

REPORTS

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Commission on Archives and History

by Lona Dearmont, Chair

The Commission on Archives and History recognized five churches celebrating their 150th anniversary in 2015: Palmyra UMC in Nebraska and Eureka First UMC, Fort Scott First UMC, Monticello UMC, and Westmoreland UMC in Kansas, all founded in 1865. The Commission also recognized 13 churches celebrating their 125th anniversary and one celebrating its 100th anniversary.

In May 2015, the Commission bid farewell to Jen McCollough, the Baker University archivist who cared for the Kansas United Methodist Collection since 2009, and in September 2015 we welcomed Sara DeCaro who became the archivist of the Kansas UM collection. In April 2016 Nebraska UM Historical Center director Karrie Dvorak resigned, and at the time of this writing, interviews for her replacement are being held. The Commission is very grateful for Karrie's dedicated service since December 2011.

Archives staff and Commission members assisted in making a historical video for Annual Conference 2015. It highlighted the pioneering women delegates Amanda Rippey and Angie Newman, elected from Kansas and Nebraska, respectively, to the 1888 General Conference.

The Commission got approval for an updated Articles of Agreement between the Great Plains Conference and Baker University governing the operation of the Kansas United Methodist Archives. A newly reconstituted Archives Advisory Committee met in December with the purpose of strengthening the ties between the university and conference in overseeing the Kansas United Methodist Collection.

In November 2015, the Kansas archives received a generous donation from Leon and Catherine Hayen, allowing for some much-needed improvements. New compact and cantilever shelving is helping the archives use space more efficiently and giving the archives a modern and professional look. Kansas archives staff are currently transferring many files to archival boxes in preparation for the move to new shelving. Also, archives staff are preparing a grant application for the digitization of some former Kansas-area closed church records.

There is a continual stream of activity in both Kansas and Nebraska archives in the form of accessioning inactive files from former conference offices, ministry groups, mission entities, and closed churches, as well as many research requests. For example, archives staff provided research support to the Conference Treasurer in (1) helping establish building dates for a fixed asset list of the three Nebraska UM camps, (2) understanding the origin of a consolidated Board of Ordained Ministry trust (3) providing documentation affirming ownership of a Conference Board of Pensions mineral interest in Wyoming, and (4) providing information pertaining to ownership of four abandoned Nebraska cemeteries.

Archives staff also assisted current ministries seeking to document the Conference's historical involvement in Zimbabwe and in celebrating two significant milestones of United Methodist Ministries in Omaha. Finally, staff assisted Nebraska Educational Television producers with a documentary entitled Sacred Places, which profiled a former Methodist Protestant church near Culbertson and a current African Methodist Episcopal church in Lincoln.

**Articles of Agreement between Baker University and
The Great Plains Annual Conference
of the United Methodist Church
Concerning the Kansas United Methodist Archives**

ARTICLE I

Purpose of the Agreement. This agreement defines the Kansas United Methodist Archives (the Archives) and provides for their support and operation under the aegis of the Great Plains Annual Conference (the Conference) and Baker University (the University).

ARTICLE II

Purpose of the Archives. The Archives provides a place where records, historical documents and information, and memorabilia pertaining to the United Methodist Church in Kansas are collected, organized, used, and preserved. Because of the unique role of Baker University in the history and development of United Methodism in the state of Kansas, the Archives shall be located in the library on the Baker campus in Baldwin City, Kansas. Materials deposited in the Archives are held in trust for the Conference and its officers by the University.

A. Collection Development. The Archives shall have in place collection policies and procedures to govern the acquisition and de-accessioning of materials and guidelines for local churches and for organizations, offices, and officers of the Conference.

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B. Organization. The Archives shall be organized and materials shall be cataloged according to generally accepted archival and library practice for the easy identification and retrieval of items deposited there.

C. Access and Assistance.

1. the Archives shall be open to the public during posted hours,
2. the staff shall provide assistance in identifying, locating, and using items in the collection,
3. in-depth research may be provided researchers who are unable to visit the Archives as time and resources allow. A fee schedule for this kind of research is subject to approval by the parties to this agreement, and
4. items from the collection may be used for exhibits or displays as appropriate and if, in the estimation of the Archivist, such use will not harm the materials.

D. Preservation. The Archives shall be housed in conditions as favorable as possible to their physical condition.

Items which are in poor condition shall be restored or copied as time and money allow. Priorities for such preservation efforts are determined by the condition of the item, its value, uniqueness and frequency of use.

ARTICLE III

Governance. The Kansas United Methodist Archives shall be governed by the Archives Advisory Committee (AAC), composed of representatives of the Great Plains Conference Commission on Archives and History (the Commission) and representatives of Baker University (the University).

A. **Membership:**

1. The Commission shall be represented by the Chair of the Great Plains Commission on Archives and History and two additional persons appointed by the Commission Chair. They may be, but are not required to be, members of the Commission.
2. The University shall be represented by the Archivist and two additional persons designated by the Provost or the President.

B. **Chair:** The Chair of the Commission shall chair the AAC.

C. **Meetings:** The AAC shall meet once per year in coordination with budgeting timelines of the Commission and the University. The Chair, in consultation with the Archivist, will call the meetings. The Chair may call additional meetings as needed.

D. **Voting:** All members of the AAC shall be voting members.

E. **Minutes:** A member of the of the AAC shall be designated as recording secretary and send the minutes to the Commission

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Chair, who will in turn send the AAC minutes to the Commission members, Conference officers, and President of the University, as well as other University representatives on the AAC.

F. Budget:

1. The Archivist shall devise and submit a budget to the University and the AAC for review and recommendation to the Commission. The Commission will review and approve and submit the budget to the Conference for final approval.
2. The University shall provide facilities for the Archives. The Conference shall provide fifty (50) percent of the salary and benefits of the Archivist and a share of the other operating expenses as agreed.
3. Special projects may be negotiated and funded separately.

ARTICLE IV

Amendments. Amendments to this agreement may be initiated by the Archives Advisory Committee (AAC), the Commission, or the University. The amendments must be submitted to and approved by the Conference and the Board of Trustees of the University.

1 The United Methodist Church as referred to in this document is meant to include all its previous names and antecedent denominations that later joined to form what is now known as the United Methodist Church.

Personnel

By Craig Hauschild, Chair

The Personnel Committee of the Great Plains Annual Conference makes the recommendation for a 2% increase to minimum compensation levels for 2017.

Minimum Base Compensation for 2017:

- Full time Local Pastor = \$35,445 (increase of \$57.92 per month)
- Associate Member = \$37,740 (increase of \$61.67 per month)
- Provisional Elder or Deacon = \$40,035 (increase of \$65.42 per month)
- Full Member = \$42,330 (increase of \$69.17 per month)

There was no increase in 2016.

Board of Pension and Health Benefits

by Kelly Williams, chair

Kelly Williams was appointed chair and Janet Classen, secretary. The Board consists of seven laity, one retired clergy member and three active clergy members. Ex-officio members include the

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Conference Treasurer, Gary Beach, the Conference Benefits Officer, Carol Fusaro, and Cabinet Rep. Rev. Dan Flanagan.

The Board along with CFA has an Investment Committee for the purpose of advising the Board regarding the investment of discretionary funds.

It remains the desire of the Board to continue using the resources of the General Board's Investment Arm (Wespath) for the investment of our discretionary funds until such time the Investment Committee deems it necessary to move the funds.

Health Insurance/Health Insurance Allowance

October 20, 2014 the annual conference voted to end the clergy health insurance plan and replace it with a health insurance allowance.

Resolution 9: Reinstating Group Health Insurance (Passed at Annual Conference 2015)

In order to evaluate whether it was feasible to offer health insurance to clergy members the Board asked our broker, Lockton, to use the past renewal rates and current medical trend to provide a reasonable expectation of what rates would like.

Lockton has provided what they are calling "extremely illustrative" monthly rates. They came up with these by looking at the previous renewal rates, and medical trend. These are not firm rates, and would require an underwriter's approval which would require at least an updated census, if not more.

ILLUSTRATIVE Monthly Rates –	
Clergy & Laity	2017 Rate
PPO	
EE	\$1,087.01
ES	\$2,282.78
EC	\$2,065.33
EF	\$3,261.08
HDHP	
EE	\$1,050.74
ES	\$2,206.54
EC	\$1,996.39
EF	\$3,152.15

Chart Key:

- EE Employee
- ES Employee/Spouse
- EC Employee/Children
- EF Employee/Family

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The Board does not believe it is fiscally wise for the clergy serving the local churches or the local churches or the Great Plains Annual Conference to return to group health insurance for the clergy members.

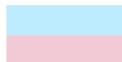
Resolution 10: Local Church Health Care Allowance

To assist the Board with determining if the health care allowance currently being used (\$14,232) was adequate to meet the needs of the clergy members while maintaining a reasonable amount to be met by the local churches three things were done.

1. The Board sent out a survey in order to get feed-back from clergy members on how well that amount was working for them and their family.
2. The Board asked Lockton to secure the average rate in each district. They looked at families meeting the following characteristics by zip code:
 - o Family of 4
 - o Husband and wife ages 55
 - o Children under 19
 - o Average income \$80,000 (to get over the subsidy threshold)
 - o Silver PPO Plans

The results are as follows:

Silver PPO Plan Rate by Districts		
District	Zip Code	Ave. Monthly Rate
Blue River	68504	\$870
Dodge City	67801	\$924
Elkhorn Valley	68701	\$1,083
Five Rivers	66047	\$945
Flint Hills	66502	\$920
Gateway	68845	\$1,083
Great West	69153	\$824
Hays	67601	\$943
Hutchinson	67501	\$913
KC	66213	\$833
Missouri River	68131	\$1,003
Parsons	67357	\$901
Prairie Rivers	68802	\$1,083
Salina	67401	\$913
Topeka	66604	\$920
Wichita	67207	\$913



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NE DOI SAMPLING OF FINAL APPROVED CHANGES TO INDIVIDUAL PLAN RATES FOR THE FEDERALLY FACILITATED MARKETPLACE FOR PLAN YEAR 2016.

Final Approved Rates for 2016		BECS NE		Cowentry CHC-NE	
Coverage Option	2015 Monthly Premium	2016 Monthly Premium	% Change 2015 to 2016	2015 Monthly Premium	2016 Monthly Premium
1. 30-year-old single female in Omaha on a silver plan	\$2,807.74	\$3,144.45	12.01%	\$2,343.39	\$2,791.91
2. Family coverage in Omaha for 2 adults aged 35 & 2 children on a silver plan	\$91,876.64	\$1,028,961.00	12.01%	\$767,000.00	\$915,428.00
3. Family coverage in Lincoln with 2 adults aged 45 and 2 children on a gold plan	\$1,177.94	\$1,082.10	12.94%	\$1,150.00	\$1,514.28
4. Coverage in Omaha with 2 adults aged 60 on a gold plan	\$1,867.38	\$2,094.72	12.17%	\$1,394.02	\$1,752.88
5. 26-year-old single male in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$288.35	\$334.25	15.92%	\$240.12	\$287.53
6. Coverage in Lincoln for 2 adults aged 64 & 62 on a platinum plan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7. 22-year-old male tobacco user in Scottsbluff on a catastrophic plan	\$147.62	\$166.79	12.99%	N/A	N/A
8. Family coverage in Hastings for a 50-year-old single non-tobacco user w/2 children on a silver plan	\$1,099.35	\$1,204.82	15.92%	\$870.89	\$999.55
9. 30-year-old non-tobacco user female in Norfolk on a silver plan	\$319.61	\$370.49	15.92%	\$267.80	\$307.37
10. 26-year-old single female in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$288.35	\$334.25	15.92%	\$240.12	\$287.53
11. 30-year-old single female in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$319.61	\$370.49	15.92%	\$267.80	\$307.37
12. 64-year-old single female in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$844.77	\$979.26	15.92%	\$703.24	\$842.08
13. 30-year-old single female in Hastings non-tobacco user on a silver plan	\$319.61	\$370.49	15.92%	\$267.80	\$307.37
14. 30-year-old single female in Hastings tobacco user on a silver plan	\$319.61	\$370.49	15.92%	\$294.70	\$338.11
15. Family coverage in Hastings 50-year-old non-tobacco user female, 3 children, silver plan	\$1,039.35	\$1,204.82	15.92%	\$870.89	\$999.55

14.80%

14.80%

14.80%

14.80%

14.80%

Final Approved Rates for 2016		UnitedHealthcare of the Midlands		Medica	
Coverage Option	2015 Monthly Premium	2016 Monthly Premium	% Change 2015 to 2016	2015 Monthly Premium	2016 Monthly Premium
1. 30-year-old single female in Omaha on a silver plan	\$2,777.65	\$3,144.45	12.01%	\$2,343.39	\$2,791.91
2. Family coverage in Omaha for 2 adults aged 35 & 2 children on a silver plan	\$906.59	\$1,028,961.00	12.01%	\$767,000.00	\$915,428.00
3. Family coverage in Lincoln with 2 adults aged 45 and 2 children on a gold plan	\$1,179.94	\$1,082.10	12.94%	\$1,150.00	\$1,514.28
4. Coverage in Omaha with 2 adults aged 60 on a gold plan	\$1,574.82	\$2,094.72	12.17%	\$1,394.02	\$1,752.88
5. 26-year-old single male in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$274.08	\$334.25	15.92%	\$240.12	\$287.53
6. Coverage in Lincoln for 2 adults aged 64 & 62 on a platinum plan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7. 22-year-old male tobacco user in Scottsbluff on a catastrophic plan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8. Family coverage in Hastings for a 50-year-old single non-tobacco user w/2 children on a silver plan	\$885.46	\$1,204.82	15.92%	\$702.35	\$842.08
9. 30-year-old non-tobacco user female in Norfolk on a silver plan	\$267.05	\$370.49	15.92%	\$226.62	\$267.05
10. 26-year-old single female in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$274.08	\$334.25	15.92%	\$240.12	\$287.53
11. 30-year-old single female in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$309.79	\$370.49	15.92%	\$267.05	\$309.79
12. 64-year-old single female in Lincoln on a silver plan	\$806.97	\$979.26	15.92%	\$681.86	\$831.86
13. 30-year-old single female in Hastings non-tobacco user on a silver plan	\$267.05	\$370.49	15.92%	\$226.62	\$267.05
14. 30-year-old single female in Hastings tobacco user on a silver plan	\$280.41	\$370.49	15.92%	\$240.12	\$287.53
15. Family coverage in Hastings 50-year-old non-tobacco user female, 3 children, silver plan	\$885.46	\$1,204.82	15.92%	\$702.35	\$842.08

14.80%

14.80%

14.80%

14.80%

14.80%

3. The Board received from the State of Nebraska details of 2016 rates on healthcare.gov. (the above chart)

After reviewing the results of the survey and taking into account the average rate in each district, the Board recommends a \$15,000 health care allowance for 2017. For years after 2017, the Board will research annually the actual cost of a silver PPO plan for all the pieces of geography in the Great Plains Conference. The Board will compare each year's rate to the prior year's rate for the same plan and the same geography and that will guide the Board in determining any rate for the health care allowance for the ensuing year.

Incapacity Leave Health Care Allowance

Clergy members receiving paid incapacity leave benefits through CPP and that were eligible for health insurance coverage at the time of their application have been receiving a health care allowance of \$14,232 annually. Realizing that the sustainability of this funding level was not possible the Board reviewed what 23 other conferences were doing to support their members on incapacity leave and therefore, the board recommends that effective January 1, 2017, those currently receiving a healthcare allowance and those newly eligible for CPP incapacity leave benefits receive \$300 per month and \$300 per month for the spouse and dependents under the age of 26 for three years. **Motion to Amend** by Lou Davies: That the annual conference continue to pay the conference insurance rate of insurance allowance (\$14,232.00) for the first 24 months until Medicare kicks in. The motion was seconded. **Motion to Amend the Amendment** by Evelyn Fisher: An allowance for \$14,232 for up to 24 months, following which benefits will be \$300 per month and for 3 years, \$300 per month for spouse and dependants until the age of 26. Fisher clarified her intention in the amendment to the amendment: I would anticipate that the \$14,232 would be for two years, the \$300 a month would then kick in for the amount of time stated, an additional three years. Motion to amend the amendment was seconded and **carried**. Bishop Jones called for the vote on the Davies amendment as it's been affected by the Fisher amendment. The amendment **carried**. Bishop Jones clarified further: It is for each individual person that meets that parameter, spouse, and multiple children under the age of 26 (\$300 per person for eligible spouses and dependents). The three-year timetable is just for spouse and dependents; the clergy person has no timetable. Bishop Jones called for the vote on the amended proposal. **Approved**.

Retiree Health Insurance

The Conference partners with One Exchange through the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, for Retiree Health Insurance. One Exchange is an exchange that will assist each retiree in selecting the private Medicare plan that best meets their medical needs and budget.

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Nebraska Retirees retiring through 2019 are eligible for a health reimbursement account (HRA) providing they use One Exchange in securing their coverage. The coverage must continue through One Exchange in order for the HRA to be available.

The Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) voted to pay off an unfunded liability of approximately \$1.4 million for the Nebraska retiree health reimbursement subsidy using conference reserves. This move means Nebraska churches are no longer paying an extra Mission Share to support the benefit beginning in 2016.

An annual Retiree Health Valuation is required by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The valuation completed by Willis Towers Watson indicates that there will be adequate funding to meet the needs of this subsidy.

Life Insurance

We continue to offer affordable voluntary life insurance. This benefit is available to clergy members and conference lay staff members who works at least 30 hours per week. The benefit can be portable when employees terminate.

Vision and Dental

We continue to offer affordable vision and dental insurance. This benefit is available to clergy members and conference lay staff members who work at least 30 hours per week. These benefits are optional coverage's and the costs are to be paid by the participant on a pre-tax basis.

Critical Illness and Accident: Two new optional coverages were made available for clergy members serving three-quarter time or more, along with family members and conference lay staff and family members.

Virgin Pulse Health Miles: This program is available to active clergy members serving three-quarter time or more and spouse and retired clergy and spouse, along with conference lay staff and spouse. The participant can earn actual dollars by completing their activity goals.

Retirement Benefits

The Conference has an over-funded position in the Pre-82 Pension Plan and substantial pension reserves. The Board recommends we continue to use the over-funding and reserves to reduce the overall cost of the pension benefits to the local churches. The retirement contributions in excess of those paid by local churches will be funded first from the Pre-82 fund, and then out of the pension reserves, if needed. The excess funds in the Pre-82 plan will be used as long as the funding balance is not reduced below 120%.

It is the recommendation of the Board to continue the current funding level for 2017.

The local church funding is as follows:

	2016	2017
CPP death and disability	3%	3%
CRSP defined contributions	3%	3%
CRSP defined benefit	2%	2%
Total	8%	8%

Those members serving 25% the local churches will fund 10% into the members UMPIP account. The 2% balance required will be funded from the Pre-82 over-funding, and then out of the pension reserves, if needed.

Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits will be submitting to General Conference proposed changes to the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP).

Those changes will have an effect on some clergy members. The proposed changes are as follows:

- Eligibility by Plan Sponsor election:
 - ¾ time Ordained
 - ¾ time Student and Part Time Local Pastors
 - Premium: 3% of Plan Compensation
- Eliminate special arrangements and ordained clergy and associate members serving 50% will lose coverage.
- Clergy serving 100% with a plan compensation between 25% and 60% of the DAC will gain coverage.

To assist with those that are losing coverage the General Board is offering benefits through UMLife Options.

If the new changes are approved at General Conference the Board has the following recommendations:

- All three-quarter time ordained pastors, all three-quarter time student local pastors and all three-quarter time local pastors be covered by the CPP.
- Ordained clergy members serving one-half time will receive benefits through UMLife Options with the actual cost being paid by the local church.

Other Board Activities

Farmer Fund Emergency Grants/Crouse Fund Grants: The Board received seven Farmer Fund emergency grant requests. These were approved for funding.

The Board maintains written guidelines for emergency grants.

Crouse Fund Grants: The Cabinet approved four Crouse Fund Grants. The Cabinet established criteria for Crouse Fund Grants as follows:

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1. Cabinet would spend no more than five percent of principal and interest per year.
2. Fund would be used only for medical expenses after insurance.
3. District Superintendent will determine need.
4. Amount available for disbursement will be based on January 1 principal and interest of current year.
5. Maximum amount the cabinet may use per individual cannot exceed \$3000.00, unless the cabinet makes a separate motion and approves it.
6. The pastor making the request must have at least a minimum of a silver plan health insurance policy.
7. Anyone serving a church may request funds, including DSA's and part-time pastors.

Short-term Disability: Short-term disability funding is available to assist member churches in the event a full-time or part-time (1/2 time or more) clergy or District Superintendent Assignment (DSA) is unable to perform the duties of their appointment due to a documented medical disability when the period of the clergy or DSA's absence exceeds 30 days but is anticipated to be less than 180 days.

Five short-term disability grants were funded through-out the year. The Board maintains written guidelines for short-term disability funding.

Use of Reserves: The Board of Pensions has \$13.5 million of reserves for pension benefits (BOP Pensions \$9.6 million, KWC Endowment corpus \$2.2 million, and KWC Endowment Earnings \$1.7 million).

The Mission Alignment team requests the Board of Pensions continue to draw 5% of pension-designated reserves to help pay for Conference Staff benefits. The retirement contribution for Conference Staff is about \$1.1 million. Currently 5% of the \$13.5 million reserve is about \$675,000, of which \$200,000 must be restricted for pensions. The Board established a 5% fund spending of the pension reserves to be utilized to offset Conference Staff benefit costs, with health insurance benefits coming from the share of unrestricted funds.

Past Service Rate (PSR): The PSR shall be increased from the 2016 rate of \$744.00 for each past service year to \$759.00 for each past service year, beginning January 1, 2017. (The past service rate is a defined benefit based upon years of service through December 31, 1981.)

Contingent Annuitant Percentage (CAP): The CAP for the surviving spouses shall remain the same for 2017. Former Nebraska and Kansas East conferences have the rate of 85%, and the rate for the former Kansas West conference is at 100%. The former Nebraska and Kansas East conferences rates will be reviewed each year with the possibility of moving the rate to 100% sometime in the future.

Special Pension Grants: Special pension grants have been provided for the following:

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- **Esther R. Miller**, surviving spouse of Alfred Miller. The grant is for 12.5 years of service credit at the surviving spouse contingent annuitant for the former Kansas West Conference (100%).
- **Lance Lingard**, dependent son of Richard H. Lingard, clergyperson of the former Nebraska Conference (25% of pension rate times years of service of the father).
- **Kathy Kirkus**, dependent daughter of Eldo Kirkus, clergyperson of the former Nebraska Conference (25% of pension rate times years of service of father).

