

VIII. REPORTS

A. CONFERENCE SUPPORT

1. COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The purpose of the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) is “to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference” (§ 612.1, 2016 *Discipline*). This mission statement drives the work of CFA.

CFA sees itself as a vessel for resource management of the Western North Carolina Conference. The role is to wisely discern available and potential resources that match with the vision and implementation of the conference’s ministry. It is the council’s deepest hope to ensure funds and other resources are available for the Western North Carolina Conference to achieve its mission.

CFA believes that apportionments are solid pathways to tangible connectionalism. By joining together resources, the collective bonding achieves far more than CFA could ever accomplish alone. Yet, CFA acknowledges that local congregations are engaged in vibrant ministries in their communities. CFA, therefore, strives to balance the needs of the local congregations and the needs of the annual conference.

Rather than regurgitate what your apportionment funds are realizing, CFA simply invites one to further explore and keenly discern what all the teams, committees, boards, agencies, institutions, and organizations are doing in the Book of Programs and Reports.

It almost goes without saying that CFA urges every local church to support the fair share asking’s by paying 100% of its funds apportioned. The council commends those churches in the conference who fully supported the connectional ministry of the church in 2020, sometimes at great sacrifice and in the throes of the COVID 19 Pandemic. In 2020, 81% of all congregations of the conference paid 100% of the total amount apportioned.

The Council would like to report that due to the faithfulness of the churches in 2020, funds not spent were re-directed to the following causes. \$70,000 to Campus Ministries of WNCC; \$30,000 to Camping and Retreat Ministries; \$200,000 used to supplement 2021 budget spending controls; \$250,000 set aside for grants to address COVID 19 testing and vaccination administration with at least \$125,000 targeted for churches and communities of color. As of March 31, \$84,000 has been awarded with the vast majority going to ethnic minority causes.

CFA resists a rigid pushing of the mandate for local congregations to follow the standards of *The Book of Discipline* that each congregation must pay 100% of the total monies apportioned through the district, conference, jurisdiction, and general church. CFA simply reminds clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference to interpret and promote 100% payment of apportionments. Churches and their leaders can access the WNCC web site (www.wnccumc.org/administration) and review their local congregation’s apportionment allocations, remittances, and descriptions of each of the funds. In the average congregation in our conference, based on 2020 statistical data, the total 2022 apportionment payment (District, Conference and General Church) is about 8% of the average contribution income from church members and others. Congregations retain 92% of monies given. In using the biblical language of the tithe, apportionments are less than a tithe and they do not represent the full 10% of the expenses of our congregations.

Originally CFA was to recommend a 2022 budget that was one-quarter of one percent increase over 2021. The original budget carried over the same amounts for the General Church apportionments as contained in 2021’s budget. The 2021 amounts were approximately \$1 million less than the 2017-2020 Quadrennium budget of the General Church. These numbers were given to the annual conference by the General Council of Finance and Administration in 2020 in anticipation of the 2021-2024 Quadrennium budget being adopted by the 2020 General Conference. By the time this was released to the Western North Carolina Conference in 2020, the pandemic had hit, and the General Conference was postponed. CFA did not receive any directive to alter the General Church amounts. CFA and the Annual Conference elected to keep the lower numbers for 2021. Likewise, for the 2022 proposed budget, the General Church amounts were still \$1 million less than the 2017-2020 budget.

On March 25, 2021, the Judicial Council, acting upon a request from General Council on Finance and Administration, ruled that since there was no General Conference to authorize a new budget, the 2017-2020 budget must stand. Once the General Conference can meet and pass a new budget, it is anticipated that the General Church apportionments will decrease for the ensuing years.

The United Methodist Church is a connectional church, and it is important that the conference follow *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. Therefore, the currently 2022 proposed budget uses the 2017-2020 General Church apportionments (as assigned by the GCFA), which is \$1 million more than the 2021 budget.

Additionally, the 2021 General Church apportioned amounts are impacted as well. Rather than re-apportion the churches for this required 2021 increase, CFA is asking to take the percentage collected from churches for the entire 2021 year, apply that percentage against the \$1 million increase, and pay it from conference reserves. We will not pass on the 2021 increase to the local churches.

To these ends, CFA commends to the annual conference the 2022 budget which is focused on accomplishing the vision of the Conference, with the ultimate focus of developing vital disciples and vibrant churches. At a total of \$14,815,288, the 2022 conference apportioned budget represents an increase of 7.77% over 2021. The degree to which this goal is accomplished depends upon local churches' support of the conference budget. Receipts on all funds for 2020 were \$12,964,385 or 79.68% of the total apportioned, a decrease of 5.21% over 2019 receipts. In a year of economic challenges and a global pandemic, it is extraordinary that the decrease was not larger.

The 2022 Budget does include one exception from 2021:

- Removal of the Jurisdictional Apportionment. In 2021, the decision was made by the Council on Finance and Administration of the Southeastern Jurisdiction to return a surplus of apportionment funds collected over the last eight years to the SE annual conferences. WNC will use that surplus in the years 2022, 2023 and 2024, as much as feasible, to pay the Jurisdictional apportionment.

CFA is confident that it will be able to provide for growth in the ministries of the conference. This budget represents the best efforts of the conference staff and ministry teams of the Western North Carolina Conference as a funding ministry plan to achieve the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our world.

a. Proposed 2022 Conference Funds and Financial Policies

(Petition 1a) Approved June 12, 2021

The Council on Finance and Administration proposes:

1. That each of the funds described in the section of this report headed "Conference Funds for 2022" be approved and that the traditional decimal formula be used in determining the apportionments for 2022 for each chartered church/charge for these funds. (New church starts will participate in the apportionments in a "phasing" period and churches deemed "mission churches" are excused from apportionments):

District Support Fund	Africa University Fund
Equitable Compensation Fund	Black College Fund
Conference Support Fund	Episcopal Fund
Mission and Ministry Fund	General Administration Fund
District Administration Fund	Interdenominational Coop. Fund
District Mission Engagement Fund	Ministerial Education Fund
District Benevolence Fund	World Service Fund
District Church Vitality Fund	

The decimal formula shall be based on the average of the amounts paid by each chartered church/charge during 2018, 2019, and 2020 on the following items:

Items from Table Two of the Year-end Statistical Reports

Total Conference Apportioned Funds Paid (29a and 29b)

Pastor(s) Pension Premiums (39)

Pastor(s) Health Insurance Premiums (40)

Salaries, Housing, Utilities, Travel, and Other Cash Allowances Paid to Pastor and Associate(s) (41-44)

Compensation of All Other Church Employees & Diaconal Ministers (45)

Local Church Expenses for Program (46)

Other Local Church Operating Expenses (47)

2. That the following policy be approved and observed:
At the beginning of the calendar year, the Council on Finance and Administration shall determine which portions of the Conference Support Fund and the Mission and Ministry Fund are "fixed costs" (salaries, benefits, etc.) and shall be paid at 100% of the approved budget. The District Support Fund will be funded at 100% of the approved budget. Based on prior year receipts to these funds, CFA shall then determine a percentage of the approved budget to be authorized for expenditure of the remaining items of the budget, so that expenditures shall not exceed income.
 - a. Each church is expected to support all funds at 100% of the apportioned amount. (§ 247.14 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline*)
 - b. The churches are requested to make payments thereon aggregately, with the understanding that the conference treasurer will allocate such payments according to the appropriate percentage due the fund according to the Conference Budget.
3. That an Unrestricted Fund Balance Account be maintained by the annual conference at a goal level of 30% of the current total of the Conference Funds and that any undesignated interest income plus unused balances in budget accounts be transferred to the undesignated fund balance at the end of the fiscal year.
4. That all apportioned funds, pension, and health benefits costs, both receipts and disbursements, be managed through the office of the conference treasurer and that all districts, boards, agencies, committees, and commissions use the conference treasurer as fiscal agent.

5. That the group medical insurance plan be continued and that all churches be required to participate, based on the eligibility requirements of the plan, through the payment of premiums to the office of the conference treasurer.
6. That local churches should be aware that, for apportioned funds for bishops (Episcopal Fund), district superintendents (District Support), and the Equitable Compensation Fund, the church has an obligation to observe the rule of proportional payment (§§ 622 and 639.4, 2016 Discipline), and that ¶ 639.4(c) be observed by the statistician in reporting these apportionments. The rule of proportional payment requires that each local church/charge makes payments for these apportioned funds in the same proportion as payment for the support for the clergy appointed to the charge, i.e., if a church pays their clergy monthly, then these apportioned funds are to be submitted monthly.
7. That, for 2012 and beyond, the Conference Staff Relations Committee (CSRC) set the salary and benefits (including clergy housing allowances) for district superintendents, and district and conference staff within the approved total salary budget. The salary of the District Superintendents for 2022, as recommended by CSRC, is to be set at \$115,890 for 2022.
8. That the amount of compensation designated as housing allowance for ordained staff members and district superintendents be set by an annual resolution of the conference Council on Finance and Administration after consideration of a statement of amounts to be used during the year.
9. That Conference-related travel expenses of all members of conference boards, agencies, committees, and commissions and conference and district staff will be reimbursed per the Per Diem Reimbursement Policy approved by the Annual Conference. Church-related travel by local church clergy be paid by voucher on a mileage basis at the business mileage reimbursement rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. This will be considered as a church-related business item and will not be factored into any compensation package by the Cabinet.
10. That the governing boards of:

Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.
 Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.
 Givens Estates United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.
 Crossnore School & Children's Home
 UMAR-WNC, Inc.
 The United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc.
 Methodist Youth Camp of Western NC Conference, Inc. (Camp Tekoa)
 Guilrock United Methodist Camp, Inc.
 Mount Shepherd Retreat Center
 Bennett College
 Brevard College
 Greensboro College
 High Point University
 Pfeiffer University
 Western North Carolina Conference Brotherhood/Sisterhood
 Western North Carolina Conference Historical Society
 Sanctuary Counseling Group, Charlotte
 Chrysalis Counseling Center, Greensboro
 Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries of NC, Inc.
 NETworkX
 Methodist Home for Children
 New Faith Communities Fund, Congregational Vitality Team
 Campus Ministries to include Appalachian State University, UNC-Asheville, NC A&T, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Greensboro,
 Western Carolina University, Winston-Salem Wesley Foundation, Common Ground Lees McRae College

be granted the privilege of soliciting and receiving funds from churches, individuals, and other sources (but not from conference-wide offerings except as indicated in the list which follows) in keeping with *The Book of Discipline*; no capital campaigns be approved for 2022; and that the following, and only the following, conference-wide offerings be approved for 2022:

Human Relations Day	General Conference
UMAR Sunday	Annual Conference
UMCOR Sunday	General Conference
Native American Awareness	General Conference
Mother's Day (Aldersgate, Arbor Acres, Givens)	Annual Conference
Disciple Bible Outreach	Annual Conference
Project AGAPE	Annual Conference
Peace with Justice	General Conference
Crossnore School and Children's Home Sunday	Annual Conference
World Communion	General Conference
United Methodist Student Day	General Conference

11. That clergy be reimbursed for moving expenses in the following manner, effective upon adjournment of the 2021 conference session:
 - a. IN-CONFERENCE MOVES: The conference shall pay a moving allowance, plus \$2.50 per mile, one way, on those moves which are required from one appointment to a new appointment. If an appointment requires a move from one parsonage/home into another parsonage/home, the moving allowance will be set at \$500. If the appointment does not require a move from a parsonage/home, the moving allowance will be set at \$150.
 - b. MOVES INTO THE CONFERENCE: The conference shall pay on the same basis as in item 11a above. The moving allowance will apply to the number of miles on the most direct route traveled from the conference boundary to the pastoral appointment.
 - c. MOVING AT RETIREMENT: Retiring clergy, surviving spouses of active clergy who died during the year, and clergy who go on medical leave during the year shall receive a moving allowance of \$750, plus \$2.50 per mile, from the pastoral appointment to the retirement residence or the conference boundary. A retiree who moves to a parsonage and serves a pastorate in retirement is eligible for an in-conference moving allowance upon approval of the district superintendent.
 - d. MOVES OUT OF THE CONFERENCE (moving to another conference, withdrawing from conference membership, leave of absence, or not receiving an appointment, etc.): No allowance will be paid.
 - e. SABBATICAL LEAVE: No allowance is granted when the leave begins; however, an allowance will be given when the leave is completed, and the clergy person is again available for appointment by the bishop. The amount will be consistent with items 11a and 11b above.
 - f. In many instances, the moving allowance will not cover the total expense of the move. This reimbursement is given to help with the over-the-road cost of the move. Each church/charge receiving a new pastor is strongly urged to pay any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the new pastor because of the move. The district superintendent will negotiate the request with the church/charge well in advance of moving day.
 - g. The district superintendent is asked to make a very special appeal for each church/charge to be especially sensitive to both parsonage families during this stressful time. The appeal should include assistance with meals, packing, unpacking, loading, and unloading where helpful and appropriate for the parsonage family.
 - h. Due to the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, clergy should continue to be aware of the provisions of moving reimbursements that may impact their tax situation and are urged to consult with their tax advisor.
12. That each local church makes a very special effort to undergird the meal, transportation, and lodging expenses of annual conference members attending annual conference by adding a minimum of \$100 to the church budget for each lay and clergy delegate. The district superintendents are asked to encourage such support at each charge conference.
13. That the Council on Finance and Administration be authorized to appoint a conference auditor.
14. That the president, vice-president, and secretary of the conference Council on Finance and Administration, the chairpersons of the Audit Review Committee and the Investment Committee, the conference treasurer-director of administrative services, a cabinet representative, and one lay member of the CFA constitute the executive committee of the Council on Finance and Administration. The principal duties of the Executive Committee include annual review, compensation and benefits of the conference treasurer, and review and recommendation to CFA all statements of relationship for ministries relating to the conference.
15. That conference funds are not permitted to carry over unspent funds from one conference year to another unless specifically authorized by the Council on Finance and Administration. Agencies receiving funds from sources other than apportioned funds, such as fee-based events, may carry over such unspent funds into the next year.
16. That 3:00 P.M., Wednesday, January 5, 2022, be the cutoff time by which all payments from local churches must be in the office of the conference treasurer to be applied to the 2021 year. Apportionment payments must be in the conference or the district offices by this time to receive credit.
17. In January 2022, the treasurer shall determine and communicate to CFA the total percentage collected of conference and general church apportionments from churches for the entire 2021 year. CFA will then apply that percentage to the \$1 million increase of the general church apportionments for 2021 and pay it from conference reserves.
18. That each conference board, agency, or institution receiving, or disbursing funds not managed by the conference treasurer maintain adequate financial records and prepare and submit annual audit reports to the conference treasurer and the conference Council on Finance and Administration. All treasurers should be properly bonded.
19. That the conference fiscal year begins on January 1, 2022 and ends on December 31, 2022.
20. That the conference Council on Finance and Administration be responsible for designating depositories for conference funds.

George Coates, President
Mark King, Treasurer

b. Approved Budget for 2022

(Petition 1b) Approved June 12, 2021

Western North Carolina Conference Budget 2022						
Fund Name	2020 Approved	2020 Actual Receipts	2020 Actual Expenses	2021 Approved	2022 Proposed	
Conference Funds						
District Support	\$ 2,592,405	\$ 2,193,116	\$ 2,131,699	\$ 1,890,945	\$ 1,872,120	-1.00%
District Superintendents Salaries	908,945		908,945	908,945	927,120	
Benefits and District Staff Costs	1,043,460		822,754	982,000	945,000	
District Office Operations	640,000		400,000	-	-	
Conference Support (Schedule 1)	4,089,414	3,261,578	3,123,368	4,135,400	4,186,985	1.25%
Conference Services Support	634,405		193,041	603,350	618,635	
Conference Staff Support	2,573,024		2,377,259	2,625,000	2,646,400	
Conference Administrative Support	811,985		553,068	907,050	921,950	
Equitable Compensation	150,000	122,566	117,702	125,000	125,000	0.00%
Clergy Medical Leave Benefit Supplement	425,000	365,008	299,833	-	-	0.00%
Mission and Ministry (Schedule 2)	3,005,847	2,338,830	1,804,824	2,500,000	2,550,000	2.00%
Total Conference Funds	10,262,666	8,281,098	7,477,426	8,651,345	8,734,105	0.96%
General Church Funds						
Africa University	92,468	87,021	87,021	81,362	94,322	
Black College	413,180	323,758	323,758	361,899	421,465	
Episcopal Fund	908,204	719,594	719,594	1,003,978	926,416	
General Administration	364,157	284,130	284,130	307,910	371,459	
Interdenominational Cooperation	81,009	52,225	52,225	10,825	82,633	
Jurisdictional Conference Administration	46,980	39,436	46,980	46,980	-	
Ministerial Education	1,035,822	800,781	800,781	783,110	1,056,593	
World Service Fund	3,066,798	2,376,334	2,376,334	2,500,336	3,128,295	
Total General Church Funds	6,008,618	4,683,279	4,690,823	5,096,400	6,081,183	19.32%
Grand Total of all Conference- Apportioned Funds	\$ 16,271,284	\$ 12,964,377	\$ 12,168,249	\$ 13,747,745	\$ 14,815,288	7.77%
Increase (decrease) in budget from 2020 to 2021; 2021 to 2022				(2,523,539)	1,067,543	
				-15.51%	7.77%	
District Apportioned Funds						
District Adminstry	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 685,000	\$ 685,000	0%
District Mission Engagement	532,000	428,552	423,536	409,000	409,000	0%
District Benevolence Grants	641,800	592,471	491,739	584,000	584,000	0%
District Church Vitality	678,700	529,505	508,545	564,000	564,000	0%
Total District Funds	\$ 1,852,500	\$ 1,550,528	\$ 1,423,820	\$ 2,242,000	\$ 2,242,000	0%
Grand Total of all Conference & District Apportioned Funds	\$ 18,123,784	\$ 14,514,905	\$ 13,592,069	\$ 15,989,745	\$ 17,057,288	6.68%
Schedule One						
Conference Support						
Conference Services Support:						
Cabinet Support	56,055		18,452	55,000	55,000	
Archives and History	14,350		1,167	14,350	14,635	
Resource Center	52,000		9,747	52,000	52,000	
Committees Support	15,000		2,279	10,000	10,000	
Annual Conference						
Conference Sessions	102,000		31,064	102,000	102,000	
General & Jurisdictional delegate expenses	15,000		1,767	-	15,000	
Ministers Moving Fund	130,000		94,789	120,000	120,000	
Contingency	250,000		33,775	250,000	250,000	
Total Conference Services Support	634,405		193,041	603,350	618,635	2.53%
Conference Staff Support:						
Salaries	1,759,755		1,511,317	1,760,000	1,865,625	
Related Benefits costs	813,269		865,942	865,000	780,775	
Total Conference Staff Support	2,573,024		2,377,259	2,625,000	2,646,400	0.82%

Approved Budget for 2022, Continued

Western North Carolina Conference Budget 2022	2020 Approved	2020 Actual Receipts	2020 Actual Expenses	2021 Approved	2022 Proposed	
Schedule One						
Conference Support (Continued)						
Conference Administrative Support:						
Office Operations						
Episcopal Office	8,500		8,101	85,000	85,000	
Assistant to Bishop	3,800		1,530	3,800	3,800	
Treasury Services	10,000		6,076	10,000	10,000	
Communications	96,000		17,864	96,000	91,000	
Ministerial Services/Conference Secretary	17,250		7,669	17,250	14,000	
Information Technology	312,760		247,370	315,000	318,150	
General Support						
Liability & Property Insurance	30,000		27,107	30,000	35,000	
Legal	63,125		63,125	60,000	75,000	
Audit	75,000		33,118	45,000	45,000	
Staff Travel/Education	155,500		34,911	125,000	125,000	
Episcopal Residence	4,000		29,610	20,000	20,000	
Conference Office	106,050		74,567	100,000	100,000	
Total Conference Administrative Support	881,985		553,068	907,050	921,950	1.64%
Total Fund 505 - Conference Support	\$ 4,089,414	\$ 3,261,578	\$ 3,123,368	\$ 4,135,400	\$ 4,186,985	1.25%
Schedule Two						
Conference Mission and Ministry						
Connectional Table						
Connectional Table	7,000		-	5,000	5,000	
Connectional Ministry	\$ 96,000		\$ 62,197	80,000	80,000	
Contingency	\$ -		\$ -	17,030	67,030	
Council on Camping & Retreat Ministries	100,000		74,710	83,300	83,300	
Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries	621,150		465,177	518,039	518,039	
Ordained Ministry	288,750		\$ 67,009	233,417	233,417	
Board of Laity	7,550		1,256	6,665	6,665	
Total Connectional Table	1,120,450		\$ 670,349	943,451	993,451	
Church Vitality						
New Faith Communities Ministry and Grants	731,240		626,641	608,000	608,000	
Total Church Vitality	731,240		626,641	608,000	608,000	
Mission Engagement						
Ministry and Grants	170,250		80,010	136,500	136,500	
Mission Church Grants	250,000		120,000	250,000	250,000	
Mission Response Center	59,500		22,591	21,000	21,000	
Total Mission Engagement	479,750		222,601	407,500	407,500	
Leadership Development						
Ministry and Grants	345,000		161,303	281,000	281,000	
Total Leadership Development	345,000		161,303	281,000	281,000	
Justice and Reconciliation						
Ministry and Grants	189,407		18,930	160,049	160,049	
Total Justice and Reconciliation	189,407		18,930	160,049	160,049	
Mission/Ministry Grants						
Partnership Fund with WNCC-UMC Colleges, Retirement Communities, Crossnore and UMAR	140,000		105,000	100,000	100,000	
Total Mission & Ministry Grants	140,000		105,000	100,000	100,000	
Total Mission and Ministry Fund	\$ 3,005,847	\$ 2,338,830	\$ 1,804,824	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,550,000	2.00%

2. BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS

Pension Program and Policies

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits, Inc., Western North Carolina Conference, The United Methodist Church, acting as an auxiliary to Wespath Benefits | Investments, is charged with caring for the work of providing for and contributing to the support, relief, assistance, and pensioning of clergy and their families in the Western North Carolina Conference.

In 2020, the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits acted promptly as the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted our world. First, the Board created a \$1 million Connexion Fund to assist our congregations with maintaining appointed clergy salaries and benefits. Over \$750,000 of that fund has been used across the conference on a grant making basis to local churches to support their clergy.

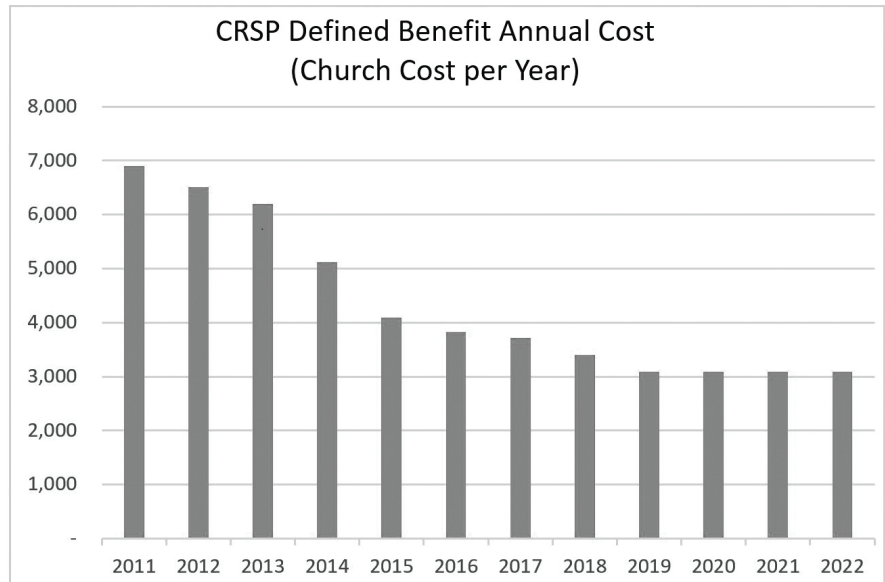
The board also implemented a three-month waiver to all local churches for the church component of pension and health benefits costs. This took place in the April-June quarter, however for those churches seeking Payroll Protection Program loans and / or for other needs, the board also granted a deferral of the waiver upon request by a local church to be used for either the third or fourth quarter in 2020.

Both actions taxed the Board’s reserves but with market conditions ending favorably for 2020, the Board’s reserves remained with a solid foundation. The Board was very pleased to be able to assist our churches during this critical time.

In 2022, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits will send invoices monthly to the churches for clergy appointed in accordance with the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) adopted by The United Methodist Church. Through December 31, 2016, CRSP covers all US United Methodist Church clergy, including elders, local pastors, and deacons, appointed within the annual conference, subject to the time designations described below with the effective date of January 1, 2014.

Since the implementation of direct billing for pension and health benefits in 2007, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits have been investing the net proceeds from these billings in various investment vehicles with our United Methodist Foundation. Over the years, these investments have provided better than projected earnings for our Conference. As a result, the Board has approved the sharing of these resources with the local church by reducing the cost of pension benefits (**without reducing any pension benefits to the pastors**) by \$2,374 per full-time pastor in 2022, invoicing \$3,093 to the local church. The actual cost invoiced to the conference for the CRSP DB full time benefit will be \$5,467. This is the tenth year of reductions in our CRSP defined benefit pension billings to each local church for each full-time pastor as shown in the table below:

2011	\$ 6,903
2012	\$ 6,504
2013	\$ 6,200
2014	\$ 5,118
2015	\$ 4,092
2016	\$ 3,824
2017	\$ 3,713
2018	\$ 3,402
2019	\$ 3,093
2020	\$ 3,093
2021	\$ 3,093
2022	\$ 3,093



The Board rejoices in the ability to share these resources with the local church so that more of their resources may be used for ministry within their communities.

As published in our report in 2013, new provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), enacted at General Conference 2012, became effective January 1, 2014, as follows:

- *Eligibility:* Full-time clergy are eligible to participate and earn benefits. Annual Conferences may elect to cover clergy who are appointed as three-quarters or one-half time. Clergy who are appointed one-quarter time are no longer eligible to earn CRSP benefits. Any benefits already earned through December 31, 2013 remain in place.
- *Benefit Formulas:* The formula for determining the defined benefit (DB) component was reduced for the multiplier from 1.25% to 1.0% to be applied to Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) per year of service beginning January 1, 2014. Additionally, for the defined contribution (DC) component, the local Church will contribute 2% of the clergy's compensation, reduced from 3% in 2013. If the clergy person contributes up to 1% of his/her plan compensation, the local Church will also contribute an additional 1% amount as a dollar-for-dollar match of the UMPIP contributions, up to 1%.
- *Surviving Spouse Benefits:* Beginning January 1, 2014, the initial dollar amount of the benefit paid to a married participant will be reduced to offset the value of spousal benefits.
- *Disabled Adult Child Benefits:* Beginning January 1, 2014, participants may designate a disabled adult child as a secondary contingent annuitant. After the participant and his or her spouse die, the disabled adult child would continue to receive DB benefits for life. The initial participant benefit would be reduced to pay for this extra benefit.

The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits, in consensus with the Cabinet of the Western North Carolina Conference, recommends that the Annual Conference approve the continuation of eligibility of those clergy who are appointed to three-quarter or half-time designations.

Based on the above, invoices will be prepared using the following criteria:

- A. Pension Plan Compensation (PPC) is the total annual compensation reported by the charge conference for 2022; included in the PPC is the housing component. The housing is either 25% of the aforementioned annual compensation, if a parsonage is provided, or the cash paid in lieu of a parsonage.
- B. Clergy Retirement Security Program – In 2022, the Core Defined Contribution Part (CRSP-DC) is 3% of PPC. Continuing from 2014 (the effective date of this change) CRSP-DC will continue to be invoiced at 3% of PPC, with 2% being an employer contribution and 1% as a matching contribution to the pastor's United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP).
- C. Clergy Retirement Security Program – Core Defined Benefit Part (CRSP-DB) is an actuarially determined normal cost provided by Wespath. For 2022, the cost is \$3,093 for each full-time clergy. For those clergy appointed $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ time (based on the eligibility approved by this session of the Annual Conference), the cost is that percentage times \$3,093. Wespath has provided that the conference actuarially determined normal cost contribution due December 31, 2022 will be \$3,940,238. Effective January 1, 2014, as approved by General Conference 2012, clergy appointed to $\frac{1}{4}$ time positions will **not** be eligible to earn benefits under the CRSP – DC plan and will not accrue benefits in the CRSP – DB plan after that date. (All previously earned benefits will remain in place.) The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits of Western North Carolina highly recommends that any local church which is served by a clergy person appointed to a $\frac{1}{4}$ time position sponsor the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) and provide an employer contribution on behalf of the clergy person under appointment.
- D. Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) is the death and disability program administered through Wespath. In 2013 and prior years, premiums of 3% of PPC have been required to be paid for full time clergy. The premium is 3% of PPC to a maximum amount of 200% of Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). General Conference 2016 approved a change that would permit Annual Conference Boards of Pension to enroll clergy appointed to $\frac{3}{4}$ time and fulltime positions in the CPP. GC 2016 also changed the minimum compensation to 25% of DAC. For the year 2022, the CPP premium will be invoiced to the churches with full-time and $\frac{3}{4}$ time clergy at the rate of 2.50% of PPC, and the remaining 0.50% will be funded from Conference Board reserves.

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) provides that the Past Service Annuity Rate (PSR) for service years prior to 1982 will increase 2% per annum. The conference board is proposing that the 2022 PSR be set at \$840.00 per service year, which represents the aforementioned 2% increase and is greater than 1% of Conference Average Compensation as provided by Wespath for the Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

Paragraph 1506.6 of *The Book of Discipline*, 2016, requires each annual conference to develop, adopt, and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan or plans for funding all of its benefit obligations. Such funding plan must be submitted to Wespath Benefits | Investments for review in order to obtain a favorable written opinion from Wespath. Under this requirement, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits has developed, adopted, and implemented such formal comprehensive funding plan upon obtaining a favorable written opinion from Wespath. By approval of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and inclusion of a summary of the Comprehensive Funding Plan, with the favorable written opinion received, this Plan is deemed to be approved by the Annual Conference of Western North Carolina.

a. Proposed Pension Programs and Policies

(Petition 2a) *Approved June 12, 2021*

The conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits proposes:

1. That the basic cost of pastor's pension be invoiced to churches in 2022 as pension responsibility to support the Clergy Retirement Security Program.
2. That costs of the Clergy Retirement Security Program – Core Defined Benefit Part (CRSP-DB) for clergy appointed on medical leave be borne by the Board. That pension cost for clergy on medical leave shall be borne by the Board and not included in the 2022 conference apportioned budget.
3. That the Past Service Annuity Rate for service years prior to 1982 be set at \$840.00 per service year, effective January 1, 2022, and that the eligibility for the Clergy Retirement Security Program be determined to include clergy appointed for full, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ time positions. That the eligibility for the Comprehensive Protection Plan be determined to include clergy appointed for full and $\frac{3}{4}$ time positions earning a minimum of 25% of the DAC in pension plan compensation (PPC).
4. That the following resolution be adopted for calendar year 2022:

Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired, Disabled, or Former Clergypersons of the Western North Carolina Conference

The Western North Carolina Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolution relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergypersons of the conference:

Whereas, *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, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, terminated, 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 Wespath, the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina Conference Superannuate Endowment Fund, and The Duke Endowment during the period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 by each active, retired, terminated, 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, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any pension, severance or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from Wespath and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath 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, a terminated 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 an active, a retired, a terminated or a disabled Clergyperson's pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: 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 resolution) 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. Retired Clergy are encouraged to consult their tax advisor concerning this resolution.

Clergy Debt Reduction Peer Program

The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits is working in partnership with the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc. (the Foundation) on a Clergy Debt Reduction Peer Program. The program is sponsored and funded by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and administered by the Foundation. The board is excited about the impact the program is having already for its participants, and about the possibilities the program will hold for improving general welfare and well-being of our clergy. As of December 31, 2020, loans outstanding for clergy debt reduction and refinancing totaled \$1,854,593.

Balances Due from Churches

Beginning in 2007, direct clergy benefit costs were invoiced to each local church. According to conference action, recorded in the 2004 journal, page 234, "Non-payment of direct clergy benefit costs (pension and health benefits) result in a default recorded against the church (see ¶639.4, *The Book of Discipline* 2016). While individual clergy will not lose benefits, the church will incur a liability to the conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The default will be reported by the conference benefits officer to the district superintendents, and the church will be led to correct this situation.

The following is the 2020 list of churches with balances greater than \$50.00 as of April 14, 2021, resulting from non-payment of direct clergy benefit costs:

District	Church	2020 Balance	District	Church	2020 Balance	
Blue Ridge	Addie's Chapel (Marion).....	\$ 2,920.51	Smoky Mtn	Wesleyanna (Sylva).....	\$ 1,421.25	
	Oak Hill (Candler).....	\$ 1,251.13	Yadkin Valley	Antioch (Rural Hall).....	\$ 1,496.79	
Catawba Valley	Grace (Kings Mountain)-closed	\$ 658.13		Cornatzer (Mocksville).....	\$ 1,088.88	
	Linville (Morganton).....	\$ 1,851.00		Doubs (Pfafftown)-closed	\$ 983.52	
	Mount Moriah (Casar)	\$ 2,191.56		Mt Pleasant (Thomasville)-closed...	\$ 5,648.58	
	Mountain Grove (Morganton).....	\$ 1,514.32		New Mount Vernon (WS)	\$ 1,812.78	
	Mundy's Chapel (Mooresboro).....	\$ 916.56		Saints Home (Winston Salem).....	\$ 833.94	
Metro	Hunter's Chapel (Cornelius).....	\$ 6,498.13		Shiloh (Germanton)	\$ 636.60	
					Total	\$ 31,723.68

Health Benefits Committee

The Health Benefits Committee serves as a sub-committee of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits (BOPHB), with responsibility in two specific areas: health benefits and group term life insurance.

The committee is composed of at least 12 members appointed by the board to quadrennial terms, as follows: three from BOPHB, one serving as chair of the committee, one being an officer of BOPHB, and one being the Cabinet representative to BOPHB; one from the conference Board of Ordained Ministry; one from the conference Council on Finance and Administration; two retired clergy persons; and five professional persons involved in the insurance industry. Typically, there are six lay members and six clergy members. The various agencies represented nominate their representatives to BOPHB for appointment.

Group Life Insurance

Wespath, through the Comprehensive Protection Plan, provides a death and disability benefit for eligible clergy, along with death benefits for members of clergy families. In addition to this coverage, the conference offers basic life insurance coverage of \$10,000 for active clergy enrolled in the conference group health plan, with premiums for this coverage collected through the invoice. Clergy members may elect to increase their coverage by enrolling in additional coverage in the amounts of \$25,000, \$50,000, \$75,000, \$100,000 or \$150,000. A new feature to the plan is critical illness and accident coverage. As an added benefit, a clergy member may elect to enroll his/her spouse and dependent children. This additional coverage is available from a group policy secured by the committee for a quarterly premium to be collected by the insuring company. The continuation of this optional benefit is dependent on normal participation of those eligible. Newly eligible clergy will receive information about this coverage from the Treasury Services Office. To obtain coverage without evidence of insurability, enrollment must be made within 30 days of eligibility.

Enrollment Deadlines for Health and Life Insurance

Responsibility rests with the individual to make application in writing for the group health insurance and the group life insurance. In addition, any changes in dependents' status must also be submitted in writing. The effective date of coverage for new applicants is July 1 following the session of annual conference. Applications must be made within 30 days of appointment at annual conference. Anyone seeking to apply following the 30-day grace period will have a 12-month waiting period for all pre-existing conditions.

Health Benefits Continuation Policy

The conference benefits plan provides for group members and eligible beneficiaries to continue coverage if they become ineligible for the plan. The policy is available from the plan administrator.

Premium Collection Policy

Payment of the medical/health insurance premiums for pastors is the responsibility of the local church (es). This premium payment is invoiced monthly. For churches with more than one pastor on the staff, the church is responsible for the payment of the insurance premium for each eligible pastor. It is the responsibility of the pastor to pay the premium costs for dependents.

The Health Benefits Committee requires the conference treasurer to notify dependent accounts which are delinquent by sixty (60) days or more that their coverage is immediately subject to termination. If full payment is not made by thirty (30) days after the delinquency, coverage will be terminated.

2020 Financial Summary of Health Benefits Plans through December 31, 2020

	Fund 575	Fund 125
	Active	Retirees
Sources of Funds		
Premiums –		
Active-Church Contributions	8,116,379	0
Active-Clergy/Dependent/Conf. Personnel	1,224,461	0
Medical Leave/Apportionments	52,323	0
Retiree Contributions	0	1,029,974
Cole Foundation	0	157,862
Other –		
Stop Loss Claims	230,033	0
Flexible Spending Account Direct Invoice	458,241	0
Drug rebates/Misc	101,685	0
Clodfelter Trust	0	0
Retiree Stabilization Fund	0	0
Total Sources	10,183,122	1,187,836
Uses of Funds		
Benefit Payments	9,974,950	1,035,758
Wellness program	44,034	0
Administrative Charges	848,828	260,996
HSA Seed Expense	12,833	0
Flexible Spending Claims	658,946	0
Life Insurance Premium	42,624	0
Operating Expenses	5,115	4,961
ACA Fees	3,867	0
Change in Claims Incurred but not received	43,321	0
Miscellaneous	0	23,556
Bad Debt Expense	0	0
Total Uses	11,634,518	1,325,271
Sources less Uses	-1,451,396	-137,435
Fund Balance, January 1	-3,458,232	1,016,176
Excess/Deficit	-1,451,396	-137,435
Fund Balance Adjustment	0	667,797
Fund Balance, December 31	\$ -4,909,628	\$ 1,546,538
<i>Retiree Stabilization Fund</i>		
Beginning Balance, January 1	\$	9,226,182
Investment Income		1,063,479
Grant Payment		0
Current Balance, December 31		<u>10,289,661</u>
Combined Total Fund Balance	\$	11,836,200

Conclusion

The board appreciates the fine spirit in which subscribers and local churches are supporting the work of the Health Benefits Committee. The board seek your continuing support as it makes every effort to provide a health benefits program that meets your needs. Members of the committee are Lori Wilson (Chairperson), Frank A. Stith III, Marvin Melton, Rey Rodriguez, J. Zachery Christy, Phillip B. Cole, Andrea Conder, Ken Poe, Rennie Salata, Dave Ogden, Mark Key, and Beverly Copley (Cabinet Representative), R. Mark King (Conference Treasurer), Dale C. Bryant (Benefits Administrator), and M. Lynne Gilbert (CBOPHB Treasurer).

b. Proposed Health Benefits Program and Policies

(Petition 2b) Approved June 12, 2021

The Health Benefits Committee proposes:

1. That the Board of Pension and Health Benefits be authorized to secure a hospital/medical insurance contract for 2022 that will be advantageous in terms of coverage, premium rates, and administrative costs.
2. That the hospital/medical insurance program be continued for all eligible persons working 30 hours or more per standard workweek.

