the 2020 Connection
The Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Conference
Dear Ministry Partners,

The year 2020 has been, without a doubt, the most unpredictable year I have ever experienced. Your faithful giving has allowed impactful ministry to take place in creative ways. I continue to be amazed at the ministry taking place through our local churches and extension ministries across the Alabama-West Florida Conference. You are transforming our communities, the region, and the world.

A scripture that continues to bless me is found in Philippians 1:18 and 19 and says, “the message about Christ is being preached... so I rejoice. For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to deliverance.” The Apostle Paul wrote these words while in a Roman prison. He was sent there because he shared about Christ. I am deeply grateful for your gift of prayer this past year for me and for our shared ministry together.

Another giving opportunity placed before you is our 2021 Missional Budget. The strength of our United Methodist Church is shown when we come together to be in shared ministry. Your faithful giving allows so much to take place, especially here in the bounds of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. In May we announced significant budget reductions to ensure our conference ministry remains effective while giving attention to each dollar. These were hard decisions, but we are already seeing the fruit of leading in new and adaptive ways.

Our treasurer’s office will willingly explain the various connection giving line items should you or your church need details. The more each of us know and understand, the more you will appreciate what strength is found by supporting our connectional giving.

For me, it is all about winning people to Jesus, seeing the unseen, transforming lives, and a calling to change this corner of the world. Together I am looking forward to what God is going to do through our prayers, our presence, our giving, our serving, and our witness in then coming months.

David W. Graves
Resident Bishop, Alabama - West Florida Conference
The United Methodist Church

July 29, 2020
Apportionments, your church’s “fair share” support for United Methodist missions and ministries, should not be a mystery to you. Read here how you are part of a worldwide service to Christ through The Connection!

- **Not one local church has the combined resources of our United Methodist connection.** Our institutions, colleges, hospitals, seminaries, missionaries and ministers throughout the state, nation and world are efficient channels through which your missional dollars provide effective ministry.

- **Stewardship is a spiritual matter.** Through our missional giving, we give to God, trusting His servants to use our gifts wisely. The Alabama-West Florida Conference is a good steward of your offerings. You are asked to continue your good stewardship.
**Benevolence Funds**
The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* calls this the “First benevolent responsibility of the church.” (¶ 247.14)

**WORLD SERVICE**

**World Service:** This is the heart of our denomination’s ministry, underwriting Christian mission around the world. It empowers our evangelism work, stimulates church growth, and supports local church programs.

**Conference Missional Giving Fund**  

**Conference Benevolence:** Our Annual Conference supports a myriad of ministries, missions, programs and administrative tasks. These items in the Conference Budget are combined and funded based upon the approved budget. “Prior claims” items are paid first. The remaining funds are distributed based on the percentage each line is of the combined total budget. (For details on any of the following, contact your district superintendent or the Conference Resource Center). This fund for 2020 includes:

1. **Connectional Ministries/Communications**  
   
   The Connectional Ministries and Communications Staff serve the districts and local churches by providing resources and leadership to help grow more vital, fruitful, healthier congregations. Your connectional giving supports salaries, benefits and expenses for five (5) program staff and two (2) support staff. Your giving also supports general office expenses including telephone, printing, mailing, computer and miscellaneous expenses.

2. **Mission and Ministry Fund**  
   
   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 currently being supported are Dumas Wesley Community Center, Mobile Inner City Metro Ministries, Mary Ellen’s Hearth (Nellie Burge Community Center), The Ark (formerly Noah’s Ark), Alabama Rural Ministries, Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries, Milk and Honey, and Communities of Transformation. Support for these boards and agencies/ministries is reviewed annually.

3. **District Superintendent’s Fund**  
   
   Provides salary and travel expenses for our eight district superintendents.

4. **Conference Claimants Fund**  
   
   This fund provides the church’s pension contributions for full-time and part-time pastors for eligible clergy for whom the Alabama West Florida Conference is the responsible entity as approved by the annual conference. It also provides: disability coverage for full time pastors, death benefits for full-time pastors, spouses, dependent children, and retired pastors and their spouses.