Funding percentage: A minimum funding level of 120% is to be maintained to protect the Pre-82 commitment. Any increases to the annuity Past Service Rate (PSR) shall be funded immediately in the year in which the increase occurs.

Lockton Consultant Services: The Board continues a contractual relationship with Lockton. As our broker we are provided updates/reporting requirements in regards to Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Lockton conducts the bidding processes on all of the benefits made available to conference members and staff.

2017 Comprehensive Funding Plan

The Board is required to submit a comprehensive funding plan each year to the General Board. A summary of the plan is included in the items for action.

ITEMS FOR ACTION, PETITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following are the recommendations of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church for 2017:

1. Resolution on Rental/Housing/Household Expense Allowance, in accordance with Federal Guidelines for clergy housing, the following resolution if recommended.

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

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

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergy persons are considered to be deferred compensation and

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are paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension, severance, or disability payments received from plans authorized under The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist (the Discipline), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB), during the period January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017, by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

THAT the pension, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities, of funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active a retired, a terminated or a disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church contributions to or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled Clergyperson's pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross compensation.

Note: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal (and, in most cases, state) income tax purposes is limited under internal Revenue Code section 107(2), and regulation thereunder, to the least of: (a) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this

Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year: (b) the amount actually expended by the Clergy person to rent or provide a home in such year; or (c) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. Each clergy person or former clergy person is urged to consult with his or her own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing allowance exclusion.

2. **Resolution 9: Reinstating Group Health Insurance:** The Board does not recommend reinstating the group health insurance.
3. **Resolution 10: Local Church Health Care Allowance:** The Board recommends that research of the actual cost of a silver PPO plan for all the pieces of geography in the Great Plains Conference be performed each year. The Board will then compare each year's rate to the previous year's rate for the same plan and the same geography and that information will guide the Board in determining any rate for the health care allowance for the ensuing year. Since the Board cannot use the criteria stated above for 2017 due to lack of equivalent information, the Board recommends a \$15,000 health care allowance for 2017, based on clergy reporting and the average that accounts for taxes.
4. **Incapacity Leave Health Care Allowance:** Clergy members receiving paid incapacity leave benefits through CPP and that were eligible for health insurance coverage at the time of their application have been receiving a health care allowance of \$14,232 annually. Realizing that the sustainability of this funding level was not possible the Board reviewed what 23 other conferences were doing to support their members on incapacity leave and therefore, the board recommends that effective January 1, 2017, those currently receiving a healthcare allowance and those newly eligible for CPP incapacity leave benefits receive \$300 per month and \$300 per month for the spouse and dependents under the age of 26 for three years. **Motion to Amend** by Lou Davies: That the annual conference continue to pay the conference insurance rate of insurance allowance (\$14,232.00) for the first 24 months until Medicare kicks in. The motion was seconded. **Motion to Amend the Amendment** by Evelyn Fisher: An allowance for \$14,232 for up to 24 months, following which benefits will be \$300 per month and for 3 years, \$300 per month for spouse and

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dependants until the age of 26. Fisher clarified her intention in the amendment to the amendment: I would anticipate that the \$14,232 would be for two years, the \$300 a month would then kick in for the amount of time stated, an additional three years. Motion to amend the amendment was seconded and **carried**. Bishop Jones called for the vote on the Davies amendment as it's been affected by the Fisher amendment. The amendment **carried**. Bishop Jones clarified further: It is for each individual person that meets that parameter, spouse, and multiple children under the age of 26 (\$300 per person for eligible spouses and dependents). The three-year timetable is just for spouse and dependents; the clergy person has no timetable. Bishop Jones called for the vote on the amended proposal. **Approved.**

5. **Past Service Rate (PSR):** The PSR shall be increased from the 2016 rate of \$744.00 for each past service year to \$759.00 for each past service year, beginning January 1, 2017. (The past service rate is a defined benefit based upon years of service through December 31, 1981.)
6. **Contingent Annuitant Percentage (CAP):** The CAP for the surviving spouses shall remain the same for 2016. Former Nebraska and Kansas East conferences have the rate of 85%, and the rate for the former Kansas West conference is at 100%. The former Nebraska and Kansas East conferences rates will be reviewed each year with the possibility of moving the rate to 100% sometime in the future.
7. **Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP):** If the new changes are approved at General Conference the Board has the following recommendations:
 - All three-quarter time ordained pastors, all three-quarter time student local pastors and all three-quarter time local pastors be covered by the CPP. Costs to the local church are 3% of plan compensation.
 - Ordained clergy members serving one-half time will receive benefits through UMLife Options with the actual cost being paid by the local church.

8. Special Pension Grants: Continue to provide Special pension grants for the following:

- **Esther R. Miller**, surviving spouse of Alfred Miller. The grant is for 12.5 years of service credit at the surviving spouse contingent annuitant for the former Kansas West Conference (100%).
- **Lance Lingard**, dependent son of Richard H. Lingard, clergyperson of the former Nebraska Conference (25% of pension rate times years of service of the father).
- **Kathy Kirkus**, dependent daughter of Eldo Kirkus, clergyperson of the former Nebraska Conference (25% of pension rate times years of service of father).

9. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) Funding:

- Use the Pre-82 over-funding to fund the 2016 and 2017 CRSP-DB portion while maintaining a minimum funding level of 120%.
- While maintaining a minimum funding level of 120%, use the Pre-82 over-funding to fund the 2016 and 2017 UMPIP contributions needed (2%) to bring the amount up to the funding level of those serving 25%.
- Maintain the CRSP defined benefit (CRSP-DB) contribution funding at 2% of compensation.
- Maintain the CRSP defined contribution (CRSP-DC) funding and CPP funding at 3% of compensation for each.
- Maximum total contribution for pension and CPP at the local church level will be 8% for 2017 with the understanding that it may be increased in future years.
- Spousal benefit at 85% for (former) Nebraska and Kansas East and 100% for (former) Kansas West.
- Continue PSR increases at or near the level of the average (annual basis) clergy COL.

10. Use of Reserves: Establish a 5% fund spending of the pension reserves to be utilized to offset Conference Staff benefit costs, with health insurance benefits coming from the share of unrestricted funds.

11. 2017 Comprehensive Funding Plan Summary**INTRODUCTION**

The 2012 *Book of Discipline* ¶ 1506.6 requires that each annual conference develop, adopt and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan for funding all of its benefit obligations. The funding plan shall be submitted annually to the General Board of Pension and Health benefits for review and be approved annually by the annual conference, following the receipt and inclusion of a favorable written opinion from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB). This document is only a summary of the information contained in the actual signed funding plan and does not contain all the information required for a comprehensive view of the conference's benefit obligations. You may request the full contents of the 2017 comprehensive benefit funding plan from your conference benefit office.

**CLERGY RETIREMENT SECURITY PROGRAM (CRSP)
Defined Benefit (DB) and Defined Contribution (DC)****Program overview:**

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement program providing lifetime income and account flexibility designed for those who serve as clergy of The United Methodist Church. The program is designed to provide participants with one portion of their overall retirement benefits. CRSP replaced the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) effective January 1, 2007, which had previously replaced the Pre-82 Plan for service rendered prior to January 1, 1982. CRSP consists of both a defined benefit (DB) plan, which provides a monthly benefit at retirement based upon years of credited service to The United Methodist Church, and a defined contribution (DC) plan, which provides a retirement account balance established and funded by the annual conferences.

Current funding plan information:

The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP-DB) annuities total liability as of January 1, 2015 is \$1.271 billion, while total plan assets are \$1.407 billion, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 111%. The Great Plains Conference portion of the liability is 3.1759% with a 2017 contribution of \$3,354,498. The conference anticipates that the amount will be funded by Surplus Redirection from Own Pre82 - representing year over year in how contributions are to be funded. Additionally, General Conference 2012 approved a change to CRSP that provides each annual conference the discretion to determine whether to cover three-quarter and/or half-time clergy. The Great

Plains Conference has elected to cover clergy serving 50%+ under CRSP effective January 1, 2017.

Effective January 1, 2014 the CRSP-DC plan was reduced from a 3% to a 2% of plan compensation non-matching contribution. Clergy have the opportunity to earn up to an additional 1% CRSP-DC contribution by contributing at least 1% of their plan compensation to UMPIP; therefore, if a participant contributes at least 1% of plan compensation to UMPIP, the individual will receive a contribution of 3%, which is unchanged from 2013. The 2017 CRSP-DC contribution is anticipated to be \$1,134,000 and will be funded by Direct Billed – representing year over year in how contributions are to be funded.

MINISTERIAL PENSION PLAN (MPP)

Plan overview:

Supplement Three to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP), provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church from 1982 through 2006. MPP is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement plan. Effective January 1, 2014, exactly 65% of the account balance must be annuitized when the funds are to be distributed. The remainder may be rolled over to UMPIP, into an IRA or another qualified plan, or it may be paid out as a lump sum.

Current funding plan information:

The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities' total liability as of January 1, 2015 is \$3.122 billion, while total plan assets are \$3.509 billion, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 112% and no required contribution for 2017. The Great Plains Conference's portion of the total liability is 3.0064%. Future MPP annuitants have a total account balance of \$4.145 billion and the Great Plains Conference's portion of that balance is \$106,040,698 or 2.56% of the total.

PRE-1982 PLAN

Plan overview:

Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Pre-1982 Plan, provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church prior to 1982. The Pre-1982 Plan was replaced by MPP effective January 1, 1982. If a clergy person retires within the Conference (and does not terminate), the minimum benefit payable is based on two factors: 1) years of service with pension credit and 2) the Conference pension rate. Years of service with pension credit are approved by

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each Conference on the recommendation of the Conference Board of Pensions (CBOP) in accordance with plan provisions and *The Book of Discipline*. The pension rate, also called the Past Service Rate (PSR), is the dollar amount chosen by the Conference as the amount payable for each approved year of service with pension credit. The pension rate may change from year to year. The number of years of service with pension credit is multiplied by the pension rate, and the product is the minimum annual benefit payable to those clergy eligible for Pre-1982 Plan benefits. In certain situations, the benefit received from the Pre-1982 plan may vary based on the applicability of what is referred to as Defined Benefit Service Money (DBSM), which is the defined contribution feature of the Pre-1982 Plan. At the time that a participant retires, the DBSM account is converted to a life based benefit and, at that point, the clergy's benefit is the greater of the PSR or DBSM benefit. If the conference increases the PSR, the clergy's benefit is recalculated; but the DBSM based benefit does not change.

Current funding plan information:

The 2017 PSR recommended to the Great Plains Conference will be \$759.00, representing a 2.02% increase from the 2016 rate. The conference expects future increases to be approximately 2.00%, which is based on the following rationale: Approx. 2.0% or COLA.

The contingent annuitant percentage is recommended to remain at the 85%/100% level.

Based on the final actuarial valuations from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits as of January 1, 2015 for 2017, the portion of the Pre-1982 liability and assets attributable to the Great Plains Conference and its related funded status are as follows:

Funding Plan Liability	\$(90,429,081)
Assets, including In-Plan and Outside	<u>121,743,220</u>
Funded Status	\$31,314,139
Funded Ratio	134.63%

ACTIVE HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM**Program Overview:**

The Great Plains Conference offers the following active health benefit to its active eligible participants: Self Funded-Non HealthFlex.

Current funding plan information:

The total cost of the program for 2017 is anticipated to be \$992,059 and will be funded by premiums that are Budgeted - Direct Bill (staff

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pays portion) & Mission Share to the local churches. It is anticipated that increases for future years will average 6.0% based on the following rationale: Expected health insurance trend increase - also due to experience ratio.

- ***Claims Incurred But Not Reported***

The Great Plains Conference provides a Self Funded-Non HealthFlex to its eligible participants. As of 12/31/2017, the estimated IBNR claims total is \$99,206. It is anticipated that increases for future years will average 5.00%, based on the following rationale: Projected increase is there for unexpected need/usage of coverage. It is anticipated that the IBNR claims, if applicable, will be funded via the following: Budgeted.

- ***Additional Conference Sponsored Coverage***

The Great Plains Conference has elected to provide health benefits coverage to the following groups during periods where, without conference funded premiums; the participants would not be provided coverage or benefits (all figures as of 12/31/2015):

Category	# of Participants	Estimated Cost
1. Clergy and/or lay participants on disability	17	\$241,944

The total estimated cost of conference sponsored coverage as of 12/31/2015 is \$241,944.

POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFIT PROGRAM (PRM)

Program Overview:

The Great Plains Conference post-retirement medical program currently offers a Stipend for those who were members of the Nebraska conference prior to 2014.

Current funding plan information:

The conference's expectation for 2017 is to offer the following benefits: One Exchange.

The funding obligation for 2017 is anticipated to be \$660,979 with the following funding sources: Account assets. On a longer term basis, the conference intends to ensure funding by: Secure Promise Funds.

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Based on the most recent PRM valuation dated 03/01/2016, the following is the funded position of the post-retirement medical benefits:

1. Expected Post Retirement Obligation (EPBO) or net conference cost	\$7,728,057
2. Accumulated Post Retirement Obligation (APBO) or net conference cost	\$7,704,472
3. Assets designated for PRM	\$7,352,789
4. Service Cost (SC) or net conference cost	\$14,972

As a preview of the 2018 CBFP requirement, a new PRM Funding Contribution requirement will be mandatory for conferences requesting a full favorable CBFP opinion. This year the calculation for informational purposes only is as follows:

5. Funded Status, [3. – 2.]	\$(351,683)
6. Number of Annual Payments	20
7. Portion of Funded Status Payable [5. / 6., but zero if 5. is positive]	\$17,584
8. PRM Funding Contribution, Informational purposes only [4. + 7.]	\$32,556

These values are based on a 3.60% long term discount rate, a 6.0% long-term expected rate of return on assets, and a current medical trend rate of 0% with an ultimate medical trend rate of 0%.

COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN (CPP)**Plan Overview:**

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides death, long-term disability and other welfare benefits for eligible clergy of The United Methodist Church and their families. It is an Internal Revenue Code 414(e) "church plan" funded by plan sponsor insurance premiums. Generally, clergy are eligible to participate in CPP if the conference or salary-paying unit sponsors the plan and they are able to satisfy the eligibility requirements which include full-time appointment with plan compensation equal to or greater than 60% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) or the Conference Average Compensation (CAC), whichever is less.

Current funding plan information:

For 2017, the Great Plains Conference has an expected required contribution to the Comprehensive Protection Plan of \$1,328,800, which is anticipated to be funded by: Direct Bill. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be 2.00% per year as a result of: Based on COLA.

UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP) FOR LAY AND CLERGY**Plan Overview:**

The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) defined contribution retirement savings plan for clergy and lay employees of The United Methodist Church and affiliated organizations. Participants may make before-tax, Roth and/or after-tax contributions through payroll deductions. Participant contributions, various optional plan sponsor contributions and investment earnings comprise the individual's retirement account balance.

Current funding plan information:

Conference office lay employees working an average of twenty (20) hours per week or more are eligible after Three (3) months for a plan sponsor funded pension contribution of 6.00% of salary. Lay employees are required to contribute 3.00% through payroll deductions to the UMPIP. The estimated contribution for the Great Plains Conference is anticipated to be \$123,300 and will be funded via Budget/Mission Shares.

The Great Plains Conference, as of January 1, 2017 is planning on sponsoring the UMPIP for clergy serving quarter-time and are eligible for a pension contribution of 12.00% of salary. The estimated contribution for the Conference is anticipated to be \$21,970 and will be funded via Direct Bill.

OTHER CONFERENCE BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS: DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) TYPE

Plan Overview: The Great Plains Conference currently offers the following DC benefit(s): Virgin Pulse Health Miles. The funding obligation for 2017 is anticipated to be \$33,356 with the funding sources to be: Health Insurance Fund/Mission Shares. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be 2% per year due to: Costs are based on participation.

Plan Overview: The Great Plains Conference currently offers the following DC benefit(s): Moving Expenses. The funding obligation

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for 2017 is anticipated to be \$480,000 with the funding sources to be: Mission Shares. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be 0% per year due to: The amount did not increase - this is a budgeted line item.

Plan Overview: The Great Plains Conference currently offers the following DC benefit(s): Lockton Consultant Fee. The funding obligation for 2017 is anticipated to be \$30,000 with the funding sources to be: Direct Bill if needed - also use reserves from Health Insurance Account. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be 0% per year due to: Reviewed yr to yr - billing is based on usage.

Plan Overview: The Great Plains Conference currently offers the following DC benefit(s): Death & Disability for Lay Staff. The funding obligation for 2017 is anticipated to be \$18,317 with the funding sources to be: Budgeted - Mission Shares. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be 0% per year due to: Based on COLA and new hires.

CONCLUSION

The 2017 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan and the above Summary document incorporates, to the best of our understanding, the Great Plains Conference's obligations and funding requirements of the benefits provided to the clergy and laity of the Great Plains Conference.

Council on Finance & Administration Policies**Central Treasury**

The Great Plains United Methodist Conference (Conference) shall operate a central treasury under the direction and supervision of the Conference Treasurer in accordance with the policies and procedures of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, the Conference and its Council on Finance & Administration (CFA). The funds of all boards, councils, committees and task forces of the CONFERENCE (hereinafter called agencies or individual agency) as well as Districts and related corporations and their units shall be held in the central treasury, unless otherwise authorized by the CFA. The Conference Treasurer shall be the custodian of all Mission Share (apportionment) funds, non-budgeted funds, special offerings, and other designated funds. The Conference Treasurer shall make accounting of all receipts and disbursements in accordance with *The*

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Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, and the policies and procedures approved by the CFA.

Donor restricted funds given to the former Kansas East, Kansas West, and Nebraska Conferences will be respected as to both purpose and geography as assets are combined into the Conference. Unrestricted funds given to the former three conferences will be combined for the benefit of the Conference as a whole.

Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Conference shall be January 1 to December 31. All local church remittances that are postmarked on or before the 5th business day following the close of the fiscal year, will be credited to the immediately preceding fiscal year, unless otherwise designated by the church. All remittances by local churches postmarked and received after that date shall be credited to the next fiscal year, regardless of fiscal year designation. Any variance to this deadline, due to extraordinary circumstances, will be at the discretion of the Conference Treasurer.

Mission Share (Apportionment) Formula

The mission share formula for the Conference will be based upon a percentage of each church's total operating income, with total operating income to be equal to the amount listed on Table 3, line 62, of each church's annual report to the conference. The Conference will use a 10% mission share formula for the base budget.

Mission Agency Support

Each local church in the Conference will be asked to contribute 1% of its total operating income to the mission work of key partner agencies. This amount is over and above the mission share tithes. These agencies are separately incorporated and have a historic missional tie to the work of the conference. In each budget, the list may be adjusted by action of the Annual Conference. The CFA will recommend a list each year. Money given to Mission Agency Support will be divided proportionately among the agencies listed in the Budget section.

General Church Mandated Special Sunday Offerings

1. Human Relations Day – January 15, 2017
1. UMCOR Sunday - March 26, 2017
2. Native American Ministries Sunday – April 30, 2017
3. Peace with Justice Sunday – June 11, 2017
4. World Communion Sunday – October 1, 2017
5. United Methodist Student Day – November 26, 2017

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Conference Advance

The Conference Advance list is recommended each year by the Mercy and Justice Team for action by the Annual Conference. All ministries on this list have the privilege of approaching the churches of the conference to raise funds in support of their efforts. Only additions or deletions to the approved list will be voted on each year at Annual Conference.

Special Appeals

No agency, institution or organization beyond those in the Mission Agency Support or Conference Advance lists shall make a special conference-wide appeal to the local church for funds without the approval of the Annual Conference session, upon recommendation of the CFA. In case of extreme emergency, approval may be given by the Connecting Council upon recommendation of the CFA.

Annual Conference Budget

The Conference Budget is to be developed in the following manner:

1. The CFA shall project the income of the conference based on the current mission formula, the expected income from the Budget Reserve Fund, the expected income from the Missional Opportunity Fund and the allowance for unpaid mission shares. The projected income shall be provided to the Mission Alignment Team.
2. In the fall, a letter will be sent out to all conference councils, boards and agencies advising them of the process for submitting budget requests and direction regarding budget building. Boards and agencies shall submit their budget request according to the prescribed process to the Conference Treasurer no later than January 31.
3. The Mission Alignment Team (as selected by the Connecting Council) shall study the budget requests, consult with the agencies of the Conference, and recommend to the CFA the total sums they recommend for the respective groups.
4. The CFA shall examine the work of the Mission Alignment Team and bring a recommendation to the Connecting Council and the Annual Conference of a budget that includes the full amount apportioned to the Conference for the several general funds authorized by the General Conference, and that amount shall be apportioned to the churches (Discipline, Par. 613.3).

Budget Administration

A. Meeting expense reimbursement:

1. The mileage rate for conference and district board, agency and council meetings shall be 40% of the standard rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for business expense (in 2016 this is \$0.216/mile, which is 40% of \$.54/mile). Clergy and lay participants in such meetings are encouraged to submit for reimbursement through the Conference rather than through their local church. Procedures and policies will be developed to encourage carpooling and video venue usage with this policy.
2. Dependent (child and/or adult) care reimbursement to people attending approved meetings is \$5.00 per hour for one dependent, \$8.00 per hour for two dependents, and \$10.00 per hour for three or more dependents. The total shall not exceed \$50.00 per day for one participant.
3. Lodging may be reimbursed at actual expense if attendance at such meetings requires an overnight stay due to distance traveled. Lodging will be arranged for by leadership of such conference or district boards. Shared rooms will be expected when appropriate.
4. Meals may be reimbursed if attendance at such meetings requires an overnight stay due to distance traveled. Meals will be arranged for by leadership of such conference or district boards. Reimbursement to participants will be at \$20 per day with that amount prorated for partial days based on the length of meetings and the travel required. At or immediately following the close of any fiscal year, the CFA shall have the authority to pay any remaining General Church and South Central Jurisdiction mission shares from available cash.

B. All available funds remaining in the Conference budget shall be transferred to Conference reserves. Notwithstanding the forgoing sentence, those available funds remaining in the accounts of the three related corporations: New Church Development, Inc., United Methodist Campus Ministry, Inc., and United Methodist Camps, Inc., as well as accounts for the work of the Board of Trustees related to property management, and Missional Opportunities shall not be so transferred.

