Report No. 6 - FUND RAISING and COLLECTION POLICIES**

CFA makes the following recommendations for those causes for which no funds are
allocated:

1. That each local church observe World Communion Sunday, Human Relations
   Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, United Methodist Student Day, Peace with Justice
   Sunday, Native American Awareness Sunday, and Golden Cross Sunday and that
   special offerings be received or budgeted for these special days.

2. That our conference continue to give its hearty support to the Advance Special
   program at both the General and Conference levels. (See complete listing of
   approved Conference Advance Special programs in the Journal Report of the Board
   of Global Ministries or the General Conference data log of Mission Handbook.)

3. That the Alabama-West Florida Conference fully support the following
   programs and give sponsoring agencies permission to raise and receive funds,
   provided that there be no goals or quotas placed on local churches:

   **A. Blue Lake**

   1) Camps for the underprivileged and special youth (Blue Lake Assembly
      Ground Trustees)

   2) United Methodist Women’s Blue Lake Support

   3) Blue Lake Partner Program (Assembly Ground Trustees)

   4) “Camping Sunday” for Blue Lake improvement and volunteer
      recognition (Assembly Ground Trustees)

   5) 20in12 Blue Lake Campaign

   6) “Blue Lake Sunday” to help reduce debt at Blue Lake (Assembly
      Ground Trustees)
B. **Homes for the Aging**
   1) “Fountain of Love Offering,” for Homes for the Aging (primarily in February) (The Board of Global Ministries)
   2) Support for New Homes sponsored by Methodist Homes for the Aging

C. The White Christmas and fifth Sunday church school offerings for the **Children’s Home**

D. **Golden Cross Ministries** (primarily on Mother’s Day) (The Committee on Health and Welfare Ministries)

E. **Youth Service Fund** (United Methodist Youth)

F. **Huntingdon College** (Board of Higher Education)

G. **Mobile Inner City Mission** Endowment Fund (Board of Global Ministries)

H. United Methodist Men’s **Kingdom Builders Project** (Board of Laity)

I. **New Church Development Fund** (Commission on New Congregational Development)

J. **Wesley Foundation**
   1) University of South Alabama Wesley Foundation Capital Fund Campaign
   2) University of West Alabama Wesley Foundation Capital Fund Campaign

K. **Central Conference Pension Initiative** (Board of Pension and Health Benefits)

L. **Academy for Congregational Excellence**

M. 5 on the 5th (**Nellie Burge** BOD)

N. **Dumas Wesley** Roof Repair Project
### Report No. 7 – APPORTIONMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>+/-</th>
</tr>
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<td>(3) Congregational Development</td>
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**TOTAL CONFERENCE BUDGET**  
10,908,711  
10,991,553  
0.76
### Report No. 7 – APPORTIONMENTS

(1) Includes:

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<th>Department</th>
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<th>Difference</th>
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<td>Mission and Ministry Fund</td>
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**Connectional Ministries/Communications:** $674,100

Supports salaries, benefits and expenses for six (6) program staff and two (2) support staff. Also supports general office expenses including telephone, printing, mailing, computer and miscellaneous expenses.

**Mission and Ministry Fund:** $536,000

This fund supports eight (8) of the Boards related to the Conference CORE Team. They are Discipleship, Advocacy and Ethnic Ministries, Higher Education and Campus Ministry, Laity, Church and Society, Global Ministries, Town and Country, and Hispanic Ministries. The Mission and Ministry Fund also provides support for agencies related to the annual conference and new and emerging ministries. Those being supported in 2016 are Dumas Wesley Community Center, Mobile Inner City Metro Ministries, Mary Ellen's Hearth (formerly Nellie Burge Community Center), The Ark (formerly Noah's Ark), Alabama Rural Ministries, Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries, Milk and Honey and CIRCLES of Transformation.

(3) Includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Amount 2016</th>
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<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Congregational Development Office</td>
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<td>New Church Development Fund</td>
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<td>Church Revitalization Fund</td>
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### Report No. 7 – APPORTIONMENTS
#### SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>2015 Apportioned</th>
<th>2015 Received</th>
<th>2015 %Received</th>
<th>2015 Expended</th>
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<td>World Service Fund</td>
<td>$1,754,239</td>
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<td>Africa University Fund</td>
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<td>Episcopal Fund</td>
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<td>General Administration Fund</td>
<td>$211,746</td>
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<td>Interdenominational Coop Fund</td>
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<td><strong>84.79%</strong></td>
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#### SEJ FUNDS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>2015 Apportioned</th>
<th>2015 Received</th>
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<th>2015 Expended</th>
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<tr>
<td>SEJ Administration</td>
<td>$58,380</td>
<td>$53,073</td>
<td>90.91%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,380</strong></td>
<td><strong>$53,073</strong></td>
<td><strong>90.91%</strong></td>
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#### ANNUAL CONFERENCE FUNDS

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<th>Fund</th>
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<th>2015 Received</th>
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<th>2015 Expended</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Lake Operation Fund</td>
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<td>B/L Cap Impr/Debt Retirement Fund</td>
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<td>Capital and Operations (Trustees)</td>
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<td>Conference Administration Fund</td>
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<td>Conference Resource Center</td>
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<td>Congregational Development Fund</td>
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<td>Dist. Superintendent's Fund</td>
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<td>Wesley Foundations</td>
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<td>Conference Claimants Fund</td>
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**GRAND TOTALS**

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<th>Fund</th>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>83.96%</strong></td>
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</table>
Brochure of Reports — 2016

Report No. 8  STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES and LOCAL CHURCH CONCERNS

1. CFA believes that all apportionments are needed in the amounts apportioned. Furthermore, CFA believes that all churches have the capacity to pay apportionments in full. In 2014, 85.64% of apportioned funds were paid by local churches. In 2015, 88.49% of apportioned funds were paid by local churches. CFA continues to encourage all churches and all United Methodist Christians in the Alabama - West Florida Annual Conference to participate fully in our connectional ministries through generous serving, generous giving, generous living, generous leading, and generous praying. The 2017 Conference budget reflects a 0.70% increase in Connectional Missional giving (apportionments.) General Church apportionments have increased by $60,272 or 1.77%. Jurisdictional apportionments decreased by 50% in 2017. Over-all Annual Conference Connectional Missional (apportionments) increased by 0.76 % in 2017.

2. By action of the 2001 Annual Conference, thy 50% following schedule shall be used in setting apportionments for new churches:

- 1st full year  no apportionment
- 2nd year  25% apportioned
- 3R year  50% apportioned
- 4th year  75% apportioned
- 5th year & following  100% apportioned

3. Apportionments shall be made to all churches using the apportionment formula outlined in CFA Report - Formula and Allocations.

4. Local churches shall provide for the audits of local church records as provided in ¶258.4d of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church.

Report No. 9 FORMULA and ALLOCATIONS

1. In 2012 a task force was formed to evaluate the fairness of the current formula for determining conference apportionments. They reviewed formulas used in each of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Annual Conferences. The task force recommend, and the 2013 Annual Conference approved, the continued use of the current apportionment formula.

2. Therefore, the apportionments shall be developed using a formula based on financial strength of the local churches and membership of the local churches. Financial strength will be weighted 75% and professing membership will be weighted 25% in the formula. Apportionments will be determined by local church decimal applied to the amount of each budget item at the conference level.

3. The financial strength of a local church in calculating the decimal formula shall be based on all local expenditures (lines 48-57 of the Local Church Report to the
Annual Conference). This eliminates all apportionments (including direct billing) and special giving from the formula. (Listing: Standing Rule No. 22)

4. The winter/spring meeting of the Council on Finance and Administration shall be the time for receiving requests from all boards and agencies for the ensuing year. All boards and agencies should be advised that they place their allocations in jeopardy when they fail to submit timely budget requests.

5. The local church will enter the Local Church Report information using the “UMC GCFA Statistical Input System” located on Alabama-West Florida Conference Web Site (www.awfumc.org) Contact the District Superintendent’s office for the User Name and Password if they are not known by the church pastor. The pastor and chairperson of the Committee on Finance or the church treasurer shall review the annual local church report as being correct before its final submission. The Fiscal Office will establish a date by which it should be notified if corrections are necessary. If no corrections are identified by that date, the fiscal officer will consider the report accurate. When the new year’s apportionments are run in July/August, there will be only one set of apportionments, which will be the final set. There will not be a “Trial Set” of apportionments.

Report No. 10 - DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS’ COMPENSATION

In 2012 a task force was formed to study district superintendents’ compensation. The task force, composed to both clergy and lay members studied many annual conferences’ formulas for District Superintendent’s salary. Their recommendation, approved by CFA and approved at the 2013 Annual Conference, recommend that superintendents’ salaries be based on the average of the highest 25 senior pastor’s salary appointed to a local church from within the conference. The 25 pastors’ salaries in the formula do not include District Superintendents nor do they include clergy conference staff members. From time to time CFA may adjust its District Superintendents salary recommendation. In keeping with this salary formula, CFA recommends that the base salary of the district superintendents be $116,182, resulting in an increase of .0105%.

The base salary of the district superintendents shall be set at $116,182 for 2017 with travel expense paid on voucher from a travel pool of $92,000. The executive committee of CFA shall adjust the rate per mile, as needed, within this limit.

1. District superintendents shall receive no supplementary travel funds from district administration funds.

2. Each district shall place funds in its budget for district parsonage utilities, up to a total of $4,500, for each calendar budget year. Utilities to be included are electricity; gas, water sewage, and basic television cable or satellite services, telephone, Internet service, and trash collection.
3. The districts which provide district superintendents a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage shall designate the housing amount in the minutes of the District Conference. This designation shall be made in advance of payment of such allowance, either upon appointment or in advance of the calendar year thereafter.

4. Each district shall place in its district administration fund an amount not to exceed $2,000 for continuing education.

**Report No. 11 - MOVING GUIDELINES and EXPENSES**

The first Sunday following the adjournment of Annual Conference shall be the last Sunday of pastoral responsibility for each conference year. The official moving day will be Tuesday, June 21, 2016 and may be adjusted according to the needs and concerns worked out in consultation with the clergy persons, the churches and approved by the District Superintendent.

The entire June salary shall be paid to the pastor by the church from which he/she is moving. In effect 50% of the annual salary will be paid January through June; with the remaining 50% paid by the church receiving a new pastor. Health insurance contributions and/or premiums, as well as any UMPIP payments are to be deducted from the pastor’s compensation for the full month of June, with the receiving church beginning such payments in July.

Upon retirement, disability, termination, or death of a minister serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference and serving a full time appointments under the provisions of ¶333.1 of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, the conference shall pay up to $2,500 for documented moving expenses to the first place of retirement, termination, or disability or the first place of dwelling for a surviving spouse. Moving expenses to be reimbursed shall not be incurred prior to retirement or termination notification to the Bishop and will be reimbursed after the move is completed.

**Guidelines for clergy under appointment:**

1. Following notification of appointment change by the district superintendent, the Chairperson of the PPRC should contact the minister to be appointed to communicate the church’s policy in paying moving expenses and to discuss moving plans.

2. The receiving church is responsible for the first $3,000 of documented moving expenses and is encouraged to pay all documented expenses for the incoming ministerial family.

**Report No. 12 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXPENSES**

1. A charge of $28.00 per person, per night, will be made for all who use Conference provided housing. (Standing Rule No.8) CFA will be responsible for studying and investigating possible locations and expenses for housing during future sessions of the Annual Conference.
2. The *Brochure of Reports* will contain instructions for ordering printed regular bound copies of the *Conference Journal*. (Standing Rule 15)

3. Electronic versions of the *Brochure of Reports* and the *Conference Journal* may be substituted for printed copies.

**Report No. 13 - CREDIT CARD POLICY**

Organizations for which the Council on Financial and Administration have responsibility and or the Fiscal office provides financial services must coordinate approval before establishing credit card account and credit limits for consumer credit accounts.

**Report No. 14 - INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

**SCOPE OF THIS INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

This statement of investment policy reflects the investment policy, objectives, and constraints of the Council on Finance and Administration of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. (CFA)

**PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

The Council on Finance and Administration sets forth this statement of investment policy in order to do the following:

1. Define and assign the responsibilities of all involved parties.
2. Establish a clear understanding for all involved parties of the investment goals and objectives for assets.
3. Manage assets according to prudent standards as established in common trust law and in accordance with general guidelines by the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church.
4. Establish the relevant investment horizon for which assets will be managed.

In general, the purpose of this statement is to outline a philosophy and attitude which will guide the investment management of the assets towards the desired results. It is intended to be sufficiently specific to be meaningful, yet flexible enough to be practical.

**DEFINITIONS**

1. “The Council on Finance and Administration” is the governing council established to administer the assets as specified by *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* in its most recent edition and applicable actions of the annual conference.
2. “The Council on Finance and Administration” shall be referred to hereinafter as the “Council” in regard to this policy statement.
3. “The Investment Committee” consists of members of the Council, appointed by the Council, to act on behalf of the Council to administer this policy. It shall be referred to hereinafter as the “Committee” in regard to this policy statement.
4. “Investment Manager” shall mean any individuals or organizations employed to manage the investment of all or part of the assets.
5. “Investment Broker” shall mean any individual or organization employed to provide advisory services, including advice on investment objectives and/or asset allocation, manager search, and performance monitoring.
6. “Assets” shall mean all funds and securities for which the Council is responsible.
7. “Securities” shall refer to the marketable investment securities which are defined as acceptable in this statement.
8. “Investment Horizon” shall be the time period over which the investment objectives, as set forth, are expected to be met. The maximum investment horizon for’ these assets shall be set by the Council.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY
The Committee is responsible for directing and monitoring the investment management of the assets. As such, the committee is authorized to delegate certain responsibilities to professional experts in various fields subject to Council approval. These include, but are not limited to the following:
1. The **Investment Broker** may assist the Committee in: establishing investment policy, objectives, and guidelines; selecting investment managers; reviewing such managers over time; measuring and evaluating investment performance; and other tasks as deemed appropriate.
2. If an **Investment Manager** is used, he/she has discretion to purchase, sell, or hold the specific securities that will be used to meet the investment objectives.
3. The **Custodian** will physically (or through agreement with a sub-custodian) maintain possession of securities administered by the Committee, collect dividend and interest payments, redeem maturing securities, and effect receipt and delivery following purchases and sales. The custodian may also perform regular accounting of all assets owned, purchased, or sold, as well as movements of assets into and out of the investment accounts.
4. Additional specialists such as attorneys, auditors, and others may be employed by the Committee to assist in meeting its responsibilities and obligations to administer assets prudently.

If such experts employed are also deemed to be fiduciaries, they must acknowledge such in writing. All expenses for such experts must be customary and reasonable, and will be borne by the Council as deemed appropriate and necessary.

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY
**Responsibility of the Council**
The Council is charged by law, The Book of Discipline and the actions of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church with the responsibility for the management of the investment assets. The Council and Committee shall discharge their duties solely in the interest of the annual conference, with the care, skill, prudence and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing, that a prudent person, acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character with like
aims. The specific responsibilities of the Committee, subject to the approval of the Council, relating to the management of investment assets include:
1. Projecting the investment needs and communicating such needs to the investment brokers/investment managers on a timely basis.
2. Determining the Council’s risk tolerance and investment horizon, and communicating these to the appropriate parties.
3. Establishing reasonable and consistent investment objectives, policies, and guidelines which will direct the investment of the assets.
4. Prudently and diligently selecting qualified investment professionals, including investment manager(s), an investment broker, and a custodian.
5. Regularly evaluating the performance of the investment manager(s) to assure adherence to policy guidelines and monitor investment objective progress.
6. Developing and enacting proper control procedures: for example, replacing an investment manager due to a fundamental change in investment management process or failure to comply with established guidelines.
7. The Conference Treasurer shall serve as the contact person for the investment brokers or investment managers.

**Responsibility of the Investment Broker**
The investment broker’s role is that of a non-discretionary advisor to the Committee. Investment advice concerning the management of investment assets will be offered by the investment broker and will be consistent with the investment objectives, policies, guidelines, and constraints as established in this policy statement. Specific responsibilities of the investment broker include the following:
1. Assisting in the development and periodic review of investment policy.
2. Conducting investment manager searches when requested by the Committee.
3. Providing “due diligence” or research on the investment manager(s).
4. Monitoring the performance of the investment manager(s) to provide the Committee with the ability to determine the progress toward the investment objectives.
5. Communicating matters of policy, manager research, and manager performance to the Committee.
6. Reviewing asset investment history, historical capital markets performance, and the contents of this investment policy statement with any newly appointed members of the Committee and Council.
7. Executing orders for the purchase and sale of securities.