3. That each local charge and eligible pastor be expected to participate in the conference program of hospital/medical insurance by contributing an amount equal to the pastor's coverage premium for each eligible pastor appointed to that charge and that these premium payments be remitted to the conference Treasury Services Office rather than to the pastor or other insurance carrier. The participant participation schedule should be used to calculate the eligible pastor's portion.
4. That premium cost information is made available to local churches and pastors immediately after the 2022 plan has been determined and rates established.
5. That a pastor may exclude himself/herself from coverage by signing a written waiver, releasing the conference and any local church from legal or moral responsibility for medical or accident claims.
6. That, in the discussion of salaries and benefits for 2022 and all succeeding years, local church committees on staff-parish relations consider designating a portion of compensation for dependents' health care coverage.
7. That medical/hospital coverage be provided for persons terminated from the plan for not more than a 12-month period, with the premium costs to be paid by the person terminated.
8. That continued endorsement be given to the optional life insurance program provided by a top-quality life insurance company as supplemental coverage for active clergy.
9. That the following Retired Clergy Medical Plan, which became effective on January 1, 2003, and was amended at the special session of the conference on February 2, 2008, be continued:
 - a. *Benefit Design:* The basic benefit design for all participants will be a comprehensive Medicare supplement. (complete benefit description available from the conference Treasury Services Office).
 - b. *Funding Design:*
 - (1) *Creation of the Retiree Security Supplement Fund*, which was created December 31, 2008. This Restricted Fund shall be vested with a minimum of \$5,000,000. Subsequently, additional contributions to this Fund (corpus or principal) shall be made of all free reserve available at year-end. Free reserve is defined as the fund balance in excess of the Claims Reserve required by the Plan. The Claims Reserve is 25% of the prior year's claims paid.
 - (2) The purpose of the Retiree Security Supplement Fund is to secure the retiree medical benefit by contributing 4% of the fund balance (which consists of corpus or principal and earnings from dividends, interest, and appreciation) each year to the Retired Clergy Medical Plan. The Fund's contribution will reduce the Net Estimated Claims Cost of the Retired Clergy Medical Plan to the Base Estimated Claims Cost.
 - (3) Net Estimated Claims Cost is defined as Total Estimated Claims Costs (including administration, stop-loss insurance and other operating expenses), less all contributions from other charitable trusts, foundations or individuals, such as The Cole Foundation.
 - c. *Premium Design:*
 - (1) Participants enrolled prior to January 1, 2003 will contribute the Base Estimated Claims Cost.
 - (2) Participants enrolled in the retiree plan on or after January 1, 2003, will contribute based on "years enrolled in the Active Health Benefits Plan". The contribution will be based on a percentage of the plan year's Net Estimated Claims Cost, as follows:
 - (a) 1-10 Years: 100% of the Net Estimated Claims Cost.
 - (b) Beginning in the 11th year, the contribution will decline approximately 1% per year to an amount to the Base Estimated Claims Cost.
 - (c) All of the years prior to 2003 that a clergyperson has been appointed to a local church or conference position will be considered "years enrolled in the Active Health Benefits Plan"
 - (d) Participants must be enrolled in Medicare Parts A & B to be eligible for the Retired Clergy Medical Plan.
10. That each participant electing dependent coverage be required to remit premium payments in the method established by the Health Benefits Committee and that dependent coverage remain in effect only when premium payments are current.
11. That each participating participant be required to remit premium payments in the method established by the Health Benefits Committee and approved by the 2009 Annual Conference and coverage remain in effect only when premium payments are current. The current participating participant method is a progressive scale percent of premium based on salary.
12. That sufficient funds for hospital/medical coverage be included in the appropriate 2022 apportioned funds to pay premiums for district superintendents and administrative, program, and support staff members of the conference headquarters.
13. That costs for insurance for clergy on medical leave shall be borne by the Board and not included in the 2022 conference apportioned budget.

Words of Appreciation

The board express its gratitude and that of the conference to Dale C. Bryant, benefits administrator since October 1998.

Questions dealing with pension, health insurance, or group life insurance should be directed to Mr. Bryant at 704-714-2332 or e-mail dbryant@wnccumc.org.

Sarah B. Kalish, President
Lynne Gilbert, Treasurer
R. Mark King, Conference Benefits Officer

3. COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

Policies and Guidelines for Administering the Equitable Compensation Fund (Calendar Year 2022)

1. Policies Pertaining to the Commission on Equitable Compensation:

¶¶ 342 and 625 of *The Book of Discipline* (2016), direct the Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) to recommend a minimum level of pastoral compensation for clergy serving as local church pastors under episcopal appointment and to administer the Equitable Compensation Fund (ECF) as a source of funding of last resort for pastors-in-charge to maintain a living, equitable level of compensation for these itinerant ministers.

a. Executive Committee:

During each quadrennium, at its organizational meeting, the CEC shall elect an executive committee consisting of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a secretary, and additional members from the full commission as needed, so that the executive committee consists of an equal number of clergy and laypersons. The assistant to the bishop and a cabinet representative will serve as *ex-officio* members of the executive committee.

b. Definition of Compensation:

As used by the CEC, the term "compensation" includes the annual amount designated as cash salary for service rendered, additional insurance premiums over and above the conference-approved program of individual medical insurance for clergy, accountable professional expenses, household expenses paid by the local charge, and other fringe benefits. Compensation does not include housing allowance in lieu of parsonage to the extent of actual housing, fair market value of supplied parsonages, reimbursement for parish-related travel expenses paid by the local charge to the extent of actual travel expenses or use of an automobile for parish travel purposes, funds provided for continuing education to the extent they are used for that purpose, *bona fide* gifts or honoraria for special services, allowances for moving expenses paid by the annual conference or local church, or individual medical insurance premiums in the amount of the conference-approved program of insurance for clergy.

2. Types of Grants

Two categories of support are available from the ECF: emergency sustentation grants and regular grants.

a. *Emergency sustentation* grants are available under the provisions of ¶626, which states that each church or charge has an obligation to pay in full compensation, as approved by the charge conference, to its pastor(s). If it becomes apparent that a church or charge will be unable to so provide the compensation approved by the charge conference, the church shall immediately notify the district superintendent and may request consideration for a short-term emergency grant from the Equitable Compensation Fund (cf. also ¶625).

b. *Regular grants* are available for those churches or charges which, at their annual charge conferences, determine that they will be unable to provide compensation at the minimum level set by the annual conference. In cooperation with the bishop and cabinet, the CEC offers grants, on a declining schedule, totaling no more than 30 percent of the appropriate minimum pastoral compensation for a period of three or fewer years. The following chart details the maximum equitable compensation grant available each year according to clergy status:

Full-Time	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Full Connection	\$12,978	\$9,085	\$6,359
Provisional/Associate Members	\$11,680	\$8,176	\$5,723
Course of Study Grads/M. Div.	\$10,869	\$7,608	\$5,326
Local Pastors	\$10,382	\$7,268	\$5,087
$\frac{3}{4}$ Time			
Full Connection	\$9,734	\$6,813	\$4,769
Provisional/Associate Members	\$8,760	\$6,132	\$4,293
Course of Study Grads/M. Div.	\$8,152	\$5,706	\$3,994
Local Pastors	\$7,787	\$5,451	\$3,816
$\frac{1}{2}$ Time			
Full Connection	\$6,408	\$4,486	\$3,140
Provisional/Associate Members	\$5,840	\$4,088	\$2,862

c. In 2021, 12 churches received regular grants. Two churches received emergency sustentation grants when one of the churches closed on the charge the clergy was serving. A total of \$117,702.48 was allocated in grants.

3. Definitions and Classifications of Pastors

Subject to these policies and guidelines, pastors appointed to full-time service under ¶338.1 or ¶318.1 shall have a claim on the ECF and shall not receive less than the minimum compensation specified in the current schedule (¶342).

a. *Pastors Serving Less Than Full-Time*: Subject to these policies and guidelines, elders and provisional members serving as pastors appointed to less than full-time service under the provisions of ¶338.2 shall have a claim upon the ECF in one-quarter-time increments of either $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ time as negotiated by the district superintendent at the time of the appointment, receiving not less than this percentage of the minimum compensation specified in the current schedule. Local pastors serving $\frac{3}{4}$ time shall also have a claim upon the ECF, receiving not less than this percentage of the minimum compensation specified in the current schedule.

b. *Pastors Attending School*: Subject to these policies and guidelines, a pastor appointed to a church or charge who is enrolled in good standing in a college or seminary for a minimum of nine hours per semester or equivalent in fulfillment of the

requirements for conference affiliation and who is not otherwise gainfully employed shall have a claim upon the ECF in an amount based upon the one-quarter-time increments as negotiated by the district superintendent at the time of the appointment, which shall not exceed ¾ time. In determining the compensation for a pastor attending school, grants received for education expenses shall not be considered as part of compensation. Pastors who discontinue or complete their studies and intend to be considered as serving full-time shall be compensated at that level only after certification by the CEC.

- c. *Part-Time Local Pastors and Retired Supply Pastors:* Since the ECF is designed to support those in full-time services as pastors of local churches, those charges utilizing part-time local pastors at ½ time or ¼ time as negotiated by the district superintendent at the time of the appointment and retired supply pastors shall not have a claim upon the ECF.
- d. *Pastors Engaged in Continuing Education:* Inasmuch as continuing education is required of all ordained clergy, no pastor engaged in a program of continuing education under ¶351 shall by reason of such study leave be denied the minimum compensation support as specified in the current schedule, except that in cases of educational leave in excess of one month, the supplement shall be adjusted as negotiated by the district superintendent and the CEC.
- e. *Deacons in Full Connection:* As provided in ¶331.10b, deacons in full connection serving within the local church “shall receive salary from the local church, charge, or cooperative parish not less than the minimum salary established by the equitable compensation policy of the annual conference for full-time or part-time pastors,” although these entities should be reminded that they are fully responsible for the compensation of these individuals. If the bishop and cabinet appoint a deacon in full connection to a position as pastor-in-charge of a local church or charge, that individual shall have a claim upon the ECF and shall not receive less than the minimum compensation specified in the current schedule for elders in full connection.

4. Request Procedures

Regular grants from the CEC must be requested by a formal action of the charge conference, supported by an electronic grant application through the conference grant software. Requests must be completed in full and be accompanied by all required documentation in order to be processed by the CEC. Required documentation must include but is not limited to: a written plan for decreasing reliance on equitable compensation, letters of support from the pastor, church leadership, and district superintendent. The more information the CEC has about a local church situation, the better equipped the CEC is to provide support.

For emergency sustentation grants, the district superintendent is responsible for submitting documentation to the cabinet and CEC executive committee for immediate processing, approval, and payment authorization.

5. Guidelines for Recommending Minimum Compensation

The CEC desires to recommend minimum pastoral compensation that is equitable for both churches and pastors. It is acknowledged that economic conditions vary across the annual conference. To be equitable, therefore, there must be awareness of the financial impact of these recommendations upon the local churches in order not to make pastoral support an excessive burden while providing clergy with fair, living, and equitable compensation.

In making these recommendations, the CEC refers to changes in the North Carolina Per Capita Income (NCPCI), as maintained by the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, on a two-year-lag basis (the earliest time for which data are obtainable). The NCPCI offers a true measure of the underlying economy in which congregations exist and is independent of Western NC Conference actions. Additional consideration is given to the two-year-lag Conference Average Compensation (CAC) and other measures of the health of churches and the economy as deemed necessary, segmenting the minimum compensation levels into the following categories:

- o Elders and Deacons in Full Connection;
- o Provisional/Associate Members;
- o Local Pastors who have completed the Course of Study or Masters of Divinity;
- o Local Pastors who have not completed the Course of Study.

Amy Coles, Staff Liaison

Proposal: Equitable Compensation Policies and Guidelines

(Petition 3) Approved June 12, 2021

The CEC proposes the adoption of these policies, definitions, and classifications for administering the ECF and these guidelines and schedules for recommending minimum compensation for 2022.

A. Allocation of Requested Equitable Compensation Fund Budget for 2022:

Regular Grants	\$97,000
Emergency Sustentation Grants	\$25,000
Expenses of the Commission	\$3,000
Total	\$125,000

B. Schedule of 2022 Minimum Compensation for Clergy Serving Full-Time Appointments:

Elders and Deacons in Full Connection.....	\$43,260
Provisional/Associate Members	\$38,934
Local Pastors who have completed the Course of Study/M.Div.	\$36,230
Local Pastors before completion of Course of Study	\$34,608

4. CONFERENCE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, INC.

The Board of Trustees, Western North Carolina Conference, United Methodist Church, Inc. is a charter nonprofit corporation under North Carolina law, in accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and is subject to the instructions of the annual conference and its officers. The current board of trustees held an organizational meeting on August 13, 2020 and have been meeting monthly since then.

Investments

- A. The Jesse Spencer Bell Fund, under trustee management, is invested through The United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc.
- B. Earnings during 2020 were distributed to the following designated beneficiaries:
- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Western North Carolina Conference Board of Pensions | \$4,260.20 |
| Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women | \$2,403.80 |
| Brevard College | \$5,236.00 |
| Total Distribution | \$11,900.00 |

Conference Center

Property Management

All conference property management and broker services are now handled by Wesley Community Development, a nonprofit that helps North Carolina churches develop or repurpose real estate to best meet church and community needs.

Leasing

The lease with NVR, Inc. (parent company of Ryan Homes and NVR Mortgage) for occupation of 80% of the first floor conference center building is continuing for the second of seven years. The total yearly lease payments will cover most, if not all, of the operational expenses of the conference center building.

Episcopal Residence

The Episcopal Residence Committee cares for the conference-owned Episcopal Residence, constituted according to the provisions of *The Discipline*. The trustees send a representative to this committee. Bishop and Mrs. Paul and Janet Leeland live in the Episcopal Residence located at 3416 Maryhurst Lane, Charlotte, NC 28226.

Duke Endowment Grant for the Church Legacy Initiative

Among other duties, the trustees look after discontinued and abandoned churches. The Church Legacy Initiative, with a staff of four persons, is continuing to assist local churches with discerning possible paths forward. This project has completed its fifth year of a five-year grant from the Duke Endowment, and due to excellent stewardship, will have funding for an additional year. The trustees affirm the benefits of this transition team, and gratefully thank the cabinet, The Duke Endowment, and The United Methodist Foundation for their endeavors in this area.

Discontinued Churches

Please note that ¶2548.4 of *The Book of Discipline* specifies that all deeds, records, and official and legal papers of a discontinued church shall be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the Commission of Archives and History of the Annual Conference. The central repository is currently housed at Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, NC. A list of the local churches that have been discontinued since the last annual conference can be found in the Cabinet Resolutions of the Daily Proceedings of the Annual Conference.

Heritage Cemetery Association, LLC

The Heritage Cemetery Association was established to hold, manage, and maintain certain cemeteries belonging to closed, abandoned, or discontinued churches in The Western North Carolina Conference. Funds for this association are managed by The United Methodist Foundation of Western NC, Inc., and the properties are managed by Wesley Community Development. As of December 31, 2020, the association was comprised of 14 cemetery properties.

Disaffiliated Churches

At the Special Session of General Conference in February 2019, an additional pathway for a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church was adopted. Paragraph 2553 is now effective and will be in effect through December 31, 2023.

The proviso allows a local church to leave the denomination, i.e. disaffiliate, under certain circumstances and subject to a series of agreements and required approvals of other denominational bodies along with payment of 24 months of apportionments and a pro rata share of aggregate unfunded pension obligations. Under this new provision, the main body of decision making and negotiating on behalf of the conference is the annual conference board of trustees. This is a distinct departure from the other two possible exit routes from the denomination we have discussed in the past (Paragraph 2548 permitting mergers of a local church with another denomination and Paragraph 2549 which has been used by other conferences to close a church desiring exit and sell assets back to a newly formed congregation outside of the UMC, respectively). The 2021 Annual Conference will be asked to approve the disaffiliation of 16 local churches: (AP) Calvary (Fleetwood); (AP) Green Hill (Lenoir); (AP) Olin (Olin); (AP) Snow Creek (Statesville); (AP) Zion (Todd); (BR) Mount Hebron (Forest City); (BR) Sunshine (Bostic); (CV) Hoey Memorial (Shelby); (CV) Oak Grove (Lawndale); (CV) Palm Tree (Lawndale); (NP) Mount Gilead (Sophia); (SM) Dryman's Chapel (Franklin); (UW) Mount Carmel (Monroe); (UW) Prospect (Monroe); (UW) South River (Woodleaf); (YV) Withers Chapel (Belews Creek).

Vehicle Leasing

Because of the cost effectiveness of this practice, the trustees worked again with Vann York Auto Mall in High Point, NC to secure new 36-month leases of 11 vehicles (eight Honda CRVs, two Honda HRVs, and one Honda Accord) in March 2019. These vehicles are used by the district superintendents, bishop, bishop's assistant, and director of church development.

Insurance Matters

The Book of Discipline 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.” To assist local church trustees with this requirement, GCFA guidelines for minimum insurance policies and coverage limits are available on the conference website (wnccumc.org) under Administration/Forms, Documents, and Publications and are recommended for comparison with existing local church policies.

Liability coverage for sexual misconduct has been eliminated, altered, or only provided under separate policies by many insurance companies. The trustees continue to admonish all churches to confirm that required Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures are in place, and to reevaluate all insurance programs with their insurance agents.

The board of trustees works with the conference insurance provider, Church Mutual Insurance Company, a nationally recognized and specialized provider of property and casualty insurance to churches and religious organizations, to provide a new cost-effective program for worker’s compensation of WNCC churches. WNCC congregations now have the option to participate in the Church Mutual program at a reduced rate as well as to save on the Expense Constant Fee.

Eric Lane, President

5. CONFERENCE RESOURCE CENTER

The WNCC Resource Center is proud to be a free lending library for all churches in the Western North Carolina Conference. The mission of the resource center is to provide a deep well of engaging, relevant books and media supporting the mission of the local church in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The resource center continues to purchase new, quality resources recommended by staff, clergy, and laity for use by churches and individuals for the education, leadership training and spiritual formation of children, youth and adults. As of January 2021, the resource center boasts 6,331 resources on its shelves, including books, DVDs, worship aids, vacation Bible school starter kits, stewardship campaign programs, Stephen Ministry support, and curriculum for all ages and stages of life. Additionally, congregations continue to enjoy borrowing the resource center’s two 24-foot canvas labyrinths, especially during Lent.

In collaboration with the conference Communications team, the resource center released two seasonal studies in 2020:

- *Adventus: Ancient Practices for an Advent at Home* has five sessions, one for each week of Advent plus an extra lesson for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Each session of *Adventus* follows the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*. Download the study guide at <https://www.wnccumc.org/adventus>.
- *The Passions of Jesus* has six sessions, one for each week of Lent. Each session of *The Passions of Jesus* includes a teaching video by WNCC clergy and a guide for individual reflection or group discussion. Download the videos and study materials at <https://www.wnccumc.org/passionsofjesus>.

The resource center was not immune from shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a library closure for several months in late spring and summer. During that time, virtual ministry resources were compiled at <https://www.wnccumc.org/virtual>. Although the physical library space remains temporarily closed to the public, the resource center continues to serve the conference by shipping out resources.

Pastors and lay people alike can turn to the resource center staff for help and guidance in selecting resources that fit their needs. Contact the resource center at resourcecenter@wnccumc.org or 704-535-2260 with any questions or to set up a free patron account, update contact information, or rent one of the labyrinths.

Resource center materials are managed and supported by Surpass software. The online catalog was upgraded this year and has a new web address: <https://wncc.library.site>. It is open to all for browsing, but a patron account is required to make reservations. Be sure to “like” the resource center’s Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/wnccresourcecenter>, for seasonal recommendations and to stay up-to-date on the newest resources as they are catalogued.

Havaleh Havelka, Training and Resource Specialist

6. CHURCH LEGACY INITIATIVE

The Church Legacy Initiative (CLI) is a ministry of the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, supported by a grant from The Duke Endowment. The purpose of CLI is to assist churches in assessing their current and future potential for ministry and leading them through next steps so that they may provide a legacy which will help to make disciples in this and future generations. CLI team members and the districts they serve are:

- Rev. Charlotte Brendel – Appalachian, Blue Ridge, and Smoky Mountain districts
- Rev. Renee Easter – Northern Piedmont, Yadkin Valley, and upper Uwharrie districts
- Rev. Angela Hollar – Catawba Valley, Metro, and lower Uwharrie districts

The Western North Carolina Conference has a large number of churches which have declined significantly in vitality and worship attendance during the previous decade. Congregations faced with declining membership and diminishing resources have significant challenges in fulfilling their call to develop faithful followers of Jesus within the church, as well as making new disciples and providing meaningful ministry to those outside the walls of the church. These churches struggle to sustain even the most essential work of the church, and often are focused more on survival than making disciples.

The ministry of the Church Legacy Initiative is to work with the pastor and congregants of struggling churches and provide support

as they follow a faithful path. This journey includes important conversations and commitments by churches, but they can know they will be supported by CLI personnel each step of the way.

CLI works collaboratively with district superintendents to determine the churches with whom CLI will work and to discern next steps. CLI plays an important role in the vitality efforts of the Western North Carolina Conference as churches purposefully discern the faithful path God is calling them to follow, either for intentional revitalization of their own church or to provide a legacy which will assist with the renewal of other churches and the creation of new faith communities. Through loving faithfulness in this ministry, the Church Legacy Initiative will provide the WNCN with greater opportunities to fulfill the mission of following Jesus and making disciples who will transform its communities and the world.

Lyn Sorrells, Team Leader

7. COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The Commission on Archives and History continues its work of collecting, recording, and preserving the story of the people called Methodists in The Western North Carolina Conference. Their work is a “Ministry of Memory,” so that all may continue to learn from the past and anticipate the future.

Due to the year-long pandemic conditions, the commission has met virtually via Zoom since March 2020. They continue to oversee the work of the conference archives, located in the G. A. Pfeiffer Library at Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, NC. Highlights this year include:

- Rev. James Pyatt continues as the part-time Conference Archivist. He supervises the work of an archival assistant, Sonja Clough, who works in the archives on a part-time basis.
- The archives house documents and information available to those wishing to conduct research. Research requests have held steady during 2020, indicating that people are aware of the archives and are making use of the resources.
- Working with librarians at Duke Divinity School, Rev. Pyatt had worked on the details for the digitization of some of the archival resources to make them available and searchable in electronic format. When that Duke library closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was put on hold. They anticipate moving forward with digitization as soon as possible.
- Because Pfeiffer University has been closed to most outside visitors during the pandemic, the conference archives have also been closed to the public. Research requests and other queries have been handled by phone and online only. In-person visits will resume as soon as the university re-opens on a full-time basis.

Another function of the commission is to provide a clergy grave marker upon the passing of any clergy member of the conference. During this conference year, markers were presented to 27 affected families. They anticipate continuing this service on behalf of the conference.

The commission has offered each district training opportunities for local church historians and remains ready and willing to facilitate such events in any district which wishes to host one.

They also continue to ask for assistance in identifying significant sites in the conference which can then be nominated for designation as historic sites of The United Methodist Church. One such site has been identified and the commission is petitioning the annual conference to approve recognition of The Shook-Welch-Smathers House, and the property of the former Louisa Chapel as a United Methodist Historic Site, to be known as the Louisa Chapel Historic Site:

- The Shook-Welch-Smathers House in Clyde, NC is connected with the emergence of early Methodism.
 - After settling in Haywood County, Jacob Shook designated a tract of his land to be used as a Methodist campground. In 1797, Samuel Edney was appointed to the newly formed Swannanoa Circuit. In 1798, Edney organized a “Society of Methodists” which met in Jacob Shook’s home.
 - In October of 1808, Henry Boehm came from the Holston Conference to preach at the Shook home. He preached there six times before joining Bishop Francis Asbury in Asheville where Asbury had been preaching at the Buncombe County Courthouse. Asbury recorded in his journal that Boehm had been to “Pigeon Creek” to preach to the Dutch. On November 30, 1810, Henry Boehm returned to the Shook home with Francis Asbury, McKendree, and John McGee. Asbury’s full account of that visit can be found in *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, volume 2, page 654. (Abingdon, 1958)
- In addition, in December 1835, and registered on the 15th day of May 1837, Jacob Shook donated to “trustees for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church a certain lot of land in said County including Shook Campground for that purpose” (*Haywood County Deeds*, C/526).
 - The campgrounds later became the site of Louisa Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church.
 - All documentation points to Louisa Chapel being the first organized congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in North Carolina west of Asheville. As such, it was influential in the spread of the Methodist Episcopal Church throughout this part of North Carolina.

The Commission on Archives and History continues its tradition of recognizing those churches within the conference that are celebrating significant anniversaries this year.

- Those identified as celebrating sesquicentennial anniversaries this year (at the time of this writing) include Bollinger’s Chapel (Burke County), Memorial (High Point), Pelham (Caswell County), Saint James (Lincoln County), Saint Paul (Winston-Salem), and Union Ridge (Winston-Salem).
- Churches celebrating their centennial anniversaries are Boger City (Lincoln County), Cramer Memorial (Gaston County), Green Street (Winston-Salem), Newlyn Street (Greensboro), Oakley (Asheville), Park Street (Belmont), Trinity (Thomasville), and West Jefferson.
- A more complete list of churches celebrating significant anniversaries will appear in the Conference Journal.

The Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Commission on Archives and History met virtually via Zoom in November 2020.

- Rev. Pyatt serves as chairperson, and Sandra Williamson, chairperson of the Conference Commission, serves as an at-large member.
- The SEJ Historical Society was scheduled to meet at Epworth-By-the-Sea in Georgia during the summer of 2020, but the meeting was canceled due to the pandemic.
- The General Commission on Archives and History met virtually in September 2020, with Rev. Pyatt in attendance.

God is at work in and through United Methodists in western North Carolina. This commission pledges to continue to collect the documents, preserve the materials, equip local historians, and tell the story.

Sandra Williamson, Chairperson
Charles Curtis, Vice Chairperson

a. Proposal: Naming Louisa Chapel as an Historic Site

(Petition 4) *Approved June 12, 2021*

Whereas, ¶1712.1.a of *The Book of Discipline (2016)* allows for the designation of Historic Sites by the Annual Conference, upon recommendation of the Conference Commission on Archives and History; and

Whereas, the Haywood County Historical and Genealogical Society of Haywood County, North Carolina has requested Historic Site status for the Shook-Smathers House and the property of the former Louisa Chapel United Methodist Church; and

Whereas, the Western North Carolina Conference Commission on Archives and History, in its meeting on February 2, 2021, approved the recommendation of the Shook-Smathers House and the property of the former Louisa Chapel United Methodist Church as a United Methodist Historic Site; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church approve recognition of the Shook-Smathers House and the property of the former Louisa Chapel United Methodist Church as a United Methodist Historic Site, to be known as the Louisa Chapel Historic Site.

8. COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATIONS

The primary work of the commission is to support and communicate the annual conference's mission of "Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform the World." The commission strives to do this by "Building relationships through communication, the commission will help create space for people to interact and have conversation in safe spaces. It will share the stories of how God is at work among us as United Methodists in Western North Carolina, that in turn shares the Good News of Jesus Christ."

Traditionally, the Commission on Communications provides leadership for the Western North Carolina Conference in communications, public relations, social media, and promotional awareness of the programs of the conference. The commission assists with managing the image of the conference, as well as working to provide resources for local churches. Whether in the form of training, sharing news, or crisis management, the commission exists to equip and encourage the ministry efforts of local churches, districts, and the annual conference to achieve identified goals.

The Communications Commission welcomed a new slate of lay and clergy members and is excited about the work of this new 2020-2024 quadrennium. Officers were elected as follows: Doug Peninger will serve as chairperson, Shonnie Streder as vice-chairperson, and Juston Smith as secretary. The commission split into project groups to contribute to the communications work of the conference and support the offices of Communications and Information Technology. These groups include Writing/Reporting/Photography, Website Redesign, Podcast, Local Church Communications Resources and Worship Assets. As churches and the conference return to in-person events, these groups may adjust and reflect new priorities.

Melissa McGill, Conference Director of Communications

9. COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE STAFF RELATIONS

The Conference Staff Relations Committee (CSRC) provides support for the conference office staff and the staff of the district offices. The committee met virtually on August 18, 2020 to orient new members and organize for the new quadrennium.

On January 23, 2021, the committee met remotely to approve a change in the performance review process recommended by Treasurer Mark King, Director of Administrative Services. The new process was approved and initially will be tested with conference staff and one district prior to expanding to all employees. The committee reviewed the current personnel and policy handbook and a task force was established to work on a revision and bring it back to the full committee. The CSRC is especially vested in supporting and affirming all employees during this challenging season of COVID-19. The committee is grateful for the creative ways the conference staff has continued to be in ministry – fulfilling their mission of developing and supporting vital congregations. Members of the committee wrote personal notes to each employee of the conference thanking them for their work during this season.

One new position on the conference staff is the Director of Equity and Justice Ministries. After receiving applications and interviewing candidates with a team from the conference, Bishop Leeland appointed the Rev. Dr. Bill White to begin serving as the director on April 1, 2021.

Amy Coles, the Assistant to Bishop Leeland, and Mark King continue in their responsibilities with Human Relations for the conference staff.

Nancy Miller Campbell, Chairperson

10. COMMITTEE ON THE EPISCOPACY

In his report to the Committee on Episcopacy last fall, Bishop Leeland pointed to the many areas of concern prevalent in society, in the church, and in individual lives. Among the concerns: the potential split in The United Methodist Church over issues of sexual identity and inclusion; systemic racism and racial tensions; deep political divisiveness, including the presidential election; and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic that has wreaked unbelievable levels of disease and death and threatened the economic fabric of the country and its citizens. Bishop Leeland shared a pastor's concern for United Methodist churches and people, and especially for their clergy who have been experiencing unprecedented levels of stress. Every aspect of the church's life has been affected, from the way they conduct worship to the way pastoral care is given when personal presence is not an option.

There has been help for pastors and churches. The bishop has regularly updated CDC guidelines for churches in determining the advisability of in-person gatherings and worship services. The bishop has made himself available for district online events, and superintendents ("extensions of the office of bishop") have conducted regular online meet-ups for conversation, ideas, and support. The conference provided funding for 450 Zoom accounts to provide online connectivity and \$500,000 to small membership churches for pastors' salary support. Also, in support of pastors, the conference provided pre-recorded worship services for the Sundays after Christmas and Easter to give pastors much-needed breaks.

COVID-19 has touched every aspect of people's lives and work, including the election and assignment of bishops. Bishop Leeland was scheduled to retire following the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference last July, to be effective August 31, 2020. That conference, like so many things, did not happen. The committee is most grateful that Bishop Leeland was willing to remain as the bishop for another year, lending a continuity of leadership during this trying year. Like everyone else, he has had to adapt his familiar work patterns, limiting his presence, holding all cabinet meetings virtually for over a year. But do not think that he abandoned his faithfulness to the church and its mission during this time. He has continued his diligent work in a number of areas.

During Bishop Leeland's five years in his position, the Bishop's Emerging Leadership Initiative has enriched the leadership skills of 400 clergy. Twenty-one "good" congregations have participated in Transformation Journeys toward becoming "great" congregations. Twelve new churches have been started, the last four of which are diverse congregations. The connectional table has been strengthened, meeting three to four times a year to provide improved communications within conference leadership. The quadrennial ethics training for clergy and conference lay leadership was held in 2020, addressing the theme "Cultural Humility," and many committee members participated. Working with The Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness, Bishop Leeland has hired and appointed Rev. Dr. Bill White to direct the conference's strategic efforts in diversity, equity, inclusion and advocacy as the newly approved Director of Equity and Justice Ministries. In this new position, Dr. White will be a member of the appointive cabinet, the extended cabinet, and the connectional table.

The committee is grateful for all who make up Bishop Leeland's support system, including the cabinet and extended cabinet, Executive Administrative Assistant DeEtta Rivens, Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Amy Coles, Rev. Coles' Assistant Shanta Bryan, and, of course, his wonderful life and ministry partner for over half a century, his wife Janet. She has been a shining light for us all.

What will the next year look like? What will be the lasting effects of COVID-19? What will happen regarding the future of The United Methodist Church? One thing is sure, that Bishop Leeland will be retiring August 31, 2021. The committee shall be forever grateful for his extended ministry, his integrity and humility, his commitment and devotion to Christ and the church. May Bishop and Mrs. Leeland and their family enjoy God's richest blessings as they make this transition.

The Committee on Episcopacy has continued in dialog with the Southeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy regarding the assignment of the next bishop. There are many questions unanswered at the time of this writing, regarding not only who that bishop will be, but if, for example, in acknowledging new realities, there will be sharing of a bishop with another conference, or perhaps a period with an interim bishop. One thing is certain - God is always and forever present as the church seeks to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Sandy Giles, Chairperson
Hank Dozier, Vice-Chairperson
Linda Linfors, Secretary

11. EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE COMMITTEE

The Episcopal Residence Committee is pleased to report that Bishop and Mrs. Paul Leeland have been comfortably using and enjoying the residence at 3416 Maryhurst Lane in Charlotte. The Episcopal Residence Investment Fund now stands at \$65,339.47 (as of December 31, 2020). For 2022, the amount of \$20,000 will be included in the apportioned conference budget. The committee, in consultation with Bishop and Mrs. Leeland, will continue to monitor expenses and request funding as is appropriate and necessary.

Shirley Canty, Chairperson

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12. JUST COMPENSATION TASK FORCE REPORT

Last year, Bishop Leeland commissioned the Just Compensation Task Force to evaluate salary inequality based on race, gender, and years of service and offer possible responses. The members of that task force are:

- Brandon Lazarus (Chair)- Pastor at Morning Star UMC in Canton
- Ann Aldridge- member of Equitable Compensation
- George Coates- chair of Council on Finance & Administration
- Jessica Dayson- Associate Pastor at Myers Park
- Mark King- Conference Treasurer
- Neffie “Connie” Locklear- member of Southeastern Jurisdiction Native American Ministries
- Norma Villagrana- member of the Hispanic/Latinx caucus
- Otto Harris- former interim director of justice and equity
- Polly Pearson- member of Commission on the Status and Role of Women
- Ronnie Roseboro- Justice and Reconciliation Convener African American Ministries

In our work, we have spent time listening to clergy of color’s stories. It has been difficult to hear their trauma, mistrust, and abuse. Many requested their stories be confidential in fear of retribution or further isolation. We heard stories of clergy who find when they follow a white clergy colleague, their salary has been lowered. Others have shared about relationships shifting from camaraderie to competition because a door opening for one clergy of color is viewed as one door closing for another. There are only two predominantly non-white churches who have a salary over the conference average for a full-time elder (\$70,013) and some clergy of color feel it is a competition for those two spots.

The evidence indicates that the only other way that a clergy of color can make more than average salary is through a cabinet position or cross-racial appointment, which brings challenges of their own. Clergy of color serving cross-racial appointments share traumatic experiences as members have said directly, or indirectly, that they wanted a white pastor, and they hope the next one is white. When preaching about race they are then accused of having an agenda or that they need to be more appreciative of their position in a white church. While some have shared about congregational leadership that have stood up to support them, many have experienced very little support across the board in difficult appointments.

With the added stress and difficulty of being a person of color in the Western North Carolina Conference, it seems an extra blow to see that clergy of color are also paid significantly less than their white counterparts. Among full-time clergy, clergy of color make, on average, \$13,078.20 less than their white counterparts. Women make, on average, \$6,658.20 less than their male counterparts. When accounting for years of service, full elders of color make on average \$7,976.24 less than their white counterparts and women make \$4,742.42 less than their male counterparts. The same discrepancy is apparent in appointments to large membership churches as elders of color make up 8% of elders but only 3% (3 total) of churches with an average worship attendance over 200 are pastored by clergy of color and none of them are pastors of churches with an average attendance of over 500. The same is true of women where they make up 27% of elders but only 14% (12 total) of churches with an average attendance above 200 and only 12.5% (3 total) of churches with average attendance over 500.

What follows are proposed steps that can be taken to lessen the gap between clergy of color and white clergy as well as the gap between female clergy and male clergy.

- The Task Force implores our conference, congregations, clergy, and laity to continue addressing both a culture and system of racist injustice and white privilege. We believe we must proclaim and live out a prophetic witness to not only correct systemic inequities in our nation, our state, and our communities, but also seek to change our culture in order that all God’s people can live into harmony and respect with each other.
- The Task Force will continue to compile the statistical data around salaries based on years of service, race, and gender. This report will be shared with the annual conference as well as the cabinet.
- The Task Force suggests the Commission of Equitable Compensation create a new grant in accordance with ¶625.6. These grants would offer support for clergy who have been historically undercompensated.
- The Task Force also believes that much of the work of the Comprehensive Plan of Equity led by the Director of Justice and Equity Ministries can help to lead us to a more just and equitable compensation practice across our conference.
- The Task Force plans to bring a comprehensive report to the 2022 Annual Conference that includes work that Equitable Compensation, Justice and Reconciliation, Comprehensive Plan of Equity, and the extended cabinet have already done as well as suggestions on what could change to bring us to more just compensation practices.