C. Operating Reserve: The Operating Reserve provides for cash flow needs of the Conference and shall be used at the direction of the CFA. The goal of the Operating Reserve shall be to maintain an annual balance of no less than ten (10) percent not to exceed

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twenty (20) percent of the Conference budget. Operating Reserve balance above twenty (20) percent at the end of the fiscal year shall be reported to the Connecting Council and shall be included as part of the Great Plains Conference Reserve Fund. Great Plains Conference Reserve Fund (amended June 2014)

The Conference has at its disposal an account referred to as the Great Plains Conference Reserve Fund. This fund is restricted by the Annual Conference and is to be administered by the CFA. The purpose of the fund is to support conference ministries. It is the Conference's intention to maintain a minimum balance of \$10,000,000. This balance is to provide additional protection against stock market downturns for the purpose of meeting potential pension obligations

The Missional Opportunities Reserve Fund:

\$3,000,000 of the Fund shall be treated as the Missional Opportunities Reserve Fund. Each year CFA will designate an amount up to 5% of the Missional Opportunities Reserve Fund to be available to the Conference for missional opportunities according to policies set up by the Connecting Council. Any team of the Conference, including the Extended Cabinet or Appointive Cabinet, can request money from the Missional Opportunities Fund for any conference-wide strategic purpose or one that implements or strengthens one of the Conference's missional priorities.

The Budget Reserve Fund:

The balance of the Budget Reserve Fund is for support of the Conference budget. Each year in February, the CFA will calculate the thirty-six monthly average of the Fund ending on January 31 of that year. They will apply a percentage not greater than 5% to that average. The calculated amount shall be designated as an income source for the next budget year and shall be withdrawn from the Budget Reserve Fund during the budget year in accordance to the directions from the Conference Treasurer. The CFA may also designate a special distribution of the Fund if its earnings make that prudent and possible. The CFA shall consult with the Investment Committee before making the recommendations contained in this paragraph.

- D. Non-Budget Fund Accounts: The Conference Treasurer may receive and disburse funds for designated purposes, separate from the Conference budget. Such funds shall be listed as "Non-

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Budget Fund Accounts.” All Non-Budget Fund Accounts must be sponsored by an agency of the Conference.

1. Income from money held in Non-Budget Fund Accounts may be credited to the respective account as determined by the CFA.
2. When an unrestricted Non-Budget Fund Account has been terminated or has been inactive for a period of one year, the balance shall be transferred to the Conference reserve, unless otherwise determined by the CFA.

Investments

Investments of the Conference funds shall be made by the Conference Treasurer, under the direction of the Conference Investment Committee under the policies and procedures for all investment transactions and balances as described below.

Investment Policy**Purpose**

The purpose of the Great Plains United Methodist Conference Investment Policy is to provide governance and oversight to the Investment Committee of the Conference with the intent to facilitate and not hinder conference committees, commissions, institutions and agencies in the execution of their duties related to their investment portfolios and in the use of their funds.

In recognition of fiduciary responsibilities and the mandate of the 2012 Book of Discipline (§ 613.5), the CFA has approved this Investment Policy governing the Investment Committee of the Conference. This Investment Policy shall comply with the policies related to Conflict of Interest and Investment Management of Annual Conference Pension and Pension Related Funds under § 1508 of the 2012 Book of Discipline.

Delineation of Responsibilities

Under the 2012 Book of Discipline (§ 612.1), the purpose of the CFA shall be to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference. The CFA is responsible for establishing principles, policies, standards and guidelines for the investment of all monies, assets and properties of the Conference. The CFA is responsible for the financial integrity and oversight of the financial resources of the Conference.

By this Investment Policy, the CFA delegates, to the extent provided, to the Investment Committee the management and operations of the Conference’s investment assets, which are made subject to this Investment Policy. Under this Investment

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Policy, the Conference's investment assets are comprised of funds under the responsibility of the CFA, the Board of Trustees (BOT), the Council on New Church Development (CNCD), and the Board of Pension and Health Benefits (BOPHB), except for funds within the Conference pension plans. The Investment Committee shall establish investment objectives for the Conference funds under the responsibility of the CFA, BOT, CNCD, and BOPHB, except for funds within the Conference pension plans, so as not to hinder the stewardship of their respective Conference funds as required by the United Methodist Book of Discipline or Conference policies and procedures.

The Investment Committee shall be fully accountable to the CFA. The CFA shall review the Investment Policy and the work of the Investment Committee, as needed, to determine the effectiveness of and the overall results of the investments.

The Investment Committee shall:

1. Define and develop investment goals and operational guidelines;
2. Select and discharge Investment Managers, and carry out any other duties required for the legal operation of the Investment Committee, including but not limited to hiring outside vendors to perform various services;
3. Monitor and evaluate the performance results and risk posture of the Investment Manager(s) to insure they are striving to achieve the investment goals and objectives as formalized by the Investment Committee.
4. Provide annual written accounts of the investment results, accounting summary and any significant developments to the CFA, BOT, CNCD, and BOPHB, and to the Conference at its annual meeting;
5. Provide annual written evaluation of the performance of the Investment Managers to the CFA, BOT, CNCD, and BOPHB;
6. Require all portfolios be managed with the aim of optimizing funds available for mission in a manner consistent with the maximization of total return (consistent with the preservation of capital), the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church and shall fully comply with the United Methodist Book of Discipline;
7. Establish and maintain effective communication procedures between the Investment Committee and the CFA, BOT, CNCD, BOPHB, staff and outside service providers;
8. Monitor and control investment expenses; and
9. Report to the CFA any significant deviations from this policy for prior written approval before they are implemented.

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The Investment Committee may delegate the execution and administration of certain Investment Committee responsibilities as appropriate to the Conference Treasurer who serves as its staff;

Fiduciary Responsibility

Persons that are charged with investing funds have a fiduciary responsibility for those funds. Fiduciary responsibility requires those responsible for investments to fulfill the legally imposed duties of loyalty, care, and prudence. The members of the Investment Committee are fiduciaries subject to the rules and laws governing fiduciary behavior.

The Duty of Loyalty prohibits self-dealing by persons who are fiduciaries. They are not permitted to take part in investment decisions that would create a conflict of interest. All investment decisions are to be made with a view to the interest of the beneficiaries, in this case the various agencies, committees, boards, and councils of the Conference providing funds for investment, rather than to the personal interests of the fiduciary. When conflicts do arise, they should be disclosed to the Chairperson of the Investment Committee (or if a conflict of interest involves the Chairperson, then to the Conference Treasurer) immediately. Advance disclosure in writing will provide evidence of the disclosure in the event the issue of conflict of interest is raised. Any fiduciary with a conflict involving an investment decision should abstain from any participation in that decision and document the abstention in the minutes of the meeting.

The Duty of Care requires that a fiduciary act at all times in good faith and in a manner which is in the best interest of the beneficiaries. Fiduciaries are to be adequately informed about alternatives available at the time of decision. Where specific instructions are left with regard to legacies, those instructions must be followed unless changed by court order. The duty of care includes prudence in the investment context (including diligence in attending meetings), efforts to ascertain relevant information prior to decision making, balanced judgment, adequate assessment and balancing of potential investment risks and returns and adequate diversification of investments. Fiduciary responsibility cannot be delegated. The decision of the Investment Committee to engage Investment Manager(s) will not absolve the Investment Committee from its ultimate responsibility for the care of the funds. In order to discharge adequately the duties of care and loyalty, the fiduciary will need to demonstrate that appropriate procedures were used for selecting the Investment Manager(s) and for monitoring the results of the advice received. The Investment Manager(s)

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should be trustworthy and competent to perform the work as outlined by the Investment Committee. The loyalties of the Investment Managers(s) must run to the beneficiaries, not to the individual members of the Investment Committee.

Fiduciaries are permitted to accept and rely on the advice of an Investment Manager where they can demonstrate that their initial decision to engage the Investment Manager was well-founded and where subsequent development do not give rise to a basis for suspending that reliance.

The standard of care when making decisions is the Prudent Expert Standard, defined as:

“... the care, skill, prudence and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent person acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims.”

Members of the Investment Committee

The Investment Committee shall be comprised of nine voting members, who shall be appointed by their respective councils, boards, and committees, as follows:

1. Four representatives from the CFA,
2. Three representatives from the BOPHB,
3. One representative from the BOT;
4. One representative from the CNCD.

Conference staff may attend Investment Committee meetings with voice, but without voting rights, on Investment Committee matters.

The Investment Committee members shall be appointed annually by their respective councils, boards, and committees. For purposes of consistency, it is desired that the Investment Committee members will serve multiple years, but not to extend past their terms on their respective councils, boards, and committees. The Investment Committee, from among its voting members, shall annually elect the Chairperson and other officers as deemed necessary. The officers as so elected shall perform the duties traditionally handled by officers with those titles.

The Investment Committee may appoint subcommittees and taskforces to prepare recommendations and review particular issues. These subgroups will not have the authority to take action, but shall be information gathering and reporting groups.

Investment of Pooled Funds

To the extent possible, funds from individual boards, agencies, councils and committees from within the Conference shall be pooled for the purposes of investment. Investors in a pooled fund investment will benefit from economies of scale, which

allow for lower trading costs, diversification and management. The pooled fund investors will proportionally share costs, capital gains and losses, and earnings. The determination of the funds to be pooled shall be done in consultation with the Conference Treasurer. Proper accounting and reporting procedures will be established and used to keep accurate records for the purpose of proportional distribution.

Time Horizon

The time horizon for investments shall be based on the liquidity needs of each Conference account as specified by the Conference Treasurer. Capital values fluctuate over shorter periods and the Investment Committee recognizes that the possibility of capital loss does exist. However, historical asset class return data suggest that the risk of principal loss over a holding period of at least three to five years can be minimized with a long-term investment mix.

Risk Tolerance

The Investment Committee intends that the investment portfolio should be managed in a manner that seeks to achieve the stated rate of return while limiting principal fluctuations over the established horizon for each Conference account. Financial research has demonstrated that risk is best minimized through diversification of assets, except in very limited circumstances when diversification may not be prudent. The Investment Committee would present a documented finding as to the nature of such circumstances before limiting diversification.

Asset Allocation

The purpose of allocating among asset classes is to insure the proper level of diversification and risk for each investment portfolio. The primary considerations in the asset allocation decision process are:

- maintaining inflation-adjusted purchasing power;
- growing the corpus of the funds to meet future obligations;
- achieving a minimum return in excess of inflation but with minimal annual fluctuations in the corpus;
- satisfying the cash liquidity needs of short-term obligations; and,
- maintaining the longevity of the assets and their distributions while taking into consideration that there may be no additional contributions.

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When mutual funds, commingled funds, ETFs and funds in general are used as an investment vehicle, then it is understood the Investment Committee has adopted the investment policies of those Funds. With the adoption of this Investment Policy, the Conference establishes the funds into which it allocates its assets as set forth on Appendix A.

Investment Performance Benchmarks

The investment performance of all portfolios will be measured against commonly accepted performance benchmarks. Consideration shall be given to the extent to which the investment results are consistent with the investment objectives and guidelines as set forth in this Investment Policy.

Investment Manager(s)

An Investment Manager must be knowledgeable and experienced in the prudent investment process, so that they may assist the Investment Committee in reaching investment objectives effectively. Investment Managers shall be selected through a process to achieve the desired investment objectives as stated in this Investment Policy. The Investment Committee may engage one or more Investment Managers from the following categories:

1. A United Methodist institution;
2. An independent Investment Manager who receives a fee based on portfolio value;
3. A bank trust department (not all bank trust departments can offer this service) whose fees may be based on portfolio value. The fees usually vary widely depending on the services needed and are based on a percentage of the managed assets, depending on the type of account, types of assets managed, and market value of the portfolio.

Deciding when to replace a portfolio manager is often subjective as much as objective, however it is a decision that the Investment Committee will be responsible for and will make when deemed necessary.

Responsibilities of Investment Managers

Each Investment Manager will have discretion to make all investment decisions for the assets placed under its jurisdiction, while observing the operating within the guidelines, constraints, and philosophies as outlined in this Investment Policy. Specific responsibilities of the Investment Managers include:

1. Exercising discretionary investment management, including decisions to buy, sell, or retain individual securities, and to alter asset allocations within the

- guidelines established by this Investment Policy;
2. Reporting on a timely basis, quarterly investment performance results in adherence to the Global Investment Performance Standard (GIPS) net of all external and internal fees, as governed by the CFA Institute;
 3. Communicating any major changes to the economic outlook, investment strategy, or the investment objective progress of the funds' investment management;
 4. Informing the Investment Committee regarding any qualitative change to the investment management organization, e.g., changes in portfolio investment management personnel, ownership structure, investment philosophy, etc.; and,
 5. Voting proxies, if and as requested by the Investment Committee, and communicating such voting records to the Investment Committee on a timely basis.

Rebalancing

Changes in the mix of assets or assignment of assets to different Investment Managers shall be made by action of the Investment Committee at a regular or called meeting with the advice and consultation of the Investment Manager(s). The Investment Committee shall undertake to maintain its desired asset allocation within 5% of the determined mix for any particular assets, except under unusual market conditions.

Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines

The Investment Committee shall pursue intentional investment decisions that further the principles of economic and social justice consistent with the goals outlined in the 2012 Book of Discipline and Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. Paragraph 717 of the 2012 Book of Discipline states: "*Socially Responsible Investments*—It shall be the policy of The United Methodist Church that all general Boards and agencies, including the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and all administrative agencies and institutions, including hospitals, homes, educational institutions, annual conferences, foundations and local churches, shall, in the investment of money, make a conscious effort to invest in institutions, companies, corporations or funds whose practices are consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles; and shall endeavor to avoid investments that appear likely, directly or indirectly, to support racial discrimination, violation of human rights, sweatshop or forced labor, gambling, or the production

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of nuclear armaments, alcoholic beverages or tobacco, or companies dealing in pornography, or the management or operation of prison facilities. The Boards and agencies are to give careful consideration to shareholder advocacy, including advocacy of corporate disinvestment.”

Records

The Investment Committee shall keep a proper and prudent record of all-important documents, meeting minutes and other information relating to the management of the Funds. They shall be available at Custodian of the Records, which shall be the Conference Treasurer

Amendments and Revisions

Amendments or changes to this Investment Policy shall be made to and approved by the CFA and incorporated directly into the policy as a revision and restatement or acknowledged and noted in an addendum until such time as the Investment Policy is revised and restated. The Committee may amend Appendix A from time to time upon approval of CFA. Following each such amendment the Committee shall replace the respective with one that reflects the amendment approved by CFA.

Surety Bond

Surety Bond coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000 is secured to cover the Conference Treasurer and staff. The Conference does not provide bonding for local church treasurers. Local churches are to provide adequate bonding of their treasurer(s).

Annual Audit of Conference Treasury

An annual audit of all Conference financial records shall be conducted by an independent certified public accountant as selected by the CFA upon recommendation of its Audit Review Committee. The Audit Review Committee will review such audit and present it to the CFA for final approval. A copy of the financial statements shall be included in the Conference Journal. The entire audit report may be viewed at the Conference Office.

Audits of Boards, Agencies and Institutions

The CFA has a fiduciary responsibility to the conference in administering conference funds. Therefore, the CFA is required to review the financial statements of organizations to which grants or contributions of conference funds are made. The CFA shall appoint an audit committee that will have on its membership at least one member of the CFA plus additional members recruited for their expertise. This committee shall work with the auditor of the CONFERENCE as well as review audits, reviews, and compilation

reports of boards, agencies, and institutions as described below. Reports from an independent Certified Public Accountant are required annually from each agency or institution that receives funds from the Conference treasury in accordance with the requirements listed below. Funds shall not be transferred to any agency or institution that has not forwarded its annual audit, review or compilation report for the preceding year within six months' time after the close of its fiscal year. (2012 Discipline, Par. 617.2.) Agencies of the Conference using the conference central treasury for all their financial activity shall be included in the Conference audit and are not required to submit separate audit reports.

In addition to audit and financial reports submitted to the conference, organizations receiving conference funds shall also provide to the Conference a copy of all other required communications received from the external auditor. These communications may include, among other items, comments regarding any significant deficiencies in the design or the operation of the organization's internal controls.

A. Audit, Review and Compilation Report Requirements:

Each agency or organization that has annual gross receipts of \$500,000 or more shall submit a copy of its audited financial statements, together with any required communications from its external auditor and management letter (if applicable).

Each agency or organization that has annual gross receipts of between \$250,000 and \$499,999 is required to submit a copy of its financial statements together with a review report from a CPA. Agencies and organizations with annual gross receipts of less than \$250,000 must submit financial statements accompanied by a compilation report from a CPA with a CPA review required every third year.

Agencies and organizations with annual gross receipts below \$500,000 may request a variance from the requirements listed above. Any variance granted is valid for the current reporting year only. A variance from these requirements shall not be granted for more than two consecutive years. The organization granted the variance shall submit the following information:

1. Financial statements. The agency shall submit financial statements that reflect its financial position and results of operations for the fiscal year then ended.
2. Tax statements. The agency shall provide documentation stating that all necessary tax returns (including payroll tax returns) have been filed in a timely manner. Documentation shall also be required regarding the status of any unpaid taxes to federal, state or local authorities as of the date of the request.

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B. Other Circumstances:

Grants or contributions of conference funds to organizations not meeting the above requirements shall not be made without special approval. Special approval shall require a favorable vote of at least 2/3 of the members of the CFA present and voting.

Mortgage Indebtedness

Any institution/agency whose board is elected by the Conference, and that has mortgage indebtedness, shall provide an annual report to the Conference showing the:

1. Total indebtedness
2. Amount paid on indebtedness last year
3. Plans to retire the indebtedness

If any such institution/agency plans to mortgage assets or to pledge endowment funds or to transfer funds from endowments to operating budgets and total indebtedness exceeds 10% of total assets or one million dollars, whichever is less, that mortgage must be approved by the Conference prior to the transaction, or in an emergency between sessions of the Conference, by a joint session of the Conference Cabinet and the CFA.

Protection of Contact Information

Contact information for clergy, churches, and laity held by the Conference is for the use and benefit of the Conference. Councils, boards, and agencies of the Conference, conference and jurisdictional Advances, local churches and districts, and agencies of the General Church may request contact information. Except as provided below, contact information held by the Conference, or provided to its respective agencies and institutions by the Conference, shall be considered confidential as to outside parties and shall not be provided to any person, group or business beyond those for whom the contact information was compiled, without the written approval of the CFA.

Contact information for clergy, churches, lay members of Annual Conference, and laity serving in conference or district leadership is printed in the Conference Journal. Directory Information placed on the conference website is limited to churches, clergy's business contact information, and a few specific lay leadership positions. Information is not provided in a downloadable list.

Local Church Report to The Annual Conference (Tables 1, 2, & 3)

The local church shall electronically submit the Local Church Report to Annual Conference no later than 5:00 PM on the last business day of January each year.

If a report is not received by the due date:

- The only figures that will be reported will be prior year membership and benevolences sent to the conference

treasurer.

- When calculating the church's Mission Share, 10% shall be added to the prior year's Operating Income.
- The Journal record shall indicate that the report was not received or not received in time to be used for Mission Share calculations.

The Pastor is responsible for the accuracy of the information submitted and assuring the report is received by the deadline (*2012 Discipline* paragraph 340.2c(2)(f)). Information about submission of these reports will be sent to the pastor as soon as the General Council on Finance and Administration makes such information available. Correction of errors with these reports after final submission should be made by the last business day of February each year. If errors are discovered after that date and the adjustment would affect Mission Shares, the District Superintendent would need to be contacted. Changes would only be made for extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the District Superintendent and the Conference Treasurer.

Local Church Audits

Church members and others provide substantial financial resources to local churches, and expect church staff and lay leadership to provide proper oversight of such resources to ensure these resources are (1) used in a manner consistent with that expressed through the church's annual operating budget and designated gifts, and (2) adequately safeguarded from improper use or loss. In light of expectations, every local United Methodist church, at a minimum, shall conduct an audit (review) as defined and described in the Local Church Audit Guide published by the General Church Council on Finance and Administration. The guide may be obtained at www.gcfa.org.

In addition to such minimum requirements for all churches, and consistent with the expectations for integrity, transparency and accountability described above, larger churches shall periodically subject their accounting records and controls to assessment by an independent certified public accountant. Specifically, larger churches (i.e., those with annual **total receipts** of more than \$500,000) shall adopt one of the following two options (**for purposes of this section, "total receipts" of each local church shall be annual total combined funds received through the operating budget; designated or restricted gifts given for a particular purpose, including special offerings collected throughout the year; monies received for capital buildings or improvements**

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or for debt service; contributions received for endowed funds, preschool tuition and fees received; and any funds received from other sources):

- 1) Have an audit performed by an independent certified public accountant (CPA) in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards; OR
- 2) Have independent CPA perform a set of agreed-upon procedures established by the CFA.

For purposes of this requirement, the frequency of having either option 1 or option 2 performed shall depend on the annual total receipts of each local church from all sources as described above. For purposes of determining the applicability of this requirement, "total funds received" shall be the **average annual** total receipts (as defined above) for the prior three years. (For example, for purposes of applying this test in 2014, local churches would determine the average of total funds received for the years 2011-2013.) If average total funds received by a local church exceed \$2,000,000, the local church should have audit work performed by an independent CPA under either option 1 or option 2 **annually**. For those local churches who have average total funds received of less than \$2,000,000 but more than \$1,000,000, those churches should have audit work performed by an independent CPA under option 1 or option 2 once **every two years**. For those who have average total funds received of less than \$1,000,000 but more than \$500,000, those churches should have audit work performed by an independent CPA under option 1 or option 2 once **every three years**. For any year in which a larger church (as defined above) is not required to have work done by an independent CPA under option 1 or 2, such churches shall conduct an audit (review) as described in the first paragraph of this section.