**Responsibility of the Investment Manager(s)**
Each investment manager must acknowledge in writing its acceptance of responsibility as a fiduciary. Each investment manager will have full discretion to make all investment decisions for the assets placed under its jurisdiction, while observing and operating within all policies, guidelines, constraints, and philosophies as outlined in this policy statement. Specific responsibilities of the investment manager(s) include the following:
1. Discretionary investment management including decisions to buy, sell, or hold individual securities, and to alter asset allocation within the guide lines established in this policy statement.
2. Reporting, on a timely basis, quarterly investment performance results.
3. Communicating any major changes to economic outlook, investment strategy, or any other factors which affect implementation of investment process or the investment objective progress of investment management.
4. Informing the Committee regarding any qualitative change to investment management organization: Examples include changes in portfolio management personnel, ownership structure, investment philosophy, etc.
5. Voting proxies, if requested by the Committee, on behalf of the Council, and communicating such voting records to the Committee on a timely basis.

INVESTMENT GUIDELINES

Allowable Assets
1. Cash Equivalents
   • Treasury Bills
   • Treasury Money Market Funds
   • Repurchase Agreements
   • Certificates of Deposit
   • Common Development Fund of the AL-WF United Methodist Development Fund, Inc.
   • Flexible Demand Note offered by The United Methodist Development Fund
2. Fixed Income Securities
   • U.S. Government and Agency Securities
   • Mortgage Backed Bonds
   • Income Fund of the AL-WF United Methodist Foundation, Inc.
   • Fixed Term Notes offered by The United Methodist Development Fund
3. Equity Securities
   • Common Stocks of U.S. Corporations
   • Convertible Notes and Bonds of U.S. Corporations
   • Growth Fund and Growth & Income Fund of the AW-FL United Methodist Foundation, Inc.
4. Restrictions
   Investments shall not knowingly be made in securities in which the corporate entity has a significant interest in distilled spirits, wine or other fermented juices, tobacco, gambling, pornography or firearms. Investments shall not knowingly be made in securities of corporate entity in which the core business:
   • Manufactures cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or in a company in which 10% or more of gross revenues are derived from supplying key components to the tobacco industry or the sale and marketing of tobacco related products.
   • Produces alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, distilled liquor) or in a company in which 10% or more of gross revenues are derived from supplying key elements for alcohol production or from the sale, distribution or marketing of alcoholic beverages.
   • Owns or manages casinos, racetracks, off-track betting parlors; or in a company that derives 10% or more of gross revenues from the production of goods and services related to the gaming or lottery industries.
   • Derives 10% or more gross revenues from the production, distribution or sale of
products or devices that are interpreted to be pornographic, meet the legal criteria for obscenity or legal definition of “harmful to minors.”

- Derives 10% or more gross revenues from the manufacture, sale or distribution of antipersonnel weapons such as land mines, “assault type” automatic and semiautomatic weapons, firearms, and ammunition provided for commercial and private markets.

**Prohibited Assets and Transactions**

Prohibited investments and transactions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Commodities and Futures Contracts
- Private Placements
- Options
- Short Selling
- Margin Transactions

**Diversification**

In order to achieve a prudent level of portfolio diversification, the securities of anyone company or government should not exceed 10% of the total assets under management, and no more than 20% of the total assets should be invested in anyone industry. With the exception of U.S. Government securities, no fixed income issues may exceed 15% of the market value of the fixed income portfolio.

**Guidelines for Fixed Income Investments and Cash Equivalents**

- Assets may be invested only in investment grade bonds rated A (or equivalent) or better.
- Maximum maturity for any single fixed income security is 10 years.
- Money Market Funds selected shall contain only U.S. Treasury securities.

**Investment Policy Review**

To assure continued relevance of the guidelines, objectives, financial status and capital markets expectations as established in this statement of investment policy, the Council shall review this policy at least annually.

**Report No. 15 - FISCAL YEAR END**

1. The Fiscal Office will close the annual financial records on the fifth working day of January.
2. This date will be the last day that apportionment payments can be credited to the prior year asking.
3. Churches sending apportionment payments AFTER December 31 must do one of the following:
   a. Deliver payment to the Fiscal Office in Montgomery AL any time before 10:00 a.m. on the closing date.
   b. Mail the payment. **Regardless of the postmark date, payments received after 0:00 a.m. on the closing date cannot be credited to the prior year apportionments.**
c. Deposit payment in the Annual Conference account on or before 1:00 p.m. on the closing date at a local Regions Bank. **Fax** a copy of the **bank receipt** and a copy of the **remittance breakdown** to the Fiscal Office when the deposit is made. Call the Fiscal Office (1-888-873-3127) to obtain the current deposit account number.

4. The Fiscal Office must know of these deposits on the closing date. Persons without access to a fax machine should call 1-888-873-3127 and report the deposit information. **Please Note:** The bank’s business day may end earlier than the time the bank closes. For example, often deposits received after 2:00 p.m. are credited to the next day’s business. CONTACT THE LOCAL BANK TO DETERMINE WHEN A DEPOSIT MUST BE MADE, IN ORDER TO BE CREDITED ON THE CLOSING DATE.

Submitted by,
Mr. Beebe Frederick, President
Council on Finance and Administration

**CONFERENCE AUDIT STATEMENT**

The Council on Finance and Administration of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church engaged Warren Averett, LLC to conduct audits of the Council on Finance, Connectional Ministries, Conference Administration, and Episcopal Office Accounts for the Conference Fiscal Year 2015. Warren Averett, LLC issued unmodified opinions on each of the statements of cash receipts, disbursements and transfers of the above referenced funds. The audited financial statements will be published in the 2016 Alabama-West Florida Annual *Conference Journal* and will be available upon written request to the Conference Fiscal Office, ATTN: Frank Dunnewind, 4719 Woodmere Blvd, Montgomery, AL 36106.
MISSION TEAM REPORTS

Conference Board of Advocacy and Ethnic Ministry

The Board of Advocacy has an exciting future ahead. The board has seen bright spots over the last year and some heart breaking moments with the passing of the Native American Ministries chair the Rev. Prentiss Taylor. The respective person of their committees are doing some incredible work through out the Annual Conference. Some of the issues have been with race and disabilities and are at the forefront making a difference in the life of the Alabama West Florida Conference. It has been an honor for me over the past few years to chair and meet many who have the best interest of the ministry of Jesus Christ in mind. We believe as a group we are all missionaries and our main goal is to introduce people to the love of Jesus.

Submitted by
Rev. Dunford C. Cole, OSL, Chair
Conference Board of Advocacy

Commission of The Status and Role of Women (COSROW)

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women is one of 12 church wide agencies of The United Methodist Church which is financed through the World Service Fund (apportioned giving from local congregations). It is one of two independent commissions, the other being the General Commission on Religion and Race, charged with advocating, monitoring and challenging the church to seek justice and inclusiveness. The Commission is accountable to the General Conference.

The Commission challenges the United Methodist Church to a commitment for the full life and participation of women in the complete life and mission of the church. The Commission serves as an advocate for and on behalf of women and seeks to eliminate inequities in relation to women in the church as to the diversity of the United Methodist Church, including laity and clergy, youth and young adults, older adults, racial/ethnic women and men, persons with disabilities and regional representatives.

The Commission is helping the church be a more reliable and trustworthy agent of the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ so that we recognize every person as a “full and equal part of God’s human family.” (The Book of Discipline)

Through training, education, research and monitoring, the Commission:
•Nurtures women leaders in the church
•Addresses gender discrimination
•Confronts sexual harassment and abuse and advocates for victims
•Raises awareness about women’s issues and opportunities
•Identifies institutional sexism and recommends ways to diminish it
The annual Event was held January 22-23, 2016 at Blue Lake Camp. The event centers on education, strategy and/or awakening. This year’s Event was led by facilitator, The Rev. Meghan Kelly, Associate Pastor at Ozark First United Methodist Church.

Also annually, an award named for a truly great leader in Alabama-West Florida Conference, Alice Lee, of Monroeville, Alabama is given to another outstanding female leader from our conference. She must have church and community leadership and be an outstanding person to carry forth the leadership of Alice Lee. The 2015 recipient, Helen Edwards, epitomizes service to God, to the Church and to her community and conference.

To carry out our mandate to full ordination of women, the conference COSROW presents at least one $1,000 scholarship to a female clergy candidate or a female seminarian entering into full time service to the church. The recipient must be attending a United Methodist seminary. To date, COSROW has presented 25 scholarships since 1997. The scholarship is named for Jane Walker of Opelika, Alabama, who was an outstanding woman in her own right. For 2015, the committee chose Susan Hatcher and Brittany Toner. They are both attending Candler School of Theology at Emory University. The scholarships are presented, annually, at the Annual Conference COSROW Breakfast on Tuesday morning at 7:00 AM, Room 6111.

Since 2009 there has been a scholarship named for the immediate past chair of COSROW, Ruth Gynther of Auburn, Alabama. Ruth worked tirelessly during her tenure to make the conference organization viable and visible. Her scholarship is for first-timers to attend the annual COSROW Event.

COSROW monitors Annual Conference and the Annual Conference Committee on Nominations for equal representation and equal access to leadership, helps members attend General Church trainings and represents the MAJORITY membership in the United Methodist Church.

Applications for all awards and scholarships are available on the conference website at www.awfumc.org or by contacting the Alabama-West Florida Conference Headquarters at 334-356-8014.

Ruth Ann Powers, Division Chair

**Division of Native American Ministries**
Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Mount Vernon, AL
State of the Church: 2016

There is exciting new life in an old church!!! While Aldersgate UMC has been a central institution in this rural Native American community for eighty years, it is currently growing and more vibrant than it has been in many years. We have a loving and inspiring new pastor who is serving a newly-created charge that
combines our church with another very dissimilar church in another community about 30 min. away. It’s an unlikely combination but one that is working very well. Both our attendance and giving have increased, and many young adults who grew up at Aldersgate have become quite active, bringing their families into the church as well. Their participation and leadership have been a key factor in our growth.

The active Sunday School classes and a mid-week Bible study led by laity continue to be key opportunities for Christian education, as does the annual VBS, held in partnership with MarThoma youth leaders, that touches over 125 lives across the community. There are some exciting additions to our worship opportunities. Our church music program, led by the congregation, is an amazing mix of traditional and contemporary literature, with weekly participation led by our children. One of our children asked our new pastor to reinstate a children’s message each week, and we now regularly have more than twenty children who participate. We have a confirmation class for the first time in years, and adults who are interested in learning more about Methodism have requested weekend workshops to meet their needs.

Our young adults have really stepped up and assumed strong leadership roles in a number of areas. One is the Trustee chair; others are effectively chairing key committees. They organized and led an Easter egg hunt for the children, and guided them in Palm Sunday participation. Many of them even set their alarm clocks and arrived (a little bleary-eyed but fully participating!) for the Sunrise service.

The most exciting example of their leadership is the Easter drama they wrote, produced, and presented on Holy Saturday. The presentation included video clips, and our worship committee spearheaded the purchase of a new projector and screen to be used for future productions and as an enhancement to our Sunday service. They also saw the need for updated sanctuary paraments, which were purchased at their request. One of the young men headed a drive for Easter lilies; we had more than twice as many this year as in the past.

Even though Aldersgate is a family/community church, we saw the need to do a directory for the first time in more than twenty years. Not only were we able to provide both a directory and a wonderful opportunity for professional photographs, we had a two-day experience of unsurpassed fellowship!

Last year’s homecoming theme was “Still Faithful After 80 Years!” This year, we can not only say we are still faithful, but we are growing and serving in countless new ways, and touching countless new lives for Christ!

Submitted by
Rev. Dunford C. Cole, OSL
Conference Board of Congregational Development

The Board of Congregational Development has a dual responsibility to support new church starts and serve existing churches in our conference with appropriate revitalization support.

The board administers a process for evaluation of candidates recommended by District Superintendents to pastor a new church start. Pastors who may have such an interest should discuss that with their District Superintendent. During 2015, six pastors involved in starting new churches received some salary support from the board. In addition, New Church Grants of:

• $30,000 The Source in Montgomery
• $6,000 Hispanic ministry at Good News UMC in Santa Rosa Beach
• $20,000 New Church in Mobile
• $30,000 Embrace UMC in Auburn

Rev. Daniel Pezet is the Director of Congregational Vitality. The Office of Congregational Vitality has launched The Antioch Project. In the 2015/2016 Conference year revitalization efforts has been initiated with 15 churches within the Dothan, Pensacola, Mobile, Montgomery Opelika, Montgomery Prattville and Marianna Panama City and Baypines Districts. This is an initiative that helps churches enter into a new level of fruitful ministry. The Antioch Project consists of three main phases:

• Leading the local congregation through a time of prayer, reflection, and self study.
• Sending a team to develop recommendations for the church to fulfill in the future.
• Providing coaches to help the church fulfill its recommendations.

District Superintendents may identify local churches as candidates to participate in the Antioch Project based on specific criteria. Individual churches which may have interest in participating in The Antioch Project should contact their District Superintendent.

As a further aid in church revitalization, district offices and individual churches are supported with demographic information for their geographic area. Contact Sandy Gutting at (850) 291-1244 for assistance with this information.

This report is submitted with appreciation for the dedication and contributions by the members and staff who represent this board.

Frederick G. Outlaw, Chairperson

Conference Board of Discipleship

The Conference Board of Discipleship was organized by the annual conference to maintain the connectional relationship between Discipleship Ministries (formerly the General Board of Discipleship) and the conference, district, and local church. The purpose of the Conference Board of Discipleship is to lead and assist
congregations and districts in the conference in their efforts to communicate and celebrate the redeeming and reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ to persons of every age, ethnic background, and social condition; to invite persons to commit their lives to Christ and to his church; and to enable persons to live as Christian disciples in the world.

The Board’s guiding scripture for this quadrennium continues to be Matthew 28:19-20, “Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always to the end of the age.” (TEV)

There are six work areas that fall under the umbrella of the Conference Board of Discipleship: worship, evangelism, stewardship, spiritual formation, education, and older adults. The following are reports on the activity of those areas.

Worship, Evangelism and Stewardship
The areas of Worship, Evangelism and Stewardship work together each year to produce a seminar focusing on just one of the three areas. These seminars are called “Seed Cast”. It was decided this year to add the area of spiritual formation into the rotation.

The first year of this planned design was 2013 when the Seed Cast focus was on the area of Evangelism. The second year, 2014, Seed Cast focused on the area of Stewardship and this past year, 2015, the focus was to be the area of worship. Unfortunately that seminar did not take place. However, it is planned to occur in the fall of 2016 emphasizing how worship can be an effective tool for making disciples.

Spiritual Formation
Spiritual Formation is “being shaped and formed in and conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others … and the world,” according to Dr. Robert Mulholland. Spiritual formation offerings through the Alabama/West Florida United Methodist Church Conference provide opportunities for laity and clergy to experience transformative practices.

Spiritual Formation Celebrations include:
• **Reunion / Continuing Ed. Retreat for Spiritual Directors**, Feb. 1-4, 2015 at Blue Lake for - Dr. Trudy Corry Rankin, Psychologist & Spiritual Director, presented Symbols & Story Telling with Sand Play Therapy; 21 attended. Several of the Spiritual Directors have instilled this within their direction if called to do so in direction sessions.
• 5 Spiritual Directors are in three year training program for **Supervision of Spiritual Directors** (so that we have trained supervisors for the next spiritual director training)
• **Five Centering Prayer Intro / Retreats**: Young Ladies / Blue Lake Camp; Montgomery 1st (20); DWUMC (27) Each break down into smaller covenant
groups (5) after the follow up sessions; Sacred Heart Monastery (2-3 day retreat). Open to all churches. Silent retreats & other Intro workshops grow out of these groups

• 4 Lectio Divina Retreat / workshops with experiential emphasis (80+ participants)

• 2 in a two year Spiritual Direction Training with the NAUMC beginning this month

• 5 – 24 hours prayer retreats (15 participants)

• 1 prayer bead workshop (12 participants)

• Ongoing Prayer Shawl ministries in conference; 2 prayer shawl retreats.

• Coordinator working with 4 Spiritual Director Spiritual Formation groups with Bishop’s Vision for Integration of Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Direction in our Conference: 1. Teaching Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines w/ Experiential Emphasis; 2. Clergy Covenant Groups; 3. One on One Spiritual Direction for Clergy & laity; 4. Spiritual Direction Training

• Power point presentations on Spiritual Formation & Spiritual Disciplines to Montgomery -Prattville to laity & clergy.

• Teaching, Experiential training, retreat workshops on Prayer.

