

BOARD OF CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRIES

Introductory Comments:

“Throughout our Christian heritage, people of God have heard the call to seek a ‘place apart’ to encounter God and center their lives around Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries is to support the local church by providing an open door into the Christian life and United Methodist tradition using year-round outdoor settings for extended experiences of spiritual growth and discipleship.”

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year:

During 2004 there were over 1,550 summer campers, over 6,000 summer guests, and nearly 28,000 guest days recorded at our Camping and Retreat programs and ministries. Like the membership of the United Methodist Church as a whole, these numbers are smaller than the year before, but they remain strong compared to numbers from other annual conferences.

The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries is very positive about the lives it touches through its ministries. There are very measurable ways that the Board is able to track its effectiveness. For example, the recent EVALUATION OF CONFERENCE MINISTRY/SERVICES gave the Camping and Retreat experiences very high marks with 92% of those responding saying “very adequate” or “adequate” as their response.

Another survey of some of the Middle and Senior High youth who attended summer camps gave the following responses:

How did your experience at camp this week affect your spiritual journey? Using the sliding scale determine whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have gained a greater understanding of the Bible	6	20	248	128
I made a significant decision to follow Christ at Camp	7	24	229	135
I renewed my commitment to Christ this week	9	16	193	145
I feel called to some kind of ministry	20	84	200	60

Again, the majority of the answers were in the “agree” and “strongly agree” areas. We know that we are strongly impacting people’s lives.

The four Sites continue to upgrade facilities with the Fund for Discipleship giving. This has helped us renew some very aging facilities. Our physical facilities are improving and are very inviting as camp and retreat settings.

Camp and retreat ministry within Wisconsin is, for the most part, based at the four Sites owned and operated by the Conference. Our four Site Directors during 2004 were: Byron Pegram at Byron Center, Jen Burch at Pine Lake, Greg Loudon at Whispering Pines, and Chris Lewis at Lake Lucerne. Visit the Camping and Retreat Ministries website at:

www.WisconsinUMC.org/camps

Pages for each Site as well as the camping booklet can be viewed.

Plans for the Coming Year:

BCRM remains committed to serve Wisconsin United Methodists through quality camp and retreat ministry settings and experiences. There is a very comprehensive offering of camps, retreats, and facilities.

We are also pleased that some of the circuits are using camp and retreat facilities. We are encouraging more to do so.

The Board is planning a Visioning Retreat in November of 2005 to continue looking at the best possible ways to be in ministry to the Wisconsin Conference and beyond. The retreat will be led by Kevin Witt of the General Board of Discipleship.

BCRM continues to look at new ways to do ministry in a camp and retreat setting. A possible Charter School for mildly at risk youth is being explored at Lake Lucerne, for example. A stronger emphasis on retreat ministry is another direction.

Rev. Bruce Bartel, Chairperson

Nancy M. Deaner, Camping and Retreat Ministries Coordinator

BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

A) Introductory Comments:

During 2003, the work of the Board of Church and Society (BCS) slowly coasted to a stop. As of July 1, 2004 a new chair and several new members were named to the Board, giving new life to its dormancy. The Board feels as though it has new legs to stand on and is excited about new opportunities for sharing knowledge and hope for peace and justice throughout the Conference. With renewed energy and new members, it has been a good year.

B) Highlights And Accomplishments Of The Past Year:

Our first meeting in 2004 was an opportunity for the new members of the Board to familiarize themselves with the history of the Board and its work. By our second meeting in November 2004 the Board had already adopted a long-term plan that included annual planning as well as quadrennial planning.

C) Plans For The Coming Year:

We are going to implement our newly approved long-term plan. In recent years the Board has not had a clear focus or direction. By implementing our new plan we hope to set out and do work for peace and justice that has not been brought forth by this Board in several years. In 2005 our work will be focused on TIP (Treatment Instead of Prisons). In addition, we have met with Scott Anderson, executive director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) and Julie Reinke, coordinator of the Restorative Justice Task Force for the Wisconsin Conference to see if we can coordinate efforts on common issues. The Board has decided to partner with the Restorative Justice Task Force (RJTF), a group that has met for almost four years without budget or formal conference connection. The Task Force will continue their work and the Board of Church and Society will share common connections with them, especially for educating United Methodists about TIP. BCS and RJTF will co-sponsor a meal at Annual Conference with guest speakers focusing on TIP legislation.

Also in 2005, the Board will partner with the Wisconsin Council of Churches, who has just hired a half time program person to advocate for better legislation and programs for those in Wisconsin who are hungry. The Board has redesignated \$5,000 (originally to go to Project Equality) to assist in teaching Wisconsin folks about hunger issues in our state and to advocate for better school breakfast programming (as Wisconsin now ranks 50 out of the 50 states in providing morning nutrition for school children.)

In 2006 the Board of Church and Society plans to continue to carry out our mission by planning for another "focus" or emphasis during that year. Our focus next year will be working on advocacy, education, and legislation around the topics that the Board is passionate about. We look forward to further educating lay and clergy in local churches around the state, encouraging educational tours and delegations to Washington, DC or New York, as well as bringing forth important legislation at Annual Conference.

Amanda Stein, Chairperson

BOARD OF CONGREGATION, PARISH AND CIRCUIT DEVELOPMENT

Purpose and Mission Statement:

The purpose of The Board of Congregation and Parish Development is to provide assistance and to facilitate the development of the existing mission congregations and local churches, new church starts and new faith ministries, circuit ministry, and the "apostolic and missional" leadership of both clergy and lay people.

The Board of Congregation and Parish Development recognizes its vital leadership role as a partner agency of the Wisconsin Annual Conference. It is striving even more to nurture its working relationship and mutual accountability from those with whom it establishes partnership and services, and to discover new, healthy, and more effective way in its style and function, content and process, passion and capacity, service and stewardship.

The Board of Congregation and Parish Development in its efforts to equip local churches for ministry and to provide a connection beyond the local church hereby affirms its Principles and Beliefs in Ministry. They are as follows:

1. We believe that God is continually calling us to higher ground, greater ministry, and be responsible stewards of God's gifts. Thus, we maintain an open spirit and willingness to "blaze new territory."
2. We strive to awaken congregations' calls to Ministry.
3. We are in service to local congregations and ministries that seek to grow and make disciples of Jesus Christ.
4. We recognize the need to continually develop healthy, effective, missional and apostolic leadership for both clergy and lay people.
5. We are committed to the development of the new circuit ministry approved at the 2004 Annual Conference.
6. We need to more effectively interface and galvanize efforts with other bodies within the Annual Conference.
7. We uphold all these things consciously aware of our need for God's divine inspiration,

direction, and redemption.

It also defines Five Major Areas of Focus, namely:

- New Faith Starts
- Revisioning
- Missional Church Support
- Racial Ethnic Ministries
- Recruit, Train, and Equip Congregational Developers (clergy and laity)
- Circuit Ministry

The Board of Congregation and Parish Development affirms the "gifts and graces" of its Coordinator, Don Mendenhall as well as its lay people and clergy members. It's new organizational structure and ministerial function network that promotes the valuable role and contribution of every individual member and enhances the spirit of teamwork and collegiality among all the members is producing significant results for the Board in accomplishing its overall purpose and objectives.

Identified Ministry Needs and Leadership Focus.

2004 was another year of major accomplishments and new opportunities. They are as follows:

The new structure the Board adapted to effectively function and responsibly deliver its services is working so well. The following are the ministry needs identified: New Faith Starts, Mission Churches, Leadership Development, Revisioning, and Property & Finance. Task groups are created and a Convener leads each task group to meet these needs. The Conveners, Board members, and Coordinator support each other and work together to fulfill identified ministry needs. The Board is now even more becoming a "working board."