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	2014		2015		2016		2017		\$\$\$ Chng from 2016 to 2017	% Chng from 2016 to 2017
	Approved Budget	Actual	Act as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Actual	Act as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Proposed Budget		
INCOME:										
Mission Shares	\$15,725,272	\$15,616,624	99.3%	\$15,181,611	\$15,167,295	98.9%	\$14,873,247	\$14,660,883	(\$312,354)	-2.1%
Less: Allowance for Unpaid Mission Shares	(\$1,358,710)	(\$2,025,359)	149.2%	(\$1,595,907)	(\$1,808,537)	133.1%	(\$1,062,400)	(\$593,167)	\$43,239	4.3%
Net Mission Share Income	\$14,366,562	\$13,591,265	94.6%	\$13,585,704	\$13,358,758	96.6%	\$13,810,847	\$13,067,716	(\$743,131)	-5.3%
% of Mission Share Asking	31.37%	31.04%		31.08%	30.80%		30.86%	30.41%	(\$268,119)	-1.2%
Other Income:										
Restricted Reserve-Budget Support (5%)	\$1,254,559	\$1,254,557	100.0%	\$1,613,669	\$1,613,669	100.0%	\$1,889,161	\$1,873,829	(\$15,332)	-0.8%
Rest. Reserve-Budget Support (Special Distribution)	\$0	\$0		\$600,000	\$600,000		\$39,132	\$0	(\$59,132)	-100.0%
Use of Missional Opportunity Reserves	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$49,099	\$49,099	
Total Income	\$15,623,021	\$14,846,832	95.0%	\$16,036,373	\$15,572,427	97.1%	\$15,799,134	\$15,624,654	(\$174,480)	-1.1%
EXPENSES:										
I: Episcopal Office										
General Church Ministries for Episcopacy	\$670,135	\$652,272	87.0%	\$698,897	\$615,465	88.1%	\$762,774	\$731,601	(\$31,173)	-4.1%
Episcopal Office Expenses	\$73,389	\$55,835	76.1%	\$63,155	\$61,762	97.8%	\$55,516	\$24,977	(\$30,539)	-55.0%
Episcopal Residence Maintenance	\$13,000	\$13,012	100.0%	\$13,260	\$13,396	101.0%	\$16,550	\$16,650	\$0	0.0%
District Office Expenses	\$2,704	\$2,704	100.0%	\$2,704	\$2,704	100.0%	\$2,704	\$2,704	\$0	0.0%
Cabinet Operations	\$338,190	\$294,594	87.1%	\$384,080	\$269,955	70.3%	\$348,310	\$230,500	(\$117,810)	-15.2%
	\$552,500	\$633,020	114.6%	\$552,500	\$605,883	109.8%	\$684,700	\$642,300	(\$42,400)	-6.2%
Total Episcopal Office Budget	\$4,226,288	\$4,044,339	95.7%	\$4,313,194	\$4,024,209	93.3%	\$4,083,853	\$3,381,745	(\$702,108)	-2.5%
II: Clergy Excellence										
General Church Ministries for Clergy Excellence	\$767,908	\$685,771	87.0%	\$800,005	\$704,501	88.1%	\$912,368	\$834,404	\$22,036	2.7%
Board of Ordained Ministry	\$141,300	\$99,426	70.4%	\$174,800	\$143,708	82.2%	\$188,500	\$175,500	(\$13,000)	-6.9%
Trans Into Ministry Mission Share Request	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$90,957	\$90,857	0.0%	\$87,307	\$147,182	\$59,875	68.6%
Clergy Excellence Office/Programming Expense	\$11,200	\$24,147	215.6%	\$36,200	\$25,238	69.7%	\$87,750	\$87,000	(\$750)	-0.9%
Clergy Excellence Personnel	\$413,203	\$362,052	87.6%	\$435,412	\$413,855	95.0%	\$388,250	\$392,036	\$3,786	1.0%
Total Clergy Excellence Budget	\$1,353,611	\$1,191,396	88.0%	\$1,537,374	\$1,378,258	89.7%	\$1,564,178	\$1,636,121	\$71,943	4.6%
III: Congregational Excellence										
III. A. Leadership Development:										
States Leadership Development	\$394,603	\$34,737	8.7%	\$90,539	\$343,008	88.1%	\$396,604	\$407,333	\$10,719	2.7%
SGJ Ministries for Leadership Development	\$123,369	\$107,406	87.0%	\$120,477	\$105,109	88.1%	\$117,555	\$121,082	\$3,527	3.0%
Leadership Development Ministries	\$69,300	\$36,695	52.9%	\$65,500	\$50,883	59.6%	\$107,000	\$72,000	(\$35,000)	-32.7%
Small Membership Church Ministries	\$20,000	\$20,028	100.1%	\$90,500	\$42,913	47.4%	\$90,000	\$115,000	\$25,000	27.8%
Campus Ministry Mission Share Request	\$551,000	\$551,000	100.0%	\$551,000	\$551,000	100.0%	\$572,690	\$636,285	\$63,595	11.1%
Camping Mission Share Request	\$626,997	\$627,000	100.0%	\$627,000	\$631,167	100.7%	\$677,160	\$685,094	\$7,934	1.2%
Safe Gatherings	\$60,000	\$13,091	21.8%	\$65,500	\$64,527	98.5%	\$30,840	\$90,900	\$60,060	194.9%
Total Leadership Development	\$1,855,499	\$1,891,957	91.2%	\$1,930,516	\$1,790,507	92.7%	\$1,991,949	\$2,127,734	\$135,885	6.8%

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Great Plains Budget Summary

	2014			2015			2016			2017			
	Approved Budget	Actual	Actl as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Actual	Actl as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Actual	Actl as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Proposed Budget	\$\$\$ Chng from 2016 to 2017	% Chng from 2016 to 2017
III. B. Vital Congregations:													
Resource Center Mission Share Request	\$19,500	\$19,511	100.1%	\$27,920	\$28,200	101.0%	\$27,920	\$28,200	101.0%	\$27,920	\$28,920	(\$1,000)	-3.6%
Youth Ministry	\$60,200	\$34,030	56.5%	\$101,750	\$89,219	88.0%	\$116,400	\$92,219	80.0%	\$116,400	\$110,900	(\$5,500)	-4.7%
Ethnic Mission Share Request	\$688,408	\$532,428	90.5%	\$659,333	\$488,121	75.5%	\$702,148	\$500,855	71.3%	\$702,148	\$500,855	(\$201,293)	-28.7%
New Church Starts Mission Share Request	\$595,846	\$595,846	100.0%	\$586,175	\$586,175	100.0%	\$587,889	\$586,175	100.0%	\$587,889	\$586,175	(\$1,714)	-0.3%
Total Vital Congregations Budget	\$1,263,954	\$1,181,815	93.5%	\$1,375,178	\$1,181,715	85.9%	\$1,444,367	\$1,181,715	81.9%	\$1,444,367	\$1,178,531	(\$265,836)	-18.4%
Congregational Excellence Office Expense	\$79,575	\$75,104	94.4%	\$79,575	\$88,003	85.5%	\$83,300	\$78,403	94.0%	\$83,300	\$78,403	(\$4,897)	-5.9%
Congregational Excellence Personnel	\$876,335	\$794,587	90.7%	\$946,161	\$848,144	89.6%	\$773,219	\$768,349	99.4%	\$773,219	\$768,349	(\$4,870)	-0.6%
Total Congregational Excellence Budget	\$4,075,363	\$3,743,463	91.9%	\$4,331,430	\$3,888,369	89.8%	\$4,292,735	\$4,155,016	96.8%	\$4,292,735	\$4,155,016	(\$138,718)	-3.3%
IV. Mercy and Justice													
General Church Ministries for Mercy and Justice	\$2,294,986	\$1,987,480	87.0%	\$2,330,263	\$2,052,052	88.1%	\$2,366,212	\$2,052,052	86.8%	\$2,366,212	\$2,470,452	\$104,240	4.4%
Disaster Response	\$8,760	\$5,663	64.6%	\$15,900	\$11,478	72.2%	\$18,600	\$11,478	61.7%	\$18,600	\$18,600	\$0	0.0%
Mercy and Justice Ministries	\$175,050	\$136,406	77.9%	\$165,050	\$129,501	78.5%	\$169,545	\$129,501	76.4%	\$169,545	\$150,500	(\$19,045)	-11.2%
Mercy and Justice Office Expense	\$13,900	\$8,199	59.0%	\$13,900	\$17,040	122.6%	\$13,900	\$17,040	122.6%	\$13,900	\$19,200	\$4,300	30.9%
Mercy and Justice Personnel	\$169,333	\$134,024	79.1%	\$151,710	\$161,173	106.2%	\$159,727	\$163,432	102.3%	\$159,727	\$163,432	\$3,705	2.3%
Total Mercy and Justice Budget	\$2,662,039	\$2,281,772	85.7%	\$2,676,823	\$2,371,245	88.6%	\$2,727,984	\$2,371,245	86.9%	\$2,727,984	\$2,821,184	\$93,200	3.4%
V. Administrative Services													
General and SCJ Ministries for Admin Services	\$382,983	\$333,337	87.0%	\$388,302	\$341,944	88.1%	\$393,678	\$341,944	86.9%	\$393,678	\$404,366	\$10,688	2.7%
Administrative Committee Expenses	\$62,262	\$95,315	115.9%	\$83,010	\$84,772	102.1%	\$97,750	\$84,772	86.5%	\$97,750	\$89,913	(\$7,837)	-8.0%
Administrative Services Office Expense	\$159,250	\$186,821	117.3%	\$166,600	\$159,313	95.6%	\$141,410	\$159,313	112.8%	\$141,410	\$144,485	\$3,075	2.2%
Information Technology	\$220,000	\$201,923	91.8%	\$175,000	\$175,514	100.3%	\$174,400	\$175,514	100.6%	\$174,400	\$174,400	\$0	0.0%
Annual Conference Expense	\$127,200	\$106,565	83.8%	\$77,600	\$118,174	152.3%	\$77,600	\$118,174	152.3%	\$77,600	\$119,300	\$600	0.5%
Conf Office Building Maintenance Expense	\$166,150	\$166,220	100.0%	\$169,473	\$201,560	118.9%	\$213,000	\$201,560	94.8%	\$213,000	\$211,500	(\$1,500)	-0.7%
Trustees: Insurance, Auto, Dist Office & Poisonage	\$541,608	\$547,229	101.0%	\$538,259	\$536,607	99.7%	\$475,000	\$536,607	114.0%	\$475,000	\$439,800	(\$35,200)	-7.4%
Communications Program Expense	\$155,200	\$159,850	103.0%	\$154,700	\$139,090	89.9%	\$163,150	\$139,090	85.5%	\$163,150	\$152,999	(\$10,151)	-6.2%
Communications Personnel	\$341,408	\$322,218	94.4%	\$332,106	\$316,529	95.3%	\$322,601	\$316,529	98.1%	\$322,601	\$335,798	\$13,198	4.1%
Administrative Services Personnel	\$1,004,203	\$934,998	93.1%	\$942,452	\$917,335	97.3%	\$880,699	\$917,335	103.1%	\$880,699	\$860,027	(\$20,672)	-2.3%
Total Administrative Services Budget	\$3,180,264	\$3,054,476	96.0%	\$3,027,652	\$2,990,838	98.8%	\$2,980,367	\$2,990,838	100.0%	\$2,980,367	\$2,932,588	(\$47,800)	-1.6%
Missional Opportunity fund request	\$125,456	\$210,597	167.9%	\$150,000	\$150,000	100.0%	\$150,000	\$150,000	100.0%	\$150,000	\$0	(\$150,000)	-100.0%
Total Great Plains Conference Budget	\$15,623,021	\$14,526,043	93.0%	\$16,036,373	\$14,802,919	92.3%	\$15,799,134	\$14,802,919	93.8%	\$15,799,134	\$15,624,654	(\$174,480)	-1.1%
Net Income (Loss)	\$0	\$320,789		\$0	\$769,508		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0	\$0	

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	2014		2015		2016		2017		Chng from 2016 to 2017	% Chng from 2016 to 2017
	Approved Budget	Actual	Act as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Actual	Act as % Bgdt	Approved Budget	Proposed Budget		
Other Billings:										
NE billing	\$557,043	\$500,321	89.8%	\$544,324	\$503,509	92.5%	\$558,229	\$0		(\$58,229)
Retiree Health Insurance Supplement										
Mission Agency Support:										
1% of line 67 for Agencies	\$1,478,397	\$1,166,028	78.9%	\$1,489,892	\$1,116,103	75.0%	\$1,487,325	\$1,456,089	(\$31,236)	-2.1%
Colleges/Universities										
Nebraska Wesleyan Univ. - Lincoln, NE	\$92,000	\$63,683	69.2%	\$92,000	\$62,768	68.2%	\$130,000	\$60,000	(\$70,000)	-53.8%
Baker University - Baldwin City, KS	\$130,000	\$90,588	69.7%	\$129,250	\$88,182	68.2%	\$130,000	\$126,100	(\$3,900)	-3.0%
Saint Paul School of Theology - KSOK	\$125,000	\$96,527	69.2%	\$125,000	\$85,282	68.2%	\$130,000	\$126,100	(\$3,900)	-3.0%
Kansas Wesleyan University - Salina, KS	\$130,000	\$90,328	69.5%	\$129,250	\$88,207	68.2%	\$130,000	\$126,100	(\$3,900)	-3.0%
Southern College - Winfield, KS	\$130,000	\$89,988	69.2%	\$129,250	\$85,162	66.2%	\$130,000	\$126,100	(\$3,900)	-3.0%
Health & Welfare Institutions										
Adensgate Village (Good Sam. Frnd) - Topeka, KS	\$75,000	\$52,282	69.7%	\$75,000	\$51,169	68.2%	\$75,000	\$72,750	(\$2,250)	-3.0%
Asbury Park (Good Sam. Frnd) - Newton, KS	\$95,000	\$18,459	73.8%	\$25,000	\$18,649	74.6%	\$25,000	\$3,950	\$8,950	35.8%
GraceMed Health Clinic - Wichita, KS	\$14,000	\$4,012	83.7%	\$55,000	\$43,461	79.0%	\$55,000	\$48,500	(\$6,500)	-11.8%
Released & Restored - NE	\$14,000	\$10,687	76.3%	\$14,000	\$10,877	77.3%	\$16,325	\$29,100	\$12,775	78.3%
Released & Restored - KS	\$20,000	\$14,725	73.6%	\$20,000	\$14,725	73.6%	\$20,000	\$19,100	(\$900)	-4.5%
Elmworth Village - York, NE	\$30,000	\$31,768	105.9%	\$30,000	\$33,860	111.9%	\$30,000	\$33,950	\$3,950	13.2%
Ministries with the Poor										
United Methodist Ministries - Omaha, NE	\$185,000	\$128,309	69.4%	\$185,000	\$126,446	68.3%	\$200,000	\$194,000	(\$6,000)	-3.0%
Justice for Our Neighbors - NE	\$150,000	\$104,011	69.3%	\$150,000	\$102,408	68.3%	\$160,000	\$150,200	(\$9,800)	-6.1%
Friendship House of Hope - Ogden, KS	\$37,000	\$26,177	70.7%	\$37,000	\$25,423	68.7%	\$37,000	\$16,430	(\$16,570)	-44.5%
Friendship House of Hope - KS	\$14,000	\$10,150	72.5%	\$14,000	\$10,150	72.5%	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$0	0.0%
Fellowship and Faith - Topeka, KS	\$14,000	\$18,501	132.2%	\$14,000	\$19,480	139.2%	\$14,000	\$9,700	(\$4,300)	-30.7%
Living Hope-Omaha, NE	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	0.0%
UM Open Door - Wichita, KS	\$55,000	\$79,744	145.0%	\$55,000	\$65,381	118.9%	\$55,000	\$72,500	\$17,500	31.8%
Genesis Family Health (UM Max-Amer Minist), KS	\$55,000	\$56,381	102.5%	\$55,000	\$53,881	97.6%	\$55,000	\$53,000	(\$2,000)	-3.6%
Ecumenical/interchurch organizations										
Rural Response-Holtsie, Nebraska	\$35,000	\$34,228	69.2%	\$35,000	\$9,142	26.1%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Rural Response-Holtsie, NE	\$25,000	\$17,306	69.2%	\$25,000	\$17,057	68.2%	\$25,000	\$13,313	(\$11,687)	-46.7%
Kansas Christians United	\$6,000	\$0	0.0%	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Retreat Centers										
Forest Park Confr & Retreat Ctr - Topeka, KS	\$30,000	\$21,264	70.9%	\$30,000	\$22,894	75.3%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Total Mission Agency Support/Budget	\$1,478,000	\$1,161,876	78.6%	\$1,489,750	\$1,101,985	74.0%	\$1,487,325	\$1,457,483	(\$31,552)	-2.1%
Net Mission Agency Support Income	\$397	\$4,152		\$52	\$14,738		\$0	\$3,346	\$3,346	

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Mission Agency Support

Gifts can be designated for the following Mission Agencies. However, such gifts will not count toward the payment of a church's Mission Agency Support share.

Colleges/Univ/Seminary:

NE Wesleyan Univ-Scholarships - Lincoln, NE	700
Baker University - Baldwin City, KS	701
St Paul School of Theology	702
KS Wesleyan University - Salina, KS	703
Southwestern College - Winfield, KS	704

Health & Welfare Institutions:

UM Homes - Aldersgate Village - Topeka, KS	710
Asbury Park (Good Samaritan Fund)- Newton, KS	711
GraceMed Health Clinic - Wichita, KS	712
Released & Restored - NE	713
EmberHope (Youthville) - KS	714
Epworth Village - York, NE	715
Crowell Health Services - Blair, NE	990
Wesley Towers - Hutchinson, KS	993
E. C. Tyree Health & Dental Clinic - Wichita, KS	994

Ministries with the Poor:

United Methodist Ministries - Omaha, NE	720
Justice for Our Neighbors - NE	721
Friendship House of Hope - Ogden, KS	722
Wesley House - Pittsburg, KS	723
Fellowship & Faith - Topeka, KS	724
UM Open Door - Wichita, KS	725
UM Western Kansas Mex-Amer Ministries	726

Ecumenical/Interchurch Organizations:

Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska	730
Rural Response Hotline, NE	731

Retreat Centers:

Forest Park Conf & Retreat Center, Topeka, KS	736
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Great Plains Mission Partnerships:

Nigeria Hope for Children in Africa	300
Nigeria Scholarship for Students	301
Haiti Covenant	302
Zimbabwe East Chabadza Covenant	303
Fairfield Outreach Sponsors Organization (FOSA)	992

Great Plains Campus Ministries:

Emporia State - Emporia, KS	320	001
Fort Hays State - Hays, KS	320	002
Kansas State - Manhattan, KS	320	003
Nebraska Wesleyan - Lincoln, NE	320	004
University of Kansas - Lawrence, KS	320	005
Pittsburg State - Pittsburg, KS	320	006
Washburn University - Topeka, KS	320	007
Wichita State - Wichita, KS	320	008
University of Nebraska, Kearney, NE	320	009
University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE	320	010

Great Plains Camping Inc:

Camp Chippewa - Ottawa, KS	321	010
Camp Comeca - Cozad, NE	321	011
Camp Fontanelle - Nickerson, NE	321	012
Camp Horizon - Arkansas City, KS	321	013
Camp Norwesca - Chadron, NE	321	014
Camp Lakeside - Scott City, KS	321	015

Great Plains Ethnic Ministries:

Hispanic/Latino Ministries	345
Blue River Hispanic/Latino Ministries	348
Prairie River Hispanic/Latino Ministries	349
Great West Hispanic/Latino Ministries	
<i>Centro de Alabanza y Adoracion</i>	350
<i>Imperial Ebenezer Hispanic</i>	351
El Mesias UMC - Wichita KS	352
Evangelica UMC - Garden City, KS	353
Center of Grace - Olathe, KS	354
Native American Ministries	360
Sacred Winds Native Mission Cong - Lincoln, NE	361
Korean UMC - Wichita, KS	370
Danner Mem. Scholership African-Amer Students	375
Living Hope UMC - Omaha, NE	376
New Visions Community UMC - Lincoln, NE	996

Other Great Plains Missions:

Seminary Scholarship Endowment	900	
New Church Development	934	
Peace With Justice	960	
Hunger	967	
Round up for Hunger	968	
Great Plains Disaster Response Fund	975	
Rebuilding GP Churches Fund	976	
Habitat for Humanity		
<i>Beatrice</i>	978	020
<i>Hastings</i>	978	021
<i>Kearney</i>	978	022
<i>Lincoln</i>	978	023
<i>Omaha</i>	978	024
<i>Grand Island</i>	978	025
<i>Sarpy County</i>	978	026
Great Plains Volunteers in Mission	981	
Common Ground	982	
David Upp Missionary Support, KS	984	
Crossroads Center - Hastings, NE	991	
First UMC Television Ministry - Wichita, KS	995	
Sunrise Community Services - Chadron, NE	997	

Board of Trustees

By Tom Emerton

The Great Plains Conference Board of Trustees' responsibility is to evaluate, maintain and protect conference-owned property over the two-state area. This includes 14 District parsonages, three conference buildings, an Episcopal residence in Wichita and an apartment for the Bishop's use in Lincoln. In addition, we maintain a fleet of conference vehicles and insure, sell or otherwise dispose of discontinued local churches. We assist local churches in protecting their property in furtherance of United Methodist principles and mission.

Maintaining district parsonages is one task given to the board by the Book of Discipline. Major updates to district parsonages include: Blue River District parsonage: replaced the dishwasher and dryer; Dodge City District parsonage: cleaned up water damage from rain coming in a basement escape window and re-sloped dirt from side of house and escape window; Elkhorn Valley District parsonage: trimmed or removed overgrown/dead bushes trees and plantings, interior painting and repair, purchased new basement refrigerator, removed remnants of pergola, replaced side garage door, replaced shower door in master bathroom; Five Rivers District parsonage: repaired drywall and siding, painted both interior and exterior in preparation for sale, Great West District parsonage: located and replaced a sump pump; Hays District parsonage: cleaned up water damage from a water leak, removed trees and planted new trees; Hutchinson District parsonage: installed new lighting in living room, removed large tree that was too close to the house causing upheaval of sun porch, and replaced water heater; Kansas City District parsonage: repaired drywall, painting and refresh landscaping in preparation for sale; Prairie Rivers District parsonage: added a deck, removed trees, added extra zones to the sprinkler system and sodded the back half of the back yard; Salina District parsonage: installed a garbage disposal and reset toilet in preparation for sale; Wichita West District parsonage: installed retaining wall and adjusted drainage issues, removed linoleum and installed tile floor in utility room, removed carpet and installed tile floor in master bathroom, and removed linoleum and installed tile floor in basement bathroom.

Sales of the Five Rivers, Kansas City, and Salina District parsonages were completed, reducing the number of district parsonages to 14.

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In maintaining the three conference offices, the Topeka office has purchased guest seating; removed wallpaper from, repaired the sheetrock, and painted the hallways; and pruned or removed bushes and trees, removed rock from planting beds, landscaped around the sign, and seeded some reclaimed yard areas. At the writing of this report, we are reviewing options for the Lincoln office in replacing tiles on the exterior columns due to poor performance of adhesives and for the Wichita office in revising offices for better utilization of office space and security upgrades.

In March, a contract was signed to replace the windows, a sliding door, a French door, garage doors, and siding of the Episcopal residence. This work is to be completed by mid-June. In June, cracked and sinking portions of the driveway will be removed and replaced.

The Trustees work also includes property issues related to discontinued local churches. The following churches or properties have been sold or disposed of within the last year: Clyde, KS UMC church and parsonage; Strong City, KS UMC church; and Tyro, KS UMC church. In addition, Mt Pleasant UMC, Ellinwood, KS property was deeded to the surrounding landowner and Prairie Chapel UMC, Oberlin, KS property was deeded to the surrounding landowner in accordance with original deed reversionary clauses. For all these properties the Board is responsible for insurance and legal fees following their closing. In some cases, the expenses exceed the proceeds from the sales of the property. Current properties being maintained until sale or disposal can be completed are: Lyle, KS UMC church; Grace UMC, Wichita, KS church; and Mt Olivet UMC, Wichita, KS church.

