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In our continuing effort to be a part of the Wisconsin Annual Conference vision of Imaging Wisconsin Anew and producing new fruit the Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries has worked diligently to “create community, equip disciples, and model care of creation that reflect God’s grace and love” at Lake Lucerne and Pine Lake.

2015 was an exciting and challenging year for the Board and the staff. We underwent a transition in our staffing model and Nick Coenen has assumed the role of Camps Administrator. David Irick is the program director of retreats and Collin Grooms is the program director of summer programs. This leadership team along with Sharon Cook, Coordinator of Camp and Retreat Ministries have done yeoman work in carrying out the guiding statement of the BCRM as we moved through this past year.

Over 900 “kids” of all ages took part in our summer camp and retreat programs. Our “second season” retreat programs continue to grow under David’s leadership and have provided opportunities for local churches, youth groups and individuals to experience the beauty and quiet of 1000 acres of God’s creation.

This past spring when we were informed that we would need to be less dependent on apportionment dollars the Board created a task force made up of members from the Cabinet, Conference Staff, Trustees and Board members to discern how we would maintain the financial viability of our ministry. To guide us through this process the Board contracted with Kaleidoscope Inc., a well-respected consulting firm. From April through January the task force, staff and the consulting firm worked to develop a new financial plan that will ensure our ministry will have a strong financial future. You will be hearing about these new strategies over the coming year and the Board came out of this process well aware of the challenges we face and excited about the opportunities for growth that they present.

We encourage all members of the Conference to visit our sites and to visit our new website at www.wiumcamps.org. See you at camp!

Brad Sherman, Chair
Sharon L. S. Cook, Coordinator of Camp, Retreat and Age-Level Ministries

The Conference Board of Church & Society is about making connections and building relationships. We serve as a connector between the local churches, districts, conference and the General Board of Church & Society. We help build relationships by providing resources that equip and empower United Methodists to engage in social issues with a faithful response. We are about helping members relate the gospel of Jesus Christ to people, communities and the world in which they live. From the General Board of Church & Society, our purpose is “to bring the whole of human life, activities, possession, use of resources, and community and world relationships into conformity with the will of God.”
This past year we focused on improving relationships in our communities by supporting Interfaith Dinner Dialogues in Milwaukee and the development of a Racial Equity Guide with the Wisconsin Council of Churches. We also have connections with Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice; the Wisconsin Peace with Justice Network; the Wisconsin Council of Churches; the North Central Jurisdiction Committee on Religion and Race; the United Methodist Women and the latest connection, the Lifeboat Foundation—an organization addressing teen homelessness in The Northwoods of Wisconsin.

Our action items this year are offered as bridges of hope to help our members and our communities address the contentious issues before us in this election year. We show how support of the Peace with Justice Special Sunday Offering helps resource our local congregations to engage in state budget issues that impact the well-being of our communities. We offer study guides through our collaborative relationship with state and national resources, as we continue to develop our relationship with other boards and agencies in and outside of the WAC.

In August, we held the first annual BCS Retreat and focused on engaging materials around racism, white privilege, Palestinian oppression and self-care. Some of our work and advancement in the work has been delayed due to relocation of board members, but we are getting back on track. We work to understand the issues that are facing our society and help implement the Social Principles in response to those issues. We are all called to provide “forthright witness and action on human well-being, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation that call Christians to respond as forgiven people for whom Christ died.”

We continue to develop our relationships with our sister boards and agencies as we work to fulfill the mission and vision of the Wisconsin Annual Conference. We are dedicated to serving with an attitude of gratitude confident in the abundance of God and that resources are available to us serve our local congregations, conference and general church.

If you would like more information about the board and its work or you are in need of resources, please contact us at churchandsociety@wisconsinumc.org or through our Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/WIChurchAndSociety, or our website through the conference website. We look forward to hearing from you.

Ellen Rasmussen, Chairperson

CONFERENCE STRATEGY BOARD

In the past year, the mission of the Conference Strategy Board (CSB) was to provide resources, support, training and leadership for congregations and District Strategy Teams (DST) in the Wisconsin Annual Conference. CSB understands the primary emphases of its mission to be:

a. Training to develop healthy leadership for congregational vitality.
b. Resourcing and Training for DST’s
c. Funding and resources for the development of new faith communities.
d. Extending loans for capital and emergency congregational development needs
e. Providing professional Conference leadership to consult on local church development and new faith starts.
LAST YEAR IN REVIEW

1. A main emphasis has been working with the DST’s and training around the seven season’s of new church starts for accountability purposes.
2. CSB has narrowed its focus to two main area of Congregational Development:
   a. New Church Starts
   b. Leadership Development (The Institute for Congregational Developers)
3. Over the past year, CSB has accomplished the following:
   a. Engaged in loan approvals and financial restructuring for congregations.
   b. Provided the following funding of churches
      1. 16 New Faith Communities = $479,000
   c. Provided funding for persons to attend training events and Congregational Development Schools
   d. Provided financial support to 21 Ethnic Minority Faith Communities
   e. Provided MissionInsight Train the Trainer Training through a Conference Wide Training with Tom Bandy
   f. Provides MissionInsight Training to DST’s with conference trained trainers
   g. Provides other demographic and ethnographic resourcing to DST’s
   h. Develop and implementation of Shepherding Teams across all new church starts for accountability purposes.

LOOKING FORWARD TO A FRUIT-PRODUCING FUTURE

For 2016 and beyond CSB
- Continue to Resource DST’s
- Begin our second year for the Institute for Congregational Developers (ICD)
- Refine and implement the process for new church starts
- Resource and collaborate with Circuits
- Assist in identifying potential hot spots for new faith communities
- Assist in identifying types & forms of new church starts
- Assist in identifying potential Partner Congregations
- Assist in the identification and training of potential new church planters

Participating in Collaborative Congregational Development Specific Training
- Within and outside the Wisconsin Annual Conference
- Developing Trainers of Trainers

Gary Holmes, Chair

BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

Introductory Comments
1. Accountability: The Conference Board of Global Ministries has the responsibility of the oversight and the coordination of the mission work of the Annual Conference in coordination with the General Board of Global Ministries. We are here to help the United Methodist people of Wisconsin share God’s abundance with those in need near and far.
away, and participate in the reclaiming, restoration, and redemption of all human and created life.

Membership is composed of chairs of the various committees and task groups under the Board, along with district representation, UMW representation, and at-large members. The Board meets three times annually (two face-to-face meetings and one phone conference).

2. 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. Regarding Wisconsin Annual Conference Imagine Wisconsin Anew goals, we are a major arm of the vision regarding Multicultural Outreach and ministries of Mercy and Justice. Through Advance specials, missionary work, VIM trips, Health and Welfare Ministries, Community Ministries, Partnerships, and Immigration Ministry, we are a church that is humbly reaching out into the world in Christ’s name.

3. 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, challenges 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.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Last Year

1. Health and Welfare Ministries (John Lawson, Chair) is the connecting link between the Conference and the following 14 health and welfare ministries in Wisconsin related to the United Methodist Church:

   Bellin Health System
   Cedar Crest
   Christian Community Home
   Evergreen Retirement Community
   Harbor House Crisis Shelter
   Hillcrest Family Services
   Morrow Memorial Home
   Northcott Neighborhood House
   Parish Nurse Ministries
   Schmitt Woodland Hills
   Sheboygan Senior Community
   United Methodist Children’s Services
   United Methodist Hospital Ministry
   Village at Manor Park

The committee membership includes the CEO and/or designee and a liaison from the governing board of each ministry, a liaison from the United Methodist Association of
Health and Welfare Ministries, a designated Conference staff representative, and the committee chair.

The committee is the channel through which the Conference provides financial support to the Ministries in three ways – 1) from apportionments and 2) Golden Cross offerings and 3) Advance Special Giving. The primary recipients of apportionment funds, which are part of the Board of Global Ministries budget, are four ministries that serve persons with great needs and few resources:

- Harbor House Crisis Shelter
- Northcott Neighborhood House
- United Methodist Children’s Services
- United Methodist Hospital Ministry

All churches are encouraged to collect a Golden Cross offering each year, which is distributed by the Health and Welfare Ministries Committee to all of the Ministries that have a current Affiliation Agreement with the Conference. The Golden Cross contributions are used to support the benevolent programs of each Ministry. In 2015, Golden Cross offerings provided more than $31,000 in support.

The committee is responsible for working with each Ministry to have a current Covenant of Affiliation Agreement. Currently, 11 Ministries have such agreements. Each year at Annual Conference we review a portion of those agreements. In the year 2016 we have the opportunity to reaffirm the Covenants of Affiliation with Bellin Health, Evergreen, Sheboygan Senior Community, and United Methodist Children’s Services.

2. Mission Motivation Committee (Mary Balson, Chair) in coordination with the Conference Secretary of Global Ministries (Tony Fuller) and District Mission Secretaries, educate, encourage, and stimulate mission work in the Conference. We share with you a thanksgiving for Tony Fuller’s service to the conference as the Conference Secretary of Global Ministries and welcome as the new secretary Benjamin Morris.

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. We have trained a new set of District Mission Secretaries and seek to have annual regional mission training events. We have reinstituted the Rainbow Covenant Program for mission giving in which every local church is challenged to give abundant gifts in a rainbow of color giving levels reaching local missions, circuit, district, state, national, and international levels. Mission Motivation coordinated the itineration of five missionaries in our districts. The first three churches completing their covenants were recognized this past year.

Wisconsin United Methodists gave more than $160,000 for all Special Sunday Offerings in 2015. In addition, Wisconsin Conference churches raised over $78,937 to support missionaries around the world (down 13%). The Imagine No Malaria campaign raised $512,292. We celebrate the news that Wisconsin United Methodists gave over $1,550,000 for all Advance projects in 2015 (up 10.7%). You can visit the Wisconsin Conference Board of Global Ministries web site, developed under the auspices of Mission Motivation, at www.wisconsinumc.org/missions.

The Thelma Gregg Award for 2015 was not awarded due to no applications. Applications have been received for this year and an award will be announced at Annual Conference.
The Hunger Task Force is chaired by Julie McNaughton. We keep the Conference Web-Site up to date and have a display at Annual Conference.

Immigration Task Force chaired by Donna Veatch continues to work with districts and local churches to extend the mission work of the Conference. The Immigration Task has organized gatherings, produced materials, and facilitated conversations on Immigration Issues. We are most grateful for the fruitful offerings of Donna Veatch for leading the Immigration Ministry.

3. **The Community Ministries Committee** (Sarah & Tyler Smoot, Chairs) provides funding assistance for the ecumenical partnerships around the state and supports Community Developers in our state. These programs reach out to persons in stressed urban areas, persons involved in migrant work, prison populations, and other conditions of need. We note a new Community Developer Ministry at Milwaukee: Summerfield church has been developed with a special focus on the downtown city needs. We are thankful for our US2 (Global Mission Fellows) who have worked in Madison and Milwaukee:

4. **Conference Partnerships:** A new partnership entitled In Mission Together has being implemented that will allow churches to relate more directly with another global partner. The following countries have been designated by the General Board of Global Ministries as Mission Initiatives and are promoted in this program: Cambodia, Cameroon, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Russia, Senegal, Thailand, Uzbekistan. This Partnership is designed to move missional support away from situations of dependency or symptom treatment to a true partnership which enables both Wisconsin congregations and congregations overseas to support and encourage one another. For more information visit http://www.umcmission.org/Get-Involved/Partnerships/In-Mission-Together

5. **National Volunteers in Mission** (Bruce Koch, Chair)

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 (Bruce Koch, Chair) and International VIM (Nancy Carmichael, Chair) divisions within the Wisconsin Conference committee structure. VIM projects are largely self-funded and continue to grow in size and scope.

In 2015, ten National VIM events were conference sponsored to Pahokee, FL; Lineville, AL; Plymouth, NC, Pine Lake Camp, WI; Chain Saw Training, Platteville WI; Red Cliff Reservation, UMTLP-Milwaukee, Pine Lake 2, Camp Lucerne, WI; Cass Community Center, Detroit. This involved more than 178 volunteers.

VIM also continues to train leaders for future work camps. Safe Sanctuary policies and background check procedures are now standard for all trips. The committee also maintains interaction with the Disaster Response facet of the conference efforts.

In addition to the above, many individual churches have sent out teams to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world and those are not recorded in this report.

Individual VIM trip reports and upcoming events are available to view on the wisvim.org website.

6. **International Volunteers in Mission** (Rev. Nancy Carmichael-Stoner, Chair)
International Volunteers in Mission develops policy, trains and supports leaders, promotes and sponsors trips. All international trips are to be registered with the committee and a report filed with the committee at the conclusion of the trip. In connection with our jurisdiction, trips open to anyone are listed on jurisdictional websites.

This committee is committed to raising funds for scholarships. We are intentionally encouraging young adults. Two persons received Trainer training in 2015 and they in turn have been training team leaders.

This last year we had registered trips to India, Peru and Uganda.

In, 2016 it is our prayer that all churches planning International trips will register and report back. The world is our parish!

7. This was a busy year for the Wisconsin Conference Disaster Response Team (Tom Rossmiller, Chair).

Grant County: The Boscobel Flood / Platteville Tornado project was closed out during 2015.

Chain Saw Training: Eight (8) people attended chain saw training in Platteville— 5 from Ill. and 3 from Wis.

Disaster Response Trailers are stored in Prairie Du Sac, Sun Prairie Conference Offices, and Camp Lucerne. One trailer needs new tires. The cost for them is in the 2016 budget.

Logistics: Flood/ cleaning buckets were removed from Prairie Du Sac UMC and sent back to Midwest Mission (MWM) this past summer as MWM wanted to check over the buckets, also buckets stored in Waterford were removed for inspection by MWM. No flood buckets remain in the state at this time. We can get flood / cleaning buckets in emergency quite easily. We were given thirty (30) homeless blankets by MWM which were distributed. Childcare kits are available.

Spiritual and Emotional Care: We are looking to schedule our next S & E class in March 2016 in the Oneida area and another in the Edgerton area later in the year. Currently we have approx. 32 Spiritual Care Team Members trained. Not all are badged, because of the online portion of the training is not being completed, thus restricting them from becoming badged. Persons completing the training are badged and uniformed to help identify workers in disaster settings. A training session for 2016 is in preparation. One class in 2015 was cancelled due to low enrollment.

We are planning for the creation of a Disaster Response Devotional Book.

Emergency Response Trainer Training: Tom Rossmiller did participate in a train the trainer class in Iowa this past summer and plans on offering training here in Wisconsin.

Other Information:

The 2015 Love in Action Award was presented to Pastor Ann Bullis at the Annual Conference-

A language barrier ministry for our disaster response teams was attempted to be created from attendees at the annual conference, however only one name from the entire conference was obtained - We have now discussed the possibility of calling on our Ethnic Clergy in case of an emergency.
The Disaster Response chair did travel to several communities around the state during this past spring and summer after more severe storms to offer assistance, none was requested. Columbus UMC did have some minor tree damage and they did offer their church to the Salvation Army to provide a place for meals for disaster survivors and community members assisting those impacted by the storm. It would be nice to see local United Methodist Churches around the state offer this food preparation assistance within their respective communities if at all possible- no travel would be involved yet this would help many people within the local community and a way to show compassion by United Methodists and help the local church be part of disaster response within its community.

The Disaster Response Academy was held August 27 through August 30, 2015 at the Wesley Wood Retreat Center Indianola IW- DRC attended this to become an ERT trainer and obtain the most current disaster related information available. The Wisconsin DRC was on the NCJ Planning Committee for this NC Jurisdictional training event.

DRC meeting with Bishop Jung: Bishop Jung and DRC attended the NCJ training event- DRC felt it was informative, he met two young ladies from Wisconsin who also became ERT’s at this event and I invited them into the Disaster Ministry These two young ladies have a lot of interest and energy- something this ministry needs- Bishop Jung talked about district coordinators which are badly needed. He indicated by 2016 these coordinators will be in place – we need coordinators who want to help pursue training in their respective districts in all phases of the disaster ministry- The DM would like to see teams able to be deployed as needed across the state. All teams would hopefully be ready and willing to respond to disasters in each district- this is going to take work and commitment from all of us as well as the United Methodist Conference and will have an impact on the 2016 budget. Discussion was held with Rev. Sam Royappa- Director of Connectional Ministries- regarding Wisconsin UMC disaster preparedness. The cabinet is working on District Disaster Coordinators and teams. More information on this in the future is forth coming. The Wisconsin United Methodist Conference Cabinet will have Disaster Response training with UMCOR staff on April 7, 2016.

The Disaster Ministry Committee reminds our conference churches that when our churches experience disasters, they are to report to the district or conference any damage they receive so that we are able to respond to their needs more quickly and efficiently.

8. Board of Global Ministry Goals for the Coming Year

A. Engage in ministry with the poor in the multicultural communities of Milwaukee and Superior, Wisconsin.

B. Educate and inform all local congregations and individuals of the many opportunities for involvement with missions in the Wisconsin Conference through Annual Conference Mission Dinner, email, mail, workshops, missionary visits, and other speakers.

C. Utilize conference information gathering tools to target local congregations not active in varied mission opportunities.

D. Encourage local churches to focus support and participation on United Methodist projects. This would include support of UM missionaries and mission projects, involvement in UM volunteer trips and UM agencies. (Involvement in other local and international projects is not discouraged; we do, however, hope to encourage a greater focus on UM projects.)
E. Develop better communication between the various volunteer groups (NVIM, IVIM, Disaster Response) and the conference office so that background checks can be expedited.

F. Strengthen the Conference Partnership with local churches by utilizing the General Board of Global Ministries “In Mission Together” program.

G. Expand the recruitment, training, and deployment of volunteers responding to disasters throughout the conference and nationally, as well as to non-disaster needs (such as work at campgrounds and agencies affiliated with the UMC.)

H. Continue the work of the Health and Welfare Committee as it reviews and represents relationship statements for each of the 14 H&W agencies.

I. Participation in and support of national campaigns toward Comprehensive Immigration Reform and more humane treatment of immigrants.

J. Utilize the Rainbow Covenant material to encourage local church missional giving.

Paul Armstrong, Chairperson

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT MINISTRY (BHESM)

A. Introductory Comments

The Board of Higher Education and Student Ministry seeks to provide for “ministry beyond the local church” by supporting the ministry of United Methodist related campus ministries financially and by providing training opportunities for campus ministers. In addition, we seek to assist young women and men in the United Methodist Church who need financial assistance in obtaining a college degree. We oversee the work United Methodist-related campus ministries in our conference and strive to hold especially our remaining Wesley Foundations accountable to support their student ministries. We also support North Central and Wiley College, two United Methodist colleges, with some financial giving. In all areas we are supporting efforts to reach out to college students and “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” for those who journey through the mission field of higher education.