New Faith Starts.

There are five new faith starts that the Board is in partnership. They are Green Bay Hmong, Green Bay Hispanic, Bay View/CETA Hispanic, Neenah/Menasha Family Church, and Asbury/Verona Madison. They are all making progress. Established local churches likewise take in the initiative and responsibility for starting new faith ministries like Kenosha county churches are attempting to create a common community life center in their midst.

The Board is determined in its efforts to make sure that these new faith starts will achieve their goals and objectives by providing necessary financial and other forms of support and maintaining closer working relationship with them. New Faith Starts will continue to receive full attention and strategic position in the overall work of the Board.

Revisioning

In its effort to effectively assist local churches to gain new confidence and new direction in their ministry, the Board has added the Natural Church Development process to its revisioning services to established local churches in the Wisconsin Conference.

As of today, the Board has 18 coaches and mentor coaches ready to offer the NCD Revisioning Process to local churches. The Board will continue to provide these people advance training and actual experience in the NCD process.

The NCD material was used by all the SPPRC in the Wisconsin Conference in 2004. They were encouraged to use this process to review and evaluate the ministry of local churches. The level of interest for the use of the NCD Process is increasing. The Board felt the need to recruit and train more coaches in order to make the NCD Process available to local churches and Circuits in 2005 and beyond.

Mission Church Support

By providing financial, consultation, and other resource support, the Board continues to assist, encourage, and work with mission churches to become healthy and more self-sufficient congregations. In 2004, the new funding policy was introduced. The Board will continue to look into ways and means that it could best serve the mission churches. The goal is to make these congregations vital and self-supporting members of the Wisconsin Conference.

Racial Ethnic Ministries.

It is very evident that the number of racial ethnic populations within the State of Wisconsin is rapidly increasing. This trend is expected to accelerate. The Board is responding to this new development by partnering with local churches that are situated in such areas wherein these changes are taking place. The partnership between the Board and local churches that are in the process of transition calls for mutual accountability, open communication, and willingness to respond to the ever-changing environment. Moreover, this new and on-going reality should be received with openness by the entire Wisconsin Conference. The situation provides us all an opportunity to grow and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

New Faith Builders Call.

This was proven in the past as a very effective and consistent way of providing long-term support and sustenance to new faith starts. The Board agreed to invigorate its effort to increase its funding resource through this Call. The former chair of the Board, Daniel W. Zei, is leading this endeavor for the Board. With his leadership, the Board is confident that it is going to be another worthy and successful fund-raising program.

Financial Support.

The funding sources of the Board are being fully engaged. New faith starts require active listening on the part of the Board to provide critical funding support at just the right time. Fund for Discipleship (FD) has been and continues to be an important source of funds. The Immediate Fund account of FD has been used up completely. Interest from the FD Endowment is currently the Board's main funding source in addition to local area matching funds for new starts. It needs to be supplemented by the New Faith Builders' Call and apportionments in order to keep a consistent funding source. Training scholarships and established church seed funding are used not only in local church ministries, but circuits and clusters as well.

Reverend Benner Agtarap, Chairperson

BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

1. Introductory Comments

a. Accountability

The Conference Board of Global Ministries has the responsibility for the oversight and the coordination of the mission work of the Annual Conference. The Board, in establishing its membership policy, seeks to reflect the diversity of the Annual Conference. Members are selected from each of the districts. There are also at-large members elected by the Annual Conference and by the Board itself. The Board meets three times annually (two face-to-face meetings and one phone conference). All Board members are encouraged to participate in one of the Board's committees.

b. *Philosophy and Priorities*

The Conference Board of Global Ministries is responsible for maintaining the connectional relationship between the General Board of Global Ministries and the Annual Conference. The Conference Board sees as one of its priorities the importance of making the mission of the General Church real by inspiring, educating, recruiting, training, informing and deploying persons and congregations for mission and ministry on the local, national and international levels.

c. *Information*

The Board of Global Ministries establishes mission priorities and funding procedures, recommends ministries to be funded through Conference apportionment dollars and designated funds, evaluates the impact and effectiveness of those ministries, stimulates local churches to be in mission, educates districts and local churches about opportunities and channels for mission and giving, and provides avenues for hands-on mission efforts. The Board also has oversight responsibilities for segregated funds from gifts and bequests designated to be used for mission.

2. *Highlights and Accomplishments of the Last Year*

- a. Health and Welfare Ministries has 11 mission-ministries in Wisconsin that are UMC connected and under the review/support of the Wisconsin Conference by covenant relationships: 6 Long-term care ministries, 1 Hospital System, 1 Chaplaincy Program, 3 Family/Children Services. The Committee has put a major emphasis on re-connecting these ministries to the Church and re-connecting the Church to these ministries. Harbor House Shelter, a newly formed ministry in Superior, is covenanting with the Church. The Committee's budget provides Conference support for Northcott Neighborhood House, United Methodist Children's Services and the Transitional Living Project. The Madison Hospital Chaplaincy also receives support through this agency. The Health and Welfare Committee administered publicity and information about the Golden Cross Sunday offering, which raised over \$21,000 in 2004. This Committee has worked to promote the development of Parish Nursing Programs in local churches and provides an annual retreat for all UMC connected Parish Nurses. Another emphasis has been to lift up the awareness of the issues of people with disabilities, focusing on the need for accessibility to all people. ? local churches requested information to do the Accessibility Audit last year.
- b. Mission Motivation Committee, in coordination with the Conference Secretary of Global Ministries and District Mission Secretaries, educates, encourages, and stimulates mission work in the Conference. District Mission Secretaries are responsible for providing training for local churches and Districts in the area of mission, and to provide current information on mission projects. Mission Motivation coordinates the itineration of mission interpreters in our districts. Wisconsin UM's gave more than \$200,000 for Special Sunday Offerings in 2004. In addition, WI Conference churches raised more than \$115,000 to support missionaries around the world. We celebrate the news that Wisconsin raised over \$819,000 for Advance projects and other benevolences in the year 2004. As of March 1 churches in Wisconsin have sent over \$147,000 to UMCOR for Southeast Asia Relief. You can visit the Wisconsin Conference Board of Global Ministries web site, developed under the auspices of Mission Motivation, at www.wisconsinumc.org/missions.
- c. The Hunger Task Force and Refugee Task Force are subcommittees of Mission Motivation and continue to work with districts and local churches to extend the mission work of the Conference.
- d. Reconciling Ministries provides funding assistance for eight ecumenical partnerships

- around the state. These programs reach out to persons in stressed urban areas, persons involved in migrant work, prison populations, and other conditions of need. This committee also supports the Community of Shalom, Shalom Zone, Inc. linked to Solomon Community Temple in Milwaukee. Members of the committee continue to maintain contact with each of the programs funded by this agency.
- e. Conference Partnership has organized into two sub-committees: one to focus on our partner relationship with the Methodist Church of Cuba, the other to focus on our relationship with the Rio Grande Conference. The Cuba Partnership sent a group of people to Cuba in January, 2004. The Rio Grande Partnership is working to formalize a relationship with the Rio Grande Conference, and has helped our National Volunteers in Mission committee organize work camps there.
 - f. Volunteers in Mission develops policy, selects work sites, and recruits leadership for short-term mission projects at Conference, Jurisdictional, national, and international sites. VIM has established National VIM and International VIM divisions within the committee. VIM projects are largely self-funded and continue to grow in size and scope. In 2004 a total of 352 work campers provided nearly 23,000 hours of volunteer labor for mission projects. VIM also continues to train leaders for future work camps.
 - g. The Disaster Response Committee began the year dealing with spring floods in southern Wisconsin and two tornados that went through Adams County and Marquette County. After the initial response we began the long-term recovery serving 42 counties in southern Wisconsin affected by them and partnered with several agencies to do that. This was a first time experience for this type of collaboration. The project is still open in March 2005 as the last cases are being cared for. We trained additional workers with children in a disaster through the School for Christian Mission. In this program we are now partnered with the Badger Chapter of the American Red Cross to assist in a disaster with child care workers. Further collaboration with the American Red Cross is developing with local congregations and circuits sponsoring Red Cross Disaster Preparedness courses. On going training is done with reviews, table top exercises and drills. We held a Disaster 101 Course to train additional persons in our policies and procedures. Our District Coordinators are evaluating church readiness and preparing an inventory of church resources that can be available in a disaster. Application has been made to approve an Advance appeal for an Emergency Disaster Response Fund. Disaster Response also provided training for caseworkers in the 2004 Wisconsin Spring Storms Recovery Project utilizing staff from the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