• Covenant groups are being born out of Centering Prayer follow-up sessions (5 known of now 1 is clergy)

• Wednesday night prayer time: Modeled after prayer room at Annual Conference. Begins: Silent prayer, Quiet music, candles on altar, Short devotion, Time of intercessory prayer, Holy Communion elements, Blessed by pastor ahead of time, Served to each other in circle at a Montgomery church

• Companions In Christ - (this is just one comment from a Companions participant) “absolute most life-changing experiences; have been participating in a Companions in Christ group/study and receiving direction since started this class. I cannot emphasize this enough! These came about because there was a Minister of Spiritual Formation who was also a spiritual director. I became fully immersed in the life of the church. In the years that there was no one on staff or trained in direction/formation, I know the many class and small group offerings were not of the formation ilk..... Formation is what transforms us into the likeness of Christ for the sake of the world.”

• DS, Rev. Brooks asked SD to coordinate small, covenant groups for ministers in District. He asked SD to personally contact them. They contacted and visited about 15 ministers. Based on meeting noted above, October 1, 2015, we conducted our first clergy covenant group meeting on October 1, facilitated by Gloria Wilson and Donna Keith. Six additional sessions were held facilitated by Gloria Wilson and Elizabeth Whatley utilizing information from the book Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton.

• Reverend and Spiritual Director, Lynn Nesbit and Reverend Sam Parkes co-facilitated a study of David Brazzeal’s Pray like a Gourmet offered through the district to pastors and anyone else interested. In addition, Lynn is seeing 2 directees, as well as incorporating spiritual direction within our congregation in all that she does. Lynn is working with her church’s children, tweens and youth directors to establish ways to teach each age group to pray. She has had David Brazzeal at her home church for a week of prayer experiences in March and two
more days in June. We have held centering prayer workshops. All these events are open to other churches and clergy.

- The 22 Spiritual Directors within our conference currently work with 39 directees, 3 Emmaus groups, 4 centering prayer groups, 2 prayer shawl groups and 15 various other groups.

**Education**

The 2015 Bishop’s Confirmation Retreat was a wonderful time of worship, learning and growth. Ninety students and adult leaders from Arlington UMC, Camden UMC, Church Street UMC, Crawford UMC, Enterprise UMC, Jackson UMC, Ozark UMC, Rosinton UMC, Tallassee UMC, Thomasville UMC and Woodland UMC came for the weekend. The retreat focused on the vows we take for membership, particularly with regard to what it means to pledge your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Leadership was provided by Bishop Paul Leeland, LeeAnn Boykin, Rev. Tony Jeck, Rev. Meghan Kelley, Rev. Ashley Davis, Rev. Samantha Lewis, Blue Lake counselors, Kendra Bryan and Paige Norman, and students from Huntingdon College.

**Senior Adult**

The Older Adult Task Force continues to provide programming for senior adults of the conference. “One Day!” and annual ministry event for adults 50 plus was held January 10 at Blue Lake Assembly. The theme for this event was Fruitful and Flourishing. There were 85 seniors in attendance.

This year’s Inspirit theme was “Aging Faithfully” and featured keynote speaker Missy Buchanan, a popular author and speaker who serves on the Committee on Aging and Older Adult Ministries for the global United Methodist Church. The event was held at Blue Lake Assembly, April 9-11, with 94 senior adults in attendance.

This report is submitted with grateful appreciation for the work done by the members of the Conference Board of Discipleship: Patti Bodenhamer, spiritual formation; Mel Barkley, treasurer; Geoffrey Lentz, worship; Allen Newton, evangelism; Dan Pezet, (Director of Congregational Vitality) stewardship; Amy Persons Parks, at large; Katie Richburg, at large; Paula Roane, education; Cory Smith, Director of Connectional Ministries; Barbara Wilder, senior adults; Robin Wilson, Discipleship Ministries; and the various committee members who have helped area chairpersons perform their mission.

Barbara Sadler, Chair
Conference Board of Discipleship

**Conference Board of Global Ministries**

**Division of Advance Specials**

The Conference Advance Special is a means of second mile giving to help feed the
hungry, help women and their children who are in need of shelter, repair homes for the elderly and poor, minister to our Hispanic Latino members, provide a safe place for children to play and study, minister to those with special needs, and the cycle of poverty, and for inner-city and at-risk children.

The Conference Advance Special program is for projects within the bounds of the annual conference, as recommended by the conference Board of Global Ministries, and is consistent with the goals of the General Advance (2012 BOD, ¶656). Please consider these opportunities when working on your second-mile giving portion of your budget.

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0110-19</td>
<td>Alabama Rural Ministries</td>
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Receiving Conference Advance Special status does not guarantee any funding, only the opportunity for open channels for extra-mile giving throughout the bounds of our annual conference. The actual money received will depend completely on donor gifts. Extra-mile giving to any of these ministries should be sent to the Conference Treasurer marked with their Advance number. 100% of every Advance gift is sent directly to the mission or ministry of your choice.

More information, including the guidelines and application, can be found at [www.awfumc.org/advance](http://www.awfumc.org/advance). Applications are due January 1 each year.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Felio, Chairperson
Conference Board of Global Ministries, Advance Specials Division
Thank you to these churches for giving to the Advance Specials program in 2015:

### 2015 Advance Specials Program

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</tr>
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<td>Nellie Burge Community Center</td>
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**2015 Advance Specials Program**

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<td>New Brockton UMC (3260)</td>
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</table>

*Note: donations to the Children’s Home White Christmas offering are not listed as Advance giving*

**Division of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM)**

The United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) is the short term missionary arm of The United Methodist Church, serving to connect clergy and laity with mission service opportunities in the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, throughout the United States and around the world. UMVIM seeks to empower volunteers to use their skills and talents in mission to answer the call of God to “bring good news to the oppressed [and] to bind up the broken-hearted.” Isaiah 61: 1
UMVIM supports the local church by connecting churches with appropriate mission projects, and by providing training and support to resource mission teams. The Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) UMVIM website, www.umvim.org, contains information on sending mission teams from the local church, on project sites, and on insurance. In addition, the Alabama West Florida Conference website contains a tab for UMVIM to provide information tailored to mission teams serving in our conference of serving from our conference.

One of UMVIM’s best practices for mission teams is to have a team leader who has received training through UMVIM. Team leader training occurs at various times throughout the year in different parts of the conference. Over the course of the last conference year, UMVIM training occurred in Hartford, Dothan, Jackson, Montgomery, and Spanish Fort in Alabama; and Pensacola and Niceville in Florida. Some 55 persons received training to enable them to lead an UMVIM mission team. If you or your church are interested in scheduling UMVIM team leader training at your church, please contact Alan Gantzhorn, conference UMVIM coordinator, at pastor.jfumc@bellsouth.net or Susan Hunt, conference Director of Mission and Advocacy, at susan@awfumc.org.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commission on Archives and History (COAH)

The Commission on Archives and History was once again privileged to host the Memorial Service Luncheon following the Memorial Service on Monday of the 2015 Annual Conference. Sharon Tucker, Archivist, assisted by Mary Ann Pickard, did an excellent job of contacting families and putting the memoirs together for the Journal. Blue Moon Catering of Camden, Alabama catered the luncheon. The speaker for the Memorial service was the Rev. Spencer Turnipseed. This service is a wonderful tribute to those who have faithfully served. We are grateful to all those who helped to plan and prepare the special remembrance.

The COAH is housed at the Huntingdon College Library where Sharon Tucker has an office, and our conference records are stored. If anyone has a need to research any aspect of our Conference history, Sharon is the one to call. We are grateful for her expertise and accessibility. A special thank you to Mary Ann Pickard as well, who offers a helping hand. The COAH will soon begin the process of digitalizing all records, which will be a huge undertaking. We are thankful that our archivist is willing to give her time and attention to this new system.

Under the umbrella of the COAH is the Historical Society, capably led by Mr. Jim Young. We appreciate his work in planning events that remind us of our rich history. Preserving the stories helps new generations to see and understand God’s faithfulness. We are also thankful for our Conference Historian, the Rev. Ed Shirley, who portrays our history in costume and story throughout the year.
We were privileged to give two Church Heritage Awards this year. They went to Fairview UMC and Bradford’s Chapel. We congratulate those churches for their hard work. Every church has the opportunity to receive this award by documenting a special celebration or anniversary and then submitting pictures and stories to COAH. We encourage each church to have a church historian who will document what the church does to further the work of God through the missions and activities of their churches.

This year ends my tenure as Chairperson of the COAH. The fine people I have worked with have blessed me beyond measure. I have made rich and lasting friendships over the last eight years I have served on this committee. I have been inspired by the beautiful Memorial Services that have honored so many faithful servants of God. I have enjoyed the sweet remembrances of the family members at the luncheons. I pray that those who follow after me will have the same rewarding experience.

Thank you to the Alabama-West Florida Conference for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this important ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Reverend Pamela Avery, Chair
Commission on Archives and History

Archivist’s Report

The Alabama-West Florida Conference Archives is located in the Houghton Memorial Library on the campus of Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama. The Methodist Archives Center is a joint function of the college and the conference. The Commission On Archives And History is the agency responsible for management of the Methodist Archives Center. It is the responsibility of the archivist and those working at the Methodist Archives Center to assist the COAH with their meetings, the Memorial Service held at each Alabama West Florida Conference Annual Session, and the Memorial Luncheon which is given for the immediate family members of those deceased clergy and spouses who were remembered at the Memorial Service. It is also the archivist’s responsibility to gather information and write the Memoirs printed in each yearly Journal of the AWFC. We also assist the Alabama West Florida Conference Historical Society with their meetings and projects throughout the year.

In 2015 there were thirty visitors requesting information concerning the Alabama-West Florida Conference. There were thirty-nine visitors requesting information concerning Huntingdon College. There were also one hundred thirty reference questions answered. They consisted of the following: General Public – Methodist Related 63.85%; General Public – College Related 2.13%; Huntingdon Faculty/Staff 3.85%; Huntingdon Students 0.77%; Huntingdon Alumni 2.31%; Huntingdon Library Faculty/Staff 5.38%; and Methodist Conference Employees 21.54%.
2015 List of Alabama-West Florida Conference Accessions

• MC783 – Church Street United Methodist Church
• MC782 – AWFC Treasurer’s Office
• MC781 – Papers of Bishop Paul A. Duffey
• MC780 – Post Oak United Methodist Church
• MC779 – Saint Paul United Methodist Church, Opelika, Alabama
• MC778 – Personal Papers of Rev. A.G. Rogers
• MC777 – Holt Street MESC Register
• MC776 – Scrapbook, Jr. Missionary Society
• MC775 – Alabama West Florida Conference Bishops
• MC774 – Papers Bishop Paul A. Duffey
• MC773 – Alabama West Florida Conference Files
• MC772 – Baypines District Records
• MC771 – Kundo Donation
• MC770 – Two History of Methodism Books
• MC769 – Texasville M.E. Church Register
• MC768 – Board of Pensions
• MC767 – Church Registers: Newbern & Uniontown Circuits
• MC766 – Saint Paul United Methodist Church, Montgomery, Alabama
• MC765 – Charge Conference Records
• MC764 – Artifacts
• MC763 – Audio Visuals
• MC762 – Reference Files
• MC761 – Periodicals, Publications, Library

2015 List of Huntingdon College Accessions

• HC289 – Artifacts (9)
• HC288 – Periodicals (1)
• HC 287 – Audio Visuals (14)
• HC 286 – Reference Files (1)

Submitted by,
Sharon Tucker, Archivist
Alabama-West Florida Conference

Historical Society President’s Report

The Alabama-West Florida (AWF) Conference Historical Society (AWFC-HS) is a voluntary membership organization which is formed to work with the Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History (COAH) in the collection and preservation of materials related to the history of the United Methodist Church and its antecedents. The Society promotes research, writing, and publication in the field; and develops interest in United Methodist history and skills for pursuing it among local church historians and others. Anyone who is interested in preserving the heritage of this Conference and our local churches is welcomed and encouraged to join and participate.
The Society’s 2014 Annual Meeting was actually held in January 2015 in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, to take advantage of the Florida Chautauga which was being held there at that time. At this meeting, the Society elected an Executive Board and gave it the authority to elect Society officers for the coming year. The Executive Board subsequently met on February 20, 2015, at the Methodist Archives Center at Huntingdon College in Montgomery. It elected James Young as President of the Society; Reverend Ed Shirley, Vice President; Sharon Tucker, Recording Secretary; Mary Ann Pickard, Financial Secretary and Membership Secretary; and Carolyn Coker, Craig Reynolds, and Joyce Stimak as Members at Large. Myrtice Carr was recognized as the Previous Past President and honored for her work.

The Board discussed ways to encourage local church historians to become active in the Society and approved that the Society have (or share) a table with the COAH at the 2015 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference to provide brochures and other material to help make the role and mission of the Society to be better known. In other actions, the Board approved the designation of the Society’s Fiscal Year to be from the beginning of the Annual Conference of the Alabama-West Florida Conference to the beginning the next Annual Conference, essentially June through May of the following year. The Board also approved the establishment of a website and the payment of the annual fees required for it. Rev. Shirley volunteered to be the webmaster. President Jim Young announced that he would create and publish the newsletters.

At the 2015 AWF Annual Conference in June, the Society assisted the Commission on Archives and History to organize and decorate for the Memorial Luncheon. Society members also helped the Commission as it greeted, guided, and served the families and surviving spouses of the Conference clergy who had passed on since the last Conference.

The Society’s 2015 Annual Meeting was held on September 24, a beautiful day in southern Autauga County, Alabama. Ivy Creek UMC, a church here since 1854, was our host for the morning opening session; and, as Jeannie Johnson, Ivy Creek Church Historian, told us when she welcomed us, “We’ve been sweeping the floor and fluffing the pillows in preparation for company coming.” And a warm, gracious, and delightful welcome it was!

After a brief period of meeting and fellowship with the large number of Ivy Creek members and friends who had turned out to welcome us and to display an amazing collection of historic Ivy Creek material, we moved from the Fellowship Hall into the historic sanctuary. We sang familiar hymns from the Cokesbury Hymnal and were inspired by a warm welcome and devotional from Ivy Creek pastor Rev. Richard Lucas. Jeannie Johnson then told us of the history of this area and how Ivy Creek church came to be. She described the successful efforts by members of the congregation over more than 150 years to serve God and the community and preserve their heritage. She invited us to enjoy the wonderful display of historical
artifacts in the Fellowship Hall, to climb the stairs to the gallery, and to visit the adjoining cemetery.

The morning session at Ivy Creek was adjourned and everyone was invited to continue the meeting with the afternoon session hosted by the Autaugaville UMC. Lunch was served in the Fellowship Hall of the Autaugaville UMC, and Pastor Dr. Jabe Fincher and other members of the Autaugaville congregation gave us another warm and gracious welcome. After lunch we gathered in the sanctuary for a short time of singing and to hear Dr. Fincher tell us of the history of the church and some of the unique features of the historic building. His presentation was followed by a presentation of the Autaugaville County Historical Society concerning the past and future of the county.

A business session was held immediately following these presentations. Rev. Shirley reported on the creation and maintenance of the AWFC-HS website; President Jim Young discussed the publishing of the society’s newsletters; and Mary Ann Pickard gave a Membership and Financial Status Report. Sharon Tucker and Rev. Shirley discussed the joint efforts of the COAH and the AWFC-HS at the 2015 Alabama West Florida Annual Conference held in June.

There were no nominations for new members to the Executive Board, and the current Board was re-elected for the 2016/2017 term. In other actions, the Society voted to help financially support the publishing of a coffee table book to be produced from the pictures and history produced by the late Mr. R.H. Couch and Mr. J.B. Harrington of some of the oldest churches in the conference. It also decided to hold the next Annual Meeting of the Society after the 2016 AWF Annual Conference. Again at the Conference, brochures will be presented to encourage attendance at the 2016 Annual Meeting and membership in the AWFC-HS.

The Society has greatly increased its presence this year on social media. Our website at www.awfhistory.com and our official Facebook Group site (AWF Historical Society) are helping to make us more widely known. Our newsletters, now published quarterly and distributed in both electronic and printed form, provide interesting articles concerning our Alabama-West Florida Methodist history and the activities of the Society.

We are continuing the work begun by the founders of the Society and those faithful members who have worked diligently to help preserve our shared heritage. We recall the admonition found in Deuteronomy: “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.” ~ Deuteronomy 32:7 (KJV)

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Young, President
Committee on Episcopacy

The Committee on Episcopacy is pleased to announce it voted unanimously to request the return of Bishop Paul L. Leeland for a third quadrennium of service with our Alabama-West Florida (AWF) Conference. On behalf of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, the Committee on Episcopacy wishes to express deep appreciation to Bishop Paul and Janet Leeland for their service to our conference not only for the past four years, but also for the past eight.