We are pleased that in past years we have been an agency of our Conference that gave more financial support than most other protestant mainline denomination towards campus ministry and have lived, given and loved beyond the expectation of some of our campus ministers. By having regular meetings with our campus ministers we hold the campus ministry programs accountable towards disciple making ministries not only for students but with students so that new leaders are built and the world is transformed into a closer iteration of God’s kingdom.

By supporting our campus ministries, we are able to support those doing the hard, holy work of developing Christian disciples and leaders on our college campuses. The more effective our ministries on our campuses, the more likely these students connect with other local churches when they graduate and become leaders in their churches and communities. So, the work of our local churches looking for leadership
in their places of ministry and our conference looking for new and innovative lay and clergy leadership is directly related to the support we give to our campus ministries.

B. Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year

- In 2015, we used our apportioned dollars to grant eight campus ministries a total of $75,000 including La Crosse, Madison, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Platteville, River Falls, and Whitewater.
- We were able to support both Wiley College and North Central College with $2,000 each in 2015.
- The Board gathered with campus ministers for the purpose of networking, sharing ideas and talking about how the Board can best be of support to our campus ministries in Wisconsin.
- In addition to financial support our board has worked on the promotion and awareness of our individual campus ministries and the UM Student Day Offering.
- We have promoted and raised awareness of our campus ministries, scholarship programs and United Methodist schools. Our webpage provides access to information of scholarship possibilities, helpful links to campus ministries in Wisconsin and to UM schools. The webpage can be found by clicking “education” on our conferences web site (www.wisconsinumc.org) and choosing “higher ed & student ministry.”
- We have continued to work towards encouraging campuses with inactive Wesley Foundations and or inactive campus ministries to re-launch a viable student ministry in their communities.
- We were intentional about developing our board to its specifications according to the conference rules. We are happy to have a fully functioning board with new highly qualified members.

C. How we relate to the United Methodist Church’s Mission and the Vision of the Wisconsin Conference

1) The conference’s vision for the current quadrennium is to “Live the Fruit of the Spirit.” We have been engaged in conversation with our campus ministers who their ministries can be centers of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

2) Our conference’s vision needs accountability! It is our responsibility to hold Wesley Foundations accountable to use their resources for the purposes they are meant for.

3) The primary goal of each campus ministry we are supporting is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

4) Transforming the world does not happen over night! We work to ensure long-term solutions. Our board’s role in this is to provide training for campus ministers to find more funding resources that ensure long term financial sustainability to be in the transformation business.

5) The Conference’s fruit-producing strategy encourages us to move from scarcity to abundance, from retention to recruitment and to celebrate the gifts of God’s people: While our board has a role in holding others accountable, we don’t forget that accountability can be wrapped in encouragement which in our case celebrates the gifts that God has put into what already exists. While our mindsets and
hopes can be stuck in retention it is the goal of our board to be intentional about board development, both internally and for each individual Campus Ministry board. Additionally it is encouraging to see the spiritual growth and depth of many of our campus ministries - we serve students from many backgrounds, from various theological traditions, in our campus ministries - all of whom are growing in their love of God and neighbor.

D. How we Relate to the Five Focus Areas
We ask and expect that our campus ministries will, at least in part, align their ministries with our priorities with Imagine Wisconsin Anew. Most of our 8 campus ministries did have at least one program that engages the multicultural community on campus, starts new ministries to reach out to their student communities, initiate turnaround movements where old approaches no longer work. Additionally, all of our campus ministries are engaged in mercy and justice ministries, such as creating Christmas stockings for battered women’s shelters or going on mission trips all over this country and world. Additionally, each campus ministry feeds souls through food – in some cases to the degree of starting their own student run and student serving food pantry!

E. Plans for the Coming Year
1) We will financially support United Methodist-related campus ministries in Wisconsin by generally financing up to 20% of their needs.
2) We plan to assist our campus ministries in creating supportive boards for each of their own locations to better support our campus ministers and the ministries to students with fundraising, programming, and administration. We hope to do this with a Board training event.
3) We intend to support our campus ministers by providing a retreat that coincides with our Board training event so that our campus ministers may develop a stronger community of campus ministers in Wisconsin, learn from each other, and support each other.
4) We will promote our connectional responsibilities: conference student scholarships, United Methodist Student Sunday, and apportionment giving through our work within the Annual Conference.
5) Creatively and strategically looking into new methods of funding and fundraising to support campus ministry. This is twofold, a) continue to encourage and support campus ministries in finding funding methods b) investigating the potentials and limits of fundraising as a conference board under new guidelines.
6) We hope to encourage local churches near institutions of higher education to engage in ministry with the “mission fields” at campuses near them. By engaging with the people in their communities, our local churches can transform lives and connect with their communities in new and exciting ways.
7) This year we hope to be able to support both Wiley College and North Central College again.

Allie Scott, Chairperson, Board of Higher Education and Student Ministry
CONFERENCE BOARD OF LAITY

The Conference Board of Laity (“The Board”) enables laity to have full and equal partnerships in collaborative ministry with clergy and throughout the Wisconsin Annual Conference. The Board programs align with

1. the purpose of The Board as defined in The Book of Discipline 2012 (BOD) ¶631
2. the mission of the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (BOD ¶120 The Mission and Ministry of the Church)
3. the purpose of the annual conference to make disciples of Jesus Christ by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church, all to the glory of God (BOD ¶601 Purpose of the Annual Conference)

The Board

1. grows lay leadership in the local congregations, the circuits, and the districts
2. provides collaborative ministries between clergy and lay
3. provides lay opportunities for education and spiritual growth
4. develops principled spiritual leaders for the church and for the world

The Board accomplishes its work primarily via Lay Leadership Development, Faith Alive!, Annual Conference Laity Session, Lay Servant Ministries programs, Lay Leader/Lay Member to Annual Conference trainings, AC 101 – Navigating Annual Conference, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men and the work of the District Lay Leaders and District Directors of Lay Servant Ministries. The Board maintains a webpage on the Wisconsin Annual Conference website that includes a listing of all training and connecting opportunities and events throughout the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

The Conference Board of Laity (“CBOL”) aligns its programs, courses, events and activities with the Mission and Ministry of The United Methodist Church “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” through the lens of and infusing them with the Wisconsin Annual Conference quadrennial themes 2013-2016” Imagining Wisconsin Anew and Living the Fruit of the Spirit – Cultivate and Nurture 2015. The Conference Board of Laity achieves this by study and discussion of the quadrennial themes and incorporating vocabulary, images and scriptural references and by promoting and teaching from materials and resources available and produced to support the understanding and living of the same. At the same time, the purpose of the annual conference “to make disciples of Jesus Christ by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God”; and “develop principled spiritual leaders for the church and for the world” which is one of the four focus areas of The United Methodist Church, so that they are equipped to create new places for new people and revitalize existing congregations, engage in ministry with the poor and combat the diseases of poverty by improving health globally.

We celebrate and rejoice in Bishop Hee Soo Jung’s faithful support for the laity using his voice throughout the Wisconsin Conference and The Great Partnership with the Conference Lay Leader and the Conference Board of Laity to empower the laity voice in
this Conference in order that God’s work can be accomplished by good stewardship of
gifts of the Spirit among all God’s people. The Board is the connectional table for laity
leaders throughout the Wisconsin Annual Conference: Conference Lay Leader, Past
Conference Lay Leader, Associate Lay Leader, Dean and Associate Dean of Faith Alive!,
District Lay Leaders, District Directors of Lay Servant Ministries, President of
Conference United Methodist Women, President of Conference United Methodist Men,
youth representative, and Cabinet Liaison. The Board is in collaborative ministry to
worship, to study, to build relationships among its members, to implement and evaluate
programs and events; to develop opportunities for spiritual growth for leaders, to
collaborate with other boards and agencies in the Wisconsin Conference, and to vision for
effective ministry. The Board meets regularly about nine times a year, about half in
person and half by teleconference.

Faith Alive! celebrates sixteen years of spiritual formation courses! Faith Alive! was
born to open the world to seekers and seekers to the world - not to keep it the same - but
to live into a new day. Faith Alive! is asking us to look forward, with new eyes, with
new words, and with new visions. April 10, 2016, Faith Alive! celebrates the graduation
of eleven students who began their two-year journey September 2014. Half the
participants in this class are Hmong and half are Anglo including one of Baha’i faith.
The diversity greatly enriches our experience. The class of eleven students who began
September 2015 continues into its second year. A new class begins every September and
registration for the class beginning September 2016 is open now on Faith Alive!’s
webpage at WisconsinUMC.org where you will find online registration and information
about Faith Alive! some of which can be downloaded and shown in local congregations,
community groups, at board and agency meetings and in small groups.

Faith Alive! is a major opportunity for laypersons and clergy to reflect on their role as a
spiritual person in their daily lives, not just when serving the church. Students of all ages,
men and women, come from all over the state. The group gathers January, April and
September each year, giving student’s time to seek out God and practice ways to live
more faithfully. The Design Team spends much time prayerfully evaluating and futuring
Faith Alive! to make adjustments and changes that will grow and improve the students’
experiences while keeping the core values of the program and how to live as a spiritual
person in the WORLD. The Design Team spends many hours preparing with the  faculty
person for each weekend class to help with discernment and reflection on what is core to
Faith Alive! and what can be adapted. Faith Alive! core values that align with the
purposes of both the Conference Board of Laity and the Wisconsin Annual Conference
are: 1) providing the opportunity to study in community with others seeking to develop a
deep faith and 2) providing an environment away from home and work that is conducive
to dedicating one’s time to spiritual inquiry and development with diverse students and
faculty/leaders. The Faith Alive! brochure has been redesigned in look as well as
changes in vocabulary to better invite and appeal to a more diverse faith audience.

The Conference Board of Laity offered the workshop “AC 101: Navigating Annual
Conference”, a training for first-time attendees to Annual Conference and for those who
want a refresher course on the organization and operation of the 2015 Annual
Conference. The training was offered on Friday, June 12, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 pm prior to
the beginning of opening worship to give opportunity to both clergy and laity to attend
and again at 6:00-7:00 pm immediately preceding Laity Session.
The 2015 Laity Session of Wisconsin Annual Conference, Marriott West Madison, Middleton, Wisconsin, convened Friday evening, June 12, 2015, preceded by gathering music by Mark Miller and his band Subject to Change. The Laity was warmly welcomed by Deanna Shimko, Conference Lay Leader; then she introduced Bishop Hee Soo Jung who said, “I hope that we as leaders say clearly to the world: We believe in God and because of faith, we are making a difference”. Bishop thanked the Board of Laity for their work in the Conference and for the ministry and opportunities they provide around the Conference.

Imelda Roman, Metro South/South East District Lay Leader; Sharon Black, Metro North/South East District Director of Lay Servant Ministries; Ron Vinger, Nicolet/North East District Lay Leader; Judy Wiernert, Winnebago/North East District Lay Leader; Clark Stevens, Nicolet/North East District Director of Lay Servant Ministries; Deb Kraemer, Winnebago/North East District Director of Lay Servant Ministries; Shirley Clark, Heartland/North Central District Lay Leader; Steve Mayeshiba, Capital/South West District Lay Leader; Corrine Daniels, Coulee/South West District Lay Leader; Lisa Gilbert, Capital-Coulee/South West Director of Lay Servant Ministries; Gail Burgess, Associate Dean of Faith Alive!; Eric Taylor, Young Adult Representative; Dorthy Radley, Past Conference Lay Leader; and Dan Dick, Cabinet Liaison. D Shimko mentioned those Board members not present at Laity Session: Denise Retzleff, Dean of Faith Alive! and Mark Sheets, Metro North/South East District Lay Leader. D Shimko expressed appreciation to the Board for their dedicated volunteer work on behalf of laity throughout the Conference all year long.

D Shimko invited the lay delegates to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences to the platform: Gail Burgess, Barbara Dick, Katie Estrem-Fuller, Lisa King, John Lawson, Diane Odeen, Julie Schubring, Jen Southworth, and Judy Vasby. They presented information about General and Jurisdictional Conferences and then ably responded to questions from Laity Session attendees.

Winding up Laity Session, D. Shimko thanked the Board of Laity and all laity present for their passion and ministry all year long in the many congregations and communities of the Wisconsin Conference. Attendees were invited to the Board of Laity display in the exhibit area of Annual Conference for additional support, resources, information and to make connections with the members of the conference Board of Laity. D Shimko closed Laity Session with a prayer of blessing and thanks and encouragement to Imagine Wisconsin Anew! Mark Miller and Subject to Change led Laity Session attendees in original and familiar music. Mark Miller sometimes introduced a song by talking about it or singing it once or his vocalist(s) singing it demonstrating how we can introduce music to people and bring them into worshipful singing of any new song.

Conference Board of Laity sponsored a “door prize”. A completed evaluation of Laity Session was a qualifying entry in the drawing for a $50 gift certificate to Cokesbury Store.

Resources were placed on each chair for the attendees: Evaluation of the Laity Session and drawing entry, bio for Mark Miller, GBOD 2015 Resources Catalog for Lay Servant Ministries, and a two-sided sheet: What to look for at Annual Conference!/What to do after Annual Conference!/Guide to “Methodist Speak” (abbreviations and acronyms)/useful websites and useful contacts.
Conference Board of Laity display booth offered the following resources:

- Faith Alive! brochure for 2015-2017 course
- Conference Board of Laity Wisconsin Conference brochure
- GBOD Lay Servant Ministries brochure
- GBOD 2015 Catalog of Resources for Lay Servant Ministries
- Imagining Wisconsin Anew brochure
- Live the Fruit of the Spirit brochure
- Laity Session evaluations and receiving basket for completed forms
- Walk to Emmaus brochure
- Wisconsin Conference UMW Mission U (July 2015) flyers
- Deaconess information
- Map of Wisconsin Conference districts
- UMW brochure
- Sign-up sheet for people to request additional information
- Bowls of complementary candy
- Evaluation of Laity Session

The Lay Servant Ministries trains in many and varied topics in the caring, leading and communicating categories, not only preaching. The Board attempts to make this better understood among laity and clergy. Some of the many ministries Lay Servants may explore are: Discovering Spiritual Gifts, Leading in Prayer, Preaching, Leading in Worship, United Methodist Heritage and Polity, Lay Servant Ministry Basic, Lay Pastoral Care Giving, Lay Servants Teach Adults, Lay Servants Tell Stories, Lay Servants Lead Bible Study, Lay Servants Are Servant Leaders. Pursuant to 2012 Book of Discipline, successful completion of the first six courses listed in the previous sentence is required to become a Certified Lay Speaker who may preach beyond his/her local church/congregation. The Board of Laity publishes a brochure explaining Lay Servant Ministries, requirements for serving beyond his/her local church/congregation, and contact information for district directors of lay servant ministries.

The District/Regional Directors of Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) arrange for basic and advanced classes in all of the eight and now five (as of July 1, 2015) districts of the Wisconsin Conference. Look for other than LSM courses/programs now accredited for Lay Servant Ministries credit, e.g. Mission U (Conf UMW), Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation (annual stewardship workshops and seminars). The purpose is to make course opportunities more accessible to laity throughout the large geographic area of the Wisconsin Annual Conference and its districts, and to improve the scope and variety of courses available to meet the needs of laity for their personal, leadership and spiritual growth for their lifetimes.

The Third Annual Lay Leadership Convocation with Bishop Hee Soo Jung is scheduled for Friday evening, March 18-Saturday, March 19, 2016, at First UMC, Oshkosh.

The Board supports the work and ministry of “Catalyst” which is designed for collaborative ministry of laity and clergy to build strong, healthy relationships and healthy, productive congregational environments by teaching/equipping laity and clergy leaders with tools based in family systems theory, emotional intelligence, navigating controversial and difficult relationships, have deep change – transformation of congregational cultures and worldviews, moving from dysfunction to full function, from
corrosive to creative, from resigned to engaged, and from comfortable to productive. This is a practical learning designed for application in a wide variety of settings with simple, clear, hands-on and experiential, equipping and self-replicating. This shifts the focus from “tending” to “leading,” from shepherding participants to forming disciples and “to providing principled spiritual Christian leaders for the church and for the world.” Go to the Catalyst website located at http://catalyst2.wordpress.com/ for more information.

The Conference Board of Laity has strong, quality programs that foster spiritual growth, resource and equip leaders and provide new opportunities for church members to be strengthened in their ministries. These are different pathways to the same goal: they all align to revitalize, individually and within a congregation, circuit and conference.

The priorities set by the Board of Laity were initially measured primarily by 1) number of attendees, 2) contact hours, 3) cost per person and 4) feedback. Four programs, Faith Alive!, Lay Leader/Lay Member of Annual Conference trainings, Laity Session and the Laity Convocation obtain written participant evaluations at the conclusion of each event/weekend. These evaluations are compiled and distributed among the leadership/design teams. In this way, we can measure the effectiveness of these programs beyond statistics. We can get to a better place: the heart of the meaning of these programs for the participants in their lives by their own testimony. What we have learned is the transforming power of the design/relevance of these programs and the ministry/witness of the faculty/leadership teams. God is ever creating and recreating; so, the life of these participants is unfolding spurred by a newfound willingness to respond affirmatively to God’s call. We cannot see immediately all that they will become, and we may never know all the fruit of their transformations. We do know already significant changes/decisions many have made. They tell/write their stories and live out their faith in the world.

Deanna L. Shimko, Conference Lay Leader

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Ordained Ministry

The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible for the recruitment, credentialing and nurture of the clergy of the Annual Conference. The work of the Board is an integral part of the development of principled spiritual leaders for the church and the world. The Board relates to everyone who experiences God’s call to professional ministry in the Wisconsin Conference in order to help them clarify that call and understand the opportunities available within The United Methodist Church to respond to that call, and acts on behalf of the church to determine how the church can best affirm each person’s call to ministry. These primary responsibilities are defined in the twenty-seven specific tasks identified in ¶635.2 a through 635.2aa of the 2012 Book of Discipline, as well as the responsibilities of the Registrar of the Board found in ¶635.3a through 635.3e of the 2012 Discipline.

Effective clergy leadership is one of the keys to equipping local churches for ministry. Working together with the District Committees on Ordained Ministry, which by Discipline are sub-committees of the Board, the Board of Ordained Ministry determines
on behalf of the annual conference whether those who offer themselves in service as clergypersons meet the qualifications, ethical standards, and high expectations of The United Methodist Church for its clergy, so that the churches of the annual conference may have competent, effective, and skilled clergy leadership. The Board then makes its recommendations to the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference for their consideration.