3. Plans for the Coming Year

- a. Health and Welfare will continue to work with UM related Health and Welfare ministries in Wisconsin to assist them in responding to the spiritual needs of those they serve. A new prayer ministry has been implemented to help the Wisconsin United Methodist Churches to actively connect with their United Methodist Health & Welfare ministries. Golden Cross publicity and special offering is another way the Committee helps the churches connect. Encouraging congregations to explore Parish Nurse programs as an extension of their ministry and creating a network of support for the United Methodist Parish Nurses remains an annual activity. The committee's vision is: That every local church is assessing, understanding, and actively responding to the health & welfare needs of the community in which they are located, with the involvement of all members and in partnership with the Health & Welfare Ministries of the WI Conference of The United Methodist Church.
- b. The Conference Partnership Committee will continue to explore ways to strengthen relationships with our brothers and sisters in the Rio Grande Conference and the Cuba Methodist Church. They continue to explore opportunities for sending work camp

teams to Cuba and the Rio Grande area.

- c. Volunteers in Mission will work with our Partnership Committee to explore the possibilities for work-camps in Cuba and the Rio Grande Conference, in addition to several other work-camp opportunities at state, national, and international sites.
- d. Mission Motivation will invite local churches, through the District Mission Secretaries, to host itinerating missionaries as they spend time in Wisconsin during the year. They will continue to challenge each local church in our conference to participate in at least one Advance Special this year. A new "People Touching People" book was published and sent to each local church pastor and Missions chair. Marty Nolet, the new Conference Missions Secretary, is now the chair of Mission Motivation.
- e. Reconciling Ministries will continue to strengthen its connection with and evaluation of the various ecumenical ministries receiving support from the committee. They will explore innovative ways to support those missions through connections with the Circuit Teams in those areas. An emphasis in 2004 will be to visit each of the projects that receives funding through Reconciling Ministries. This committee welcomed Rosalind Driver Scott as their new chair.
- f. The Conference Committee on Missionary Personnel is working to understand how they can best accomplish their work in light of the current financial struggles experienced by the General Board of Global Ministries. They continue to explore ways to encourage local churches to support missionary work through Covenant Relationships.
- g. Disaster Response will continue to work with the School for Christian Mission to train workers with children in a disaster. If not actively engaged in an operation, we will do a readiness drill. We will continue to participate in the Voluntary Organizations Assisting Disasters (VOADs) at the state and county levels. We are sending two persons to the National training sponsored by UMCOR at Sager Brown in Baldwin LA this fall. We will conduct a review of T shirts are being produced to identify our volunteers working in a disaster. We are committed to a higher level of training and readiness so that we can be equal and dependable partners in the relief and recovery phases of a disaster.

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT MINISTRY (BHESM)

Introductory Comments

As an agency of the Wisconsin Conference and the General Church (GBHEM), the mission of the Board of Higher Education and Student Ministry is to facilitate, nurture, support, and network with campus ministries, campus ministers, Wesley Foundations, United Methodist schools and local churches in order to support students in post-secondary education and to develop a new generation of Christians committed to faith.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year

*During the 2004 year, our Board used our apportioned dollars to grant nine campus ministries a total of \$87,000 including La Crosse, Madison, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Platteville, Ripon, River Falls, and Whitewater.

*Financially, the Board continued our support of North Central College with \$15,000 and supported Wiley College with \$5,000.

- *Financially supported three students at \$400 each to attend the United Methodist Student Forum.
- *Gave \$500 to the Shalom Zone Dream College Tour. This gift provides minority teenagers, mostly from central city Milwaukee, an opportunity to tour college campuses in Wisconsin and Illinois.
- *The Board gathered with campus ministers and coordinators for the purpose of networking, sharing ideas and talking about how the Board can best be of support to our campus ministries in Wisconsin.
- *Worked with conference staff to design, implement and “launch” the BHESM website, located at wisconsinumc.org/highered
- *Our Board’s work in 2004 continued to be rewarding as it focused on communicating and relationship-building, as well as doing things that will help lives be transformed by experiencing God’s presence.

Plans for the Coming Year

Our goals include:

- 1) being responsible stewards of the money we have to fund campus ministries and continue the high expectation of accountability we have of the ministries receiving apportioned monies from the Wisconsin Conference;
- 2) expanding our support for campus ministries financially and as a resource for helping expand the networking of our campus ministers/coordinators;
- 3) exploring other sources of funding (namely support from local United Methodist Churches and personal gifts from individuals with passion for campus ministry) to better support our campus ministries;
- 4) strengthening our relationship with those leading Wisconsin campus ministries and with colleges supported by our Annual Conference (specifically North Central College and Wiley College);
- 5) Developing young adult ministry in Wisconsin specifically at technical schools and 2-year campuses, for those young adults 18-26 years old that want to stay connected with The United Methodist Church;
- 6) We will work to encourage and resource United Methodist circuits in ways to support their local campus ministry and make United Methodism a more visible presence on campuses within their circuit.

BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

The Board of Lay Ministry is excited about our work in 2005 and our plan for ministry in 2006. We are in a time of transition as we work together as a team in ministry.

The Lay Ministry Academy began its seventh 3-session series under the leadership of Tim Van Schyndel. This session started with reading the book *How Then Shall We Live* by Wayne Muller. Lay Ministry Academy equips laity and clergy for more effective ministry, helps individuals recognize and accept a call to ministry, assists individuals and congregations in developing plans for ministry, provides leadership for congregations through shared/mutual ministry, and creates an environment where personal spiritual growth can take place.

Faith Alive! started its second three-year program under the leadership of Dean Diane Schobert. Faith Alive! is designed for people who want to explore, in depth, the ways that God is calling them to minister in the world. FaithAlive! provides perspectives and resources for relating the Bible to daily living, integrating faith into the workplace, and establishing ministries in the faith community and the world. FaithAlive! is for people who want to grow in their relationship with God and each other. This learning opportunity includes lecture, dialogue, discernment, group reflection and care. Study topics include: theological perspectives; Biblical interpretations; personal spiritual growth; holistic personal development; ethics; interpersonal skills; leadership skills; nurturing spiritual growth in others; choosing a place of ministry; cultural diversity, including on-site visits.

As our work together with clergy and laity in the circuits across our conference begins to explore the ministry opportunities in our churches, communities and the world, the Board of Lay Ministry team is working on ways to better communicate, help develop leadership, and be prayer partners with and for laity and clergy within our circuits and across our conference.

The Board of Lay Ministry will be exploring new ways and opportunities to learn what our spiritual gifts are, exploring our faith and deepening our relationship with God, learn how to live out our Spiritual Gifts, our faith, and tell our faith story in our churches, communities and our world.