At the end of each quadrennium, it is the responsibility of the Committee on Episcopacy (COE) to identify the AWF episcopal leadership needs for the coming quadrennium and to evaluate the work and ministry of the bishop. At the conclusion of those activities, a report is submitted to the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy (SEJ COE). That information from our AWF Conference is combined by the SEJ COE with similar reports from all other annual conference within our Jurisdiction to match specific bishops with specific conferences for the coming quadrennium. The AWF submission to the SEJ COE documents our clear desire for Bishop Paul and Janet Leeland to return to the AWF Conference for a third quadrennium of service.

To arrive at that decision, an assessment process was conducted that was in keeping with guidelines set by the SEJ. Both anonymous and openly owned input was sought and given. A broad cross-section of 60 AWF conference leaders were invited to complete an anonymous survey and an outside bishop was brought in to facilitate the final assessment meeting which was held on October 6, 2015. AWF COE members were asked to prepare for and attend that open discussion meeting on the status of the AWF Conference. Topics included our conference’s progress, opportunities, challenges, and priorities along with the leadership characteristics seen as needed to address those indicators. At the completion of those deliberations, it was unanimous concluded that Bishop Leeland would be the best equipped to lead the AWF Conference through the coming quadrennium and to continue the support for the positive trajectory set in motion through his strengths in leadership skills, vision and spiritual depth.

Retired Bishop Al Gwinn facilitated the October 6, 2015 meeting. He lead the committee in a review of the challenges confronting the conference, the work and ministry accomplished by our bishop and the leadership characteristics seen as needed to best move the conference through the next four years. Results and comments from the anonymous survey were incorporated into the discussions.

Committee members generated a long list of specific changes within our AWF Conference which were attributed to the vision and leadership of Bishop Leeland. Those combined with the overwhelmingly positive survey results from AWF Conference leaders left little doubt that Bishop Leeland has had a tremendously positive effect on our Conference. Affirmations of his influence ranged from fiscal accountability to spiritual formation and strategic thinking.
Among the listings noted were: his reduction of the conference budget while increasing missional giving, purchasing the AWF Conference Office building and still reaching the Imagine No Malaria goal of $1,000,000; his focus on fruitful and effective leaders, the development of Cabinet Core Values and placing the mission of the church as the priority in appointment making; his fostering of the Young Clergy Initiative followed by AWF’s recognition as a Top 10 Conference for Young Clergy; the establishment of Incubators, a New Church Process, Communities of Transformation, the Antioch Project and a Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness along with the vision and ongoing support given to the Academy for Congregational Excellence and the Spiritual Directors’ spiritual formation offerings.

Challenges facing AWF Conference were also addressed. While broader in discussion, they clustered roughly into three areas and were not given priority ranking. Those areas were (a) the need for conference increases in church membership and diversity, (b) support for small membership churches and (c) conference stability which included both the large proportion of clergy eligible for retirement and the uncertain impact on our conference relative to decisions pending before the General Conference.

Appreciation is expressed to all who gave technical assistance, participated in the survey, and added to the discussions. A special thanks goes to Bishop Al Gwinn, Jr. for his assistance and guidance as well as to all on our hard working AWF COE members. Those committee members are: Jean Belt, Larry Bryars, Helen Edwards, Tonya Elmore, Clara Ester, Steve Furr, Eileen Griffith, Dawn Hare, Betty Helms, Shirley Hodges, Beverly Maddox, Jeremy Pridgeon, Lester Spencer, Karl Stegall, Gerry Stiffler, Libba Stinson, and Wesley Wachob.

Respectfully submitted
Paulette Thompson, Chair
Committee on Episcopacy

CONFERENCE AGENCY REPORTS

Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly

As Blue Lake enters its 64th year we are excited to be such a large part of the Alabama-West Florida conference. Not only do we provide summer camp for our conference youth, but for many other youth in our conference boundaries. We are excited to have 8 Emmaus Walks, Bishop’s Conformation Retreat, numerous Methodist Women’s retreats, Methodist men’s retreat, Winter Retreat, Chrysalis Flights, many Conference meetings and so many more groups that use this wonderful facility.

We have restarted an “adopt a cabin” program for the 9 cabins and the dining hall at Pinewood Camp. With this program we have had the NOMADS help with the renovation of these cabins from the early 50’s. We have removed the cinder block
walls from the old bathrooms and will be putting metal roofs on the buildings, new windows and some paint. We are working to make Pinewood as nice as the rest of the camp.

We are also, so very thankful for the Bishop, Cabinet, Clergy and the members of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, who continue to love us, pray for our ministry and support us. Without your support Blue Lake would not be the ministry that it is today.

In 2015 we served 7,410 individual participants in programs at Blue Lake. From those 7,410 guests we had 25,226 user days. These are impressive numbers and we pledge as the Blue Lake Staff that we will do our very best to honor our Mission “to make disciples for the transformation of the world while connecting people to God’s creation”.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Lewandowski, Executive Director
Blue Lake Assembly

Methodist Homes Corporation
Transforming How We Care For Our Elders

Methodist Homes has grown through the years into an organization comprised of 13 senior communities in Alabama and northwest Florida. On a daily basis, through the hearts and hands of 800 associates, care is provided to more than 1,200 residents in the various settings of affordable housing, independent living, assisted living, memory care assisted living, skilled nursing and skilled rehabilitation services! In Alabama and West Florida, these communities include Wesley Scott Place and Wesley Haven Villa in Pensacola, Mathison Retirement Community in Panama City, Wesley Gardens in Montgomery, Epworth House in Selma, and Wesley Manor in Dothan. Each has its own history of providing care to elders in a Christian environment.

Wesley Manor is the largest Alabama-West Florida retirement community within the Methodist Homes organization. Originally constructed in 1968, and expanded on numerous occasions since that time, Wesley Manor now provides health and housing services to 200 residents. We celebrate that achievement, but look forward to an even brighter future as Wesley Manor embarks on a restoration and expansion in 2016, an event which has been prayerfully planned over the past several years.

We will accomplish this restoration and expansion in several ways: a redeveloped physical environment, a renewed spirit, and a shift in organizational culture, all working in concert. The redeveloped physical environment at Wesley Manor will include a dedicated short-term stay rehabilitation center, and modernizing the entire campus, including existing assisted living and healthcare areas. The main entrance and other building exteriors will be canvassed into a mid-century modern style. Wesley Manor is adopting the “household” model of care, where seniors live
together in a community rather than in a clinical atmosphere. And we accomplish these transformations through small self-led teams of associates who grow with and create family with the residents who call the community “home”.

Providing care for elders, particularly in nursing homes, grew out of the hospital medical model in the 1950s, and the majority of this country’s 16,000 nursing homes still provide care in that fashion. Despite the excellent medical care that is most often provided in these settings, the needs of the spirit and being have gone unmet. However, a new culture surrounding care in senior communities has developed in recent years and has been adopted by Methodist Homes – one that continues to provide the necessary care, but disposes of the medical model which has plagued us for decades. Indeed, the ‘household’ model of care restores a sense of home, returns privacy to the individual, and protects dignity which is so important to us as individuals. Change and transformation are inevitable in this world, but undergirded by Christian principles and teachings, such change can be a blessing to untold numbers.

Thank you for your continued support and prayer Wesley Manor, the Fountain of Love and all our Methodist Homes in the Conference.

Christopher Tomlin, President and CEO

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Class of 2019
Mrs. Marty Clark – Dothan
Dr. Chris Eckert – Demopolis
Mr. James P. Hall – Dothan
Dr. Douglas C. Newton – Niceville
Mr. Tommy Peacock – Dothan
Mrs. Betty Salter - Pensacola

United Methodist Children’s Home (UMCH)

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
For the past 126 years, The United Methodist Children’s Home has been caring for orphaned and vulnerable children as a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through group homes, higher education scholarship homes, transitional living homes, foster homes (regular, therapeutic and enhanced), adoption services and family preservations, UMCH extends the ministry of its supporting congregations in the North Alabama and Alabama-West Florida Conferences of the United Methodist Church. In this brief report I will highlight the vital statistics of our work in 2015, as well as summarize the programmatic highlights and changes.

BOARD UPDATE
• Mark Saliba, a member of Covenant United Methodist Church of Dothan, Alabama, provided excellent leadership in his 2nd year as UMCH’s board president. Under Mark’s leadership, UMCH added six new board members from Alabama and Florida.
• UMCH’s clergy advisory board, led by Dr. Patrick Quinn of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church of Montgomery, commenced bi-annual meetings to provide UMCH with sustained feedback and counsel regarding the ministry’s strategic direction. Clergy from both conferences are represented on the clergy advisory board.

PROGRAM/MINISTRIES UPDATE
• In 2015, UMCH served 66 youth through our group homes, higher education scholarship homes, and transitional living homes. UMCH served 131 children through our foster care programs in Alabama and Northwest Florida. While the actual number of children served in our group homes dipped when comparing 2015 to 2014, the total number of “care days” for children stayed roughly the same.
• UMCH served 189 families through our Family Preservation Program in Dothan and Andalusia, which represented caring contact with over 705 individuals. This program has over 90 percent success rate in preventing family dissolution due to child neglect. UMCH also served 27 families through its adoption services program.
• All in all, UMCH made a difference in the lives of 1,117 individuals through our various ministries in 2015. This represented a 10 percent increase over the prior year’s totals.
• 92 percent of all eligible high school seniors in UMCH’s care graduated in 2015.
• In fall 2015, UMCH began the third academic year of our higher education residential scholarship program with scholarship homes in Tuscaloosa and Florence. This program served 20 young men and women in 2015. UMCH has retained 70% of all students who have enrolled in the program since its inception and all current students are progressing nicely in their degree programs. The cumulative GPA of all 20 participants in the higher education program is 2.85. Considering that less than 2% of all foster children who begin college nationwide actually graduate, we are most pleased with the results of our program thus far.
• UMCH is continuing to provide opportunities for our youth which they would not otherwise experience. UMCH partnered with Canterbury United Methodist Church for our 3rd Annual Mission Trip to send a team of 26 youth and staff to New Orleans to rebuild homes for families in need. Our youth and staff are excited to partner with Crosspoint from the Alabama-West Florida this coming up summer. Also, we will have our 4th Annual Awards Weekend at Children’s Harbor in Alexander City, Alabama on Lake Martin. We value this time to celebrate our kids and youth.

FUNDING/FUTURE UPDATE
• When comparing 2015 to 2014, UMCH saw a 17% increase in private and congregational support and a 1% decrease in its operational budget. These statistics are reflective of an efficient three-year trend. When comparing the three year periods of 2010-2012 to 2013-2015, UMCH saw expenses decrease by 13%, public support increase by 14%, and endowment drawdowns decrease by 36%, all the while influencing roughly the same number of children, youth, and families through its ministry.
UMCH officially began strategic planning in 2015, chaired by Glenda Allred. With the assistance of Auburn University Montgomery’s Center for Outreach, UMCH began planning for the future in several key areas:
1. Ministries and Services
2. Facilities
3. Funding/Finances
4. Marketing/Branding
5. First Who Then What: Recruiting, Training and Retaining the Right People

The United Methodist Children’s Home is a ministry of the Alabama-West Florida and North Alabama Conferences of the United Methodist Church to the hurting and forgotten children of Alabama and Northwest Florida. With God’s help and the support of our United Methodist churches, we are developing new and creative ways to fulfill the greatest and most ageless mission an organization could hope to have: “To follow the example of Christ by embracing all God’s children……one child, one family at a time.”

God bless you, churches and believers of this great annual conference, for seeing the great needs of our children and responding so faithfully!

Grace and Peace,

K. Blake Horne, Ph.D., President/CEO
The United Methodist Children’s Home
Blake.Horne@umch.net
Office: 334/387-2112
www.UMCH.net

United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union

Chairman’s Report

Your Board of Directors’ primary job is to set direction for and control the credit union, making sure it is operated in a sound and prudent manner and that all decisions are guided by the best interests of the members. For this reason, we have adopted strategies for short and long-term goals that insure the Credit Union’s future development and growth. During 2015, we continued to implement those endeavors necessary to maintain growth along with a strong financial picture.

Our achievements include:
• We experienced a 4% increase in loan balances during 2015 as we continue to “Help Our Members Afford Life”.
• Once again, we awarded four $1000.00 college scholarships to members ages 17 – 35 located in our four conferences - Florida, North Georgia, South Georgia and Alabama-West Florida.
• Last year we implemented “SPRIG by CO-OP”. During 2015, this service has grown enormously and provides members with the ability to make deposits electronically from their phones, tablets, etc.

• We will continue to provide technological enhancements for our products and services as they become available so that we can continue to provide members with safe and secure ways to do business with our Credit Union.

In 2016, we will introduce “Faith-Based Travel Discounts through Educational Opportunities Tours”. Watch for details about this new program via our web site, emails and statement stuffers. We will also be offering VISA Balance Transfer Promotions in 2016 – a service that many members like.

Of course, all of this could not have been achieved without our staff, my fellow board members, and other volunteers that helped make 2015 another great year for your Credit Union. Most importantly, however, I want to thank you, our members, for continuing to do business with your credit union.

James Mitchell, Chairman

Supervisory Committee Report

United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union’s Supervisory Committee independently evaluates the soundness of the credit union’s operations and activities. This committee is responsible for a series of internal and external audits that are performed to insure that the Credit Union complies with generally accepted accounting principles. This committee also makes certain that United Methodist Connectional FCU’s audited financial statements provide a fair and accurate representation of the financial condition of the credit union and is compliant with state and federal regulations.

As a result of the audits held and in conjunction with the annual examination of the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), it is the opinion of the Supervisory Committee that the financial condition of United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union continues to remain strong and well managed, with sound policies and programs. The Credit Union is also compliant with the Credit Union’s by-laws, Georgia and Florida state laws relating to credit unions, and applicable federal laws and regulations.

The Supervisory Committee would like to commend the staff, management and volunteers of the Credit Union for their efforts in maintaining the soundness and safety of the credit union.

Kelly Brisendine, Chairman

Committee Members: Maryanne McCurdy, Charles Houston, Clarence Thrower
Treasurer’s Report

United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union ended 2015 with a strong financial bottom line and continued controlled growth as can be seen with the accompanying balance sheet and income statement.

2015 Highlights:
• Assets increased from $27,066,634.11 as of December 31, 2014 to $27,639,307.52 as of December 31, 2015.

• Loans to members increased from $17,099,138.92 at year-end 2014 to $17,765,038.96 at year-end 2015.

• Income on investments increased from $59,469.64 in 2014 to $70,234.35 as of year-end 2015.

• Operating expenses increased slightly from $1,167,980.08 in 2014 to $1,182,764.69 in 2015.

• Net income increased from $45,116.63 in 2014 to $57,800.76 as of year-end 2015.

We have continued to remain strong and steady through the years and remain a safe haven for all of your financial needs. Our goal is to continue building our net worth in order to maintain the NCUA required ratios and maintain our financial solvency. 2016 will find us continuing on the course so as to ensure the financial soundness and success of your credit union for all of our members today and into the future.