The Board of Ordained Ministry meets twice each year at the Bishop Rader Retreat Center at Pine Lake Camp. The Board interviews candidates for Provisional and Associate Membership, as well as candidates for Full Membership and Ordination. Candidates come to Pine Lake overnight to meet with the Board over a two-day period. In addition to three formal interviews, board members get to know candidates informally over meals, in shared worship and communion, and in other unstructured settings. This format for the credentialing process has significantly improved the ability of Board members to get to know candidates and to make better, more informed decisions about their application for commissioning or ordination. One of the consequences of this interview format is that the Board’s meetings are lengthened. It takes longer to interview each group of candidates, and candidates are at camp overnight, which increases the costs of the interview process. While the Board does everything it can to hold down costs, we believe that this improved interview process is a long-term investment in the future clergy leadership of the annual conference.

At any given moment the Board is caring for 150 to 200 individuals who are exploring a call to ministry, enrolled in the candidacy certification process, serving as Licensed Local Pastors, moving towards commissioning and Provisional Membership, serving as Provisional Members while moving towards ordination and Full Membership, or seeking to transfer their credentials into the Wisconsin Annual Conference from other Annual Conferences of The United Methodist Church or other Christian denominations. Approximately 90 Licensed Local Pastors are supervised by the five District Committees on Ordained Ministry.

Candidates for ministry are required to complete a psychological assessment at North Central Ministry Development Center, and the Board conducts background checks on all individuals seeking a clergy relationship with the annual conference. Both of these measures are required by The Book of Discipline.

There are currently 20 Provisional Members of the Annual Conference who are under the direct supervision of the Board of Ordained Ministry. The Provisional Members participate in a “Provisional Residency Program” which consists of a summer provisional members gathering/retreat, and two provisional residency seminars - held in October and May. One of these seminars focuses on the practice of ministry, while the other focuses on a theological topic. Participation in the provisional residency program is required by the Book of Discipline. Provisional Members are also expected to participate in a Provisional Mentoring group. There are four of these mentoring groups around the conference, which usually meet monthly.

The Board is responsible for administering the Conference’s portion of the Ministerial Education Fund. Through this fund 12 individuals received Seminary Scholarship assistance, and 26 Licensed Local Pastors received scholarship assistance for their required Course of Study Classes or Licensing School in 2015.

The Board consults with the cabinet when clergy from other Annual Conferences or denominations are being considered for transfer into the conference or appointment to
serve Wisconsin United Methodist churches. Whenever clergy members of the Annual Conference request a change in their relationship (retirement, various kinds of leave, honorable location, etc.) with the Annual Conference or approval of an extension ministry setting, the Board of Ordained Ministry has a role in that process.

Each August the Board sponsors a two-day “New Clergy Orientation” program. The program is designed to provide an orientation to the ministries of the Annual Conference and training in ethics and boundaries for those clergy persons who are serving their first appointment in Wisconsin, or returning to local church ministry after serving in an extension ministry appointment. In 2014 this program was expanded to include Lay Supply Preachers, who are not clergy, but who have been assigned to preach and lead worship in some congregations under the supervision of a District Superintendent. More than 40 persons participated in the “New Ministries Orientation” in 2015. The Board, Cabinet, Conference Staff, the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, and other agencies share information about the work of the Annual Conference with persons who are serving their first appointment in Wisconsin or who are returning to parish ministry from leave or an extension ministry appointment. The retreat also includes intensive training in sexual ethics and the maintenance of proper boundaries.

The work of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the District Committees on Ordained Ministry requires thousands of hours of time each year on the part of the 35 Board members, more than 70 District Committee members, and the 5 District Superintendents. These dedicated people willingly give of their time because they believe in the importance of the work of Clergy Leadership Development in the Annual Conference.

The Board of Ordained Ministry depends heavily upon the staff support provided by the Executive Secretary of the Board, who functions as the registrar and maintains the personnel records for the more than 200 people who are under the care of the Board. He provides guidance for those who are entering ministry, which is an incredibly lengthy and complex process, as well as training for mentors, District Committees on Ordained Ministry, and District Superintendents. The Executive Secretary prepares materials submitted by candidates for commissioning and ordination for review by the Board, as well as the Board’s report to the Clergy Session (also known as “The Business of the Annual Conference.”) He also conducts background investigations on all candidates for any clergy position in the Wisconsin Conference, and is responsible for the preliminary evaluation of all psychological assessments for candidates.

**Highlights of the Past Year**

The year 2015 was a year of transition for the District Committees on Ordained Ministry as the annual conference moved from 8 to 5 districts. New committees were organized and then trained at 6 different events. One was a conference-wide gathering for all of the District Committees. There was then a separate training day for each individual District Committee.

The work of the Conference Covenant Team has now been moved under the direct care of the Board of Ordained Ministry, with the intention of finding ways to revitalize the Orders of Ministry (Elders, Deacons and Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members). A critical component of this work includes hosting an annual event in the spring focused upon nurturing collegial relationships.
The Board continues to explore how best to develop a training program for Certified Lay Ministers. This year the Board has begun conversations with the Board of Laity about the planning and development of this program as it anticipates a possible change at the 2016 General Conference regarding designated responsibility.

The Board has been involved in conversations with others regarding our Annual Conference’s observance of the Act of Repentance and how better to prepare congregations and clergy for cross-cultural appointments.

**Plans for the Coming Year**

The Board anticipates there may be a number of changes coming from General Conference that will have a direct impact upon its work. A number of Board members will be attending a quadrennial training event conducted by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in October. Following this denominational gathering the Wisconsin Conference Board of Ordained Ministry will hold an overnight gathering later in October, both to train new members and inform all members of changes that have occurred.

In cooperation with the Cabinet, the Board is working to develop a more strategic approach in our visits to seminaries as we seek to recruit new clergy more effectively.

The Board will continue to work with the Board of Laity in planning and implementing an effective training program for Certified Lay Ministers.

The Board recognizes the continued financial limitations of the annual conference, as well as the need to expand its current programs to more effectively address its multiple responsibilities. As such the Board plans to begin exploring ways to develop other sources of revenue in addition to the apportionment support received from the annual conference budget.

The Board has identified four ongoing challenges in its ministry:

a. Recruiting high quality, talented young people (under age 35) into the ministry of The United Methodist Church.

b. Finding ways to reduce the financial costs/burdens that must be assumed by those who do respond to a call to enter United Methodist Ministry

c. Streamlining the process of entering ministry while at the same time meeting all of the requirements of The Book of Discipline related to the candidacy/ordination process.

d. Educating current clergy about the importance of continued growth in their knowledge and skills in order to improve the overall effectiveness of the clergy of the Annual Conference.

The Board’s goal is to provide the congregations of the Wisconsin Annual Conference with the most qualified, competent and capable clergy leadership possible. As the Board guides candidates through the journey from fitness to readiness to effectiveness in ministry, we are always mindful that the people under our care will have a direct impact upon every United Methodist in Wisconsin for generations to come.

*Rebecca Henry, Chairperson*

*Kevin Rice Myers, Executive Secretary*
JOINT BOARD OF PENSIONS, INSURANCE & EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

Introductory Comments

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

Pensions, death and disability benefits for 1) active and retired clergy 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 clergy under appointment to the Wisconsin Conference, 2) active and retired laity employed by the Wisconsin Conference and local churches sponsoring the plan, and 3) active and retired laity employed by Wisconsin United Methodist churches.

Equitable Compensation support is granted to local churches to ensure that pastors under appointment are provided at least minimum salary compensation at churches that may need financial assistance.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the Past Year

The Joint Board met all pension obligations of the Wisconsin Conference by collecting the necessary amounts from congregations and remitting them to the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.

Six charges made up of thirteen congregations were provided Equitable Compensation support. The number of charges receiving grants was up slightly from the year before. The total amount of support granted was down slightly from 2014.

The Joint Board continues our attempt to balance premium costs with health insurance benefits through our participation in HealthFlex, the United Methodist denomination’s health insurance plan, to active clergy and lay personnel of the Wisconsin Conference. Over the past few years our participants have had to shoulder more of the cost of their medical care through increased deductibles and co-pays in order to reduce the total cost of health insurance. Our retirees, who are age 65 and older, transitioned to new coverage in 2015.

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. A separate Board administers the East Wisconsin Pension Trust, and its audited financial statements are provided elsewhere in the Conference Yearbook and Journal. The Joint Board administers the West Wisconsin Pension Trust. 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:

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Less administrative expenses</td>
<td>(55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plus earnings</td>
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</table>
As is customary annually, the Joint Board sponsored a March Retirement Seminar for those clergy planning to retire in the current year.

The Joint Board has been diligently working through the Health Insurance Subcommittee to continue to focus on the wellness of our participants. As a result, we have continued to sponsor an incentive program through HealthFlex. We have continued in a walking fitness program through Virgin Health Miles. This program encourages all enrollees in the Conference active health insurance plan (HealthFlex) to participate in the walking program by using a special pedometer. The participant then downloads his/her steps to a website in order to monitor his/her progress. HealthFlex financial incentives are provided to the participants dependent upon various levels achieved. In addition, we continue to highly recommend completion of the WebMD “HealthQuotient” assessment, a health assessment tool. “HealthQuotient” provides a personalized report and a prioritized list of health concerns and recommends actions to help design a wellness plan. There is no cost to the participant to take the “HealthQuotient” assessment. Last year 249 of our active participants took advantage of the Quest Diagnostics Blueprint for Wellness Screening at the Annual Conference session and we will be offering this again at Annual Conference this year.

Plans for the Coming Year

We will be using the HealthFlex Exchange for active coverage in 2017. The HealthFlex Exchange means that our health insurance participants will have six plan options to choose from, compared to the current two options. Participants will need to consider their potential health care needs in 2017 when deciding which plan makes the most sense for them: a low premium plan with more out-of-pocket costs or a higher premium plan with lower out-of-pocket costs. They will need to make these choices on-line. This process may not be completely clear to many initially so the Joint Board will provide multiple training events throughout Wisconsin to help people understand how to make best use of the HealthFlex Exchange.

The Joint Board will continue our wellness initiative. Eligible enrollees will be strongly encouraged to once again complete the WebMD “HealthQuotient” assessment and also to complete an annual wellness exam. We are also sponsoring a Quest Diagnostics screening at the site of Annual Conference this year for our participants. Group rates with a significant discount are also offered for Weight Watchers participation for eligible enrollees. Wellness is important for multiple reasons:

- Individuals are generally happier when they are healthy
- Clergy are more effective in ministry when they are healthy
- Healthy individuals spend less on health care so that future premiums paid by churches will be less
We hope to continue our ongoing efforts of monitoring our rates within reasonable percentage increases while offering competitive benefit levels for our actives and retirees. We are, however, aware that this is becoming increasingly more difficult as the cost of health insurance increases at a rate higher than inflation. Our claims experience has been less unfavorable than previously. However, over the last five years HealthFlex has paid $1.7 million more in claims than they have collected from Wisconsin in premium. We are fortunate that the method HealthFlex uses to calculate premiums spreads much of this adverse experience over other participating Conferences.

The changes in the stock market and the general economy have continued to affect the holdings of the General Board of Pension & Health Benefits. The stock market experienced a small decline in 2015. Consequently there could be small increases in clergy pension costs in the future. The Joint Board takes very seriously its fiduciary responsibility to act on behalf of all our participants and will continue to do so in the future.

David Ogden, Chairperson

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The responsibility of the WI Conference Board of Trustees is to oversee the use of conference-owned real and personal property, to review property and liability insurance, to manage some conference investments, and to participate in certain legal matters. The Book of Discipline, state statutes, and the Wisconsin Annual Conference rules direct the work of the Trustees.

Highlights and Accomplishments

United Methodist Conference Center, Sun Prairie

The United Methodist Conference Center is located at 750 Windsor Street, Sun Prairie. This building houses various office spaces including, but not limited to, the South West District Office, the Episcopal Office, the offices for Finance, Camp and Retreat Ministries, Ministry and Outreach, Communications, Information Technology, Development, and Congregational Development, as well as the Archives and the Service Department. The building also leases space to multiple tenants, including the WI United Methodist Foundation. The trustees continue to pursue new tenants to rent current open office space.

The Trustees are keeping a close watch on various areas of the Conference Center that may need to be updated in the next few years, including the boilers, sidewalks and the parking lot. A few of the projects that were completed during 2015 and early 2016 at the Conference Center include replacing the roof, renovations to the Episcopal office area, and painting of office spaces. In addition, an energy audit was completed in order to assess how the building could be more energy efficient.

The Board of Trustees also received a request to start a community garden. The Community Garden would be placed in raised garden beds in the Conference Center parking lot. The intent of the gardens is to be an outreach to the local community. It is anticipated the community gardens will begin in 2016.
2016 Wisconsin Conference Journal

Episcopal Residence
The Trustees have a liaison to the Episcopal Residence Committee. This committee oversees the maintenance of the Episcopal residence and works for a quick resolution to any issues that arise. The Episcopal residence is a single family home located in Sun Prairie. There were no major issues during 2015 that needed to be cared for in relation to the Episcopal residence. The Board of Trustees will continue to work with the Episcopal Residence Committee to ensure that any needed upkeep is completed.

Camps and Retreat Centers
The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries stays in close contact with the Trustees through a Trustees representative that attends the camping facilities committee meetings. The Trustees consider the items that are occurring at the camps and assist with issues that may arise.

Other Property
As of the writing of this report, the former Marion: First UMC property is listed for sale. The properties that have been sold since the last Annual Conference Report are the former Reedssville UMC, Hawkins UMC and Neillsville UMC properties.

The Board of Trustees is also in charge of overseeing the New Berlin: Agape Ministry property, which is not for sale, but is currently being used by a ministry that is not chartered. Since the last Annual Conference report, a new well has been installed at the New Berlin property. Additionally, a parsonage that was on the New Berlin property has been demolished due to extreme deterioration, which made it unsafe.

The Board of Trustees also continues to work with The Crossing Ministry at UW-Madison. The Crossing is an ecumenical campus ministry that is housed in a building owned by the WI Annual Conference on the UW-Madison campus.

Conference-Wide Insurance Program
WI Annual Conference Rule 130.2.0(d) states “The Conference Board of Trustees is responsible for determining and periodically re-evaluating the insurance carrier(s) for the Conference-Wide Insurance Program and the required and optional types and levels of insurance coverage under the Program.”

The Board of Trustees, in order to be in compliance with this rule, is currently in the process of rebidding the Conference-Wide Insurance Program. During the rebidding process, three Insurance companies will be presenting bids to the Board of Trustees in order to determine what company will provide the Annual Conference with the best insurance coverage while also remaining cost effective for the local churches.

Investments
The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation holds investment accounts for the Trustees.

The Parsonage Fund came from the sale of conference staff and district superintendent parsonages. Earnings from the fund help to cover the costs of the annual housing allowances for the district superintendents and conference clergy staff.

The invested bequest from Eva and Alice Stearns in the name of their father, William Stearns, is to provide loans to United Methodist students attending the University of Wisconsin.
The Conference Center Building Fund is an investment that is designated to be used for the upkeep and maintenance of the Conference Center in Sun Prairie. These funds are used for things such as the replacement of the roof and other issues that arise to keep the building in good and safe condition.

The Discontinued Church Disposal Reserve is an account that was established, in compliance with Conference Policy 10.13.3, in order to have resources that can be used if a discontinued church property needs to have any work done to it in order to list it for sale. This reserve is made up of a portion of the funds from the sale of other discontinued church property that has sold.

The Board of Trustees also has accounts with the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation that are reserved to be used for campus ministry in Madison. These funds came from the dissolution of the Wesley Foundation in Madison. Some of these funds are restricted while others are used to continue the ecumenical campus ministry, The Crossing, in which the WI Annual Conference is a partner.

Additionally, in the last year, a gift was given to the WI Annual Conference from the Mary Ellen Groat Estate. This gift was given with the stipulation that the funds are to be used for “rural ministries.” These funds have been invested in a WI UM Foundation account while the Board of Trustees goes through the process of determining the proper criteria needed in order to distribute these funds.

Amy Jameson Yackovich, President

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The Commission on Archives and History is entrusted with fostering the Ministry of Memory within our Conference. The Commission oversees the Conference Archives in the Conference Center in Sun Prairie, the Conference Museum in Greenfield, WI and the development work on the Sanford Center, which is also in the Conference Center in Sun Prairie.

2015 was dominated by the process of recovering from the flood in the Archives that occurred in November, 2014. We have made significant progress in our efforts to reconstitute the Archives. As we restore the materials to the Archives shelves, we are working toward our goal of an overall inventory and a clear organization of all the materials that we have in the Archives. Our work was immensely aided by the continued commitment of our regular Archives volunteers and also by Commission members who spent many work days on the Archives recovery process.

In 2015, the Archives also saw a dramatic increase in the number of inquiries and requests for information from pastors, local churches, historians, and individual church members from across the Conference. Many churches requested information about their church in effort to celebrate a special anniversary of their church or to compile a written history of their church.

We have continued to celebrate these special anniversary celebrations and also present topics of historical interest in our publication of our newsletter Flashbacks.
Also, we have continued our outreach to local churches and local church historians through our fifth annual Archives Retreat, held at Pine Lake Camp on October 1-2, 2015. Our local church historian workshop is a key part of that retreat and it offers practical help and successful strategies aimed at the local church historian. This year we heard from Judy Vasby, the local church historian at the Cambridge:Willerup UMC, about the challenges she faces working with a multi-faceted archival collection in one of our earliest churches that is also the “oldest Scandinavian Methodist Church in the World.” We also learned about the exciting project of Georgia Kestol to faithfully restore the one room Heart Prairie Norwegian-American Methodist Episcopal Church.

Our retreat also continued our exploration of our United Methodist Musical Heritage. Again under the very able direction of the Rev. Jeremy Deaner, we explored our German musical background and focused on (and sang) many of the early Evangelical Association, the United Brethren in Christ, and the Evangelical United Brethren denominations’ hymns. The Rev. Dan Dick, Assistant to the Bishop, continued this theme and gave an informative and inspirational talk that emphasized some of the key figures from our EUB background.

Finally, our retreat (which was attended by 47 people) was highlighted by a reunion of two members of the EUB singing group “The Trust Company.” The Rev. Norm Silvester and the Rev. Lynn Kollath, accompanied by Vida Kollath on keyboard, led us in a special hymn and psalm sing of some of their favorite pieces. We were privileged to hear them sing, and to hear their reminiscences about the history of the group, as well as those from family of former members and others who remembered hearing the group many years ago. It was a very special reunion. We now have a CD available of their album “Ó Bless The Lord.”