Solo/LEAD Pastor with 200+ Worship Attendance				
Male	74	87%		
Female	12	14%		
White	83	97%		
Black	3	3%		
Other	0	0%		
Total	86			
200-299				
	Avg Sal.	#	%	Difference
Male	\$84,983	35	88%	(\$5,132)
Female	\$90,116	5	13%	
White	\$85,718	39	98%	\$3,718
Black	\$82,000	1	3%	
300-499				
Male	\$93,951	18	82%	(\$10,130)
Female	\$104,081	4	18%	
White	\$100,459	20	91%	\$51,329
Black	\$49,130	2	9%	
500-749				
Male	\$117,774	12	86%	\$16,840
Female	\$100,934	2	14%	
White	\$115,368	14	100%	
Black			0%	
750+				
Male	\$151,988	9	90%	\$1,938
Female	\$150,050	1	10%	
White	\$151,794	10	100%	
Black			0%	

FE Salary based on Years of Service in WNCC				
Male	285	73%		
Female	108	27%		
White	360	92%		
POC	33	8%		
All	\$70,013	\$64,050	393	
0-10yrs				
	Avg Sal.	#	%	Difference
Male	\$54,388	47	68%	\$676
Female	\$53,712	22	32%	
White	\$54,524	62	93%	\$5,475
Black	\$49,049	5	7%	
All	\$54,172	69	18%	
11-20yrs				
Male	\$63,971	81	66%	\$2,420
Female	\$61,551	42	34%	
White	\$63,996	106	92%	\$11,017
Black	\$52,979	9	8%	
All	\$63,145	123	31%	
21-30yrs				
Male	\$77,212	86	70%	\$9,501
Female	\$67,711	37	30%	
White	\$75,229	115	93%	\$13,456
Black	\$61,773	8	7%	
All	\$74,354	123	31%	
31yrs+				
Male	\$88,579	71	91%	\$6,307
Female	\$82,272	7	9%	
White	\$88,091	77	99%	\$6,091
Black	\$82,000	1	1%	
All	\$88,013	78	20%	

Brandon Lazarus, Chairperson

13. NOMINATIONS REPORT: 2020-24 AD INTERIM CHANGES

Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry

Tylisha Baber
Cade Barefoot
Cindy Turner

Board of Laity

Penny Ledbetter

Board of Ordained Ministry

Beth Crissman
Joseph Kim

Church Vitality Team

Amy Hutchison, CV District Representative

Commission on Archives & History

Betty Durham

Commission on Equitable Compensation

Kyle Evensen
Brandon Lazarus

Committee on Investigation

Richard Abernethy
Carol Hunter

Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits

Lori Wilson

Conference Staff Relations Committee

Susan Roseboro

Council on Finance & Administration

Lewis Burgman
Ellis Carson
In-Yong Lee

Leadership Development Team

Shirley Canty, Vice Chair
Diron Chloe

B. CONFERENCE MISSION & MINISTRY

1. CONNECTIONAL TABLE

The Connectional Table (CT) exists to connect the ministry and resources of the annual conference to increase and strengthen the number of vital congregations and conference entities and to coordinate, promote, and encourage the development of faithful disciples and fruitful leaders across the conference, so that lives and communities are transformed by the power of God (from the *Plan of Organization and Rule of Order and Procedure of WNCC*). The CT is the governing body for the conference between annual conference gatherings.

The CT was responsive with quick action to the uncertainty brought on by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Conference Council on Finance and Administration recommended adjusted spending practices that included reductions in travel, meetings, and non-contractual expenses.

The Mission and Ministry Budget was reduced by 17% in anticipation of a decrease in giving. This reduction was reflective of budget cuts across the UM Connection.

The CT received and supported new per diem travel, lodging and meal policy from CFA Spending Task Force that will result in substantial financial savings going forward. A renewed commitment was made to continue to work collaboratively to put the needs and shared focus toward current priorities now and as they develop in 2021. Anti-racism training previously slated for the CT in 2020 will be held in 2021 when groups are allowed to meet in person.

The CT thanked leaders whose terms of service came to a close and welcomed new leadership after election during the first virtual Annual Conference. John Crane replaced Jane Wood as the Conference Lay Leader and Co-chairperson of the Connectional Table.

Stated values set by the extended cabinet and embraced by the CT continue to provide framework for mission and ministry. They are as follows:

- Laity are essential
- Resist injustice in whatever forms it presents itself
- Collaboration and cooperation across all districts and ministries
- Navigate conflict head-on following Matthew 18 for ministry transformation
- Fresh leaders lead to innovative solutions

John Crane and Caroline Wood, Co-Chairpersons

2. COUNCIL ON CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRY

The goal of the Conference Council on Camp and Retreat Ministry (CCRM) is to support, encourage, and resource the three camping ministries with four camp sites of the Western North Carolina Conference. Camp sites are Mount Shepherd in Asheboro, Camp Guilrock in Reidsville, Camp Tekoa in Hendersonville, and Tekoa Foothills in Casar, NC.

This year the CCRM has worked to help the camps weather the COVID-19 storm. The camps rose to the challenge and quickly created innovative programming to reach out to their communities to help during the pandemic. All camps offered programming for home school and virtual students as many of their communities were out of school for an extended period of time.

Despite not being able to have a traditional summer, all four camp sites offered alternative programs that brought in some revenue and blessed their communities. The CCRM is very proud of the efforts made by the camps over the past year.

This summer brings new hope as all camps are poised to have a full summer of traditional activities. The camps are making adjustments to ensure they are safe for campers with new COVID-19 protocols, but the spirit of camp remains. The CCRM looks forward to hearing of the lives transformed through camping ministries this year.

Tresca McSwain, Chairperson

a. Camp Directors' Reports

i. Camp GuilRock

Camp GuilRock centers its ministry on its mission statement "Discover Creation, Experience God, and Grow in Faith." With this as their backing, they strive to provide meaningful outdoor experiences for people in all groups. Youth groups, churches, scouts, and families are given the opportunity to enjoy their facilities and develop lasting relationships with each other and with Christ.

GuilRock United Methodist Camp, Inc. has continued to grow and reach more people throughout the surrounding community. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, they had already seen higher numbers in registration than any previous year. While the pandemic has put a limit on the families that they can host on-site, they are continuing to develop ways to be involved. They have also continued to improve the rental experience for all guests, which led to continued growth in usage of the property, prior to closing for safety reasons. They closed 2019 with another successful fundraising appeal which raised \$20,000, thanks to a generous matching gift. The director and board of directors are still optimistic that despite setbacks that have arisen due to the global pandemic, Camp GuilRock is moving in a positive direction and continues to grow its ministry in new and exciting ways.

Eric Hearn, Director
www.campguilrock.org

ii. Mount Shepherd Retreat Center

While the challenges presented in 2020 proved great for Mount Shepherd, God was greater. In 2020, the organization grew in its number of year-round staff, became debt-free, and developed new program models to adapt to the needs created by COVID-19.

Challenges

Based on the first quarter of the year, 2020 was shaping up to be the most profitable year Mount Shepherd had ever had. Utilization was at an all-time high, and summer camp registrations were up year-over-year. Things came to a halt mid-March. Due to precautions and government mandates related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mount Shepherd lost its primary capacity to generate revenue.

The board of directors made the heartbreaking decision to forego overnight programming in summer 2020, and numerous guest groups canceled their reservations for safety reasons. With the loss of overnight programs, Mount Shepherd had a diminished capacity to serve children who have the most to gain from summer camp programs.

Year-Round Staff

Thanks to the faithful generosity of the annual conference, Mount Shepherd's donor base, and the federal Paycheck Protection Program, the organization was able to maintain the salaries of its employees in spite of economic hardship. Further, Mount Shepherd was able to hire a new employee to catch up on deferred maintenance projects. Other employees took advantage of the break in action to focus on personal growth. Mount Shepherd's program director, Christina Gibbs, achieved new challenge course certifications through the ACCT.

Debt-Free

For reasons other than the coronavirus, 2020 was a landmark year for the camp. For the first time in at least a decade, and perhaps longer, Mount Shepherd paid off all indebtedness. Mount Shepherd is grateful to the annual conference for its assistance in this process. At the 2020 Annual Conference, the body approved Mount Shepherd to convey 88+ of its 543 acres to the Piedmont Land Conservancy for a perpetual conservation easement. Not only did this decision ensure the conservation of natural resources for generations to come, but also, it provided a net of close to \$177,000. These proceeds allowed the camp to pay off a line of credit graciously extended through the WNCC.

New Programs

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mount Shepherd modified its summer program and developed a new program. The summer program was modified to a 99 percent outdoor program to mitigate the risk of viral transmission. This and other programs provided opportunities for children to safely interact with peers for the first time in months. They completed the summer with no cases of COVID-19, thanks to the grace of God and the organization's strict adherence to community health recommendations.

In the fall, as schools were restricted to virtual learning, Mount Shepherd offered a Fall Camp. This program allowed children to safely interact with peers, while the staff supervised their online learning. This program provided value to families struggling to balance childcare and education with careers.

Mount Shepherd is grateful for its partners and friends in ministry. In particular, Mount Shepherd remains sincerely grateful for the Conference Council on Camps and Retreat Ministry for their tireless support. And lastly, Mount Shepherd recognizes Dr. Cheryl Freeman for her years of service as the chair of the board by endowing a scholarship fund in her name.

Josh Britton, Executive Director

www.mtshepherd.org

iii. Camp Tekoa

Camp Tekoa experienced a year like no other in their history. In April of 2020, the board of trustees made the difficult decision to not hold the traditional summer camp program for the first time since 1949. This meant the loss of the camp experience for thousands of campers and families and a \$1.275 million income loss. Tekoa worked hard at both sites to offer substitute programming and found ways to offer ministry in the midst of the pandemic.

- Tekoa launched a fund to overcome their financial losses called the Raise Your Candles High Emergency Fund. In 2020, donors gave \$195,022. The camp is deeply grateful for all those who gave sacrificially to this ministry.
- Tekoa experienced its largest year of giving in its history. Donors gave a total of \$227,420.
- Camp Tekoa offered its first Family Camp experience last summer. They had four mini-sessions and welcomed several families, including foster families who received scholarships through the James and Jerrilyn Johnson Scholarship Fund. One parent shared, "Family Camp was a breath of fresh air and normalcy... we catch ourselves still singing the silly songs and thinking about all we would like to do when we return to Camp Tekoa!"
- In the fall of 2020, Tekoa launched Tekoa Distance Learning Academy which met the needs of community children by providing a place for them to experience virtual learning while having access to high-speed internet and adult supervision. This infrastructure was made possible by a grant from the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. One parent shared, "Your program has been everything we prayed to find for him. I can't begin to express the gratitude we have for all of you and your program."
- Tekoa continued to operate the Tekoa Afterschool program throughout the pandemic. It was a blessing to many families who needed child care in this difficult season.
- Reverend John Isley was hired as the Executive Director of Tekoa. John had previously served as the Assistant Director from 2013-2020. Dave Bollen was hired as the Assistant Director.

- Tekoa will operate camp this summer with safety protocols in place. They look forward to welcoming families, staff and campers back to experience God's love in creation. They continue to extend their mission of Touching Hearts. Changing Lives. Sharing the Light of Christ.

John Isley, Executive Director
www.camptekoa.org

iv. Tekoa Foothills

In 2020, Foothills successfully pivoted from traditional residential summer camp programming to provide for families in an exhausting year of uncertainty and relentless innovation.

In the spring, private recreational facilities shut down while municipal and state parks closed their gates. Foothills quickly pushed to create a temporary facility day-use policy with COVID-safe practices to welcome guests for outdoor recreation and thus ease the tension brought about by wide-spread cabin fever.

From June to September, day passes allowed guest access to the Foothills pool, paddle boats and hiking trails. Local families especially enjoyed access to a community pool - a novelty in Casar. Over and over again they met families enjoying much needed quality time and socially distant outdoor recreation in its sacred space. This summer, Foothills welcomed over 1,300 guests to utilize the site and facility including free daily staff-led devotions, Eco-Adventures, and Family Challenges.

Outdoor recreation ministry continued into the fall with "Unplugged"- a new screen-free outdoor education program developed for virtual and home school learners, grades K-8. Unplugged received excellent parental evaluations for having fostered a respect for the natural environment and an interest among participants in ensuring its preservation.

The "Loy White Scholarship Fund" was established for Tekoa Foothills campers demonstrating a financial need while the "Shine Fund" was established to develop and expand camp and retreat opportunities at Foothills for the neurologically diverse community. Their dedication to the building up of scholarship funds was the catalyst for Tekoa, Inc. to adopt a new practice of tithing annually to their own respective site scholarship funds, and thus ensure their growth with each season.

Tekoa Foothills continues to develop and expand the facility and programs of the historic Camp Loy White property. In 2020 especially they celebrated that program, and operating income exceeded expenses for the year, paving the way for future growth and a vibrant summer camp season in 2021.

Jennifer Bingham Hampton, Director
www.tekoafoothills.org

b. Proposed Camp Boards of Directors

(Petition 5) Approved June 12, 2021

Camp GuilRock

President: Rhonda Lee
 Lori Buck
 Bobby Jones
 Doug Berlin
 Jennifer Carter

Vice President: Stan Hollis
 Mike Shelton
 Todd Freeland
 Cole Perkinson

Secretary: Lenora Graves
 Hil Peel
 Kevin Raper
 Kris Lassiter

Mount Shepherd Camp Retreat Center

Class of 2021

Carla Freemyer
 Ryan Nunn
 Paul Strahan
 Ben Morgan

Class of 2022

Nikia Domally
 Angela Kern
 Frances Pariz
 Christopher Smith

Class of 2023

Dennis Carroll*
 Ray McKinnon
 Gifford Del Grande*
 Charles Lyons*
 Michael Smith
 Kathryn Robinson*
 *2nd Term

Camp Tekoa/Tekoa Foothills

Dan Lyons, Chairperson

 Karen Kurtz
 Keys Pendleton
 Bill Porter

David Mitchell, Vice-Chairperson
 Jimmy New, Treasurer
 John Fletcher
 William Van Wieren

Candis Walker, Secretary

 Brad Cunningham
 Kimberly Jackson

3. CHURCH VITALITY TEAM

The Church Vitality Team had four major areas of focus this conference year: New Church Starts, Fresh Expressions of Church, the Transformation Journey, and Technology Support in response to the COVID-19 quarantine.

COVID-19 Response

At the beginning of the COVID-19 quarantine, the Church Vitality Team took quick action, repurposing grant funds to offer Zoom Pro accounts to conference churches so that they could continue to meet and worship electronically. As of this writing, the conference hosts 441 Zoom accounts to help churches connect electronically with their congregations. They have hosted over 28,000 meetings with 252,462 participants.

They have expanded offerings this year to include technology grants to help improve the online worship presence for conference churches. These grants will help churches plan to engage both online and in-person audiences, provide financial assistance to purchase new technology, and provide technical training for laity. This is made possible, in large part, by funding partners, the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina and the Reynolds Ministry Fund.

New Church Starts

The Western North Carolina Conference continues to create new places for new people through church planting. They have launched 14 new church start projects since 2017. The church starts and pastors that have started this conference year are:

- Lydia's Place, a campus of First UMC, Asheboro; Alexis Coleman.
- Checkpoint Church, Lincolnton; Nathan Webb.
- The Hope Church, Greensboro; Samuel Moore.
- Art Church, a campus of West UMC, Mooresville; Pastor to be determined.

Fresh Expressions:

The Church Vitality Team started this conference year with more than 250 Fresh Expressions of Church. All of these fresh expressions and dinner churches were significantly impacted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some were able to shift to online ministry, others adapted to safe outdoor gatherings (like drive-thru dinner churches and small backyard gatherings), while others simply needed to press pause. In the midst of these challenges, they witnessed incredible creativity. A craft-oriented Fresh Expression dropped craft materials off on front porches, Asheville Beer and Hymns shifted to Facebook Live, churches started outdoor house churches, a Messy Church was started under a church picnic shelter, and one church even started a Fresh Expression in Virtual Reality (VR). Trainings and cohorts were offered around Messy Church, starting Fresh Expressions, and anti-racism. With vaccine rollout and a widespread desire for community, they are ramping up for an active year launching and relaunching Fresh Expressions and dinner churches. The Church Vitality Team is thankful for the leadership of Rev. Luke Edwards, the Associate Director of Church Development, for continuing the Fresh Expressions movement during these challenging times.

Transformation Journey:

In addition to planting new faith communities, the Church Vitality Team is also helping to strengthen existing congregations with an initiative called Transformation Journey. The Transformation Journey is a three-year process of partnering with congregations to discern and live into God's future for the church. They have 20 churches engaged in the Transformation Journey process thanks to a grant from ministry partners at the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina and the Reynolds Endowment Fund. Churches that participate in the Transformation Journey will receive up to five recommendations for their church's future. More than 85 guides have been trained in this process to partner with churches to help them fulfill their recommendations. A new cohort of churches will be invited to join the Transformation Journey process this year. The Rev. Dr. Nancy Rankin is the Transformation Journey Coordinator, and she is providing excellent leadership to this ministry initiative.

While this has been a tough and challenging year for the church in general, the Church Vitality Team has enjoyed the opportunity to respond with ways to help their local churches. Strengthening existing congregations is part of their calling as a team, and they will continue to explore new ways to help the local church.

Frank Ramos, Chairperson
Dan Pezet, Director of Church Development

4. BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

The year 2020 was a challenging year for Campus Ministry across the conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This caused all campus ministries to shift the way they had been ministering to students and look to new ways of offering worship, spiritual formation, and connection. The pandemic also resulted in a decrease in the budget for 2021. Despite the challenges, all of the campus ministries continue to find ways to grow disciples and minister to their community.

The Appalachian State Wesley Foundation was blessed with students stepping up to share their gifts to lead worship through singing and playing musical instruments. Student leaders also took ownership of the creative and technical aspects of online worship and small groups.

The Wesley Foundation at East Market which serves NC A&T State University and goes by the name R.E.A.L (Reaching Every Aggie in Love) saw student leaders rise to the challenge and take ownership over their campus ministry. One of the ways the students did this was by stepping up and assisting a fellow student who had financial needs. The campus minister of this ministry serves part time at the Wesley Foundation and part time at Metropolitan UMC.

In the fall semester of 2020 the Asheville Wesley Foundation, which serves the campus of UNC Asheville, had its largest influx of new students getting involved. In spite of challenges posed by restrictions due to COVID-19, this ministry has continued to grow.

Several students from Niner United, an ecumenical ministry that serves the campus of UNC Charlotte, spearheaded the sorting, boxing, and donating of 10,000 N95 medical masks to CaroMont Health System. The masks were at the local United Methodist relief warehouse.

In the calendar year 2020, Wesley-Luther, the ecumenical ministry that serves the campus of UNC Greensboro, distributed more than 28,058.60 pounds of food to 538 student neighbors and served more than 2,500 hot meals, in addition to 386 pounds of clothing and \$16,200 in gift cards to students in need.

Common Ground, the Wesley Foundation at Lees McRae College, while maintaining social distancing, saw the attendance at its Sunday evening worship services double this year. The campus minister of the ministry serves part time at the Wesley Foundation and part time at Banner Elk UMC.

The Wesley Foundation at Western Carolina University saw about 17 new students become highly active through their small groups.

The Winston-Salem Wesley Foundation which serves Wake Forest University and Salem College celebrated an increase in freshman students who are active in their first year bible study and engagement. They were also able to hold a two hour, in-person retreat held outside under a big tent. The retreat gave students an opportunity to gather together while still safely social distancing.

In April of 2020, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry received a generous grant from the “Royce and Jane Reynolds Ministry Fund” of the “United Methodist Foundation” that provided for the WNCC Wesley Foundations technology needs, staff salaries, and programming costs. The board is grateful to the foundation for this grant and to Caroline Wood and Annalee Allen for their assistance in applying for the grant.

In 2020, the board presented the Francis Asbury Award to Dr. Dennis Carroll for service at High Point University and for the support in strengthening and promoting the church’s work in higher education ministries at the annual conference, district and local church level.

The purpose of the WNCC Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry is to empower those responsible for ministries on the campus so that students will become “disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”. Even in times of change and uncertainty in our world and denomination, Campus Ministry is still a strong and vital ministry of the conference. The board is committed to its mission and looks forward to what God has in store for the future of Campus Ministry in the conference.

John F. Howard Jr., Chairperson

a. Campus Ministry Reports

i. Appalachian Wesley Foundation

An exciting year has transpired at the Appalachian Wesley Foundation. First and foremost, the student center has undergone a major renovation. Bill Dixon of Appalachian Architecture solidified plans with the board of directors and Greene Construction, Inc. to complete the renovations. App Wesley is planning a dedication worship service for August to include those involved with the project, conference representatives and leaders, donors, and students. The service will allow all involved and many others to see the new accessible bathrooms, the lift from the first floor to the second floor, upgraded kitchen, and two new upstairs bathrooms. The project is titled “Firm Foundation,” based on 1 Corinthians 3:11, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ” (NRSV). Alan Wildes of Generis Consultants, and Kevin Ache of Ache Designs helped to guide the board in donor, student, alumni, and parent engagement for the project. App Wesley is making great strides to pay off the building loan secured through the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina by December 2022. Learn more about the project at www.appwesley.org/project.

While renovations and construction management may have been a priority during this past year, Director Juston Smith, the board, and student leaders have continued to be engaged in the campus ministry and mission of making disciples. They are grateful for the grant funding to help secure streaming services to livestream worship during the fall semester; and when moving to small in-person worship this spring semester, streaming continued. These technological upgrades allowed for more student involvement and leadership, with at least six to seven students learning how to operate robotic cameras, sound, video switching, and other necessary technology. Even though on-campus student involvement was down statistically, the virtual and online resources allowed for even more to be connected.

Looking toward a fall semester returning to some type of normal, according to the Appalachian State University chancellor, App Wesley anticipates the upgraded, modern, and accessible space to be a booming hub of worship, prayer, study space, and respite. Even through COVID-19 restrictions, students continue to help lead free meals, offer food pantry services, seek space to attend class virtually, spiritual formation and reflection through “Stations of the Cross” and prayer services, small groups for men and women, and an opportunity for an end-of-the-year beach retreat.

The board completed amendments to App Wesley’s Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation in complete alignment with the General Council on Finance and Administration, and to receive the updated Certification of Inclusion in The United Methodist Church Group Tax Exemption Ruling. These documents were approved by the board, GCFA, and North Carolina Secretary of State. They are included at the end of this section for the annual conference’s approval.

The foundation is blessed with an active board that has been a source of encouragement to Juston Smith, and most importantly, the students. The foundation is blessed with active students who take leadership seriously, and actively participate in the ministries of App Wesley. The foundation is always grateful for all alumni, parents, local churches, and friends for their support; and the foundation would be remiss if not to thank this annual conference for their support of this vital extension ministry.

This sentence may be a copy-and-paste from last year's report, but remains pertinent: the mission, the message, and the place for openness in such a vulnerable time never wavered.

Juston Smith, Director

ii. Asheville Wesley Foundation

This has been a year of challenges, complexity, and resiliency for the UNCA campus ministry. Over a year ago, Asheville Wesley was faced with the universal challenges brought by COVID-19 and the questions of how to continue ministry despite those challenges. Through creativity, diligence, and persistence, the campus ministry intertwined both virtual and in-person means to continue engaging with college students. Asheville Wesley's leadership found ways to continue to pull in new students despite most classes being online. These challenges pushed Asheville Wesley to grow in new ways, and that persistence continues to reveal abundant and joyful fruit. Despite headwinds from the pandemic, conference budget cuts, and uncertainty within the denomination, Asheville Wesley continues to be known as a campus ministry that is seeking to be an authentic community that is accepting, affirming, and open to all God's children. With that being stated, the foundation would like to thank both its old and new friends for their support of the campus ministry. Thank you for continuing to help make Asheville Wesley a place where any student can be known, seen, and loved as individuals of sacred worth.

Jeff McCumber, Director

iii. Common Ground at Lees-McRae College

The year 2020 was a challenging year for Common Ground. As COVID-19 became front and center, Lees McRae College moved everyone off-campus early and ended the school year with all classes online. The Common Ground leadership sought creative ways to stay connected with students. Thanks to a grant from the Western North Carolina Conference, Common Ground secured a Pro Zoom account. It utilized the online platform to host virtual dinners and online scavenger hunts throughout the summer months and student-led Bible studies. The 2020-2021 school year began with a great deal of trepidation as the thoughts to begin in-person classes one week later than the original start date became a reality.

Thanks to strict campus safety protocols, the college remained open with a hybrid teaching platform through the end of the year. Following the prescribed safety protocols, the Thursday gatherings of Common Ground and Sunday Worship services on campus were able to continue with an in-person format. This year's attendance has been greater than any year in the past, and Common Ground Board believes the increased attendance reasons are twofold.

Overall, students could not have the social interaction typical in a college setting due to COVID-19 protocols. As such, having the ability to gather outdoors at Common Ground and indoors for Sunday worship provided much sought-after social engagement. Secondly, with Campus Minister the Rev. Ted Henry, also serving in extension ministry as the Lees-McRae chaplain, greater exposure to the program was possible.

Chairperson Susan Staton stated she is looking forward to the opportunities of closer community and the profound spiritual growth God will provide as this Wesley Foundation continues to build strong relationships with the college.

Theodore A. Henry, Campus Minister

iv. Niner United at UNC Charlotte

Niner United is the United Methodist campus ministry that works ecumenically with the Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), and Presbyterian (USA) denominations at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Carolinas' fastest-growing university. With over 30,000 students, UNC Charlotte is a critical population to reach and serve. Niner United offers an incredibly comprehensive and dynamic ministry program and presence. A three-person staff, along with a team of 20 student leaders, plan and oversee ministry activities such as worship, Christian formation, outreach and service, and music ministry. They also offer an intensive curriculum in vocational discernment known as the Faith and Leadership Experience funded by the Lilly Endowment, the Young Clergy Initiative, and other organizations and foundations.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Niner United has continued to grow and offer life-changing experiences, especially to students. All in-person events, including three weekly worship services, were held outside and followed CDC and NC COVID meeting guidelines. They also provided virtual programming through WebEx, Zoom, YouTube, and IGTV, and connected with students via email, text, Instagram, and GroupMe. This year, Niner United reached 7,056 students, including 2,760 students in the Class of 2024.

Steve Cheyney, Campus Pastor

v. Wesley Foundation at East Market

Wesley Foundation at East Market (WFEM) is the Wesley Foundation to North Carolina A&T State University. The past year for WFEM has been a unique year because of COVID-19, in which they were unable to have in-person events, but they were able to help many students with emergency resources during this time. WFEM continued their partnership with the Good Neighbor Movement by assisting them with the Harbor City Village. WFEM is continuing its relationship with Metropolitan (Greensboro) and developing more relationships with the faculty and staff of NC A&T State University. They have connected with A&T students to offer a couple of outside events, as well as virtual opportunities for connecting to the ministry.

WFEM is developing a new extensive worship leader/musician program to help with training the next generation of worship leaders for local United Methodist churches that they are hoping to start the Fall of 2021, since A&T is scheduled to have in-person events. Additionally, they are looking at a future collaboration with another denomination for a possible ecumenical campus ministry position. Primarily, this has been a year of transitioning, and it is hoped the Fall of 2021 will begin a year of launching.

Diron Chloe, Director

vi. Wesley-Luther at UNC Greensboro

While the first two months of 2020 felt very normal to campus ministry, with weekly meals, Bible studies, worship and service activities much like 2019, the spread of COVID-19 caused a dramatic shift in the nature of UNC Greensboro's ministry in March. UNC Greensboro began to close in-person operations immediately after spring break, with all students who had a safe option returning home. Wesley-Luther assisted with the logistics by distributing about 2,000 moving boxes provided by donors, U-Haul, and the Western North Carolina Conference (WNCC). As this transition began, Wesley-Luther shifted their efforts to prepare to assist with providing food for off-campus students and students who had to remain on campus for their safety. Within a week, the output of the pantry tripled and remained at that level through the summer and fall semesters of 2020. As increasing numbers of students lost jobs or parental financial support, new students constantly needed assistance from the pantry. Commercial refrigeration and additional freezer space were added to allow for an increase in fresh foods, and the fellowship hall at College Place UMC was converted to allow for social distancing and other safety measures. During 2020, the campus ministries pantry distributed 34,845 lbs. of food, 641 lbs. of clothing, 3,017 hot to-go meals, and \$19,425 of other emergency food support. The pantry also expanded to provide basic house wares and cooking items students required but could not afford. None of that would have been possible without the outpouring of support from the WNCC, North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, local churches, the UNC Greensboro community, and other Greensboro community members.

While attempting to meet the basic needs of struggling students, programming needed to transition to online as all on-campus student group activities were prohibited on campus for the remaining months of 2020. Sunday night worship immediately transitioned to online, while Bible study, a weekly game night, and a new prayer group were offered via ZOOM. Creative and dedicated student leaders found new ways to create community online to support each other, study and reflect on scripture, and show the love of Christ to their fellow Spartans.

Since their creation as a Wesley Foundation in 1930, they have strived to love, serve, and provide a Christ-centered community for students and staff at UNC Greensboro. As 2021 continues, campus operations are still altered, and food pantry usage continues to break records. Wesley-Luther is proud to serve UNC Greensboro students on behalf of the WNCC, and create disciples of Christ for the transformation of their community and world.

Andrew Mails, Director

vii. Wesley Foundation at Western Carolina University

The Wesley Foundation at Western Carolina University is grateful for all of the support it received from the Western North Carolina Conference, the Smoky Mountain District, local churches, its board of directors, and all their friends and alumni. This academic year the ministry helped college students connect with each other and the world around them in many creative and new ways. Students spent time with each other daily at the ministry and at Cullowhee United Methodist church. They participated in thousands of hours of service work over the year, including splitting and delivering over 100 loads of firewood to local residents, and delivering meals weekly via the Department on Aging Meals on Wheels program. New for students this year was a 10-week cooking class, helping at the local food pantry, and roadside litter removal with a local veterans group. Unfortunately, students were not able to hold the 12th annual Wesley Foundation Haunted House in October 2020.

Each week during the school year the student worship team and Wesley staff plan and hold worship for college students. This year worship has been a combination of virtual and limited in-person worship. Wesley staff helped college students learn how to plan and give a sermon almost every week of the school year. They are hoping to be able to begin to provide opportunities again in the fall worship, fellowship, and study with Cullowhee UMC members.

Two years ago, Wesley staff started planning their next trip for the Holy Land in December 2020. It was postponed until December 2021. As is always the case with constant turnover, the staff plan to maintain focus on in-depth student leader development, board development and student involvement, increased intentional student outreach, and student worship leadership training. All of this would not be possible without the generous grant from the WNCC, the Smoky Mountain District, friends and alumni of the Wesley Foundation, and their own fundraising efforts.

Jay Hinton, Director

viii. Winston-Salem Wesley Foundation

Despite a year of following COVID-19 protocols for the different institutions included in Winston-Salem Wesley, students are still alive for Jesus Christ and as active as they can be. While Salem College opted to have completely virtual classes for the entire 2020-2021 academic year, UNC School of the Arts and Wake Forest University were in-person with a strong mixture of virtual and in the classroom classes. Zoom weariness is definitely a "thing," but the Wesley officers have gamely met each week of this academic year through Zoom meetings; students worked to produce the large group virtually (piecing together student introductions and closings, the worship team's music, and the campus minister's message) each week. Students also kept leading the first-year and older classes' Bible studies. Although much harder because of limited access to the Wesley office on the campus of Wake Forest University, the campus minister has kept up his mentoring appointments with students as well. The Spring 2021 semester has been marked by more in-person meetings; worship services are in-person for the rest of the semester. It is fully expected that all three campuses will meet in person for the next academic year.

The current campus minister, Larry Jones, is retiring from active service (and thus this position) as of August 1.

As always, the Winston-Salem Wesley Foundation would like to thank the churches of the conference for their continuing support of campus ministry in the WNCC. For the Winston-Salem Wesley Foundation, the financial support received through the conference provides over 60 percent of the income needed to continue this ministry. Continued prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.

Larry Jones, Campus Minister and Director

b. Proposed Campus Ministry Boards

(Petition 6) *Approved June 12, 2021*

Appalachian Wesley Foundation

Class of 2022: John Cope (West Jefferson UMC), Marshall Boyer (West Jefferson UMC), Katherine Christie (FaithBridge UMC, alumna)

Class of 2023: Wes Austin (Deerfield UMC, pastor), Dodie Glowa (Boone UMC), Fred Fonville (Boone UMC)

Class of 2024: Rachael Gossett (alumna), Aaron Prillaman (alumnus), Ben Caviness (alumnus)

Student Members: Garrett Hoyt, Zach Green, Katie Stevens

Pastor of Local United Methodist Church: Tracy Love (Mount Hermon UMC, Cedar Valley UMC, pastor)

Ex officio: Lory Beth Huffman (Appalachian District Superintendent), Kyle Sigmon (FaithBridge associate pastor)

Campus Minister: Juston Smith

Asheville Wesley Foundation

Class of 2021: Spencer Daniel (Student Intern) Charlie Smith, (Student Intern) Maggie Pasour, (Student Intern)

Class of 2022: John McCullough (Treasurer)

Class of 2023: Ashley Crowder Stanley, (Chairperson), John Smith, Lindsay Rosson

Ex officio: Mark Ralls (Blue Ridge District Superintendent)

Campus Minister: Jeff McCumber

Common Ground at Lees-McRae College

Susan Staton (Chairperson), Rebecca Bolick (Secretary), Jana Greer, Vicki Lott, Jim Hart (Chaplain), Neil Hartley, Michelle Scott, Gina Phenneger (Finance Treasurer)

Campus Minister: Ted Henry

Niner United at UNC Charlotte

Ian Binns, Anne Brown, Jesse Caldwell, Olanda Carr, Sandra Cline, Beth Hardin, Mike Hoffman, Lyn Holt, Sonya MacAuley-Allen, Trey O'Quinn (Chairperson), John Richards, Taylor Simmons, Ethan Smith, Beth Whitaker

Ex officio: Cailee Franklin, Ben Rogers, Stephen Cheyney (Campus Pastor)

Wesley Foundation at East Market (North Carolina A&T State University)

William Waddell (Chair), John Henry (Secretary), Dottie Troxler (Treasurer), Lauren Cunningham, Brandon Wrencher, Drew McIntyre

A&T Graduate Members: Jaala Harrison, Jovan Lawless

Ex Officio: Beverly Copley (Northern Piedmont District Superintendent)

Director of the Campus Ministries: Diron Chloe (Campus Minister)

Wesley Luther at UNC Greensboro

Jessica Gregory (College Place UMC), James Esterline (Centenary UMC), Jill Alventosa-Brown (West Market UMC, Council on Campus Ministry), Tom Herin (Retired), Jay Hilbinger (First Lutheran Church), Don McCrickard (Christ UMC), Carolyn Miller (Trinity Lutheran Church), Catherine Sevier (West Market UMC), William Parish (St. Timothy UMC, Director Elliott University Center), Paul Freeman (Mt. Pleasant UMC) Mark Smith (Hinshaw UMC)

Students: Kellie Thomas, Beth Hall

Ex Officio: Beverly Copley (Northern Piedmont District Superintendent), Andrew Mails (Director of the Wesley-Luther Campus Ministries), Emily Saine (Associate Director of Wesley-Luther Campus Ministries)

Wesley Foundation at Western Carolina University

Class of 2021: Ryan Pless, Sarah Speed (Secretary), Eric Sink, Callie Moore

Class of 2022: Liz Davis, (Chair) Jay Ruebel (Vice Chair)

Class of 2023: Mike Poston (Financial Secretary), Nathan Borchelt, Sam McCarson

Students: Savannah White, Adam Mottershead, Zack Georgopoulos, Reagan Tomlinson

Ex-Officio: Jae Lee (Smoky Mountain District Superintendent), David Reeves (Senior Pastor at Cullowhee UMC), Jay Hinton (Director of the Wesley Foundation at WCU), Hannah Van Hooser (Associate Director), Scarlette Pless (Associate Director), Rachel Gibby, (Ministry Intern)

Winston-Salem Wesley Foundation

Roger Echols (Chairperson), Christy Buchanan, Elinor Starling, Steve Felts, Jonathan Philpot, Nicklaus Ashburn, Ryan Angi, Zechariah Kearns, Lamar Parker, Sara Miller, Josh Walls, Meredith Menius, Annamae Giles

Ex Officio: Sam Moore (Yadkin Valley District Superintendent), Larry Jones (Director of the Campus Ministries)

c. Proposed Appalachian Wesley Foundation By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation

(Petition 7) Approved June 12, 2021

The following items have been approved by the Appalachian Wesley Foundation Board, the General Council on Finance and Administration, and the North Carolina Secretary of State; for more information, see the report on page 44.

By-Laws of THE APPALACHIAN WESLEY FOUNDATION, INC.

ARTICLE I – NAME

This institution shall be called the Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the Appalachian Wesley Foundation shall be to establish and maintain a United Methodist ministry to the total campus community. The Appalachian Wesley Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable and religious purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding secant section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE III – MISSION

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world through campus ministry.

ARTICLE IV – THE PROCESS FOR CARRYING OUT OUR MISSION

We make disciples as we:

- proclaim the Gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the Body of Christ.
- lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ;
- nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace;
- send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the Gospel; and
- continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the community of the Body of Christ

ARTICLE V – AUTHORITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Section 1. Authority.

By definition of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, a Wesley Foundation is the organized educational ministry through which the United Methodist Church makes a unified approach to the tax-supported or independent college or university. These By-Laws shall take precedence over all constitutions, by-laws, policies, and/or regulations adopted by any group working in, or related to, or associated with the Appalachian Wesley Foundation subject only to prior authority vested in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, and subject in regard to employed personnel, who may be effective ministerial members of an annual conference, to prior obligations inherent in the Methodist appointive system.

Section 2. Relationships.

a. To the United Methodist Church.

The Appalachian Wesley Foundation is related to the total United Methodist Church through the Council on Campus Ministry of the Western North Carolina Conference.

b. To the Western North Carolina Conference.

In furtherance of its exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, the organization is organized and operated exclusively for the benefit of, to perform the functions of, or to carry out the purposes of the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

b.c. To the local churches.

It is related to United Methodist churches in its vicinity through the Board of Directors.

c.d. To the university.

It is related to the University as a recognized religious club and through the club's faculty advisor.

Section 3. Prohibitions and Limitations Clause.

a. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the exempt purposes of the organization. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision herein, this organization shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes of this organization.

ARTICLE VI – LOCATION, PROPERTY AND RECORDS

Section 1. Location and Offices.

The Appalachian Wesley Foundation is housed at 461 Howard Street, Boone, North Carolina 28607. The principal office of the corporation in the State of North Carolina shall be located in the city of Boone, County of Watauga. The corporation shall have and continuously maintain in the State of North Carolina a registered office, and a registered agent whose office is identical with such registered office and may be, but need not be, identical with the principal office in the State of North Carolina, and the address may be changed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Property Arrangements.

This property is held by the Board of Directors of Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc. in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina and The United Methodist Church. If for any reason the corporation shall be abandoned, discontinued or cease to exist as a legal entity and its charter shall expire or be terminated, title to all its property, both real and personal, shall be vested in and be the property of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, pursuant to the Discipline of the United Methodist Church.

a. Dissolution Clause.

Upon the dissolution of the organization, all assets of the organization remaining after all liabilities and obligations of the organization have been paid, satisfied and discharged, will be transferred, conveyed, and distributed to the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

If on the date of such proposed distribution, the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church is no longer in existence or does not qualify for exempt status under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, the assets of the organization shall be transferred, conveyed, and distributed to the United Methodist entity (the "Successor Organization") entitled under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, or by other General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, Annual Conference, or District action, to receive the assets of the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church upon its dissolution.