Michael McQueen, Treasurer
## United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union
### Annual Report 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Summary as of 12/31/14</th>
<th>Summary as of 12/31/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$236,581.53</td>
<td>$344,865.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans To Members</td>
<td>$17,099,138.92</td>
<td>$17,765,038.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loan Participation</td>
<td>$1,253,679.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowance for Loan Losses</td>
<td>-$105,663.42</td>
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<td>Other Receivables</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
<td>$7,901,857.67</td>
<td>$7,606,814.67</td>
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<td>Accrued Income</td>
<td>$56,295.30</td>
<td>$64,472.15</td>
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<td>Prepaid Exp &amp; Defer Charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets</td>
<td>$533,083.03</td>
<td>$516,615.27</td>
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<td>All Other Assets</td>
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<td>$47,075.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$27,066,634.11</strong></td>
<td><strong>$27,639,307.52</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>$4,241.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dividends Payable</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>Notes Payable</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>Taxes Payable</td>
<td>$409.74</td>
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<td>Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>$32,115.94</td>
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<td>Deferred Credits</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>Other Liabilities</td>
<td>$1,530.29</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$38,297.19</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shares of Members</td>
<td>$24,470,712.79</td>
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<td>Reserves</td>
<td>$682,937.04</td>
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<td>Undivided Earnings</td>
<td>$1,829,570.46</td>
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<td>Net Income</td>
<td>$45,116.63</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Equity</strong></td>
<td><strong>$27,028,336.92</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</strong></td>
<td><strong>$27,066,634.11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
United Methodist Connectional Federal Credit Union
Annual Report 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Statement</th>
<th>Summary as of 12/31/14</th>
<th>Summary as of 12/31/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest on Loans</td>
<td>$1,026,832.65</td>
<td>$1,022,256.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income on Investments</td>
<td>$59,469.64</td>
<td>$70,234.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees &amp; Charges</td>
<td>$164,031.86</td>
<td>$153,306.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Operating Income</td>
<td>$77,041.03</td>
<td>$102,702.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Operating Income                                   | $1,327,375.18          | $1,348,499.73          |

| Operating Expenses                                 |                        |                        |
| Compensation                                       | $482,665.19            | $496,058.71            |
| Employee Benefits                                  | $152,315.71            | $153,605.76            |
| Travel & Conference                                | $52,124.25             | $59,014.73             |
| Association Dues                                   | $19,038.00             | $18,309.00             |
| Office Occupancy                                   | $43,030.00             | $45,846.90             |
| Office Operations                                  | $100,284.14            | $105,961.19            |
| Education & Promotion                              | $41,441.44             | $54,093.91             |
| Loan Servicing                                     | $25,805.57             | $28,957.77             |
| Prof & Outside                                     | $196,367.94            | $195,088.98            |
| Provision for Loan Losses                          | $39,000.00             | $8,000.00              |
| Member Insurance                                   | $0.00                  | $0.00                  |
| Federal Operating Fee                              | $4,947.93              | $4,948.86              |
| Interest on Borrowed                               | $0.00                  | $118.08                |
| Cash Short/Over                                     | -$10.99                | $0.10                  |
| Annual Meeting                                     | $3,614.67              | $4,583.71              |
| Miscellaneous                                      | $7,356.23              | $8,176.99              |

| Total Operating Expenses                            | $1,167,980.08          | $1,182,764.69          |

| Income From Operations                              | $159,395.10            | $165,735.04            |
| Income Before Dividends                             | $159,395.10            | $165,735.04            |
| Dividends                                           | $114,278.47            | $107,934.28            |

| Gain/(Loss) on Assets                               | $0.00                  | $0.00                  |

| Net Income                                          | $45,116.63             | $57,800.76             |
United Methodist Development Foundation, Inc.

The Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation would like to thank the members of the Annual Conference for your support and partnership in service for over thirty years. The mission of the Foundation is to strengthen ministries of United Methodist churches and agencies by encouraging generosity through education, consulting, development and financial services. Working together, we have disbursed over $72 million back into the conference for ministry since 1991.

The United Methodist Foundation offers professional services to set up and facilitate planned giving and permanent endowment programs in the church. An endowment is a gift that can be invested to support church ministry programs such as missions, scholarships, programs and building/cemetery maintenance. The Foundation is empowered to act as a **managing trustee of a charitable trust** of which at least 50% of assets will benefit a UM church or institution. In 2015, we received eleven new trusts to manage with an amount totaling over $465,000. Many of the new trusts were a result of local churches implementing the Foundation’s “Permanent Endowment Program”.

The Foundation offers oversight and layers of accountability that give churches confidence in their responsibilities of fund management. Our Investment Committee applies conservative investment guidelines and follows United Methodist social principles. The Committee also continually reviews and monitors investments to insure stable and long term growth. The Foundation provides an accounting of transactions with respect to each account invested in its common funds. Staff is available to meet privately with potential donors to help them clarify their charitable gift giving options. For a free consultation, call 334-793-6820.

Through our educational programs, we offer workshops and free programs that teach an understanding of generosity and stewardship as an act of worship. To schedule a program, email foundation@alwfumf.org.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors, we thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the Church.

Aubrey Stabler, President
Terri Turner, Executive Director

**ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION, INC.**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Officers:**
President: Aubrey Stabler
Vice-President: Ross Cotter
Treasurer: Herbert Barr
Executive Director: Terri Turner
CLASS 2016
Chris Beam, John Bullard, Jr., Laureen Lynn, Harry Nelson, Mike Norris, Jeff Sessions, Talana Wilkins, Mark Davidson.

CLASS 2017
Tommy Boyd, Ross Cotter, Gene Floore, James Hall, Aubrey Stabler, Mike Tucker, Henry Hooks, Dennis Adams, Olen Kirby, Mac McCorquedale, Jennie Hoppenjan, Stephen Burch, Russ Dunman, Jody Dunn.

CLASS 2018
Herbert Barr, Lany Simmons, Jon Heath, Jeff Outlaw, Eric Canada, Bill Hill, Beebe Frederick.

Ex-Officio Members: Resident Bishop, District Superintendents and Conference Lay Leader.

United Methodist Development Fund

Our Purpose: As the body of Christ, it is our mission to build His kingdom. Ephesians 4:16 shares that we are fitted and held together with each individual part working together; causing the growth of the body for the building up of the church in love. In the Alabama-West Florida Conference, our churches, agencies, and missions are building God’s kingdom in a variety of ways. The United Methodist Development Fund wants to offer your church a helping hand through our investment and financing options.

Who We Are: The Development Fund has fueled the growth, expansion and renovation needs of the AWF Conference for over 28 years, loaning more than $18 million to churches and agencies. Because of the generosity of other United Methodists who invest in our Development Fund, our conference can continue to grow and serve our communities.

What We Do: We make loans to churches, agencies, and missions in the Alabama-West Florida Conference for purchasing property, building projects and major renovation projects. Some examples of loans that we have issued are for the building of a new sanctuary, purchasing property to expand the missional work of your organization and renovations for roofs and air-conditioning units.

How We Can Help Your Church:
• Loan terms for up to 15 years
• Fixed interest rates for one year
• Competitive long-term rates
• No points or closing costs
• Excellent service complying with Book of Discipline guidelines

Begin the loan process by following these three steps:
1. Meet Requirements-Meet Discipline requirements and approval from the District Buildings and Location Committee and approval at a called church conference.
2. Secure Pledges—Conduct a financial canvass by the borrowing congregation, bona fide pledges made, and secure pledges in an amount equal to the total of at least 2 or 3 years of the amortization schedule.

3. 10% of Proposed Project—A church must have a minimum of 10% of the total cost of the proposed project in hand in a separate building fund account at the time the loan is approved.

For information on rates and availability of funds please call Terri Turner at (334) 793-6820.

Henry Hooks, President
Terri Turner, Executive Director

United Methodist Development Fund Board of Directors

President: Henry Hooks
Executive Director: Terri H. Turner
Board of Directors: Henry Hooks, Steve McCarroll, Clay Carnathan, Pat Luna
Conference Treasurer: Frank S. Dunnewind
Conference Missions Secretary: Susan Hunt
Conference Lay Leader: Dr. Steve Furr
Resident Bishop: Bishop Paul L. Leeland
U.M. Foundation President: Aubrey Stabler
Cabinet Representative: Rev. Sara Shaver

CONFERENCE MISSIONS and MINISTRIES

Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM)
Extending the love of Christ through home repair and children’s ministry

In 2015, some pretty amazing things happened! In our partnership with Tuskegee Methodist, we invested over $100,000 into the church. Upgrades included an updated fire safety system, new doors and windows, and continued progress in the bunk rooms. For the first time, the church hosted our youth teams working in the Lee/Macon county areas. We are grateful to the District and Conference for their prayers and support!

Below lists the impact of the year:
• Served with 36 families and completed vital repairs on 17 homes
• Hosted 1087 volunteers on 28 teams non-local teams along with several local teams
• 44 children were reached through our Sonshine Kids Day Camp ministry

Here are a few other updates:
Cycle of Service, our bicycle ride across the state last May raised over $26,000 for home repair and hosted a total of 12 riders. Part of the fundraising success was due to a large gift from Auburn UMC to help us renovate homes in Tuskegee. Several Methodist Churches between Livingston and Georgia helped out! Livingston UMC,
Memorial UMC (Selma), Trinity UMC (Phenix City) and Tuskegee Methodist to name a few. This ride is slotted for April 22-24, 2016 and will cover 300 miles in 3 days touching 3 states. And...we have a way for “spinners” and virtual riders to participate!

Fall ministry:
**Make A Difference Day** and our **Saturday Serve Days** continued to help us complete and open new homes. Our volunteers, who we like to term our “friends”, came from college groups and local churches in the Auburn area. We are grateful to churches like Auburn UMC, Auburn Wesley Foundation, Cornerstone Church, Grace UMC, FUMC Opelika, Trinity UMC, Bradford’s Chapel and of course Tuskegee Methodist who continue to participate in these service days. And don’t forget **The Shack** where director, Lisa Pierce, accompanied by board members, local pastors, and others lived in shacks to raise funds and awareness about poverty housing. Our efforts generated over $55,000!

Winter Ministry:
Our **MLK worship service** and the **National Day of Service** is always a highlight in the winter months. Rev. John Brooks, District Superintendent from the Montgomery-Prattville District was our worship pastor and delivered the sermon, “On Being a Good Neighbor” written by Dr. King. We had many choirs helping us all have an incredible night of worship with the Tuskegee Community. The day of serving had approximately 85 “friends” who split into several groups doing home repair, renovation at the Tuskegee Methodist, or a children’s Bible camp.

ARM had some new ventures this year as well. Being able to help our families apply for Housing Preservation grants through USDA or helping veterans apply for home repair assistance through HUD is increasing our capacity to serve more families who may need more extensive repairs. These repairs many times are contracted. Several members of Grace UMC in Auburn are helping the families put together their packets which can be very intimidating and confusing. They gently help the families and can even help answer questions about basic budgeting. More, they provide a warm and loving presence with our families. ARM has also partnered with the Tuskegee VA. Through the Compensated Work Therapy Program for homeless veterans in a substance abuse treatment program, veterans with construction backgrounds are hired on by ARM and can help us with repairs in a paid status. This is helpful for when we are working on contracted houses as it allows us to keep the labor costs down, still provide a good wage, and be cost efficient for the government. More than that, it is one more opportunity to extend Christ’s love!

Behind each family, each child at day camp, and volunteer is a story. The narrative of Jesus’ redemptive love and power over our brokenness and pain continues to weave its way through all we do. Our prayer is that every person is touched by Jesus and that is why we always speak in terms of extending Jesus’ love. We hope you will join us in that lifestyle!
How can you plug in?
1) We can come to you! Our ministry team can come and do workshops that help you connect to low-income, broken, and the “unseen” people in your community. We can also preach a sermon lead a youth or college retreat, or help with your mission event, so just give us a shout.
2) We can help you understand the political structures in Alabama that perpetuate poverty-keep your eyes on the Alabama Housing Trust fund and the bill to better regulate pay day lenders.
3) Of course, bring a group either in the summer or for a weekend retreat to do home repair. We’ll help you plan it out and cover the details.
4) Finally, you can help us renovate Tuskegee Church. We have to raise another $55,000 to complete the kitchen and bathhouse. Stay tuned for how you, your small group, or church can play a major role!

We thank all of those who have come to Tuskegee and Livingston to serve with us. We are grateful for all of our partner churches, groups, and individuals who give and also challenge and encourage us! Our vision is to eliminate poverty housing in rural Alabama and you all are instrumental in making that happen. See you all at Annual Conference. Come get filled at the snack bar and of course get your new coffee mug! Blessings to you all in your ministries!

Grace and peace,
Lisa Pierce, Executive Director
Alabama Rural Ministries

Dumas Wesley Community Center

Introduction
The Dumas Wesley Community Center (DWCC) is a neighborhood based non-profit organization located in the Crichton community of Mobile, Alabama. DWCC was founded in 1903, by the Woman’s Society of Christian Service (present day United Methodist Women). The agency’s original mission was to serve poor women and children who worked in the cotton mills of the Crichton community.

Over the years DWCC evolved to meet the changing needs of the community, becoming a multi-service center offering after school programs, senior services, neighborhood outreach, transportation services and transitional housing for homeless families.

The majority of households served by the Center are headed by single mothers with an average household income of less than $14,000 per year. Of those served directly by DWCC, 69% are low-income and approximately 95% are minority.

Mission Statement
The mission of the Dumas Wesley Community Center of Mobile, Alabama is to EDUCATE, EMPOWER and ENRICH our local community through collaborative
programs of Christian service that: Provide for immediate human needs, Strengthen family life, Develop leadership and encourage personal responsibility.

**Neighborhood Outreach**
The intent of our Neighborhood Outreach and Advocacy program is to implement and foster trust and belief in the residents of Crichton, thus serving as a catalyst for the advocacy and betterment of the community. Our major goals are:

- Rehabilitation of family life through education and services that enhance awareness of the needs of self, other family members and neighbors.
- Improve the lives of disadvantaged and underserved area youth, families and senior citizens by ensuring adequate nutrition, healthcare, preventative education, and referrals to area social service agencies and resources.
- A renewal of community interest in the neighborhood as a place of pride, resulting in increased personal self-esteem and security in the home environment.

**Youth Programs**
The After School Achievement Program (ASAP) provides a safe environment for community youth to participate in age-appropriate activities. Specific programs include:

- Sports - Teens participate in church and city basketball leagues each year.
- “Safe Haven” Daily Recreation - This program gives our community youth a safe place to go after school. We offer two game rooms, outside play and basketball.
- Summer Recreation and Camp – Our summer recreation program offers sports, arts and crafts, a variety of field trips, and a week-long camping experience at Camp Blue Lake.
- Tutoring – Provides weekly tutoring assistance for program participants of all ages.
- Computer lab- Provides weekly supervised access to our computer lab for homework studies, college prep work and games.
- Music Lessons: Provides weekly piano and choir classes for youth.
- Youth Empowered Wednesdays – Led by the Junior League of Mobile, this program offers weekly workshops, speakers, arts and crafts and sports activities led by local volunteers.

**Sybil H. Smith Family Village Transitional Housing Program**
The Sybil H. Smith Family Village transitional housing program began serving homeless families in July, 1999. To date, the Center has served over 444 individuals from seven Alabama counties, the Mississippi coast area and the Florida panhandle. This unique program provides homeless families with the tools to establish and maintain self-sufficiency. It combines transitional housing of up to 24 months with on-site support services as well as referrals to other community agencies and institutions. 80% of our clients successfully complete the program, become gainfully employed and remain in permanent housing. This percentage is well above the national average (60%) for similar transitional housing programs.
Each resident participating in DWCC’s Transitional Housing Program:
• will be provided the opportunity to learn the life skills necessary to become independent and obtain permanent housing for him/herself and her minor children within two years;
• will complete an on-site Life Skills/Employment Readiness Curriculum;
• will be assessed and referred as quickly as possible to all mainstream community resources in accordance with the mandate of Congress that all homeless individuals have access to such resources as expeditiously as possible;
• will be required to be working and/or attending school and/or in a job training program at least 25 hours per week, within three months of entry into the transitional program;
• will be provided with on-site group counseling and substance abuse aftercare counseling
• will be required to save at least 30% of his/her income while in transitional living in order to have necessary financial resources to transition into and remain in permanent housing;
• will set specific personal goals regarding her employment, education, health, finances, personal development, and the needs of his/her children, and will meet those goals in a timely manner. A case manager will monitor the setting and attainment of those goals on a weekly basis;
• will learn to become an advocate for herself and her children; and,
• will become an active community participant by becoming a registered voter, joining and participating in local community and neighborhood advocacy groups, and volunteering in his/her church, community and local service agencies.

Senior S.A.I.L. Program
The Dumas Wesley Senior Activities for Independent Living (S.A.I.L.) Program provides seniors age 60 and over with a hot congregate meal, daily activities and dependable transportation to medical appointments. Available to senior residents living in Crichton and Toulminville.

Transportation: The purpose of the program is to provide seniors with transportation to doctors, hospitals and other health facilities. There is no set fee, but donations are accepted. 81 percent of those served live alone and are dependent upon Dumas Wesley for this much needed service. Transportation is also provided to Dumas Wesley’s S.A.I.L. program daily.

Senior Activities for Independent Living (S.A.I.L.) - provides daily activities Monday through Friday for an average of 60 seniors daily. A hot, nutritious meal is served to 25 seniors at the center, and in addition, meals are transported to 35 homebound seniors. Participants enjoy a variety of activities, including games, sing-alongs, nutrition education, speakers, health checks and field trips. Trips to the grocery store are provided one day per week. Information referrals are made on health and wellness issues, Medicare, Social Security, Fair Housing and other social services.
Other Programs:

The Joseph Project: A Community Food Pantry
The Joseph Project, named for the Joseph story in Genesis 41, is a partnership between the Ashland Place United Methodist Church and the Dumas Wesley Community Center. Serving an average of 100 individuals each week, the food pantry is open for all in need and completely volunteer-supported and operated.

The Clothing Closet
Dumas Wesley Community Center offers a clothing closet for those in need. Serving an average of 30 individuals each week, the closet is a community-wide program that is completely volunteer-supported and operated.

Monitoring of Home Day Care Feeding Program
Dumas Wesley staffs the monitoring of the feeding program in 64 home daycares in Mobile and Washington Counties. This program plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for local low-income families. Homes must be licensed and approved in order to qualify for meal reimbursements. Dumas Wesley monitors each provider through quarterly on-site visits, in-home trainings and annual workshops.