This year’s retreat was dedicated to the memory of Lois C. Olsen who passed away in September, 2015. Lois was a missionary to Africa, a nurse midwife, and a prominent member of the Commission of Archives and History for many years. She served as Editor of our historical newsletter, Flashbacks for almost 20 years, as well as publishing a number of books on UMC history in Wisconsin. In addition, she was a leading force on our Conference Museum committee and helped mount several museum exhibits. Her commitment to preserving our history inspired all of us on our Commission and she was rightly awarded the Ministry of Memory award by the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church in 2009. Her enthusiasm and passion for sharing the history of our Conference will be dearly missed.

In 2015, our Commission also continued our work on a revisioning and reopening of the Conference Museum, which is located on the grounds of the Memorial UMC in Greenfield, WI. We are at work on a permanent display detailing the history of the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations and also a display on the history of the original Greenfield Evangelical Association Church that is the home of the museum. In the future, we plan to highlight other church histories and stories from our past, and also prepare displays that will be timely and relevant to confirmation curriculums to make this outstanding historical gem a resource and source of historical memory for our whole Conference—and anyone else who is interested.

Also, collection development and the collection of oral histories for our Sanford Center continued to progress in 2015. The Sanford Center aims to collect oral histories and
records from clergy and prominent lay people in our Conference to supplement the archival collection of the Revs. Charles and Lourinda Sanford that formed the original basis of this collection. In time, we plan to open this collection to research and also have a display space in our Conference Center. The Sanford Center is made possible through a grant from The Albert and Mary Rhoades Museum and Charitable Foundation, Inc. This past year, we received the exciting news that the Rhoades Foundation had made their $20,000 a year of support funding for our Sanford Center in the Conference Center a permanent commitment thus ensuring that this Center will continue to be an important part of our efforts to tell the history of our Conference.

To conclude, in 2015 the Archives has continued to work toward our goal of making more people more aware of their Conference’s past history, and giving them encouragement to share and preserve their own special stories that define their congregations and our Conference. We look forward to continuing this work in 2016.

Sandy Kitner, Chair

**COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS**

We have had a year of changing leadership and planning for two major events in 2016. The events highlight how we imagine a new Wisconsin by engaging the reality of living in multicultural and multi-religious community. Working at the intersection of religions also contributes to better knowing our own United Methodist gifts and giftedness as we encounter the gifts of others.

1) In light of increasing misrepresentation and political tension regarding our Muslim sisters and brothers we designed a study, “Islam and the West: Rethinking Islam’s Place in the Contemporary World and in the American Public Square” led by our own Rev. Dr. Wesley Jacob. Individuals and congregations can work through the Wisconsin Council of Churches, [http://wichurches.org/sitecontent/pdf_files/programs/Friendship%20Not%20Fear.pdf](http://wichurches.org/sitecontent/pdf_files/programs/Friendship%20Not%20Fear.pdf) United Methodists are urged to attend to our *Book of Resolutions* “3126. Prejudice Against Muslims and Arabs in the USA”; “3284. Faithfulness in Response to Critical Needs”; and “3422. Resisting Hate, Fear, and Scapegoating; and Transforming the Context of Hate in the United States”.

2) The Interreligious Bus Tour that was cancelled in 2015 is now a bigger and better Bishop’s Interreligious Bus Tour scheduled for August 13-14. Details and Registration can be found at: [http://tinyurl.com/BusTour2016](http://tinyurl.com/BusTour2016). It appears this Bus Tour will fill ahead of its deadline and we encourage registering at the earliest opportunity.

We celebrate the 9 United Methodists engaged on the Board of the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) which is a major recipient of our resources. Bishop Jung along with 4 clergy and 4 laity bring United Methodism to larger ecumenical conversations and help place the Annual Conference in a larger context.

Our Book of Discipline (¶642.g) summarizes our work, “To stimulate understanding and conversations with all Christian bodies, to encourage continuing dialogue with Jewish
and other living-faith communities, and to encourage an openness of mind toward an understanding of other major world religions.” Toward these ends, in the coming year we anticipate highlighting the ecumenical opportunities for congregations to deepen their spirit through an engagement with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pentecost Sunday, World Communion Sunday, and Reformation Sunday. Our intention is also to widen intentional and honest congregational learning about other faith groups that will help clarify where the congregation has placed its own trust and why.

Wesley White, Chairperson pro Tempore

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The purpose of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women is to act as monitors advocates and catalysts on behalf of lay and clergy women of the conference. Our task is to facilitate, empower, and encourage the full and equal participation of all women in all areas of church life.

COSROW seeks to promote equality and partnership among women and men as they seek to minister together in the name of Jesus Christ. We seek to achieve the above purposes in the following ways:

- We attempt to monitor at Annual Conference
- We act as catalysts for greater inclusiveness throughout the whole church

Diane Quade, Chair
Sharon Cook, Coordinator of Camp, Retreat & Age Level Ministries

COMMISSION ON RELIGION & RACE

The Commission on Religion and Race supports the ministries of lay and clergy ethnic leaders in the Wisconsin Annual Conference. The following are some highlights from 2015:

The Korean Caucus reported an increase of Korean pastors, all originally from South Korea, from 18 pastors in April to 27 pastors as of end of August. While the ministries have been increasing, including regular meetings, an annual retreat held in December and a national meeting held in Wisconsin, the caucus reports geographical challenges for meetings and get-togethers. The Asian Caucus had a joint meeting with the Korean Caucus for dialogue.

The Hmong Caucus has been holding leadership training sessions: 20 participated in Lay Servant ministry training this year, 80 took part in Membership & Leadership training in April, and a Revival for Hmong Ministries expected at least a 50% increase in participation over the 200 in attendance during 2014. Last Christmas Eve and Ash Wednesday saw 200 in worship, while about 150 took part last Good Friday.

Hispanic Caucus held Lay Servant Ministry training as well as National Hispanic Caucus Module 1 training. MARCHA (the Hispanic National Caucus) was held in Madison in March to advocate in terms of immigration issues. The Caucus, in general, is focusing on...
greater participation in the Annual Conference, second generation congregations, new church starts and building faith communities through congregational development. The Caucus has been supporting some congregation through conflicts over building usage in certain sites. The Caucus reports that 15 youth attended an inquiring candidates retreat in September.

BMCR is still in the process of regrouping, but reported participation in a Black History month celebration, a candle light service, and a heritage event designed to celebrate the origins and history of BMCR.

CONAM reports that the Cabinet has engaged David DeLeon as a consultant to the Native American communities to work with the Native American plan. An Act of Repentance is being planned for the 2016 Wisconsin Annual Conference.

A representative from the Immigration Task Force indicated some of the immigration difficulties encountered particularly by Korean and Hispanic pastors, and included basic training on how to care for these pastors by NOT interfering in the immigration process.

The Cross Cultural Programming component of CORR surveyed ethnic pastors on their needs and desires for support, fellowship, training, etc. A gathering of ethnic pastors followed for dialogue. In March, Giovanni Arroyo (GCORR) was invited to engage in a conference call and a meeting took place with Conference leadership to address connectionism and education within the infrastructures of the Conference. Plans are being made for specific training sessions—for the laity and in local churches, for a “Train the Trainer” program, for more follow-up.

The Lansing NCJ-CORR learning event was promoted in the Wisconsin Conference, and funds approved for 4 scholarships.

Jean B. Schmidt, Chair

ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH CONCERNS COMMITTEE

It has been an exciting year for the Ethnic Local Church Committee in responding to its obligations in fulfillment of the mission of the Wisconsin Annual Conference. Guided by the new vision of “Imagine Wisconsin Anew,” the ELCC continuously worked with the various Caucuses towards this vision. One of the goals towards this vision was “Living the Fruits of the Spirit.”

This became the emphasis of the Summer Developer program training which the Committee sponsors and also fund to assist the Ethnic Churches undertake community outreach programs during the Summer months. Through this program prospective leaders especially youth are given the opportunity to experience various aspects of leadership in ministry as a way of exploring their calling. The program also provides the churches the opportunities to connect with their neighborhoods through various events, and also offer the opportunities for evangelism.

The programs gathered for an Annual Evaluation at Central United Methodist in October with presentations from various churches who applied for the grants. As usual there were exciting presentations reflecting the work of God through the Holy Spirit in the leaders, their churches and the impact on the communities. For some of the churches and their
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communities, it became evident that the need in the communities goes beyond the Summer Developer program. There was the need for a year round program to in responds to such needs. The need to look at a Community developer program thus will be explored in the coming year and resources made available for it.

Among the various caucuses, ongoing efforts at developing and training leaders especially the laity to support the work of the clergy continued. Also the need to revive all the caucuses to enable them be effective and functional in their ministries was the on the agenda of the committee throughout the year. The committee looked a possible “Capacity Building Training” for the Caucuses in the year 2016 in the mid fall.

In celebration of its ministries, three Ethnic clergy were ordained as Elders and full membership of the Wisconsin Annual Conference and one other was commissioned as provisional members. A couple of laity also explored their call to church vocations through the inquiry Candidacy retreat. In addition there was also the some new ethnic church starts in the Conference.

It is our prayer that our God in ages past and our hope for years to come will guide us in our endeavors to fulfill our missional obligations through such unique ministry opportunity that our Wisconsin Annual Conference has been blessed with to his glory.

_Ebenezer Insor, Co-Chair_

**COMMITTEE ON HISPANIC/LATINO MINISTRY**

Mission of the Board/Agency

1. Planning Developing and Implementing a Strategic, Comprehensive Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry
2. Training Lay and Clergy Leadership for Hispanic/Latino Ministry
3. Assist in securing and Providing Resources
4. Monitoring, Supporting and Evaluating the Wisconsin Annual Conference Hispanic/Latino Ministries.

Vision

An inclusive Christ-centered community that connects faith and culture so that the broken world is transformed. (Elaborated in partnership with the NPHLM on our Spring 2015 strategic plan session).

List in priority order of the major strategic initiatives that group has crafted to address and respond to the major issues and concerns facing the Hispanic/Latino community and Annual Conference

1. **Hispanic Community:**
   
   Leadership development for second generation of Hispanic/Latino Ministries:
   
   - Development of the next generation of ALHMA in order to train a new generation of Christian leaders for a second generation of Hispanics
   - Creation and nurture of a recruitment system for a second generation of credentialized leaders (Clergy).
Expansion and consolidation of Hispanic Ministries in communities in need:
- Creation of two new Hispanic Ministries in communities in need with continuous demographic Hispanic/Latino growth.
- Consolidation of communities of faith around the self-sustained Hispanic/Latino churches in the Conference

2. Annual Conference
An Intentional movement of growth and presence in the life of the Conference:
- Creation and nurture of a system of recruitment and positioning Hispanic/Latino clergy and lay in positions of leadership across all committees and boards within the Conference
- A systematic approach towards the Cabinet to promote the creation of a Hispanic Ministry coordinator full time position for the Conference.

Intercultural and intergenerational awareness across all levels of leadership in the Conference:
- Development of series of Conference training tools to understand and overcome institutional resistance to all intercultural and intergenerational approaches of doing church.

Audelis Ayala, Chair

PROGRAM AND ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

The Wisconsin Annual Conference celebrated our theme of “Cultivate and Nurture” June 12-15 at the Madison Marriott West.

Highlights from Guest Speakers

Guest speakers included Dr. Elaine Heath, McCreless Associate Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology; Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society; Bishop Han Ku Kim, Dongbu Conference; Dr. Olusimbo Ige, Director of Global Health at the General Board of Global Ministries; and Mark Miller, Assistant Professor of Church Music at Drew Theological School.

Bishop Han Ku Kim preached during opening worship on Friday and again greeted Annual Conference members during Opening Plenary that afternoon. Bishop Kim, who is visiting Wisconsin for the third time, said our Conference has inspired him to encourage more women to enter into ministry in the Dongbu Conference in Korea. He said that for the first time, 30% of the Dongbu Annual Conference members are women, and 30% of its delegates to the General Conference are women. “I was challenged to help more women be elected as delegates when Bishop Sharon Rader and Bishop Linda Lee visited Dongbu conference,” Bishop Kim said. “I thank the two bishops and female members of Wisconsin Conference for being a model.” He went on to say, “May God intervene in all the churches, the clergy, and the members of Wisconsin Conference so that the church may grow, the businesses do well, and the families be happy. I pray in the name of the Lord that Wisconsin Conference may be able to go out to the world with the slogan, ‘The world is my parish’ and be a model conference for the United Methodist Church.”
Dr. Elaine Heath led Bible studies on Saturday and Sunday, where she discussed the Third Great Awakening and what it looks like to “fail forward.” She said that failure is not our enemy, but our friend. “This is a time of a rapid culture shift where pioneering is required.” She explained that the new awakening is Eucharistic; small communities of faith are where this will happen. She said that we need to make space for the apostolic innovators. Heath explained, “The bad news is that change calls into question who has the power, who gets to preside, who gets to wear the stole. There is a very special role for people who now have power and influence. These people love God, have been faithful, will continue to be faithful the rest of their lives. Make sure that the people in the old system are being cared for in the new structure. They’re providing resources for the apostolic innovators.”

Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe delivered an inspiring sermon at the service where six people were ordained Elders, five people were commissioned for the work of an Elder, and twelve people were licensed as Local Pastors. Henry-Crowe cited Genesis 12:1 and encouraged the clergy to not be distracted by the location of their ministry, but rather to focus on the people they can affect with their ministry. “There will be sites and sightings,” she said. “Vibrant places attract people, but that’s not the real question. The question is, what will the sightings be? What will you let yourself see? Children living in poverty next door to the church? People suffering with addiction? Ministry will not be as much about the place as what you will let yourself see.”

Dr. Olusimbo Ige, the Director of Global Health for the General Board of Global Ministries, presented a moving Imagine No Malaria progress report. On a personal note, she told the Conference that she and her husband both came down with malaria a week after their honeymoon. But “we didn’t die” because we had access to medicine and health facilities. “Some people die because they don’t have medical support, but some are living thanks to The United Methodist Church,” she said. Dr. Ige ended her presentation by thanking the Wisconsin Conference. “You have given a child hope, a family hope, a mother hope that they will be able to live,” she said.

Mark Miller provided amazing music throughout the weekend and led a special worship on Sunday evening, open to the public. Miller explored worship resources that revived and inspired attendees through plentiful songs and abundant advice, but also said that it is important to recognize the healing role that music can play in worship. “When we come to worship, we’re there to give thanks, but also to recognize that we’re all broken and suffering,” he said. “We need to acknowledge brokenness and suffering before healing can take place. Music breaks us open; music has a way of accessing those places where we can say, ‘We’re vulnerable; heal me God.’”

**Transitioning to a New Conference Structure**

As of July 1, 2015, the Wisconsin Conference has transitioned from eight districts and four superintendents to five districts and five district superintendents, as voted at Annual Conference 2014. Bishop Jung discussed this transition in his State of the Church Address. “This isn’t simply the adding of one district superintendent. This is another step that moves us forward as we pursue our Kingdom vision together. This change that you have supported will enhance our shared ministry; yes to get the job done of being the Church in our communities, but also to nurture our spirits and strengthen our connections. Your bishop and superintendents, directors and all Conference staff are committed to lead and serve, act and love through their professionalism and gifts...
demonstrating shared values in supervision ministries, common vision, and God’s kingdom goals as they reach out to all of our congregations and the great wide world.”

Sam Royappa, Dean of the Cabinet, said that change and transition has been the major theme of meetings over the last year, and that the Cabinet is working closely with Bishop Jung to facilitate change in a way that honors the three missional reasons for change: effectiveness or fruitfulness, intentional leadership presence, and creative ministries across the Conference. “As a Cabinet, we act missionally, while thinking institutionally,” he said during the Cabinet address on Saturday.

Don Greer, Coordinator of Circuit Ministries, also gave an update on changes coming to the circuit structure of the Wisconsin Conference, partially as a result of the new districts, but also as a culmination of a two-year journey to visit every Wisconsin church alongside Bishop Jung. During their visits with each church, Greer asked the congregation members about what was and was not working with their ministry. The result of this research is Circuit 2.0, a plan that implements many changes – including new, smaller circuits that are contained within new district lines, and a new numbering system that is consecutive within the district rather than the entire state. “We are Imagining Wisconsin Anew in such a way that we reach new people and new ministry,” Greer said. “The circuit ministry is focused on revitalization.”

Celebrating Giving to Imagine No Malaria

In a presentation on Saturday, Bishop Jung praised the progress our Conference has made toward our goal of raising $1 million for Imagine No Malaria. “There are so many exciting transitions happening in the Wisconsin Conference. From Imagining Wisconsin Anew to redistricting, and so much more – we are glad that Imagine No Malaria has been a big part of this year too.” He said that in the midst of change, “we came together as a Conference and have already raised over $650,000 toward our $1 million goal. That’s over 65,000 lives saved in just this year alone. As we look toward the second year of the campaign, we reflect and celebrate the ways that churches and individuals all across the state have come together to support Imagine No Malaria this year.”

That evening, a silent and live auction for INM was held which raised $15,780. Henry Yoap and Mary Beth Scow served as the auctioneers for the live auction and encouraged everyone to reach out with their heart and money. Silent and live auction items were donated by many Wisconsin churches and generous individuals and businesses, including quilts, vacation packages, handmade keepsakes and woodworking items, and sports memorabilia and experiences.

Lifting Up New Church Starts

During his presentation on Sunday, Gary Holmes, Chair of the Conference Strategy Board (CSB), said, “We are excited about our future, and that future begins today! Imagining Wisconsin Anew has led to a concise and strategic plan to accomplish our mission - to reach the unchurched, young and diverse populations.” Our plan is to create dynamic faith communities that reflect spiritual intensity, missional alignment, and cultural openness, he said. It is not a plan for keeping our church doors open, as much as it is a plan to help us move out of our doors into the world for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By July, Holmes said, we are launching the Institute of Congregational Development (ICD) as a means of developing leadership and gaining direction for new
faith communities going forward. He reported that we have 20 spots out of 30 filled for the ICD, and hope to fill the 10 left soon.

Enrique Gonzalez, Director of Congregational Development, reported that there are three new church starts that began in 2014, including Urban Poiema in Milwaukee, a new Korean church in Madison, and The Vine in New Richmond.

In his State of the Church Address, Bishop Jung echoed his excitement for the new faith communities in Wisconsin. “We are experiencing success in Milwaukee with Urban Poiema and with our new Korean ministry in Madison; new Hispanic communities are being launched in Monroe, Sheboygan, Fox Valley areas, and the Vine new faith community nested in New Richmond. I am so excited that our system changes are already being made visible in creating and joining a new cultural climate for new church planting for new people, diverse people, and young creative people in so many and varied places in Wisconsin. They join a long list of successful new church and new faith ventures, and I pray are only the beginning of a wave of new faith reaching some of the 65-plus percent of people in most of our communities who are unconnected to a faith community, or have never connected.”