If pursuant to the preceding paragraphs, the organization's assets are to be distributed to the Successor Organization, but on the date of the proposed distribution, the Successor Organization is no longer in existence or does not qualify for exempt status under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, the assets of the organization shall be transferred, conveyed, and distributed to such other United Methodist related organization(s) as may be specified in, or provided for, under a Plan of Distribution adopted by this organization; provided, however, that in any event, each such distributee organization shall be exempt under the provisions of §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Section 3. Books and Records.

The corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its members, Board of Directors, and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors, and shall keep at the registered or principal office a record giving the names and addresses of the members entitled to vote. All books and records of the corporation may be inspected by any board member or member's agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERS

The corporation shall have no members.

ARTICLE VIII - WESLEY FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORSSection 1. General Powers.

The affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors. Directors need not be residents of the State of North Carolina.

Section 2. Area of Responsibility.

The Wesley Foundation Board of Directors shall be responsible for the direction and administration of the Foundation in accordance with policies and standards established by the WNCC Council on Campus Ministry, as provided by *The Book of Discipline*. It shall initiate planning, receive reports, recommend objectives and goals, recommend policy, and recommend programs. It shall evaluate the existing Campus Ministry programs and make recommendations to the Western North Carolina Annual Conference and/or the Council on Higher Education Ministries. It shall make recommendation regarding employment (appointment of), evaluation, and financial support of Campus Minister(s) and other staff. It shall have the authority to purchase and/or sale of all real property at the disposal of the Campus Ministry program in accordance to Article VI section 2 of these by-laws. It shall, after studying needs and planning needed ministries, recommend, adopt, and/or amend an annual budget with amount of support requested from the Annual Conference. It shall review and oversee the administration of finances of the Campus Ministry including the provision for an annual financial review to be submitted to the appropriate entity within the Annual Conference. It shall nominate to the Annual Conference persons for election as members of the Board as provided for in these by-laws. It shall provide annually for the election of officers and standing committees of the Board as specified in these by-laws. It shall receive annually a report from the Campus Minister and shall forward this report to the Council on Higher Education Ministries.

Section 3. Board Member Expectations:

In order for our Board to effectively operate with continuity and consistency as we support the purpose of the Appalachian Wesley Foundation and enable it to carry out its mission, we, as members of the Board, will uphold these five expectations as a part of a shared covenant:

PRESENCE: Faithfully attend all Board meetings, which is normally six meetings a board term year. Two absences from Board meetings in a given board term year is assumed to be your notice of resignation.

PREPARATION: Be informed about the Board's mission, vision, strategic plan, responsibilities and policies.

Review previous Board meeting minutes and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings.

GIFTS: Each Board member will support our mission and ministry by making a personal financial contribution each year. Board members are encouraged to make a monthly pledge that is prayerful, faithful, and sacrificial.

SERVICE: Each member will offer any unique gifts, abilities, skills, and/or expertise on behalf of our campus ministry, as appropriate. Each member will also actively serve on at least one Standing Committee and make at least one visit to a campus ministry event or program each semester.

ADVOCACY: Be familiar with all the ministries of the Appalachian Wesley Foundation and inform others about the work of our campus ministry, especially within our local churches. Actively connect students from your local church, district, and other relational networks to our campus ministry.

Section 4. Membership.

The membership of the Board of Directors shall consist of the following:

- a. The District Superintendent of the Appalachian District.
- b. The Campus Minister / Executive Director.
- c. One Pastor of a local United Methodist church.
- d. Three student members who have been active at the Wesley Foundation for at least one year. One of those students will be the Servant Ministry Leader of the Servant Leadership Team
- e. At least six, but no more than nine non-student members who are active laypersons from area United Methodist churches. One of these laypersons should be a Wesley alumni.
- f. One or two university faculty/staff representatives.

Section 5. Election, Classes, Terms and Vacancies.

- a. Election

All incoming board members must be approved by majority vote of the Board and by official action of the Western North Carolina Conference or the WNCC Council on Campus Ministry. **At all times, at least sixty percent (60%) of the members of the organization's Board of Directors must be elected by the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, an organization required to act in accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.***
- b. Non-Student Member Classes

The non-student elected members of the Board shall be set up in appropriate classes so that one-third of the terms expires each year, each having a term of three years. Elected members may succeed themselves, but shall not serve more than six years in any seven year period. The District Superintendent and the Campus Minister / Executive Director will serve on the board continuously due to their positions, and will not rotate off or be put in a class.
- c. Student Member Classes

The student elected members of the Board shall serve for one year terms and may serve up to three terms.
- d. Beginning of Term

Terms for Board members and officers shall begin July 1.
- e. Vacancies

Any vacancy in membership or office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the Board of the unexpired portion of the term from the members of the Board.

Section 6. Board Officers and The Executive Committee.

- a. Officers and Responsibilities

The officers of the corporation shall be a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, (or two Co-Chairpersons), a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of this Article. All officers of the Board shall be elected annually by the Board upon nomination by the Committee on Connections.

 - (1) Chairperson

The Chairperson shall serve as chairperson of the Board of Directors and preside at all meetings at which he or she is present. The Chairperson shall also coauthor Board agendas with the Campus Minister, appoint and assist committees, appoint a search committee for a new Campus Minister, maintain organizational integrity, forge a link between the campus ministry's constituents and the Board, and support the Campus Minister. The Chairperson may sign, with the Secretary or any other proper officer or the corporation authorized by the Board of Directors, any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Directors or by these by-laws to some to the officer of agent of the corporation.
 - (2) Vice-Chairperson

In the absence of or in the event of the Chairperson's inability or refusal to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson and when so acting, shall have all the powers of the parliamentarian for the Board of Directors.
 - (3) Treasurer

The Treasurer shall give general financial oversight to the corporation and work with the staff person in charge of the daily finances. The Treasurer shall also maintain financial integrity, coauthor Board financial reports with the staff, ensure that incoming revenues and outgoing payments are handled and recorded appropriately, and insure a regular annual audit or financial review is conducted by an independent external party. The Treasurer shall serve as the chair of the Finance Committee.
 - (4) Secretary

The Secretary shall ensure that all Board related documents, including all Board meeting minutes, are accurate and prepared in a timely manner according to the provisions of these bylaws.
- b. Executive Committee.

The officers of the board and the Campus Minister shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have all the authority of the Board of Directors and may exercise the powers of the Board during periods between the meetings of the Board with the following exceptions:

 - (1) It cannot approve the dissolution, merger, or consolidation of the corporation;
 - (2) It cannot fill vacancies on the Board;
 - (3) It cannot amend or repeal these by-laws;
 - (4) It cannot sell and/or purchase any real property;
 - (5) It cannot make any changes to compensation of staff.
 - (6) It cannot make any changes to our annual budget.

The Executive Committee shall also handle any business that may have been delegated to it by the Board.

Section 7. Meetings.

- a. Frequency.

The Board shall meet at least quarterly.
- b. Notification.

The members shall be notified of each meeting of the Board by notice from the United Methodist Campus Minister or the Chairperson ten days before the meeting. Emergency Board meetings may be called by the Campus Minister or the Chairperson to address items of importance to the Board which are so urgent that giving ten days advance notice to members would hinder the Board in the performance of its responsibilities or cause (or exacerbate) harm to the Appalachian Wesley Foundation or its mission. We will also notify the chairperson of the WNCC Council on Campus Ministry and other Council liaisons assigned to the Appalachian Wesley Foundation.
- c. Quorum.

A majority of the current membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum after due notification of the meeting.
- d. Manner of Acting

The act of majority of the directors present at a meeting at which quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, unless the act of a greater number is required by these by-laws.

- e. **Voting Privileges**
All elected members of the Board have the privilege to vote on all matters with one exception being that the Campus Minister is not allowed to vote on personnel matters directly concerning the Campus Minister's position, which in such case the Campus Minister may be asked to leave the room so the Board may properly deliberate.
- f. **Minutes**
Announcements, reports, deliberations and decisions made by the Board shall be recorded in written minutes and approved at the next meeting following necessary amendments and corrections. This shall be conducted by the Secretary of the Board.
- g. **Informal Action by Directors**
Action taken by the Directors or members of a committee of the Board of Directors without a formal meeting is nevertheless Board or committee actions provided the following conditions are met:
 - (1) The Board, Executive Committee, Standing Committees or Ad Hoc Committee has authority to make such a decision.
 - (2) Written consent or consent by electronic media (email, fax, etc.) to the action in question is given by all the Directors or members of the committee.
 - (3) The decision does not involve the expenditure of Wesley funds outside of the usual course of business, unless clearly and previously authorized by the Board during one of its regular, special or emergency meetings.
 - (4) The decision, if made, is reported at that body's next regular meeting and made part of the minutes.
- h. **Attendance by Telephone and Video Meetings**
Any one or more Directors or members of a committee may participate in a meeting of the Board or committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications device which allows all persons participating in the meeting to hear and/or see each other, and such participation in the meeting shall be deemed presence in person at such meeting.

Section 8. Standing Committees.

In order for the Board to fulfill its responsibilities, there may be organized the following standing committees nominated annually and elected by Board. Board membership for committee members is not required.

- a. **Executive Committee**
Board Chair (or co-chair), Board Vice-Chair (or co-chair), Secretary, Treasurer, and the Campus Minister shall be members of this committee (see Section 6.b for responsibilities).
- b. **Governance committee**
This committee recruits new members, conducts orientation, produces board materials, and evaluates the performance of the board itself. It shall have a minimum of 4 and no more than 7 members with the Campus Minister as one of the members.
- c. **Internal affairs committee**
This group handles all internal and operational issues related to finance, investments, capital acquisitions, human resources and facilities. It shall have a minimum of 4 and no more than 7 members with the Campus Minister as one of the members, but the Campus Minister shall not have a vote on personnel matters related the her or his position.
- d. **External affairs committee**
This committee handles all external issues — including fundraising, public relations, publications and marketing. It shall have a minimum of 4 and no more than 7 members with the Campus Minister as one of the members.

Section 9. Ad Hoc Committees

The Board of Directors shall have the authority to create any Ad Hoc Committees to deal with special issues or projects of the Board. Members and chairpersons of Ad Hoc Committees shall be recommended by the Connections Committee and approved by the Board. Ad Hoc Committees shall disband after completion of their appointed duties or by action of the Board.

Section 10. Financial Procedures.

Enabling statements are provided in Article VIII of these By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX - CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, AND FUNDS

Section 1. Contracts.

The Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent, or agents of the corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these by-laws to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 2. Checks, Drafts, Etc.

All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the corporation, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the corporation in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer.

Section 3. Deposits.

All funds of the corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

Section 4. Gifts.

The Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the corporation any contribution, gift, bequest, or device for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the corporation.

Section 5. Bonding.

The Treasurer shall be bonded with a reliable company, as specified by *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Section 6. Non-Profit Status.

The organization is not operated for profit and not profit shall inure to the benefit of any individual connected with the organization except in consideration for services rendered.

ARTICLE X - PROFESSIONAL STAFFSection 1. United Methodist Campus Minister or Wesley Foundation Director.

A United Methodist Campus Minister or Wesley Foundation Director shall be employed by the Board. The Campus Minister or Director shall have authority to conduct the daily affairs of the Wesley Foundation, oversee the use of its facility, and supervise all employees, interns, and student leaders.

Section 2. Other Staff.

The Board may employ other personnel as in its judgment are needed for the furtherance of the Foundation's program.

ARTICLE XI – SERVANT LEADERSHIP TEAMSection 1. Area of Responsibility.

The Servant Leadership Team, in conjunction with the Foundation's professional staff, shall be responsible for the formulation and carrying out of the Foundation's program for the university community.

Section 2. Membership.

The membership of the Servant Leadership Team shall include the United Methodist Campus Minister or the Director of the Foundation and such other members of the university community as are designated by the Team. There shall be a minimum of five members.

Section 3. Procedures.

The Servant Ministry Team shall determine its procedures.

ARTICLE XII - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December in each year.

ARTICLE XIII - SEAL

The Board of Directors shall provide a corporate seal which shall be in the form of a circle and shall have inscribed thereon the name of the corporation and the words "Corporate Seal, November 12, 1970 The Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc."

ARTICLE XIV - WAIVER OF NOTICE

Whenever any notice is required to be given under provisions of the North Carolina Non-Profit Corporate Act or under the provisions of the articles of incorporation or the by-laws of the corporation, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notices.

ARTICLE XV - RATIFICATION OF BY-LAWS

These By-Laws shall become provisionally operative when approved by two-thirds of the members of the Foundation Board of Directors, and shall become finally operative when approved by the Western North Carolina Conference Council on Higher Education and ratified by the Western North Carolina Conference.

ARTICLE XVI - PROCEDURE FOR AMENDMENT

These By-Laws may be amended provisionally by a two-thirds vote of the Board after thirty days notice of the proposed amendment, such action not to become final until approved by the Western North Carolina Conference Council on Higher Education and ratified by the Western North Carolina Conference.

ARTICLE XVII – ANTI-AMENDMENT CLAUSE

Any amendments to the following provisions shall require the approval of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference:

Article II: Purpose Clause.

Article V, Section 3, a: Prohibitions and Limitations Clause.

Article V, Section 2, a., b., c., d: Related Category I Organization Clause.

Article VI, Section 2, a: Dissolution.

Article VIII, Section 5, a: Elections of Board, and

Article XVII: Anti-Amendment Clause.

By-Laws Amended by two-thirds vote of the Board on January 24, 2021

By-Laws Amended by two-thirds vote of the Board on May 30, 2019

By-Laws Amended by two-thirds vote of the Board on April 26, 2015

By-Laws Ratified by two-thirds vote on February 18, 2007

Approved by vote of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the UMC June 2007

155038

FILED
Nov 2 10 07 AM 1970
TAD EURE
CLERK OF STATE
NORTH CAROLINA

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF

APPALACHIAN WESLEY FOUNDATION, INC.

We, the undersigned natural persons of the age of twenty-one years or more, do hereby associate ourselves into a business corporation under the laws of the State of North Carolina, as contained in Chapter 55-A of the General Statutes of North Carolina, entitled "Non-Profit Corporation Act," and the several amendments thereto, and to that end do hereby set forth:

- 1. The name of the Corporation is Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc.
- 2. The period of duration of the corporation shall be perpetual.
- 3. The purpose or purposes for which this corporation is formed are:

~~To foster a better relationship between the Methodist Church and the students of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina; to acquire and to hold or lease real estate and such items of personal property which may be incidental to or reasonably necessary to carry on the business for which this corporation is formed.~~

The purpose of the Appalachian Wesley Foundation shall be to establish and maintain a United Methodist ministry to the total campus community. The Appalachian Wesley Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable and religious purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

4. The membership of the corporation may be as follows: The membership of the corporation shall be the members of the Boone United Methodist Church, including the Trustees, Official Board, and students of Appalachian State University and any person who is interested in the furthering of the provisions for which Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc. is formed. There shall be no class or classes of members.

5. The address of the initial registered office of the Corporation is 339-A East King Street, Watauga County, Boone, North Carolina, and the name of the initial registered agent at such address is Manuel Wortman.

6. The number of directors of the corporation may be fixed by the by-laws but shall not be less than three (3).

The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors shall be three (3), and the names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as directors until the first meeting of shareholders or until their successors are elected and qualified are:

Paul J. Smith	Route 1	Boone, N. C.
Manuel Wortman	339-A East King St.	Boone, N. C.
John O. Fish	Farming Street	Boone, N. C.

~~7. The name and address of the incorporator is:~~

~~Paul J. Smith Route 1 Boone, N. C.~~

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, this, the 11 day of November, 1970.

Paul J. Smith
Paul J. Smith

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

7. Any Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc. Bylaw amendments to the following provisions shall require the approval of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference:


Article III: Purpose Clause, and

Article XVII: Anti-Amendment Clause.

8. The name and address of the incorporator is:

Paul J. Smith Route 1 Boone, N. C.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, this, the 11th day
of November, 1970.

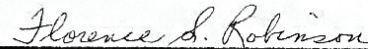

Paul J. Smith

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF WATAUGA

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that on this 11th day of November, 1970,
before me, a Notary Public, personally appeared Paul J. Smith, who, I am satisfied, is the person named in and who executed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation of Appalachian Wesley Foundation, Inc., and I having first made known to him the contents thereof, he did acknowledge that he signed, sealed and delivered the same as his voluntary act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein expressed.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal, this the 11th day of November, 1970.


Notary Public

My commission expires: 2-16-75

5. JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION TEAM

The Western North Carolina Conference J&R Team is fully engaged in the ministry of Jesus Christ, in order to make Christian Disciples for the transformation of the world. Their ministry impacts many areas of the Western NC Conference, and varied communities throughout western North Carolina. They are organized for mission and ministry within a framework of 11 key areas:

- Social justice - Church and Society
- Environmental creation care - Earthkeepers
- Peace with justice
- Matters of religion and race (CORR)
- Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW)
- North Carolina Council of Churches (NCCOC)
- Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (CUIR)
- Native American ethnic caucus Ministries
- African-American Ministries
- Hispanic/Latino American Ministries
- Asian-American Ministries

Though COVID-19 put many aspects of their ministry on pause, the J&R Team did not stop. Team members have been hard at work envisioning and planning for mission and ministry. In addition, the J&R Team has sought collaborative partnerships with the United Methodist Women Social Action Emphasis, United Methodist Youth, Board of Ordained Ministry, and the Board of Laity. As vaccines gain wider distribution and the country leans into a new normal, they will reactivate ministries and missions that have been gestating during the lockdown. The Conference Leadership Team has formed a unique bond that has cast a vision of heaven on earth. However, there is a great deal of work ahead. Leaning into that vision will provide challenge and require a radical shifting of culture. Such shifts can be frightening, but by affirming the loving grace of God, the redemptive presence of Jesus Christ, and the healing power of the Holy Spirit, God is continually offering opportunities to witness the power of Jesus Christ through the forged relationships both within the WNCC and throughout the world.

With their vision, "Empowered by Christ," the J&R Team exists to repair that which has been broken. Their mission is to listen, evaluate, initiate, advocate, train, educate, offer grants, and celebrate through acts of God's love, so the whole church reflects

the diversity of each community, with an intentional effort to include all constituencies with respect and equity, while also being inclusive of the work of environmental and social concerns. Their core values are to practice genuine listening and mindfulness, to encourage others to lean into discomfort, to serve as a catalyst for equity in change by compassionate acts, and to practice inclusive language with humility and discipline, speaking and receiving wholeness through Christ. The near-term objective/top-level goal of the J&R Team is to work to build a voice, influence, access, resources, and spirit among caucuses and conveners so that the WNCC will reflect the diverse body of Christ.

Committee on Native American Ministries: Convener, Rev. Joel Locklear. Like many organizations within The United Methodist Church, hands-on ministry was nearly impossible throughout 2020. Pre-COVID-19, the committee planned and held a conference workshop at Triad Native American UMC, Greensboro, NC. With the theme “Honoring Our Children in the Circle of Life,” the workshop focused on combating bullying, domestic violence, and suicide, all prevalent in the Native American community. The goal was to reverse the cycle of pain through conversation and action. Calvetta Watlington, a tribal citizen of the Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation, was the workshop leader. Freeman Owle, who recently served as Elder-in-Residence at Western Carolina University, who is also a traditional storyteller of Cherokee culture and history, led the group in arts and crafts. New tables were recently installed in the Native American room at the Lake Junaluska Bethea Welcome Center. Connie Locklear, Director of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association of Native American Ministries (SEJANAM), shared that a Waynesville artist used wood from a maple tree from the golf course at Lake Junaluska. Sixteen matching chairs from this tree are the next project for this room. The committee looks forward to more in-person ministry in late 2021 and 2022.

African American Ministries: Convener Rev. Ronnie Roseboro continues to move forward with the vision of strengthening the Black churches in the conference through leadership development, revitalization and Christian/spiritual formation. The mission is to use resources to train clergy and laity in the African-American context of what it means to be a vital church in the community and world, to make disciples for the transformation of the world. African-American Ministries continues to focus on strengthening the Black church as a way of creating disciples for the transformation of local communities and the world. Throughout the pandemic, this body has been engaged in dreaming for the Black church. This effort has identified ways in which African-American Ministries can partner with the WNCC to increase God’s territory and nurture new disciples in underserved communities.

Hispanic-Latino Ministries: Convener Rev. Susan Suarez-Webster continued to lead this caucus, along with chairperson Pilar Perez. Regular meetings are held throughout the year to include worship and fellowship. The vision is that of a united and diverse community that experiences God’s transformation through embracing neighbors. Values are mutuality, commitment, love, hope, and empowerment with the mission being to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Asian-American Ministries: May Vang continues as convener. The regularly scheduled meetings include clergy and laity, Koreans, Hmong, Cambodians, African-Americans and Caucasians. The vision is to become a community that sees all the people, and a near-term objective is to have a more vital presence in the WNCC by “Bridging, Building and Becoming,” with specific strategies for each component of the goals. First Hmong UMC youth attended Ca Sab National Youth Summer Camp in Missouri with the theme “Worthy.” They were able to attend various workshops to help them grow spiritually, learning about creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration. They participated in encouragement groups with deeper focus on the theme and prayer, praise, and worship, with energy and enthusiasm along with fellow youth from across the nation.

Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW): Led by Nancy Wilson. Their mission: to work alongside the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women advocating for full participation in the total life of The United Methodist Church by helping the church to recognize every person – clergy and lay, women and men, adults and children – as full and equal parts of God’s human family. It is anticipated that a fully engaged and empowered membership is vital to The United Methodist Church’s mission to “Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform the World.”

Commission on Religion and Race: Convener Rev. Tamara Ingram. The commission organized the planning team for the 2020 WNCC Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration. This event was co-sponsored with Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), and the coordinator of that caucus is the Rev. Charlie Rivens. The commission will continue its work of diversity monitoring so that the WNCC may have an accurate understanding of the vision of God’s Kingdom projected to the world. The goal is to ensure that their words and actions are in alignment with the call of Jesus Christ.

Monitoring efforts have revealed only modest changes have been noted over the years. With respect to racial/ethnic background, participants have consistently been 78%-80% white. Black participation actually declined from 21% to 16% with the difference being an inclusion of Asian and Hispanic/Latino participants. The lay/clergy ratio has shifted toward clergy with an average of 43% laity and 57% clergy. Youth and young adult participation has improved, going from 0% for both in 2016 to 2% and 33% in 2018, with corresponding declines in mature and older adult participants. Unfortunately, there was only one physically challenged participant in all the years for which data exists.

As the team studies this data, it wants to encourage the Annual Conference Planning Committee to work with intentionality to ensure that the participants reflect all communities. While strides toward being more inclusive have been implemented, it is important that the participants’ pool is both deepened and widened with people from all districts. God has been gracious in gifting many with multiple talents. There are individuals with the ability to serve in many areas in both the business and worship sessions. The goal is that the Annual Conference Planning Committee will seek to involve as many, and as varied, a population as possible to truly represent the variety and richness of UMC congregations.

Environmental Concerns and Efforts: Convener Kim Richmond. EarthKeepers are keenly aware of the ecological challenges in today’s world and feel called to be part of a movement to transform the world. Although the pandemic restrictions postponed many of the anticipated conference-wide Creation Care Ministry events and programs, there were four EarthKeepers from the WNCC who

attended the national UMC Creation Justice Summit, held online October 16 and 17 for 180 registrants from 30 states and several international countries, which featured inspirational worship and words of wisdom from speakers and other leaders regarding “Local Solutions to Global Crises.” Additionally, the conference gained one more commissioned EarthKeeper (bringing the total to six) who started a creation care ministry and a community garden at her home church in Greensboro. The UMC EarthKeepers continue to expand in the WNCC. On February 8-9, 2020 in Southport, NC, the first African-American and Hispanic/Latino American became certified as UMC Earthkeepers: Karlah Y. Burton, member of St. Matthews UMC Greensboro, NC, and Sabrina Maria Visigali Martins do Rosario, originally from Brazil and a member of University City UMC Charlotte, NC. The 50th anniversary of Earth Day was April 22, 2020.

The J&R Team gives yearly financial support to the North Carolina Council of Churches (NC COC) which is a statewide ecumenical organization promoting Christian unity and working towards a more just society with the motto: Strength in Unity, Peace through Justice. The council enables denominations, congregations, and people of faith to individually and collectively impact the state on issues such as economic justice and development, human well-being, equality, compassion and peace, following the example and mission of Jesus Christ. NC COC addresses social justice issues through a faith lens to include: immigration and the Sanctuary Coalition, the Opioid Crisis, North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light (NCIPL) and Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW). The council’s priority areas continue to be Gun Violence Prevention, Raising Wages Campaign, Money Bail Eradication, and Public Education Advocacy. On Saturday, February 29, 2020, the committee sponsored a community forum at Milford Hills UMC, one of several such events held across the state and co-sponsored by the NCC and WNCC United Methodists Advocating for Public Schools (UMAPS). The community forums aimed at changing the narrative about public schools versus privatization and the prevalence of racial bias in disciplinary policy enforcement. The PHW program is working with NCIPL and the Creation Care Alliance to address food insecurity. The Northern Piedmont Missional Networks are benefitting from these efforts. PHW also provided trauma care training for the Northern Piedmont district; and 19 clergy breakfasts focusing on the opioid crisis were held across the state.

Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness (CPI) Educational Work: The J&R Team celebrates the appointment of Rev. Dr. William White as the WNCC Director of Equity and Justice Ministries. The J&R Team serves within this framework to create educational experiences that address racism, diversity and integration, by creating various exchanges of churches and clergy with congregations that are different from where they have served; through choir and pulpit exchanges; joint worship services; and ministries and temporary membership exchanges to name several. The Conference Resource Center has a number of helpful items. This work raises awareness, where the J&R Team already has a platform for advocacy and training.

The 1996 General Conference mandated that each annual conference and local church develop concrete programs of antiracism training. This mandate remains largely unfulfilled. Racism is still pervasive and harmful. It is time that the Western North Carolina Annual Conference re-commit to dismantling racism. The Dismantling Racism Task Force, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. In-Yong Lee as part of the J&R Team, has worked to advance this goal for the past three years, and now welcomes the new conference-wide initiative to eliminate racism. In particular, the new quadrennium’s focus on antiracism for the clergy ethics training and the inclusion of laity promises to be an important step. Planting seeds is a lifelong process, and as a task force it is exciting to see what God will cultivate and grow. Partners in this initiative are the Board of Ordained Ministry Ethics Committee and the Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness Team. May God bless the work of the whole J&R Team as they seek to witness to faith in Jesus Christ, and make disciples for the transformation of local communities and the world.

Donnell FitzJefferies, Chairperson
Renee Hayes, Vice-Chairperson
Nikki Raye Rice, Secretary
Carl Arrington, Cabinet Representative

6. BOARD OF LAITY

The start of the 2020-2024 quadrennium brought with it new challenges and new opportunities for laity ministries within the conference. In a year of such unprecedented change, it has been amazing to see the many ways that laity in the Western North Carolina Conference (WNCC), in partnership with clergy and other ministry leaders, have found to use the gifts, talents, abilities, and resources God has given them to make a difference in their churches and communities.

The examples of the ways in which laity have continued to “be the church” during times in which their congregations could not gather in person are too numerous to name. Whether it has been helping with the shift to online worship and discipleship ministries, sewing and donating masks by the thousands, delivering food and medicine to those who could not risk shopping for themselves, volunteering to help run COVID-19 testing or vaccination sites, continuing to pack backpacks with food for distribution through their schools, or simply reaching out with a card or phone call with encouragement, the laity of the WNCC have continued to show God’s love to others.

Perhaps one of the biggest impacts to laity ministries has been in the area of lay training, including the Lay Servant Ministry program. Over the past year, district leaders worked diligently to transition these programs from being delivered only in person to being offered online. This has created new opportunities; removing the constraints of space and travel requirements made it easier for participants to join in training offered in other districts, which helped strengthen connections.

Churches, too, have seen the benefits of offering online small group studies as part of their discipleship programs. This opened up the opportunity for members for whom travelling to church to attend a study was difficult and for those who live outside of the local community to engage more fully in these programs. While everyone is eager to return to participating in-person, it is hoped and expected that the opportunities for online fellowship and study will become a more regular part of the “new normal” for conference, district, and local church laity training and discipleship ministries.

Looking ahead, the Board of Laity is excited to focus their efforts over the next 18-24 months in three key areas:

- **Spiritual Formation:** The purpose of this focus area is to discern, develop, and deploy opportunities that will help laity grow in their own spiritual practices and/or engage and equip laity to be more effective disciples.
- **Faith in Action:** The purpose of this focus area is to discern, develop, and deploy opportunities that will help laity more effectively live into their faith through active ministry participation within and through their local church, district, and conference in ways that positively impact their community and the broader world.
- **Communications:** The purpose of this focus area is to enhance the practices, tools, and technology associated with laity communications. By doing so, the board seeks to ensure laity are engaged and informed regarding the work of the church and understand the resources that are available to support them and how to access those resources.

The board is excited to partner with the Connectional Table and the Extended Cabinet to ensure laity ministry efforts are effectively aligned in supporting the priorities and goals of the conference and to further the attainment of their vision: to see growing numbers of committed United Methodist laity who are maturing in their faith, discipling others, and transforming the church, community, and world in measurable ways.

On behalf of the Board of Laity, thanks to the WNCC laity, for all they do each day to follow Jesus, make disciples, and transform the world.

John D. Crane, Conference Lay Leader

a. United Methodist Men

The Western North Carolina Conference of United Methodist Men mission is to support spiritual growth among men, helping men to mature as disciples as they encourage spiritual formation in others. The WNCC UMM goal is to empower the ministry of Jesus Christ through men within the congregations of the WNCC. The WNCC UMM is proud of the faithfulness and hard work of the local UMM units in each district. The focus of the United Methodist Men is not inward, concentrating only on those who attend a set meeting, but outward to all men, assisting them to engage in the process of spiritual growth.

The WNCC UMM is committed to building relationships and encouraging one another. They continue to encourage men in each of the eight districts to sponsor a variety of events and gatherings such as spiritual workshops, men choir singings, prayer breakfasts, buildings projects, supplying food for pantries to feed the hungry, building accessibility ramps for individuals in need of them, the class meeting, and many other Christ-centered events that will more effectively connect and fellowship with local and district members and all people in their communities.

The WNCC UMM continues to present information about their emphasis on Scouting.

The WNCC UMM proudly sponsors Ministerial Scholarships for Second Career Pastors for which the UMM gives on average \$5,000 every year.

This year the UMM continued donations to food banks to three areas of the WNCC to feed those who are hungry. Some local UMM units are even sponsoring hot dog dinners to raise funds to help the hungry. The UMM supported WNCC disaster and building teams.

The United Methodist Men of the WNCC and the United States are continuing to participate in workshops, webinars, and Jurisdictional National Days of Prayer concerning dismantling racism and how all can contribute to a more understanding, loving, and caring world.

The WNCC UMM is a very strong advocate against domestic violence and the first week of August, they will again ask everyone to observe a week of prayer against domestic violence and pray for strong, loving family relationships. The UMM works along with the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the GCUMM partner AMEND Together to help STOP Domestic Violence.

Looking at the future the UMM needs younger men to participate in their ministry, so they are looking establish a "YOUNGER Men's Ministry," which is an innovative way to draw men to UMM. For more information go to: <https://sejumm.org/youngERMen.html>.

The WNCC UMM continues to be leaders among the General Commission of United Methodist Men with their continuing to have a high number of life members of UMM, a high percent of churches with a charter, and a high number of charters. The WNCC UMM is "Coaching men to THRIVE through Christ, so others may KNOW Christ."

William Waddell, President
wiloliwad@yahoo.com • www.wnccumm.org

b. United Methodist Women

The year 2020 began as a perfect 20/20 vision for ladies of the Western North Carolina Conference of United Methodist Women. By March that vision became clouded with the pandemic, causing districts to cancel most of their spring events. By summer, districts and conference were back in full swing conducting meetings and events via Zoom.

The national office funded 107 programs in more than 110 countries, with the help of eight regional missionaries. The Bethlehem Center in Winston-Salem and the Alliance Center for Education in Charlotte (formerly Bethlehem Center Charlotte) both closed for a few weeks due to COVID-19, but returned to operate under safety guidelines. Brooks-Howell Home in Asheville was proactive in their safety procedures, maintaining a safe environment for residents and staff. Both Bennett College and Pfeiffer University underwent changes in their academic year to continue to educate their students in a safe manner.

The June Spiritual Growth Retreat was a virtual three-day event that featured Rev. Pam Blackstock, Rev. Dr. Suzanne Michael, and Rev. Lisa Beth White as speakers. The theme was "For Such a Time as This," based on Esther 4:14. During August all eight districts held annual meetings via Zoom, which included presentation of a budget and election of 2021 officers. At the virtual conference annual celebration in September, the theme "Walk in God's Light" featured a border video by Deaconess Cindy Johnson, from

Brownsville, TX. In October, Sandra Williamson of the Northern Piedmont District facilitated a four-day Mission virtual study on "Finding Peace in an Anxious World." The conference leadership team provided training for district officers on Leadership Development Day and sponsored a conference-wide Leadership Development Day for all local officers. The year ended with a "Merry & Bright" fellowship event enjoyed by many of the executive team.

Despite limited local unit meetings, the conference total Mission Giving was \$604,339. For the first time in many years, UMW met the goal of \$525,000 National Pledge to Mission and exceeded it by \$5,817, for a total Pledge to Mission of \$530,817. Western North Carolina was again #1 in the nation for Mission Giving! Hands-on projects through districts totaled \$25,770.90, which included UMCOR Hygiene and School Kits as well as Project AGAPE clothing and Christmas Shoe Boxes. The Legacy Fund endowment campaign reached \$34,640,000 at the end of 2020. This fund will undergird this organization and insure the mission work of United Methodist Women well into the next 150 years.

As 2021 began, UMW looked forward to a year of eradicating the virus and returning to a new way of safely and effectively conducting meetings and events so as to continue with personal spiritual growth, leadership development, and support for so many women, children, and youth around the world who rely on UMW's involvement to better their lives.

Julia A Willis, President
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c. Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM)

The Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) is a leadership team of many dedicated youth and adults who plan, develop, implement resources/events/ministries for youth across the Western North Carolina Conference. The mission is to find ways to encourage young people to follow Jesus, become leaders, make disciples, and transform the world. The 2020-2021 is composed of 23 youth and three adults from seven districts from across Western North Carolina. As a council, four members are elected to serve on the executive committee: Joseph Navarro (Metro District) to serve as president, Talon Shuffler (Catawba Valley District) to serve as vice-president, Alex Sisk (Catawba Valley District) to serve as secretary, and Kayla Stewart (Uwharrie District) to serve as vice-secretary. The CCYM faced many exciting changes in the past few years which served as catalysts to expand CCYM's influence in the conference as the council continues to amplify the voices of the youth of the conference.

CCYM gives thanks to God for the leadership from the amazing adult members: Shannon LeMaster-Smith, Amber Huskins, and JJ Gibbs. These adults have worked hard together to aid the youth of the CCYM in their various decision makings, given insight on a multitude of topics, and widening horizons while doing such.

The CCYM receives Youth Service Fund grant applications and awards Youth Service Funds each year. The Youth Service Fund is money raised by youth for youth, through local churches and different events run by CCYM, and are distributed by grants administered by the CCYM. "Of the funds given, 70% is given back within the Western North Carolina Conference. The remaining 30% is donated to the General Council on Finance and Administration, and this amount is used to fund projects that a team of youth from around the world select. Most importantly, the projects supported are designed and led by youth, for the benefit of their peers." (Book of Discipline 2012).

The CCYM has the pleasure of planning the conference-wide retreat for middle school youth, known as IgniteUs (formerly Kaleidoscope). CCYM meets every other month to work on IgniteUs and share ideas and resources for youth ministry. This year a deep dive into re-configuring the structure and responsibilities of CCYM was continued. Guidelines and relational covenants were reviewed and updated. New committees were formed and old ones were changed so more youth could be involved in the planning and execution of IgniteUs and spreading God's word beyond this event. An example is CCYM's new Praise Team that was formed to lead the group in worship at each meeting and at IgniteUs in the spring. God has blessed each of the CCYM members with many talents that help CCYM realize its mission and inspire others.

With COVID-19 still being a top Public Health Crisis in the world today, CCYM was once again for the second year in a row unable to host IgniteUs 2021 at YMCA Camp Hanes. While disappointed that CCYM would not be able to share the love of God to middle school youth in person at IgniteUs 2021, the council is grateful for the leadership growth of the youth who serve on CCYM and will build on this in the future. The council will continue to use the time that has been given to better the planning and curriculum for future IgniteUs camps.

CCYM thanks the Western North Carolina Conference for the continued support the conference youth ministry. CCYM is full of growing leaders and eager to transform the church and the world into a community that accepts and loves all of God's children. Thanks be to God for guiding us, especially when the path may not be clear.

Joseph Navarro, President

7. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Jesus once reminded his disciples that in order to bear fruit, they must abide in him. Jesus, being the vine, produces the fruit through those who are the branches (John 15:4-5). A year of pandemic, social unrest and denominational turmoil has challenged many leaders' resolve to simply abide in Christ, and yet the Leadership Development Team (LDT) of WNCC has continued to offer opportunities to foster resilient and fruitful leaders. With "A Portrait of Fruitful Clergy Leadership" to guide the development of resources along with listening sessions with clergy, ministry professionals, and providers, the LDT has continued to fulfill their mission of building "the capacity of ministry leaders to follow Jesus, make disciples and transform the world."

In spite of Zoom meetings with many new members, there is great teamwork among the program, communications, and stewardship subcommittees of the LDT. The team has identified and provided resources for the building of fruitful leaders in the areas of faith and theology, innovation and change, relationship and conflict, as well as leading in the community. The team has offered preaching and peer cohorts, workshops for racial healing and dealing with church conflict. Scholarships for personal development plans, spiritual retreats and opportunities to equip clergy for innovative leading in times of change have been offered. Well-known providers have been accessed from The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, The Reynolds Academy for Ministry Management, and The Arbinger Institute, as well as the more local WNCC-based Davidson Clergy Center and School of the Spirit.

Opportunities developed by the LDT are communicated through the monthly eLEAD newsletter, the conference website, Facebook posts, and communication tools with district offices. Podcasts covering a multitude of topics continue to be offered. All resources are archived on the LDT section of the conference website so that when the ministry leader is in need of resources for development in a particular subject, timely and appropriate help can be found with an easy-to-use search.

The stewardship of resources is valued by the team. The WNCC has been generous to support the ongoing efforts to develop ministry professionals and clergy leaders, and the team seeks to be wise stewards with these resources. With each new offering, grant or scholarship, the mission to foster the development of fruitful and resilient ministry leaders remains the focus.