Wellness Center
In collaboration with the University of South Alabama’s College of Nursing, a Wellness Center is now located at Dumas Wesley. Classes, health assessments and referrals to medical services are offered free of charge every Thursday to the families and individuals served by Dumas Wesley.

Assistance to Refugee and Immigrant Populations
Attorney Perry Noble has brought pro bono legal services to Dumas Wesley, serving immigrant and refugee families and individuals. Assistance is provided on by appointment only.

How can you participate in the ministry of Dumas Wesley Community Center?
For over a century we have been proudly serving our community. We have a well-established reputation for quality service among our multi-generational client base. We serve hundreds of needy families every year. That is really special to us - our programs meet the whole family’s needs. We want to continue to meet these needs for generations to come, but without your support our programs wouldn’t be possible! We ask for your continued prayers, monetary support and sharing of your talents and skills through volunteerism. Thank you and God bless!

Yours in Service,
Kate Carver, Executive Director
Dumas Wesley Community Center
Golden Cross

Golden Cross is a special fund of the United Methodist Church. It exists in order to:

• Respond to the most pressing health care needs.
• Allow the local church to give with compassion.
• Adhere to the guidelines set forth by the conference.

The Golden Cross represents Christ’s healing presence in a hurting world. As United Methodists, we are active in and support the ministries of Christian care by reaching out to those in need. The Golden Cross offering is retained within the conference where it is received. The conference designates the use of the offering. The contributions you give to the Alabama-West Florida (AWF) Conference provide the opportunity to make available financial aid for medical delinquent expense charges from a hospital, physician or pharmacy. Golden Cross receives no funds from apportioned items; the only source of income is from the people of the local church within our Conference. Please send your offering to the AWF Conference Treasurer.

The First Sunday in May is Golden Cross Sunday. Local churches are encouraged to give on this day – or any day of their choosing – so that the most urgent requests can be fulfilled.

Guidelines used to assist those in need:
• Assistance shall be available for United Methodists of the conference. Payment toward financial assistance shall be made directly to the hospital, physicians, or pharmacy.
• The Director of Golden Cross will provide each applicant with a form that must be filled out in advance of receiving assistance. It is also available on the website of the AWF Conference.
• A copy of the balance with past due, unpaid balances must be provided with the completed application form.
• This information is to be returned to the Director of Golden Cross.
• Assistance will be granted to a person only upon the recommendation of a pastor or District Superintendent who is in a position to know of the need or circumstances. Assistance will be granted for a pastor only on the recommendation of the District Superintendent.

A copy of the past due bills and the completed application form is to be sent to the Golden Cross Director, Julie Terrell, 4570 Sailboat Lane, Pensacola, FL 32514. The amount of assistance granted to any person shall be limited to a total of $1,200.00 for any combination of hospital, physician, or pharmacy bills. There have been no requests made to the Golden Cross fund for the past year.
Local church pastors are encouraged to contact the Golden Cross Director to assist members of their congregations who may need assistance from the Golden Cross fund.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Terrell

Mary Ellen’s Hearth at Nellie Burge Community Center

History
The Nellie Burge Community Center was founded in 1904 by a women’s group of the Court Street United Methodist Church “to bring about better social, moral, educational and religious services in those communities in our city which are in need of such help.” Initially the Center was known as the North Montgomery Settlement House, Inc. In the 1950’s, the Board of Directors purchased a parcel of land from Sam Burge and he donated the family home that was on the land. In response to his generosity, the Board renamed the Settlement House the Nellie Burge Center in honor of Mr. Burge’s wife. The house was used by the Center until 2000 when a new building was erected on the property. For the next several years, the Nellie Burge Community Center served the local community by providing a low cost day care option for needy families in the area. By 2010 the residential population had largely relocated to other areas of town due to the closure of the Riverside Heights housing community. As a result, the center closed and began searching for a new mission. After a lengthy assessment of needs in the community, the board determined that the Nellie Burge Community Center could best serve the community by providing transitional housing for homeless women with children. The center was reopened in 2011 and the ministry was renamed “Mary Ellen’s Hearth” in honor of long time board member and volunteer Mary Ellen Bullard. Mary Ellen had served the community through this ministry for over fifty years.

Mission Statement
The mission of Mary Ellen’s Hearth is to “offer hope, help and healing to homeless women and their children through Christian love and values.” We offer hope by providing life skills training. We offer help through our transitional housing services. Finally, we offer healing by covering everything with Christian love and support. Our goal is for residents to leave the program fully prepared for independent living, with their dignity and self-respect restored.

Transitional Housing
Mary Ellen’s Hearth at Nellie Burge combats homelessness by providing transitional housing for homeless women with children. More than simply providing a place to live, our programs and services empower families to stabilize their lives, build new skills, decrease their dependency on emergency services and keep their families united and safe. Families are mentored on their path to independent living and permanent housing. We currently have ten transitional family living units. Specifically, our program provides the following:
Family Service Plan: Every family entering the program partners with the Program Manager to craft an individualized family service plan. Weekly the family meets with the Program Manager and a case manager to help identify the goals/needs of the family and to assist the family in meeting those goals/needs. The family service plan includes various life skills/training components, job training, money management (debt reduction and savings), counseling/support needs, basic living skills needs, transportation, and educational needs.

Training: Many of the women come to Mary Ellen’s Hearth needing to learn the life skills necessary to achieve a stable lifestyle and home environment for their children. We are able to provide this training through the several key partnerships in the community. Local financial institutions offer financial literacy training. Nutrition and health education is offered through the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. The Family Guidance Center provides parent education. We also utilize a specialized curriculum for persons in poverty called “Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World”. The curriculum assists individuals in poverty build their resources for a more prosperous life for themselves, their families, and their communities. The project guides individuals through an assessment of their own resources and how to build those resources as part of their move toward self-sufficiency. The curriculum is taught through a partnership with Transformation Montgomery, a program of Frazier United Methodist Church, and is essential in putting the concepts, tools, and relationships in the hands of these women to make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of their families.

Other Supportive Services: Mary Ellen’s Hearth also provides referrals for counseling for various issues that many of the women are faced with; transportation; linkage to community resources and volunteer opportunities, participating in GED training through a partnership with Trenholm State Technical College; tutoring towards obtaining their GED through various partnership with volunteer (tutoring on-site); job training through Alabama Department of Human Resources and the Montgomery Alabama Career Center/Unemployment Office (all residents are required to complete a vocational assessment).

Children’s Services: As their mothers work to get back on their feet, the children are exposed/learn life skills in order to prepare him/her to manage a household and make good decisions as he/she grows into adulthood. By working with children in their younger years, they have more opportunity to practice the skills that will help them as they get older and face more difficult choices. Mary Ellen’s Hearth’s Life Skills curriculum for children provides an opportunity for hands-on learning with real tools and activities. We also assist mothers with obtaining various other services for their children i.e. identifying appropriate daycare facilities, applying for subsidies, transportation, and counseling. Volunteers are available to provide tutoring to school-age children on-site. These volunteers are committed to providing children’s activities during training times for the mothers, and they also assist in providing birthday parties as well as special occasion gifts and parties.
How can you help?
In order to help families overcome critical obstacles, secure and retain permanent housing, and provide other support/services, Mary Ellen’s Hearth relies on the generosity of churches, individuals, companies and foundations. THANK YOU for giving your time to help us meet this critical need in our community.
Please visit our Facebook page or website (www.maryellenshearth.org) for information on how to give and volunteer. Our facility is located at 1226 Clay Street Montgomery, Alabama 36104 and donations can be mailed there as well. Thank you again for supporting us through your prayers, presence, gifts and service. You are making a difference!

Dr. LaTeasa Hicks, Executive Director
334-264-4108
lateasa@nellieburge.org

Mission u

The 47th Cooperative Mission u Event was held at First United Methodist church – Dothan, Alabama on July 31 – August 1. Approximately 101 people from over the conference were in attendance. Our 3 studies this year were:
• Spiritual Growth Study: Created for Happiness: Understanding Your Life in God – led by The Rev. Tonya Elmore and Clara Ester
• Geographic Study: Latin America: People and Faith – led by Debbie Bracewell and Susan Hunt
• Issue Study: The Church and People with Disabilities – led by Ann Aldridge

The Cooperative Mission u Committee consists of three agencies with-in our conference: Board of Church & Society, Board of General Ministries and United Methodist Women. These three groups plan and implement Mission u each year. Our offering of approximately $846 was used to replenish the scholarships offered each year. These scholarships are: The Don Brill Scholarship – offered to any clergy during their first 5 years in the ministry that has never attended Mission u; The Nell Chance Scholarship – offered to any new member of United Methodist Women that has never attended Mission and The Lib Claridy Scholarship offered to any lay person that has never attended Mission u.

In 2016 the event will be hosted by Millbrook First United Methodist Church, Millbrook, AL July 29 - 30, 2016. We will have three studies this year.
• Spiritual Growth: The Bible and Human Sexuality – led by Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson and Julie Taylor
• Geographic Study: Latin America – led by Susan Hunt
• Issue Study: Climate Justice – led by Debbie Bracewell and Sue Owens.
The Committee thanks each person that participated in any way to help make this event happen.

Respectfully submitted,
Margie Miller, 2015 Dean
Betty Helms, 2015 Assistant Dean

**Pensacola UM Community Ministries (PUMCM)**

Hunger has many different faces. Young children and senior citizens, solitary soldiers and immigrant families, men and women of many colors from varying backgrounds and lifestyles. Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries (PUMCM) had a banner year for providing for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of those in our community.

18,859 meals were purchased, prepared and served with love and our Community Ministry Thrift Store provided volunteer, community service, and job training opportunities. We also provided clothing and household vouchers and provided for the emergency needs of our community.

Our Celebrate Recovery meetings averaged 55 weekly and expanded to two nights weekly.

Our Sunday community worship service averaged 60.

**His Place Ministry** provided housing for disaster recovery teams and youth mission teams to work and minister to our neighborhoods.

Our Earn a Bike program has provided over 60 bikes for much needed transportation.

We are a Resource Center for the Re-Entry Alliance of Pensacola, the Learn to Read program, seven AA meetings and provide on site mail service, food stamp assistance and internet access.

How have we been able to do all of this? Because of you and your faithfulness to follow Jesus Christ who calls us to minister to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captive, those in darkness, those who mourn, and those in despair. All praise and glory are God’s.

Submitted by,
Robin Noble, Executive Director
Pensacola UM Community Ministries
The Ark

The Ark continued to grow and change in 2015, and we are looking ahead to the new and exciting things God has placed on the horizon for 2016!

Throughout Spring 2015, we focused our renovation efforts on our 3 dorm facilities. We upgraded each dorm with fresh paint, updated bathroom facilities, comfortable community spaces, and brand new bunk beds. Countless people contributed to this project through funds, supplies, and labor. We completed the upgrades in May of 2015, and students for our International Student Program arrived a few days later.

Our transitional living program continues meet needs in our community. Our Director of Transitional Living, Evelyn Willis, led the charge on improving this program. On average, we had 10 residents working toward reaching their educational, vocational, and personal goals. We worked with several families to secure safe housing for their children, and increased our networking efforts with other agencies in our area. Our residents are working hard to improve their situation through God’s help and the generosity of our community.

We housed approximately 90 international students that participated the Summer Work Travel Program in 2015. Emily Austin completed her internship with us in May of 2015, and then remained as permanent staff as our Program Director. We also had 6 interns that worked with our student program throughout the course of the summer. We made many changes to our policies and increased security measures to combat the trafficking issues we face. These students are particularly vulnerable to sex and labor trafficking, so our facilities provide a safe and affordable environment. We are increasing our anti-trafficking efforts by raising awareness for the community, educating local businesses and agencies, and by serving on the Bay County Human Trafficking Task Force. We are honored to be part of this mission, and we look forward to the changes God will bring to our area!

The Pour celebrated 1 year of operation in November 2015. We have enjoyed the connections that have been made within our neighborhood, and the coffee shop serves as an excellent way for unchurched neighbors to get plugged into ministry. Dozens of volunteers have originated from conversations had over the coffee shop counter, and we are so thankful for this unique outlet for ministry. Through the funds generated by The Pour, we were able to offset a large portion of The Ark’s operating costs for 2015.

Even with our dorm renovations and financial difficulties of this year, we completed our fiscal year under budget! This is the first time in many years that we can look forward to financial stability and sustainable growth as a reality. This could not have been possible without God’s guidance and the help of our many contributors. God is clearly doing big things in our community, and we appreciate the support of so many in our community and around the nation.
Katie Winton completed her first year as the Executive Director, and is looking forward to the ministry opportunities in 2016. By working alongside our Board of Directors, we aim to make an impact for Christ.

Please note our updated contact information, and connect with us to stay up to date with all our activities!

The Ark
www.thearkpcb.org
850-234-9345
info@thearkpcb.org
@thearkpcb

The Pour
www.thepourpcb.com
850-234-3084
thepourpcb@gmail.com
@thepourpcb

Thank you for your continued support,

Katie Winton
Executive Director
director@thearkpcb.org

United Methodist Inner City Mission

The United Methodist Inner City Mission serves the Oakdale-Maysville community in the heart of Mobile’s inner city. Since 1965, the Mission has developed ministries to meet the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the residents who live in the highest poverty area of the City. The Mission staffs and operates Taylor Park Community Center located next to Oaklawn Homes, a one hundred unit public housing facility. In 2004 the Mission started an After School Tutorial Program at Taylor Park for students in pre-kindergarten through the eighth grades. There are eighty five (85) students enrolled in the program for the 2015-2016 school year. The Tutorial Program is staffed by certified teachers, aides, and students from Spring Hill College. Volunteers from local churches also assist with the students. This year we had six high school students, in the tutorial programs since elementary school, volunteer their services in the tutorial programs. During the summer the Mission has an eight week Summer Tutorial and Enrichment Program for elementary and middle school students. Feeding the Gulf Coast provides snacks and hot meals for the students after school and breakfast and lunch during the summer program.

Students in both after school and summer programs receive tutoring in reading, math, computer skills, social skills, and assistance with special projects. Life Line Counseling Service provides pregnancy prevention counseling for those participating in the programs. The Mission’s community garden at Taylor Park is now in its fourth planting and plays an important role in our programs. Bible lessons such as the sower and the seeds and other stories from the Bible are shared with the children. The Cooper Foundation has provided volunteers to work with the students to set up a business model for the community garden. The older youth elected a board of directors and officers to plan the work around the garden. The
goal is to plant a cash crop in addition to the other vegetables. They will then set up a marketing and distribution plan for the crop. The profits will go to support the tutorial programs.

The Mission has a year round sports program of football, basketball, softball, and baseball for boys and girls ages four to fourteen. The teams are coached by volunteer parents and residents from the community. This past year saw the most successful sports program in the history of the Park. Through sports the children are taught teamwork, discipline, and how to establish their priorities which are God, family, school, and sports. The Mission’s Summer Tutorial and Enrichment Programs at Taylor Park continue to provide a safe haven for our children and youth while instilling in them the importance of staying in school and obtaining a good education. In the summer of 2015, 145 children participated in our summer programs. The Mission took a total of 36 campers to Blue Lake for Camp Discovery. In addition to these 36, four of our high school volunteers went as “junior campers”. They did an excellent job and one of the senior high school students wants to become a counselor at Blue Lake during the summer.

The Mission continues to provide emergency assistance to families in need of food and medicine, as well as, assistance with utilities and rent due to unforeseen emergencies in order to prevent them from being evicted. We also provide breakfast on Mondays through Thursdays for those in our community who struggle to put food on their table. This is also an opportunity to minister to their spiritual needs. The staff of the Mission’s Community Enrichment Program oversees a day program for senior citizens who are on limited income and often times are living by themselves with no personal means of transportation. Monday through Thursday they are transported to the Mission for group activities including devotions, singing, ceramics, exercise, dancing, and table games. They go shopping on Wednesdays and are taken to a local church where they worship and fellowship with other senior citizens. Once a month, the seniors attend a lunch and learn. The Oakdale Community Service Club works closely with the City of Mobile Police Department’s First Precincts Neighborhood Policing Program to address public safety issues in the community. The Community Enrichment Program and its Oakdale Community Service Club partners with Raise the Roof through Dauphin Way UMC to identify homes that are in desperate need of new roofs, painting, or repairs. Within this past year, seven homes of Oakdale-Maysville residents have benefited from this ministry. Members of Raise the Roof have been able to use the relationships established through this program to build long term ministries with those who have been served.