The Board of Trustees completed the lease of Conference owned property to the United Methodist Open Door Inc. of Wichita to continue their food ministry outreach to the citizens of the city.

Because Bishop Jones continues to reside in Wichita, the Board of Trustees is renting an apartment in Lincoln for his use when he is in Nebraska. This will be reevaluated on an annual basis by the Episcopacy Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Patrick McKaig, Conference Property Manager and Gary Beach, Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, conduct and oversee much of the Trustee work, on a daily basis. The Trustees could not effectively perform our responsibilities without their good assistance. I also commend and thank them and those who have served this past year on your Conference Board of Trustees. They provide a wealth of experience and wisdom and continue to work diligently in the best interests of our Conference.

Episcopacy Committee

by Maria Campbell

The Episcopacy Committee (as per paragraph 637.3 in *BOD*), supports the bishop in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, with special reference to presidential responsibilities; is available to the bishop for counsel; and keeps the bishop advised concerning conditions within the area as they affect relationships between the bishop and the people of the conference agencies. The committee offers encouragement for Bishop Jones' work within the conference and for the greater church.

The Episcopacy Committee met with Bishop Jones in November 2015 and April 2016 to discuss episcopal tasks and the bishop's goals. Bishop Jones is intentionally focused on accomplishing as much as is possible to prepare for the transition of impossible leadership. Under his guidance, the transition for his departure and the welcome of the new bishop will be well-orchestrated. Nancy Lambert, the assistant to the bishop, and Barb Campbell, the administrative assistant to the bishop have attended meetings on how other conferences have assisted in the transitional process. The committee also reviewed the Episcopal financial statements and proposed budget for 2017.

We continue to live into functioning and becoming one cohesive conference. This work is crucial to achieving our missional goals as a conference and a denomination. Our new episcopal leader will be greeted with all the necessary tools and information that is needed for a GOOD START.

2016 is a significant year for the GPC because of the change in episcopal leadership. The committee asked for Bishop Jones' guidance and assistance to make this a good transition for him, as well as, for our incoming bishop. We are doubly blessed because this year we will have six delegates to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference. This will give us the best representation we will likely ever have as from this point forward we will have two delegates. We are grateful for this opportunity to have a strong voice as we express the needs of our conference.

The Episcopacy Committee is grateful to Bishop Jones for his leadership and his commitment to integrate all of the functions and holdings of the three previous conference entities into one conference whose missional priorities are the guiding factors for us as we move forward as one conference. His commitment to the Lord, as well as, his desire to be faithful to his calling and the gospel

will bless the new episcopal area that he will serve. We trust that God will send us the leader to enable us to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Report of the Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services

by Gary A. Beach

I appreciate the opportunity to, again this year, share with you how our conference ended the year 2015, and some words about resources we are providing to pastors, local church leaders, and conference level leaders. Because my report will contain a number of figures I will ask the Communications staff to put my report on our website soon after Annual Conference. That way you won't need to take notes along the way.

Regarding year-end 2015 – our conference raised **88.08%** of **Mission Shares, up from 87.04%** in 2014. Thanks for your assistance in moving us in a positive direction! However, Bishop Jones has challenged us to reach Mission Share payout of 95%. While some other Annual Conference do that routinely is that even possible in the Great Plains? Yes, it's possible even in Kansas and Nebraska! I'd like to recognize the laity and clergy of three of our own districts that have already met and surpassed that goal in 2015. Would the laity and clergy of the **Blue River District** of Nebraska please stand and be recognized for paying **95.7%** of their Mission Shares in 2015. Now would the laity and clergy of the **Prairie Rivers District** of Nebraska please stand and be recognized for paying **95.3%** of their Mission Shares in 2015. Now would the laity and clergy of the **Elkhorn Valley District** of Nebraska please stand and be recognized for paying exactly **95%** of their Mission Shares in 2015. One year ago only two districts made this goal and this year it was three. And, finally, I'd like to recognize the laity and clergy of **seven** more districts who **paid between 90 and 95%** (one more than a year ago) – the **Hays District** of Kansas with **94.7%**, the **Gateway District** of Nebraska with **94.2%**, the **Flint Hills District** of Kansas with **93.8%**, the **Hutchinson District** of Kansas with **93.0%**, the **Great West District** of Nebraska with **92.1%**, the **Kansas City District** of Kansas with **90.7%**, and the **Salina District** of Kansas with **90.4%** paid. Now, I would ask that all clergy and laity stand if your church paid 100% of its Mission Share in 2015. If your church paid 100% last year your DS has a certificate issued by the national level of the church that they hope you will pick up from them before they leave today. As an update for 2016, at the end of May we are 2.27% ahead on percent paid compared to one year ago. Give yourselves a hand for such faithfulness!

But Mission Shares are but one aspect of our financial life together. We also set as a goal to raise 1% of a church's operating income for **Mission Agency Support** to undergird financially the separately incorporated institutions that are related to our conference. Because this was considered second mile giving Bishop Jones had instructed our institutions to only budget to receive 60% of the goal. However, you surpassed that and raised 68.35%! And, beyond that, a number of churches designated additional funds for specific institutions on the list raising the equivalent of another 7.7% of the goal (however, that money was not spread proportionately among the institutions so not all received equivalent amounts from these gifts). But, on average, the institutions received about 76.05% of the goal set!

Another goal for churches in Nebraska was the funding of the **Nebraska Retiree health program**. While that has been a project of the Nebraska Conference for many years it was simply a part of the base budget of that conference and therefore, some churches were not even aware of it. Once it was broken out in the Great Plains Conference there was some concern by leaders of our conference from Nebraska that support for this might not be as strong as they hoped. However, churches in Nebraska paid this at **92.51%** (even higher than the Mission Share itself and substantially higher than what was paid in 2014)! Additional good news came last fall regarding this program. After the TowersWatson firm that does actuarial valuations on such programs as these for the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits produced in March of 2015 their first real valuation of the program as revised by the Nebraska Conference in 2013 the liability was reduced to \$7,549,473! Once our first audit was completed in July 2015 the Council on Finance and Administration took a hard look at conference reserves and voted to pay off the entire remaining liability for the program, \$1,387,489. That decision meant that in 2016 it was no longer necessary for Nebraska churches to be billed for this program. Over time changes in the actuarial valuations of the program and changes in the asset value of cash held to fund the program may fluctuate. And occasionally the program may become slightly underfunded. But the Council on Finance and Administration and the Conference Pension and Health Benefits Team are confident the program will remain fully funded over time and, if not, the Pension and Health Benefits Team has some reserves that might be used as necessary if they are needed.

As I just mentioned we received the report of our first audit for the year 2014 in July of 2015 and Dave Platt, chair of our audit committee will report on that as well as preliminary information of our audit for 2015. Both reflect the fact that our accounting is in great shape. I am grateful for the hardworking staff in the Administrative Services

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department that have helped us accomplish that. In particular, I want to express a special word of thanks to Niki Buesing, our Controller, who manages the financial staff who do this amazing work!

We continue to work closely with the Communications Department to provide resources that we hope will be helpful to laity and clergy alike. If you go to the Administrative homepage of our conference's website you will find several links on the left that represent ways we have tried to sort such resources to make it easy for you to access. This spring and summer Communications staff are working to clean up that portion of the website and make it even more user friendly. Added this winter were two things I want to call your attention to today. The first is a video created for church treasurers on how to fill out a clergy person's W-2 correctly. Second is a video for clergy on how to fill out their tax returns in light of the health care allowance and the ways clergy could tax shelter at least some of that income. We hope both were useful to clergy and church treasurers. Don't find everything you need on our website? Don't hesitate to be in touch and let us know what else you'd hope to find and we'll work with our Communications staff to see what's possible.

Beyond the website our department has created a newsletter that came out quarterly since the birth of the Great Plains Conference. Originally it was emailed to church treasurers, financial secretaries, chairs of Finance Committees, pastors, and (if a church has one) an email address for a church secretary. But we discovered, based on the questions that we have been asked to address that other local church officers might benefit as well. So local church chairs of Board of Trustees and Staff-Parish Relations committees have been added as well to the mailing list.

Several persons have been in touch with me prior to Annual Conference and others in touch once we arrived here concerned about the news they have heard regarding the Department of Labor's recent rules making changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act, in particular about who in the U.S. can be paid a salary and who must be paid hourly with overtime if such a person works over 40 hours per week. We are collecting data on this from a number of sources and will, following Annual Conference, provide information about this to all our churches. Do note today that while "ministers of the Gospel" are excluded from this, lay staff are not. And the salary threshold is being raised on December 1, 2016 to over \$47,000 meaning any lay staff paid less than this amount must be considered hourly and subject to overtime. Watch for more information on this in the near future.

As we move into the future we announced in 2014 that we would begin to move into online bill payment for churches to the Annual Conference. Our first rollout for this allowed churches to pay their benefit bills in this fashion if you so choose. A second push toward automation occurred last fall with benefit enrollment for clergy. That will continue to be used this fall. In addition, we are finalizing an automated process to complete clergy support worksheets. In discussion with our various vendors it appears it may be possible for clergy benefit enrollment information to feed directly into this system. Staff are currently testing the system to make sure it works as intended. It will even include online signature process for all persons who are asked to sign this form each year.

Your gifts given thru the Great Plains Conference make mission and ministry happen. Our job as your staff is to facilitate this work. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you, the conference, and God, whose work all of us are striving to do. Many of you noticed an announcement early this year of my upcoming retirement. The announcement indicated that would occur in June of 2017 but several thought it was coming this June. But you're stuck with me for one more year. CFA asked that I announce that early so they could make adequate preparations for the selection of my successor and for some transition time for training. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served in this capacity beginning in March of 2010 in Kansas East, adding Kansas West in July of 2011 and then being asked to serve in the Great Plains. I believe CFA has planned well for the transition and look forward to working with my successor to have a smooth transition for the sake of the Great Plains Conference and its work.

CONNECTING COUNCIL

Connecting Council

by Nancy Lambert

The Connecting Council membership includes the district lay leaders, the Extended Cabinet, chairpersons of many of the conference teams and committees, and at-large clergy and laity. Connecting Council meets twice a year, as charged by the Plan of Organization "to review and evaluate the conference's missional progress, to align major initiatives of the GPUMC, to enhance communication with all parts of the annual conference, and to take such actions between sessions of the annual conference as are permitted."

During the October 2015 meeting, the Council discussed the book *Just Say Yes* by Bishop Robert Schnase. The discussion centered on how local churches and the annual conference can be more open to innovation and doing things differently. At the March 2016 meeting,

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there was conversation about the functioning of the team and the structure of the meetings.

At the October 2015 and March 2016 meetings, the Connecting Council considered a number of things: Reviewed the summer 2015 internships

- Reviewed the conference reserves and their use
 - Affirmed the decision of Council on Finance and Administration and the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits to use reserves to fund the unfunded liability for the former Nebraska Conference Retiree Health benefit. This actions eliminated the extra 1.25% asking assessed to Nebraska churches on January 1, 2016
 - Approved the use of the Missional Opportunity fund to cover a projected decrease of income in the 2017 budget
- Approved an amendment to the Plan of Organization which changed the language regarding minimum salary of Deacons so that it aligned with the 2012 Book of Discipline
- Approved a new Articles of Agreement between Baker University and the Conference for the Kansas United Methodist Archives
- Approved the expenditure from the Missional Opportunity fund for the purchase of 40 licenses of Rosetta Stone to encourage clergy and laity to improve English skills and/or learn a new language
- Other Missional Opportunity Fund grants were approved for: VBS interns (\$21,000 for a second team); Worship Workshop (up to \$30,000)
- It approved a proposed budget in conjunction with the Council on Finance and Administration for Conference consideration. The proposed budget includes a freeze on the salaries of District Superintendents and Directors on formula.
- Discussed the Fast Facts report and the implications it has for the conference
- Approved a motion that there would be no realignment of districts at this time
- Heard reports about General Conference and the *We Are More* media campaign as well as Jurisdictional Conference and the process for election and assignment of Bishops
- Discussed the need for the development of a policy for our camps that addresses the needs of transgender campers
- Approved a revision to the Conference policy for vacation leave for clergy, effective July 1, 2016

Connecting Council motions passed.
a. Clergy Vacation Policy

The current clergy vacation policy as adopted in the Plan of Organization reads:

“All people shall receive a minimum of four weeks of vacation (28 days, including 4 Sundays).”

It has been assumed that persons serving churches either use their vacation or lose it. To our knowledge, no pastor (or clergy on conference staff) has tried to claim pay for unused vacation upon leaving an appointment.

The concern is two-fold: 1) persons serving churches have less chance of “burn-out” in ministry if they take their allotted vacation and 2) neither churches nor the conference are prepared to provide extra pay to persons serving churches at the conclusion of an appointment for unused vacation.

The proposed clergy vacation policy that would begin July 1, 2016 would read (if adopted):

All people serving churches shall receive a minimum of four weeks of vacation (28 days, including 4 Sundays). All persons are strongly encouraged to take their full vacation each year. However, persons can only accumulate or bank a maximum of 1½ times the total amount of vacation time they are allowed to earn. When persons reach their maximum vacation time, they do not accrue more vacation until the accumulated amount drops below the maximum amount that they can accumulate. Accrual calculations occur only on July 1 of each appointive year; therefore, if a person has reached his or her maximum accrual and has not taken any additional vacation by July 1, he or she would have to wait until the following year to receive additional vacation time.

Persons who regularly work less than full time receive the same amount of weeks of vacation but pay is prorated to the percent of time worked.

All **earned** vacation will be paid upon termination of employment, including but not limited to change of appointment, for all persons. A local church may require a pastor to use the last weeks of an appointment as vacation rather than paying the unused vacation as an extra check. It is the expectation that the SPRC chair and/or staff person

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who keeps personnel records will be notified when vacation is being used and will maintain a record of vacation used.

The word ‘earned’ refers to a situation where a person leaves their appointment in the middle of a conference year. The four weeks of vacation granted to that person on the prior July 1 would be reduced proportionately to the percent of the year actually served in that appointment.”

For example, if a person has served a church for one year but has not taken any vacation time, he or she will earn only two additional weeks of vacation time on July 1 of the next appointment year. If a person has accumulated six weeks of unused vacation, that person will not accrue any additional vacation until July 1 of the **following** year and then only if his or her accrued vacation time dropped below the six weeks’ vacation maximum.

b. Redistricting Study Group Proposal

The Connecting Council recommends that the study of Redistricting the Conference be ended.

CLERGY EXCELLENCE

Board of Ordained Ministry

by Rev. Amy Lippoldt, chair

Operating in our third year as a combined BOM, we have continued to grow more united in our mission and shared culture. The following statement based on 1 Peter 5 provides guidance and inspiration for our work: “The Great Plains BOM shepherds those whom God has entrusted to us. We recognize each one as a gift to the church for the strengthening of the Kingdom of God on earth. We will tend to their formation and offer oversight with humble authority and a spirit of service.”

Our work brings moments of great joy along with moments of difficult discernment and tension. Our hope is to hold together high standards for clergy performance with a graciousness that provides room for growth and formation. We enjoy a very close working relationship with the office of Clergy Excellence and share in the common goal to strengthen and equip all those who are ordained, appointed and assigned for leadership in Great Plains churches. To that end we can report the following from our work in the last conference year:

Call Team: we continued to improve the Candidacy Summit process, Residency and Group Mentoring with the help of feedback from participants and the cabinet. We are increasing connections with our seminarians and money was designated to scholarship a "Great Plains Fellow" at St Paul School of Theology for 2016-2019. We made it possible for 27 students to attend Exploration 2015 in Florida and paid the registration fees for 31 students and young pastors to attend the "Young Preachers Festival" at Church of the Resurrection last fall. Our initial year of offering Pastoral Internships to college students was a great success and the program is being expanded to five interns for the summer of 2016.

Competency Team: We completed a change in licensing school so that week one is offered in both January and June. Students all return in late July to take the second week of training after they have experienced congregational life for a few weeks or months. For Provisional Members we began a expanded and enhanced "ordination project" that encourages experimentation and creativity in ministry. All paperwork at the BOM level is now evaluated by anti-plagiarism software called "ithenticate" and we are working on developing guidelines for English proficiency in conjunction with the cabinet.

Covenant Team: In addition to helping plan Orders and Fellowship, we finalized a new Continuing Education policy for GP clergy and supported new opportunities for training in the conference including the "Process Communication Model" and "Leading Out of Drama," both used in Residency. We also funded coaching and community of practice groups for clergy ready to grow in their functioning.

Transition into Ministry Program

by Rev. Ashlee Alley, Clergy Recruitment and Development Coordinator

The Transition into Ministry Program (TiM) of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church assists young pastors in making the transition from seminary to effective full-time pastoral leadership. TiM residents serve for two years with a mentoring pastor in a teaching congregation and then for three years as a solo pastor. Throughout the five years, the young pastor receives learning, feedback and peer support. The vision statement for TiM which was revised in early 2015 by the TiM Board identifies five earmarks that influence all activities for the program as follows:

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TiM Pastors will be excellent preachers, collaborative clergy, and confident leaders who will empower the laity and be empowered to flourish in ministry. The TiM program will aid Clergy Excellence staff in identifying best practices for training and developing all Great Plains clergy for excellence in ministry.

In appointive year 2015-2016, there were four pastors in their first two years serving as Associate Pastors in teaching congregations and four who made a transition to a new solo appointment who are in their final three years of the program. The 8 served in the following districts: Five Rivers, Kansas City, Missouri River, Prairie Rivers, and Wichita West.

The TiM Program's emphasis on preaching and worship along with Leadership Development for clergy and laity, two of the Conference Missional Priorities, fuels the work of Clergy Excellence. One of the essential outcomes of the Transition into Ministry program is for identifying best practices for training and development that is applicable for excellence in ministry for all Great Plains clergy. Program elements that have contributed to learning this year include the following: clergy coaching, Clergy Community of Practice, utilizing the Process Communication Model for church staffs, creating a continuing education plan, best practices in conducting weddings, sermon preparation, committee leadership, and pastoral transitions. One important note is that the Lilly Grant funds expired at the end of December 2015. Priorities have been identified as the funding is being integrated into being supported fully by the Conference.

CONGREGATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Vital Congregations Team

by Eric Ford, chair

The mission of the Vital Congregations Team is to equip and connect local congregations so that they may become more vital and effective in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Vitality is intrinsically linked to a church's local context; therefore, to be vital, a church must intentionally be on a journey of learning, growing, and leading as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our vision is to see every congregation in the Great Plains Conference be a great church for the transformation of the world. To better serve, equip and connect all local congregations of the Great Plains

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Conference, the Vital Congregations Team will manage its work through three sub-teams: Hispanic Ministries, Small Membership Churches, and Vital Congregations. The following list outlines our 2017 priorities:

Hispanic Ministries:

1. Equipping effective leaders for Hispanic Ministry,
2. Developing congregations who are contextually aware and culturally competent to reach multiple generations of Hispanic/Latinos.
3. Encouraging cross-cultural and bi-vocational appointments by providing resources to the cabinet.

Small Membership Churches:

1. Provide an 18 month ABIDE process for churches with average weekly worship attendance under 50.
2. Host the annual Small Wonders conference.
3. Offer small churches the opportunity to have Vacation Bible School via summer interns.

Vital Congregations:

1. Work in conjunction with the Cabinet in assessing the strength, health and vitality of our congregations.
2. Continue to refine vitality markers and connect congregations with best practices and resources.

Great Plains New Church Development, Inc.

by Chad Anglemyer

New church development begins with each local church committing itself to becoming fertile ground from which those hearing a call to ministry are encouraged and mentored. Certainly, the Bishop and members of the cabinet, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the New Church Development, Inc. Board of Directors play an important role as those who credential, deploy, and support new churches and planter pastors. However, the local church is the place where seeds of possibility are planted in the hearts and minds of those who may hear a call to ministry. Most pastors will freely share that their first sense of a call to ministry came through involvement in or relationships with a local church.

New churches do not begin unless there is a highly gifted and talented pastor/planter prepared to co-create, with God's help, a new worshipping community that works in solidarity with surrounding United Methodist Churches. Existing local churches who are

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intentional and prayerful in their discernment process will often identify those among them who are suited for local church ministry as a deacon or elder.

As the Great Plains Annual Conference and New Church Development, Inc. work collaboratively to establish great new congregations, we will deeply depend on each United Methodist to help us seek out new talented leaders for the future. We encourage every annual conference delegate to begin a dialogue with their local congregation to consider the best means of engaging and encouraging persons suited for ministry to prayerfully consider if God is calling them.

A few highlights from the year:

Future Plants: November 18, 2015, Bishop Scott Jones, NCD Board Members, Urban Area District Superintendents and Directors met to discern where the next churches will be planted. This was in conjunction with the 20 by 2020 strategic plan approved at the 2015 annual conference.

Districts with plans to Plant: Wichita West District, Wichita East District, Kansas City District, Missouri River District, Blue River District and Prairie River District

Current New Church Plants: Saint Mark UMC, Wichita, SE Campus, Church @ Park City, Wichita Aldersgate / @ the Well Restart, LifeBridge, Urban Abbey, Prairie View, New Hope Lincoln

Discontinued Church Plants: New Church Lawrence, United Methodist Fellowship @ the Well

Church Planter Pre-Assessment Incubator: A second group of pastors and lay person attended five retreats in Kansas City, Wichita and Salina this year for pre-assessment as planters. Eighteen pastors and one lay person participated this year.

**New Church Development has plans for 100 pastors and lay people to go through this process in the next five years.

Church Plant Crucible: For the first time church planters starting out new appointments in church plants, Hispanic partnerships and Campus Ministries participated in monthly meetings to learn about church planting best practices, building a great team and building a great plan to succeed in the church planting context. This year two Hispanic partnerships, four campus ministries and five new church starts participated in this first test of a new concept to plant new faith communities.

Great Plains United Methodist Camps Inc.

A strong camping ministry is an important component of the Great Plains Area's commitment to develop Christian spiritual leaders. This emphasis is one of seven foundations for camping and retreat ministries. The other six are to provide intentional places apart to encounter God, to extend genuine Christian hospitality and community, to nurture Christian faith and discipleship, to teach creation care and appreciation, to collaborate with United Methodist churches and agencies and to inspire and equip guests to do love and justice.