The Board of Lay Ministry Team looks forward to the new opportunities that lie ahead working with circuits, developing new opportunities to grow, individually and as a team in ministry and to support and be in mutual prayer.

Dorothy Radley, Conference Lay Leader

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Introductory Comments:

The work of the Board of Ordained Ministry focuses on the recruitment, credentialing and nurture of the clergy members of the Wisconsin Conference. Our Purpose/Mission is clearly outlined in great detail in ¶634 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004*.

Highlights and Accomplishments:

2004 was a year of transition. As a new quadrennium began, a new Board took over with new leadership, and a new Book of Discipline took effect. With all the newness, the Board experienced some organizational challenges, but with the challenges, there is also the possibility of many new opportunities.

The Book of Discipline charges the Board of Ordained Ministry with three primary functions: the recruitment, the credentialing, and the nurture/support of all the clergy within the Conference. The credentialing of clergy has been the Board's highest priority in the past, and the other two functions have not always received the attention they need and deserve. Mentoring, covenant groups, and continuing education—each a nurture/support function—were greatly undervalued. As 2004 ended and 2005 began, these areas of the Board's responsibilities are being given renewed commitment.

In 2004, the Board of Ordained Ministry began to take advantage of research being done at the national level dealing with "effectiveness" in ministry. This research, being conducted specifically with those who have recently completed the probationary process and been ordained, shows that the quality of the mentoring process, covenant disciple groups, and continuing education opportunities are far more helpful in the movement from readiness to effectiveness in ministry

than is the supervisory processes of either the Board of Ordained Ministry or the District Superintendents. The Board is intentionally working to improve its nurturing and support processes, even as we work to maintain and improve the credentialing process.

In 2004 the Board of Ordained Ministry changed the vendor for the psychological assessments that are required by *The Book of Discipline* for all those who are entering the clergy process. We are now utilizing the services of North Central Ministry Development Center in New Brighton, Minnesota. North Central uses a two-phase assessment process that evaluates “fitness for ministry” as a person enters the candidacy process and “readiness for ministry” as the candidate moves toward ordination and full membership in the Annual Conference. This provides the Board with a far more thorough assessment of the candidate than we were receiving before.

To help the Board “get off on the right foot,” a full day training session for Board members took place in September at the Conference Center. Our new emphasis was reviewed and The Rev. Dr. Mark Sundby, Executive Director of the North Central Ministry Development Center, explained the new psychological assessment process. In December, a training session for all members of the District Committees on Ministry took place in Stevens Point. This training was designed to coordinate and standardize our policies, procedures, and communication processes among all of the District Committees.

Another aspect of the board’s work is recruitment of persons who are experiencing the call to ministry and mentoring those persons as they explore their call through inquiring candidate retreats, visits to seminaries, contacts with local churches and district committees. The Board is also responsible for training candidacy mentors and probationary mentors who work directly with the candidates as they move through the process towards becoming licensed local pastors, commissioned ministers, or ordained ministers.

While working to improve the way we nurture and support both candidates and clergy, the Board continues to work to maintain the high standards for credentialing that we have developed over the years. During the year, two retreats are held for inquiring candidates, as well as a “New Clergy Orientation Retreat” for all those who are serving an appointment in the Wisconsin Conference for the first time.

At a three day meeting in November of the 34 member (clergy and lay) board, teams of board members interview candidates for commissioning and probationary membership and review their submitted materials to discern their qualifications for beginning or in some cases continuing their path toward ordination. At a three day meeting of the board in February, teams of board members interview those who have completed their 3 year probationary period and who have applied for ordination and full clergy membership at that year’s annual conference. Prior to these meetings, the Executive Secretary of the Board collects, organizes, and distributes to Board members on CD-ROM the materials submitted by the candidates who will be interviewed at the Board meeting, so that the Board members may be prepared for the candidate interviews at these meetings. Candidates for Ordination as Elder are also required to submit a video recording of themselves preaching a sermon on a text prescribed by the Board in an actual worship setting. This year those video recordings were converted by the Executive Secretary to DVD’s, which were sent to all Board members prior to the February, 2005 board meeting so that all members of the Board can observe each candidate preaching “live.” This meticulous work by the Executive Secretary provides a thorough picture of each candidate that comes before the board.

In addition to the above mentioned work, the Board is involved throughout the year in small team meetings with clergy regarding issues such as leaves of absence, misconduct, returning from leave, retirements, as well as joint Board/Cabinet interviews with candidates who have expressed a desire to come to the Wisconsin Conference from other conferences or denominations. This consultation is required by *The Book of Discipline*, and helps to facilitate the appointment process.

Selected members of the board are also responsible for partnering with others in the planning, organizing, implementing and participating in the Ordination Service at Annual Conference.

The executive committee of the Board, along with the Executive Secretary, is responsible for compiling a report to be presented to the Clergy Session at Annual Conference in June. This 20+ page document, required by *The Book of Discipline*, lists the status of clergy and all changes in clergy relationships during the year, such as retirements, deaths, leaves of absence, candidates for probationary membership and commissioning, and candidates for ordination, as well as information regarding changes in the conference relationships of Diaconal Ministers and persons seeking certification in specialized ministries. It provides the basis for all actions taken by the Clergy Session.

The joy of all this work is in presenting to the Wisconsin Conference well qualified candidates to lead the spiritual growth and well being of our local churches.

In an effort to place greater emphasis on the recruiting and nurturing/supporting dimensions of the Board's responsibilities, it was clear that saving in other areas of our budget was needed. To meet that challenge, we moved our November 2004, meeting from a motel setting to Pine Lake Camp. In so doing, we saved over \$2000. We will meet at Pine Lake Camp again in February 2005. With the new Bishop Rader Conference Center, the Board's need for large group space, confidential interview space, and dining space are all met, while at the same time supporting another Conference agency.

Plans for the Coming Year:

A conscious effort will be made to continue to change the "cultural understanding" of the Board of Ordained Ministry from doing only tough credentialing (a strength we must not lose), to a more "humane" board that is also concerned about the recruitment, nurture, and training of effective clergy in the Conference. To do this, we will also attempt to work more closely with other boards in the Conference and especially coordinate more fully with the Cabinet. We are all on the same team, trying to accomplish the same goals of strengthening the church, providing strong leadership, and making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Goals for 2006

- a. To recruit, credential, and nurture/support the clergy of the Wisconsin Conference.
- b. To work with, and coordinate more closely with, the Cabinet and Boards / Agencies of the Conference.
- c. To develop a strong program for candidate and clergy mentors.
- d. To develop a Continuing Education program for the clergy of the Conference in coordination with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

By attempting to change the way the Board of Ordained Ministry is perceived we hope to increase its effectiveness by increasing the level of trust in the board by candidates for ministry and by Conference clergy. By seeking to provide the most effective clergy possible, we believe we are offering to the local church the best possible clergy leadership. By making the sweeping changes to the Board of Ordained Ministry goals and vision that are outlined above, the process of changing the long established status quo is underway.

Richard H. Strait, Chairperson

Kevin Rice Myers, Executive Secretary

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Introductory Comments:

The Conference Board of Trustees is an incorporated body of 12 members, 1/3 clergy, 1/3 laymen, and 1/3 laywomen, responsible for certain conference investments, conference-owned personal and real property, insurance, and certain legal matters. The decisions of the Trustees are based on The Book of Discipline, state statutes, directives of the Annual Conference, and the needs that best serve the teachings of Jesus. The Trustees serve the Conference in an administrative capacity.

Highlights and Accomplishments:

Parsonages Fund

The concern that the Parsonage Fund will not sustain itself beyond 2010 was brought to the 2004 Annual Conference floor.