It is recorded in Jeremiah 17:7-8: “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” The resources of the Leadership Development Team of WNCC are provided so that in times of need, when the heat, drought and pressure emerge (or even a pandemic and unrest on all sides), clergy and ministry professionals can find the support they need to be fruitful leaders.

Shirley Canty and Kari Howard, Co-Chairpersons

8. MISSION ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The Mission Engagement Team exists to cultivate, collaborate, and communicate God’s mission to the local churches of the Western NC Conference of The United Methodist Church. MET forms and administers the conference relationships with the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Committee on Relief, and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission. More so, they promote and expand the Western NC Conference initiatives such as Congregations for Children (C4C) and the Committee on Relief.

The pandemic has created apparent challenges to the work of both C4C and the Committee on Relief:

- For C4C, requests and responses have focused on the digital divide, relief efforts, and school staff support. For some church partnerships, this has required stepping back from in-person support and responding by collecting needed items such as earbuds, books, food, and various supplies. Others have stepped deeper into their partnerships by opening their church doors in response to the need for remote learning centers and space to connect to Wi-Fi. Still, others have responded to challenges elicited by the pandemic in various ways— one example is developing a suicide prevention program. In the meantime, C4C has updated training materials and offered Zoom sessions as they continue to provide support to congregations. Additionally, the team has completed a pilot initiative in the Smoky Mountain district, which led to the development of materials for “Going Deeper” in response to child poverty through community collaboration. The current primary focus is on post-COVID-19 planning through summer and fall programming and response.
- The Committee on Relief had a very active year despite being limited due to COVID-19. They distributed masks in response to COVID-19: 14,000 N-95 masks to CaroMont Health in Gastonia, 4,500 N-95 masks to the Charlotte Fire Department, and 45,000+ cloth masks to over 300 churches/organizations within the conference. They made multiple shipments to distribute resources from the MRC to other UMCOR depots and disaster sites, such as Dauphin Island UMC in response to Hurricane Sally.

MET also advances their conference partnerships:

- Project AGAPE has assisted in Armenia and Artsakh for over 27 years. They help with humanitarian aid (clothing, cloth for sewing, school supplies, etc.), wells for small towns, schools, children’s homes, rebuilding homes for families and schools for communities, and an agriculture development project to help families make a sustainable living. In September 2020, Project Agape moved all of its supplies in Berdzor (humanitarian aid, health kits, furniture, etc.) to a warehouse in Goris, Armenia. A new Project AGAPE Center office has now opened in Vayk, Armenia. Unfortunately, much of Project Agape’s work has struggled due to the war between Armenia and Artsakh with Azerbaijan. This war has displaced over an estimated 40,000 people.
- The Northern Haiti Mission Connection works through Partners 4 New Hope, Inc. to support the Cap Haitien Ministry Center, Dr. Maklin Eugene, and New Hope Hospital in Plaine du Nord, Haiti. Their financial support has provided for the shipment of over 3,000 masks to Haiti, the funding of many feeding programs through New Hope Hospital to serve the surrounding communities, schools, and the prison population, micro-finance programs, and the installation of clean water wells in the area serving thousands without water.
- MET also supports conference sponsorships with Zoe Empowers (serving Africa and Asia), the Central Congo Partnership, and Open Arms Community. MET further assists numerous mission teams from the conference as they journey locally, regionally, and internationally.

MET also has developed programs and resources for local church empowerment through a lens of asset-based community development. The team has produced a comprehensive mission training program that includes mission team leaders, early response team, chaplaincy, advanced team training, and district disaster response orientation. These trainings will start in the fall of 2020. They have designed and organized conference-wide events aimed at mission learning, community development, and leading crucial conversations around mission, service, outreach, and ministry. They look forward to lessened COVID-19 restrictions that will allow for a comprehensive calendar of events in the coming year. MET supports the tremendous and groundbreaking work of their Conference Missional Collective, led by Erin Burleson and various learning cohorts, available to any lay or clergy member of the annual conference. It has been the tradition of MET to assist the local church and United Methodist agencies with programmatic grants, and they aim to rekindle this work once conference funds are unfrozen. MET also studies, explores, and examines potential future mission partnerships and Advanced Specials for the conference.

They have implemented a quarterly MET newsletter to provide relevant information, best practices and share stories. MET invites anyone to subscribe to this newsletter by visiting the page on the conference website. They also have a monthly blog with various contributors that advance the work of mission engagement throughout the conference. Finally, MET is working to establish a coordination protocol and a roadmap for imminent and post-disaster scenarios.

Stephen Cheyney, Chairperson

Advance Specials

(Petition 8) *Approved June 12, 2021*

Churches are at liberty to support Advance Specials according to the wishes of the individual churches. The following ministries have been vetted and are approved as Annual Conference Mission Specials:

Carolina Cross Connection
Congregations 4 Children
Open Arms Community

Youth Service Fund
Mission Response Center
WNCC Committee on Relief
Northern Haiti Mission Connection Team

VIM Mission Connection Teams
Missional Church Fund
Project Agape

9. BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Board of Ordained Ministry supports the mission of the Western North Carolina Conference by developing, implementing, overseeing, and evaluating programs that focus on recruiting, training, certifying, examining, recommending, and supporting clergy leadership for the conference and denomination. The board is a diverse group of clergy and laity from across the conference. The Director of Ministerial Services and the Associate Director of Ministerial Services serve as staff to the Board, along with one district superintendent who serves as the cabinet representative.

The members of the Board serve on working teams to care for specific aspects of the board's work and on discernment teams to interview candidates. Due to the pandemic, meetings and interviews were conducted virtually. Although not ideal, members and candidates navigated this process extremely well. Each member volunteers many hours to this important work.

The board met last fall for three sessions for educational purposes and also to consider several business items. The board was edified by the teaching of Dr. Lacey Warner (Duke Divinity) and Dr. Candance Lewis (District Superintendent, Florida Conference).

Board members received candidate papers and information in early winter. The board met with ordination candidates in February and provisional candidates in March. The board is recommending 15 persons (1 Deacon and 14 Elders) for ordination and 14 persons (6 Deacons and 8 Elders) for commissioning at the 2021 session of the Annual Conference. In addition to provisional and full connection interviews, the board conducted continuance interviews of 31 provisional candidates.

The Executive Committee created a "Fair and Equitable Interview Task Force", chaired by Ceola Ross-Baber (Laity, Newlyn Street UMC, Greensboro) and Rev. Kevin Turner (Clergy, Davidson UMC), with several other members. This task force has been charged to continue work on making the Board of Ordained Ministry process fair and equitable to all candidates.

The current clergy vacation policy has been in place since 2002. An updated policy has been endorsed by the Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Laity, and WNC Cabinet. The proposal will be considered by the annual conference session. The board is grateful for the hard work of ministry leaders and endorse time away for Sabbath, rest, recreation, and vacation.

The work has been very involved and the members of the Board of Ordained Ministry are honored to serve Christ in this important way.

Lynda Ferguson, Chairperson

a. Local Pastors Completing Course of Study

The Board of Ordained Ministry wishes to recognize those local pastors who have completed the Course of Study since the last annual conference session:

Name, Appointment, District, COS—School Name

- Philip J. Tate, East Marion (Marion), Blue Ridge, COS —The Divinity School, Duke University

b. Sexual and Professional Misconduct Policy for Ministerial Leadership

The current policy is published online at <https://www.wnccumc.org/misconduct-policy>.

c. Proposal: Vacation and Continuing Education for Clergy

(Petition 9) Approved June 12, 2021

Whereas, rest and renewal are important components of fruitful clergy leadership. Sabbath-keeping, time away, continuing education, and vacation make for good ministry and for fruitful leaders. A link for descriptions and resources for Fruitful Leadership can be found at www.wnccumc.org/FCL. United Methodists elders, deacons, and local pastors are in a covenant of shared ministry. While the responsibilities and expectations vary from appointment to appointment, the weight of responsibility and expectation is the same whether a pastor is in their first appointment or their last appointment. Furthermore, clergy who are early in their ministry must begin developing good habits and rhythms of rest and renewal **for the sake of fruitful ministry**; therefore, be it

Resolved, that each clergy person under appointment by the bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference shall be entitled to receive the following minimum vacation time during the Annual Conference year (July 1-June 30):

1. Those serving full time are eligible to receive four weeks' vacation (including 4 Sundays) with the charge responsible for any honorarium for pulpit supply. We encourage districts and missional networks to provide current information on available lay speakers.
2. Those serving part time are eligible to receive two weeks' vacation (including 2 Sundays) with the charge responsible for any honorarium for pulpit supply.
3. Time away from the appointment for participation in continuing education events and experiences shall not be counted as vacation time. Time away from the appointment to attend Annual Conference or other conference or district events which the appointee is expected to attend shall not be counted as vacation time. Clergy members are eligible for a professional formation leave of at least one week each year and at least one month during one year of every quadrennium, ¶ 350.2 *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016)*.
4. The Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations or comparable body should also arrange for the clergy person to have two days off each week for personal time and Sabbath.
5. Information about this policy should be clearly communicated to responsible parties in the local church or other appointment.

Additional Notes:

Maternity or Paternity Leave, not to exceed one fourth of a year, will be available and shall be granted to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who so requests it. Compensation will be maintained for no less than the first eight weeks of leave, see ¶ 355 *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016)*.

On occasion, clergy will need time for rest and healing for illness and recovery from surgery. Clergy and the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations or comparable body should consult with one another about this recuperation period. Instructions from medical professionals should be followed. If the time required for healing and recovery will be a month or longer, the Staff/Pastor-Parish chairperson and the pastor should consult with their district superintendent.

C. WNCC DISTRICTS

1. APPALACHIAN DISTRICT

The Appalachian District continues to be blessed by the great variety of ways by which the clergy and their leadership teams are leading their congregations in disciple-making, equipping, and connecting them to their local communities and the world.

The last year of living through a global pandemic has thrust them into discovering innovative and creative new ways of worship, disciple formation and being the church. As a response to the pandemic, the district established weekly check-in Zoom calls for clergy to provide support, encouragement, and resources for navigating what has become the new normal of uncertainty. In a response to the racial injustice and reconciliation issues that broke forth with the killing of George Floyd and other Black persons, the clergy Zoom calls provided a basis from which to discuss these issues and to strategize. The calls also provided a platform for clergy to engage in several studies on addressing racism in society and churches. After these studies on racial reconciliation were completed, the calls focused on what it means to lead courageously in challenging times that are characterized by division in both churches and society at large. This call has continued each week for more than a year with an amazing response from clergy who voluntarily continue to attend each week.

Many of the churches have adapted the vital work of implementing systems of welcome, hospitality and connecting guests to the life of the church in a virtual world. They celebrate the accomplishments in ministry churches have made during these unfamiliar times of challenge. Several district churches have welcomed new covenant members into fellowship although they have never met together in person. This movement of the Holy Spirit has reminded them that indeed, people are the body of Christ, not the physical facilities in which they gather.

The district is grateful for the dedication and hard work of the Fresh Expression churches that are finding fruitful ways of connecting with their community through new expressions of Dinner Church during the pandemic. Through the generous gifts of grants and community partners, these churches continue to feed the people of their communities both physically and spiritually. Through the pandemic, Dinner Churches have found creative ways of continuing this vital ministry. Some are reporting that the number of persons they are feeding has exploded as they have reached out into their communities as people long for connection with others and the spiritual nurture of the church.

The Appalachian District is tremendously blessed with gifted pastors and laity who, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, have implemented essential and life-giving ministries that are sustaining families within their communities. Ministries such as the Fusion Innovation Academy help adolescent men encounter the living Christ while learning 21st century skills, and the Hens from Heaven ministry teaches sustainable living practices in the rural mountains. Then there are other ministries such as Open Door Family Resources, community book studies on racial reconciliation, connecting churches with local community colleges to create campus ministries, and countless other initiatives and ministries. All of this attests that the Holy Spirit is alive and moving, even in the most challenging of circumstances, and that the promise of Christ is true: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

Carl Arrington, District Superintendent
Gloria Hughes, District Vitality Associate

2. BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT

Over this past year, the Blue Ridge district found itself in a period of re-imagining and re-forming. Leadership transitions and COVID-19, though challenging, really served as a springboard to begin having conversations surrounding core needs.

The district began the year by gathering, mostly virtually, with clergy and laity for focused conversation and listening sessions. These sessions were valuable in that they highlighted a need which corresponded to United Methodist research into “16 Drivers of Vital Congregations.” Mainly, clergy spoke about the need for laity involvement, and laity expressed the need to be involved and connected in a richer, more robust way.

These conversations launched a strategic planning session hinged on Ephesians 4:7-13. Asking the questions, “How do we best support those who are called to equip the saints and support those equipping efforts; and how do we help those who are equipped for ministry, feel empowered and encouraged to do so?” started a discussion surrounding the latter.

Using the ToP method of strategic planning, clergy and laity gathered from around the district for four sessions designed to take a journey toward action. It began with realizing possibly latent, individual visions of the future of laity involvement. Then, a consensus was reached surrounding a shared vision. Next, underlying contradictions were uncovered which could be holding back accomplishing that vision, and then agreement was reached on three strategic directions which would work to heal those contradictions, moving toward that shared vision. From there, three strategic project teams were formed, which are currently working together to: rebuild relationships and discover how to best support lay leaders in local congregations; re-imagine how the Lay Servant Ministries process functions in the Blue Ridge district; and outline pathways for laity engagement from within a local congregation, with hopes to adapt and replicate within other congregations.

Currently a team of clergy and laity are coming together from across the district to engage in this same strategic process in response to the first question outlined above— “How do we best support those who are called to equip the saints and support those equipping efforts?” The district wants to take some time and liberty to re-imagine pastoral leadership in a way that establishes a full partnership between clergy and laity.

The district looks forward to seeing these strategies take root over the next year. With the strong leadership and focus each strategic project team brings to the table, there is sure to be much fruit, and further joy and hope in a shared ministry throughout the Blue Ridge district.

Mark Ralls, District Superintendent

3. CATAWBA VALLEY DISTRICT

The last year has shown the strength of the churches in the Catawba Valley District. Church leaders improvised and learned new avenues of ministry. The district celebrates the resourcefulness of pastors and laity across Burke, Catawba, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Gaston counties. Cell phones became cameras for filming and Facebook became much more than a place to promote political views. The love of Jesus Christ was shared in new ways to different people.

Organizationally, the committees were streamlined to allow new ways to make disciples. Attempts have been made to continue the good work started over the last several years related to church vitality. Fredrick Bowman, Church Vitality Associate, worked hard with local churches on implementing plans for growth. David Hamlyn, Director of Missional Engagement, worked with churches to update missional networks and engage their communities in existing ministries like Habitat for Humanity. The District Administrator, Jana Alexander, has been a needed resource for helping connect people to ministry options and answer questions.

One long-range goal is utilizing the skills of Wesley Community Development to help churches in close geographical proximity to consider a shared future. These meetings began in January of 2021 and will continue to take place over the course of several years. The meetings will also call upon experts in Church Development, Church Legacy Initiative, and The United Methodist Foundation. Leaders of churches in the district celebrate the connection that allows such conversations and planning to happen.

The district has enjoyed monthly clergy Zoom meetings. An attempt has been made to better understand such things as partnerships in connection, how churches of any size can worship online, the appointment system, and issues pertaining to general conference. The clergy have been a great resource for each other in these meetings.

In the final analysis, it seems that the greatest gift shared in the district is that sharing takes place. The year has served as a vivid reminder that ministry does not take place alone. The connection with other churches, laity, and clergy has been a great resource in a tumultuous year. Faithful laity and clergy have assured that the connection of United Methodism is strong in the Catawba Valley District.

David H. Christy, District Superintendent

4. METRO DISTRICT

The Metro District knows that the scope of the church's mission and ministry should never be limited to the geography of its buildings, and the past conference year has pushed them to imagine new and creative ways of being the church beyond the walls. As they emerge from the pandemic and continue to navigate denominational issues, it is a hopeful sign that the people called Methodists in the Metro District have continued to be the church in and for their communities. In the Metro District, and across the conference, laity and clergy have worshiped and learned together and have served their communities in the name of Christ. They celebrate that faithfulness, and give thanks both for all they have learned and the ways this very challenging year has made them more like Christ.

In response to the ongoing challenge of racial inequity and injustice and with a desire to join God in the work of building Beloved Community, the Metro District Racial Healing Social Justice Cohort - brought together 168 laity and clergy for a four-month deep dive to gain information, discern the movement of God, and imagine individual and group advocacy around how the church is called to address issues of justice and equity. Participants developed relationships with other Metro leaders while learning from Julie Porter, Leader of DreamKey Partners (formerly Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership); Dr. Tom Hanchett, a local historian; Justin Perry, a passionate clinician and social justice advocate; Bishop Latrelle Easterling of the Baltimore Washington Conference; and Dr. Peter Storey, former bishop of the Methodist Church of South Africa and a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Duke University, and former chaplain to Nelson Mandela. Church leaders developed plans for their next steps and committed to continue bringing the voice of the church to bear in the public square.

They know this work is challenging and so, in order to nurture the spiritual life of their leaders, over 100 diverse Metro District laity and clergy prayed and learned together during the Metro District Lenten study. Bishop Sharma Lewis led the opening session, along with amazing laity and clergy who facilitated the other five sessions. This holy conversation provided much needed rest and inspiration for the challenges of being the church in a fractured world.

They know that learning is critical to discipleship and leadership and so the district continued to offer engaging conversations through the Metro District Podcast, Sights and Sounds. Podcast conversations are designed to assist laity and clergy in leading through uncharted territory into the new "normal". Podcast guests included leaders from the Metro District, and national and international leaders who have been successful in piloting the leadership of their organizations and churches in order to find new ways to thrive in the midst of historic change. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/metro-district-sights-sounds/id1488629933?i=1000511284430>

Modeling Christ's ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom and healing the sick, the Metro District partnered with NC Health and Human Services and The NC Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, to help close the gap for COVID-19 vaccinations in Black and Brown communities. Several Metro District churches hosted vaccination clinics that served more than 3,000 Charlotte-area residents. Members of these congregations offered hospitality and prayer for vaccine recipients and began relationships with their neighbors that will prayerfully result in new faith journeys.

Because the ministry of the church is the ministry of the baptized, they continued to offer opportunities for lay leadership development. Church leadership consultant Brian Zehr was the keynote speaker for Metro LEADs, their annual district leadership training, where more than 300 laity gathered to strengthen their leadership capacity. They completed another cohort of SALT (Spiritual Academy for Leading Transformation). And, almost 80 laity and clergy participated in Zoom conversations entitled, *Praying. Listening. Hearing. Leading*, where they explored issues of racial equity and injustice and how the Gospel speaks to these issues.

Although COVID restrictions postponed the Lay Servant Ministry training scheduled in March 2020, the courses were held in October via Zoom. Two classes of the Basic Course were offered and 16 laity completed the class. Three different advanced courses were held, and 50 laity received their certification as advanced Lay Servants. A commitment service was held via Zoom which celebrated the dedication of all who completed a course. The 2021 Lay Servant training was also offered via Zoom in April. The Metro District continues to train and equip the laity of the district for ministry in their local churches and communities, including significant numbers of Hispanic leaders.

They also continued to imagine new and creative ways of utilizing church property. SouthPark UMC celebrated the completion of their joint church and corporate redevelopment project that is a model for how urban congregations can be the church and connect with their neighbors in creative ways. They are currently engaged in joint ventures with Wesley Community Development to redevelop church property and provide affordable housing, retail space, townhomes, and new church facilities. These projects are examples of the kind of creative stewardship of property that can maximize the witness of the church.

It is a challenging and uncertain time to lead and be the church. It is also an exciting time with extraordinary opportunity. As Peter Storey relates, it is not a matter of having enough courage to answer God's call for this new day, rather, it is a matter of whether we will love enough. The Metro District celebrates all the ways they have loved well this past year and look forward to the work yet to be done.

David Hockett, District Superintendent

5. NORTHERN PIEDMONT DISTRICT

Like all Western North Carolina United Methodists, the Northern Piedmont District's mission is to "Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform the World." The district endeavors to do this by placing distinct emphases on growing in spiritual maturity and living life in the beloved community. It supports long-term relationships within its 15 missional networks, confident that neighborhood relationships drive authentic and sustainable discipleship. Strong ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic was possible in part to the established relationships between churches, which helped each another with worship, technology, food-related ministries, and critical partnerships with children and schools in need. The district has added innovative platforms for its diverse communities

to share their specific needs. Cohorts of churches of similar sizes regularly discuss their specific needs as the church emerges from the pandemic. The district received a \$30,000 Technology Grant to resource small and medium-sized resource churches in worship technology and best practices for live-streaming worship. The District Vitality Team will provide training and consultants to take their technology to the next level of need.

As the COVID-19 vaccine came into the communities, the district endeavored to bring equity and honesty, remembering how vaccines brought violence and trauma to communities in the past. Beginning with Zoom conversations about the vaccine, the district hosted open forums between communities of color and health departments. Persons needed more information about how the vaccination process would impact their families and communities in 2021. As the past repeated itself with the lack of equity for all communities to receive their shot, the district worked to stand in the gap with honest conversations with local health departments regarding the equity of vaccination appointments. Speaking the truth in love, district representatives shared how communities of color were not getting a “shot to get their shot.” After conversations and authentic partnership, churches collected names and numbers of persons who wanted the vaccine, but lacked the opportunities to get an appointment despite a lack of information and technology. Lastly, trained district representatives hosted one-on-one conversations to make sure everyone felt comfortable and had access to receive their vaccinations.

The district engaged the work of the North Carolina Council of Churches for virtual Missional Network gatherings, co-hosting three “Becoming a Trauma-Informed Health Community” workshops with the assistance of Partners in Health and Wholeness. The district continues to invest in learning opportunities for its clergy that lead them to be more innovative and inclusive in the pulpit and continued hosting preaching workshops and retreats focused on deepening beloved community. Dr. Andre’ Resner of Hood Theological Seminary and Dr. Frederick J. Streets of Yale Divinity School were recent guests for virtual preaching workshops in the district.

Northern Piedmont continues to lead both North Carolina conferences in cross-cultural appointments. It supports cross-cultural appointments with truth and reconciliation dialogues and the care of souls in transition. Its partnerships with local and regional community leaders and resources allow the district to live into God’s vision for all. The learning cohort is in the midst of exploring the book *The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health*. Together they are learning an authentic path toward healing in personal lives and in communities. The relationship with the Beloved Community Center has continued through Zoom Retreats throughout the pandemic.

The Northern Piedmont School of Spiritual Direction supports the district’s goal of spiritual maturity and includes laity and clergy from all over the conference. Trained directors are mobilized for both personal spiritual direction and group direction for churches in discernment. The district continues to resource congregations, missional networks, and neighborhoods with team development, executive coaching, and teaching cultural intelligence. Vitality and missional engagement grants support discipleship initiatives in all the counties in which the district does ministry. Recent district grants have included a production studio for churches to enhance online worship, as well as community meal and backpack programs. Benevolence grants continue to support UMAR, campus ministries across Greensboro, and the Chrysalis Counseling Center.

The Northern Piedmont District is beginning the 2021-2022 conference year with 134 churches in 102 charges, with a total of 120 clergy and 39,657 laity. The district is proud to have 90 retired clergy living within the bounds of the district. At the time of this report, the Northern Piedmont District has 20 Certified Candidates for ministry, 33 Local Pastors, and three clergy from other denominations appointed in the district. The district will assign its first Certified Lay Minister this summer.

Bev Copley, District Superintendent

Maria King, District Vitality Associate

Landa Wallace and Lynne Gilbert, District Administrators

6. SMOKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

There is no debate about the fact that the year 2020 has been unlike any other year. The impact of Covid-19 on individuals, families, churches, communities, and communities is beyond comprehension. However, during this season of grief and loss there are glimpses and powerful examples of light in the darkness, hope in the midst of despair, and the deep eternal truth that nothing can separate the people of God from the presence and love of God. It has been a journey of trusting God and trusting each other in the Smoky Mountain District to learn new ways to give expression to life giving truths of God’s love for the most vulnerable and the least recognized in our communities. The journey is a shared journey of laity and clergy, churches and community leaders, and persons who have embraced the gift of God’s grace personified in Jesus and persons who are just beginning to get a glimpse or a nudge toward the transforming power of embracing the reality that God’s love is for each and all persons.

Following are words of reflection about this past year from Wayner Dickert, District Vitality Team Leader, Nicole Jones, District Vitality Associate, and D’Andre, District Communications Coordinator.

Wayner Dickert: The Gospel of John tells us that on a dark night, Nicodemus came to Jesus looking for some wisdom (some say he came looking for a fight). During the ensuing discussion, Jesus announced that “God’s Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It’s the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Over the past year, the Smoky Mountain District churches and the world have experienced the longest, darkest night in our memory. As our churches were taken from their sanctuaries, our rural district faced deep challenges. How can we connect and worship, when we are isolated with only a few people having viable internet connections and fewer churches having ever tried livestreaming? Each church tried to find the best way to follow the blowing of the Spirit in their context.

Recognizing the needs around them, most congregations sought to bridge the gap between the church and the world to serve in whatever way possible in their communities. Many of our churches had to shut down, or postpone, their plans for Dinner Church. Some were able to transition to drive-through and delivery of food. Some churches were able to partner with local agencies to make food accessible to people in desperate need. Being able to be in ministry and mission together helped create connection and holy purpose for everyone involved.

Nicole Jones: Despite the enormous disruption in their lives this past year, churches throughout the Smoky Mountain District have demonstrated incredible resolve and creativity with their response. Whether or not the church doors were open, the ministry of the churches continued as faithful congregants sought ways to address the needs of the community. Through this profoundly revelatory year, the social disparities have been even more visible. Churches increased their crises response with feeding programs, book distribution for virtual learners, and expanding Wi-Fi for their surrounding community. New partnerships emerged as churches worked together both within the denomination as well as ecumenically and with community partners.

For some, the delay of entering the digital world was felt strongly as congregations had to adapt to new modes of physically distanced ministry. However, many churches rose to the challenge offering new online services, mid-week prayer services and daily reflections through Facebook live and Zoom. Parsonages and sanctuaries were transformed into make-shift production studios. As long-awaited vaccines rolled out, churches became sites for distribution, connecting to a larger system of care for the health of our communities.

We also continued to witness the brokenness of centuries of racial violence and inequity. As our hearts have ached, longing for justice, churches have addressed these issues through webinars, studies, virtual gatherings, and prophetic preaching.

D'Andre Ash: In response to persistent and pervasive systemic racism, The Smoky Mountain District Vitality Team gathered in the fall of 2020 to plan a Black Lives Matter worship service at Lake Junaluska in Lake Junaluska, NC. The flashpoint of George Floyd's death and the civil unrests that followed provided the impetus for planning such a gathering. As the team began to plan, it became evident that single service was not enough and that a broader coalition should be formed to include leaders in the region already doing justice work. With a new awareness and commitment to the call for justice, the Smoky Mountain District Justice and Reconciliation Team was formed. Its mission is to worship inclusively, educate on racial disparities, initiate conversations, and celebrate diversity. "Worship, Educate, Initiate, Celebrate." Its first project and inaugural event will be a Juneteenth Celebration held on June 19th, 2021 at Lake Junaluska. The Justice and Reconciliation Team will facilitate ongoing opportunities for education and dialogue to dismantle racism.

The laity and the clergy of the churches and other district leaders in the UMW, Wesley Foundation at WCU, Hinton Rural Life Center have inspired and challenged one another on this shared journey with their faithfulness and determination to stay focused on God's mission for the Body of Christ in each unique context and to be open to the power and newness of God's Spirit.

Linda Kelly, District Superintendent

7. UWHARRIE DISTRICT

The Uwharrie District has resourced pastors and congregations for ministry during a time of pandemic and a time of increased awareness of the need for authentic conversations around racism and social justice. They have provided online training and ongoing conversations on relevant ministry topics. Weekly email newsletters and targeted newsletters kept resources and information before laity and clergy. They have provided online sermons and worship resources for pastors and worship leaders who needed a respite from the week after week marathon of online worship.

The Uwharrie District has hosted two Reading and Listening Groups on Racism, Spirituality, and Christian Discipleship. Together, they have read books and listened to podcasts, with two of the books being a part of the 2020 UMW reading program. They have offered mini-grants to churches who serve primarily racial minority communities. In total, they have granted over \$80,000 in district grants for mission and ministry. They are able to do this because of the generous participation in district apportioned giving.

Many ministries, especially meal ministries, have been curtailed in 2020. Other ministries have emerged because of the pandemic: food pick-up and delivery ministries, support for health care workers and schools, and outreach to those engaged in virtual learning. Several churches stepped up their community feeding programs and food pantry ministries. Churches offered free wi-fi to their communities. Many churches discovered new people seeking Jesus as online opportunities for worship and discipleship were offered.

Ministry leaders across the district met together as the Ministry Council to give guidance and support to the work of Fresh Expressions, Lay Servant Training, and Recovery Ministries. They look forward to how God will lead and direct them as they equip clergy and laity to lead vital congregations and ministries. This past year has been painful in so many ways. The district is grateful that the year has also included great possibility for God's reign.

Laura Auten, District Superintendent

8. YADKIN VALLEY DISTRICT

The Yadkin Valley District has thrived during the season of the pandemic. It has done so by the grace of God, faith in God, and the commitment of the pastors and laity of the district. These manifested themselves as the district partnered with God and collaborated with one another.

The Missional Networks were resources to share ideas, refine them, adapt them, and implement them in context. Because of this, all the churches moved to virtual platforms in which to practice ministries. They included YouTube, Facebook, drive-in worship, outdoor worship, and call-in worship. These platforms were not only used for worship, but operated as small group ministries, educational ministries, and outreach ministries.

Many clergy in the district discovered newer ways to empower and include the laity in the church's ministry. One of the ways this occurred was by asking the laity to check on others during this season of COVID-19. Laity expressed their love and concern for others by mailing cards, letters, making calls, and running errands.

This love for others was not limited to church members. The district practiced it and lived it out for community members at large. It followed the protocols of the CDC and the annual conference as it adapted its outreach ministries. The dinner church and other feeding ministries became take-out and delivery. Community children gathered in district buildings because the district transformed them into remote learning centers. Some of the parking lots became outdoor classrooms where students could use the internet to download and upload their assignments.

The district thrived in its ministry of racial justice. The Missional Network charge conference asked the question of what churches were doing related to the pandemic of racism. This question led to lay leaders and clergy sharing what they were doing, and the next faithful steps God was calling them to take. The Justice and Reconciliation team continued its monthly meetings, and listened to stories, had conversations, read, and discussed the late Reverend Doctor James Cone's book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. It also sponsored a ten-week study on Jemar Tisby's book *The Color of Compromise*. Clergy and laity participated in this study. Jim Melson, a retired elder from the Virginia Annual Conference, led these discussions from April 13, 2021, until June 15, 2021. These opportunities will lead to more understanding that this work is part of being followers of Christ, with the expectation that each disciple will grow into a more faithful representation of Jesus.

The district thrived in its work of increasing the vitality of its churches. It identified, nominated, and worked with pastors who participated in the B-ELI. Randy Blanchard worked with G3 and Sunrise so that they could share resources and merge. Ardmore United Methodist was identified and assisted in their transformational journey as they continue to grow into one of annual conference's "great churches." The district reworked and realigned charges so that churches could collaborate and share resources.

It continues to partner with God and each other as God's direction guides the next steps in faith, and is ready to listen to and obey God to discern the next steps. As the district moves into the next season of the pandemic, it looks to the future with hope. Faith in God holds the future and accompanies the Yadkin Valley district.

Sam Moore, District Superintendent

D. AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

1. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

a. Aldersgate Life Plan Community

Aldersgate is now in its 73rd year of serving elders. It is located in the most diverse segment of Charlotte and continues to spearhead diversity, inclusion and equity for residents, team members, board members, and community partners. The first three words of the Aldersgate mission statement, "We honor elders," establishes their inclusive nature of serving all elders. Comprised of 231 acres in east Charlotte, Aldersgate is one of the largest employers in the area, representing over 30 different nationalities in its team. Aldersgate continues to hold SAGE certification at a platinum level as part of the intentional journey to become the inclusive flagship of the life plan community sector. Aldersgate's core values of living in faith, practicing stewardship, serving with compassion, striving for excellence, respecting independence, embracing diversity and inclusion, and building meaningful connections are reflected and modeled starting with the board of directors and executive team. Aldersgate partners with 57 local, diverse organizations and minority-owned businesses as a continued part of diversity, inclusion, and engagement.

One of the most significant achievements of 2020 was brought about by the largest catastrophe, the pandemic. Aldersgate is fortunate to have the availability of multiple and ample outdoor spaces to circumvent isolation and depression brought on by the lack of social interactions. Aldersgate has championed social interaction and wellbeing in all areas, including mental, physical, emotional and cognitive. Modifications to previous 'normal' activities became critical and immediate, which led to an outpouring of creativity. Keeping true to the commitment to elders as well as to community, Aldersgate reached out to local musicians and created Concerts by the Lake. Musicians and bands performed from the lake gazebo with speakers angled toward the surrounding lake, allowing residents to safely distance in an outdoor space. This permitted a semblance of interaction and community, with residents seeing each other for the first time in months. Concerts by the Lake was originally scheduled to happen monthly, but was popular enough that it was increased to every two weeks and extended, until cool weather forbid it. Concerts were made accessible to all residents, whether independent living or not. Residents residing at Asbury Health and Rehabilitation Center in skilled nursing are not as ambulatory, so concerts were brought to them. Asbury residents gathered at the screened porches abutting the courtyards while musicians performed in the center of each courtyard. While these concerts were brought about in response to COVID19, they and many other modifications will remain in place past the pandemic, as they are enjoyed and appreciated by residents and team members alike.

Like many other businesses, Aldersgate struggled with staffing during the time of COVID19. With the onset of distance learning, many parents had to remain at home to assist children with school, thus limiting the talent pool of team members. In a time when healthcare professionals were in high demand, some were not available to work due to this added task. Aldersgate, in conjunction with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, created an onsite Learning Pod for children of team members. This pod was staffed and provided assisted distance learning, while allowing team members to work knowing their children were on task with learning.

With the onset of COVID19 and the predictions of potential shutdowns and surges during the winter months, Aldersgate started planning in September for adding some light to the resident's lives for the holidays. The concept exploded and grew far beyond the original plan and became a campus-wide light festival that was opened to the surrounding community. Sponsors and vendors of Aldersgate supplemented the typical decorating budget and allowed for a lightshow that brought over 600 vehicles on campus in a 2-hour timeframe, and yielded over 1,200 pounds of donated non-perishable food items to support Second Harvest Food Bank.

In 2020, Aldersgate partnered with GenOne to provide a new workspace on campus in the former Aldersgate At Home cottage. GenOne is a local non-profit that helps talented, qualified students from underserved communities prepare, navigate and enroll in higher education. GenOne has deep ties to the Eastside with students from Garinger High School and OurBridge for Kids. Once it is safe to gather in person, opportunities for intergenerational exchanges will be further accessed.

Aldersgate won The Charlotte Observer's Best Of contest in Independent Living as well as Skilled Nursing — both for the second year in a row.

Aldersgate at Home has continued to serve clients who live both on- and off-campus in Mecklenburg County, expanding to approximately 215 additional lives touched.

Brooks Shelley, Chief Branding and Community Engagement Officer, Aldersgate Life Plan Services

**Proposal: Boards of Directors of
Aldersgate Life Plan Services, Inc.,
Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.,
and Aldersgate At Home, Inc.**

(Petition 10) *Approved June 12, 2021*

The board of directors of Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc., proposes that the following persons be confirmed as members of that board. Note the addition of the Board of Directors for Aldersgate Life Plan Services, Inc. is due to the addition of the parent company as its own entity.

*Class of 2021 (*denotes resident member):*

(10a) Board of Directors of Aldersgate Life Plan Services, Inc.

Mary E. Wilson, Thomas R. Lawing Jr., William K. Springs, Patricia Garrett, David J. Guilford, Stanley Watkins, Robert Dee Vaughn Jr., Christopher W. Davis, Fred Longiette, Billy Maddalon, Kevin McKane, Irene Vogelsong, Brad Crossley, Martha D. Jones*, Richard (Jerry) Gaudet*

(10b) Board of Directors of Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.

Mary E. Wilson, Thomas R. Lawing Jr., William K. Springs, Patricia Garrett, David J. Guilford, Stanley Watkins, Robert Dee Vaughn Jr., Christopher W. Davis, Fred Longiette, Billy Maddalon, Kevin McKane, Irene Vogelsong, Brad Crossley, Martha D. Jones*, Richard (Jerry) Gaudet*

(10c) Board of Directors of Aldersgate at Home, Inc.

Mary E. Wilson, Thomas R. Lawing Jr., William K. Springs, Patricia Garrett, David J. Guilford, Stanley Watkins, Robert Dee Vaughn Jr., Christopher W. Davis, Fred Longiette, Billy Maddalon, Kevin McKane, Irene Vogelsong, Brad Crossley, Martha D. Jones*, Richard (Jerry) Gaudet*

b. Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.

Through excellence, innovation, caring and beauty, Arbor Acres cultivates community, comfort and well-being for senior adults.

The year 2020 was one of challenge and opportunity. By God's grace, the COVID-19 pandemic spared the community of a potentially devastating impact. While there were numerous positive cases among residents and staff, only five of residents' deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

The Core Redevelopment Plan, created in response to the need to replace portions of the now 40+ year-old community, moved closer to reality. After receiving the necessary North Carolina Department of Insurance approval, presales consisting of 10% deposits began in earnest. Groundbreaking is anticipated in early summer 2021.

Arbor Acres Home Care continued to expand in 2020, providing residents with support during the periods when family members were unable to visit loved ones due to pandemic restrictions.

The Resident Assistance Fund received \$538,901 in 2020, setting an all-time record for giving at the community. Arbor Acres was also the recipient of \$1,436,739 in estate bequests. The new Anniversary Society successfully launched with 11 charter members who have named Arbor Acres in their wills for a minimum of \$500,000. All proceeds from the Anniversary Society will be used to supplement the Resident Assistance Fund. Finally, the residents of Arbor Acres joined forces with the Salvation Army's Center for Hope to raise over \$180,000 to enable Winston-Salem's only family homeless shelter to renovate their kitchen.

Arbor Acres is grateful for the opportunity to actively join with the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church in being the hands and feet of the Lord Jesus Christ in this community.