See more at: <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/camps#sthash.ecSfZoSC.dpuf>

Last year we set a goal to collect 2,015 stories by the end of 2015. I am happy to announce that we collected over 2,015 stories. Find below three compelling camp responses to these GP Camp questions that we focused on last year. GP Camps Inc. want you to continue to share the magic of camp with others. Tell your camp story and tell our camp stories as often as possible. Together we can make a big difference in a child, in our communities, and in our churches.

WHY IS CAMP SUCH AN IMPORTANT MINISTRY?

In December of 2014, a young single mother I've visited with when I make bank deposits for Aldersgate UMC in Olathe happened to mention that her daughter Anne had been given a scholarship to attend a church camp between Christmas and New Year's. Lisa seemed a little apprehensive about having her daughter go. Since I knew about the Camp Chippewa Holiday Camp, I took a chance and asked her whether her daughter was going to be at Camp Chippewa. She was surprised that I knew about the Holiday Camp but seemed relieved when I told her that Camp Chippewa staff members were terrific and that I was sure her daughter would have a great time. When I saw Lisa the week after Holiday Camp, I asked her about Anne. She said her daughter had had a wonderful experience at the camp and that now her daughter wanted to go to Camp Chippewa during one of the summer camp sessions.

Last summer Anne attended one of the summer sessions and had a great time. Lisa mentioned that Anne had made lots of friends and had really grown in her faith.

Just after Thanksgiving 2015, Lisa caught me one week and said that the only thing Anne wanted for Christmas was to go back to Holiday Camp. As a single mom, money is tight in their household but she'd

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been saving for the camp for Anne since summer and was excited about what a great surprise it would be for Anne that Lisa was going to be able to let her daughter return to Holiday Camp.

She mentioned that her daughter had been going to a church that had an active children's program since her first winter camp experience. Lisa said she hadn't been going to church with her but she was glad that Anne was. And just before Anne went back to Holiday Camp, Lisa shared that she'd found a church where she was comfortable and had begun to attend it.

Through her camp experiences, Camp Chippewa staff helped a young girl in her faith walk. And seeing the changes those experiences made in the life of her daughter gave a young mother enough confidence to find her way back to God.

Linda Hopwood, Camp Chippewa

Joseph came to Norwesca from the Pine Ridge reservation. He lives in a single wide trailer with his mother, father, two siblings, and grandma. His older brother has already been in trouble with the law for theft and is currently in jail. Joseph was starting to follow in his brother's footsteps and was beginning to get into fights at school. Upon arrival Joseph was quiet and didn't want to participate in any of the activities. He told me multiple times that camp is stupid and that he didn't want to be here. During Bible studies he would stare down at his closed Bible and refuse to participate.

The second day the Camp Staff was beginning to worry about Joseph. He still wasn't opening up or participating. He didn't want to talk to his camp counselors, so we decided to ask one of the older campers who had been coming to camp for years to take Joseph under his wing. Tim agreed to be Joseph's buddy for the week. With lots of coaxing Tim finally talked Joseph into participating in the games and activities, Joseph actually started to smile. During the Bible lesson he was still very reserved and didn't want to participate. However, towards the end of the lesson we split the campers up boys and girls, the campers were encouraged to share struggles in their life that they would like everyone in their group to pray about. Everyone went around the circle, some shared and others did not. When it was Joseph's turn no one was expecting him to share. However, he did share. He opened up about what life was like on the reservation, he talked about his brother getting into trouble, getting in fights at school, and he told us that he feels alone and that he is scared of what his life is going to become. He asked everyone to pray for him to make good choices and for God to help guide him to the right path. The circle ended with prayers for everyone's struggles.

We saw a change in Joseph after that. He didn't seem to be carrying around the weight that he came to camp with. He laughed more, played, and even read from the Bible during lessons.

On the last day we were having campers share what they were going to take with them from camp. Joseph said that he was going to take God with him. When it was time for him to go home, Joseph went to his mom and hugged her. He told her that he was going to try to do better. His mom came to me with tears in her eyes thanking me; she said that she hasn't seen him this involved or happy in a very long time. She wants to send him to summer camp; Joseph says that he can't wait for summer so he can come see his camp family. Norwesca gave Joseph a safe place where he was accepted. Under a camping environment he thrived, Joseph found God while he was at camp. Tim became Joseph's pen pal and they are still keeping in touch. I cannot wait to see how much he has grown when he comes back this summer.

Katelin Gosser, Camp Norwesca

HOW DOES SENDING CAMPERS TO CAMP HELP MY CHURCH, MY CHILD, AND ME?

My first full time appointment was to Asbury UMC in Wichita KS and I served for almost 3 years. Once I received my next appointment to Cunningham/Pennalosa my wife and 3 kids decided to take a short vacation or getaway. We came across Camp Horizon in Arkansas City, this was a little after Joel had started at the camp, and he welcomed us for a short getaway...I was hooked right away...

After I started serving at Cunningham/Pennalosa UMC's I started planning camps at Camp Horizon. This was new to them so we started with a few kids going to camp with us, including my own for the first time.

To gain better support I sought out a family mission trip to Camp Horizon, we went as a group of about 15-20 to build an outdoor shower for the mud pit.... It was a great retreat time for the parents and kids. The following summer we had doubled in the number of kids and volunteer adults going to Camp Horizon. I only stayed at this appointment for a few years however, that church still takes kids to camp, more and more every year, and more adult volunteers...

I now serve Harper/Argonia UMC's and we have been adding more and more kids to camp every year. Last year I even drove an hour each way to go down and teach a small group with the camp Counselors, and recently was added to the Site council of Camp Horizon.

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So kids and camp are in my history....and I use camp as a Ministry within my church....

1. One of 3 main things that if you write them down and apply them will change your camp and your camping ministry.

The Local Congregations should be the closest and biggest partnership for your camp.

* Here is some ways to do that. One let the local pastors know you would welcome them for a personal retreat or time of renewal. While at Cunningham I went through a very dark time in my Ministry and so I called Camp Horizon and they invited me for the weekend with no charge, it changed my ministry.

*ask the local pastor to review your curriculum or small group lessons this lets the pastor will know what you are teaching kids....

*another thing you can do is invite those local churches to come serve on mission team to work at the camp. Have on your web site a list of projects for churches to sign up, adults and kids.... The first time we took kids from Cunningham we had a few, but after the missions project of the shower, we doubled...in the amount of kids the following year, and we added adult volunteers, they have worked in the kitchen doing dishes, worked on outdoor projects, and helped with countless other things at camp.

2. Keep the main thing the Main thing...

* Beautiful buildings, amazing activities, swimming pools, zip line, rock wall, hiking trails, are all great but they are not the main thing about camp....Jesus Christ is the main thing! As a pastor those activities attract kids to want to come, and you need those, but if you are not teaching my kids about Jesus it's a waste of time...I can get activities at the local Y.

For me as the pastor I look at Camp as a great tool or ministry in my church. When I served at Asbury we had to come up with those ministries and it was a lot of work, but if I have a good camp...it adds a new resource to growing disciples within my church, and that's kids and adults. Use this idea to share with big churches and to the small congregation...

* when you think of it most churches, not all, but most have about 5 minutes on a Sunday of teaching between the pastor and the kids during a children's time. This happens mostly in smaller or rural congregations... so if the pastor can come with his kids for a week, or send them to you to grow deeper in their faith, it develops disciples within the United Methodist Church.

* If you have a strong camp, and the local pastors are supportive... he will or should reach out to community kids to come to camp, the local churches become your advertisement...now it becomes and outreach of the church.

SO HOW DO WE GET INVOLVED IN CAMPING?

Call the camp directors of the camp closest to you. They can help you get involved.

Volunteer at camp.

Review Curriculum with camps.

Have a Retreat at Camp

Take time away and have a little renewal vacation for yourself at camp.

Bring your church to camp.

Send children from your church to camp and come with them to help during that week of camp.

Send children from your community to camp regardless if they are with your church or not. Use camp as an outreach tool to share Christ's love with your community.

Great Plains United Methodist Campus Ministry, Inc.

Samuel S Fisher, Chair of GPUMCM

Nicole Conard, Coordinator of Young Adult Leadership

The Great Plains United Methodist Campus Ministry Board fulfills missional priorities of the conference under Congregational Excellence in leadership development. Our continued vision is to develop 2,000 student leaders to be disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by the year 2020. Our newly adopted philosophy for ministry is, " Campus Ministry is a movement of grace empowering students to live transformed lives to transform the world." We seek to achieve this philosophy by creating spaces where students can encounter grace, experience equipping love, and discover engaging transformation.

Through many transitions in 2015 the GPUMCM Board has worked to address concerns of adequate funding for ministry sites, building evaluative measures flexible enough to be applied to each unique campus, determine where support is needed for not only each ministry, but each minister, and the local boards that support those ministries.

Several Board members also gathered in Nashville, TN with other conference leaders at the General Board of Higher Education for training and a sharing of best practices. Nicole Conard, Conference Coordinator of Young Adult Leadership, presented on the extensive steps the Great Plains is taking to support our Campus Ministries.

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The following are several steps the GPUMCM Board is working to live into its 2020 vision:

- Implemented new grant allotments application with detailed narrative assessments of ministry vitality
- Hosted Annual Conference luncheon to share the story of campus ministry and unique dynamics of doing ministry with students on college campuses
- Received Fundraising Training from Nebraska and Kansas Area Foundations
- Participated in Great Plains Planter Crucible with 4 new campus ministers who engaged in a monthly process of the fundamentals in starting new campus ministries.
- Conducted Site Visits in the Fall and Spring Semesters with District Superintendent, UMCM Board Representative, Conference Staff, local board representative, Campus Minister, students
- Training local boards in each state-school or private-school campus ministry
- Asking every church who knows students who may be attending college to share their information and the information about our United Methodist campus ministries

The Great Plains has **10 Campus Ministries and 4 United Methodist Schools.**

United Methodist Schools –Nebraska Wesleyan University (Lincoln, NE), Kansas Wesleyan University (Salina, KS), Baker University (Baldwin City, KS) and Southwestern College (Winfield, KS).

Our Great Plains United Methodist Campus Ministries are present at the following campuses:

- University of Nebraska-Lincoln – (Lincoln, NE)
- University of Nebraska – Omaha (Omaha, NE)
- University of Nebraska – Kearney (Kearney, NE)
- Creighton University (Omaha, NE)
- Kansas State University (Manhattan, KS)
- University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS)
- Emporia State University (Emporia, KS)
- Fort Hays State University (Hays, KS)
- Washburn University (Topeka, KS)
- Wichita State University (Wichita, KS)

Each local church has nurtured many young lives. Seize the opportunity to connect young adults, with the next steps of faith at www.greatplainsumc.org/campusministries. Schedule a visit with our United Methodist pastors and ministries. Discover all that awaits you at college campuses throughout the Great Plains Conference.

MERCY AND JUSTICE

Mercy and Justice Team

by Kent Little, chair

The Mercy and Justice Team of our Great Plains Annual Conference has had a busy year since our 2015 Annual Conference. Our intent was to meet approximately quarterly face to face to do the work of our team for the Conference.

A priority we set in our last report was to make sure we addressed the mercy and justice issues raised and affirmed at our 2015 Annual Conference. Our team was active across the conference with presentations and special speakers and actions in regards to this priority. The following are the primary activities and events we sponsored and provided.

Robert Lupton on *Toxic Charity* – Sustainable assistance out of poverty

Ellin Jimmerson on *The Second Cooler* – A Documentary about Undocumented Immigration and justice.

Bryan Stevenson with *Equal Justice Initiative* addressing incarceration and justice

Archbishop Elias Chacour – will be speaking at our 2016 Annual Conference and our GPAC in general. His vision was, and is, that through education, children, youth, and young adults of different faith traditions will learn to live and work together in peace.

This is just a summary list of some of the highlights of our Conference Year. Our team has also been very active with addressing such topics as gun violence, encouraging our General Conference Delegates as they prepare to travel to Portland and to support our Great Plains Annual Conference Petition 7. We spoke out in support of Syrian Refugees and attended a committee hearing in Lincoln, Nebraska at the State House to support a statement submitted by our Bishop Scott Jones.

We have also worked closely with our Global Mission Partners and our Conference Mission Agencies. Our Micah Corp continues to grow encouraging and recruiting young adults in justice and mercy work within the church and across our country. The Mercy and Justice Team is also involved in our disaster relief and response and continues to provide care and support in the event devastating circumstances as the result of flooding, storms, and other disasters.

Our team is honored and humbled to be a part of this Great Plains Annual Conference and the important emphasis our Conference places on mercy and justice ministries for all. Thank you for this incredible opportunity to make a difference in individual lives as well as transforming our world for the Kingdom of God.

Disaster Response Team

by Steve Burnett, chair

The Great Plains Disaster Response is a Ministry of Care that has theological, material, mental health, advocacy, and social service components designed to provide for the spiritual, emotional and physical recovery of disaster survivors and for the well-being of their caregivers. It is the goal of this ministry that in the midst of their situational turmoil all the affected people will experience God's grace and mercy through our presence and our response efforts.

The local church is the point of contact for all church assistance in a disaster. The Conference will support the local church by making its resources and those of the General church available, when invited and if needed, through the leadership of the Conference Disaster Response Team. The Conference Disaster Response Team links the local church to the resources of the District, Conference, and the General Church.

Operating consistently within the United Methodist Committee on Relief's (UMCOR's) philosophy, we stand ready to assist communities within the Great Plains Conference geographical area over the long haul of their recovery, until they are well on their way to establishing a "new normal" after a crisis. Like UMCOR, when possible, this ministry cooperates with other aid organizations to insure that all resources are used effectively and efficiently and to reduce the duplication of services to survivors. This cooperation provides the framework to reach the most survivors, especially those with the greatest need.

The Disaster Response Team is actively involved in meeting the mission priorities of the Great Plains Conference as adopted at the Uniting Conference. We can be particularly effective in equipping

congregations to understand and to connect with not only their local communities, but also with others throughout the conference and beyond, by providing training and assistance for local churches in developing disaster plans, and providing training in disaster response that can also be used in local missions.

Disaster Response offers congregations the opportunity to address the needs of disaster survivors through our service and our presence. Our ministry provides a visible presence of the church and offers spiritual and emotional healing as well as physical restoration of people's lives. We are transforming the world through our service one person, one family, and one community at a time.

Training, such as spiritual and emotional care, and the opportunities for mission provided by Disaster Response are often a "stepping stone" to greater involvement in the United Methodist Church. Members often become involved in leadership roles on disaster response teams, on committees in their church, and in outreach programs.

We offer opportunities to build lay and clergy partnerships in all of our training and missions. Lay and clergy are encouraged to work together in developing disaster response plans for the local church, in training for and responding to disasters, and in planning local missions to name a few. We stress that everyone has spiritual gifts and that all are important and needed as we strive to be the hands and feet of Christ in service to God's children who are in need.

"Share with God's people who are in need." Romans 12:13a

The team has adopted a Disaster Response Plan for the Conference that was approved by the Connecting Council. The plan is available on the Great Plains web site. We encourage everyone to review the plan, especially Appendix B which contains handbooks that provide specific information for each position from Local Church Disaster Coordinator to the Bishop.

The Disaster Response Team is focusing on training to insure that we have an adequate number of volunteers trained at the Early Response Team level throughout the Conference. We are also focusing on training and providing assistance to local churches in developing a disaster response plan for their church and community through the Connecting Neighbors program. We invite anyone with an interest in serving Christ through disaster response and preparedness to join us. Contact Rev. Hollie Tapley at the Wichita Conference Office to sign up for classes or for more information.

“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:12

General Board of Global Ministries - “From Everywhere to Everywhere www.umcmmission.org

by Alan Gager, Conference Secretary of Global Ministries with information from General Board of Global Ministries.

- The Rev. Alan Gager serves as our conference secretary of Global Ministries (CSGM) and also serves as the Jurisdictional CSGM representative on The Advance Committee.
- The Rev. Nathan Stanton serves on The General Board of Global Ministries Board of Directors.
- In 2015, \$886,584 was donated to the projects of The Advance by individuals and groups/churches in our conference.
- 100 percent of all donations given through the Advance go to the chosen mission project or ministry. Each Advance project has been vetted and approved by Global Ministries. The Advance works with church leaders around the world to ensure that projects are aligned with the goals of The United Methodist Church in the local area, help develop partnerships that are mutually advantageous, tell the story of projects and missionaries, and report how giving is making an impact.
- Global Ministries has personnel, programs and mission partners in 136 countries. It facilitates international and domestic mission, including missionary service. Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Global Ministries provides humanitarian relief and development on behalf of the denomination.
- GBGM is realigning its resources to fit the global need by opening offices around the world and relocating its downsized main office to Atlanta Georgia.

Peace with Justice Ministries

by Andrea Paret, Peace with Justice Coordinator
<http://www.greatplainsumc.org/peacewithjustice>
[Facebook.com/peacewithjusticeministriesgp](https://www.facebook.com/peacewithjusticeministriesgp)

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Luke 2:10 (NIV)

“Do not be afraid,” we are told. And yet, we are often fearful and scared. What if the refugees bring different customs and values with them? What if they bring diseases? What if they bring violence? What if someone wants to harm my family? How can we protect ourselves?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian and pastor in Germany during the Third Reich, spoke out against the persecution and killing of Jews through the Nazi regime. His highest priority was not safety (his own or the safety of his family) but following God’s commands and call for our lives. This cost him his own life when he was executed by the Nazis. Bonhoeffer was very conscious of the dangers he faced by speaking out. *“There is no way to peace along the way to safety. For peace must be dared. It is the great venture.”*

Peace with Justice Ministries (PWJ) aims to make shalom visible and active in people’s lives and communities. Many peace advocates across our conference have taken action, partnering with and speaking out on behalf of those whose voices are not heard, who are not given a place at the table. We engage in ministries and outreach with refugees, asylees and immigrants. We thank Bishop Jones for his strong voice in encouraging congregations to participate in this work. We also engage in issues of interfaith dialog and understanding, racism, working for a just peace and human rights for all in the Middle East, abolishing the death penalty in both of our states and reforming our justice system, reducing gun violence, caring for God’s creation, a stronger emphasis on diplomacy and a reduction of our weapons as well as others.

In 2015, 376 churches across our Conference contributed to the Peace with Justice Sunday Offering. This was an increase from the 345 churches in 2014. The amount of offerings also increased from about \$26,000 to \$35,000. Half of the raised amount stays in our conference to support peace and justice work. The other half is sent to the General Board of Church and Society to support such work around the globe. **Thank you Great Plains churches for your support of the PWJ Sunday!**

Ana Marsella (Grace UMC in Topeka), with the help from a PWJ scholarship, attended the Peace Conference at Lake Junaluska last November: “We heard different perspectives from different faith traditions (Christianity, Judasim, Islam) from speakers from all over the world who talked about issues we are facing in our world today. I felt the motivation to work and do my part to promote peace in the community I live in and anywhere I go. I feel that I have more knowledge now and I’m able to speak with others about not looking at the barrier ‘religion or denomination’ but looking at the individual and believing in the only God who loves all the same.”

UM Campus Ministries at Emporia State University received a PWJ grant to help fund a trip to Washington D.C. during spring break. Students attended a seminar organized through the General Board of Church and Society dealing with the interrelatedness of environmental challenges and poverty. “A big thing I learned was about our church’s social creed and how it impacts what our church does. I found that to be awesome and I saw how the creed impacted all the other topics we talked about,” reflected Abe Ruffcorn.

What is Christ calling each one of us to do to promote true and just peace? Archbishop Elias Chacour, who will be speaking during our Annual Conference, reminds us, that “with all of our weapons, we do not achieve peace, we achieve fear.” Jesus tells us to not be afraid. Peace-making takes hard work and a lot of courage.

Thank you to all the faithful peace and justice advocates. Jesus calls us to be peacemakers and not just lovers of peace when he tells us **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matt. 5:9)**. PWJ Sunday is May 22nd this year (or any other Sunday that works for you).

United Methodist Orphanage, Jalingo, Nigeria

by Simon Benjamin

I bring greetings from Bishop Johnwesley Yohanna of the United Methodist Church of Nigeria and the entire staff and students of the United Methodist Church Orphanage, Jalingo, Nigeria.

Let me begin by commending the world council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church, the Nebraska Annual Conference now the Great Plains United Methodist Conference all our individual donors here in state, for initiating and sponsoring the orphanage program in Nigeria to give the less privileged and meaningful life which today have benefited orphans drawn from different areas and trained for

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future leadership. It also gives me joy to sincerely congratulate all of you for your love and concern for restoring the life of these orphans who were hopeless but today are hopeful for their future which is done by you all. I say thank you.

The Orphanage started in 1999 with only the structure and was inaugurated by late Bishop Kefas Mavula and retired Bishop Ann Sherer Simpson with the total number of 48 orphans, but today we transformed the life of 160 orphans and 150 non orphans from denomination of which 20 were adopted by the adopted parents and 40 was given for fostering to the foster parents to give them hope for their future. Which four are in the State University in Jalingo the state capital and 38 are in various secondary school outside the orphanage in private but residing in the orphanage and are sponsored by you our partners and donors and the rest are in nursery and primary school in the orphanage together with 150 non orphans coming from outside the orphanage to school with our orphans to compete and make friends with our orphans because of the quality education rendered.

Achievements:

The Orphanage from 2010 to date have recorded the following achievements which make the orphanage what it is today.

1. Graduation of first set of five female orphans.
2. Thirty eight are now in secondary school outside the orphanage.
3. Four of our orphans are now in the State University in Jalingo the State Capital of Taraba, Nigeria.
4. Payment of school fees for thirty eight students in secondary school and registered four students in the University.

We have many challenges, to mention a few:

1. Students in secondary school are increasing and they need scholarships for their education.
2. The program needs transportation to convey need to other church denominations and conventions for fund raising.
3. Need for health care delivery for the children.
4. Feeding of the children is a challenge due to drop of our support and the poor economy of our present government. Many of our local donors are directly affected and no food items are forthcoming from them as before.

Finally: On behalf of the orphanage and the entire leadership of the United Methodist Church in Nigeria (UMCN) we appreciate you all and appeal for continuation of your support as we work on sustainability for the program.

OTHER**Great Plains Conference Lay Servant Ministries**

by Mary Feit, director

The purpose of Lay Servant Ministry is to develop, maintain, and support discipleship skills in laity. This supports the mission of the church by enabling lay persons to more effectively create disciples for the transformation of the world.

The first meeting of the Great Plains Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee (GPCLSMC) occurred September 26, 2015. Many of us were able to gather in a central location (Kearney, Nebraska) and others joined us via teleconference. According to the Book of Discipline 2012, this committee is required as part of the organization and process for our ministry.

Membership of the committee consists of the 17 Great Plains Conference District Directors. Ex Officio members include Carolyn May, representing the conference lay leaders, and Micki McCorkle of the conference staff.