Preparing for General Conference

Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences were elected during the 2014 Annual Conference session. The Conference voted on endorsing petitions to the 2016 General Conference. Lay delegates provided a wealth of information about General and Jurisdictional Conferences to those in attendance at Friday’s laity session with presentations, open floor questions, and a skit that discussed the upcoming quadrennial events.

Giving Generously

Annual Conference members gave generously to Ingathering, special offerings, and Imagine No Malaria during Conference:

- Opening Worship (offering for Thailand Methodist Theological Seminary): $1,783.50
- Ordination and Commissioning (offering for Clergy in Transition): $2,352.79
- Ingathering: $6,345.55
- Imagine No Malaria auction: $15,780
- Imagine No Malaria church and individual donations brought to/made at AC: $32,925.08

Susan Bresser, Chairperson

RULES COMMITTEE

With an eye open to changes the General Conference will make to the UMC Book of Discipline, the Conference Rules Committee continues with its mission of keeping the Conference rules and policies current. Our role is to facilitate and appropriately frame actions of Boards and Agencies of the Conference and its local congregations. If any Board or Agency is aware of Rules or Policies that need changing, contact the Committee chair. We are always alert for new committee members who see the broad picture of the
UMC can focus on details of rules and policies. If that applies to you, contact the Rules Committee chair for inclusion in our work.

George Affeldt, Chair

DISCIPLESHIP LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

This has been a very busy year for our teams as we’ve tried to live out our mission and vision of Imaging Wisconsin Anew.

We offered our fifth learning day at the 2015 Annual Conference, which was well received by participants. Our goal was to offer resources that each participant could take home and use in their local church. We will be offering Learning Day in 2016 with an adjusted format so participants will have more options to choose from.

The Learner Leader Academy started in January of 2016. It is comprised of clergy and lay teams from local churches. This year the Academy is focusing on fostering effective small groups designed to be a part of a church’s disciple making system. Next year’s focus will be evangelism.

We are continuing to search for leaders who are passionate and skilled at resourcing local congregations to be a part of our Resource Teams. The more gifted people we add to our teams, the more we are able to fulfill our mission.

I am thankful for and excited about our gifted leaders and the passion our teams have for helping our local churches make disciples for the transformation of the world.

Jason Mahnke, Chair

CONFERENCE YOUTH COUNCIL

Since Annual Conference last year, the Conference Youth Council has been working hard to live into our new structure.

Our biggest challenges have been identifying and retaining adult and youth leadership for our District Youth Teams, and finding effective means of communication with our congregations. Our biggest success has been launching the South West District Youth Team. They have met several times to plan events and discussions.

As we move into the next year, CYC is looking to do a comprehensive analysis of youth ministry in the Conference. Our task is to equip congregations to do effective youth ministry at the local level. We are hopeful that we can identify the ways to best use our financial and human resources to be effective in ministry.

Sharon L. S. Cook, Coordinator of Camp, Retreat, and Age-Level Ministries
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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

- Provide a connective link between the Conference staff and ministries, the churches, lay leaders and clergy, congregations, other agencies of the General Conference, and future disciples of The United Methodist Church, through an appropriate mix of communications tactics to best reach these audiences.
- Provide a source for information, news, ideas, joys and concerns, tools, training and more for Wisconsin United Methodist clergy, lay leaders and members.
- Encourage ongoing dialogue among the different audiences and participation in conversations about topics and events of interest.
- Provide a primary point of access to Wisconsin United Methodists for persons/agencies on the General Conference level.
- Direct, administer and provide maintenance for the Conference’s multilevel communications network. Provide technical support and consultation in conjunction with other conference agencies/boards/committees for our Annual Conference sessions and other Conference events, and integration of communication resources throughout the Annual Conference.
- Provide a primary point of access to the workings of the Wisconsin Conference UMC for both secular news and religious media, and other organizations.
- Provide multiple avenues of outreach to the wider Wisconsin community.
- Provide Conference leadership through the Full Cabinet and Discipleship Leadership Executive Team.

In 2015, we ensured the timely communication of the messages, inspiration, tools, and training that support the mission and vision:

- Continued efforts to ensure that Wisconsin Conference UMC communications are executed professionally and consistent in voice and message throughout all media.
- Implemented ongoing communications via a variety of tactics, including our website, Enews e-blasts, Reflections print newsletter and other direct mail, print literature, YouTube, Flickr, U-Stream sites, Facebook, Twitter, audio/visual presentations, video conferencing, public relations and other publications.
- Continued to disseminate Soul Food as well as video messages from Bishop Jung. Produced a wide variety of other videos for workshops and other inspiring events and news.
- Developed a variety of print, PowerPoint, and video tools for use by staff and churches as part of their ever-expanding communications “tool kit”.
- Helped several boards and agencies upgrade and redefine their messaging and communication efforts, including their website presence and printed materials.
- Generated ongoing publicity for the Wisconsin Conference through United Methodist and other religious and secular media.
- Provided communications planning and training support for important initiatives.
- Restructuring of the Conference required us to update website for the new 5 districts, develop new solutions for list serves, revise/update database, and equip new staff with their technology needs as well as letterhead, business cards, name tags.
Supervised the Imagine No Malaria effort in Wisconsin, through July of 2015, and developed resources for the Conference and congregations. Continuing to support the efforts of our new Development Director.

Helped plan and promote other key Conference events/initiatives, including Change the World, Annual Conference, ongoing Disaster Relief efforts, various stewardship efforts, as well as numerous other ministries and missions for which we provide resources and funding.

Provided ongoing personal consultation and training for clergy and lay leaders.

Directed website updates to increase utility, effectiveness, efficiency and impact, and reduce redundancies.

Provided crisis management planning, media direction and PR.

Continued efforts to streamline equipment and servers and reduce external reliance on our website and email hosting services.

Ensured reliability of software, virus protection, and spam filtering, and backup solutions for network and websites.

Maintained security of internal systems, including the safeguarding of all passwords, procedures and inventory.

Continued to provide audiovisual and live streaming resources for Conference events.

Continued testing emerging technologies, products, and services to maintain a state-of-the art communications and information technology (IT) system for the Conference.

Ongoing upgrades to software and computers to meet standards.

Maintained hotline for after-hours/weekend/holiday support needs.

Ongoing organizing and recycling equipment; sold off old equipment.

Met ongoing needs of internal and external customers for email, web, computers, cell phones, I-pads, and more.

Continued to monitor relationship with IT vendors.

Overall, implemented strategies to reduce complexity of network, address problems prior to downtime, update security and prevent hacking, improve performance through upgrades, and quickly handle daily issues through new helpdesk Ticket system.

Continued to provide trouble-shooting for new keyless entry system.

Continued to trouble-shoot and service our voice-over IP phones.

Worked on a team of staff to assess current and future database needs.

Worked on a team to implement a new document management system.

To meet our mission for the greater ministry of The United Methodist Church, we have established many goals and strategies for 2016 and beyond. Many of these began in 2015 and are ongoing as we continue through 2017:

Develop communication efforts that will support and integrate the 2013-2016 *Live the Fruit of the Spirit* messaging, the *Imagining Wisconsin Anew* initiatives, as well as Bishop Jung’s *Fruit Producing* strategy (shifting focus from “scarcity” to “abundance,” shifting from “retention” to “recruitment,” and celebrating the gifts of all God’s people) on both a local and more global level. Ensure these messages and focuses are woven into our Wisconsin Conference’s communications. Begin to transition to a focus on Imagining Wisconsin Anew in all communications and branded efforts, including a vision to engage.
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multicultural ministries, plan new faith ministries, revitalizing congregations, establishing mercy and justice ministries, and creating Soul Food.

- Plan and implement an ongoing communications strategy with supporting tactics to promote our mission and vision, and provide a connective link with the Conference, clergy, lay leaders, congregations and potential disciples. Tactics will include, but are not limited to:
  - Website
  - Enews
  - Reflections newsletter and other direct mail
  - Printed literature
  - Soul Food message and social media
  - Public relations (both secular and non-secular)
  - Communication tools/materials for events, such as banners, displays
  - Audio/visual presentations, YouTube, Flickr and U-Stream sites
  - Face-to-face meetings and webinars

These efforts will all work together to ensure that we continually connect in a meaningful way with our churches and ministries, and provide them services, tools and information, and add value to their communities. A major focus of all efforts will be to ensure the voice of the Episcopal leadership can be heard within the Conference, denomination, the ecumenical and secular community, and the media.

- Continue to promote several key events and initiatives for the Wisconsin Conference to ensure their success and support, including Capital Campaign, Imagine No Malaria, Annual Conference, General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, Apportionment Giving, Youth Conferences and Conventions, DLET/DLC Campaigns, District Strategy Teams, Circuit Ministry 2.0, MLK Celebration, Rethink Church, Change the World, World Service Fund, Health & Welfare Ministries, UMCOR and other disaster relief efforts, boards, agencies and committees projects, as well as the numerous other ministries and missions for which we provide resources and funding.

- Solicit and share stories of best practices witnessed in churches, circuits, organizations and districts in Wisconsin.

- Continue to provide research and training as needed for UMC initiatives.

- Develop and promote tools (both those created by the Wisconsin Conference and the general church boards and agencies) to help clergy and lay leaders in their ministry.

- Continue to upgrade/update our integrated online solution which interacts with e-blasts, social media, databases, video and other tools.

- Continue to provide Help Desk IT consulting for clergy and lay leaders. We will also continue to recycle computers when possible for use by churches and organizations.

- Maintain appropriate level of computer and IT infrastructure and support for Conference staff and regional offices. Improve staff productivity and workplace satisfaction as well as streamline processes and reduce costs by continuing the standardizing of desktop equipment and software and upgrading/replacing necessary servers and systems. We will continue to communicate policies and procedures to ensure centralized purchasing of computers and software. We will
also continue to stay abreast of emerging technologies and launch/invest in them as appropriate.

- In addition to computers, IT is also involved and/or directing domain name registrations, door locking/security mechanisms, cell phones, I-Pads, online document system, music/video licensing, and more.
- Continue service for our voice-over IP phone system that saves money and adds more utility.
- Continue working on transition to a new database solution.
- Continue working on a new document management system.
- Work with Service Department staff to provide cost-efficient and speedy printing and mailing services.

*Michele Virnig, Director of Communications*

**CONFERENCE EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE**

**2015:** Bishop Jung has put high priority on his “Fruit-Producing Strategy” that includes:

1. Theology of Abundance vs. Scarcity
2. Recruitment vs. Retention
3. All God’s Gifted People

Bishop Jung has reworked many areas of the conference, but most critically conference structure and staffing. Simultaneously, he also placed a high priority on making connections, building new relationships, and initiating new faith communities—in a sense to “Imagine Wisconsin Anew.” Bishop Jung has been able to accomplish a lot in very little time. His own work ethic—working voraciously to accomplish his own ministerial goals—models true servant leadership. Bishop Jung’s efforts have made a tremendous difference in the conference by reconnecting many disenfranchised congregations and demonstrating himself to be a strong spiritual guide who leads with excitement and vision.

2012-2016 has been a rejuvenating quadrennium for our conference. The episcopacy committee has processed two evaluations for the Bishop during this quadrennium: a mid-quad assessment and a final four-year assessment (both reported to the North Central Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy). Both evaluations recognized the bishop’s ministry in WI to be valuable and hopeful.

**2016:** As we move into 2016 we prepare for General Conference and the North Central Jurisdictional Conference. This summer at jurisdictional conference, there will be the election of FOUR bishops and a significant shuffling of episcopal assignments. The area committee on episcopacy is in conversation with the 2016 jurisdictional delegation (elected in 2014) to discuss the needs of our conference and an appropriate assignment (or re-assignment) of a bishop for WI for 2016-2020.

**2017:** 2017 brings about many unknowns. As this report is written, we have yet to see the outcomes of General Conference 2016. After a disappointing General Conference in 2012, there are many new hopes hinging on the conference in Portland. This year, perhaps more than any other, will be a critical year for our denomination. With the US Supreme Court having come down on the side of equality for gay marriage rights in...
2016 Wisconsin Conference Journal

2015, the stage is set for a very precarious General Conference with the denomination’s unity hanging in the balance.

Amanda Stein, Chair

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 provides oversight and delegation of the search process, employment and supervision of conference staff positions other than District Superintendents and Assistant to the Bishop. The committee works in consultation with the Bishop (for those positions he supervises), and with appropriate programmatic and administrative groups during a search process, and provides general oversight and coordination for those positions.

Highlights and Accomplishments
The Personnel Committee met three times this past year and held two conference calls. These are staff changes during the past year:

- Lynn Lubkeman’s position as Archivist was temporarily increased from half time to three-quarter time with the support of an insurance claim for water damage, effective January 1, 2015.
- Karen Lamoree left the position of Administrative Assistant in Ministry and Outreach, effective April 1, 2015.
- Angela Ullrich’s title/responsibilities changed from Administrative Assistant in Ministry and Outreach to Event Planner and Administrative Assistant to Ministry and Outreach, effective May 9, 2015.
- Nicole Riege’s title/responsibilities changed from Accounting Clerk to Finance Office Manager, effective May 23, 2015.
- Tou Kou Khang was hired for the position of Accounting Clerk, effective May 26, 2015.
- Larry Olson retired from the position of Accounting Manager, effective May 29, 2015.
- Pat Falkner retired from the position of Information Technology Manager, effective June 15, 2015.
- Nicole Wilken left the temporary position of Field Coordinator for Imagine No Malaria, effective June 30, 2015.
- In the process of restructuring from eight-districts/four-regions to five districts, the four Regional Office Administrators were given the new title District Office Manager, effective July 1, 2015, with Barb Ridgely in the South East District Office, Sherry Malone in South West, Susan Olson in North Central and North West, and Barb Franken in North East.
- Kelly Walker-Pontius was hired for the position of Administrative Assistant to Ministry and Outreach, effective July 1, 2015.
- Dan Dick left the position of Director of Connectional Ministries and was appointed Assistant to the Bishop, effective July 1, 2015.
2016 Wisconsin Conference Journal

- Sam Royappa was appointed Director of Connectional Ministries, effective July 1, 2015.
- Jean Nicholas was appointed Director of Development half-time (position funded for one year by an anonymous donation), effective July 15, 2015.
- Erik Barton left the position of Lake Lucerne Site Director, effective August 19, 2015.
- Tsuker Yang was appointed temporarily as Hmong Ministries Assistant quarter time in the Office of Congregational Development, effective September 15, 2015.
- Nick Coenen was promoted from Pine Lake Site Director to Camps Administrator for both camps, effective October 1, 2015.
- Barb Ridgely retired from the position of South East District Office Manager, effective October 12, 2015.
- Roy Noriega was hired for the position of Information Technology Support, effective November 2, 2015.
- Heidi Careaga was hired for the position of South East District Office Manager, effective November 30, 2015.

The committee provided oversight to and support for the staff of the Wisconsin Annual Conference as staff provided leadership to the conference in implementing its vision and the focus areas of The United Methodist Church. It also provided oversight and support to insure there is appropriate and sufficient staff to do the work of ministry and to coordinate lay/clergy leadership in its work through various boards and agencies.

The Committee has moved to consolidated responsibility for all conference staff (other than District Superintendents and Assistant to the Bishop), which includes current and future employees of various Boards and Agencies. The Personnel Committee prepared and submitted the 2017 budget, in consultation with appropriate boards and agencies regarding salaries for all staff positions that are now part of this consolidated budget.

A revised consolidated employee handbook has been in operation since the fall of 2013.

Plans for the Coming Year

The committee will continue to support the vision of the Annual Conference through oversight for appropriate staffing configurations and positions that address established priorities. It will continue to provide input and feedback for proposed adjustments in staffing, and to regularly review all policies/procedures that are our responsibility and continue to monitor the budget.

The committee will continue to work to establish consistent guidelines, including processes for recruitment, hiring, oversight, evaluation, etc. of all employees.

The committee continues to review its charter of primary roles/responsibilities and will work with key staff/leaders to communicate the roles/functions for which Personnel is responsible and insure appropriate avenues exist for addressing specific personnel issues, particularly as new priorities emerge. The committee will work to provide oversight, support and resourcing needed to empower key staff to plan, lead and supervise within their areas of responsibility.

*Greg Jewison, Chairperson*
COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The 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”. (*Book of Discipline*, paragraph 610)

Cultivating Harvest through Conference Finances in 2015

The local churches of the Wisconsin Conference shared their gifts and talents towards the ministries of the Conference and Global Church and we received 82.0 percent of our apportionments in 2015. CF&A would like to thank the churches who gave towards this abundance by giving more than 100 percent of their 2015 apportionments, for paying their 2015 apportionments in full, or for moving toward full apportionment payment by paying a higher percentage of their apportionments in 2015 than in 2014! Thank you! Danke (German)! Merci (French)! Ua tsaug (Hmong)! Gracias (Spanish)! 감사합니다 (Korean)! (See list attached following the budget in the pre-conference workbook.)

The Council of Finance and Administration members travel from all over the state, represent many ages, ethnic groups, and are balanced in gender and clergy/laity. Our life experiences give us wisdom while our commitment to facilitate the ministry of the Wisconsin Conference through the distribution of apportioned dollars gives us purpose. We are excited to be in this ministry of supporting those who sow seeds! We do not work alone. We are grateful for the people who serve on the Conference boards and agencies. We work together to sow, cultivate and nurture the seeds that grow into God’s work in the rich soil of the Wisconsin Conference. We celebrate the bounty of this harvest we are growing together!

CF&A’s Work

The CF&A’s primary focus is to govern the stewardship of the Conference Budget. To create the annual budget, CF&A

- Requests a Plan for Ministry (PFM) from each conference agency. The PFM asks for ministry goals and the anticipated cost of achieving those goals.
- The PFM are reviewed by CF&A, the Cabinet and the Discipleship Leadership Council.
- A preliminary budget is drafted and then discussed with board and agency chairpersons.
- The budget is evaluated by current apportionment receipts for the current year, along with economic conditions affecting local churches.
- Following CF&A’s final approval, the budget is brought before the Annual Conference.
- Occasionally a local or world event makes mid-year modifications to the budget necessary. These changes are monitored by CF&A throughout the year.

In this work CF&A listens closely to the overall mission and vision for the Conference. Throughout the year CF&A meets periodically to review Conference financial reports, review the annual audit and to communicate with boards and agencies to facilitate stewardship.