Our mission through all our ministries is to love unconditionally those we serve as Jesus loves us. We continue to show this love through our words, actions, and deeds so others may see Christ in us. It is a wonderful thing to witness how God continues to transform lives when his unconditional love is shared through us with those we serve.
Our ministries are made possible through the support of our brothers and sisters throughout the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Please know how much we appreciate and depend on your gifts and your prayers.

Grace, peace, and prayers,
Rev. Tonny H. Algood, Director

OTHER REPORTS

Africa University


The Africa University story is one of incredible faithfulness and the generosity of The United Methodist Church is evident in every chapter—from nascent dream, to the institution’s founding, to its current, vibrant reality.

In 2015, the Alabama-West Florida Conference increased its investment in the Africa University Fund apportionment to 89.18 percent, up from 84.1 percent in 2014. Thank you, Alabama-West Florida, for steadily growing your support for Africa University. The upward trend in giving puts your conference in an excellent position to reach the goal of a 100 percent investment in the AUF in 2016 and we look forward to celebrating that milestone with you.

Institutional Update:
Under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Munashe Furusa, Africa University has increased its focus on the student experience and student success. New staff development strategies are being implemented to ensure that the majority of the faculty have terminal degrees in their various disciplines. Academic programs are being restructured to make them more relevant and marketable. A new strategic plan, (2017-2020), is in development. The plan assigns resources more effectively, while ensuring that fiscal responsibility and accountability are maintained. In addition, the university is increasing its friend-making and fundraising efforts in Africa and among its core beneficiaries—the graduates and their families.

Enrollment: Currently, Africa University has a total enrollment about 1,500 full-time students who represent 26 of Africa’s 54 countries. An additional 770 students are gaining new skills and knowledge as they pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees on a part-time basis.

Alumni: Africa University graduates number around 6,200. They are dispersed across the continent and engaged in vigorous efforts to improve public health, food security, peace, stability, and the enjoyment of economic prosperity in Africa. Africa University graduates are leaders and role models who inspire a new optimism.
Looking ahead:
The ongoing support of local churches in the Alabama-West Florida Conference, and across The United Methodist Church, is crucial to Africa University’s ministry and its impact within Africa. As you journey with Africa University, know that you are part of a ministry that equips Africans to do for themselves and grow the experience of God’s promised abundance in the world.

Submitted by:
James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement
Africa University Development Office
P O Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007
(615) 340-7438
audevoffice@gbhem.org
www.support-africauniversity.org

Partnership with the Red Bird Missionary Conference

The Alabama-West Florida Conference (AWFC) is now in partnership with the 22 churches of the Red Bird Missionary Conference. The Red Bird Missionary Conference (RBMC) is in an impoverished area of eastern Kentucky with many struggles, but the members of their churches have a heart for Jesus and want to reach out to their communities in Jesus’ name despite the difficulties they face. This partnership is about our conferences being in ministry with each other as we seek to reach out to and serve our respective communities together.

Based on the book When Helping Hurts by Corbett and Fikkert, the goal of the partnership is to build relationships that foster transformation, to honor the God-given gifts that everyone has to offer, and to learn from each other.

Each AWFC district is in partnership with one to four of the RBMC churches. Meant to develop over the long term, these partnerships can include activities such as pulpit swaps, shared Bible studies, prayer partners, drama and music enrichment, community outreach events, and more. For example, Covenant UMC in Dothan assisted its RBMC partner church pastor in learning more about Celebrate Recovery and in starting the program in the partner church. Tabernacle UMC hosted a Red Bird Mission Craft Fair. Clanton First UMC assisted their partner church in getting a new roof on their building. Several RBMC mission teams have come to assist with disaster response in coastal AWFC. Several districts have swapped teams for work, community outreach, worship, and fellowship.

In addition, the RBMC churches are listed in the AWFC conference calendar on the 2nd Sunday of each month. All Alabama-West Florida church members and clergy are encouraged to pray for those churches and consider how we can be in ministry together.
There is room for more churches to join in this partnership in ministry. If your church wants more information about the partnership, contact Susan Hunt at susan@awfumc.org or 334-356-8014.

Submitted by,
Susan Hunt, Director
Mission and Advocacy

Schools of Theology

Boston University School of Theology

Dear Colleagues in the Alabama-West Florida Conference:
Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (STH) walks with you on the journey of discipleship, seeking to love God and to love our neighbors with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Thank you for your prayers that inspire and support the STH mission to love God, build knowledge, and equip leaders for the church and society.

NEWS
• New faculty: This year, Boston University welcomed new faculty in ethics, psychology, theologies of spirituality, comparative theology, church renewal, Black church leadership, and mission studies. We welcomed: Nimi Wariboko (Walter G. Muelder Professor of Social Ethics); David Decosimo (Theology); Theodore Hickman-Maynard (Evangelism and Church Renewal); Andrea Hollingsworth (Theology); Barbod Salimi (Psychology and Peace Studies); and Daryl Ireland (Associate Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission).
• Spiritual life: STH continued to expand and deepen its spiritual life program, led by Charlene Zuill, Spiritual Life Coordinator and United Methodist elder. Bishop Susan Hassinger, Claire Wolfteich, and many others also offer a rich selection of courses in spirituality and leadership.
• Chaplaincy track: STH added a chaplaincy track to the MDiv degree, preparing students for hospitals, prisons, and military settings.

ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE: STH spent much energy this year in hard conversations on violence, racism, and injustice, seeking to be honest and vigorously open to change, while honoring the dignity of all persons.
• Power, Privilege and Prophetic Witness is the STH theme for 2015-2017. We engaged the theme in classes, lectures, retreats, and workshops, seeking to stretch our capacities to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.
• Examining the intersection of theology and race. The opportunities this year included: a brilliant new documentary on North Korea; a dialogical viewing of Selma; dialogues on racism with Thandeka and Andrew Sung Park; a retreat on building race relations; circle worship; a student-led event Missing Voices, Daunting Choices: The Erasure of Black Women in Black American Movements; and events on interfaith understanding.
CARING FOR THE CHURCH through leadership and service.

• Serving the United Methodist Church. Students served local churches and church bodies as interns, staff, and volunteers. Faculty served with such bodies as: United Methodist Women, World Methodist Council, Ministry Study Commission, Women of Color Scholars and Mentors program, Pan Methodist Commission on Children in Poverty, and boards and agencies of the general church and annual conferences.

• Empowering young Latino/a leaders. Young leaders gathered with seasoned mentors to enhance their gifts and service as Christian leaders: Hispanic Youth Leadership Initiative (HYLA) and Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute

• Facilitating dialogues on church renewal. We launched a new initiative on Evangelism and Church Renewal.

• Reflecting on worship. We contributed to a special issue of Worship Arts Magazine, edited and written by STH faculty, alumni/ae, and students, and published by the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.

CARING FOR THE WORLD

• Offering opportunities for engaged learning. Opportunities included the Doctor of Ministry program in Transformational Leadership; an urban ministry course; travel seminars to India, the Arizona-Mexico border, Israel-Palestine, Mexico, and Turkey (Ephesus); work with leaders in Ferguson, MO; and a travel seminar for UMC clergywomen to Cuba, co-sponsored by GBHEM and STH.

• Collaborating with the global church. Collaborations included sponsorship of the Dictionary of African Christian Biography; events and art exhibits on local and global ecology; and dialogues with global church leaders.

As we at STH seek to be faithful and to partner with you in ministry, we give thanks for your witness. Thank you too for your continuing inspiration and contributions to our shared journey.

Blessings and gratitude,

Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean of Boston University School of Theology

Candler

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

One of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is also one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, a top-tier research institution offering extensive resources and a rich context for study. Our location in Atlanta provides a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse
communities of the 21st century. Simply put, there is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health. In order to keep pace with the needs of the church and the world, Candler now offers 17 degrees: seven single degrees and ten dual degrees pairing theology with bioethics, business, development practice, law, public health, or social work. One of our newest degrees is a retooled Doctor of Ministry that is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry as they study—and apply what they learn in real time. We’ve also partnered with the University of Georgia’s School of Social Work to create an MDiv/MSW where students learn to maximize their effectiveness by combining pastoral skills such as spiritual counseling with social work practices such as family therapy and community assessment.

Our student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. 466 students are enrolled, with 48 percent women, 34 percent people of color (U.S.), and a median age of 29. Students represent 44 denominations, with 51 percent coming from the Methodist family. 82 percent of students are seeking a degree to prepare them as ministry professionals.

Candler has a deep commitment to alleviating student debt and employs a multi-pronged approach to tackle this issue. In 2015-2016, we awarded nearly $5.5 million in Candler scholarships, with 92 percent of MDiv students and 84 percent of all students receiving support. And our comprehensive financial literacy program teaches money management skills that serve our students now and will continue to serve them—and the churches they serve—well into the future.

At the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, Candler says goodbye and Godspeed to a handful of noted faculty as they retire: Barbara Day Miller, Luke Timothy Johnson, Steve Tipton, and Bishop Woodie White. Yet even as these legends take their leave after distinguished careers of scholarship and service, we look forward to welcoming a new crop of scholar-leaders who will join us in the coming months and grow with us in the coming years. We are especially pleased to welcome Bishop Larry Goodpaster, who will join the faculty as bishop-in-residence in the fall of 2016.

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

Jan Love
Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics
Candler School of Theology
Drew University

A Cohering Vision: Curriculum, Community, Co-Curricular Initiatives

After much collaborative discussion, discernment, and evaluation of the current state of theological education, those of us who lead, teach, and support Drew Theological School have launched on an ambitious course. Nearly 150 years after our founding, we envision a future as bright as the best eras in our past. I am pleased to share with you here the concrete steps we have taken—and are taking—to bring this future to light.

First, our efforts have been attentive to the history of Drew, in particular its Methodist roots, its long commitment to the Church and its ministries, and draw from this wellspring for inspiration and direction. Also, we have honored our progress to achieve denominational, ethnic, gender, and racial diversity in our faculty and student body. This rich diversity has become both a hallmark of Drew and an expansion of our wellspring. Forces beyond our campus—notably, that the reasons for pursuing a theological education and expected outcomes are shifting dramatically—further press the need for us to align our vision and its supporting systems with our communal reality.

Given this imperative, we are focused on the three “C’s” of our cohering vision: redesigning our curriculum, strengthening our community of learning, and deepening training through revived co-curricular initiatives. These three aspect of a Drew Theological School education will work together to enable us to empower creative thought and courageous action to advance justice, peace, and love of God, neighbor, and the earth—as well as uniquely position us to lead evolving expressions of Christianity.

Designing distinct pathways from curriculum to vocation

To remain meaningful and offer the greatest value to our students, each of the six degree paths that we offer must be as distinct as the ministry to which it leads. For example, our Master of Arts in Ministry program, which forms students for the broadest spectrum of theologically-informed advocacy and ministry, or our DMin program, which has become the “new” terminal vocational degree, must be custom rebuilt for current and emerging student needs and outcomes. This also holds true for our Master of Arts, Master of Sacred Theology, PhD, and, most critically, our Master of Divinity programs.

We have achieved our roadmap for curricular change through a period of intentional discernment, which included discussion with consultants, and with colleagues at peer institutions, who led a curricular formation retreats with our faculty; through the discernment and guidance of our faculty, and with the generous financial support of the Jesse Ball duPont Fund. Our next steps include a comprehensive analysis of pedagogical and technological trends in theological education, enrollment, and outcomes. Our redesigned curricular paths will be announced in the fall of 2017, concurrent with the 150th anniversary of the
founding of Drew Theological School and the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

**Student experiences rooted in community**

Despite the increase in students pursuing their education through evening classes and online enrollment, we remain committed to the on-campus experience of community. This begins with a student-centered educational experience that better attends to the scheduling needs of our students, offers broader course content and availability, and more intentionally integrates vocational or career aspirations with coursework.

The success of these efforts are inextricably linked to scholarship support. Only by removing the financial barriers for students pursuing vocations can we hope to attract and retain the most promising students and free them to learn and grow in community. Related to tuition support is the need for more affordable and modernized housing for those students who choose to live on campus. Together, scholarship support and housing relief will also unburden our students from unsustainable debt.

**Fostering innovation in ministry and the work of spirit-filled justice**

To round out changes in our curriculum and on-campus learning experiences, we are also reviving co-curricular initiatives. The existing Center for Lifelong Learning will be recast as the new Center for Innovation and Leadership in Ministry and serve students, alumni, and others seeking to find creative and courageous approaches to revitalizing ministry. Here, programming will train pastoral leaders, in particular, for service in rapidly changing church environments, as well as position them to lead fearlessly and prophetically.

Our second co-curricular center will be an expansion of the current Communities of Shalom. This initiative will focus on action, advocacy, and social justice work in both pastoral and lay environments. Projects will range from student interns supporting the work of A Future with Hope in our home state of New Jersey, advancing social justice in non-profit settings across the country and around the world, initiatives which seek to transform and end systemic poverty, expansion of our Partnership for Religion and Education in Prisons (PREP) program, and teaching residencies at Drew for prophetic leaders.

**Success so far through our One and All Campaign**

As the 14th dean of Drew Theological School, I am deeply committed to continuing our long and distinguished legacy. To this end, our vision is innovative, forward-looking, and grounded in the practical needs of our students—we hope, too, that it is an inspiration to the various constituencies we serve. I fully subscribe to the inimitable words of Antonio Machado, that “we make the road by walking.” The road to this bright future we envision will be made by the dedication, determination, and generosity of those who love Drew and believe in its future.
Our vision is coming to light, in part, because of the generosity of our many alumni-donors and friends. Our One and All fundraising campaign has raised more than $12 million to date for the Theological School and has seed-funded many of our burgeoning efforts.

Also, I encourage our alumni to embrace your power of influence to help grow philanthropic support for Drew Theological School. Many of our largest gifts have come from the influence of alumni, particularly pastors who serve in our church communities.

Yes, the needs ahead are many, yet our hope is high for a bright future for Drew Theological School. The road is made by walking. Let’s walk it together.

The Reverend Dr. Javier A. Viera
Dean of the Theological School
Professor of Pastoral Theology

Duke

The academic year 2015–2016 has been one of transition as Dean Richard Hays was diagnosed with cancer and forced to step down from his role as dean a year sooner than anticipated. Ellen Davis, Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology, accepted the invitation from Duke University President Richard Brodhead to serve as interim dean this year. A robust search committee to select candidates for the dean position had already been assembled, and they have spent this year conducting a thorough and thoughtful process to present final nominations to the president and provost of Duke University, who will make the final decision. The final slate of candidates was presented to the president and provost on Feb. 1, 2016, and we anticipate a final decision later this spring.

In the midst of this year of transition, we continue to engage with the church, academy, and society on important ecclesial and cultural issues. The heart of our work remains the preparation of men and women for Christian ministry and leadership within the church. This year we welcomed students from a range of backgrounds who are called to serve God and the church. In 2015, our total enrollment was 626 students: 449 are enrolled in the M.Div. degree program; 36 in the M.T.S.; 19 in the Th.M.; 44 in the Th.D.; 71 in the D.Min.; 33 in the M.A.C.P.; 16 in the M.A.C.S.; and 12 who are special students. Thirty-eight percent of our students are United Methodist, with an additional 4 percent from other Wesleyan traditions, and 43 percent of our M.Div. students are United Methodist. Fourteen percent of all students are Baptist, 8 percent are Anglican or Episcopalian, 3 percent are Roman Catholic, 8 percent are Presbyterian or Reformed, with the rest from 22 other denominations or nondenominational churches.

This year we made a number of strategic staffing decisions to ensure that we are meeting the priorities of the Divinity School. Laceye Warner, associate professor of evangelism and Methodist studies, has been named our senior strategist for
United Methodist collaborations. Warner, whose background includes academic administration, parish ministry, theological teaching, and denominational leadership, will bring oversight, guidance, and new ideas about ways that the Divinity School can work with our United Methodist partners in the work of serving local churches and local pastors. She has been named interim regional director and head of Course of Study at Duke, one of the largest Course of Study programs. She will build on the strong existing curriculum to explore new forms of pastoral formation, as well as develop more formal assessments about the effectiveness of Course of Study to ensure that it delivers the best preparation for local pastors and churches.

Warner has also worked with Pastor David McNitzky of Alamo Heights UMC in San Antonio, Texas, to create a certificate program. People in the church were interested in learning more about theology, church history, and biblical studies. The church offers courses and helps people use this training to be transformational leaders in their church and community, and Duke Divinity School recognizes this training with an approved certificate.