Andrew W. Applegate, President/CEO
Pam Ball, Chairperson, Board of Directors

Proposal: Board of Directors of Arbor Acres**(Petition 11)** *Approved June 12, 2021*

Cynthia S. Graham
 Arthur L. Bloom
 Dudley C. Chandler
 Florence P. Corpening
 Danny R. Newcomb
 Courtney H. Douglas
 Susan C. Elster
 Christopher Pearce

Christin M.D. Dunn
 David C. Hinton
 Kaye P. Lambert
 J. Hill Stockton
 William J. McGuinn
 Drewry H. Nostitz
 John E. Lauer

Donald F. Eppert
 Vincent W. Howell
 Susan S. Schwartz
 Victoria P. Hunt
 Wendy Walker-Fox
 John W. Willingham
 Carroll McCullough

Bishop Paul L. Leeland
 Resident Bishop

Ex Officio
 Samuel Moore
 Yadkin Valley District Superintendent

Frank Rayburn
 President, Resident Council

c. Chrysalis Counseling and Consultation Center

Chrysalis is the Methodist counseling and consultation resource serving all the districts of the eastern part of the conference. The center is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), fee-based center providing mental health services for individuals, couples, families, and children.

Chrysalis believes that healing and wholeness is a fundamental part of serving God both as pastoral professionals and caregivers. Quality confidential counseling for ministers and their families at an affordable cost is provided. It also serves clergy as a referral source for congregants experiencing a range of emotional problems including anxiety disorders, addiction, depression, marital conflict, relationship issues, and issues related to healing and growth.

In 2020, the Center, following CDC guidelines, moved to extend telehealth sessions via Zoom and Facetime to new and existing clients. Intakes dipped, but remained steady. The satellite at Covenant UMC in High Point remains in place under Chrysalis counselor, Cathy Cole, LCMHC. The satellite at Gethsemane UMC has been discontinued. New counselors and satellite locations are being sought.

Chrysalis continues to serve as an invaluable resource for those seeking affordable, professional counseling and consultation services. In 2020 Chrysalis reduced total fees by \$21,845 for the clients. The Chrysalis Samaritan Fund for those who have limited income and are without mental health insurance coverage. The center invites local churches to help financially support the Samaritan Fund.

Appreciation goes out to the board members listed below. COVID 19 has restricted board meetings, but God is helping to experience a successful 2021.

Since 1980, Chrysalis Counseling & Consultation Center has provided services to individuals and families in our faith communities. We thank you for your trust in our efforts over the years to make a difference in the lives of people. We appreciate all financial support as we move forward to meet the growing demands of the future! Please visit our website at chrysaliscenters.org to learn more about the Chrysalis ministry.

Gary L. Kling, Executive Director

Proposal: Board of Directors of Chrysalis Counseling and Consultation Center**(Petition 12)** *Approved June 12, 2021*

Amanda Kirby (Vice President)
 Jackie Selman

Mary Lu Harmon (Secretary)
 Donna Miller
 TBA (President and Treasurer)

Clarinda Crawford
 Lynda Hodges

Ex Officio
 Gary L. Kling (Executive Director)

Cathy G. Cole (Staff Counselor)

Leigh Loftin (Office Manager)

d. Crossnore School and Children's Home

Crossnore School & Children's Home, a 212-acre campus, opened in 1909 in the heart of Winston-Salem, N.C., an 86-acre campus opened in 1913 in Crossnore, N.C.; and, a satellite office opened in 2018 in Hendersonville, N.C. The mission of Crossnore School & Children's Home is to grow healthy futures for children and families by providing a Christian sanctuary of hope and healing. Crossnore works with children who are at risk of entering the child welfare system, already in the child welfare system, and/or youth who are aging out of the system. Services include Clinical Therapy, Prevention/Early Intervention, Permanency Planning, and Post-Permanency/After Care.

Brett A. Loftis, J.D., Chief Executive Officer of Crossnore School & Children's Home, directs an executive team of four: Angela Woods, Chief Operating Officer, Sarah Norris, Chief Program Officer, and Caroline Hart, Deputy Director and Chief External Relations Officer. Each officer leads a team of talented directors and staff who are committed to the mission of Crossnore School & Children's Home. The Board of Trustees is led by Bick Cardwell Jr., Chairperson; B. Kelly Graves, Vice-Chairperson; Traci D. Royster, Secretary; and Charles O. Izard, Treasurer.

Crossnore utilizes The Sanctuary Model®, a trauma-informed model of care, and expects to be re-certified in the model in late spring of 2021. Crossnore is one of only six organizations nationwide that have been certified more than once by The Sanctuary Institute. By utilizing the most current science about brain development and decades of research about the impact of trauma on the brain, Sanctuary transforms organizations into healing communities. Sanctuary is implemented worldwide in more than 300 organizations, and it is the only organizational model that is recognized by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Put

simply, Sanctuary changes an organization's essential question from, "What's wrong with you?" to, "What happened to you?" When implemented with fidelity in an organization, research shows that children and adult clients make better and faster progress, and the staff members serving clients are protected from the dangerous impacts of vicarious trauma and toxic stress. Crossnore currently has 50 employees who are trained as Sanctuary trainers providing ongoing training for staff and community-based foster families.

Crossnore opened the Center for Trauma Resilient Communities in 2018 to provide training in trauma and building resiliency to communities across the United States. Faculty of the center offer customized training to meet the needs of groups, teams, churches, businesses, or organizations. These sessions range from half-day workshops in the basics of trauma-informed care to multi-day intensives that delve deeper into effectively responding to those who have experienced trauma, as well as multi-year contracts helping organizations embed and embody the science of trauma resilience.

Therapists in Crossnore's Clinical Services program provide outpatient and school-based therapy to more than 400 children in Winston-Salem, Crossnore, and Hendersonville. This includes children living in campus cottages on the Crossnore and Winston-Salem campuses. A major accomplishment this past year has been the pivot to telehealth services during the pandemic. Within two weeks of North Carolina's stay-at-home order, clinical services teams had a plan in place to offer virtual sessions allowing children and families to remain connected to their therapists and continue to receive vital services.

Crossnore School & Children's Home's Prevention and Early Intervention programs include Day Treatment and Homebuilders. Day Treatment staff work with students in kindergarten through 12th grade who are assigned to Kingswood School in Winston-Salem. Day Treatment also was able to implement telehealth services, allowing children to continue working toward returning to their home schools.

Homebuilders® Family Preservation is a new program in Crossnore's prevention line-up. Homebuilders is a nationally known and evidence-based program providing in-home crisis intervention, counseling, and life skills education for families whose children are at imminent risk of being removed from the home. The start-up costs have been funded by a generous gift of \$1.3M from Elizabeth M. Strickland, a long-time Winston-Salem resident. The goal of the homebuilders program is to remove the risk of abuse and neglect from a family situation, rather than removing the child from the home. Crossnore staff work with families to help them learn new behaviors and make better choices for their families.

The Permanency Planning programs include Foster Care Licensing & Training and Residential Services. The Foster Care Licensing team recruits and trains single-family foster homes to receive their foster care licensure. At the end of 2020, Crossnore had 121 licensed foster homes, with 12 families in training, and 20 families awaiting their final licensure. These families were able to provide a home for 115 children in 2020.

The residential program continues to provide homes for more than 200 children annually in cottages on the Avery and Winston-Salem campuses. Many of the children live with their siblings and all receive the therapeutic, medical, and educational support services they need. Spiritual life has been a challenge during the pandemic, but Crossnore's campus pastor has continued to connect with staff and children through Zoom chapel services and a weekly faith connection group for staff.

Crossnore's Post-Permanency and After Care programs include Adoptions and Youth Independent Living. The adoptions staff works with families to match them with children who need a forever home. In 2020, 31 adoptions were finalized. Youth Independent Living has opened on the Winston-Salem campus, beginning with supervised, on-campus housing for youth who have aged out of foster care. Additional on-site unsupervised housing and community-based rental properties will be available to these youth as they build their skills to live independently.

Crossnore's Fostering Communities continues to recruit churches and other community groups to serve foster children and families in their own communities. Crossnore partners with groups to create a Fostering Community and provides a dedicated point of contact, education on the impact of trauma and how to build resiliency, development of a sustainable support structure to meet the needs of foster children and parents, training and licensure for families who are interested in becoming trauma resilient foster families, support with ongoing coaching and consultations, and overseeing a smooth process for any foster placement that may become a forever home for a child through adoption.

For nearly 112 years, Crossnore School & Children's Home has worked to transform the lives of thousands of children in need of hope and healing. With three locations, professional and dedicated staff, and the support of many donors and volunteers, Crossnore School & Children's Home is the premier provider of children's services in Western North Carolina.

Holly Solomon, Director of Communications

336-721-7600 • hsolomon@crossnore.org • www.crossnore.org

e. Givens Communities

COVID-19 has received much attention during 2020 and 2021. It has been a priority to keep residents and staff as safe as possible in a caring and supportive environment. Emergency preparedness, infection control and pandemic have been refined and implemented to address this challenging situation. The residents and staff in the four communities are working together in a positive and supportive manner to manage and overcome this crisis. There is solace in going through difficult times together. The response of this vulnerable group who have been concerned for others and the welfare of our country and world before themselves has been inspirational.

Beginning in 2019, Givens placed an emphasis on respecting differences, diversity, and inclusion. This will continue through 2021 and 2022 with a specific focus on inclusion. There is much work to be done though they are pleased with current progress and enthusiastic about the future and the opportunity to become stronger and healthier through this process.

Givens Estates is renovating Oxford Commons, the main building on campus. The renovations will expand the dining options and wellness opportunities and will be complete in April of 2021. Also, Givens is building Friendship Park which is designed to replace some of the older more moderately priced housing and includes 80 one- and two-bedroom apartments. Friendship Park will be completed in December of 2021. While these projects are under construction, attention will soon be shifting to Phase 2 of the campus master plan which includes a significant renovation of the health care center and converting semi-private rooms to suites. The health center will be working with Action Pact to continue its effort of becoming more resident and staff focused. This process was delayed due to COVID. It will be completed in 2021.

In 2020, Highland Farms built The Cottages which is sixteen one- and two-bedroom homes on a beautiful seven-acre site. While these projects were underway, attention shifted to Phase 2 of the campus master plan. It will include demolition of part of Brookside and construction of the new Brookside Commons which will be the home of the kitchen, dining and commons areas. The new Brookside Apartments will include 30 one- and two-bedroom apartments. Concurrently, they will build the new Vista Ridge Apartments which will include 36 one- and two-bedroom apartments and will be connected to the new dining and activity areas. These additional phases of the master plan will augment Meadowmont Homes and The Cottages which will further transform that wonderful community.

Great Laurels continues to emphasize the importance of social connections and being a community. The onsite Manna Food pantry and the access to campus nursing continues to benefit residents. This wonderful community is fully occupied with healthy waiting lists which is a testimony of the need and demand for quality affordable housing in Western North Carolina.

Gerber Park is a wonderful community that is fully occupied with healthy waiting lists which is evidence of the need and demand for quality affordable housing in Western North Carolina. The focus is on making this a vibrant and lively community and providing a quality of life with support services to enable residents to gracefully age in their homes. Socialization is the cornerstone of resident life with a particular emphasis on nutritious meals, addressing food insecurity, navigating a complex and complicated health system, and accessing community-based services. Residents are collaborating with staff and taking responsibility for making Gerber their home. Two meals are available each weekday in the Go to Café. The medical clinic is a partnership that provides residents onsite access to primary care to the residents.

LifeMinistries is the faith and community-based outreach program. Givens is committed to a wellness philosophy of whole-person health not only for their residents, but for many living beyond their campuses. Givens LifeMinistries is actively working to address health disparities of underserved, diverse, and vulnerable populations in Western North Carolina by providing access to resources and health education that empowers individuals to improved wellness and quality of life. It enables congregations to share their gifts and talents in addressing health and meeting needs of those in need through Welcome Tables (meal sites), BEAR Closets (baby equipment and resources), medical equipment loan closets, wellness education, and a community nurse program addressing the needs of lower-income seniors.

Givens Communities continues to be an exciting organization with an abundance of opportunities serving seniors in Western North Carolina. They remain enthusiastic about the Life Plan Communities, affordable housing, emphasis on keeping residents independent for as long as possible, and the goal of being a responsible employer in which team members are welcomed, respected, and appreciated.

Kenneth M. Partin, Chief Executive Officer

Proposal: Board of Directors of Givens Communities

(Petition 13) *Approved June 12, 2021*

It is proposed that the following be elected as members of the Board of Directors of Givens Communities:

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Annette P. Coleman	Kathryn M. Atkinson	Margaret A. Kuhn
Adam K. Ennis	Donna A. Broadwell	Suzanna E. Landis
Charles L. Frederick	Alisa J. Brown	Connie B. Martin
Ronald C. Leatherwood	Kathryn R. Durity	Joseph P. McGuire
Robert M. McKown	Murphy H. Fletcher	Robby Russell
Charles Pine	F. Patrick McGuire	Kenneth W. Swayze Jr.
Christopher B. Taylor	Miles K. Hoffman	G. Edward Towson II
David C. Whilden	Rebekah M. Lowe	Marjorie J. Tucker

Ex Officio

Robert E Shepherd (Honorary Life)	Hal F. Starnes (Honorary Life)
Alfred J. Whitesides Jr. (Honorary Life)	Doris Loomis (Immediate Past Chairperson)

Clergy

Robert M. Blackburn Jr.	Karen L. Easter Bayne
W. Michael Holder	R. Keith Turman
W. Mark Ralls, Blue Ridge Superintendent	

f. Sanctuary Counseling Group

Sanctuary Counseling Group (SCG) is an agency that provides pastoral and mental health counseling to 15 unique communities in the greater Charlotte area. For over 55 years, SCG therapists have been offering counseling, psychotherapy, pastoral counseling and consultation to individuals, clergy, congregations, and UMC districts in the Western and Central Piedmont areas. The group works with a variety of issues, including depression, anxiety, stress, trauma, career counseling, abuse recovery, grief/loss, and addiction to name a few. In addition, Sanctuary offers educational programs for congregations and church groups. The mission statement is “to be dedicated to the healing of the heart, mind, and soul by providing excellent emotional, spiritual, and relational health care to all peoples and communities.”

2020 Statistics:

- 10,454 hours of counseling services were provided for over 750 clients.
- SCG serving 15 communities: Gastonia, Belmont, Harrisburg, Monroe, Pineville, South Charlotte, Center City, University City, Concord, Huntersville, Davidson, Hickory, Salisbury, Winston-Salem, and High Point.
- 2,823 hours of service provided on a sliding scale.
- 100% of donations go to the Samaritan Client Assistance Fund.
- \$90 pays for one hour of services; \$900 can last a client for a year.
- 27% of hours provided are at reduced rates.
- SCG put approximately \$421,000 back into the communities.

All therapists are licensed to conduct counseling in the state of North Carolina based on their professional affiliations. In addition to having pastoral counselors on staff, Sanctuary also has licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical mental health counselors, and licensed clinical social workers. The goal is to meet people where they are in their walk without judgment or bias. Sanctuary realizes that throughout life there are times that everyone needs some assistance, and values the opportunity whenever someone calls for help in their despair and darkness. As a faith-based organization, SCG offers God’s healing grace to all regardless of their beliefs or position in life. SCG has found that too many of the churches are full of those broken because of life circumstances and this keeps them bound to the pews instead of fully engaging in God’s work. SCG serves as an important referral source for pastors, who often do not have the time or the specialized training to work with persons in local congregations who are hurting.

Some specialties include play therapy, music therapy, abuse and trauma recovery, perinatal and child loss trauma, marital therapy, adolescents and young adults, men’s issues, women’s issues, coaching, and addiction. While some have specialties, SCG is, for the most part, generalists who can engage most clients. The group is highly trained in understanding and treating the issues with which clergy struggle. The clinicians are routinely updated on the state of the church and the unique challenges United Methodist pastors face. The group uses various theoretical orientations, methodologies, tools, and techniques so that the clients can reach the goals they set for themselves.

As with the rest of the world, SCG has had to adapt to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As of mid-March 2020, the group was able to shift to HIPAA-compliant virtual therapy within 48 hours of pivoting the method of service.

The SCG area of service now encompasses the Catawba Valley, Metro, Northern Piedmont, and Uwharrie districts. Harrisburg UMC has just become the latest addition to the SCG church. In 2020, SCG donated approximately \$421,000 back to the various communities where there are satellite locations in dollars of service provided at either a reduced- or no-cost basis. This was made possible by generous donations from the church partners and donors who believe in the mission. In addition to offering the Samaritan Client Assistance Fund, there is also insurance from four different insurance carriers, including the conference plan that covers UMC pastors and their families.

The SCG website and social media sites are updated regularly with new information that pertains to the field of mental health. The website can be accessed at www.sanctuarycounselinggroup.org. A variety of original articles, blog posts, podcasts, and videos that have been created to help individuals, families, and churches with the mental health needs, including information around COVID-19 is offered. SCG encourages one to follow the group and to post links to any content found relevant on their own church’s websites and social media. To learn more about the clinical services and sites, as well as to make contributions to the Samaritan Client Assistance Fund to aid persons without financial means who seek mental, spiritual or emotional assistance, visit the website or any of the social media sites.

SCG is a service center that is accredited by both the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) and the Solihnten Institute (formerly known as the Samaritan Institute). In 2020, SCG went through a rigorous reaccreditation process with Solihnten Institute, a national pastoral counseling accrediting body. The organization received the highest commendation from Solihnten, as the work was commended as “excellent and exemplary.”

Jay Cobb, Executive Director

g. UMAR Services, Inc.

As a mission and ministry, UMAR promotes community inclusion, independence, and growth for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through residential, employment, and cultural enrichment opportunities. Providing vital services for adults with a wide range of physical, mental, and emotional disabilities, the mission easily translates into “live, work, and thrive” as the services transform lives. UMAR is grateful for the partnership with the Western North Carolina Conference.

Districts, churches, and individuals welcome UMAR into their hearts, homes, and sanctuaries. While living out *The Social Creed of the United Methodist Church* to be committed to the rights of people with disabilities, the church body advocates, provides financial support and inclusive opportunities for spiritual development, volunteerism, essential items, and social interaction. If it were not for this support, UMAR would be unable to provide the following opportunities and quality services that our families and communities rely upon:

- **Live (Residential Services):** UMAR operates 22 homes, nine apartments and one duplex. Dedicated, trained staff provide residents with 24/7 support, meals, transportation, activities, and other quality of life enhancements – all while fostering independence and responsibility in a family-like setting.
- **Work (Vocational Services):** UMAR helps adults with disabilities secure and maintain competitive employment with skills assessment, job coaching, placement, training, and support for as long as the individual is employed.
- **Thrive (Art/Day Programs):** UMAR Day Programs focus on art, social, and independent living skills. Because vocational services are not appropriate for everyone, day services ensure meaningful activities that foster learning and growth. With art centers located in Charlotte, Lincolnton, and Reidsville, community partnerships inspire a variety of art forms such as painting, pottery, culinary, and horticulture. Artists earn a 40 percent commission for every piece sold.
- **Community Services:** Across 11 counties, UMAR provides individualized or group activities to increase or maintain life skills, self-determination, self-care, and participation in the community. Supports can include community networking, supported living in their own residence, crisis services, respite for family caregivers, and supported employment.

As an outreach ministry, congregations can be engaged in the work of UMAR through hands-on mission activities, donations, and volunteering with participants. For more information on programs or to get involved visit UMARinfo.com

Because of the pandemic, 2020 was a challenging year. Under a federal-declared Public Health Emergency, the health, wellness, and safety of the adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities that UMAR serves, as well as their caregivers and family, were the top priorities. Guidance from the Center for Disease Control and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, as well as Executive Orders from the Governor, required that residents in group homes stay home with restricted visitor visitation and that UMAR Arts Centers remain closed. Numerous infectious disease procedures and protocols were put in place to prevent, mitigate, and fight the spread of the virus. Focus for the year quickly pivoted from helping individuals grow and thrive to also ensuring they had continuity of care and services.

Highlights from 2020:

- UMAR served 308 individuals and their families.
- With the three arts centers in Charlotte, Reidsville, and Lincolnton closed, arts and day program services were provided in the home to 135 individuals.
- Residential and community services supported 173 individuals and their families during this turbulent time.
- 38 percent of UMAR residents received financial assistance through donations.
- 97 percent of all donations directly funded UMAR programs and services.
- Through grant funding, UMAR hired a public policy consultant to advocate and lobby the state legislators on behalf of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Focus Areas for 2021:

- Continue performance improvements in care delivery that embody UMAR's mission while meeting the needs and dreams of UMAR participants.
- Invest in technologies that enhance workforce resourcing and productivity, as well as improve outcomes of the people UMAR supports.
- Implement organizational strategy to reduce annual operational deficit, improve financial strength, and sustainability.
- Increase organizational awareness and image throughout western North Carolina.
- Advocate and lobby state legislators for appropriations and policy changes benefitting the people UMAR serves.

Marilyn Garner, President and CEO

Proposal: Trustees of UMAR Services, Inc.

(Petition 14) Approved June 12, 2021

It is proposed the following be elected as members of the Board of Trustees of UMAR Services, Inc.:

2020/21	2021/22
Billy Morton	Billy Morton
Leslie Marsicano	Leslie Marsicano
Parks Hunter	Parks Hunter
Max Daniel	Max Daniel
Morry Johnston	Morry Johnston
Gil Middlebrooks	Gil Middlebrooks
Archie Pertiller	Archie Pertiller
Pat Mirabelli	Theresa Hall
	Ray Breazeale
	Reeves Davis

2. BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The Brotherhood/Sisterhood is an affiliate ministry of the WNCC in which clergy and laity members mutually share compassion for the families of clergy members when they die. The group extends a pastoral visit and a financial gift that is available for their family's immediate use when a clergy member dies. The funding for this gift comes from the clergy members' assessments coupled with the contributions of supportive laity.

Beneficiary membership in the BH/SH is open to all clergy members of the annual conference, including full and provisional members and local pastors. Clergy who join after their 35th birthday compensate the BH/SH for all assessments issued since that date. They may sign a non-interest-bearing promissory note to facilitate this.

The election of the Board of Directors and its officers, the approval of the annual budget, the proposals to the annual conference and other official business of the BH/SH comes from the annual meeting, normally held on the site of the annual conference and open to all clergy and laity members.

The 2021 annual meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, June 10, beginning at 7:00 pm and ending no later than 8:00 pm. The board will propose that the base amount of the financial gift be set at \$10,000.00 for the 2021-2022 Conference year with the clergy assessment rate remaining at \$15.00 per death. Laity members, responding as individuals and church groups, are asked to consider contributions of \$6.00 or more per death.

Local churches are encouraged to observe Brotherhood/Sisterhood Sunday on the third Sunday in February or on another Sunday of their choice.

With more than 600 clergy members plus many laity enrolled in the Brotherhood/Sisterhood ministry, the group expresses its profound appreciation for everybody's consideration and support.

H. Donnell FitzJefferies, President
 Donald A. Newman, Vice President
 Jeremiah P Pegram, Recording Secretary
 Roland T. Barnhardt, Executive Director

3. THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

The Duke Endowment was formed in December of 1924 by the industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, who famously said that if it were not for his father and the Methodist Church, he would not have amounted to anything. When forming his endowment, Mr. Duke named four areas of focus: higher education, health care, child welfare, and rural United Methodist churches in North Carolina. For almost 97 years, the endowment has engaged with rural churches to strengthen their ministries all across the conference and state. Formed by the grace and love of God, and led by the spirit, rural churches understand what it means to "love their neighbors."

In 2020, the rural church program area of the endowment made 28 new grants totaling over \$11 million. Other highlights of their work are below:

1. In collaboration with the two conferences and Duke Divinity School, they are working to cultivate and support clergy leadership for the rural United Methodist church in North Carolina through several initiatives, including:
 - The **Clergy Health Initiative (CHI)**, based at Duke Divinity School, advises and informs the conferences, the denomination, and others on issues of clergy well-being. The CHI team is continuing an effort aimed at bolstering pastors' ability to thrive in the midst of stressful circumstances. Called "Spirited Life: *Selah*," the effort is serving over 300 pastors across the state.
 - The **Thriving Rural Communities Initiative (TRCI)** is a collaborative effort among the endowment, the two conferences in North Carolina, and Duke Divinity School. The program forms and networks strong pastors, dubbed "Rural Fellows," for service to rural congregations. This year, Mackenzie Gary, Willie Murray, and Danielle Voigt are graduating from Duke Divinity School as Rural Fellows and beginning their ministry under appointment in the WNCC.
 - The **Hispanic House of Studies** at Duke Divinity School, which develops pastoral and congregational capacity for engagement with Latino populations, one of the fastest-growing demographic groups in the state.
 - The **Ormond Center**, also at Duke Divinity, has been re-launched and seeks to contribute scholarship, training and leadership on building thriving communities. Read more about the center here: www.ormondcenter.com.
2. The endowment is working with both conferences on efforts to support congregations in long-term planning, including helping churches to discern their most faithful and fruitful future. Resourcing the work of the Church Legacy team in the Western North Carolina Conference, as well as the partner agency Wesley Community Development Corporation, they celebrate the unique redevelopment programs that have been accomplished so far. One example is the Mineral Springs Commons located on the former Cole Memorial UMC site. It will offer 73 units of affordable housing for seniors and will be joined by a new church start, commercial office space, and retail space.
3. The endowment is also working to build the capacity of United Methodist churches to help address community-wide issues at their roots. This happens primarily through *system-level grants* to non-profit agencies that are experts in issue areas, and who coach congregations in enhancing their missions. With an intentional move away from building and construction grants, the endowment now seeks to create the conditions for congregations to thrive and to impact their communities in new and vital ways through grants that support multiple churches engaging in creative ministry. If a church is interested in deepening its work in food system engagement (including all food ministries), community or economic development, or strategic planning for community engagement, the endowment will be glad to connect you with these congregational coaches who have a statewide presence and expertise.

4. Finally, the endowment is developing and testing models for high-impact community-focused ministry for the 0-8 population. Currently, the focus of this work is the Summer Literacy Initiative, which resources up to 20 congregations (currently 10 in the Western North Carolina Conference) per year to offer to early elementary students summer reading camps that follow a set of six guiding principles. Churches that are interested in joining this pilot program may reach out to Kristen Richardson-Frick, Associate Director of the Rural Church program area.

More information about this work may be found at the Rural Church page of The Duke Endowment's website:

<https://www.dukeendowment.org/program-areas/rural-church>.

Robb Webb, Director, Rural Church

4. THE EUGENE M. COLE FOUNDATION

The Cole Foundation was established by the will of Eugene M. Cole in 1944 to provide benefits for retired ministers and surviving spouses for the Western North Carolina Conference. In 2020, the foundation directed monthly payments to the conference treasurer to supplement the cost of health care benefits to retired ministers and spouses.

The foundation is governed by three trustees elected by the annual conference: James C. Windham Jr., chairperson; Anthony Orsbon, vice-chairperson; and Rebecca Douglas, secretary.

James C. Windham Jr., Chairperson

Following submission of this report, Mr. Windham passed away, on April 19, 2021. WNCC and the community are grateful for the generosity and service Jim shared through the years.

5. WNCC FAITH FORMATION COMMUNITY

The Western North Carolina Conference Faith Formation Community, formerly known as Christians Engaged in Faith Formation (CEF), is for people of all denominations who have responsibility for the educational ministries in the church.

In February 2021, the National Christians Engaged in Faith Formation came to the sad conclusion that CEF as an organization had come to an end. For over 50 years CEF has been supporting Christian educators. Their ministry is celebrated and remembered for its support and encouragement over the years to many Christian educators.

The WNCC Faith Formation Community will continue supporting the conference. A board has been established and will continue the process of re-visioning the purpose and the means by which educational opportunities are offered.

In March 2021, the Faith Formation Community Group gathered virtually for a time of collaboration, learning, sharing difficulties, and celebrating ministries in a variety of faith formation areas, including age level ministries, small group, virtual discipleship and more. The group looks forward to planning workshops, gatherings, and retreats in the future.

The WNCC Faith Formation Community is for laity and clergy, full-time and part-time, professionals and volunteers, and anyone who participates in any form of Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Children's Ministry, Adult Education, and areas of faith formation.

To learn more about the WNCC Faith Formation Community join the WNCC Christians Engaged in Faith Formation page on Facebook or go to www.wnccumc.org/CEF for more information; or email the board at wncc.cef.membership@gmail.com.

Edward Ramsey, President

6. HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER

Mission statement: Inspired by Jesus Christ, Hinton Rural Life Center's purpose is to engage individuals, congregations, and communities in transformation through retreat ministries and missional outreach.

Hinton Rural Life Center is blessed to have secured a strong foundation over the past decade with the generosity of The Duke Endowment, North Carolina Health Foundation, The Nantahala Health Foundation, Dub and Murray Martin, the Payroll Protection Program, and their donors. Hinton was also blessed with an incredible giving response in 2020 from individuals, churches, and other organizations -- with a 46% increase over 2019 giving. All of this financial support enabled Hinton to continue to cover the cost of operations and to reach out in mission and ministry.

One of Hinton's greatest assets is the talented and dedicated staff. Even through lay-offs and payroll deductions required to navigate cash flow in 2020, Hinton staff facilitated online webinars and summer staff training, hosted a virtual missional training event for young people, implemented and maintained new cleaning and operating protocols, and creatively and safely met needs in the community through the Safe & Healthy Home Repair ministry, firewood ministry, garden ministry, and Christmas Care.

- Over 460 households were served, which included 84 home repair projects and over 300 children receiving new clothing items for Christmas.
- Over 450 truckloads of firewood were distributed, an increase of 80 loads from 2019.
- Over 1,150 pounds of garden produce was shared through local food pantries and with guests, up 300 pounds harvested from 2019.

As for 2021, there is excitement and enthusiasm about:

- Campus enhancements: renovating the McCall Retreat House and Sells Cottage for families and small groups; improving and creating new "Sanctuary" trails and gardens; updating the disc golf course.

- Partnering with a local medical provider to further connect Hinton's home repair ministry with improving the health and safety of the neighbors served.
- Continuing to offer virtual equipping and learning opportunities, including mental health first aid and webinars that explore and support the rural church.
- Offering discipleship and leadership training opportunities for young people that include summer staff training, Hinton YouthLead Academy, Youth Leadership Chatuge, and Staffers-in-Training. These are bearing fruit as participants are discerning calls to ordained ministry. Also being planned is a confirmation retreat ministry to launch in Spring 2022.
- Celebrating Hinton's 60th Anniversary, as an agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church, with special events that recognize and give thanks for 60 years of fruitful mission and ministry to the glory of God. Hinton is honored to have Bishop Ken Carter as guest preacher at the Service of Celebration on September 25.

Located in the southwest corner of North Carolina in the Appalachian Mountains on Lake Chatuge, Hinton Rural Life Center is dedicated to serving all with retreat and renewal ministries; mission outreach opportunities for individuals, families, and church teams; and equipping and discipleship programs that impact individuals, groups, and congregations for transformational ministry in their own communities.

Jacqueline Gottlieb, President and CEO
828.389.8336 • info@hintoncenter.org • www.hintoncenter.org

7. LAKE JUNALUSKA ASSEMBLY, INC.

Lake Junaluska is a place of Christian hospitality where lives are transformed through renewal of soul, mind, and body. If someone was asked to identify one word to describe Lake Junaluska over the past year, the term "sanctuary" would be used. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic impact for organizations like Lake Junaluska, it remained open and welcomed thousands of individuals, families and small groups seeking a safe haven during these difficult times, always focusing on the mission.

Commitment to transformation at Lake Junaluska is stronger than ever. Since generous charitable giving provides opportunities for Lake Junaluska to reinvest into its facilities and grounds, great strides have been made toward improving the infrastructure that will enable the Conference Center to continue to meet the needs of all guests. The center has also been preparing for a time when the Western North Carolina Annual Conference can return to these sacred grounds.

Projections on the immediate and long-term effects of the pandemic have indicated a slow recovery for the travel industry, especially for organizations relying heavily on group gatherings and events. This has been the case at Lake Junaluska, which has experienced both a slow winter season and a slow return of groups. The large conferences that usually take place in June have been cancelled, resulting in a large shortfall of projected revenue through the middle of the year. The good news is more interest for later this year is being seen.

Due to significant cost controls, charitable giving, forgivable federal loans, and excellent work by the Lake Junaluska staff to adapt how guests are hosted, 2020 was finished with a loss of \$94,000, which is amazing for an organization that lost more than \$4 million in revenue due to cancellations. Thankfully, debt has been minimized and a strong foothold is being maintained as plans for the future are made.

At its recent meeting in March 2021, the Board of Trustees reviewed the strategic vision that was adopted in March 2020. This expansive document is based on two years' worth of input from community members and stakeholders in the ministry of Lake Junaluska. It includes the following five ambitious aspirations for the future of Lake Junaluska:

- **Aspiration 1:** To preserve and enhance the lake and grounds so that more people will recognize the natural beauty of God's creation.
- **Aspiration 2:** To be a conference center that rivals hospitality industry leaders by exceeding guests' expectations through excellence in staff and facilities.
- **Aspiration 3:** To be the place that connects more youth to Christ through meaningful ministry, recreation, and education programs.
- **Aspiration 4:** To identify, uphold and strengthen the Lake Junaluska tradition of implementing innovative, shared experiences—for both individuals and families—that celebrate faith, recreation, the arts and education.
- **Aspiration 5:** To be an involved, inclusive community that provides the highest quality of life for residents and guests.

On Friday, February 5, 2021 the World Methodist Council announced the decision to close the World Methodist Museum. A few days prior to this announcement, the assembly learned of the Council's intent to sell both of its buildings at Lake Junaluska.

Lake Junaluska has a very long history with the World Methodist Council. In the 1950s, the community, along with Methodists from around the Southeast, raised funds to build the World Methodist building, which housed the World Methodist Museum. In the 1990s, Lake Junaluska Assembly, along with a generous United Methodist supporter, enabled the construction of the Royce and Jane Reynolds Headquarters building, a replica of the Old Rectory where John Wesley was born in Epworth, England. These buildings and the ministry that has taken place in them are an important and significant part of the history.

Deeds for property located at Lake Junaluska include a provision that enables Lake Junaluska Assembly a right of first refusal when transfers of ownership occur. This provision has occasionally been exercised throughout our history and, at its March 2021 meeting, the Lake Junaluska Board of Trustees voted to exercise this right to purchase the World Methodist Council buildings. The purchase will be fully funded by a generous charitable gift. While the assembly is sad to lose the Museum and its contents, it is grateful for the opportunity to keep these buildings in the ministry of Lake Junaluska.

Even in the midst of this challenging season, the assembly continues to live into the mission to be a place of Christian hospitality where lives are transformed through renewal of soul, mind and body. The return of annual conferences in 2021 and 2022 is eagerly anticipated, and it greatly appreciates the ongoing support. Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

Ken Howle, Executive Director
khowle@lakejunaluska.com

8. THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

With 18 denominations representing over 6,200 congregations in N.C., the Council provides incarnational evidence of Christian Unity. By creating unity without expecting uniformity, member bodies collaborate on matters that contribute to the flourishing of God's creation. The council is grateful to the Western North Carolina Conference for the support and leadership of the Governing Board provided by the Rev. Amelia Stinson-Wesley, Memorial UMC, Charlotte, N.C., and Ms. Renee Hays, Trinity UMC, Trinity, N.C.

Currently, the priority areas include:

- **Anti-Racism Project:** A few days after George Floyd was killed, the Council's Governing Board approved a policy statement that, among other things, called on white Christians to take seriously the work of dismantling racism. To help us see what needs to come apart, the Council staff have put together a 12-series project that systematically examines the structures contributing to racial inequity. Each lesson examines a specific issue from three angles: personal witness, demographic evidence, and the faith imperative. This final piece will also include concrete action items that individuals and groups can perform to start the process of taking down the structure of white supremacy. This resource will be a place to take hold and start acting to end racism. It is designed to be used in group study or by individuals. The council imagines it as a pilgrimage of sorts, a way to begin walking toward a world everyone wants to inhabit, the world of flourishing peace that God already knows. For more information, contact info@ncchurches.org.
- **Confederate Monument Removal:** Related to the above, but with its own emphasis, the Council has joined the work of the N.C. Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Criminal Justice in the effort to move confederate monuments from courthouse lawns. For more information, contact: info@ncchurches.org.
- **The NC Interfaith Power & Light (NCIPL) work** is expanding to become the Eco-Justice Connection (EJC). This larger program scope is a multi-faith program focused on environmental and climate justice, while NCIPL will still focus on energy democracy and climate policy. The program mission continues to be to educate, inspire, and mobilize people of faith and conscience in this state to act on climate change as a moral imperative. For more information, contact susannah@ncipl.org.
- **Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW)** provides tools to help faith communities form healthy habits including exercise, healthy eating, mental health awareness, and smoking cessation by supporting congregation based health ministries with resources and mini-grants. Mini-grant applications will be received June 1 through July 30, 2021. Other PHW focus areas include mental health, substance use disorder, and issues related to healthy aging. Additionally, to assist with COVID-19 vaccinations the council facilitated partnerships between the Department of Health and Human Services and faith communities across the state with an emphasis on rural and marginalized areas to aid in the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines. For more information, contact phwinfo@ncchurches.org.
- **The Opioid Crisis, the Faith Community Responds** educates faith leaders about compassionate responses to the growing overdose crisis and offers ways for congregations to become involved by connecting them to resources in their communities, such as a harm reductionist. To host an event or learn more about this project, contact elizabeth@ncchurches.org.
- **Gun Violence Prevention advocacy** focuses on telling the truth about gun violence in the country. The council knows the majority of gun deaths are suicides; the next highest number is homicides, usually among people who know each other or who are related to one another. The work is to help people understand how guns end up in places that create great harm and what each can do to make everyone safer. For more information, contact jennifer@ncchurches.org.

Over the course of this year, the Governing Board approved the following policy statements which can be found on the website along with other statements from previous years:

- Statement on Staying Home (April 24, 2020)
- Statement on Systemic Racism (June 2, 2020)
- Statement on Removing Confederate Symbols Where Justice Is Sought (January 26, 2021)

These statements are crafted in keeping with the interpretation of the prophetic witness of the Old Testament and the gospel message of the New Testament.

Currently, other areas of emphasis include living wage promotion, criminal justice reform, Medicaid expansion, and redistricting reform. Resources are available online and the staff is available to help congregations address any of the myriad concerns that arise in the contemporary setting. If there are any questions or anyone is interested in more information, please contact info@ncchurches.org, or call the office at 919-828-6501.

Denominational members include Alliance of Baptists · African Methodist Episcopal Church · African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church · Christian Methodist Episcopal · Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) · Episcopal Church · Evangelical Lutheran Church in America · General Baptist State Convention · Metropolitan Community Churches · Mennonite Church USA · Moravian Church in America · Presbyterian Church (USA) · Reformed Church in America · Reformed Churches of God in Christ, International · Religious Society of Friends · United Church of Christ · Unity Fellowship Church Movement · United Methodist Church.