As of December 31, 2015, the Wisconsin Annual Conference had fully paid off its indebtedness incurred in the past to fund improvements to the Sun Prairie Conference...
Center building. For 2015, the Wisconsin Annual Conference paid a total of $1,421,109 (83 percent) of the General and Jurisdictional Conference apportionments. In addition to apportionments, Wisconsin United Methodists gave almost $164,000 to the Special Sunday Offerings and another $1,340,000 to Advances and other benevolent giving through the Conference.

Apportionment receipts in 2015 were $6,542,000. This was $358,000 less than budgeted. At the same time, expenses were $337,000 less than budgeted, resulting in an excess of expenses over revenue of $21,000. This resulted in a cash reserve at 2015 year-end of $451,000, which is about $240,000 below the Conference goal of having a cash reserve equal to 10% of the Annual Conference Budget.

Our connectional giving for 2015 enabled us to sow more seeds, as well as harvest fruit. As a Conference we supported the addition of a fifth district superintendent, planted new churches, provided grants for new ministries, supported pastors in mission churches, provided resources for parents and children, and offered training to members of local churches with our apportioned dollars. CF&A encourages you to share the fruit-producing work we are doing as a conference with your local church. Together we cultivate and nurture in order to live abundantly!

Plans For The Coming Year

Our first task is to continue to monitor apportionment receipts and expenses to mitigate financial deficits and maintain a positive cash flow. We will continue to work with the Cabinet to increase apportionment giving. In conjunction with the Communications office and the Discipleship Leadership Council, CF&A is working to better tell the story of the ministries of our Wisconsin Annual Conference. Materials on apportionment giving are currently provided on the Conference webpage under Resources/Campaigns/Apportionment Tools. CF&A will continue to review various areas of financial operation to assure healthy internal controls are in place. We will continue to oversee the Conference Finance Office to assure that the financial duties of the Conference are carried out in an efficient and effective manner. In the midst of our duties we will also stop to celebrate the abundances with which God has blessed each of us and the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. Our prayer is one of gratitude – for the people of the Wisconsin Conference, for the ministry we are doing and for the unity we have as the Body of Christ. The connectional giving we share is sowing seeds to grow fruits of the spirit in our Conference and throughout the world.

Carrie Kreps Wegenast, Chairperson

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Our Purpose: 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 of 2015

Membership: We celebrate that 6730 women across Wisconsin Conference are members of United Methodist Women.

Mission Action Day was held April 11th at Kaukauna Peace UMC. The theme was “Homelessness”. The event was planned by our four mission coordinators: Ruby Dow (Social Action), Kay Putman (Education and Interpretation), Shirley Carpenter (Membership Nurture and Outreach), and Michele Hopp (Spiritual Growth). The main speaker was Chris Lashock who is a client services coordinator for Homeless Connections. Homeless Connections works to end homelessness in the Fox Valley area. As part of the event, participants helped to stuff informational flyers and promotional materials for Homeless Connections.

Charter For Racial Justice Program: The Charter For Racial Justice Policies is a document that has been approved by National UMW and adopted by General Conference as a guide for reducing and eliminating racism in both church and society. UMW conference officers wrote a program specifically for use by units in Wisconsin. This program titled “Prison, Policing and Profiling: Criminalization of Communities of Color”. This program was written in response to the large racial disparity in incarceration rates in Wisconsin as well as several police shootings. We included a story told by one of the participants at our National Mission Institution, Northcott Neighborhood House as well as a reflection by from our young women’s group (LEGACY Women). The program challenged UMW members to understand the role of “white allies” to their neighbors.

Northcott Neighborhood House: United Methodist Women continues to support the mission we started at Northcott Neighborhood House over 50 years ago. We are members of both the mission board and corporation and were present at the Annual Meeting on May 3rd at the Harley-Davidson Museum. We continue to encourage units and individuals to give financial and in-kind support to this mission as it works through a difficult time of mission transition and financial strain. We will help Northcott to adapt their by-laws to accommodate the change from 8 to 5 districts we will be making January 2016.

Mission u: From July 20 to July 23, we held our Mission u at Westwood Conference Center in Wausau. The theme was “Justice and Happiness for All”. The studies were: 1) Created for Happiness- taught by Rev. Mary Kathryn Pearce, Rev. Dr. Joan Goebel and Laura Ida; 2) The Church and People With Disabilities- taught by Rev. Dr. Laurence Goebel; 3) Latin America – taught by Martha Boyer and Fernando Siaba. To those who requested, Continuing Education Units were given to pastors and Advanced Lay Servant Certification to laity who attended the 4-Day session. There also was a class for teens and LEGACY (Young) Women led by Corrine Robson and Mary Lainberger. Our Dean was Dee Klawitter; Assistant Dean, Gail Burgess. Overview day, a single day in which a “taste” of each study is presented, was held on Friday, July 24. Our children’s camp Yo-Mi-Ca (Youth Mission Camp) was held at Pine Lake the same week using the children’s study for “Latin America”.

Annual Gathering: Our Conference Annual Gathering was held at Eau Claire: Lake Street UMC on Friday-Saturday, October 23-24. The Theme was “Welcomed by God, Welcoming all”. Our keynote speaker was Conference Lay Leader Deanna Schimko. She spoke about her experiences in mission in Cambodia. Reverend Barbara Certa-Warner, director of Harbor House Crisis Center also spoke about her work combating
homelessness in Superior, WI. Jean Bonney, Vice President, was in charge of the programming and activities for the event. 149 women and men were in attendance. A LEGACY Women’s retreat featured the topic of Environmental Justice.

**National Seminar:** We sent two women (Shirley Jackson and Brett Thompson) to National Seminar in Chicago. National Seminar is an event held once every four years and is meant to motivate work on significant social justice issues. The issues highlighted at this year’s event included: Economic Injustice, Criminalization of communities of color, Maternal and child health and environmental justice.

**Mabel Heil Scholarships:** This year, Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women awarded $3,570 in college scholarship money among nine applicants for the fall semester of 2015 and $3570 among eleven applicants for the spring semester of 2016. This fund was begun by Mabel Heil and is available to United Methodist Women who are seeking a college education, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree and beyond. Recipients are chosen through an application process and all members of United Methodist Women are urged to apply. When deciding on scholarship amounts, preference is given to non-traditional students.

**Mission Giving:** We celebrate that in 2015, Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women gave $234,408.77 to National UMW for mission work and contributed approximately $58,000 more for programming, training, and administration in Wisconsin as well as $30,043.41 in designated giving to specific projects or events.

**2016 Activities and Celebrations**

**Redistricting:** United Methodist Women will be following the redistricting plan of the Wisconsin Conference and will formally switch from 8 to 5 districts beginning January 2016. This will be reflected in combined or reorganized district names, district team leadership and events. Much planning and rewriting of rules, nominations slates and redesign of newsletters and events will be required, but all plans will be ready in time for this transition.

**Mission Action Day:** This event is scheduled to be held on April 2nd at Columbus UMC. The topic will be “Homelessness” which is a continuation of our topic from 2015. We will host a panel on affordable housing and have a speaker on the effect of racial injustice and incarceration of persons of color with respect to homelessness.

**Jurisdiction (Quadrennial event):** The North Central Jurisdiction of United Methodist Women will be meeting on June 24-26 in Grand Rapids, MI to elect Directors to the National Board of United Methodist Women. The theme is “A Fresh Wind Blowing”. Mission u: Mission u will be held July 20-23 at the Mead Inn in Wisconsin Rapids, with overview day on Friday, July 24th. The studies will be “The Bible and Human Sexuality: Claiming God’s Good Gift;” “Latin America;” and “Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action.” There will be classes for Teens/Young Women, as well. Yo-Mi-Ca (Youth Mission Camp) will be held at Pine Lake Camp concurrently with Mission u.

**Annual Gathering 2016:** Our Conference Annual Gathering will be held at Lake Street UMC in Eau Claire on October 21-22. The theme is “Growing in Blessedness.” We plan to have our Limitless (young/teen women’s group) retreat on-site again this year to increase fellowship and intergenerational connection.
**Living the Fruit:** Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women embraces the Annual Conference quadrennial theme of “Living the Fruit of the Spirit.” We are reaping the harvest of mission as we work towards our 150th anniversary in 2019 by engaging in uplifting our LEGACY endowment fund, as we continue the mission work started by our foremothers, yet reinvented for today’s needs and in growing our next generation of women in mission through our Limitless group. We are engaging in social justice issues with our Mission Action Day and Charter for Racial Justice programs so that all of God’s children may enjoy the bounty of the Lord and the abundant life of community. We always work to empower the laity of our conference (both men and women) with resources, opportunities for spiritual growth and learning engaged in mission in order to deepen the discipleship which leads to the transformation of the world.

*Laura Pfeffer, President*

**UNITED METHODIST MEN**

**NO REPORT**

**WISCONSIN UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION, INC.**

A. **Introductory Comments**

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is an adjunct ministry of the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The Foundation’s mission is: “to be the primary resource in the Wisconsin United Methodist Fellowship for lifelong financial stewardship”.

**HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Rev Jean E. Nicholas was appointed ½ time at the Foundation and ½ time for the annual conference in the newly created position of Director of Development. Jean continues at the Foundation as Vice President of Programs and resources.
- Our Finance & Investment Committee restructured eight of the Foundation owned accounts. These changes will allow us to make more money available through our grant and scholarship programs.
- In January, with the advice of our Investment Consultant Robert W. Baird, our Finance & Investment Committee changed our Fixed-Income management to Reinhart Partners. This change provides for a more diversification in investment grade Corporate Bonds and U.S. Government Agency Securities.
- Our visioning taskforce surveyed clergy and lay from across the conference to gather feedback about our services. This feedback will help us to improve our service offerings to local churches and agencies.
- The total funds under management surpassed the $112 million dollar mark! This was accomplished through the addition of new accounts, contributions to existing account, and investment gains.
- Three stewardship seminar/retreats were held in February, August and
October. These gatherings were well attended with over 150 people representing 50 congregations participating. We have received feedback that the information presented has helped churches increase their giving and support of their ministry.

1. SERVICES OFFERED

INVESTMENT:
The Foundation provides options for local churches and church-related entities to pool their funds for the purpose of professionally managed investment. Our investment policies are designed specifically to serve the long-term investment strategies of United Methodist ministries, endowments, trustees’ funds and other permanent funds. We seek to provide maximum benefits of investment growth and earnings, while maintaining a conservative investment strategy and minimizing risk levels. In addition, our funds investment policy operates under the United Methodist Social Principles. We offer investments in our Equity Pool, in our Fixed Income Pool, and in our Church Loan Pool.

PLANNED GIFTS:
We provide an on-going educational program available to all church-related groups at no charge. We offer charitable giving seminars and workshops, individual consultation with clergy, laity, and local church groups about charitable giving options and assistance in the technical aspects of completing charitable gifts.

We continue to operate a Charitable Gift Annuity Program. We also serve as Trustee for individually created Charitable Remainder Unitrusts. The Foundation has planned giving software to assist individuals in charitable gift planning. Through continuous promotion, education and awareness we see significant gifts being received by Wisconsin United Methodist Churches and related institutions around the world.

STEWARDSHIP/ EDUCATION:
Our staff is available to help organize, train and provide resources to Wills, Memorials and Estate Committees in the local church. We also provide guidance in the development of local church Endowment Funds and encouragement to on-going program efforts at the local level. We meet with Church Councils, Trustees and Finance Committees to explain the investment options we provide local churches through our professionally-managed Equity Pool, Fixed income Fund and Loan Pooled Fund. Increasingly we are working with circuit gatherings in Stewardship and Planned Giving educational programs.

We hold three stewardship events annually. A retreat at Pine Lake Camp in August, the “Superbowl” of stewardship seminar in February and the “Spooktacular” of stewardship in October. Local church stewardship teams come and learn about stewardship programs and develop a year round stewardship plan with strategies that will fit their congregations.

We provide an annual “Clergy Tax Seminar” for Wisconsin clergy at no cost to
2016 Wisconsin Conference Journal

the Conference. We also provide an annual New Clergy Orientation where we meet with newly appointed clergy serving the Wisconsin Conference to update them on Foundation services.

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND GIFTS:
The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation continues to invite applications and award grants throughout Wisconsin. We hope to encourage innovative and creative ministries, provide scholarship assistance, provide resources for United Methodist missions and assist a variety of projects in Wisconsin churches.

GRANTS
Fifty-nine grants were awarded in 2015 totaling over $129,423. These grants will help churches and UMC organizations that are trying to start new ministries and programs. *For additional information on grant recipients please, visit our website www.wumf.org.

SCHOLARSHIPS
In 2015 the Foundation was able to award 38 scholarships totaling $30,000 to promising young United Methodist college students and adults returning for additional education, or persons working towards vocations in church-related fields of ministry.

The Foundation was also able to award 12 Scholarship grants totaling $52,500 to Wisconsin UM students attending seminary in preparation for service in the Wisconsin Conference. * For additional information on scholarships, please visit our website www.wumf.org.

CONGREGATIONAL LOAN PROGRAM
As of December 31 2015, our Church Mortgage Loan Program had 26 active loans for churches, including one for the Wisconsin Annual Conference. Loans total $9 million and are often at better interest rates for the congregations, leaving more funds available for programs and other local church expenses.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS
We provide a positive, faith-centered fundraising assistance to Wisconsin United Methodist Churches seeking to raise capital funds in addition to the annual operating budget. We have three options that you may choose from to best suit your congregation. In 2015 we helped two congregations Janesville Cargill and River Falls run very successful campaigns.

STOCK GIFTS
We received and processed 112 stock gifts totaling $878,000 that went to local churches and United Methodist Institutions.

2. 2015 FINANCIAL RESULTS
The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation manages accounts for UMC churches and agencies. Below are results for the past year that show our growth in both investments and numbers of churches served. For additional information regarding our investment performance, please visit our website at
### Reports of Boards, Committees, and Agencies

**FOUNDATION STAFF:**
- **President:** Eric P. Churan
- **Vice-President of Finance:** Tom Schaefer
- **Vice-President of Programs and Resources:** Rev. Jean E. Nicholas
- **Loan Officer/Financial Assistant:** Diane Follmer
- **Program Coordinator/Education Assistant:** Jim Wells
- **Administration:** Emily Peterson
- **Treasurer:** Rev. Jane Daniels

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS for 2015 (Informational purposes only)**
The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, Inc. (&906.8, 2513, Rule 4.185)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation Board Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson Holder, Cecilia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freiberg, Melissa</td>
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<td>Walton, Martha</td>
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<td>Fahs, Dan</td>
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<td>Werner, Jack</td>
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<td>Bethke, Scott</td>
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<td>Brancel, Ben</td>
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<td>Johnsen, Paul</td>
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<td>Pukaite, Connie</td>
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<td>Yoder, Paul</td>
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<td>Retherford, Ron</td>
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<td>Barry, Laura</td>
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<td>Total account values under management</td>
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<td>$112,508,983</td>
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<td>Number of investment accounts</td>
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<td>1,165</td>
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<td>Number of churches with accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of church loans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total amount of loaned funds</td>
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<td>$9,003,219</td>
</tr>
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The purpose of the Conference Moving Director is to assist pastors who are receiving their first appointments, being reappointed, or retiring with the moving of their household goods to their new location. The Moving Director is accountable to the Cabinet for the allocation of moving expenses from the Moving Expense Fund in accordance with the rules of the Conference. Exceptions to these rules are made only with approval from the Cabinet. The rules use weight and packing allowances as incentives to keep moving costs as low as possible. These limits are intended to promote sorting, discarding, and do-it-yourself packing as the normal practice. Conference policies seek to minimize the burden on local congregations and individual pastors to plan and coordinate the simultaneous and sequential moves needed to maintain itinerancy. Moves conducted through our contract mover are billed directly to the Conference so neither local congregations nor pastors are required to pay large amounts on moving day.

The Section 20.0.0 of the Conference Moving Policy sets the following allowances for each move:

- 12,000 pounds of household goods (15,000 pounds for a 2 pastor household)
- $200 of packing supplies/labor costs
- Maximum of $4,000 plus $200 of packing supplies/labor costs plus moving company fuel surcharges for retiring pastors who retire in a state other than Wisconsin

**2015 Recap:**
- We moved 70 pastors.
- We had only 6 pastors exceed the costs limitations. These pastors were required to reimburse the conference for their overages.
- The average cost per move was $3,680.
- As of December 31, 2015, the total expenses for all pastors through our contract mover and self-moves was $257,586.57. With reimbursements for overages, the net cost was $253,546.83.
Please note: in 2015, the South East District Office was relocated from Milwaukee to Watertown. The invoice for that move was not received until February 2016, therefore it will be included in the 2016 final report. In 2016, we anticipate the continuation of relocating our district offices into local churches. These moves are in addition to the moves of pastors, however they are governed by the allowances listed above and are part of the plan to Imagine Wisconsin Anew.

Carolyn Saunders, Moving Director

CONFERENCE SECRETARY

Introductory Comments

The Office of the Conference Secretary is one of the “Conference Support Ministries.” As “the keeper of the record” the Conference Secretary indirectly supports the work of all other conference agencies, officers and staff by gathering information about their work, processing and disseminating that information to the members of the annual conference, recording the actions of the annual conference, and communicating that information to a variety of agencies, organizations, and of course the local churches of the conference. The conference secretary facilitates the flow of information among the various elements of the conference by providing contact information in the journal, and maintains a historical record that can be used in future years as a reference of previous conference actions. The Conference Secretary also serves as a member of the Program and Arrangements Committee, and works with the other leaders of the Annual Conference to plan, organize, and facilitate the Annual Conference session.

Highlights of the Past Year

- A responsibility of the Conference Secretary is to accurately record the business of the Annual Conference. This task would not be possible without the assistance of a great team of “assistant secretaries” who are hard at work during each plenary session during Conference. I am grateful for their assistance and support: Sherry Malone, Amy Jameson Yackovich, Kevin Rice Myers and Dave Wolover.
- Thank you also to Mary Anne Conklin who served as the Teller Team Coordinator and did a fine job of gathering a great team and tabulating votes during the course of the conference.
- During the 2015 Conference, members voted to support or not to support the thirteen petitions that were submitted for consideration at the 2016 General Conference. Ballots were completed during the plenary and hand counted after the close of Conference with results posted online at the Conference website. All petitions that were approved were forwarded to the General Conference Secretary to be considered when that conference convenes in May of 2016.
- Finally, the 2015 Conference Journal and Directory were produced and made available in a variety of ways: About 190 members ordered CD-ROMs that were distributed in October, staff and Conference offices received both print versions and CD’s, and as in years past, a copy of both documents were posted online for general access as well as a horizontal version of the statistical tables for easier viewing and a separate copy of the Rules and Policies of the Wisconsin Annual Conference.
Goals for the Next Year

- To continue to move into the future regarding distribution of Annual Conference materials by posting more interactive documents online rather than distributing them in print form.
- To keep the record of the proceedings of the Annual Conference, and to publish that record in the Annual Conference Yearbook and Journal.
- To facilitate the work of the Annual Conference Session by both providing print/online materials and exploring new means of sharing information at Annual Conference.
- To upgrade the network of computers used by the Assistant Secretaries during Annual Conference.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as secretary of the Wisconsin Annual Conference and look forward to the year ahead as we Imagine Wisconsin Anew.