Conference Center

We continue to work with the Inland Madison, the company that manages the United Methodist Conference Center in Sun Prairie for the Conference, to accomplish the rental of all available space in the Conference Center. Rental income helps to offset the expenses for the non-rental areas of the Conference Center.

Remodeling will hopefully soon be completed at the Conference Center for the Archives.

Other Properties Owned by the Conference

Cristo En Tu Ayuda (CETA) UMC in Milwaukee, whose church building is owed by the Wisconsin Conference, needs a new place to worship because of concerns regarding the condition of the property. The offer we made to purchase a building last fall fell through, so the search continues. We continue to work with other conference agencies to find the church a new place.

Bethany UMC in Racine closed July 1, 2001. Initial income from rental use covered the expenses; however, this is no longer true. Bethany is listed with a realtor and remains for sale.

Readstown UMC closed December 31, 2003. The church property was sold by the Conference in early 2005 and the net proceeds have been appropriately distributed.

The Episcopal Residence was remodeled to include a second office.

Church Mutual

Dialogue is occurring between Church Mutual and a sub-committee of the Trustees concerning the premium rates the churches are paying.

Plans for the Coming Year:

The Trustees will continue to work in the areas mentioned above that have not been completed. The Trustees have worked hard over the years to be of service both to the Conference and local churches and will continue to do so in the future.

Sandra L. Daugherty, President

JOINT BOARD OF PENSIONS, INSURANCE & EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

Introductory Comments

The Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance & Equitable Compensation (Joint Board) has stewardship responsibility for the following:

Pensions, death and disability benefits for 1) active and retired pastors under appointment to the Wisconsin Conference, and 2) active and retired laity employed by the Wisconsin Conference.

Group health insurance for 1) active and retired pastors under appointment to the Wisconsin Conference, 2) active and retired laity employed by the Wisconsin Conference, and 3) active laity employed by Wisconsin United Methodist churches.

Equitable Compensation support to local churches to ensure that pastors are provided with adequate compensation at churches that may need financial assistance to accomplish this goal.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year

The Joint Board met all pension obligations of the Wisconsin Conference by paying the Pre-1982 obligation at the rate approved by the Wisconsin Conference. Twenty-three congregations were provided Equitable Compensation support. The Joint Board worked to balance premium costs with health insurance benefits through our participation in HealthFlex, the denomination's health insurance plan, to active and retired clergy, surviving clergy spouses, and lay personnel of the Wisconsin Conference.

Six health insurance workshops were held around the state to help prepare those in the Conference Health Insurance Plan for the change in insurance carrier that occurred January 1, 2005.

When the West Wisconsin and East Wisconsin Conferences of the Methodist Church merged along with the Wisconsin Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren, the West Wisconsin Pension Trust Fund and the East Wisconsin Pension Trust Fund were established. The East Wisconsin Pension Trust is administered by a separate Board and its audited financial statements are provided elsewhere in the Conference Yearbook and Journal. The West Wisconsin Pension Trust is administered by the Joint Board. Its assets are invested in a separate fund in the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation. Financial information for the West Wisconsin Pension Trust is as follows:

1/1/2004 Beginning Balance	\$584,826
Less benefits paid in 2004	(47,357)
Less administrative expenses	(2,525)
Plus earnings	10,910
Plus unrealized gains	<u>22,383</u>
12/31/04 Ending Balance	\$568,237

Plans for the Coming Year

We will 1) continue to provide for all pension obligations of the Wisconsin Conference; 2) continue to make available Equitable Compensation to congregations in need; 3) continue to explore the insurance premium proportions paid between local church/Wisconsin Conference and participants.

As required by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, beginning October 1, 2005, a new billing system will be implemented that will enable the Conference Finance Office to bill churches for monthly premiums for the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP). Local churches will be strongly encouraged to pay these bills through a

monthly automatic withdrawal of the total premiums due for their pastor(s) from the church's bank account. This method will help keep Conference administrative expenses to a minimum. If a monthly statement is required to be sent, it will be necessary to add a processing fee to help offset the additional administrative expenses.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2006, all local churches are being highly encouraged by legislation passed by the 2004 General Conference to contribute to a pension program for their permanent lay employees. Churches may want to use a plan offered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits called UMPIP. The Joint Board will do all it can to assist churches as they make decisions regarding pension benefits for their lay employees.

As mandated by the 2004 General Conference, a new clergy pension program called the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) will replace the current Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) beginning January 1, 2007. The Joint Board will be working throughout 2005 and 2006 on the implementation of this new pension program.

Jennifer "Jef" Anderson, Chairperson

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The Commission is an agency of the Annual Conference. The Commission oversees the Archives, the Museum (at Greenfield Memorial Church in Greenfield, WI), and the Wisconsin Historical Society of the United Methodist Church. The Conference Archivist is Lynn Lubkeman. The Reference Archivist is Mary Schroeder. Both of them are on the Conference staff. The Archives is open on Thursday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon and other times by appointment. The Commission participates in the activities of the North Central Jurisdiction Commission and the General Commission on Archives and History.

The remodeling of the new space for the Archives has begun. We all look forward to moving our historical records to their new home on the first floor of the Conference building. In the meantime, the Archives continues to function in its current home on the third floor. We continue to receive materials and artifacts from closed churches.

Research requests are currently being handled by Mary Schroeder. In 2004, she responded to over 200 requests for assistance. Mary is currently working 5 hours a week. Lynn Lubkeman is working 10 hours per week, primarily on processing the backlog of records from closed churches and planning for the organization of the records in the new archives. Archives volunteer, Robert Gruetzmacher, continues to add information to the database of pastoral appointments, extending from 1920 to the present.

The Wisconsin Historical Society of the United Methodist Church is in the process of becoming a subcommittee of the Commission on Archives and History. This decision was reached by a consensus of the membership of the Society. Subscriptions will continue to fund the publication of Flashbacks. Lois Olsen continues to write and edit Flashbacks. The Historical society officers are now members of the Commission.

The Wisconsin Commission on Archives and History will host the annual North Central Jurisdiction Convocation on July 11-14, 2005 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus.

The Conference Historian, Sandy Kintner, has published his work on the Rev. Halsey affair, titled The Arrest and Trial of Rev. Sabin Halsey. Lois Olsen, Flashbacks editor, has published Goodly Tents and will soon publish her work on the Black churches and pastors in Wisconsin.

The Museum in Greenfield will feature an exhibit on the history of the Native American Method-

ist Churches in Wisconsin that will open in April, 2005. Last year's exhibit on the Korean United Methodist churches in Wisconsin was well received. The Museum is open by appointment. For information call (414)-545-2440 or (414)-527-0043.

The Commission continues to encourage local church historians to provide the Conference Archives with written histories, special anniversary bulletins, photos of pastors, and photos of church property that enable the Archives to fulfill its mission in the Annual Conference. Questions may be directed to the Conference Archives staff.

Contact information: <http://www.Wisconsinumc.org/archives>

Telephone: 1-888-240-7328

Length of service certificates are awarded at Annual Conference for 25 years, 50 years, 60 years, and 70 years of service to the Conference.

The new Chair of the Commission will be elected at the next Commission meeting on April 16, 2005.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Introductory Comments

The purpose of the Communications Committee is to provide support for and advise the Communications and Technical Services Office, whose primary responsibilities are to:

- Project, plan, and provide maintenance for the Conference's multi-level communications network for the exchange of news, information, ideas, stories, shared joys and concerns among Wisconsin United Methodists.
- Project, plan, and provide technical support in conjunction with other conference agencies/boards/committees for our annual conference sessions and other conference events.
- Provide a primary point of access to Wisconsin United Methodists for persons/agencies on the General Conference level for the sharing of news and information.
- Provide a primary point of access to the workings of the Wisconsin Conference UMC for secular news media.
- Provide multiple avenues of outreach to the wider Wisconsin community.