Jennifer E. Copeland, Executive Director
www.ncchurches.org

9. RFD CDC

RFD CDC serves communities, congregations, and individuals. The focus is rural, but the service extends to all. RFD Consulting is available for consultation for senior, transitional, and veterans housing, community facilities, and congregational facility expansion. Contact information is available at the website www.rfdcdc.org.

NETworX® serves individuals in multiple counties in North Carolina and five other states. Outcomes of significant progress in terms of wellbeing, financial stability, and a significant decrease in reliance upon public assistance are reported by 496 persons. With gratitude, NETworX individuals in North Carolina and each of the sites celebrate the support received from the Western North Carolina Conference. More information about NETworX is available on the website www.networxusa.org.

Members of the RFD CDC board are as follows:

Rev. Lucy Robbins, President, Pastor Biltmore UMC

Rev. Carol Goehring, Vice-President, Retired District Superintendent, NCC

Rev. Gil Wise, Secretary/Treasurer, Beacon District Superintendent, NCC

Rev. Amy Coles, Assistant to the WNCC Bishop

Rev. Laura Early, Senior Minister All God's Children UMC

Tom Lambeth, Retired Executive Director, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Rev. Ken Locklear, Gateway District Superintendent, NCC

Rev. Joe Mann, Duke Divinity School

Rev. Connie Marie Stutts, Pastor Beech Grove-Rhems Charge

Steve Taylor, Outreach Team Coordinator, NCC

Rev. Dr. R. A. (Alan) Rice Jr, Executive Director and COO

R. A. (Alan) Rice Jr., Executive Director

Lucy Robbins, President

10. UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

The 2020-'21 conference year has proven to be an exciting year for the Foundation. Since last annual conference, the foundation celebrated its 53rd year serving United Methodist churches, institutions and individuals throughout the Western North Carolina Conference and beyond. Incorporated in 1967, the foundation's mission is grounded in helping promote good corporate and individual stewardship. This is carried out by offering the ministries of endowment development, planned giving, fund management, loans, stewardship education, and leadership training. When considering these, the following highlights come to mind:

- Total assets as of December 31, 2020 reached an all-time high of \$289 million.
- 25 new fund management partnerships were added as existing client relationships continued.
- Largest net gain in total assets in the history of the foundation.
- Reynolds Ministry Fund grants were in excess of \$571 thousand and included COVID-19 Relief grant distributions.
- \$75,000 given to support the WNCC Comprehensive Plan of Equity bringing total financial support over a three year period to \$168,000.
- Financial support totaling \$125,000 for the WNCC Church Development "Both/And Worship" program.
- Participation in the UMHEF Quadruple Your Dollars for Scholars program provided \$1K scholarships to 28 United Methodist students attending United Methodist colleges and universities.
- Eight \$2,500 scholarships were given through the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship Program of the UMC General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- The Clergy Debt Reduction Loan Program entered its 4th year and by year-end made loans totaling in excess of \$1.5 million.
- A record number of UMF Development Fund & Loan Program loans were made bringing total loans outstanding to just shy of \$14 million.
- The inaugural class of the Certificate Program in Church Treasury, a partnership with the WNCC Office of Treasury Services, graduated its first participants in November.

As can be seen from the ministry highlights above, it has been a busy and prosperous year for the foundation in spite of a pandemic that changed the way business was conducted and ministry carried out. Unfortunately, along with the good comes the bad.

In May 2020, Royce Reynolds, a long-time board member and benefactor of the foundation's Reynolds Ministry Programs, passed away after several years of declining health. Royce will be remembered not only for a generous spirit, but also for a passion to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Being a person who was known to say, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it," Royce believed that accountability was crucial to successful ministry. The Foundation has been forever changed due to Royce's wise counsel, faithful generosity, and commitment to The Great Commission. He will be missed, but his legacy will last forever through the foundation's leadership programs and grant-making ministries.

On behalf of the foundation's board of directors and staff a hearty "Thank You!" is offered. To learn more about how the foundation fulfills its mission of "...building the Church for generations to come," visit www.umfwnc.org or the foundation's Facebook page.

George Thomas (Tom) Jordan, Chairperson

David Allen Snipes, President

11. WESLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2020 has proven to be a year of change for Wesley, as it has for all of the church partners. Initially moving to a fully remote position, Wesley began by mid-2020 into a hybrid model and now operates close to a full office model albeit masked and distanced. Much of the work this year has been through Zoom, but the work has increased, not decreased. Wesley continues to manage the conference portfolio, including the conference center, and completed a redevelopment of Harrisburg UMC during the pandemic. Also during this challenging year, Wesley was able to complete and fully lease two new affordable housing projects, Prosperity Ridge and Cascade Garden delivering an additional 128 units of affordable senior housing to the community.

In 2020 and into 2021, Wesley is proud to be involved in a number of new initiatives within the conference and beyond. These include the development of Lydia's Place, a church being reborn as a new church start, and a women's and children's shelter. Another project with an existing church in Wilmington will house emotionally challenged adults with seniors in a new housing community. The Woodlawn Community Fellowship's development of the Selwyn campus to fund the redevelopment of the Grace campus is to be repositioned. As well as continued evaluations of a number of churches examining their real estate positions to better prepare for the ministries that are ahead of them is being continued. The Rural Church project is also gaining momentum with a selected partner and Wesley hopes to begin development of that project in 2021.

2020 provided Wesley with affirmation of the Mineral Springs project that will include 73 units of senior affordable housing, a new church start, and commercial/retail development. The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency awarded Wesley tax credits for the project and the City of Charlotte awarded an additional \$803,000 from their Housing Trust Fund. These awards are instrumental in a project that will be breaking ground in mid-2021.

Wesley has carefully developed a number of new data tools to aid churches that are looking to take a deep realistic look at the usage of their campuses. These tools provide a more complete understanding of actual impact the church is making and provides a roadmap for future decisions. Through individualized consulting, Wesley is able to help churches make personal decisions about their future growth.

Seeds of Change, the groundbreaking conversation regarding church campus usage, was placed on hold during the mutual COVID experience. Wesley is currently redeveloping Seeds of Change to address the new reality and to incorporate lessons learned since the program was launched in 2016. Much has changed and much has been learned in those years and that new knowledge will be included in the new Seeds of Change program.

The Wesley team is pleased to enter the post COVID era stronger than ever and ready to assist in the timely decisions churches are ready to carefully and prayerfully consider.

Joel A. Gilland, President
Randolph H. Harry, Chairperson

Proposal: Wesley Community Development Board of Directors

(Petition 15) Approved June 12, 2021

Rev. Randolph Harry
Rev. George Coates
Richard (Dick) Woods

Rev. David Hiatt
Phillip Jones, P. E.
Rev. Dr. Mark King
Rev. Lynda Ferguson

Rev. Willetta Ar-Rahmaan
Joseph (Ricky) Lefft, Esq
Don Pettigrew, P. E.



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Contact Kim Ingram
for more info and to apply!
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E. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**1. HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA****a.1. Bennett College for Women President's Report**

I. Students (as of fall semester 2020)	232
A. Full-time students.....	212
B. Part-time students.....	20
C. Full-time equivalent enrollment.....	220.7
D. Full-time North Carolina students	88
E. Full-time United Methodist students	NA
F. Resident students	0
G. Non-resident (day) students	232
H. Male students.....	0
I. Female students.....	232
J. Foreign students.....	3
K. Number of students receiving financial aid.....	228
II. Faculty (as of fall semester 2020)	
A. Number of full-time faculty	25
B. Number of part-time faculty.....	27
C. Full-time equivalent faculty.....	34
D. Degrees of full-time faculty:	
Doctorates.....	14
Masters	11
E. Average salary of full-time faculty	\$43,485.99
F. Average compensation of full-time faculty.....	\$54,357.49
III. Operating Finances (7-1-19 to 6-30-20)	
A. Operating income	
1. Student fees	\$5,614,998
2. Endowment income (unrestricted).....	1,286,372
3. Church sources.....	464,581
4. Auxiliary enterprises.....	1,864,679
5. Student aid (restricted).....	658,559
6. Other	5,449,998
B. Operating expenses	
1. Instructional.....	\$4,016,089
2. Administrative and general.....	5,046,427
3. Library	114,642
4. Physical plant (included throughout other areas).....	2,138,576
5. Student aid	2,765,687
6. Auxiliary enterprises.....	1,128,378
7. Other	3,611,838
C. Operating surplus/(deficit) at beginning of 2019-2020	(\$19,369,774)
D. Expenditures per student 2019-2020	\$33,731
E. Operating budget for 2019-2020.....	\$15,090,962
F. Amount per UM student provided by Western NC Conference (2019-2020).....	NA
IV. Other Financial Information	
A. Market value of physical plant (7-1-20).....	\$27,781,874
B. Capital indebtedness at 7-1-20.....	\$26,315,416
C. Net increase in physical plant from preceding year	(\$1,287,349)
D. Market value of endowment at 7-1-20	\$13,999,398
E. Net decrease in endowment principal from preceding year	\$292,677

Suzanne Elise Walsh, President

a.2. Bennett College for Women Chaplain's Report

Bennett College is a leader in the Greensboro community and state and was the first North Carolina school to announce that it will offer only virtual classes fall semester 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual instruction continued in spring 2021 as well: <https://www.bennett.edu/news/bennett-college-was-the-first-n-c-school-to-announce-that-it-will-offer-only-virtual-classes-during-the-upcoming-fall-semester-because-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Religious Life Highlights: UMC Sandi Neely Smith Social Justice Interns, Marcinia Johnson '22 and Myrakle Clark '22, continue their work with Exodus Foundation, a ministry established to "Stop the Flow of African Americans to Prison."

Co-hosted scholarship workshops, "Don't Leave Money on the Table," with the Office of Career Services in partnership with UMW representatives. Students were encouraged to take advantage of resources available through the connection with The United Methodist Church and pursue opportunities offered by local congregations.

Bennett College participated in the UMC-Affiliated Campus Ministries (mostly) of the Piedmont Christmas Special.

In efforts to offer continuous, relevant support to students, faculty, and staff, content was added to support the spiritual, emotional, and mental health of the Bennett community. Also, the following professional development opportunities enhanced the ability to serve effectively: Awakening the Church: A Call to Respond to Systemic Racism; Unwritten: History of Protest Movements; Trauma, COVID and the Church; Keeping It Real: Mental Health in The Church and Community; During the Season of Pandemic and Beyond - Mental Health Support in the Church for Youth and Adolescents; Financial Literacy Summit 2021; Mental Health, Medical Mistrust and the COVID-19 Vaccine; and The Hybrid Campus: Post-pandemic Vision of Higher Education. Bennett College community members attended GBHEM event Travel as a Spiritual Act with Rick Steves.

A Peaceful Pause (APP): 20 Minutes for Meditation ~ Affirmation ~ Prayer. This series was developed as a part of Bennett College's wellness initiatives. Sample sessions included: Welcoming Prayer; Justice; Mindfulness; Hospitality; Rituals; The Gift of Silence; and A Merry Heart.

A Word in Season (AWIS): Reflections for the campus, stakeholders, and the community (examples)

- When Life Gives You Lemons Part 1
<https://www.bennett.edu/awis/when-life-gives-you-lemons-part-1/>
- Looking for Trouble: Tribute to Congressman John Lewis
<https://www.bennett.edu/awis/a-word-in-season-looking-for-trouble/>
- Under Construction: A reflection in response to the events of January 6, 2021
<https://www.bennett.edu/news/a-word-in-season-under-construction/>

Wednesday in the Word Bible Study Theme: *Embracing Change using selected Biblical profiles and topics:* Deborah: Judge, Military Leader; Agitator, and Woman of Action; Daniel: Focus and discipline; Inner Invincibility based on Matthew 11:29; Think on These Things based on Philippians 4:4-9, and *Welcome to Adulthood: Navigating Faith, Friendship, Finances, and the Future* based on Jonathan Pokluda's book.

Fall 2020 Women in Ministry and Justice led 12 students on a journey beginning with scripture: The Making of a Deliverer: Women in Moses's early life and closing with "Breonna Taylor: A Beautiful Life" (*Vanity Fair Magazine*). The subject matter also included portions of *The 1619 Project: Four Hundred Years After Enslaved Africans Were First Brought to Virginia, Most Americans Still Don't Know the Full Story of Slavery* by Nikole Hannah-Jones (*The New York Times Magazine*) and *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Dr. Monique Morris – author, social justice scholar, and filmmaker. *The Discussion Guide for Educators (2020)* was written by Rev. Vanessa Wilson, UMC pastor and chair of the Commission on Religion and Race for the Greater New Jersey Conference.

Spring 2021 teaching Church and Entrepreneurship. This course is structured to enhance student leadership skills and critical thinking; assess values and develop a personal mission statement. These tools are designed to support student self-discovery, encourage discernment of their call to service and devise a plan with the potential to make a difference on campus, in the church, or in the community. Church and Entrepreneurship also can encourage spiritual exploration and growth. The course content will serve as a bridge between the theoretical and practical aspects of ministry.

Natalie V. McLean, Chaplain

b.1. Brevard College President's Report**I. Students**

A. Full-time students.....	755
B. Part-time students.....	24
C. Full-time equivalent enrollment.....	747
D. Full-time North Carolina students	415
E. Full-time Methodist students.....	Unable to determine due to system migration
F. Resident students	564
G. Non-resident (day) students	187
H. Male students.....	434
I. Female students.....	351
J. American black	107
K. Hispanic	74
L. Native American	11
M. Asian American.....	4
N. Foreign	19
O. Number of students receiving financial aid.....	742
O. Number of students receiving financial aid	687

II. Faculty

A. Number of Full Time Faculty	50
B. Number of Part Time Faculty	57
C. Full time equivalent faculty.....	70
D. Degrees of full time faculty	
Doctorate	42
Masters	8
E. Number of faculty and administrative staff representing ethnic minorities	5
F. Average salary of full time faculty	\$45,881
G. Average compensation of full time faculty	\$46,303

III. Operating Finances

A. Operating income (total)	\$21,114,439
1. Student Fees	21,101,800
2. Endowment Income (unrestricted).....	1,210,000
3. Church sources.....	0
4. Auxillary enterprises.....	5,694,614
5. Student aid	(10,981,074)
6. Development Funds	2,193,236
7. Other	324,261
B. Operating expenses.....	\$19,879,033
1. Instructional.....	4,518,032
2. All institutional support services.....	5,318,858
3. Library	348,960
4. Physical plant.....	1,522,557
5. Auxiliary services	3,865,736
6. Student aid	1,091,081
7. Other	0
C. Operating surplus/(deficit) at beginning of current year	\$0
D. Expenditures per student.....	\$28,685
E. Operating budget.....	\$18,460,968
F. Amount per UM student provided by Western NC Conference (2019-2020).....	\$0

IV. Capital Funds

A. Market value of physical plant at beginning of current year	\$29,325,406
B. Capital indebtedness at beginning of current year	11,931,151
C. Net increases in physical plant during preceding year	0
D. Market value of endowment at beginning of current year.....	29,074,702
E. Net increase in endowment principal from preceding year.....	139,415

Brevard College President's Report, Continued

Brevard College is a four-year, experiential liberal arts college founded in 1853, and is the oldest college in western North Carolina. The college is home to students from 30 states and 8 foreign countries.

Brevard College's mission states, "Brevard College is committed to an experiential liberal arts education that encourages personal growth and inspires artistic, intellectual, and social action."

At Brevard College, education is much more than memorizing answers on a test. Faculty connects knowledge to direct experience, purposefully and intentionally. This experiential teaching and learning philosophy, led by expert faculty in small classrooms, develops students' ability to think, work in groups, reflect upon what they have learned, and then apply their knowledge to real world problems. Faculty cultivates marketable skills such as collaboration, problem solving, teamwork, and conflict resolution, to name a few. Students graduate Brevard College with more than a transcript and diploma. They graduate with an experiential resume full of undergraduate research they have conducted, real-world problems they have addressed, and in-class projects they have completed.

Brevard College is affordable. Students from North Carolina receive a Half-Tuition Scholarship when they receive offers of admission. Brevard has 17 NCAA DIII sports teams and three non-NCAA teams including competitive cheerleading, rock climbing, and cycling.

David C. Joyce, President

b.2. Brevard College Chaplain's Report

The outstanding people dedicated to spiritual and religious life at Brevard College aimed at doing ministry differently this year. They had to. The global health pandemic COVID-19 stymied their ability to gather and physically experience life together. The hurdles created as a result of COVID-19 cannot be overstated. Nonetheless, this year helped the college minister named five themes pertinent to ministry at Brevard College.

Ministry at Brevard College is needed. Comparing data from previous years, the college minister reported an increase in the amount of individuals requesting counseling, prayer, and opportunities to gather virtually.

Ministry at Brevard College provided mentorship. This year, the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life invited seminary students interested in pursuing careers in collegiate ministry to become interns under the leadership of the college minister. The response was positive. Student ministry leaders and teams also dreamt of ministry ideas alongside their college minister.

Ministry at Brevard College grew digitally. One word used frequently throughout the academic year was Zoom. There were multiple meetings, events, and counseling sessions that took place via Zoom. Additionally, the college minister unexpectedly deployed to the Republic of Korea as a chaplain in the United States Air Force Reserves. Thanks to technology, the college minister was able to remain present while being located in another country.

Ministry was missional. Ministry at Brevard College strived to provide dynamic opportunities for learning, understanding, engagement, and discovery. The college minister and ministry leaders strived to offer creative and religiously diverse programming, service learning projects, mentoring and training, inspirational speaker series, and space for worship and reflection.

Ministry was educational and inspirational. Student leaders and the college minister taught Bible study classes. Additionally, the college minister was invited to preach via Zoom at local faith communities throughout the academic year.

Finally, the negative effect of COVID-19 on college ministry was not the prevailing narrative of the year. It was God's presence and grace with this ministry and the people who call Brevard College home.

Sharad Creasman, College Minister



c.1. Greensboro College President’s Report

I. Students

A. Full-time students.....	700
B. Part-time students.....	250
C. Full-time equivalent enrollment.....	826
D. Full-time North Carolina students	534
E. Full-time Methodist students.....	47
F. Resident students	238
G. Non-resident (day) students	712
H. Female students.....	502
I. American black students	240
J. Foreign students.....	176
K. Number of students receiving financial aid.....	687

II. Faculty

A. Number of Full Time Faculty	52
B. Number of Part Time Faculty.....	61
C. Full time equivalent faculty.....	75
D. Degrees of full time faculty.....	
Doctorate	45
Masters	7
E. Ethnic minorities employed on faculty and administrative staff – Total.....	43
F. Average salary of full time faculty	\$54,404
G. Average compensation of full time faculty	\$64,134

III. Operating Finances

A. Operating income	\$23,657,904
1. Student Fees	14,161,910
2. Endowment Income	338,220
3. Church sources.....	14,930
4. Auxillary enterprises.....	3,437,091
5. Student aid (restricted).....	3,634,137
6. Development Funds	1,690,220
7. Other	381,395
B. Operating expenditures	\$24,289,679
1. Instructional.....	6,087,069
2. Administrative and general.....	6,813,019
3. Library	271,673
4. Physical plant.....	2,705,057
5. Auxiliary expenses.....	2,050,652
6. Student aid	6,362,208
7. Other	
C. Operating surplus/(deficit) at beginning of current year	
D. Expenditures per student.....	\$26,663
E. Operating budget.....	\$17,351,936
F. Amount per UM student provided by Western NC Conference (2019-2020).....	\$16

IV. Other Financial Information

A. Market value of physical plant at beginning of current year	\$43,582,273
B. Capital indebtedness at beginning of current year	14,777,364
C. Net increases in physical plant from preceding year	1,615,698
D. Market value of endowment at beginning of current year.....	25,071,796
E. Net decrease in endowment principal from preceding year	190,255

Lawrence D. Czarda, President

c.2. Greensboro College Chaplain's Report

This past academic year has been marked by a pandemic and deep discussions of racism. Greensboro College has held classes online and in person with strict safety protocols this academic year. The college has managed to maintain a relatively safe campus while seeking to provide students with the fullest experience of college life. Along with moving many of the events and programs online, deeper discussions as a college about the influence and effects of racism in the institution have been held. Over this past year, the college has created a committee to oversee anti-racism work on campus in conjunction with the offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Religious Life.

The Religious Life office continues to support the spiritual life and faith development of students, faculty, and staff. Central to the life of the college is a weekly chapel service on Thursdays led by students, with music provided by the chapel band and gospel choir. This weekly chapel service has been held online this year and videos can be found on the GC Religious Life YouTube page.

A variety of student small groups and Bible studies have also been offered online as well. A weekly Zoom book study is also offered for faculty and staff. This year works by Howard Thurman and Anne Lamott were read. A Sunday night worship service for college students is provided in the area with the Wesley-Luther Ministry at UNCG and also held on Zoom. Before Covid-19, the Wesley-Luther Campus Ministry, Catholic Campus Ministry, Episcopal Campus Ministry, Ukirk (Presbyterian) Campus Ministry, and Hillel Campus Ministry in Greensboro, collaborated together with Greensboro College.

Religious Life also offers an internship program to help students discern their call to ministry. This program was placed on hold, but will return in the fall. Students can be an intern at local United Methodist and Lutheran congregations to learn about ministry and ways in which they can serve the church as lay leaders and ordained clergy.

The college was fortunate this year to have interns from Wake Forest Divinity School working in the chaplain's office. Both interns are alumni of the college and have worked to support students online and in-person. They have helped lead small groups, talk with students about discernment, and preach in the online worship services. The school is thankful to have them be in a place that they might explore their own call to ministry.

The Religious Life office also provides service opportunities. The college works closely with the Boys and Girls Club of Greensboro providing events for their members each semester. This past Christmas volunteers were invited to purchase supplies for the local organization. The students also sustain and support a community garden on campus to feed hungry college students. The college works closely with the Spartan Open Pantry at UNC-G that is housed at College Place UMC. Food and items that college students might need are collected. Also, the students who might be in need can receive food and meals at the pantry.

Greensboro College realigned the tuition in 2019 so that it is now \$18,960 before financial aid and scholarships. This makes Greensboro College affordable and accessible to more students to receive an education rooted in the United Methodist traditions. The college does this through classes, chapel services, lectures, and community service events so that the students might be faithful and informed citizens of the world.

Robert Brewer, Chaplain



d.1. High Point University President's Report**I. Students (as of fall semester, 2020-2021)**

A. Full-time students.....	5,528
B. Part-time students.....	89
C. Full-time equivalent enrollment.....	5,563
D. Full-time North Carolina students	1,762
E. Full-time Methodist students.....	324
F. Resident students	4,530
G. Non-resident students (commuters and adult learners)	1,087
H. Male students.....	2,357
I. Female students.....	3,260
J. American black students	434
K. International students.....	86
L. Number of students receiving financial aid.....	4,860

II. Faculty (as of fall semester, 2020-2021)

A. Number of Full Time Faculty	298
B. Number of Part Time Faculty.....	105
C. Full time equivalent faculty.....	333
D. Degrees of full time faculty.....	
Doctorate	251
Masters	46
E. Number of ethnic minorities employed on faculty and administrative staff	203
F. Average salary of full time faculty	\$78,719
G. Average compensation of full time faculty	\$100,041

III. Operating Finances (for 2019-2020 fiscal year)

A. Operating income (total)	\$220,007,135
1. Student Fees	146,861,322
2. Endowment Income	1,577,809
3. Church sources.....	16,206
4. Auxillary enterprises.....	62,818,693
5. Gifts nad grants.....	6,764,320
6. Investment income.....	0
7. Other	1,968,785
B. Operating expenses (total).....	\$187,035,523
1. Instructional.....	53,555,662
2. Administrative and general.....	59,125,370
3. Library	1,395,195
4. Physical plant.....	24,578,613
5. Auxillary enterprises.....	48,380,683
6. Student aid	48,447,738
C. Operating indebtedness at beginning of current year	\$0
D. Operating budget.....	\$229,553,596
E. Expenditures per student.....	\$49,601
F. Amount per UM student provided by Western NC Conference.....	\$3.51

IV. Capital Funds

A. Market value of physical plant (with depreciation) at beginning of current year.....	\$711,657,699
B. Capital indebtedness at beginning of current year	128,452,290
C. Net increases in physical plant during preceding year	93,513,611
D. Market value of endowment at beginning of current year.....	78,259,483
E. Net increase in endowment principal from preceding year.....	13,353,106

Nido R. Qubein, President

d.2. High Point University Chaplain's Report

Hayworth Chapel and the Religious Life Office of High Point University seeks to grow the heart and soul of High Point University. Their ambition is for all members of the HPU community to experience they are **BELoved**. Every person, as much as is possible, will:

- experience they **BELONG**.
- **BECOME** who they are called to be.
- **BEHOLD** the presence of God's grace.

The chapel, fostered by its Christian tradition, exists to deepen High Point University's Christian character and practice, which also means being a place of radical hospitality to people of all traditions. In this way, HPU is Christian by tradition (and committed to that tradition) and interfaith in outlook, modeling inter-religious understanding and cooperation.

Recent Highlights

- **Weekly Chapel in a Pandemic:**
 - Distance Learning. HPU Chapel's online platform (Facebook and Instagram) during March - April (over 33,000 minutes viewed on FB) experienced a 323% increase in engagement compared to January - February (7,768 minutes viewed).
 - 4/23/20 chapel reached more than 6,400 people through Facebook.
 - Virtual and In-Person Breakout Groups. During Fall 2020, weekly chapel went to a prerecorded format in order to make for the safest environment possible. Positives:
 - Breakout groups of 10 to 15 students per group (averaging four to five groups a week; 50 to 60 in-person) fostered deeper discussion and opportunities for students to create new and deeper friendships.
- **Weekly Chapel Series highlights included:**
 - Exodus: I Am
 - Acts of the Apostles: A Move of God's Spirit
 - Advent Series
 - What do I Want When I Want _____?
 - Faith and Science Dialogue
 - Letters to My 20 Year-Old Self
 - 8th Annual Black Heritage Worship Service.
- **HPU Sunday.** HPU's weekly Sunday worship is gathering both online and in-person on Sunday morning in the 2020-21 semester, observing social distancing protocols.
- **HPU Hillel Recognition.** Advised by Ms. Amy Epstein, Jewish Life Coordinator, HPU Hillel was awarded The Philip H. and Susan Rudd Cohen Outstanding Campus Award, for campus Hillels that achieved excellence in engaging and reaching a breadth and depth of students.
- **Social Entrepreneurship.** The board of stewards, student leaders of weekly chapel, with a matching gift of \$7,000 from an anonymous donor raised over \$20,000 (a new record) for the Salvation Army Angel Tree and the High Point Minister's MLK Oratorical Scholarship. The scholarship provides financial award toward the college education of oratory and essay winners.
- **Annual MLK Worship Service.** Rev. Dr. Jonathan Walton, Dean of Wake Forest School of Divinity was guest preacher.
- **Interfaith Engagement.** Interfaith United, a group of students who come from various religious and cultural backgrounds, gather for dinner once a month. This dinner club has grown to average more than 30 students each time.
 - Abrahamic Traditions and LGBTQIA Identity Panel. Students brought an imam, rabbi, and Christian pastor to discuss a variety of dispositions to the LGBTQ community across religious traditions.
 - Interfaith Iftar. Global Studies, Multicultural Affairs, and Interfaith United hosted an Interfaith Iftar.
 - Passover Seder. Hillel hosted their annual Passover Seder on campus.

2020-21 Priorities

- With an uncertainty future, the chapel office will focus on their core programs and initiatives for student development.
- **Practice Enhanced Mission.** Deepen practices of belonging, becoming, and beholding through online presence, programming, student leadership development, and office management.
- **Embrace and Cultivate Online Growth.** Continue best practices during distance learning, utilizing partnerships with the School of Communications, becoming proficient with video production and editing software, and online platforms for student engagement.
- **Student Leadership, Development, and Employment.** Continue to grow student leaders and the student employee base to support chapel programming, providing students with unique, hands-on learning opportunities to lead ministry in a university setting. These roles include audio, video, lighting techs, social media, and content creation for Wednesday and Sunday worship services; lay leadership of a faith community (both Christian spiritual formation and interfaith engagement); and office assistance for clerical work.

Leading HPU Community in Grieving, Healing, and Reflecting During COVID-19 Pandemic. Provide virtual opportunities to make meaning during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include but are not limited to: online memorials, contemplative practice, and content specific to grief, uncertainty, and commitment to hope.

e. Pfeiffer University President's and Chaplain's Report

Greetings from Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer! As with most private institutions of higher education, the 2020-2021 year has been a challenging one for Pfeiffer University due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there have been several positive developments since the last meeting together. A new president, a new chief financial officer, and a new provost have come to the university and focused on fiscal stability, sustainability, improving relationships with accrediting bodies, and the development of graduate programs in the cities of Albemarle and Charlotte that will not only improve health outcomes in the central North Carolina region, they will provide resources that will support the transformational undergraduate experience on the "traditional" campus in Misenheimer.

From the Academic Division:

Perhaps the biggest news out of Pfeiffer this year is the completion of the Center for Health Sciences and the arrival of Pfeiffer's latest class of graduate students in the area of Physician Assistant Studies and the first students in the field of Occupational Therapy. A 41,000 square foot, four-story structure which has now become one of the centerpieces of downtown Albemarle, N.C., the center houses Pfeiffer's programs in Physician Assistant Studies and Occupational Therapy. There are currently two cohorts of PA students, totaling 52 students overall. There is one cohort of OT students, totaling 30 students, with 35 more OT students expected in the fall. Thus far Pfeiffer has 231 applicants for that 35-person cohort. From an advancement perspective, while most of the naming opportunities for classrooms, laboratories, simulation centers, and conference rooms have been settled, some naming opportunities remain available for the Center and both of the academic programs therein. Contact the President's Office at Pfeiffer if you want more information about that.

Pfeiffer also renovated the Harris Science Building on the historic Misenheimer campus in 2020. Boasting new equipment in biology, chemistry, and exercise science, the university stands poised to recruit a new generation of majors in the sciences. The university also has plans to expand the music faculty and offerings in the coming year – a development that is the result of a new feasibility study on instrumental music and careful planning. Finally, Pfeiffer has initiated a new minor in Social Justice Studies. The minor combines already existing courses from several departments – including, but not limited to, the Counseling, Criminal Justice, and Religion Departments – with new courses and activities designed to generate thought and discussion about justice in contemporary society and what has been learned in previous eras.

News from the Master of Practical Theology (MAPT) Program:

As one of the preeminent arenas in which United Methodist Deacon candidates and others are prepared for ministry in the shifting church and cultural landscape, Pfeiffer's religion faculty is expanding the resources dedicated to this formative work through the establishment of the Center for the Church and World within the Master of Practical Theology (MAPT) program, based in Charlotte under the leadership of Dr. Heidi A. Miller. When complete, the center will provide an innovative curriculum for students and for the community to integrate faith and practice.

MAPT's current offerings include a new course on Multi-Context Chaplaincy, taught by Dr. Leah Robinson, as well as partnerships with various healthcare systems, county correctional facilities, and a diversity of non-profit and civic institutions. Pfeiffer also partners with Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., through the Center for Deacon Education, and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, VA and Charlotte, NC. MAPT is also working to extend continuing education to the community, recently partnering with the Rev. Perry Washington of the Pfeiffer's Youth Theological Institute to offer monthly webinars – Equip: Building Beloved Community – which recently focused on the leadership of the black church. Religion faculty have accepted invitations to preach, teach, and resource local congregations and communities in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference as well as Conferences across the United States, and have also provided training events with the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society and the National Council of Churches.

From the University Chaplain's Office:

Perhaps one of the most surprising developments in campus ministries this year is the way in which Pfeiffer's new graduate students in Albemarle have shown interest in spiritual growth and participating in the lives of the local churches. The university chaplain's office has partnered with an ecumenical group of local churches from five different denominations to begin a new program, Pfeiffer Pfriends. The program matches individual church members with Occupational Therapy and Physician Assistant students – matches based in part on the denominational preferences of the student – and the "Pfriends" sent notes of encouragement, gift cards, snacks, etc., to their students throughout the academic year. The goal is to provide support and community to the new OT and PA students in the area and deepen relationships between the students and the churches in their new "hometown" of Albemarle. The student response has been overwhelmingly positive. Albemarle's Central United Methodist Church has been an integral part of the program, and is joined by four other churches in the downtown area in this exciting project.

Intersections, Pfeiffer's weekly chapel service explores the crossroads between faith and academy and encourages students to think about their faith as it relates to contemporary issues in the world and local communities. Intersections meets every Wednesday morning. This year the service was delivered in a virtual format and focused on matters of race and faith, grief and mourning, and listening as a model of justice, among others. The virtual format certainly provided challenges, but one opportunity that resulted from the format was that Pfeiffer had the opportunity to reach out to a more geographically diverse set of speakers.

Connections, Pfeiffer's student-led worship service, continues to meet the spiritual needs of the campus community. Students designed a sacred space outside the Chapel walls to explore their beliefs and values through music, word, centering prayer, and reflection. This year, the service went virtual and focused on community, hospitality, mental health, and attributes of God.

XOK, Pfeiffer's Christian Ecumenical Community, continues to support students in their spiritual formation. Students meet weekly in large group gatherings, small group discussions led by local clergy, and connect with God and one another at an annual retreat. This year students focused on the semester topics of Church of the 21st Century and Intentional Community.

Beliefs and Values programming continues to grow at Pfeiffer. This initiative welcomes students of all religious and philosophical backgrounds to build a community based on the principles of mutual respect, understanding, and dialogue. This year students attended hosted interfaith speakers on campus, participated in a regional interfaith conference at Elon University, and created and facilitated student-led interreligious programming.

The Francis Center for Servant Leadership continues to provide virtual and in-person service opportunities for students. Francis scholars led socially distanced activities where students made blankets for Project Linus, filled backpacks for underserved children at local elementary schools, wrote letters of encouragement for healthcare workers, and were pen-pals with shut-ins in the local Stanly community.

Fiscal Stability and Enrollment Trends:

The COVID-19-related pandemic created a great deal of uncertainty about student and employee safety, and even uncertainty about the safety of bringing visitors to campus. This, of course, when coupled with the level of economic uncertainty that came with the pandemic, made it complicated to recruit new students, new donors, and new trustees to the university. Pfeiffer, however, has proven to be resilient in comparison to other schools. Nationally, enrollment at private colleges and universities is down 14% from a year ago. Enrollment in Misenheimer – our campus for traditional undergraduate students – is down approximately 12%. However, Pfeiffer is encouraged that graduate student enrollment has risen at Pfeiffer, and it has risen from 22 students to 82 students on our new Albemarle campus (the Center for Health Sciences), where 35 more students in the area of Occupational Therapy will be welcomed to Albemarle this fall. It is expected that growth in graduate student enrollment will continue to grow, and is expected to modestly improve the size of the freshman class this fall as compared to last fall's class.

The growth in graduate student enrollment, as well as improvements in fundraising and the addition of new spending controls in Pfeiffer's bylaws and policy manual, have led to improved fiscal stability at the university. After running budget deficits for four of the previous five years, audited financial statements covering fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) indicate that Pfeiffer University ran a surplus of \$5,692,523. For additional context, it should be noted that the university received one of the largest unrestricted gifts in its history (valued at approximately \$4 million) in fiscal year 2020, but even without that gift the university would have run a surplus of over \$1.6 million (in contrast to fiscal year 2019, for example, when the university ran a deficit of \$122,501 at the operating level, and an even larger deficit when depreciation is factored into the equation).

A more "scientific" approach to fundraising has been enacted at Pfeiffer, and while it retains many aspects of traditional, personal approach to this aspect of the work, the new approach is netting significant results: total giving at the University has more than doubled since FY 2016 (\$3,377,676), with total giving in FY 2020 at \$7,480,502. It should be noted that Pfeiffer has created a new pipeline of five-year pledges through the creation of the "Devoted and True" Society. This work has resulted in 52 new multi-year pledges (for context, Pfeiffer secured a total of two multi-year pledges in FY 2016). The secured pledges total \$4,718,506 to be paid beyond FY 2021, evidence that continued work to bolster giving and financial security have been successful.

Scott Walker Bullard, President

f. Proposed WNCC Higher Education Board Trustees

(Petition 16) Approved June 12, 2021

Trustees of Brevard College

Term Trustees: Timothy J. Bailey, Betsy O. Barefoot, John S. Boggs, B. Barbara Boerner, Isaac Bradley, Douglas Brinkley, Ronald L. Burgess Jr., Joe DePippo, Art Fisher, Calvin Harrelson III, Reginald D. Heinitsh Jr., Charles Henley, Barbara A. Hulse, Richard Jacobs, J. Phillip Jerome, A. Edwin Jones, W. Bradley Lakeson Jr., Mark Lemel, Barbara M. Nesbitt, Leigh Ann Pickup, Alfred F. Platt Jr., Connell Stafford, Jerry Stone, Elizabeth O. Taylor, Dona D. Vaughn, W. Heathley Weldon, Michael Whitehead, W. Gil West

Lifetime Trustee: C. Harley Dickson Jr.

Emeriti Trustees: Ralph L. Abernethy Jr., Douglas W. Booth, Leonard S. Bullock, Tommie L. Cassady, F. Crowder Falls, Dyeann B. Jordan, Robert S. Lawrence, Lizette Lewis Pryor

Ex-Officio: David C. Joyce, Maxie G. Munro

(Petition 17) Approved June 12, 2021

Trustees of High Point University

New members: Carlvena Foster, Mark Phillips, Steve Pond.

Newly-named Trustee for Life: Chris Henson.

2. UNITED METHODIST SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY AND UNIVERSITIES

a. Africa University

Africa University is grateful to the local congregations of the Western North Carolina Conference for investing 89.62 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund in 2020. Thank you for supporting the ministry of Africa University with such faithfulness and generosity. By giving, especially in challenging times, Western North Carolina United Methodist congregations support Africa University's growth and continental impact.