5. **Health Insurance Fund**  
   
   As a self-insured conference, this fund pays the health care claims for eligible clergy for whom the Alabama West Florida Conference is the responsible entity as approved by the annual conference. This includes district superintendents, conference office staff, new church start clergy and Wesley Foundation directors. Premium reduction supplements for retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses are also funded through this fund. Clergy fully pay the premium equivalent for dependent coverage.
6. Equitable Compensation Fund $50,000
Several small or new churches cannot bear the total expense of a full-time pastor. Under certain guidelines, the Annual Conference temporarily subsidizes a portion of the minister’s salary with this fund.

7. Conference Administration Fund $566,000
This fund finances the costs of Annual Conference sessions, printing the Brochure of Reports, and Journal, and the work of the Fiscal Office. It also includes: Moving Fund for Retirees; Board of Ordained Ministry; the Depository of Archives and Historical Materials; and support of the Area Episcopal Office.

8. Congregational Development $408,879
The Congregational Development Fund supports new church development and congregational revitalization. New church pastor’s salaries are supported from this fund as well as grants to help new churches with initial ministry needs. In addition, this fund makes possible ministry consultations to existing congregations, Natural Church Development, and congregational revitalization training. Also, revitalization grants to help congregations become more vital and fruitful are available through the Congregational Development Fund.

9. Board of Pension & Health Benefits
This fund maintains conference-owned homes, including insurance and mortgage payments on homes purchased in the past, for the use of retired pastors or their surviving spouses who are in need. Occupants pay a small amount for rent and a small amount of the maintenance costs to assist this fund. This fund also finances the operation of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefit.

10. Blue Lake Operations Supplement $192,960
Use of our extensive facilities at Blue Lake Camp would be too expensive for many without this fund.


12. Huntingdon/Birmingham-Southern Colleges $558,765
This fund is divided between our two United Methodist Colleges by a mutually agreed upon formula between our Alabama-West Florida Conference and the North Alabama Conference. The North Alabama Conference has a similar fund and together these funds affirm our support for faith based liberal arts education.

13. Capital and Operating Fund (Trustees) $0
The Conference Trustees administer this fund for property and liability insurance, maintenance of the Conference Episcopal residence, providing conference office space and more.

14. Student Aid, Huntingdon $221,805
This fund provides scholarships for United Methodist students at Huntingdon College.

15. Wesley Foundations & Campus Ministry $595,539
The programs and staff salaries for our nine campus ministries depend on this fund. Campus ministry is a key to developing future leaders of our church and our society.

16. Homes for the Aging $64,450
For God’s older children who cannot afford to pay the full cost at our homes for the aging in this Conference.

17. Academy for Congregational Excellence
The Academy for Congregational Excellence is focused on developing the most effective clergy and lay leaders, knowing that effective leadership leads to vital, fruitful congregations. Some of the initial course offerings are Primary Leadership Skills, Preaching Excellence, Building an Effective Leadership Team and Missional Church.
Southeastern Jurisdictional Funds

- **Southeastern Jurisdictional Admin Fund** $27,636  
  Just as with General Conference, every four years our lay and clergy delegates attend the Southeastern Jurisdictional (SEJ) Conference. There they decide on programs, emphases, and missions for our region that are funded under this budget item and elect our Jurisdictional episcopal leaders.

General Church Funds

We join with United Methodists across the country to support these missions.

1. **Africa University Fund** $55,493  
   The UMC is growing in Africa! Africa University empowers Africans to minister in Africa with these funds. Africa University offers courses in agriculture, management, theology, and education.

2. **Black College Fund** $247,964  
   We help support the education of future African-American leaders through our 10 historically Black United Methodist related colleges and one medical school.

3. **General Administration Funds** $218,544  
   This is our share of the cost for General Conference, the quadrennial, worldwide “congress” of Methodism.

4. **Episcopal Fund** $545,045  
   This fund supports all effective bishops and the Episcopal offices, including salaries, all office and travel expenses, plus pensions of retired bishops or their surviving spouses and minor children.