Highlights and Accomplishments of 2004

In 2004 we contracted with Norlight Telecommunications to provide us with increased virus protection for our email server and a managed security gateway for the Conference Center network. With these increased security measures, our network is now better protected from outside attacks. The load on our email server is also significantly reduced because messages are being pre-screened for viruses and spam.

Other highlights and accomplishments include:

We are particularly proud of how few times our email and web servers are actually down for any amount of time. That is a HUGE accomplishment considering that there are only two people in the Communications and Technical Services Office, and we are providing 24/7/365 service. The Witty Worm attack in April 2004 disrupted our email service by taking our email server down, but we were able to get the server operational in less than a week. The cost in manhours to get the server operational was 109 hours over the course of six days.

- We hosted the website for the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in July 2004.
- We began hosting four listserves for the North Central Jurisdiction.
- Thirty-one new domain names were registered through the Communications Office in 2004.
- We host 40 church domains on our email server, plus Wisconsin Council of Churches, the Wisconsin UM Foundation, Disciple Farm, and Wisconsin Children's Initiative among others.
- We host more than 875 user email addresses, plus 141 listserves on our email server.
- We host 187 church websites on our web server, along with websites for committees/ agencies/caucuses/task forces.
- Tom D'Alessio held six Igniting Ministry workshops during 2004 in various areas of the state.
- Linda Firestone held 18 website design classes, including ones in Superior, Milwaukee, and Waterford, as well as the Conference Center in Sun Prairie.
- We began providing computer support to the four camps.
- We provide churches and boards/agencies/committees with technical knowledge and services as they pertain to websites.
- In 2004 we had requests for assistance in web technology such as setting up password-protected websites, bulletin boards, forms, and web-based interactive calendars. Some of those who requested these services included the Conference Secretary, the Lay Ministry Academy, Waukesha: First UMC, Lake Lucerne, the Bishop Rader Celebration Committee, and Madison: Bashford UMC.
- The Conference calendar was redesigned so that it is now web-based and interactive. The various offices in the Conference Center, as well as the regional offices, can now input their own events into the calendar, as well as post changes to events on the calendar.

Plans for the Coming Year

- The upgrade and replacement of aging technology. At least half our servers are or will be of replacement age in 2005-2006.
- Form a partnership with UMCommunications in Nashville and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, for the broadcast of classes via video conferencing.
- Move the Office of Communications and Technology into a more adequate work area—one that is welcoming to visitors and can allow us to expand our services.
- Conduct more web design classes, along with classes on virus protection, spyware/spam filtering, email programs, firewalls, and basic use of different word processing programs.
- Develop a new church record software program. The need for a different type of church record software program is based on complaints received by churches that none of the current church record software seem to be adequate. (Mr. Couch is currently building our future conference database, and has worked with staff during the past five years on this project.)
- Continue to establish an extensive online searchable resource library. This library would be an organized catalog of persons, places, events, organizations, websites, and printed materials for churches, people in ministry, and lay persons to access when they need information

on many different subjects.

- Continue to expand the amount of Conference forms that are online and interactive.
- The establishment of regular webcasts with Conference staff (including the Bishop and cabinet) run just like an email/call-in radio talk show.
- Develop streaming media so that Annual Conference sessions may be seen in real time, so interested church members can email/fax/phone comments/questions which can be dealt as the sessions proceed.

EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE

Introductory Comments

The Episcopacy Committee of the Wisconsin Annual Conference, serves as a source of support for the bishop, the assistant to the bishop and the administrative assistant to the bishop. The committee serves this purpose with the bishop by listening and sharing the voices of the conference with the bishop. In turn, the committee is a listening presence for the bishop as she endeavors to conduct the business of the Episcopal office. The committee also serves in being a supportive and listening presence for the administrative assistant to the bishop and the assistant to the bishop.

The committee participates with the bishop in evaluating the needs of the Wisconsin Annual Conference. Finally, the committee works with the bishop in times of transition from one bishop to another.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year

The committee's primary focus of attention in 2004 was the transition from one bishop to another. The appropriate materials were prepared for the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee to assist them in appointing to the Wisconsin Area an appropriate Episcopal leader. The committee had a part in saying goodbye to Bishop Rader and saying hello to Bishop Lee. In the fall, the committee spent time with Bishop, Lee, sharing with her who we are as United Methodists in Wisconsin. The committee also began its work in being a supportive presence for the assistant to the bishop, Steve Polster. We also had conversation with the bishop's husband in knowing how we can best support him in his role.

Further, the committee encouraged the introductory sessions for Bishop Lee with the abundant help of the assistant to the bishop. The agency also continues to be supportive to the bishop as she and the cabinet work on making cross-cultural appointments around the annual conference. The committee has shared insights as to how racism, unfortunately, continues to be present in our state and conference.

Plans for the Coming Year

We believe our primary focus in 2006 will be in two areas: assisting Bishop Lee in our role as Episcopal leader in the Wisconsin Area and helping to strengthen & interpret the Circuit Ministry.

Howard Hintzman, chairperson

EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE COMMITTEE

Introductory Comments:

The Wisconsin Area provides an Episcopal Residence in the form of a condominium located on the East side of Madison at 6309 Merritt Ridge Drive, within easy driving distance of the Conference Center in Sun Prairie. The role of this committee, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the Wisconsin Annual Conference, is to maintain a quality residence for the bishop and to address needs as they arise. David Ward serves as the liaison person from the Episcopacy Committee to Bishop Lee and the Trustees.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year

This past year was spent in preparing the Episcopal Residence for the incoming bishop. We consulted with the Raders prior to their leaving as to specific needs which included replacing the carpet in the living room/dining room area of the home. We also heard from Bishop Lee and Rev. Lamarr Gibson as to their desires for the home which included repainting some areas and creating an office for Rev. Gibson in the basement.

Plans for the Coming Year

We will continue working with Bishop Lee and Rev. Gibson in order to maintain the condominium to see their needs and to enhance this investment of the Annual Conference.

Howard Hintzman, Chairperson of the Episcopacy Committee

CONFERENCE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Introductory Comments

The Conference Personnel Committee is responsible for establishing and implementing policies and procedures, salary scales and criteria for all Conference staff positions. The Committee oversees personnel searches for all Conference staff positions other than District Superintendents, working in consultation with appropriate program and administrative groups during the search process, and providing general oversight and coordination for those positions.

Highlights and accomplishments

The Personnel committee met four times during 2004, and held one conference phone call. In addition, we kept in touch with the committee by e-mail. It has been a year marked by many transitions.

Jane Walmer was hired for a vacated Ministry and Outreach Administrative Assistant position.

Amy Valdez Barker resigned as of December 31, 2004. We affirm the great work she accomplished, and want to continue strong programming in the area of youth ministry. Our committee began and successfully concluded the search for a new full time Conference Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. We will be welcoming that new Coordinator at our Annual Conference session in June, as this person begins their work among us.

We worked with Tom D'Alessio's request to spend most of his work week off-site, due to his family's move to Mequon last August. We accepted his resignation as Coordinator of Communications and Technical Services, effective July 1, 2005. We are in the process of searching for a new Information Technology Manager to continue to guide the Annual Conference Communica-

tions and Technology area, and we thank Tom for all of his expertise which helped move our communications technology into the current century.

In addition, Kris Pepper resigned from the position of Conference Youth Events Manager.

The Camping and Retreat Ministries Position has been increased from 75% to 85%.

We affirm and thank the members of the Conference Staff for the time they have spent in local parishes this year, communicating the work and ministry of the Annual Conference, and helping local churches understand apportionment giving.