The multilayered impact of COVID-19 and the measures instituted to control the public health crisis it caused have brought about profound and lasting adjustments to how the students live, work, serve and connect. For Africa University, these include:

- A shift to online-only teaching and learning from late March through December 2020. Online teaching and remote work required more equipment and training for faculty and staff as well as creative actions to ensure consistent internet access for the students, regardless of location. As the only university in Zimbabwe accredited to offer online degrees, Africa University had the infrastructure and expertise to transition smoothly and break new ground with competency-based student assessment tools.
- Africa University ranks number one in Zimbabwe and 39th among the top 200 universities in Africa, having moved up 59 spots in 2020.
- Gifts totaling more than \$300,000 from across the United Methodist connection designated for COVID-19 relief efforts. These second-mile gifts enabled Africa University to care for about 300 international students who were stranded on its campus between March and late July 2020 and extend assistance to students whose families were experiencing financial hardships.
- Excellent student retention and modest enrollment growth, with a more than 99% uptake of online learning by students. More than 3,000 students enrolled for the 2020-2021 academic year—16% more than the previous year—with 2,395 studying full-time. Fifty-seven percent of full-time students were female and 24% were international.
- Innovation, outreach, and service through:
 - The development and distribution of masks and hand sanitizer (of its own design/formulation), that have now been certified for commercial production.
 - The launch, via a web application, of farm to household delivery of fresh produce, meat, poultry, and milk products by the Africa University Dream Farm Trust.
 - Two student-led initiatives—"Feed a Family" and "Ben Hill UMC Women's Residence Girl Child Support Program"—provided medical care, food, and school fees assistance to vulnerable families in the wider community. Campus and home-based students gave up meals, raised resources, procured supplies, and organized safe distribution to families.
- The successful completion of two new buildings—the Highland Park UMC-funded student union facility and a dormitory for female students. A new solar farm powers the Highland Park women's dormitory.

Africa University's online campus is here to stay, thanks to infrastructure upgrades and the lessons learned while staying focused on its mission in 2020. Africa University is working to grow its pan-African presence and impact through new programs, partnerships, and an effective blend of in-person and online learning options.

Thank you to Western North Carolina United Methodists for helping to prepare young leaders to be "an aroma that brings life" to a world that is crying out for justice, compassion, healing, and wholeness (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). Through prayers and gifts, the conference participates in the efforts of the students, lecturers, and administrators to engage in disciple-making by example. In a fragile and interconnected world and family of faith, the deep commitment, loving concern, and steadfast support matter greatly.

Thank you for the second-mile scholarship and financial aid gifts from the Western North Carolina Conference that are making dreams possible for young people who would otherwise never have a chance of pursuing a college education. The steadfast support of local churches for the Africa University Fund helps the institution to maintain its focus on equipping leaders to serve and transform communities. Returning its investment in the Africa University Fund to 100 percent is a goal well-worth attaining as Western North Carolina United Methodists strive to lead new people into an abundant life in Christ.

In journeying alongside Africa University in ministry and mission, Western North Carolina United Methodists are the church in the world—seeding hope and sharing the love of Christ. The conference affirms that when everyone is in it together, God's grace is indeed sufficient. To God be the glory.

James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

b. Boston University School of Theology

Like many institutions, this past year at Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) has been largely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, outrage over enduring racial injustices, and concern over rising white supremacy in this nation. The work at BUSTH is to prepare religious leaders to encounter and engage complex challenges such as these. A year like 2020 makes the school's historic and ongoing commitments to social justice even more relevant. Below are some BUSTH highlights from 2020. All remain hopeful for continued partnership in the work and witness of the school toward advancing social justice, fostering compassionate communities, and shaping wise leaders for a hurting world.

- **Virtual Learning:** Upon the COVID-19 lockdown, faculty, staff, and library successfully pivoted to fully remote learning in Spring 2020, which continued through the summer terms. Fall 2020 offered a hybrid approach to learning, due to Boston University's "Learn from Anywhere" initiative, which included a comprehensive on-campus testing program and strict COVID-19 precautions to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff. Students were given the most flexibility, with allowances to learn in-person

in socially distanced and masked classes or in the comfort of their own homes via Zoom. The redirection to online learning served as an opportunity for BUSTH faculty to develop new online pedagogical proficiency, and positions the school for greater engagement concerning best practices in distance, hybrid, and online learning options for students worldwide.

- **Students:** BUSTH continues to increase and celebrate diversity in its student body, creating opportunities for in-depth exchanges and a rich virtual community life. The Fall 2020 entering class was among the largest classes ever, with 128 new students enrolling in September, despite the fact that recruitment had to transition to fully online.
- **Faculty:** BUSTH celebrated *dean emerita* Mary Elizabeth Moore's 12-year service to the school as she stepped down on December 31, 2020. The institution will be forever grateful for her historic tenure as its dean. New Dean G. Sujin Pak began her appointment on January 1, 2021. Dean Pak is known for her commitments to academic rigor, social justice, and United Methodism, which made her a wonderful fit for the deanship of BUSTH at this time. In the coming months, the school plans to appoint a new Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of Ethical Leadership.
- **Lilly Endowment Grant for Thriving Congregations Initiative:** BUSTH was awarded a nearly \$1 million, four-year grant to work with urban congregations responding to trauma. The project will be focused on responding to congregants who are continually shaped by and reacting to compounding domestic and global traumatic events, such as systemic racism, gun violence, homelessness, or immigration stressors.
- **Scholarships:** We continue to offer free tuition to UMC-registered candidates for ordained ministry. Building student scholarships and housing opportunities remain key priorities. BUSTH also offers leadership fellowships to support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality studies: Raíces Latinas, Sacred Worth, Indigenous Studies, Korean Studies, Women in Leadership, and Black Church Studies.
- **Online Lifelong Learning:** Through a generous grant from BU's Digital Education Incubator, BUSTH began to offer online mini-courses, workshops, and reading groups for interested professional and spiritual enrichment of alumni and other religious leaders. Inaugural groups covered topics such as religious Afro-futurism, spirituality through the writings of Howard Thurman, and rituals and practices of grief in a time of pandemic. To learn about or participate in the next BUSTH Lifelong Learning offerings, [visit bu.edu/sth/oll](http://bu.edu/sth/oll).
- **Theology and the Arts Initiatives:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional exhibits moved to an online space. The art of John August Swanson is available at <https://butheoartsgallery2020.wordpress.com/john-august-swanson-social-justice-artist>.
- **Development:** When it concluded in September 2019, BUSTH's "On a Mission" campaign surpassed all expectations, raising \$29.4 million - well beyond the \$15 million goal set in 2010. These funds reflect broad support from alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students, with a far-reaching impact on the school's ability to pursue its mission. More than 2,800 donors, including 1,927 alumni (a 50% alumni participation rate), contributed to the campaign.

The following programs were active in Partnering for Ministry and Transformation:

- **Doctor of Ministry:** The DMin in Transformational Leadership flourishes with lively student cohorts that are interfaith, broadly ecumenical, culturally diverse, and global. The model includes intensives, online courses, and faculty mentoring.
- **Ecumenical partnerships:** There are now four denominational Communities of Learning: Wesleyan/Methodist, Episcopal/Anglican, United Church of Christ, and Unitarian Universalist.
- **Partnership with Hebrew College:** This partnership enables enrichment in interreligious learning through joint courses and public events, and also co-sponsors *The Journal of Interreligious Studies* and the *State of Formation* for emerging leaders.
- **Chaplaincy education:** BUSTH and the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab received a grant to support the joint project "Innovations in Chaplaincy Education," which will seek to redesign courses on chaplaincy in higher education, and centralize education for chaplaincy curricula, including competencies needed for chaplains or other professionals in spiritual care.

Taking action globally and locally:

- **Campus action:** Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing. BUSTH is the first certified Green School in BU, and is active in the Green Seminary Initiative.
- **Internships in global service and peacemaking:** Students participate in apprenticeship ministries across the world.

Commitment to justice:

- Faculty, staff, and students are active in #BlackLivesMatter efforts to seek racial equality, and in collaborative services to support people suffering the consequences of immigration practices or disability inequities.
- In town hall meetings, the community has deep conversations on issues that divide, seeking to develop capacities for relating across differences, and creating a community based on the dignity of all.

BUSTH celebrates transformational leaders of The United Methodist Church. Through legacy, witness, and partnership, there rises hope and courage for the future.

G. Sujin Pak, Dean
Kimberly Macdonald, Director of Communications

c. Candler School of Theology

Since the founding in 1914, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has educated more than 10,000 students, shaping thoughtful, principled, and courageous leaders dedicated to transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Even through this most difficult year, Candler has continued its work. The coronavirus has continued its march around the world, a reckoning for racial injustice rolling across the nation, and a toxic, divisive political atmosphere challenging civic life. Perhaps there has been no better year than this to underscore the importance of faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world—the type of leaders formed at Candler.

Though the mission remains unchanged, the pandemic has necessitated many changes in how that mission is undertaken. Candler has shifted classes to online, redesigned syllabi to support optimal online learning, developed new ways to worship and experience community together in the virtual sphere, and discerned which new habits and modalities have promise for enriching the work even after the pandemic ends. Through these efforts, the school and its students have gained deep experience in being flexible, adaptable, and creative as it responds to the demands of ever-changing contexts—experience that not only serves the school well now, but will continue to serve its ministries far into the future.

Candler is one of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, yet true to the Methodist tradition of ecumenical openness, the school enthusiastically welcomes students from 44 denominations, with 46% of MDiv students coming from the Wesleyan tradition. The student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 483 from 12 countries and 37 states, 44 percent persons of color (U.S.), and a median age of 27 among MDivs. This diversity is a rich blessing. This year a new staff position of assistant director of student life for diversity, equity and inclusion was created to foster understanding and ensure the school is responsive to the needs of its diverse student body.

Candler offers six single degrees (MDiv, MTS, MRL MRPL, ThM, DMin) and 10 dual degrees. The Doctor of Ministry degree is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry while completing their degrees. The new Chaplaincy concentration is now among the most popular, and the Teaching Parish program enables students to serve as student pastors in local churches throughout the southeast, learning firsthand about shepherding a congregation. This year, there were 36 participants.

Alleviating student debt through generous financial aid remains among the top priority. In 2019-2020, Candler awarded nearly \$6.6 million in financial aid, with 100% of MDiv and 98% of all students receiving support. All MDiv students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church receive full-tuition scholarships, and all MDiv, MTS, and master of religious leadership students who are enrolled part-time or more receive a scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition for the length of their program.

The demands of the pandemic did not diminish Candler's robust schedule of events. Candler's Black Church Studies program celebrated its 30th anniversary with a yearlong slate of online lectures and panel discussions, now available at vimeo.com/candler. We also launched The Candler Foundry to make theological education accessible to all, through short and semester-length courses taught by Candler faculty, videos and discussion guides to spark conversation in groups or one-on-one, and Facebook Live panel discussions connecting theology with current issues in the world. View the latest offerings at candlerfoundry.emory.edu.

Candler's ability to fulfill the mission of educating faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world depends upon prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways the conference has advanced this vital ministry in the life of the denomination. Candler invites everyone to visit online at candler.emory.edu.

Jan Love, Dean

d. Drew University Theological School

As with most other schools in the northeast of the U.S., Drew University evacuated its campus in early spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Drew Theological School faculty and staff adapted to this challenge with resilience, compassion, and creativity. The Theological School faculty put their courses all online, led development workshops for faculty across the university, and, in order to accommodate our many international admits who would not be able to enter the United States for fall 2020, designed an asynchronous Master of Divinity program. As a result of this work, the Theological School welcomed 147 new students, its largest entering class in a decade, with an enrollment of 380 for the current academic year. Our chapel team has also led the way in creating online worship experiences that connect the Drew community now across the globe. All degree programs at the Theological School include interdisciplinary courses that demand out-of-the-box thinking, apprenticeship training that addresses real-world issues, and modes of learning that promote adaptability and innovation. Our MDiv and MATM degrees include a required gateway year, vocational pathways, and experiential learning that develops and deepens adaptive leadership skills. The curriculum features a team-designed and taught interdisciplinary sequence of core courses reflecting the integration of the theological disciplines and practices characteristic of the life of faith. The faculty have also articulated shared values that are infused across the teaching and learning at Drew: a commitment to anti-racism; gender and sexual-identity equality; eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and interfaith understanding and cooperation. Drew cultivates pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, and thought leaders who go all over the world to take their place as the next generation of faith leaders and change agents.

Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, Interim Dean

e.1. Duke Divinity School

Edgardo Colón-Emeric, the Irene and William McCutchen Associate Professor of Reconciliation and Theology, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Director of the Center for Reconciliation will become Dean of Duke Divinity School (DDS) July 1, 2021. Dean Gregory L. Jones will leave DDS to become president of Belmont University.

DDS announced a new hybrid version of its Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program that will give students the opportunity to earn the M.Div. degree without relocating to Durham, N.C. The hybrid learning curriculum combines remote coursework with week-long residential intensives, where students connect in-person. The first cohort will begin coursework in fall 2021.

DDS welcomed the largest incoming class in school history with 257 new students from 35 different states and seven countries. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice (28 students) and Doctor of Ministry (52 students) programs received record enrollments. The Master of Theology (13 students), Master of Theological Studies (34 students), and Doctor of Theology (six students) had strong enrollment. The new Certificate in Theology and Health Care will enroll six students, all of whom are TMC Fellows. Across all degree programs, 31 percent of the incoming class identified as a race/ethnicity other than white. Black students made up 21 percent of all students, Asian students, five percent; and American Indian students, two percent. Forty-five percent of students in the incoming class were female, and 55 percent were male. The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program gained 113 new students. There were 30 denominations represented in the M.Div. entering class, with 30 percent affiliated with The United Methodist Church.

2020 also witnessed an expansion of DDS's partnerships, including the Kern Family Foundation partnership with the Office of Wesleyan Engagement to provide accelerated pathways for undergraduate students to pursue the Master of Divinity degree at Duke. DDS welcomed its first cohort of students at Martin Methodist College, taking classes at Duke. The Americas Initiative, a fellowship of organizations, scholars and practitioners convened by the Center for Reconciliation, is working on peacebuilding among Latin American and Latinx communities, particularly those of Indigenous and African descent. The five-year Black Pastoral Leadership Collaboration, begun in the fall of 2019 and jointly funded by DDS and the Provost's Office, is working to harness the research and experiential wisdom of black pastoral leaders nationally through a leadership school and practical theology archiving project.

DDS sought to reckon in deeper and broader ways with systemic racism and injustice and the school sought opportunities to strengthen its partnership and racial justice work across Duke University. A Story Listening and Gathering project solicited past or present students, faculty, and staff to share stories of how race and racial discrimination affects daily life at DDS with a goal of understanding the experiences of the community and to inform the school's broader anti-racism efforts. A new Race and the Professions Fellowship, in partnership with the Kenan Institute for Ethics, and the Churches Promoting Recovery Project, in partnership with the Theology, Medicine, and Culture Initiative, provided new opportunities for students to deepen their vocational formation and reimagine community transformation beyond campus.

DDS hired eight new faculty members in 2020. Peter Casarella is a Professor of Theology and has published widely on medieval Christian Neoplatonism, contemporary theological aesthetics, intercultural thought, and the Hispanic/Latino presence in the U.S. Catholic Church.

Sarah Barton is an Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Theological Ethics whose scholarly work is focused in theological ethics, with special attention to theological anthropology, disability, liturgy, and pastoral care. She has a joint faculty appointment as assistant professor of occupational therapy at Duke University Medical Center.

Quinton Dixie, Associate Research Professor of Church History and Black Church Studies, specializes in American religious history and has written on a wide range of topics, from the African American Civil Rights Movement to the history of Black Baptists in the U.S.

Zebulon Highben is Associate Professor of the Practice of Church Music at Duke Divinity School and Director of Chapel Music at Duke University Chapel, and his research interests include hymnody, liturgy, music and exegesis, the musical heritage of the Reformation.

Alma Tinoco Ruiz is a Lecturer in Homiletics and Evangelism and Director of the Hispanic House of Studies. She is a practical theologian whose work centers on the intersection of homiletics, pastoral care, and evangelism and is a provisional elder in The United Methodist Church.

Janet Martin Soskice is the William K. Warren Distinguished Research Professor of Catholic Theology and for the past 30 years was on The Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. Her work lies at the intersection of Christian theology and philosophy.

Norbert Wilson is Professor of Food, Economics, and Community. His research explores food issues such as access, choice, and food waste. He is an ordained vocational deacon in The Episcopal Church USA.

Wylín D. Wilson is an Assistant Professor of Theological Ethics, and prior to joining the Duke faculty, she was on faculty at the Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics and was a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School. Her research focuses on religion, gender, and bioethics, including rural bioethics and Black Church studies.

L. Gregory Jones, Dean

e.2. Convocation & Pastors' School at Duke Divinity School

Due to the pandemic, the 2020 annual Convocation & Pastors' School consisted of five, one-hour webinars that were designed for Christian leaders of all traditions. The webinars were held throughout September and October with each focusing on various aspects of "Christian Leadership in Turbulent Times." There were over 600 unique registrants for the series. The series of webinars were led by the following distinguished members of the Duke Divinity School faculty and staff:

- L. Gregory Jones, Dean of Duke Divinity School
- Will Willimon, Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry
- Stephen Chapman, Associate Professor of Old Testament
- Lacey Warner, Associate Dean for Wesleyan Engagement
- Alma Tinoco Ruiz, Director of the Hispanic House of Studies
- Warren Kinghorn, Associate Research Professor of Pastoral and Moral Theology
- Regina Graham, Associate Director of Black Church Studies

The next Convocation & Pastors' School, "Uncommon Ground: Living with Humility, Patience, and Tolerance in a Divided Age," will take place virtually with plenary sessions scheduled for October 4-5, 2021, followed by a series of lunchtime workshops taking place throughout the remainder of October. Participants will explore the powerful ways that God can work when all are willing to gather together on uncommon ground.

Confirmed featured presenters include:

- John Inazu, author, distinguished professor of law and religion at Washington University;
- Claude Alexander, Bishop and Senior pastor of The Park Church in Charlotte, North Carolina;
- Sara Groves, singer, songwriter and recording artist, nominated for seven Dove Awards; and,
- Tru Pettigrew, author and motivational speaker

Pastors serving churches eligible for grants from The Duke Endowment, current divinity school students, and recent graduates of Duke Divinity School may attend the convocations in person at a discounted rate. In response to the pandemic and thanks to the generosity of The Duke Endowment and Duke Divinity School, the 2021 event will be offered at no charge.

The Convocation & Pastors' School Board of Managers is comprised of representatives from the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences, and it advises and works with Duke Divinity School to offer a quality continuing education event annually.

The Western North Carolina Conference representatives on the Board of Managers are Lauren Anderson, Heidi Campbell-Robinson, Darryl Dayson, Samuel Moore, Kelley Groce, Avery White, Sue Anne Morris, and Bill Roberts.

Additional information about Convocation & Pastors' School is available online at: <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/cps>.

Ken Spencer, Director
ken.spencer@div.duke.edu

f. Gammon Theological Seminary

Gammon Theological Seminary, located in Atlanta, GA, is The United Methodist constituent member of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), a consortium of historically African American theological schools. Gammon/ITC is a co-educational, professional graduate school of theology. Its faculty personifies vigorous scholarship, rigorous academic discipline, and significant research in the service of the church and other communities in the world. Gammon/ITC is a premier resource for black church scholarship and faith-based solutions to the spiritual and socio-economic challenges confronting the African American community and beyond.

Founded in 1883 by The Methodist Episcopal Church and with assistance from the Freedman's Aid Society, today Gammon Theological Seminary is one of the 13 theological schools of The United Methodist Church. The faculty and administration of Gammon/ITC create an environment in which critical thinking, investigative reflection, decision making, and responsible action are fostered. Gammon/ITC is a member of the Atlanta University Center Complex, the world's largest enterprise of African American higher education. It is also a member of The University Center of Georgia and the Atlanta Theological Association. The school is fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Gammon/ITC offers the following degree programs: the Master of Divinity, the Master of Arts in Religion and Education, and the Doctor of Ministry. Admission is open to qualified men and women.

The support given to the United Methodist Ministerial Education Fund by the Western North Carolina Conference continues to enable Gammon students to carry on a proud Wesleyan tradition of theological education. This relationship lifts up the fact that we are "Alive Together at the Table of Theological Education" where "Love is Making Room." They are taught to think independently and communicate effectively. They are challenged to become involved in finding solutions to problems that affect the human condition and to become active in the community beyond this campus. One of our students has been invited by the United Methodist Council of Bishops (COB) to attend the "Complementary Certificate in Ecumenical Studies" at Bossey through the University of Geneva. Additionally, graduates of this institution are encouraged to maintain a lifelong desire for intellectual growth, spiritual development, and the acquisition of skills for the practice of ministry in The United Methodist Church.

Gammon/ITC has experienced a challenging but productive year amid the alternate mode of instruction and learning due to the COVID19 PANDEMIC. We continue to live out our mission to recruit, support, and educate pastors and lay leaders for The United

Methodist Church. Our previous President-Dean was summoned by his bishop to serve a major local church in June 2020. An Interim President-Dean was appointed to serve in that position. A Presidential Search Committee has successfully identified a new President Dean for Gammon, the Rev. Dr. Candace Lewis. She was approved by Gammon's Board of trustees as the first female President-Dean of Gammon effective April 1, 2021. She will bring incredible leadership to the seminary. Gammon Theological Seminary is extremely grateful to this Annual Conference for your support of theological education and for your commitment to ensuring that God's church will be served by persons who are called and trained to lead us forward in the Wesleyan tradition.

Joseph L. Crawford Sr., Interim President-Dean

g. Saint Paul School of Theology

Saint Paul School of Theology, a seminary of The United Methodist Church, is committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry. The school is one institution, online and on-campus, in Kansas and Oklahoma.

This past year, the school has faced new challenges amid these unsettled times. Saint Paul School of Theology began the 2020-2021 academic year offering students an online option for all courses. With many students choosing to attend class solely online, the student council created a monthly "Chat & Chew" where students, faculty, and staff come together to eat lunch and talk about life, seminary, and ministry. In addition, Rev. Rod Newman, our Oklahoma Campus Chapel Coordinator, crafts a weekly Community Prayer to provide encouragement and faithfulness as the school seeks to provide spiritual formation in new ways.

Kansas Campus Chapel Coordinator Dr. Casey Sigmon took worship to new technological levels by introducing weekly online worship service via Zoom, bringing separate campus chapel services together for one service where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere from wherever they are. Along with featured alumni worship preachers, the community was blessed this fall by the presence of Musician in Residence Hannah Rand, from The Many, who led the music each week for worship. In Spring 2020, Odell Talley, Director of Music for Swope Parkway United and organist for Zion Travelers Missionary Baptist, served as Musician in Residence. For those who cannot join live, chapel recordings are available on the Saint Paul YouTube channel.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue to contribute to the academy, church, and society. This year, new adjunct professors, including Rev. Dr. Carol Cook-Moore and Rev. Dr. Tiffany Nagel Monroe both of the OKUMC, Rev. Dr. Robert Turner of Vernon Chapel AME, UMC Deaconess Cindy Johnson of Rio Grande Conference, Rev. Adam Hamilton and Debi Nixon both of Church of the Resurrection, Rev. Chebon Kernell of the UMC Native American Comprehensive Plan, and Rev. Dr. Shannon Fleck of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches have been added.

The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology continue to maintain high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and engagement. The many activities and publications over the past year are so numerous that space permits only the sharing of selected highlights:

- Dr. Jim Brandt, Professor of Historical Theology, will publish "Schleiermacher's Christian Ethics" in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Schleiermacher*, which will appear in 2022 from the Oxford University Press.
- Dr. Nancy Howell, Professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion and Oubri A. Poppele Professor of Health and Welfare Ministries, continues her service on the Executive Committee of the International Society for Science and Religion, working on several committees advancing the aims of the Society.
- Rev. Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, will see the publication of his book, *Reading and Interpreting the Bible with Global South Christians: A 21st Century Model for Europe and North America Christendom*, by Wipf and Stock Publishers this summer. He has also written four commentaries on 2 Corinthians and Ephesians which appeared on WorkingPreacher.org in April.
- Dr. Hal Knight, Donald and Pearl Wright Professor of Wesleyan Studies, continues his work as a contributing writer in *The Missouri Methodist* magazine.
- Dr. Kristen E. Kvam, Professor of Theology, serves as co-chair for the American Academy of Religion's Program Unit "Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions." Over the last several months, Dr. Kvam has conducted invited presentations to the Great Plains UMC Clergy and its Clergy Excellence in Liminal Time Conversations and the Fall Theological Conference of Central States Synod (ELCA) on October 14, 2020.
- Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education, continues to contribute regularly to WorkingPreacher.org and served as the keynote speaker at the Wesleyan Liturgical Society in Kansas City in March 2020. Dr. Sigmon's scholarly writing will appear in the *Preaching the Manifold Grace, Vol. 2*, edited by Ronald J. Allen and published by Wipf and Stock.

This year, the school has faced several challenges that turned into opportunities for new recruiting spaces and partnerships to enhance students' seminary experience. With the change from in-person to virtual events, Rev. Shannon Hancock, Director of Admissions and Communications, has expanded the reach to prospective students by participating as a virtual exhibitor at online conferences. Rev. Hancock engages with prospective students via apps such as Whova and HopIn to highlight Saint Paul's unique course delivery system and formative community.

In February, Saint Paul held the 2021 Slater-Willson Lecture online featuring Rev. Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre. The lecture, "Why Do They Come?" explored the political, economic, and social causes of current immigration crisis. Before the lecture, Rev. Dr. De La Torre participated in a student-led forum, entering a conversation centering around the practical aspects of ministry and immigration. Later in April, Saint Paul Evangelical Society, led by Dr. Hal Knight, hosted a lecture given by Dr. Sammy G. Alfaro, Associate Professor of Theology at Grand Canyon University and Pastor of Iglesia Nuevo Dia (New Day Church), on the "Pastoral Strategies for Ministering

Among Latinx Immigrant Communities.” And for the first time, on May 22, Saint Paul held a virtual commencement celebration with videos, cap and gown photos, online congratulatory messages from friends and family, and a commencement address by Rev. Chebon Kernell. The class of 2021 had 22 graduates, including 16 Master of Divinity and one Doctor of Ministry graduates. Due to the pandemic, for safety concerns, Saint Paul has postponed our 60th Anniversary Celebration. However, the event has been rescheduled for Friday, October 22 and the school looks forward to coming together as a community for a safe, in-person gathering.

For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, Saint Paul Course of Study (COS) School educated 255 individual students, 40 of which were new students, with a total registration of 520 classes and offering a total of 51 courses. Due to Covid-19, the school quickly pivoted its course offerings and delivered lessons in both asynchronous and synchronous online formats. In Winter 2019, Saint Paul began a hybrid (online and on-campus) schedule for six courses. Although for 2021, this went fully online, plans to increase the number of hybrid course offerings are in development.

Saint Paul Board of Trustees added three new members to the ranks: Bishop James D. Tindall, Sr., Pastor Emeritus at Metropolitan Spiritual Church of Christ Kansas City; Ms. Sharon Cleaver, Senior Director of Marketing, Communications, and PR for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City; and, Mr. Rogers Strickland, Founder/CEO of Strickland Construction.

Through a Board initiative related to diversity and inclusion, Saint Paul created a working group on Native American theology and ministries comprised of native theologians and church leaders. Their efforts are focused on how the church and academy can work together toward healing generational trauma related to the spread of Christianity and the genocide of Indigenous North Americans.

As reported in past years, Saint Paul is financially sound and operates with a balanced budget. The changes made these last years have established a solid financial foundation for years of sustainability. The school continues to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology, scholarships, and emergency assistance to students. Significant investments in technology have recently allowed staff, faculty, and students to transition to a fully hybrid educational delivery model providing a safe learning environment during the pandemic. The faculty was uniquely adept at managing technology in the classroom before the pandemic, making the transition to all online courses a smooth process.

With the board’s assistance, led by Board Chairperson Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, the seminary focuses on its mission. The trustees work to continuously enhance and evaluate the strategic plans in place to guide us into the future. Perhaps most importantly, the school has learned much and grown closer as a community due to the pandemic.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be a partner in ministry and help those seeking more to answer the call. The school is a seminary that offers online and on-campus classes with a flexible schedule to help students manage pastoral leadership demands in the 21st century. The school is grateful for the support of the students and seminary. Saint Paul continues to live the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for healing in these unsettled times and for generations to come.

Neil Blair, President

h. United Theological Seminary

It appears God is doing some new things at United Theological Seminary, even in the midst of health, racial, and political crises.

God is doing a new thing at United financially. United continues to make progress toward its goal of becoming debt-free by the seminary’s 150th anniversary on October 11, 2021. Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of alumni/ae and donors, less than \$1 million remains of the original \$4 million mortgage debt. After the mortgage is paid in full, the seminary plans to convert those mortgage payments into money for student scholarships.

God is doing a new thing in enrollment. Over the last five years, United’s Doctor of Ministry program has grown by 48%, from 170 students in the 2016-17 academic year to 251 in 2020-21. In Fall 2021, Dr. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, will become the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, upon the retirement of Dr. Harold Hudson who has been a vital leader at the Seminary for 17 years.

God is doing a new thing with partners in church renewal. In the 2020-21 academic year, United has partnered with Fresh Expressions US and the Mosaix Global Network to introduce two new Houses of Study. These houses oversee specialized tracks in the Doctor of Ministry and Master of Divinity programs. Rev. Dr. Michael Beck is director of the Fresh Expressions House of Studies, and Dr. Harry Li is director of the Mosaix House of Studies.

In collaboration with the Northwest Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, United also introduced Rooted/Enraizados, a certificate program for coaches and mentors of Hispanic/Latino church planters. In 2020-21, the program served students from more than five annual conferences.

God is doing a new thing with the establishment of The Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center. Beginning in 2021, the Innovation Center honors the ministry of Bishop Bruce Ough by providing a hub of learning for church leaders seeking the framework, support, and courage to introduce the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new and creative ways. Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey joins United as the inaugural director of the Innovation Center.

United’s prayer is that United Methodists will perceive the new things that God is doing in communities, congregations, and ministries as the church strives to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Kent Millard, President

i. Wesley Theological Seminary

For the world, 2020 was a year like no other. In the midst of a global pandemic, plus resurgent racism, mass unemployment, and politically challenging times in the US, Wesley remained committed to fostering wisdom and courage, preparing graduates to lead innovative ministries while remaining grounded in the biblical and theological traditions for the sake of God's inbreaking kingdom. The mode of educational delivery changed overnight, as Wesley became an all-online seminary on March 15, 2020 and have remained so to keep students, faculty, staff and all members of the Wesley community safe from COVID-19 exposure on campus. This is simply Wesley modelling what is taught to the students: to be committed to the God-given mission while being innovative and responsive in the delivery of ministry. Here are some of the ways Wesley is accomplishing that with the many partners in this mission, as the seminary seeks to faithfully minister to the world in the future.

Research projects support congregational community engagement and envision future ministry:

Wesley is pleased to announce new opportunities for UMC congregations to explore, clarify, and pursue thriving in their communities. Through **The Source Collaborative**, Wesley will work with three cohorts of regional congregations in a two-year process of prayer, community engagement, congregational visioning, and coaching, with the goal of following Jesus in mission and ministry. Interested congregations can contact innovation@wesleyseminary.edu for more information. This work, funded by a \$1 million Lilly Endowment, Inc. grant, raises Wesley's role as a leading research and development seminary for the whole church and complements Wesley's other Lilly Endowment-funded projects focused on congregational vitality.

The Religious Workforce Project is an expansive study of the current and future nature of religious work, particularly in local congregations, so as to understand what opportunities and constraints may exist in the future and to adapt resources and training accordingly. Through the **Wesley Innovation Hub**, the seminary has worked with 18 congregations in the greater Washington area to experiment with ministries with young adults outside the church. Together, these projects forge insight into future ministry and local church development, influencing the way students are trained in master's, doctoral, and course of study education, but also informing workshops, podcasts, articles, and training for church leaders working in their communities across the country.

Wesley invites students to discover the latest research and conversations generated by the Wesley community through the new web portal, #EngageInTheseTimes, at www.wesleyseminary.edu/#engage.

Using research and partnerships to reach and equip the next generation of ministers:

Research shows that the primary way people learn about and begin to consider seminary options is through their pastor or an alumnus. Whether one feels called or one knows someone who does, Wesley is ready to work with you as theological education is made more accessible and relevant to the realities of ministry today—for laity and clergy, for those seeking a degree or certification or continuing education, and for ministry from within or beyond the church.

Wesley offers an 81-hour Master of Divinity, a 36-hour Master of Arts, and a 60-hour Master of Theological Studies, any of which can be focused around specializations in public theology, urban ministry, arts and theology, missional church, children and youth ministry and advocacy, or African American church leadership.

For full-time students, Wesley offers a modern and affordable residential community in the nation's capital. The Community Engagement Fellows program prepares students to engage in entrepreneurial, community-based ministry. Generous stipends are available for each Fellow completing their MDiv degree. The 3+3 Fast Track BA/MDiv program with Shenandoah University allows students to complete both degrees in six years, entering ministry more quickly and with less debt.

For people with work, ministry, and family commitments, Wesley's Master of Divinity degree can now be completed via online, weekend, short-term intensive, and weeknight courses in five years. Check out upcoming flexible course offerings for Summer and Fall 2021 at www.wesleyseminary.edu/admissions/try-a-class-3.

Wesley works with each student to make seminary affordable. Thanks to the consistent support of graduates, congregations, and friends, Wesley provides more than \$2 million annually in scholarships. In addition to our regular merit awards, ranging from 25% to 100% tuition with stipends, Wesley has released special additional scholarships: **full-tuition scholarships** for people recommended by Wesley alumni, campus ministers, or Christian camping or service ministries who feel called to leadership in the church as it is becoming; **Next Call in Ministry** scholarships for students who have worked in a non-ministry setting for at least 10 years; and **Generación Latinx** Scholarships for emerging Latinx/Hispanic leaders for ministries both within and beyond the church.

Take your ministry to the next level:

In addition to full master's degrees, Wesley offers graduate certificates for those preparing for specialized ministry. The new Certificate for Children and Youth Ministry and Advocacy (CYMA) is designed for people who work with and advocate for children and young people, whether in churches, schools, or non-profit organizations. The non-residential certificate can be completed in 12 to 15 months through online coursework and up to two residential sessions. For more information, visit www.wesleyseminary.edu/admissions/cyma-3. The Certificate in Faith and Public Life explores the foundations of public theology, religious freedom, and civil discourse through graduate courses. For more information, visit www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/public-life/.

Wesley is a leader in Doctor of Ministry programs in specialized tracks that can include international study. Wesley is pleased to announce three new Doctor of Ministry tracks for 2022: Ministry in a Digital Age, a timely new track exploring the new opportunities and challenges of online ministry; Justice, Compassion, and Witness in a Turbulent World, hosted in Cambridge, England; and a program focused on Latinx ministry. As well, new 2022 cohorts for the popular DMin areas of focus will be offered for Military Chaplains and CPE chaplains, the international mission-focused Global Church Leadership program, and Wesley's premiere DMin program in innovative church administration "Church Leadership Excellence." Find out more or apply at www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/.

Enrich your congregational outreach and explore new dimensions of ministry:

The Lewis Center for Church Leadership continues to be on the leading edge of research for the local church. The Lewis Center's Leading Ideas e-newsletter is the go-to source for over 20,000 people in ministry each week. Stay on top of their latest developments by subscribing to their podcast or newsletter at www.churchleadership.com. Also, look for new practical online courses at www.lewisonlinelearning.org.

The Community Engagement Institute embraces a vibrant vision to be the premier center for churches and faith-based organization engaging their communities. The innovative online Health Minister Certificate Program prepares congregations for public health work in their parishes. Contact Dr. Tom Pruski at tpruski@wesleyseminary.edu for more information or to register for future certificate classes.

The Center for Public Theology equips pastors, seminarians, people of faith, and the media to create spaces for civil dialogue at the intersection of religion and politics. For more information, visit <http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/>.

The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion works with students, religious communities, artists, and scholars exploring the intersection of the arts and theology. By engaging in innovative research, staging challenging exhibitions in our Dadian Gallery, and hosting visiting artists in our on-campus studio, the Luce Center seeks to promote dialogue and foster inspired creativity. For information on upcoming workshops and shows at the Dadian Gallery, visit www.luceartsandreligion.org.

Faculty leading the way:

The internationally regarded faculty are the heartbeat of transformative education at Wesley. The faculty continue to advance theological scholarship with new research, publications, and courses. During this past year, Wesley celebrated the ministries of retiring faculty member, Dr. Sondra Wheeler. The Wesley community also welcomed New Testament professor Dr. Laura C. Sweat Holmes.

Stay connected:

Contact us at (202) 885-8659 or admissions@wesleyseminary.edu about how Wesley's degree programs can equip you for your next step in ministry.

Ready to join in the mission? Find out more about how one can be part of the future of Wesley at www.wesleyseminary.edu/support/. Join the Wesley Community online via Wesley's social media, www.facebook.com/wesleyseminary, on Instagram @wesleyseminary, and on Twitter @WesTheoSem, or sign up for the electronic newsletter, eCalling, at www.wesleyseminary.edu/ecalling.

Sheila George, Director of Communications and Marketing

3. THE GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

In 2020, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) announced its blueprint for the future, "Our Road Reimagined." The plan details the realignment of GBHEM's culture and organizational structure to allow the agency to further its mission in a more effective, innovative, and sustainable way. The creation of the plan was the result of a months-long process to survey and remodel the agency in order to set a course that is more collaborative, diverse, and equitable at all levels.

While the approach is transforming, GBHEM's mission is not. It remains committed to helping United Methodist lay and clergy leaders discover, claim, and flourish in God's call on their lives.

Over the last quadrennium, the world, The United Methodist Church, and its constituents' needs have changed considerably. To address those shifting needs, all are adapting culturally, strategically, and operationally to successfully carry out their important mission and ministry well into the future. GBHEM is developing an innovation mindset that will be important moving forward.

Last fall, GBHEM began carefully redesigning its organization to transition to a more cross-functional culture with three primary areas of focus: **Constituent Relations and Services; Product Innovation and Implementation; and Administrative Relations and Services**. This structure is allowing GBHEM to be more effective, agile, and sustainable.

Further, these changes are aligning the Ordained Ministry and Higher Education teams strategically, creating more intentional collaborations, and building greater connections between the church's pastoral and academic ministries.

The agency's realignment also includes initiatives to reinvigorate the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and further strengthen its global focus. The new structure opens the door for fresh opportunities, collaborations, and partnerships, becoming more entrepreneurial and creative in approach.

GBHEM looks confidently to the future. It is taking bold steps to remain good stewards and evolve in service to Christian leaders in a significant way throughout the church, the academy, and the world.

Regardless of the shifts and changes the world is experiencing, the same spirit of service and leadership that first inspired John Wesley lives on. Each person has been called in new and transformative ways. GBHEM is excited to share more in the months ahead. All are invited to connect and collaborate.

Greg Bergquist, General Secretary