Jeff Conklin-Miller, the E. Stanley Jones Assistant Professor of the Practice of Evangelism and Christian Formation and Royce and Jane Reynolds Teaching Fellow, has been named the new associate dean for academic programs. He is also the director of the master of arts in Christian practice (M.A.C.P.) program. Conklin-Miller is an ordained elder in the California-Pacific Conference and has served local churches as an associate pastor, co-pastor, and senior pastor. In addition to his extensive church ministry, he has experience in academic administration and Christian formation. In his role as academic dean, Conklin-Miller draws on these various aspects of his experience in order to ensure that academic and other formation programs at the Divinity School equip our students to further God’s work in the church and the world.

We are well aware of the changing landscape in theological education: fewer people express interest in pursuing theological degrees, and the costs of education continue to rise. As part of strengthening our commitment to the priorities of recruitment and financial aid, we have appointed Todd Maberry to the new position of senior director of admissions, recruitment, and student finance. Maberry, who earned an M.Div. from Duke Divinity School and an M.P.A. degree from North Carolina State University, has served in academic administration and church leadership. Most recently he was the community pastor at the Church of the Resurrection (Downtown) in Kansas City, Mo., and he comes to Duke under appointment of Bishop Scott Jones in the Great Plains Conference.

Another notable new hire is the appointment of Meghan Feldmeyer Benson as Divinity School Chaplain, following the retirement of Sally Bates. An ordained elder in the Rocky Mountain Conference, she served for nine years as Director of Worship at Duke Chapel. Shortly after Rev. Benson began her chaplaincy last summer, both Richard Hays and Professor Kate Bowler were diagnosed with cancer, and she immediately demonstrated her gift for offering comfort and
guidance to the Divinity School community through both skillfully designed worship and pastoral care. In the months since, Benson has continued to foster a spirit of prayerfulness, while also overseeing the Divinity School’s worship life and opportunities for spiritual formation.

Our initiatives, centers, and programs are a vital resource for us in connecting the work of Duke Divinity School with other disciplines and constituents. Our Thriving Rural Communities initiative hosted “Fan the Flame,” a weekend retreat on growth and sustainability for small-membership churches. In partnership with the Western North Carolina and North Carolina Conferences, they also sponsored the 2015 Convocation on the Rural Church, “Living in Community,” to discuss issues important for transforming rural churches and communities. The Hispanic House of Studies, supported by both North Carolina Conferences, hosted a retreat for pastors serving the Hispanic and Latino/a community. Duke Divinity School remains committed to supporting local churches and local pastors, particularly in under-resourced communities.

Spirited Life, a holistic wellness program and behavioral health study conducted by the Clergy Health Initiative, has concluded its direct services to pastors, after working with more than 1,100 United Methodist clergy in North Carolina since 2010. The program provided resources for improving mental, spiritual, and physical health through evidence-based programs, coaching, and support. The initiative will continue to conduct and publish research, and will continue to offer information for clergy, congregants, and denominational officials to support the well-being of pastors.

Since 1979, the Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition has been a source of internationally acclaimed research and support for Methodist and Wesleyan studies. The Center hosts the Wesley Works Editorial Project, which this year published a new volume of the works of John Wesley and launched a new website. The new volume, *The Works of John Wesley Volume 27: Letters III* (1756–1765), is the third of seven volumes devoted to Wesley’s correspondence. The new website provides information on the previously published work as well as other resources for the study of John and Charles Wesley.

Several initiatives, specifically in the areas of health care, reconciliation, and the arts, provide opportunities for theological reflection to intersect with the pressing needs in our world today. Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts (DITA), Theology, Medicine, and Culture (TMC), the Office of Black Church Studies (OBCS), and the Center for Reconciliation (CFR) each sponsored numerous speakers and events during this past year. *Faith & Leadership*, the online magazine published by LEADD, continues to reach over 300,000 readers and provide a resource for theological reflection and “traditioned innovation” for all in ministry. Their continued excellent work was recognized again this year with awards from the Associated Church Press “Best of the Christian Press” contest.
Our faculty continue to be recognized for their scholarship and interdisciplinary expertise. Xi Lian and J. Kameron Carter were both named Henry Luce III Fellows for 2015–16. Ross Wagner, Kate Bowler, and Jennie Grillo each received prestigious research grants and fellowships to support their book projects. Faculty continue to be in demand as preachers, speakers, lecturers, and conference presenters all over the world, from academic conferences to leading Sunday school classes, to preaching in churches.

We remain deeply grateful for the relationships among the United Methodist Church, this Annual Conference, and Duke Divinity School. We look forward to working with you 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.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen F. Davis, Interim Dean

Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO)

Thank you for this opportunity to bring you an update from MTSO.

Keeping seminary affordable
As part of MTSO’s continuing commitment to make theological education a financial reality for promising students, we announced the creation of the Bishop Judith Craig Scholarship Endowment. Bishop Craig, who led conferences in the Michigan and Ohio West areas, is MTSO’s bishop in residence and visiting professor of church leadership. One in three full-time MTSO master’s students receives a full-tuition scholarship, and our average non-load aid award is $8,600 per year.

Working for sustainable justice
This year offered continuing evidence that social justice and the care of creation are core values for MTSO. We hosted “Faithful Justice: Confronting Mass Incarceration” in February and the Institute on Organizing and Preaching for Social Justice in April. A newly installed solar array began providing energy to Gault Hall, our main academic facility. And the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development identified Methodist Theological School in Ohio as one of 25 exceptional North American seminaries (out of 231 surveyed) for faith and ecology. MTSO courses addressing ecotheology and sustainability include Ecological Religious Education; Food, Land and Faith Formation; and Dialogues in Faith and Science.

Celebrating 30 years of educating counselors
Over the past three decades, hundreds of men and women have earned graduate counseling degrees with unique depth from MTSO. Our Master of Arts in Counseling Ministries degree integrates psychological and behavioral sciences with wisdom from religious tradition. The second most popular MTSO degree, the
MACM offers tracks in Pastoral and Professional Counseling, Pastoral Care and Counseling, and Addiction Counseling.

Respectfully submitted,
Danny Russell, Director of Communications

Perkins

Perkins celebrates our vital connections with the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference:
• One student affiliated with the Alabama-West Florida Conference is enrolled at Perkins: a Doctor of Ministry student.
• Qualifying students at Perkins receive $6,000 each in need-based aid.

Enrollment at Perkins for the 2015-16 academic year totals 365 students, of which more than two-thirds are United Methodist and more than 40 percent are ethnic minority students. Master’s degree programs comprise approximately 53 percent male and 47 percent female students. The D.Min. program includes students from southern Asia taking classes in Singapore and Dallas. Our Ph.D. program has 32 students.

Please note the following faculty additions:
• Dr. O. Wesley Allen Jr. (Ph.D., Emory) joined the Perkins faculty as the Lois Craddock Perkins Chair in Homiletics in August 2015.
• Dr. Evelyn L. Parker (Ph.D., Northwestern), Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Perkins, was appointed to the Susanna Wesley Centennial Chair in Practical Theology at Perkins.
• Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison (Ph.D., University of St. Andrew’s) joined Perkins as the school’s Associate Dean for External Programs.
• Dr. Tom Spann was named director of the Perkins Intern Program, succeeding Dr. Bill Bryan, who was named to the newly created position of Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
• Dr. Paul Barton (Ph.D., Southern Methodist University) was named director of the Mexican American and Hispanic-Latino/a Church Ministries Program.

Highland Park United Methodist Church provided a $1.5 million gift to Southern Methodist University that endowed the Umphrey Lee Professorship in Methodist History at Perkins as well as support the HPUMC Future Church Leaders Program.

The Center for the Study of Latino/a Christianity and Religions at Perkins was awarded a $500,000 grant by The Henry Luce Foundation’s Theology program. The three-year grant will significantly expand the Center’s work in promoting an understanding of the different religious expressions within the Latino/a communities in the United States and in Latin America.

Perkins unveiled a new degree option, the Master of Theology (Th.M.), which began enrolling students in the Fall 2015 semester. The Th.M. degree is a second
master’s and requires 24 term hours within one of four divisions of study: The Biblical Witness, The Heritage and Context of Christianity, The Interpretation of the Christian Witness and The Theology and Practice of Ministry.

Additionally, Perkins revealed that it will begin offering a Spanish-language Master of Theology (Th.M.) degree beginning in fall 2017. The degree, the first of its kind among the 13 United Methodist-related schools of theology, will be a nonresidential program designed for experienced full-time pastors or church/academic leaders.

Perkins also announced the creation of a first-of-its-kind degree, the Doctor of Pastoral Music, which will begin enrolling students in 2016. Areas of focused study will include liturgy, congregational song, worship leadership, performance skills and the theological basis of church music.

Perkins thanks our many colleagues, friends, and alumni/ae across the connection for generous support in many ways, including referrals of prospective students, as we continue our vital mission of preparing women and men for faithful leadership in Christian ministry.

I will retire as Dean of Perkins School of Theology on May 31, 2016. It has been my privilege to serve in this capacity since 2002. In our mission to prepare women and men for faithful leadership in Christian ministry, the students who have passed through the halls of this school and into the world of ministry are the focus of our work. I am honored to have been a part of their journey.

Grace and peace,
William B. Lawrence, Dean and Professor of American Church History

Southern Methodist University (SMU) President’s Report

Over the past five years, Southern Methodist University has celebrated the centennial of its founding in 1911 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and its opening in 1915. Highlights of recent developments follow:

•In fall 2015 SMU’s total enrollment of 11,643 included 6,411 undergraduates and 5,232 graduate students. Ethnic minority students made up 26 percent of total enrollment. An international enrollment of 1,652 (14 percent of total enrollment) represented 92 foreign countries, with the largest numbers from China, India and Saudi Arabia.

•SMU ranks among the nation’s top universities. In the 2016 U.S. News & World Report listings, SMU ranks 61st among 270 of the “best national universities.” Several individual schools and academic programs also earned national rankings.
• SMU received $26 million in external funding during 2014-15 for research in the U.S. and worldwide. Current research subjects include water quality, natural hazards, cyber security and treatments for cancer and other diseases.

• SMU Unbridled: The Second Century Campaign reached its $1 billion goal ahead of schedule in Sept. 2015. It provided funds for 607 student scholarships; 62 endowed faculty positions, making a total of 114; 66 academic programs, including major endowment support for two schools; and 18 capital projects, including new and renovated facilities.

• The Meadows Museum at SMU celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2015 with exhibitions never before seen in the U.S. The museum houses one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain.

SMU treasures its Methodist heritage, and we ask for your continued prayers and support.

R. Gerald Turner, President
Southern Methodist University

**United Theological Seminary (UTS)**

United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio continues to educate a significant number of pastors and local church leaders for the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church.

United has always focused on developing faithful, fruitful, inspired and inspiring pastors and local church leaders. 83% of the 2015 graduates of United are now serving in local congregations. 53% of the 2015 graduates from all other seminaries affiliated with the Association of Theological Seminaries are serving in local congregations.

Furthermore, 44% of the current 449 students at United are African American which makes United one of the most racially diverse seminaries in the United States. An average of 12% of the student body at most seminaries in the United States are African American. 43% of the students at United are female compared to an average of 33% at other United States seminaries.

United is one of the most racially and gender diverse seminaries in the United States and produces a higher percentage of local church pastors than most other seminaries in the United States.

United is also in the process of leadership transition. In November, 2015 President Wendy Deichmann resigned as President and, after a well deserved sabbatical, will return to serving as a Professor of History and Theology. Under President Deichmann, United was listed as one of the 12 fastest growing seminaries in the United States largely because of the growing Doctor of Ministry program and our online degree programs. 44% of United’s students are in the Master of Divinity
program, 41% are in the Doctor of Ministry program and 15% are in other degree or certificate programs.

In January, 2016 The United Board of Trustees selected Dr. Kent Millard, former pastor at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, as Interim President while they search for a new President.

St. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy these words of advice:

“I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.” Second Timothy 1:6

United Theological Seminary along with the other 12 United Methodist Seminaries in the United States is committed to helping persons “rekindle the gift of God that is within” to provide educated, inspired and inspiring spiritual leaders for the United Methodist Church throughout the world.

Dr. Kent Millard, Interim President
United Theological Seminary
4501 Denlinger Rd., Dayton, Ohio 45426

Wesley Theological Seminary

Called. Answered. Sent.

Wesley Theological Seminary has been equipping and sending forth prophetic preachers, teachers, and leaders into diverse ministries throughout the church and around the world. Near and far, our alumni point to God’s love even as they join the Spirit in making disciples and shaping healthy communities.

• With more than 410 master’s-level students preparing for leadership in the church and the world, Wesley remains one of the largest and most diverse theological schools in North America.
• The Lewis Center for Church Leadership informs more than 17,000 pastors and lay leaders on trends and ideas through its e-newsletter. The center has influenced more than 5,600 church leaders through leadership assessments, sexual ethics trainings, and fundraising trainings.
• The new Institute for Community Engagement is forwarding Wesley’s mission of raising prophetic leaders in the public square through classes, partnerships, conferences, and resources.

Wesley Students Are Answering God’s Call

Wesley provides more than $2 million dollars annually in scholarships to our students thanks to the consistent support of alumni, congregations and friends of the seminary. The Ministerial Education Fund and conference partners help us equip a broad range of students to serve the church as pastors and leaders. These include:

• Two Master of Divinity students who are exploring ordination in the UMC that have created outreach opportunities for people who ordinarily would not consider
going into a church. **Zach Spoerl** and **Matt Wilke**, working with three United Methodist Churches and Wesley, have started Pub Theology in downtown D.C., drawing spiritual-but-not-religious young adults into Christian community.

• Master of Theological Studies student **Jane Adams** is working with denominations and congregations on issues of poverty and hunger in the U.S. As an intern at the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, she provides tools for building on charitable activities such as food pantries and backpack ministries. As a member of a local United Methodist congregation, she’s putting her knowledge to work in her local church and neighborhood, too.

**Christian leadership must innovate for greater faithfulness and be able to engage the full diversity of people within our society even while holding true to the foundations of our faith and tradition.** The people named above – as well as so many more of our students – exemplify these aims. Read more about our students at wesleyseminary.edu/stories.

**Mourning the Loss of a Christian Leader**
The Rev. Clementa Pinckney was a Doctor of Ministry student at Wesley in the Leadership Excellence track. He was working on a research project on the combined role of pastor and statesman, when his life was taken along with eight others at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C. **Rev. Pinckney exemplified the spiritually powerful and prophetic leadership that is at the core of our mission.**

To ensure Pinckney’s legacy continues, Wesley has established scholarships in his name for Doctor of Ministry candidates seeking to empower their congregations, engage their communities, and influence public discourse. Additionally, **Wesley has developed a Doctor of Ministry track exploring the intersection between public life and church leadership.** This degree focus amplifies Wesley’s mission and location and, we hope, will raise up leaders to continue Pinckney’s legacy. Visit https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/ for more information.

**Seeking Connection**
We are on this journey of faith together. As you follow Jesus Christ, we pray and trust the Spirit will equip you to mentor future leaders and to help others identify God’s call to ministry on their lives. Let us know about someone you feel has the potential for Christian leadership by emailing us admissions@wesleyseminary.edu. **And may God’s transformative, creative Spirit lead all of us, as the body of Christ, to new and faithful ways of sharing God’s grace and love with all God’s people, for the redemption of the world.** Learn more at wesleyseminary.edu.

Robert Martin, Dean and Professor of Christian Formation and Leadership
Wesley Theological Seminary
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FREQUENT CONTACTS

Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM) http://www.arm-al.org/
Birmingham-Southern College http://www.bsc.edu/
Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly https://www.bluelakecamp.com/
Credit Union https://www.unitedmethodistcu.com/main.php
Dumas Wesley http://www.dumaswesley.org/
Huntingdon College http://www.huntingdon.edu/
Inner City Mission 251.432.1122
Lay Servant Ministries http://www.awfumc.org/layservantministries
Mary Ellen’s Hearth a Nellie Burge Community http://www.nellieburge.org/
Methodist Homes Corporation http://www.methodisthomes.org/
Milk and Honey http://www.milkandhoneyoutreach.org/
Pensacola UM Community Ministries http://pumcm.org/
The Ark http://www.thearkpcb.org/
UMM http://www.awfumc.org/unitedmethodistmenumm
UMW http://www.awfumc.org/unitedmethodistwomenumm
United Methodist Children’s Home http://www.umch.net/
United Methodist Foundation foundation@alwfumf.org
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Errors are inevitable in any publication. If they are not corrected, it is probable that they will be reprinted in subsequent editions of the Conference JOURNAL.

If you found an error in last year’s Conference JOURNAL, please make a note of it using the form below(*). Said error will be reviewed.

The error is on page(s): _______ ________ ________

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After noting the correction, please email or mail to:

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(*) If needed please use a separate sheet of paper
# 2016 Annual Conference Tellers

## TEAM A

<table>
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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Mike Ramsey</td>
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The Alabama-West Florida Conference
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