The Personnel Handbook is in the process of being updated and revised, and will then be distributed to employees at the Sun Prairie Conference Center office.

We received requests from CF&A for additional staff time in the area of stewardship and a request from CCYM for a one-half time Conference Youth Events Manager. We will take these requests into consideration as we make a review of overall staffing needs for the whole Conference.

Plans for the Coming Year

Ongoing projects include looking at the bigger picture around staffing needs for the whole Conference, particularly because of changes created by the new circuit plan, in light of both what we believe we need and the finances that would be required to support that level of staffing. We also have begun conversations about increasing the housing allowance line item for Conference Staff, which has not been increased since 1997.

Sue Burwell, Personnel Committee Chairperson

PROGRAM AND ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Introductory Comments

The 2004 session of the Wisconsin Annual Conference was held at the Marriott Madison West Hotel and Conference Center June 13-16. The Program and Arrangements Committee continues to appreciate the feedback that is received from the members of the Annual Conference and we rejoiced in again carrying out the purpose of the Program and Arrangements Committee which is to plan, organize and present an Annual Conference session where God's Spirit can be experienced, decisions can be made, friendships can be renewed or made anew, and the church of Jesus Christ, as witnessed through United Methodism, can be celebrated. We felt this purpose was fulfilled during the 2004 Annual Conference session.

Highlights And Accomplishments Of The Past Year

There were many wonderful opportunities to experience God's Spirit during the 2004 Annual Conference. The various worship services, the opportunity to have Mark Miller join us as the conference musician and the many and varied guest speakers and visitors including those from the Dong-Bu (East) Conference, of the Korean United Methodist Church all provided us a glimpse of Christ's presence throughout the global church.

It was a joy to celebrate Bishop Rader's ministry with us as well as to put closure to the years that she had spent in the Wisconsin Annual Conference in order for the Annual Conference to open our hearts to a new Bishop. What a celebration it was to come together for a wonderful meal and then share in laughter as we watched the Montana Logging and Ballet Company.

As an Annual Conference we began moving in a new direction as we met in Circuits for part of our time together. It was the beginning of a new way to be in mission with those outside of our church walls and a hopeful new start to being in ministry together.

Plans For The Coming Conference Year

The 2005 Wisconsin Annual Conference will meet June 12-15 again at the Marriott Madison West Hotel and Conference Center in Middleton, WI. We will begin our time together with the laity and clergy sessions being held at the Marriott Madison West at 3:00 P.M. This year the Ordination service returns to the Madison Marriott at 7:00 P.M. on Sunday, June 12. We will also be having a separate Commissioning service to be held on Monday, June 13 at 3:30 P.M. also at the Madison Marriott.

We are pleased to welcome many special individuals to our Annual Conference this year including Bishop Ricardo Pereira from The Methodist Church in Cuba. Bishop Pereira will be preaching at the Ordination Service. The Program and Arrangements Committee is also looking forward to having Cynthia Wilson-Hollins as the Annual Conference musician. Cynthia is well known in the United Methodist Church for her outstanding musical talent. She has led many musical events throughout the United Methodist Church as well as having been the conference musician at a past General Conference.

Our theme this year is “One Bread, One Body” and we pray that the members of the Annual Conference will come together and experience the presence of Christ as we partake in many worship opportunities including, an opening worship service, the Memorial Service, Retirement Service and a youth led worship experience. We will of course conference together in order to accomplish much business that is before us as we meet. There is much to look forward to as we come together as an Annual Conference, June 12-15, 2005.

Amy Jameson Yackovich, Chairperson

VISION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM

The Vision and Quality Improvement Team met twice in the past year. Both meetings were focused on the Plans for Ministry documents created by the agencies of our Conference which receive funding from the Conference. As we reviewed the Plans for Ministry from the various agencies, we then made budget recommendations based on those plans. These budget proposals go to the Cabinet for review and update, and then to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration for final budget recommendations. It is a long but joyful task as we look at and celebrate the many ministries that are happening in our Annual Conference.

Since this last year was a time of transition between episcopal leaders, we did not meet to make plans for the future. The VQIT meets under the leadership of the Bishop, and we look forward to our new Bishop's insights and direction for our Annual Conference. Bishop Lee has asked the present VQIT to remain in place for one more year. Meetings are planned for the upcoming months to once again examine the ministries and processes of our conference to see that we are being faithful to our mission as Wisconsin United Methodists.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the VQIT,

Kent Ingram

COUNCIL ON FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Introductory Comments:

CF&A's purpose "shall be to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference." (*The Book of Discipline*, Par. 611.)

Highlights and accomplishments:

One of the Council's primary duties is to present an annual budget to the Annual Conference. During the year several meetings were held, leading to approval of the 2005 budget and its presentation at Annual Conference. In addition, meetings and conference calls were conducted to monitor the 2004 budget, review and approve the annual audit and discuss policies and internal controls. Members of the Council either chaired or sat on task forces to review retiree health care costs and the effect of designated fund use to fund the annual budget. In addition, several Council members participated in the "Our Common Thread" program in the Coulee District. This program placed a guest speaker at every church pulpit in the district to communicate the connectional importance of our United Methodist Church and tell the story of how each church's apportionments make a difference in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Despite our apportionment revenue coming in short of expectations, expense control and deferral of certain programming allowed the Annual Conference to experience only a nominal deficit in 2004. We count our blessings that over 75% of churches paid their apportionments in full. However, we continue to pray for those churches that come up significantly short of their apportionment goal. Continued significant shortfalls in apportionment giving will have a major financial impact on the Conference. The Conference has been faithful in meeting its financial obligations to the General Conference in full for the last 16 years. The Conference incurred no debt during 2004 to fund its current operations and has no amounts drawn on its line of credit.

The Council decided, after review of a feasibility study by Tyler & Associates and review by the retiree health care costs task force, not to conduct a conference-wide capital campaign to help pay for retiree health care at this time. A lukewarm reception from the study, the relatively small amount of income projected to be feasible to be raised, plus the uncertainty surrounding the new Medicare Part D provisions for prescription drugs adopted by Congress were factors in the decision. Although a capital campaign will not be done, the Council encourages all individuals and organizations that would like to provide financial support for this cause to send donations to the Wisconsin Annual Conference, designated for Fund C044, the Ministerial Insurance Memorial Fund.

Plans for the coming year:

One of our major objectives for 2005 is to present a 2006 Conference budget which is both attainable and meets the needs of the Conference. We continue to experience issues regarding apportionment goals, health care costs, and diminishing designated fund resources to fund program operations.

CF&A believes that stewardship needs to be reemphasized in the conference and will be working with the Bishop and Cabinet as well as other agencies to develop a plan to address this issue.

CF&A will continue to monitor the progress of the circuit ministries and the financial implications this evolving change will create.

CF&A will continue to review and evaluate internal controls over Conference operations.

Finally, CF&A will continue to monitor the financial staff of the Conference and periodically review financial results to assure that funds are being expended in accordance with the 2005 budget.

Jack Werner, Chairperson

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Leadership Development Council was originally organized to support the work of the Leadership Development Coordinator. With that position not staffed, the Leadership Development Council has struggled with its purpose. The team has coordinated several training events in the past, but did not think it necessary to meet for that kind of coordination. The team decided that we would not meet unless we had a clear understanding of where and how we would be most helpful. With the new Circuit Plan being instituted, we decided, in 2004, to wait to see where we would be able to offer help in leadership development most appropriately.

In 2005, the Team will meet to begin to vision, plan for, and develop goals for developing and supporting leadership for lay and clergy, particularly in relationship to Circuit Ministry needs.