The conference committee's responsibilities include to:

- Provide guidance and support to the District LSM Committees.
- Review and approve alternative courses as well as standards for the role of lay servant.
- Organize and/or encourage district and/or conference wide events.
- Assist district directors in maintaining accurate records.
- Provide final approval of Lay Speakers based on recommendations from the district committees.

The main objective of our strategic plan for this year was to strengthen the Lay Servant Ministry of the Great Plains Conference by enhancing networking opportunities, encouraging and supporting training opportunities, and advocating for the lay servant role in the mission of the church.

Networking opportunities included a blog published biweekly in GPConnect, three face-to-face meetings of the Great Plains Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee, initiation of a newsletters to all lay servants in the conference, and establishing a conference level database. Training opportunities were supported

by electronic conference wide dissemination of information about all education offerings and sharing of information during committee meetings and the LSM blog. We advocate for the role of the lay servant in the mission of the church with a strong presence with a booth at annual conference, addition of a budget to the conference budget, and establishment of an effective LSM Committee in each district.

According to the current Great Plains Conference journal, there are 375 lay servants in the conference. This year we grandfathered (grandparented) 30 Certified Lay Speakers that were previously certified before January 1, 2013. All Certified Lay Speakers will be expected to work toward attaining the newer standards established by the 2012 General Conference. At least 39 Lay Servant Ministry courses were offered throughout the conference in 2015 which furthered the discipleship skills of at least 274 laity persons.

Great Plains Conference 2016 Lay Leader

by Courtney Fowler

As we live into our third year as the Great Plains Conference, we feel the transforming power of the Holy Spirit at work in our ministry as the Lay Leadership team. As we continue in the mission to serve Christ, while working toward the transformation of the world, we have grown more cohesive as a team which has helped fuel our passion to empower laity to respond to God's call. The five-member team is composed of Courtney Fowler, Conference Lay Leader, and four Associate Conference Lay Leaders: Tom Watson, Micole Harms-Brazell, Carolyn May, Oliver Green. In addition, there are 17 District Lay Leaders, who assist their district superintendent when called upon.

It is a joy to be continually reminded of the many lay people who are serving in leadership in their local church, on conference committees and mission teams throughout the conference. Developing lay leadership and providing a supportive link to laity and clergy remain the top priorities of our team. We seek to help other laity find their voice and calling and an outlet to serve through their local church, thus strengthening our conference with their many gifts.

Last June, the conference approved a three-fold mission partnership campaign to help Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, the Lydia Patterson Institute and the Zimbabwe East Conference. Our laity are actively helping raise money for these important initiatives. Opportunities for service and leadership can also be found within Lay

Servant Ministries, Volunteers in Mission, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men and Education Partnerships with local schools.

In addition, this past year, I've been very humbled and proud by the laity role in social justice advocacy in our two states. We are making our voices heard on the issues of capital punishment and our willingness to welcome Syrian refugees into our churches and communities! We have heard God's call on our heart for mercy and justice and we are responding in action—AMEN! I am so proud to walk this journey with you.

We continue to work toward strengthening the lay-clergy relationship through team-building activities and workshops. I also hope you will join us in our social media presence, which is making a footprint on our everyday lives and helps strengthen our mutual connection.

As the Conference Lay Leader, I was elected to lead the Great Plains delegation to Portland, Oregon for General Conference. As part of my connection with the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, a national network of conference lay leaders, we are sponsoring key legislation that we hope will strengthen our church and connection. Courtney Fowler and Oliver Green are part of the elected General Conference delegates. Courtney Fowler will also be part of the laity address at the 2016 General Conference.

It is a great privilege and blessing to be the Great Plains Conference Lay Leader.

Great Plains United Methodist Conference United Methodist Women

by Esther Hay, Conference President

"Go Forward"

We are now in our third year as the Great Plains United Methodist Women. Much has happened during this time. While it's sometimes tempting to long for return to the familiarity of the past, just as surely as God said to Moses "tell the people to go forward," God also calls us to go forward.

We have been busy laying the foundation for our future, getting to know each other, becoming familiar with our unique new structure and learning how to work together to enhance the lives of women, children and youth in our conference. As I pass on leadership to the next president, we are now ready to launch into new opportunities that build upon that foundation. We look forward with anticipation

to our continued journey as the United Methodist Women of the Great Plains.

Six Journeys guide our work as United Methodist Women in the Great Plains. We begin all of our Journeys with the lifetime journey of developing our faith. This leads us to connect with others and to take action that helps transform the world into a better place for those who are the most vulnerable - the women, children and youth. Our ongoing faith journey leads us into journeys of Learning, Giving, Growing, Planning and Action. The quadrennium priorities for 2016-2020 give us the opportunity to put our faith into action around issues of importance not only in the Great Plains but worldwide: Maternal and Child Health; Economic Justice; Racial and Gender Justice; and Climate Justice.

As a conference organization we have much to celebrate - too many to list, however here are three...

- For the second year in a row, we have given over three-quarters of a million dollars to support mission work beyond the Great Plains Conference. Our 2014 giving was #1 in the South Central Jurisdiction and #2 in the nation. We do not yet have the final ranking for 2015 giving.
- We collected over \$5,500 for UMCOR health kits as part of our continued focus on maternal and child health and also sent UMCOR kits and \$2,900 to the Midwest Mission Distribution Center UMCOR Depot.
- We sponsored a 2015 METour where 33 young women ages 15-22 had the opportunity to participate in this educational experience and learn firsthand about mission work in the United Methodist Church.

As we go forward, we celebrate the leadership of our very own Charlotte Morrow, who in April became the President of the South Central Jurisdiction United Methodist Women.

This summer we will again offer three learning opportunities through Mission u at three sites – Salina and Topeka in Kansas and in Kearney, NE. This collaboration with the Great Plains Mercy and Justice Committee is open to everyone – men, women, children, youth, clergy and laity. The studies this year are ***The Bible and Human Sexuality*** and ***Climate Justice***.

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We are part of an organization that has been transforming the world by putting hope, faith and love in action for over 145 years! Building on that legacy, we put our Faith, Hope and Love in Action through our giving, our service and our advocacy, locally and globally. We pray, we read, we study, we hold seminars, retreats, legislative events and so much more! We are called to Go Forward!

MISSION AGENCIES

Colleges/Universities

Baker University

Dr. Lynne Murray, president

Baker University, the first university in Kansas, celebrated its 158th anniversary in February. Since 1858, the university has been committed to providing quality education for the next generation in the United Methodist tradition. The values statement of the university includes these words:

- **Student learning and academic excellence.** We provide quality learning environments promoting intellectual, professional and personal development resulting in lifelong learning.
- **Critical thinking, inquiry and freedom of expression.** We challenge all participants to think critically using open inquiry and freedom of expression.
- **Integrating learning with faith and values.** We expect all participants to be open to questions of faith and values as part of intellectual inquiry in the United Methodist tradition. In particular, we expect personal and professional responsibility that is based on high standards of ethical conduct.
- **Connections.** We promote a community of belonging and Baker family connections, which result in lifelong associations.
- **Inclusiveness.** We embrace diversity of community, thought and expression.
- **Service to the community.** We address the civic, social, health and environmental needs of our global community.

We are proud of our strong affiliation with the United Methodist Church. The 2015-2016 academic year has brought much change and achievement to Baker, with more to be anticipated for the year to come.

In 2015-2016, Baker experienced an incredible run by Women's Basketball team. They were the National Runner-up with a program high 28 wins. Football finished 5th in the final NAIA Football Coaches' Top 25 poll and captured the Heart of America Athletic Southern Division Championship out-right. Men's and women's soccer advanced to the NAIA National Championship Final site in Delray Beach, Florida and Orange Beach, Alabama. We also celebrated two NAIA Wrestling National Champions. Colby Crank – 157 pounds and Victor Hughes – 149 pounds.

The Rev. Kevin Hopkins is completing his second year serving as minister to the university. He is the third minister in Baker's long history. Osborne Chapel continues to be overflowing for Thursday Chapel services. The services are student led and spirit filled. There are now six Baker students that are exploring calls to ministry. The Baker Chapel Ambassadors have been a source of spiritual leadership on the campus for decades. Our Chapel Praise band and BU Concert Choir have made weekend visits to area churches.

I have been privileged to serve as Baker's 29th president for the past year. We continue to raise funds to support scholarships for students and for academic and faculty excellence. I will continue to build on the foundation of past presidents and faculty members.

Kansas Wesleyan University Transforms Lives

by Matt Thompson, President and CEO

Inspired by the vision and journey of John Wesley nearly three centuries ago, Kansas Wesleyan University thrives today on the values of The United Methodist Church, the pioneering spirit of its forbearers and the vision of its students, faculty and administrators to develop ethical thought leaders and innovators who will transform the world.

As we move into our 130th year, there is a sense of pride and momentum fueled by a new Liberal Studies core, the Wesleyan Journey study-away courses, online degree programs, a broader scope of spiritual development opportunities, a new partnership with Saint Paul School of Theology and state-of-the-art facilities that will attract and retain great students.

The completion of a \$1.2 million technology upgrade and the approval by the Higher Learning Commission to offer online degrees has allowed our educational opportunities to expand beyond Salina, Kansas. Students nearly anywhere in the world can earn

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a four-year online degree in Emergency Management, Criminal Justice, and Interdisciplinary Studies, as well as a Master of Business Administration. Visit www.kwu.edu/online for more.

New partnerships and collaborations open additional doors for our students. KWU announced a partnership with Saint Paul School of Theology this past fall that allows students to take three years of coursework at KWU followed by three years at Saint Paul and earn both an undergraduate degree in Christian Ministry and a Master of Divinity. We hope to enhance the pipeline into ministry.

Expanded spiritual opportunities continue to attract record numbers of students. In any given week, more than 120 students participate in spiritual experiences on campus. In addition to Upper Room

Ministries' *Journey to the Table* program, for which KWU was a beta test site, events such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Tuesday Night Alive and a new, four-week on-campus Sunday service provide leadership opportunities as well as avenues to deepen students' spirituality.

KWU offers numerous service opportunities to bring people of all faiths together. We hosted a community-wide *Feed My Starving Children* event on Martin Luther King Day at which more than 150 students joined 850 community volunteers to pack 186,624 meals—enough to feed 511 children for an entire year.

Perhaps one of the most transformative experiences for students was launched in the fall. The Wesleyan Journey courses, offered in Costa Rica, Florida, Washington, D.C. and New York City, integrated service and learning in a weeklong study-away course, all at no cost to students.

The talented faculty and impressive students continue to bring great pride to the university. Our Fine Arts students are gaining national recognition; our Forensics and Debate team won its 30th national championship; and three athletic teams competed in the national NAIA championships this fall. These co-curricular activities are building leadership, character and collaborative skills that complement the intellectual proficiencies learned in the classroom. We call this the Power of **AND**—encouraging students to be involved in the classroom AND in the community, to explore academic interests AND participate in activities, to learn AND serve in Salina AND the world. We believe the Power of **AND** makes our campus and our graduates unique.

Kansas Wesleyan University will celebrate its 130th anniversary in September. We will reflect on the foundation our United Methodist forbearers laid; we will honor the pioneers who daringly challenged and questioned in order to innovate and achieve; we will celebrate the present momentum and embrace a future that is poised to put the university at the forefront of intellectual rigor, spiritual development, personal wellbeing and social responsibility. All the best,

Nebraska Wesleyan University

by Fred Ohles, President

Nebraska Wesleyan University's vision is to be an outstanding national liberal arts university, where the educational experience transforms each student to lead a life of learning, service, leadership, and success in a diverse world. We understand that through the grace of education we help create the next generation of leaders who will be agents of change in our communities in Nebraska, Kansas, and beyond. The ministry that we achieve together with the churches of the Great Plains Annual Conference is creating a diversity of leaders who will enhance the ability of our churches to reach out to new and diverse populations. We are proud to be co-workers with the United Methodists in the Great Plains.

Support from churches in the conference helps provide scholarships to United Methodist students. One of our key partners is the Lydia Patterson Institute. This year we have four students who are LPI graduates. We have equipped them with \$149,080 in tuition waivers. We have offered two more tuition waivers for 2016-17 and admission (without tuition waivers) to three more LPI students.

During 2015-16, 192 United Methodist students received \$2,797,878 in scholarships, grants, and tuition waivers provided by Nebraska Wesleyan University. This includes 83 students who received \$63,725 in need-based Great Plains United Methodist Scholarships and four ministerial dependent students who received \$43,800 in ministerial discounts.

We have equipped high school students through the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA). In partnership with the Great Plains Annual Conference Hispanic Ministries, we celebrated our fifth year of sponsoring this summer camp. HYLA seeks to nurture United Methodist Hispanic youth, teaching them about the United Methodist Church and empowering them to continue their education through college.

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Together with Great Plains Annual Conference Youth Ministries we hosted one of three confirmation rallies with the bishop. This year 140 middle schoolers and sponsors learned what it means to be a Christian, a United Methodist, and a contributor to the ministry of the Church in the Great Plains.

University Ministries

The goal of University Ministries is to have a spiritually healthy campus. At Nebraska Wesleyan University a spiritually healthy campus is one in which people feel free to speak openly about their faith; are able to dialogue with others about their faith even when they hold differing views; and, in the midst of their differences, are able to serve together.

University Ministries' programming focuses on helping individuals grow in their faith journey and building a spiritually healthy campus. Spiritual life is nurtured with a weekly worship service in our chapel. We worship as students, faculty, and staff, and invite guest preachers from the community to share with us. We support five faith-based student organizations, with 200+ students involved every week. We organized an alternative spring break trip to Charleston, South Carolina, to help with flood relief. There students had the opportunity to work on a house, visit the state legislature, and be greeted by their Governor.

To create a greater understanding of Muslims in our community and their needs and struggles, we co-sponsored a four-part event called "Muslim in America." Topics presented by Wajahat Ali, Rohina Malik, Amir Azimi, and Amy Miller included the daily struggles of Muslim Americans, the intersections of Islam with the other Abrahamic faiths, and Muslim women's experiences.

We continue to help students in their vocational discernment. Through *Envision* events more than 130 students in the last two years have begun to explore their vocation as part of their educational journey. In November we took four students to Orlando, Florida, to explore their vocation within the United Methodist Church through *Exploration 2016*.

Speakers and Events

Through the Mattingly, Wilson, and Swan endowed lectures, we brought the following speakers to campus: Rev. Steve Griffith, *Alternatives to the Death Penalty*, community presentation and Political Science guest speaker; Arpita Ghatak, Fulbright Scholar, spoke on *feminism, religion and culture* with a Gender Advocacy

Place panel; Stanley Hauerwas delivered his lecture *Church Matters*; and, Wajahat Ali (from The Guardian) spoke on *Understanding Muslims*. All lectures were open to the Lincoln community.

Wesleyan Live!

One Wesleyan Live class was held in spring 2016, titled: "The Sermon on the Mount for the 21st Century." It was taught by Dr. Robert Jewett, a retired theology professor, NWU alum and clergy member of the Great Plains Conference. Currently engaged in study and research for a new book at Heidelberg University, he spends several months each year as Theologian-in-Residence at St. Mark's UMC, Lincoln. Twenty participants met in person for the class at the Lincoln Conference Office. Thirty-five more participated from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska through on-line video streaming and engaged in real-time discussion via email. Rev. Dr. Mel Luetchens coordinates Wesleyan Live on behalf of Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Southwestern College

Southwestern College is more than just a higher-ed institution in the Great Plains Conference. Our Christian co-curricular programs continue to excel in nurturing mature faith in their students, the Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship is growing by leaps and bounds, and the college is entering a new era of leadership. During the 2015-2016 school year, it's been clear that **Southwestern College** is growing and thriving. In April, the college inaugurated its 19th president, Dr. Bradley Andrews. The college had a low enrollment this past year, but a new VP of enrollment was hired who, in his previous role at another small private college, brought enrollment all the way up to the school's total capacity. With this new leadership and the introduction of two brand new full-tuition scholarships, Southwestern feels poised for great growth in the coming years.

The ministry-related areas of Southwestern continue to be strong. **The Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship** received half-million dollar grant from the Lilly Endowment for a week-long Wesleyan "Summit" on campus, beginning in 2017. This enabled the Institute to hire Rev. Wendy Mohler-Seib as the full-time director of the program. With the additional hire of a full-time director of marketing last summer, that brings the full-time staff up from 3 to 5 since last year. Two new Bishop Scholars and a Visiting Scholar (completing Ph.D. work from Marquette in pneumatology) began at Southwestern this year, adding to the ranks of now 8 Ph.D. students

and over 50 young people from around the globe providing a diverse cultural perspective to the college and its population of alumni. The Timothy Circle, a new online resource and mentor training program for young people discerning a call into ministry, is under development and is shaping up to be an exciting ministry. 2015's second Building for the Future Zimbabwean conference was a success, attracting 55 people from around the United States as well as Canada, England, and Zimbabwe. The Institute has also been responsible for organizing 30th anniversary celebrations for DISCIPLE Bible study this year at General Conference, all five Jurisdictional Conferences, and the meeting of the World Methodist Council. You can learn more and these and other ministries at the Institute's redesigned website, www.institutefordiscipleship.org.

Discipleship Southwestern & Worship Outreach continue to give students outstanding skills for leadership and ministry in the church. These two co-curricular two programs involve over 50 students in both class time and 6 ministry small groups each week. These programs also give students unique opportunities for mission and creativity; Worship Outreach students wrote and recorded two original songs complete with music videos this year and visited 14 churches to provide music on Sundays, and Discipleship took 12 students on a spring break mission trip to Dallas. Also, thanks to a mentoring grant Discipleship and Worship Outreach received, 15 students had official mentors during the school year and four students visited a seminary last fall. Five students from the two programs made the move into ministry-related fields after graduation, including Lindsey Graber, who will be pursuing a Master of Arts in Systematic Theology at King's College in London starting this fall. Over 22 students are in ministry-related internship positions this summer (at least five of which are Great Plains internships).

Southwestern's **campus ministry** and **department of Philosophy and Religion** are also building on past success. Rev. Ben Hanne was hired as the full-time campus minister last summer, and has started twice-weekly communion on campus. He's also put a strong emphasis on making the school's weekly Chapel service even more student-designed and student-led. The service attracts roughly 75 students, faculty, and staff each week. The department of Philosophy & Religion hosted several popular lectures by prominent scholars including Dr. D. Stephen Long, ethics chair at Southern Methodist University, and Dr. Kevin Watson, assistant professor of Wesleyan and Methodist studies at Candler Divinity School.

Finally, thank you to the Great Plains Conference, whose generous support enabled the college to take five students to Exploration 2015 in Florida to explore a call into ordained ministry. We're grateful to be a part of the United Methodist family in the Great Plains!

HEALTH & WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

Aldersgate Village

Jerry C. Ney, President & CEO

Aldersgate Village has 431 total living units, featuring 176 independent living maintenance-free cottages, garden homes and apartments; 59 assisted living apartments; and a 196 skilled nursing care occupancy. The community is set on a 175-acre campus at 7220 SW Asbury Drive in Topeka, Kansas.

Aldersgate Village continued its mission of providing a comprehensive continuum of quality care to elderly Kansans in a faith-based setting during 2015, despite continuing to face difficult economic times. Overcoming reductions in government funding and Medicare reimbursement cuts over the past several years has made Aldersgate's continued progress even more impressive. Operations have been streamlined and continue to utilize industry best practices throughout. While it has been a significant organizational challenge, Aldersgate has positioned itself as a clinical leader in the region with major hospitals and continues to build and develop its core strength - service.

Major Accomplishments for 2015

Despite the ongoing effects of the challenging economy, Aldersgate's occupancies in 2015 remained stable. The newest service line in the Recovery Center and Sub-Acute units, introduced in 2012, continue to maintain recognition as one of the top rehabilitation centers in the region.

In 2015, the organization completed another major capital improvement to the aging campus. A \$1.2 M redesign of the Manchester Lodge Independent Living main lobby and reception area was completed in June. A remarkable grand transformation; creating a flexible, friendly space for the independent living residents to help foster a sense of community and provide a warm, comfortable, social environment to enjoy. This project followed the 2014 renovation of the Independent Living kitchen and main dining room and achieved another phase of much needed renovation of the common areas of the Independent Living building.

The organization began another major capital improvement project in 2015 with the intention of creating new age-in-place villas on the Bracken Court cul-de-sac. The villas are scheduled to be completed in late fall of 2016 and will provide another added level of service by offering a design with peace of mind in modern, comfortable surroundings, allowing aging adults to live independently longer and not have to move again. The organization also began working jointly with Shawnee County and the City of Topeka in 2015 to reinvigorate the 29th Street entrance by adding new signage monuments, improving traffic flows, and linking Aldersgate's legacy with the vision for the future.

The organization's core strengths, as well as our extended programs, are provided with a foundation in Christian principles. Aldersgate provides a vital service to residents and staff through Pastoral Care, which is led by Pastor Bob Sutton. Through this service, not only do residents enjoy worship services and Bible studies, they also have access to counseling and spiritual guidance on a number of life issues.

Aldersgate remains grateful for Bishop Scott Jones' continued support and involvement in support of the organization. Aldersgate also thanks Topeka district superintendent, Rev. Kay Scarbrough for her commitment and continued service on the Aldersgate Board in 2015. Aldersgate remains very appreciative to the churches of the Great Plains Conference for their continued support of our charitable care program, the Good Samaritan Fund. In 2015 alone, Aldersgate Village provided \$264,000 in direct charitable care. In addition to charitable care, Aldersgate Village provides services under Medicaid for which the reimbursement provides no margin. This amounted to more than \$3,538,000 in care for the most vulnerable population – the frail and elderly who have exhausted their resources.

Aldersgate has been blessed with the collective talent, expertise and ambition needed to be one of the finest retirement communities in the region. We are confident that by harnessing our talented leaders and enhancing our core strengths, we will continue to serve and realize an even more promising and exciting year in 2016.

EmberHope Bylaws

BYLAWS OF EMBERHOPE, INC.

ARTICLE I NAME

The corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Kansas shall be known as EmberHope, Inc., hereinafter called "EmberHope."

ARTICLE II PLACE OF BUSINESS

The principal office of the corporation shall be at 4505 E. 47th St. So. Wichita, Sedgwick, Kansas, but the corporation may also have offices and branch offices at such other places within and without the State of Kansas as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint and the business of the corporation may require.