Amber Wolover, Conference Secretary

UNITED METHODIST COLLEGES AND SEMINARIES

AFRICA UNIVERSITY

Through its unwavering generosity to Africa University, the Wisconsin Conference is strengthening the higher education ministry of The United Methodist Church in sub-Saharan Africa. Thank you, Wisconsin United Methodists, for investing 94.65 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2015. Your giving allows Africa University to be a catalyst for change.

Thank you for your commitment to training leaders who are ethically grounded, spiritually mature, and well-equipped to address key global challenges such as food insecurity, conflict, and poverty. Your ongoing support is deeply valued by the students, faculty, staff, trustees and alumni of Africa University.

Increased and steadfast support for the Africa University Fund apportionment and investment through the World Service Special Gifts fund over the next quadrennium are vital to Africa University’s development and sustainability.

Institutional Update

Enrollment: Currently, Africa University has a total enrollment about 1,500 full-time students who represent 26 of Africa’s 54 countries. An additional 770 students are gaining new skills and knowledge as they pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees on a part-time basis. Students choose among programs in theology, agriculture and natural resources, education, health sciences, humanities and social sciences, peace, leadership and governance, and management and administration. These areas reflect crucial skills gaps in the worldwide church, as well as in the public and business sectors of students’ home countries.
Alumni: In June 2015, Africa University awarded degrees to its largest graduating class so far—674 young people from 14 African countries. Africa University’s alumni now number more than 6,200. Graduates are at work in at least 29 African countries as well as in Australia, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. Many serve The United Methodist Church and their nations in senior and strategic roles within and beyond Africa.

Africa University increasingly functions as an essential feeder institution, nurturing and sending forth leaders for new institutions and initiatives which expand the mission of our denomination in Africa. Africa University alumni include:

- A Liberian graduate, Alfred Zigbuo, serving as a Global Ministries-supported missionary and administrator in the East Congo Episcopal Area. He brings experience as the country director of Operation Classroom and expertise in post-conflict healing/institution building in Liberia to his new mission field, a recently formed and conflict-ravaged annual conference.
- Clare Paidamoyo Katiyo, a young mother who earned a degree in health services management with United Methodist scholarship support, is now the district administrator overseeing a network of four large hospitals and 37 health centers in rural Zimbabwe. Her skills and commitment put her on the frontline of an ongoing national effort to improve health and save lives.
- Ilda Guambe was born in a remote rural village in Mozambique. She is the first woman in a family of nine to earn a degree. Her 2014 speech to the U.S. Africa Summit in Washington, D.C., was a powerful and moving invitation for African and American leaders to work together in reducing early marriages and improving access to education for African girls. She continues to mentor and inspire young people in her country to stay in school to realize their God-given potential and their dreams.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pastor Mujinga Mwamba Kora serves as a lecturer and registrar of Kabongo Methodist University, while the Rev. Dr. Kimba Kyakutala Evariste is the president of Kabongo Methodist University and also lectures at the Kamina Methodist University. They are both two-time graduates of Africa University and represent a growing number of alumni who lead United Methodist higher education institutions on the continent of Africa.

The United Methodist Church benefits greatly from the leadership of Africa University graduates at the general church level. These leaders include:

- The Rev. Manuel João André of West Angola and the Rev. Daniel Mhone of Malawi, who serve as board members of the United Methodist Boards of Church and Society and Global Ministries, respectively; the Rev. Dr. Laishi Bwalya of the Congo Central Conference, who serves on the Connectional Table; and the Rev. Dr. Kimba Kyakutala Evariste of North Katanga, who is the secretary of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.
- In the wider Methodist fellowship, the Rev. Olga Choto Ranchaze of Mozambique, serves on the World Methodist Council’s Standing Committee on Education.

The gifts of Wisconsin United Methodists and others have supported excellence in teaching, learning and community service and built first-rate campus infrastructure comprised of 45 buildings—all debt-free. The university’s permanent endowment now
stands at more than $64 million, due in large part to the generosity and prayerful affirmation of United Methodist congregations, agencies and individuals. But the work is not yet done!

We pray that the Wisconsin Conference will remain resolute in pursuing a 100 percent investment to the AUF and other apportioned funds of The United Methodist Church in 2016.

Looking ahead: Together with the Wisconsin Conference, Africa University celebrates its progress as a world-class university for ethical and transformational leadership development. Please pray for Africa University. Thank you for giving so sacrificially to uphold our shared Wesleyan values and actively reach out to love God’s people in word and deed. As you journey with Africa University, know that you are part of a ministry that equips Africans to do for themselves and grow the experience of God’s promised abundance in the world. God bless and keep you all.

Mr. James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (STH) walks with you on the journey of discipleship, seeking to love God and to love our neighbors with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Thank you for your prayers that inspire and support the STH mission to love God, build knowledge, and equip leaders for the church and society.

**NEWS**

- **New faculty:** This year, Boston University welcomed new faculty in ethics, psychology, theologies of spirituality, comparative theology, church renewal, Black church leadership, and mission studies. We welcomed: Nimi Wariboko (Walter G. Muelder Professor of Social Ethics); David Decosimo (Theology); Theodore Hickman-Maynard (Evangelism and Church Renewal); Andrea Hollingsworth (Theology); Barbod Salimi (Psychology and Peace Studies); and Daryl Ireland (Associate Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission).

- **Spiritual life:** STH continued to expand and deepen its spiritual life program, led by Charlene Zuill, Spiritual Life Coordinator and United Methodist elder. Bishop Susan Hassinger, Claire Wolfeich, and many others also offer a rich selection of courses in spirituality and leadership.

- **Chaplaincy track:** STH added a chaplaincy track to the MDiv degree, preparing students for hospitals, prisons, and military settings.

**ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE:** STH spent much energy this year in hard conversations on violence, racism, and injustice, seeking to be honest and vigorously open to change, while honoring the dignity of all persons.

- **Power, Privilege and Prophetic Witness** is the STH theme for 2015-2017. We engaged the theme in classes, lectures, retreats, and workshops, seeking to stretch our capacities to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.
2016 Wisconsin Conference Journal

- **Examining the intersection of theology and race.** The opportunities this year included: a brilliant new documentary on North Korea; a dialogical viewing of *Selma*; dialogues on racism with Thandeka and Andrew Sung Park; a retreat on building race relations; circle worship; a student-led event *Missing Voices, Daunting Choices: The Erasure of Black Women in Black American Movements*; and events on interfaith understanding.

**CARING FOR THE CHURCH** through leadership and service.

- **Serving the United Methodist Church.** Students served local churches and church bodies as interns, staff, and volunteers. Faculty served with such bodies as: United Methodist Women, World Methodist Council, Ministry Study Commission, Women of Color Scholars and Mentors program, Pan Methodist Commission on Children in Poverty, and boards and agencies of the general church and annual conferences.

- **Empowering young Latino/a leaders.** Young leaders gathered with seasoned mentors to enhance their gifts and service as Christian leaders: Hispanic Youth Leadership Initiative (HYLA) and Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute

- **Facilitating dialogues on church renewal.** We launched a new initiative on Evangelism and Church Renewal.

- **Reflecting on worship.** We contributed to a special issue of *Worship Arts Magazine*, edited and written by STH faculty, alumni/ae, and students, and published by the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.

**CARING FOR THE WORLD**

- **Offering opportunities for engaged learning.** Opportunities included the Doctor of Ministry program in Transformational Leadership; an urban ministry course; travel seminars to India, the Arizona-Mexico border, Israel-Palestine, Mexico, and Turkey (Ephesus); work with leaders in Ferguson, MO; and a travel seminar for UMC clergywomen to Cuba, co-sponsored by GBHEM and STH.

- **Collaborating with the global church.** Collaborations included sponsorship of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*; events and art exhibits on local and global ecology; and dialogues with global church leaders.

As we at STH seek to be faithful and to partner with you in ministry, we give thanks for your witness. Thank you too for your continuing inspiration and contributions to our shared journey.

*Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean of Boston University School of Theology*

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**CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

For more than 100 years, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has prepared real people to make a real difference in the real world. Since our founding in 1914, over 10,000 students have graduated from Candler, where they have been shaped as Christian leaders who put faith and love into action, transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

One of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is also one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, a top-tier research institution.
offering extensive resources and a rich context for study. Our location in Atlanta provides a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of the 21st century. Simply put, there is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

In order to keep pace with the needs of the church and the world, Candler now offers 17 degrees: seven single degrees and ten dual degrees pairing theology with bioethics, business, development practice, law, public health, or social work. One of our newest degrees is a retooled Doctor of Ministry that is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry as they study—and apply what they learn in real time. We’ve also partnered with the University of Georgia’s School of Social Work to create an MDiv/MSW where students learn to maximize their effectiveness by combining pastoral skills such as spiritual counseling with social work practices such as family therapy and community assessment.

Our student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. 466 students are enrolled, with 48 percent women, 34 percent people of color (U.S.), and a median age of 29. Students represent 44 denominations, with 51 percent coming from the Methodist family. 82 percent of students are seeking a degree to prepare them as ministry professionals.

Candler has a deep commitment to alleviating student debt and employs a multi-pronged approach to tackle this issue. In 2015-2016, we awarded nearly $5.5 million in Candler scholarships, with 92 percent of MDiv students and 84 percent of all students receiving support. And our comprehensive financial literacy program teaches money management skills that serve our students now and will continue to serve them—and the churches they serve—well into the future.

At the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, Candler says goodbye and Godspeed to a handful of noted faculty as they retire: Barbara Day Miller, Luke Timothy Johnson, Steve Tipton, and Bishop Woodie White. Yet even as these legends take their leave after distinguished careers of scholarship and service, we look forward to welcoming a new crop of scholar-leaders who will join us in the coming months and grow with us in the coming years. We are especially pleased to welcome Bishop Larry Goodpaster, who will join the faculty as bishop-in-residence in the fall of 2016.

Candler draws considerable strength and inspiration from its relationship with The United Methodist Church. Our ability to fulfill our mission of educating faithful and creative leaders for the church’s ministries in the world depends upon your support, gifts, and prayers. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of our denomination. Visit us in person in Atlanta or online at candler.emory.edu to see firsthand how Candler prepares real people to make a real difference in the real world.

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics
GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The 2015-2016 academic year has been dedicated to these priorities:

- Strengthening the school’s commitment to public theology through the engagement of a feasibility study and continued focus on environmental sustainability, racial equity and non-violence work, and child advocacy as we sponsor a 2016 summer Freedom School.
- Creating a Black Sacred Music and Worship program.
- Developing a new strategic plan.
- Assessing the level of racial equity and diversity inclusion in the institution.
- Engaging new patterns of worship in chapel.
- Implementing a generational stewardship plan for theological education
- Revising the MDiv curriculum

Public Theology Lecture Series

The 2015-2016 series are held in honor of the 45th Anniversary of the Center for the Church and the Black Experience with a focus on racial equity and diversity inclusion:

- November 3, 2015: “Freedom in Blackness: Exploring Theology and Self-Identity in the Midst of Activism.” Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey (G-ETS 2005), Associate Dean for Community Life and Lifelong Learning and Clinical Assistant Professor of Contextual Theology and Practice, Boston University School of Theology.
- March 22, 2016: “Fearless Dialogue: Overtures of a Movement.” Dr. Gregory Ellison, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Candler School of Theology.

Black Sacred Music and Worship

Following careful consultation with national leaders and musicians, we have announced the launch of a program that will not only honor and help to preserve the historical contributions of the black church to sacred music and worship, but that will also train contemporary church musicians to incorporate the gifts of the black church into a variety of liturgical styles. Rev. Dr. Cynthia Wilson is the Director of this new program, and Rev. Dr. Bobby McClean will chair the Board of Advisors.

Strategic Plan

Our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 22, 2015. It as based upon extensive dialogue with students, alums, faculty, administrators, staff persons, trustees, bishops, pastors, and community leaders. The Plan is sensitive to the changing landscape of theological education and recognizes both the exciting and
challenging nature of these days. The times require innovation that is responsive to shifting needs. We believe the plan embodies our call to be a servant seminary for the church, the world, and the academy and to attract students with a relevant and robust 21st century theological education.

Racial Equity and Diversity Inclusion
We have engaged external consultants, working with a representative task force, to do an assessment of the school through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. A report of findings will be given in the spring. As a result, training processes that address identified needs for growth and improvement will be engage the whole community.

New Patterns of Worship for Chapel
We welcomed a new dean of the chapel this year, Rev. Dr. Tércio Junker. Recognizing the variety of worship dynamics and traditions present at the school, we are establishing new chapel times and experiences that will allow more options for our community. We affirm and welcome expressions of this diversity in our worship life together.

Thank you for your continued interest in our work. We are grateful to serve The United Methodist Church and the church at large. For more information about Garrett-Evangelical, I encourage you to visit our website, www.garrett.edu, and to visit us on campus.

About Us
Garrett-Evangelical is the result of the interweaving of three institutions:

- Garrett Biblical Institute, the first Methodist seminary in the Midwest, was established in 1853 by largely the same church people who founded Northwestern University.
- Chicago Training School, established in 1885, was an important force for women in ministry and for developing service agencies throughout Chicago. Chicago Training School merged with Garrett Biblical Institute in 1934.
- Evangelical Theological Seminary, located in Naperville and founded as a seminary of the Evangelical Church (later the Evangelical United Brethren) in 1873, joined with Garrett Theological Seminary in 1974 to form Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Garrett-Evangelical is committed to making seminary education affordable as reflected in the awarding of more than $2.5 million in scholarship aid to students each year. Garrett-Evangelical also leads all United Methodist seminaries in the Dollars for Scholars program with 45 recipients.

Lallene J. Rector, President

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE

A. Introductory Comments
   a. Financial accountability
      During 2015, North Central College did not receive any funds from the Wisconsin Conference Annual budget. Eight students from Wisconsin churches received $144,918 in institutional scholarships and grant aid. The Northern Illinois Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry
provided $81,204 for ministerial support of the college chaplain, Rev. Eric Doolittle, as part of the decades-long covenant between the two institutions. Contributions from individuals and congregations to the Albright-Wesley Society added $28,477 for leadership programs.

b. Mission

North Central College is a community of learners dedicated to preparing students to be informed, involved, principled and productive citizens and leaders over their lifetime. A comprehensive liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church, North Central fulfills its mission by recognizing the individual needs of students at different stages of life and from different ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds -- students who bring diverse expectations to the educational process -- with programs responsive to those needs (residential, outreach, full-time, part-time, undergraduate and master’s level) while ensuring that all students experience in common:

- One faculty committed to teaching ... in small classes ... in which writing and speaking skills are emphasized, and one standard that is applied to all degree recipients.
- Educational programs rooted in the liberal arts but also actively engaging the world of work and the practical skills needed for jobs and successful careers.
- A commitment, both inside and outside the classroom, to teaching leadership, ethics and values.

B. Highlights at North Central College

a. Financial stability and growth

This report reflects the outstanding accomplishments of North Central College in the last year. We achieved our 44th consecutive balanced budget, welcomed an impressive group of new faculty and kept our enrollment strong and steady. We launched the historic $150 million Brilliant Future Campaign and broke ground on a phenomenal interdisciplinary Science Center and opened a modern residence hall. At a time when many other institutions of higher education struggled financially, we continued to move forward through careful planning and hard work. Our first-year class was 599 strong and more racially diverse than ever (25 percent).

b. Academic transformation

The College welcomed Dr. Abiodun “G-P” Goke-Pariola as vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty. G-P kicked off this academic year by introducing to campus a large group of new faculty with extraordinary credentials, including 14 tenure-track faculty, three full-time visiting professors, nine half-time faculty and a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence.

c. Global impact

North Central continued to garner recognition from nationally and globally respected programs last year. We are a top producer of Fulbright Scholars, including a faculty scholar from our Religious Studies Department, Dr. Perry Hamalis, who earned a Fulbright
Fellowship. Our math and science students have again obtained prestigious research opportunities and scholarship recognition from the Goldwater program. North Central College was one of five institutions nationwide to receive a 2015 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization.

C. Highlights in Ministry and Service
   a. Spiritual growth
      Our student groups provided weekly worship at Focus with an average attendance of 91, as well as ongoing Bible study groups, and two retreats. The Catholic Student Association, United Methodist Student Organization, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes provide social and spiritual support for a variety of students. The annual MLK Week attracted over 800 participants to our annual breakfast, keynote address, and Gospel Extravaganza.

   b. Social holiness
      North Central College students completed over 26,000 hours of community service in 2015, including service trips to West Virginia, Virginia, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, Florida, and Costa Rica. We hosted Feed the Need, welcoming 4,000 volunteers to pack over 800,000 meals with Feed My Starving Children. We worked in partnership with local community programs including Hesed House, Little Friends, Habitat for Humanity, and Loaves and Fishes.

   c. Justice and radical hospitality
      We welcomed nationally known leaders to speak and meet with our students including Carl Gladstone of Motown Mission, scholar and activist Dr. Cornell West, and Christian bands Jars of Clay and the Brilliance. We welcomed our Muslim neighbors by providing transportation to the local mosque, forming a new Muslim Student Association, and facilitating interfaith conversations including the Mosque Alert drama. We provided opportunities to advocate world peace in worship, prayer vigils, and marches.

   d. Cultivating leadership
      North Central College sent three alumni to United Methodist seminaries in 2015, each securing the top scholarship at their respective institution. Our New Beginnings VBS Ministry Team led Vacation Bible School with seven different congregations. The United Methodist Student Organization continues to work with the Student Government Association to provide programming, retreats, and service opportunities for UM and many other students. Through a NetVue grant, we are expanding vocational exploration into curriculum, retreats, and programming.

   e. Albright-Wesley Society
      The support of individuals and UM congregations to the Albright-Wesley Society (formerly the Center for Church Leadership) allowed students to grow through the Summer Ministry teams, attendance at the Imagine What’s Next conference, and programming with UMSO.
D. Relationship to the Conference
   a. Affirmation
      North Central College affirms our long-standing affiliation with the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. We ask for your continued support through recommending your students to us and your financial support for scholarships, programs, and personnel.
   b. Continued cooperation
      We look to strengthen our cooperation with the people, congregations, and institutions of the Wisconsin Conference as the only United Methodist affiliated college in the area. We are also pursuing a deeper relationship with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

   Dr. Troy D. Hammond, President

WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Called. Answered. Sent.