5. **Interdenominational Cooperation Fund** $48,616  
   We are committed to a dialogue and cooperation with other denominations through this fund. It pays United Methodist expenses and budget supported items.

6. **Ministerial Education Fund** $621,633  
   One-fourth of this fund directly benefits ministerial students from our conference. The remainder supports both scholarships and operational expenses at United Methodist schools of theology. With the cost of postgraduate education so high, this fund is an essential help.

District Askings

Your District CORE team directs these funds

1. **District Administration Fund** $__________
2. **District Missions Fund** $__________
3. **Other District Outreach Fund** $__________
   If authorized by your district conference.
Where Your Dollar Goes In A Typical United Methodist Church

Connectional Giving enables United Methodists to do together what no church, district or annual conference could do alone.

5% AC/District/Juris Operations

86% Local Church

7% Benevolent Giving (Second Mile)

2% General Apportionments (First Mile)

All of this—and so much more—is possible because when we join The United Methodist Church, we promise faithfully to participate in its ministries through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Paying ALL of our apportionments at 100 percent, and giving faithfully to the six church-wide Special Sundays, we become a part of something big and accomplish wonderful things in Jesus’ name!

When you give through your local church or annual conference your gifts expands your church’s ministry globally.
How Your 2020 Fair Share Is Determined

Our **MISSION** is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The conference steadfastly works toward a **VISION** of thriving churches where disciple-making ministries are brought to life.

Our **PRIORITIES** -

- Growing God’s kingdom by making disciples and developing a multiplication mindset throughout the annual conference.
- Attracting and retaining exceptional talent that helps promote a culture of call for clergy and laity.
- Teaching, training, and coaching to support excellent preaching so that people encounter Jesus and live out the Great Commission.
- Being adaptive leaders through uncharted times emphasizing connectionalism and focusing on Kingdom work.

The method our Conference uses to determine your church’s fair share of missional giving is no secret!

- The overall budget for, the district, conference, jurisdiction and general church ministries, is set by the local church representatives at each level. Those budgets are “apportioned” or divided among all churches using an equitable formula. The formula, set by vote of the Annual Conference, is a ratio of current expense items and the local church membership (as reported in your 2017 Local Church Report to the Annual Conference). The formula excludes amounts paid on principle/interest for capital indebtedness, capital building and improvements, apportionments, direct billing for benefits, and all special giving, such as Advance Specials and Special Sunday offerings. **In other words, it includes only lines 41a through 47 on the Annual Report.**

- Your local church membership is then compared to the overall conference membership (129,835), and the mathematical ratio is expressed as a decimal figure. Your local church financial strength (measured by lines 41a through 47) is then compared to the total of all churches for the conference’s financial strength ($100,452,087), and the mathematical ratio is expressed as a decimal figure. The financial strength of your church is then given a weight of 75%, and membership a weight of 25%, to calculate your total apportionment. Use the following formula for your church.

1. Local Church Membership / 129,835 = Ratio of Conference membership (Membership decimal: 25%)

2. Local Church Financial Strength / $100,452,087 = Ratio of Conference financial strength (Financial decimal). Financial decimal x 3 = Local church financial strength decimal (Financial decimal: 75%)

3. Membership decimal + Financial Strength decimal = Local Church Baseline.

4. Local Church Baseline / 4 = Conference decimal.

5. Conference decimal x Approved Conference Budget Items = Local Church Fair Share of Conference Missional Giving.

Need more details?

Call the Conference Fiscal Office at 1-888-873-3127 or fiscaloffice@awfumc.org
How To Promote Our Connectional Ministry

- **Share this brochure with local church officers.** In preparation for charge conference, you may wish to fill in the blanks at the right margins with your church’s fair share of the budgeted amounts.

- **Use other materials with this brochure.** The handbooks, “Giving Beyond Ourselves, A Workbook for Pastors and Congregations” and “Sharing God’s Gifts,” are available from UMCom (1-888-862-3242). Other informational materials are available from Cokesbury (1-800-679-1789).

- **Teach and Practice Biblical Stewardship!**

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*This document is produced by the AWF Conference Fiscal Office. You may download and reprint multiple copies as needed.*