We will coordinate with other teams involved in leadership of the Conference to provide leadership development training where it will be most effective, to avoid duplication of effort, and to provide for coordination, networking, and cooperation among teams. We will be working with the Circuit Plan Consult Team and the Assistant to the Bishop to plan for and help write grants to underwrite major leadership development training for lay and clergy – to bring in money from other agencies to support and underwrite the work of our Conference.

Submitted by Sue D’Alessio, Leadership Development Council Chair

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Purpose

The organized Unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ: to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Highlights and Accomplishments of 2004

We held School of Christian Mission at Lakeland College with Dean Corrine Robson. Classes were held on Prayer; Mexico; and Public Education. We had 165 in attendance at week long school and 235 in attendance at drive in day.

- There were 30 youth at Pine Lake for YOMICA.
- We celebrated 135 years of being in mission.
- We welcomed Bishop Linda Lee with a gift to mission. She led us in our closing communion at our Annual Gathering in LaCrosse.

Information For 2005

- We had district officer’s training and conference team retreat at Waupaca with Sandra Ruby as our leader.
- Conference Annual Gathering October 22, 2005, with Bishop Linda Lee as our speaker. The Gathering will be at Wausau First UMC.
- We have chosen as our theme for four years: Vessels of Mission and in 2005 our emphasis will be on Education and Interpretation.
- Pledge of \$398,000.00 for 2005.
- Mabel Heil Scholarship is available to “worthy women” returning to school. Deadline for first semester is May 1 and for second semester is October 1. Contact Jann Brockman, 905A Windfield PL., Appleton, WI 54911-1541.

- We organized five new units in 2004.
- We will be holding our School for Christian Mission at Lakeland College July 19-22. Drive In Day will be July 18. Corrine Robson will be the dean. The studies will be India and Pakistan; Public Education; and Children of the Bible.

We gave 12 Mabel Heil Scholarships to women who find themselves having to make a lifestyle change for whatever reason.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Purpose

The United Methodist Men exist to declare the centrality of Christ in every man's life. Men's ministry leads to the spiritual growth of men and to effective discipleship. This purpose is served as men are called to model the servant leadership of Jesus Christ.

Goals

The goal of the United Methodist Men of the Wisconsin Conference is to be a resource to and a support of the men's ministries in Wisconsin United Methodist churches relating to the accomplishment of our purpose statement. Individual and group strategies form the foundation of United Methodist Men's ministry and include the following:

- Enhance evangelism, mission and spiritual life as men become servant leaders
- Advocate programs that train men within local churches to promote specific ministries including prayer, missions, stewardship, hunger relief, and civic/youth serving ministries
- Forge pastoral partnerships by men committed to the effective support and service of clergy and local congregations
- Assist men in their ever-changing relationships, roles, and responsibilities in the family setting, workplace, and society

Reorganization of the structure of United Methodist Men

With the implementation of the circuit ministry plan, we are in the process of reorganizing the structure of the United Methodist Men to include our circuits. The revised structure will have our district presidents resourcing and coaching the circuit ministry team leaders instead of relating to each of the churches in their districts. The circuit ministry teams will then resource and assist the men's ministries of our local churches.

Ministry plans for 2005 and beyond

On April 22-23, 2005 we held a retreat at Lake Lucerne retreat titled "Spiritual Refreshment". This was a time for relaxing, meeting men from other churches and districts and being refreshed spiritually. Rev. Steve Ward spoke to us on Friday night (Fishers of Men) and Saturday morning (Great Shore Lunch) with Rev. Jorge Luis Mayorga Solis speaking to us in the afternoon (Sharing our Spiritual Refreshment).

On July 15-17th - The 9th National Gathering of United Methodist Men (Purdue University) will be a time of Inspiration, Information and Instruction.

Circuit # 25 is developing a pilot circuit ministry for the men attending these churches and the men living in their communities. This ministry includes a circuit men's ministry leadership team that will lead 2-4 circuit ministry events and be a resource for each of the churches in the circuit.

Roger Kindschi, President

Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Men

WISCONSIN'S ALDERSGATE RENEWAL MINISTRIES (WARM)

WARM is a regional area renewal fellowship of Aldersgate Renewal Ministries (ARM). The purpose of ARM is to bring the life of the Spirit into the life of the church. ARM is headquartered in Goodlettsville, TN, near Nashville, and operates as an affiliate of the General Board of Discipleship. **In the past year, ARM has agreed to coordinate Lay Witness Missions across the United States.**

WARM is an affiliate of the Wisconsin Conference Board of Discipleship. Members of the WARM steering committee have been instrumental in organizing and leading annual fall retreats focused on the power and work of the Holy Spirit in Wisconsin for many years. WARM also coordinates a prayer effort for Annual Conference, including hospitality and recruitment of onsite pray-ers and a network of intercessors throughout the state.

Aldersgate 2004 was held July 29-Aug. 1 in Lexington, KY. WARM offers the Edna Taylor Memorial Scholarship to one Wisconsin family each year to attend Aldersgate. WARM also participates in the national conference by providing garments of warmth for those who are chilly because of air conditioning. This has been very "warmly" received! **More garments are needed for the 2005 conference, especially XXL sizes and sweaters or jackets for men.**

Aldersgate 2005 will be in **Overland Park, Kansas** (near Kansas City) **July 6-10**. Aldersgate is a national conference on Spirit-filled living in the Wesleyan tradition. This year's theme will be Finding Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow. The general session speakers will include Bishop Violet Fisher, from the New York West Area, Rev. Adam Hamilton, pastor of the UM Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS, and Rev. Tyrone Gordon, pastor of St. Luke "Community" UM Church in Dallas, TX. Aldersgate is a FAMILY conference, offering nursery care, children's ministry and youth ministry. For more information, go to www.aldersgaterenewal.org or contact Rev. Kerry or Sue Wilson in Sheboygan (Fountain Park UMC).

Wisconsin's Holy Spirit Conference 2004 was held Sat., Oct. 16 at Mosinee United Methodist Church. Last year's conference was an abbreviated Life in the Spirit Seminar. A lower-than-usual attendance was attributed to the many who have already attended Life in the Spirit Seminars in the past.

The **Holy Spirit Conference for 2005** will be held **Saturday, October 22** at the **Mosinee UMC**. Dr. Elmer Colyer, an elder of the Wisconsin conference who teaches seminary in DuBuque, will be speaking. The theme of the 2005 conference will be: "The Spirit of the Father and the Son: How a Trinitarian Perspective on the Holy Spirit can Transform Your Life." For more information, see the display at Annual Conference, check the conference website (WARM is looking into this) or contact Rev. Kerry Wilson.

Submitted by Susan Wilson, liaison to the Conference Board of Discipleship

SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMITTEE

The Spiritual Formation Committee has been meeting and we have been serving the Conference in very visible ways this last year.

- We offered a successful 5-Day Academy which was attended by 46 people representing that many local churches within our Conference.
- We offered an Advent Retreat with an attendance of 63 people from our local churches. It was self supporting.
- We offered a time to gather for the Spiritual Formation leaders in our local churches and have met with them twice. We have had 12 people attending and this is something that could be very important for this area of growth in our local churches. This is self supporting.
- People from our 5-Day Academy decided to attend our 2-Year Academy for Spiritual Formation at Sinsinawa Mound. The 2-Year Academy is excellent. It is a very strong program with strong worship, prayer, and theological content. The Academy has 55 people attending, 7 from Wisconsin.
- We did a brief presentation at the last training of the Circuit Leaders and offered to do an afternoon program on Spiritual Formation for anyone interested. A dozen Circuit Leaders signed up. This will be self supporting.
- Tom D'Alessio helped us design a web site for Spiritual Formation for the local churches. As soon as we reorganize, we can get this up and running.

Rev. Linda Vance, Chair