Wesley Theological Seminary has been equipping and sending forth prophetic preachers, teachers, and leaders into diverse ministries throughout the church and around the world. Near and far, our alumni point to God’s love even as they join the Spirit in making disciples and shaping healthy communities.

- With more than 410 master’s-level students preparing for leadership in the church and the world, Wesley remains one of the largest and most diverse theological schools in North America.
- The Lewis Center for Church Leadership informs more than 17,000 pastors and lay leaders on trends and ideas through its e-newsletter. The center has influenced more than 5,600 church leaders through leadership assessments, sexual ethics trainings, and fundraising trainings.
- The new Institute for Community Engagement is forwarding Wesley’s mission of raising prophetic leaders in the public square through classes, partnerships, conferences, and resources.

Wesley Students Are Answering God’s Call

Wesley provides more than $2 million dollars annually in scholarships to our students thanks to the consistent support of alumni, congregations and friends of the seminary. The Ministerial Education Fund and conference partners help us equip a broad range of students to serve the church as pastors and leaders. These include:

- Two Master of Divinity students who are exploring ordination in the UMC that have created outreach opportunities for people who ordinarily would not consider going into a church. Zach Spoerl and Matt Wilke, working with three United Methodist Churches and Wesley, have started Pub Theology in downtown D.C., drawing spiritual-but-not-religious young adults into Christian community.
- Master of Theological Studies student Jane Adams is working with denominations and congregations on issues of poverty and hunger in the U.S. As an intern at the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, she provides tools for building on charitable activities such as food pantries and
backpack ministries. As a member of a local United Methodist congregation, she’s putting her knowledge to work in her local church and neighborhood, too.

Christian leadership must innovate for greater faithfulness and be able to engage the full diversity of people within our society even while holding true to the foundations of our faith and tradition. The people named above – as well as so many more of our students – exemplify these aims.

Mourning the Loss of a Christian Leader
The Rev. Clementa Pinckney was a Doctor of Ministry student at Wesley in the Leadership Excellence track. He was working on a research project on the combined role of pastor and statesman, when his life was taken along with eight others at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C. Rev. Pinckney exemplified the spiritually powerful and prophetic leadership that is at the core of our mission.

To ensure Pinckney’s legacy continues, Wesley has established scholarships in his name for Doctor of Ministry candidates seeking to empower their congregations, engage their communities, and influence public discourse. Additionally, Wesley has developed a Doctor of Ministry track exploring the intersection between public life and church leadership. This degree focus amplifies Wesley’s mission and location and, we hope, will raise up leaders to continue Pinckney’s legacy.

Seeking Connection
We are on this journey of faith together. As you follow Jesus Christ, we pray and trust the Spirit will equip you to mentor future leaders and to help others identify God’s call to ministry on their lives. Let us know about someone you feel has the potential for Christian leadership by emailing us admissions@wesleyseminary.edu. And may God’s transformative, creative Spirit lead all of us, as the body of Christ, to new and faithful ways of sharing God’s grace and love with all God’s people, for the redemption of the world.

Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson, President

WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
We pray and work for the unity and renewal of the church and the healing and reconciliation of the world.

Tracing its roots back to the early 1940’s with an inter-denominational recreation ministry for young people, the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) began in 1947 and now encompasses 18 denominations with approximately 2,000 congregations and over one million church members statewide.

2015 Accomplishments

Equipping Leaders - The Council’s signature educational event each summer is the Washington Island Forum, which in 2015 drew 180 pastors and lay leaders from 18 states representing 15 faith traditions to hear Forum presenter John Bell from the Iona Community in Scotland. The Council also hosts regional events throughout the year on a variety of timely topics to equip clergy and lay leaders for effective ministry, including a three year pilot to provide boundary training for clergy on behalf of several WCC members.
Hunger at our Doorstep - the Council is now promoting its updated study guide *Hunger at Our Doorstep*, which was sent to every congregation in the state in 2014. It is available as a free, downloadable resource from the Council’s website at www.wichurches.org. Regional training workshops are scheduled for 2016.

New denominational partners - Over the last several years several new denominational partners have joined our ranks, including the Mennonite Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Armenian Orthodox Church. The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay has joined as our third Observer from the Roman Catholic Church.

Poverty - the Council joined three statewide partners and have hosted 18 regional forums over the last two years with over 1,300 local religious leaders to raise the voice of Wisconsin’s faith community in addressing poverty. Forums were held in Madison, Milwaukee, Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Green Bay, Wausau and Appleton.

Looking Ahead to 2016

**Washington Island Forum** - 2016 Forum Presenter Carol Howard Merritt will speak on the topic of “The Church on the Edge,” lifting up emerging models of congregational life. For more information about the Forum and all WCC educational events, go to www.wichurches.org/events.

**Winter Forum** - The Council has launched a two-day winter forum in the Wisconsin Dells to complement the summer Washington Island Forum. The 2016 Forum was Feb. 25-26 was held with Sr. Simone Campbell from “Nuns on the Bus” to speak about social justice advocacy.

Poverty - a third round of regional forums is planned for the late spring of 2016 as we develop an anti-poverty agenda and a statewide constituency within Wisconsin’s religious community to advocate for it.

New Congregational Study Resources - will be released in 2016. *Loving our Neighbors* is focused on the “why” and “how” of deepening our interfaith relationships. The second study resource will be focused on racial equity issues in Wisconsin. Both will be available to every congregation in the state.

*Scott D. Anderson, Executive Director*

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**HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCIES RELATED TO THE WISCONSIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**BELLIN HEALTH SYSTEMS**

744 S. Webster Ave.
Green Bay, WI 54301
920-433-3500
www.bellin.org

**NO REPORT**
CEDAR CREST, INC.
A Dynamic Community for Senior Adults
1702 S. River Road
Janesville, WI 53546
608-756-0344
NO REPORT

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY HOMES & SERVICES, INC.
1320 Wisconsin Street
Hudson, WI 54016
715-386-9303
www.CCHhudson.org
NO REPORT

EVERGREEN RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
1130 North Westfield Street
Oshkosh, WI 54902
920-233-2340
www.EvergreenOshkosh.com
NO REPORT

HARBOR HOUSE CRISIS SHELTERS
A Ministry of Faith United Methodist Church
1531 Hughitt Ave.
Superior, Wisconsin 54880
715-392-4157
www.harborhousecs.org
NO REPORT

HILLCREST FAMILY SERVICES
2005 Asbury Road
Dubuque, IA 52001
563-583-7357
www.hilcrest-fs.org
NO REPORT

MORROW MEMORIAL HOME
331 S. Water St.
Sparta, Wisconsin 54656
608-269-3168
www.morrowhome.org
NO REPORT
Purpose & History
Northcott Neighborhood House was founded by the Women of Wisconsin Global Ministries in 1961 to provide service and inspiration to the families of the Harambee neighborhood on the near northside of Milwaukee. Our mission is to assist youth, families, and other adult residents to become independent; gain skills for today’s economy; learn social skills; and become aware of community resources including our food program. In this effort, we provide a broad diversity of training, social services, and other youth programs for youth and families. Specific programs include: after-school and summer youth programs, prevention programs to avoid drug and alcohol, emergency food pantry and commodity distribution, driver training and academic support for students, Older Adult social club, and ongoing information and referral for neighborhood residents of all ages.

Our most recent agency component is our construction and toxic removal training Fresh Start and Milwaukee Builds programs that include: educational remediation with GED and ABE (open to all community residents), special training from the Milwaukee Area Technical College in carpentry, and training in current procedures of toxic removal that are ecologically sound. These programs are followed with intensive assistance in obtaining employment. Another community benefit of our construction component is the construction of affordable family homes in the neighborhood, utilizing the trainees so that they gain hands-on experience while receiving a subsidy.

Our entire program is targeted alleviating human suffering and the conditions that perpetuate poverty. Our role is to provide community members with the skills to meet both career goals and immediate economic needs. In addition, we are training all participants to be active members of their community seeking justice, spirituality, and peace. We emphasize the importance of voting as a necessary element of being a citizen.

Highlights from 2015
One of our successful programs has been Drivers Training where we have trained close to 200 young people to attain their Drivers Licenses. Of these, approximately 80% have been able to gain employment based on this achievement. In the last year, approximately 100 students attained licenses which is about 95% of the participants. Students learn about driving and the hazards of drinking and driving in the classroom in addition to on the road training.

Our construction programs has not only resulted in increasing the marketability of youth and adults with construction and toxic removal skills, it has produced 11 homes in the community. In the past year, 300 participants have been trained. Staff work with these individuals to find the sustainable employment after completion of the program.

We also work with the youth participants in after-school and summer programs to clarify their career goals and overcome any academic obstacles to these goals. One of
our highest priorities is assisting youth to stay in school and attain their diplomas.

As noted above, these achievements help to alleviate human suffering by giving youth a future. In addition, while working with youth in all our programs, we stress the importance of community participation and voting.

The self-development component of our programs offers us an opportunity to create awareness of the importance of a spiritual element in success.

**Future Goals**

Northcott is dedicated to the goals of Annual Conference. Our translation of these goals which fit our role as a community agency are:

1) To meet the spiritual and psychological support needs of our participants and community residents;
2) To create a safe environment for youth and families where they can learn social skills that increase their independence and involvement in the community, including the spiritual component;
3) To provide youth and adults with the skills they need to find careers and self-sufficiency;
4) To support youth, parents, and adults in their educational goals by providing academic support and GED/ABE trainings; and 5) To support families in times of economic crisis by providing food, clothing, and information referral services.

We believe that by achieving spiritual and physical well-being we promote the core United Methodist message and promote a willingness to receive the Methodist mission. We also enhance the portion of the Methodist mission that relates to the inclusion of minority communities. Northcott is a model for this type of mission.

*McArthur Weddle, Executive Director*

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**Parish Nurse Ministries**

**NO REPORT**

**Schmitt Woodland Hills, Inc.**

1400 West Seminary Street
Richland Center, WI 53581
608-647-8931
www.schmittwoodlandhills.com

**NO REPORT**

**Sheboygan Senior Community, Inc.**

930 North 6th St.
Sheboygan, WI 53081
920-458-2137
www.retiresheboygan.com

**NO REPORT**
Purpose: The United Methodist Hospitals Ministry provides a part time (0.5 fte) chaplain who visits United Methodists hospitalized in the Madison hospitals. The chaplain visits those who come from a distance (beyond the immediate Madison area) and provides a connectional link with the local congregations and pastors. The chaplain communicates with the person’s pastor when appropriate and becomes a ministry presence when the pastor is not able to visit because of distance or timeliness.

A Chaplaincy Committee of lay and clergy persons oversees the work of the chaplain, sets goals and compensation, and assists in fund raising. This ministry is regularly communicated to congregations throughout the Wisconsin Conference by the work of the chaplain and chaplaincy committee through personal appearances and contacts, informational mailing updates and at Annual Conference. This ministry is an approved ADVANCE of the Annual Conference. Funding is solicited from congregations and individuals as well as in apportionment giving through the Health & Welfare Committee of the Conference Board of Global Ministries.

History: This ministry began some time in the 1950’s when the part time Methodist Hospital Chaplain of Madison visited Methodists in the other hospitals on behalf of the Methodist Church. In the late 1960’s when the Methodist Hospital Chaplain became full time and could no longer provide this extended ministry, this chaplaincy ministry was picked up by several pastors of UM congregations in Madison. They continued to meet the need providing this healing ministry within the area hospitals. It has evolved from parish pastors providing care, to volunteer (retired clergy) chaplains and finally to a paid part time chaplain early in the 1980’s. Through the years, the ministry has become what it is today, an Annual Conference “Advance” ministry program through the Health & Welfare Committee of the Conference Board of Global Ministries. It continues to be a very important visitation ministry as persons hospitalized are sicker, are farther away from home, stays are shorter and parish pastors are stretched for adequate time to visit parishioners in the distant Madison hospitals.

Over the years, this ministry has provided spiritual care and comfort to many United Methodists hospitalized in Madison hospitals and has strengthened (and sometimes re-established) the connections with local pastors and churches. As many as 50% of those patients our chaplain visits still see themselves as Methodists, spiritually have faith and...
believe in God even though they are no longer connected to a UMC or any congregation. Truly this ministry is the CONNECTIONAL CHURCH in ACTION.

1. Pastoral Visits—Annually, the UMHM chaplain has one-on-one conversations with about 2,000 patients and family members in Madison, Wisconsin hospitals during a twelve-month period. These visits are at UW Hospitals, St. Mary’s Hospital, Meriter Hospital, and American Family Children’s Hospital. This ministry is unique in that all of the connections the United Methodist chaplain has, be it with patients, family members, or clergy, are one-on-one personal, pastoral visits.

2. Where Do Patients Come From? - The patients visited have been from many congregations throughout the Wisconsin Conference. In addition, Illinois communities south of Monroe, Wisconsin to the Freeport, IL area regularly refer patients to Madison, WI hospitals. The majority of out-of-state residents whom the chaplain visits are often persons travelling through Wisconsin when they become ill and need to seek emergency medical attention.

3. Who Are They? - The list of those visited include lay persons from United Methodist congregations, Wisconsin Conference clergy, clergy spouses and clergy family members, conference staff and family members, and those who list themselves as United Methodist upon admission census to a hospital but who do not identify with or participate in any local church congregation.

4. Connections To Congregations—At least 50% of the patients who are visited no longer participate in or belong to a congregation, but graciously receive the visit and accept the offer for prayer. In many cases, the chaplain offers to connect the patient and family with a UM congregation, pastor, or parish nurse in their community. A few accept the offer; most decline.

5. Connecting With Local Pastors—When a patient has a church home and gives permission, the UMHM chaplain will contact the pastor. This communication is by phone or e-mail…sometimes both. The chaplain has introduced primary on-site hospital chaplains and local UM clergy so that they can provide mutual support when a parishioner is having an extended stay at the hospital.

Highlights of 2015

Our Chaplain—RETIRING—The Rev. Jane Follmer Zekoff: Jane Follmer Zekoff has been our UMHM chaplain since October, 2010. Jane’s enthusiasm, commitment to the UMHM chaplaincy program, her professional chaplaincy training, extensive pastoral experience in congregations and organizational knowledge of Wisconsin Conference has continued to provide an excellent ministry that has been received well by patients, their families and local pastors throughout the Conference. Jane chose to retire as of Annual Conference and officially as of June 30, 2015. We celebrated her ministry as that time approached as well as in the retirees’ recognition events at Annual Conference. This year marked Jane’s 40th year in ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church. She has been a Blessing to many through her chaplaincy and her leadership throughout her ministry.

UMHM Chaplaincy Committee—Hiring Process for New Chaplain: Upon receiving the word of Jane’s approaching retirement, the Committee set out a process for hiring a new chaplain. The position description was up-dated, revised and was posted through the Conference E-news. Others including the D.S.’s and Bishop, hospital chaplaincy and
UM clergy were informed of the position. The Committee set criteria for hiring and times for interviewing appropriate applicants. The Chairperson of the Committee served as the initial receiver and screener of applicants. He had an initial conversation with applicants, checked references and lead the committee in the process toward decision-making and hiring.

**Our NEW Chaplain—The Rev. Aaron Alfred:** Aaron Alfred become our new UMHM chaplain July 1, 2015. He applied, interviewed and was hired by the UM Chaplaincy Committee. Bishop Hee-Soo Jung appointed him in this Extension Ministry as the part time UMHM Chaplain during the Annual Conference. Aaron has long had a passion and calling for the ministry of chaplaincy related to health and wellness. Early in his ministry in his native country India, he was inspired and worked in a healing ministry through the Christian Medical Association of India in New Delhi.

Aaron comes to this chaplaincy with extensive pastoral experience serving most recently as pastor of the Berlin UMC and Neshkoro UMC. He has completed 2 years of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and a chaplaincy residency in St. Mary’s Medical Center, Duluth, and at Luther Midelfort Hospital, EauClaire preparing himself for the chaplaincy.

At Annual Conference, Aaron was also appointed part time as Pastor of the Brooklyn UMC in Brooklyn, WI. He and his family moved and are getting settled into the new community of Waunakee.

**At the 2015 Annual Conference**, our UMHM display lifts up this hospital chaplaincy ministry. Our Chaplain Aaron was available at the display to connect with Conference attendees, providing information about the ministry and meeting people from throughout the Conference. Our display also provides information on the significant health issues of Advance Care Planning and the Wisconsin Donor Registry focusing on Organ, Tissue, Eye, Brain, Whole Body and Blood Donations. On Saturday of Conference, a volunteer from the UW Organ and Tissue Donation Services was present to inform people about donation, share their personal stories and assist them in joining the official Wisconsin Donor Registry. A “Donation Quiz” in the Conference packets and announcements by Conference Secretary encouraged Conference attendees to visit our display and talk with Chaplain Aaron and our UW OTD guest.

**Our Endowment Fund** for long term financial stability was supported through a special memorial solicitation (The Fid Fund) remembering and celebrating the 16+ years of The Rev. Fid Sailor as UMHM chaplain. Fid died in November 24, 2011…Thanksgiving Day.

**Goals for 2016**

1. To continue to provide a part time chaplaincy visiting United Methodists who live beyond the immediate Madison area and are hospitalized in Madison hospitals (Meriter, St. Marys and University Hospitals) and to communicate with the patient’s pastor and church (when appropriate) for continuity of ministry, support and appropriate follow-up when patient returns home.

2. To continue to communicate the mission of the United Methodist Hospitals Ministry to pastors, church leaders and members throughout the Wisconsin Conference and to solicit the prayers of healing and financial support for the program.

3. To address the current trend of decreased giving and to create additional ways of publicizing the value of the program and solicit increase funding through updating
the UM Conference web page, district list serves, and by other means. Anticipated cuts from BGM Funding through Apportionments for Health & Welfare Ministries in the near future will pose a greater challenge to find new sources of financial support.

4. To continue to update our program with new pictures to use in telling the story of our hospital ministry within the congregations of the Wisconsin Conference.

5. To increase the roster of the Chaplaincy Committee by 3 or 4 laypersons and clergy to meet the present and future leadership and resource needs of this ministry.

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