ARTICLE III PURPOSE

SECTION 1. NOT FOR PROFIT/PURPOSE. This corporation is organized not for profit; the purposes for which it is formed are:

- A. To establish, equip, operate and maintain clinical, developmental and rehabilitative treatment services in a Christian atmosphere for children, youth and families who have problems in adjusting to their living situation. Said corporation shall have the power to establish residential facilities for children and youth; to accept custody of children and youth; to place children and youth for foster care or for the purpose of adoption; to determine problems and develop intervention service programs for children, youth and their families; to develop both treatment and prevention programs; and to conduct research projects; and sponsor educational programs.
- B. To engage in any lawful act or activity for which corporations may be organized under the Kansas general corporation code.

SECTION 2. AUSPICES. The program shall be conducted under the auspices and with the support and approval of and in accordance with the Discipline of the United Methodist

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Church and according to the laws of the State of Kansas or any other state in which business may be conducted.

SECTION 3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. The corporation, its members, officers, directors, employees, agents or representatives, carrying out the purpose of the corporation, shall in no manner unlawfully discriminate against any person, minor or adult, because of race, religion, color, gender, age, physical handicap, national origin, or ancestry.

ARTICLE IV**MEMBERSHIP - BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

SECTION 1. MANAGEMENT AND NUMBER. The property, business and affairs of the corporation shall be governed by a Board of Directors. A range of twelve (12) to eighteen (18) members shall constitute the Board of Directors: a) at least 60% of the Board shall be Clergy or members of the Methodist Church and shall reside in the Kansas part of the Great Plains Conference, equally distributed between the western and eastern part of the State. b) at least four of whom shall be elected at large; c) one (1) member of the Bishop's Cabinet or a Kansas District Superintendent of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church, appointed by the Bishop, all of whom shall have voting power. The Bishop of the Great Plains Conference shall have access to the Board of Trustees at his/her discretion.

Members of the Board of Directors shall also by virtue thereof be members of the corporation. Membership shall terminate upon the expiration of such member's term of appointment as Director, without re-election, or upon such member's resignation or removal as a Director under these Bylaws. Memberships in the corporation shall be nontransferable.

SECTION 2. ELECTION. Except as otherwise provided under Article IV, 6 and 3, the Directors of the corporation shall be elected upon being nominated by a Development Committee, upon receiving a majority vote of the members at a Board meeting and approved by the annual conference of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church.

SECTION 3. VACANCIES. Vacancies in newly created Directorships resulting from an increase in the authorized number of Directors may be filled by a majority of the Directors then

in office, although less than a quorum. When one (1) or more Directors shall resign from the Board of Directors, effective at a future date, a majority of the Directors then in office, including those who have so resigned, shall have power to fill such vacancy or vacancies, the vote thereon to take effect when such resignation or resignations shall become effective.

SECTION 4. TERM. Directors shall assume office at the close of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors, or a special meeting at which time their election is declared, and shall serve for a three (3) year term and thereafter until their successor shall have been duly elected by the Board. Directors may serve for up to three (3) terms. Terms will end at the close of the annual meeting. A Director may be elected for up to three (3) consecutive terms.

The only exception to this regulation of terms shall be: a) when the outgoing Board Chair shall have served three (3) complete terms, as that Director shall continue to serve until the succeeding Board Chair has completed the term of Chair; or b) when a member is no longer a District Superintendent or Cabinet member and direct-report to the Bishop, yet is voted to the Board as a regular member.

SECTION 5. ATTENDANCE. Directors shall attend Board meetings regularly. Two (2) consecutive absences from Board meetings without notice shall be deemed an immediate resignation from the Board. Three (3) absences from the Board meetings during any one-year period, without notice, shall be deemed an immediate resignation from the Board.

SECTION 6. PARTICIPATION. All Directors shall be prepared for and participate in Board meetings, special briefings, standing committees, ad hoc committees and policy-decision making. Directors shall invest personal energy and skills in the purposes and objectives of the organization and shall make themselves familiar with organizational documents.

SECTION 7. RESIGNATION. Any Director may withdraw from the Board after fulfilling all obligations to it by giving written notice of such intention to the Secretary of the Board, which notice shall be presented to the Board by the Secretary at the first meeting after its receipt.

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SECTION 8. SUSPENSION/EXPULSION. A Director may be suspended for a period or expelled for violation of any of the Bylaws, or provisions of the Board Policy Manual or conduct prejudicial to the best interests of EmberHope. Suspension or expulsion shall be by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership of the Board, provided that notice of the proposed action and the time and place where the Board will take action is given to the Director by registered mail to the Director's last known address at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken thereon. The Director shall be given an opportunity to present a defense at the time and place mentioned in the notice. This section shall not apply to Directors who are deemed to have resigned pursuant to Section 5 above.

SECTION 9. DUTIES OF DIRECTORS. The governance of the corporation shall be vested in the Board of Directors who shall have the following powers and duties, exercised in congruence with a Board Policy Manual adopted by the Board and amended from time to time:

- A. To carry out its duties in a manner not inconsistent with "The Discipline of the United Methodist Church" and the laws of the State of Kansas or any other state where business may be conducted. An annual report covering the conduct of the corporation shall be made to the sessions of the Great Plains Conference.
- B. To give of their personal energy and skills to fulfill the mission of the organization through their interactions with each other, their communities, EmberHope's stakeholders, and EmberHope's employees.
- C. Develop, implement, review and revise Bylaws and policies in regard to the operation of all aspects of the corporation and shall take such actions as necessary to ensure compliance with the Bylaws and policies of the corporation.
- D. To maintain written policies reflecting the values and governance of the structure of the organization.
- E. To represent the stakeholders of EmberHope in the exercise of its governing authority.

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- F. To conduct an annual Board self-appraisal in order to discipline itself and its efforts.
- G. To hire and regularly evaluate the President/CEO.
- H. To participate and assist in fund-raising efforts.
- I. To maintain fiscal responsibility in a manner consistent with the governing structure.
- J. To develop a plan to project future goals and operations of the corporation.
- K. To hold such meetings at such time and place as the Board of Directors deems proper.
- L. To admit members and suspend or expel them by election.
- M. To appoint committees for particular subjects from the members of the Board.
- N. To devise and carry into execution such other measures as the Board deems consistent with the governing structure and expedient to promote the purposes of the corporation.
- O. To make informed decisions and support such decisions once they have been resolved.

SECTION 10. ADMINISTRATION. The Board of Directors shall employ a President/CEO who is a member of the United Methodist Church or an acting member of church in sympathy with the aims and ideals of the United Methodist Church, and endowed with personal characteristics, education and experience appropriate for carrying out the policies adopted by the Board, and who shall officially represent the Board of Directors in the management of the corporation. The President/CEO shall be given the necessary authority and held responsible for the administration of the corporation and all its departments, subject to the policies enacted by the Board of Directors and to such orders as may be issued

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by the Board. More specifically, the authority and duties of the President/CEO shall be contained in a written job description and approved by the Board of Directors. The President/CEO shall, unless otherwise directed by the Board, attend all Board and committee meetings as an ex-officio member of the Board, without any other warrant or appointment and without the right to vote. The President/CEO shall serve as an ex-officio member of the United Methodist Youthville Foundation Board of Trustees.

SECTION 11. VESTED INTERESTS. Directors shall identify all conflicts of interest and cause the Board to resolve conflicts that are unacceptable. Directors shall have no direct or indirect financial interest in the assets or leases of EmberHope, Inc. No contact or transaction between this corporation and one (1) or more of its Directors or officers, or between this corporation and any other corporation, partnership, association or other organization in which one (1) or more of its Directors or officers are officers or Directors or have a financial interest, shall be void or voidable solely for this reason, or solely because the Director or officer is present at or participates in the meeting of the Board which authorizes the contract or transaction, or solely because his/her or their votes are counted for such purpose, if:

- A. The material facts as to his/her relationship or interest as to the contract or transaction are disclosed or are known to the Board of Directors and the Board in good faith authorized the contract or transaction by the affirmative votes of a majority of the disinterested Directors even though the disinterested Directors be less than a quorum.
- B. The contract or transaction is fair as to the corporation as of the time it is authorized, approved or ratified by the Board of Directors.

Any such contracts shall not be volatile of the relevant prescriptions against use or application of EmberHope funds or assets for private benefit. No contract, transaction or act shall be taken on behalf of EmberHope which would result in the denial of the tax exemption under the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may be amended.

This corporation shall not have or exercise any power or authority either expressly, by interpretation, or by operation of law, nor shall it directly or indirectly engage in any activity that would prevent this corporation from qualifying (and continuing to qualify) as an organization described in 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law). No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, nor shall the corporation intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

This corporation shall never be operated for the primary purpose of carrying on a trade or business for profit.

No compensation or payment shall ever be paid or made to any member, officer, director, trustee, creator, or organizer of this corporation, or substantial contributor to it, except as an allowance for actual expenditures or services actually made or rendered to or for this corporation, and neither the whole nor any portion of the assets or net earnings, current or accumulated, of this corporation shall ever be distributed to or divided among any such persons; provided, further, that neither the whole nor any part or portion of such assets or net earnings shall ever be used for, accrue to or inure to the benefit of any member or private individual within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law)."

SECTION 12. NEPOTISM. When a Director has a relative on the staff of EmberHope, Inc., he/she will refrain from being part of any action involving financial expenditures which, in any way, relate to this staff person's responsibilities.

SECTION 13. REIMBURSEMENT. Directors will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing official duties but no honorariums or fees for services will be paid.

SECTION 14. MEETINGS. The annual business meeting of the Board of Directors and the other members of the corporation shall be held in September at the registered office of the corporation or at such other place as may be designated

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by the Board. The Board of Directors will meet six (6) times per year with two (2) of the meetings conducted via conference call. The time and place of these meetings shall be set at the annual meeting. Notice of the annual business meeting, and such regular meetings, shall be given by mail or electronically (email or fax) at least ten (10) days prior to said meeting. Special meetings of the Board of Directors or of the Executive Committee may be called by the direction of the Chair or by the Board of Directors upon the request of five (5) members of the Board, provided notice of such meetings shall be given by mail or electronically (email or fax), at least five (5) days prior to said meeting.

SECTION 15. QUORUM. The meeting having been duly called on at least ten (10) days' notice, or such notice being waived as set out in Section 14, the elected voting Directors present shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 16. WAIVER OF NOTICE. The notice required by these Bylaws may be waived by any Director in writing, whether before or after the time stated for notification of a meeting. The presence of any Director at any meeting regularly called shall constitute a waiver by him/her of the notice of said meeting unless he/she shall specifically take exception thereof. Waiver of any notice of meeting by the Board shall be by vote of at least 50% of the members present.

SECTION 17. MEETINGS BY TELEPHONE. Members of the Board of Directors of the corporation, or any committee designated by such Board, may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear one another, and such participation in a meeting shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

SECTION 18. VOTES AND VOTING. All votes required of members of the board hereunder may be by voice vote or show of hands, unless a written ballot is requested, which request may be made by any one (1) Director. Each Director shall have one (1) vote. On occasion voting may be necessary via e-mail at which time each member will vote by e-mail with record being kept of all votes.

SECTION 19. ADJOURNMENT. A majority of the Directors present may adjourn any Directors meeting to meet again at a stated day and hour or until the time fixed for the next regular meeting of the Board.

ARTICLE V
COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. STANDING AND AD HOC COMMITTEES. The Board may designate, by resolution passed by a majority of the whole Board, one (1) or more committees, each committee to consist of one (1) or more of the Directors of the corporation. Standing committees appointed by the Board shall have committee chairs and membership appointed annually by the Board Chair. Ad hoc committees may be appointed for specific, limited purposes, with the committee to disband when its assigned task or tasks are concluded. Committees shall have no executive or deciding authority, except when such authority has been specifically granted by the Board in a resolution. To the extent such authority is granted, any such committee, including ad hoc committees, shall have and may exercise its powers in the governance of business and affairs of the corporation, and may authorize the seal of the corporation to be affixed to all papers which require it, but no such committee shall have the power or authority to reform or amend the Bylaws. Such committee or committees shall have such name or names that may be determined from time to time by resolution adopted by the Board.

SECTION 2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Board Chair, Secretary and Past Board Chair and up to three (3) Directors chosen by the Chair. The Executive Committee may act on behalf of the Board in all matters delegated to it by specific action of the Board, including urgent legal issues, urgent financial issues, urgent personnel issues regarding the President/CEO and annual evaluation and salary of the President/CEO. Any action taken by the Executive Committee between Board meetings shall be reported to the full Board at the next scheduled meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. Three (3) Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

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SECTION 3. BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. The Board Development Committee shall consist of three (3) or more Directors appointed annually by the Board Chair. The Board Development Committee shall be responsible for nominating a Board Chair and a Board Secretary nomination of Directors, recommending criteria for selection of Directors, providing orientation and on-going training to Directors, reviewing participation of Directors, recommending action regarding nonparticipating members and recommending suspension or expulsion of Directors. Upon approval of Director nominees, the Board Development Committee will offer names of nominees to the Annual Conference of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church for approval. The Board Development Committee will endeavor to maintain a Board which is geographically representative of the organization's constituency.

SECTION 4. FINANCE COMMITTEE. The Finance Committee shall consist of three (3) or more Directors appointed annually by the Board Chair. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for outlining acceptable limits for asset control and fiscal risk, and shall adopt and implement a Finance Policy and Guideline for that purpose. The committee may act on behalf of the Board in all matters delegated to it by the Board, including oversight of significant purchases or sales of property and investment of funds. The committee shall arrange for an annual external audit of finances by an independent firm of Independent Certified Public Accountants recommended by the committee and approved by the Board. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall serve as the Treasurer of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 5. COMMITTEE VACANCIES. The Chair is empowered to fill any committee vacancies.

**ARTICLE VI
OFFICERS**

SECTION 1. OFFICERS. The officers of the corporation shall be a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

SECTION 2. ELECTION AND TERM. The corporation's Board of Directors Chair, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected at a meeting prior to the annual meeting so that the elected officers can begin their service at the close of the annual

meeting. Such officers shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified or until their earlier resignation or removal. Officers shall have a term limit of two (2) consecutive, two (2) year terms. The officer's re-election requires a majority vote by the Board.

SECTION 3. REMOVAL. Officers elected by the Board may be removed at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Board.

SECTION 4. VACANCIES. In case any officer position shall become vacant by reason of death, resignation, removal or otherwise, the Directors then in office, even though less than a majority of the entire Board may be a majority vote of those voting, choose a successor or successors for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VII
EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS

SECTION 1. CHECKS, DRAFTS AND DEPOSITORY FUNDS. The Board shall designate the depository or depositories for the funds of the corporation. All checks, drafts, notes and orders for payment of money, arising in the normal conduct of the business of the corporation, shall be signed by at least one (1) of the following: The Chair designate, Secretary, Secretary designate, President/CEO, or Chief Financial Officer with a limit of \$5,000.00. Checks for amounts exceeding \$5,000.00 shall be signed by at least two (2) of the following: The Chair, Chair designee, Secretary, Secretary designate, President/CEO, Chief Financial Officer, and Senior Executive Assistant to the President/CEO.

SECTION 2. WRITTEN INSTRUMENTS. Any written obligations or other written instruments of the corporation shall be signed on its behalf by the Chair or Chair designate and the Secretary or Secretary designate unless otherwise ordered at a meeting of the Directors. The corporate seal shall be in the custody of the Secretary or designated staff member of the agency, but any officer of the corporation shall have the authority to affix the corporate seal to any instrument that may require it.

ARTICLE VIII
FISCAL YEAR

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The fiscal year for the corporation shall be such period of twelve months as the Board of Directors shall determine.

ARTICLE IX
LIABILITY OF DIRECTORS

No Director shall be answerable for loss in investments made in good faith. No Director shall be liable for the acts or omissions of any other Director or of any accountant, agent, counsel, fiduciary or custodian selected with reasonable care. Each Director shall be fully protected in acting upon any instrument, certificate or paper, believed by him or her to be genuine and to be signed or presented by the proper person or persons, and no Director shall be under any duty to make any investigation or inquiry as to any statements contained in any such writing and may accept the same as conclusive evidence of the truth and accuracy of the statements.

When a person is a party, is threatened to be made a party, or was a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, other than an action by or in the right of the corporation, because he or she was a director or officer of the corporation, or of another corporation serving at the request of this corporation, that person shall be indemnified by the corporation according to the provisions of this section.

Indemnification shall be made for expenses, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, including attorney fees, if such person acted in good faith and in a manner such person reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation; and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe such person's conduct was unlawful. Indemnification shall also be made in those situations in which the officer or director is successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceeding or in defense of any issue or matter therein.

The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon plea of no contest

shall not itself create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which such person reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and, in a criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that such person's conduct was unlawful. The determination that the person has met the standard of conduct warranting indemnification may be made by:

- A. The Board of Directors by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of Directors who were not parties to such action, suit or proceeding, or
- B. If such quorum is not obtainable, or even if obtainable, a quorum of disinterested Directors directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

If the action, suit or proceeding is one by or in the right of the corporation, no indemnification shall be allowed for any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall be found liable to the corporation unless and only to the extent that the court in which such action was brought determines that, despite the finding of liability, but in view of all the circumstances, the person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity. In such circumstances, the court will also determine the expenses for which indemnity is appropriate.

Expenses incurred may be paid in advance of final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding upon receipt of a promissory note or other written obligation to repay expenses if it is ultimately decided that the Director or officer is not entitled to be indemnified by the corporation.

The indemnification provided for shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a Director or officer and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person.

Application for indemnity may be made either by the Director or officer involved, or by the attorney or other person rendering services to him or her in connection with the defense and the corporation may pay the fees and expenses directly to the attorney or other person although he or she is not a party to the proceeding. Notice of the application for such indemnity shall be served upon the corporation, its receiver, or its trustee, and upon the plaintiff and other

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parties to the proceeding. The application shall state whether the action is or is not one brought by or in the right of the corporation, the nature and status of the proceeding, and the facts supporting the applicant's qualification for indemnification.

ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Directors, or electronically, by a two-thirds vote of the members, provided the Board has had an opportunity to discuss changes at a regular meeting or a special meeting and provided the proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to members of the Board of Directors at least one (1) month previous, and that attention shall have been called to the proposed amendment in the notices issued. The Bylaws and any amendments must be subject to approval by the Annual Conference of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church; including the Bishop and Directors of Connectional Ministries.

Epworth Village

Margaret Donovan, CEO

Epworth Village, Inc. has been in the rebuilding process this past year. Harrietta Reynolds, the interim CEO worked Epworth Village out of crisis, stabilized the organization and moved Epworth Village into the rebuilding phase. Margaret Donovan began as the new CEO in September and she, staff and the board of directors are continuing the rebuilding process. This includes rebuilding 1) programs and services, 2) community connections and collaborations, 3) financial stability, 4) and charting the future of Epworth Village, Inc. through the development of a five-year strategic plan.

Both the Epworth Village, Inc. Board of Directors and the Epworth Village Foundation Board of Directors reorganized and are actively engaged in the rebuilding process and moving Epworth forward. The Foundation Board recently held a 2-day working session in which they adopted new by-laws, clarified its mission in relation to supporting Epworth Village, defined its role and set goals enumerating a variety of ways to provide current and future support to Epworth Village and for becoming the "Foundation for Epworth Village".

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In reorganizing, Epworth Village, Inc. Board revised and updated its by-laws, revisited and defined its role and responsibilities and actively provides oversight of the organization and the finances. The Board also adopted policies and procedures to ensure organizational accountability, efficiency and quality services. Epworth Village had a clean audit for 2015 and in fact ended the year in the black.

Epworth Village began serving girls for the first time in approximately 25 years. In June 2015 with the help of faithful Epworth supporters, Dinsdale Cottage group home for girls opened with the first girl arriving in July. Our school also became co-educational at this time providing classroom style education to group home youth as well as students from surrounding areas that have special education needs due to behavioral issues that cannot be met by their local school.

Bishop Scott Jones appointed Harrietta Reynolds, Home Missionary, to continue building the Partners Program with United Methodist Churches and individuals. The Epworth Partners Program is a vital connection to UM Churches. The Partners' goal is to raise awareness about Epworth Villages' mission, program, and work, and invite church wide participation in this Christ-like ministry.

In 2015, Epworth Village, Inc. served 260 children and 72 families through our group home, agency sponsored foster care, intensive family preservation services, in-home services and our school. This was accomplished through the dedicated service of staff and the support, including prayers, of the entire United Methodist Church.

Over the next year we plan to move our school to a more energy efficient building. We are developing transitional living services for youth who age out in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in order to prepare them for success at independent living and plan to implement this important service this year. We will continue to enhance our services, grow our programs and build upon our strengths. Together, as a part of the living Body of Christ, we will continue the ministry and mission to serve children and families in crisis and bring hope and healing to those we serve.

GraceMed Health Clinic, Inc.

David Sanford, CEO

The GraceMed health care ministry had another "banner year" in 2015. The breadth and depth of services we offer increased. We provided medical, dental and/or vision care for 36,135 unduplicated patients through 86,540 patient visits - a 3.1% increase from 2014.

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But the numbers don't tell the real story of GraceMed. Our most important goal is to show and share the love and compassion of Jesus Christ with people who are hurting, people who need care and encouragement.

During the year, we opened a new school-based clinic at Jardine Middle School in the low-income housing area of southeast Wichita called Planeview. In addition, GraceMed will open another school-based clinic in April 2016 on the campus of West High School providing primary medical and dental hygiene services not only for its students, but other children, adults and seniors within the surrounding community. GraceMed looks forward to serving this community and has plans to open two additional clinics, one near Twin Lakes in the northwest quadrant of Wichita and another on the campus of the South YMCA in early 2017.

In addition to adding new locations to serve residents in the various 'health care deserts' of Wichita, GraceMed has expanded its scope of services. We remodeled our main clinic to provide more vision services, adding one optometrist. We created space for an in-house pharmacy and plan to open it during 2016. And, we received funding to initiate substance abuse services for GraceMed patients in partnership with our local community mental health center. Our ultimate objective is to provide holistic care for each patient including a focus on physical, mental and spiritual health.

God continues to bring more opportunities our way. In 2016, we will have the opportunity to assume responsibility for the community health center in Topeka, KS, bringing a Christ-centered health care ministry to that community. And, GraceMed has been invited to establish a satellite clinic in McPherson, KS. He certainly knows many people still do not have access to quality health care in Kansas. In this regard, GraceMed strongly advocates for United Methodists to elect state representatives who have value systems prioritizing the work that still needs to be completed for the poor and disenfranchised. Access to quality health care should be a right and not a privilege in our state. Approving KanCare or Medicaid expansion would provide health insurance coverage for 150,000 Kansans who are currently uninsured.

With one out of every ten Wichita residents receiving some form of care from GraceMed in 2015, God has given us a huge opportunity and responsibility to minister well to people. Based on the fact that we see so many people in our clinics, we not only have a chance to touch and change individual lives, but impact community health as well. Overall, through our ministry, the percentage of area children receiving appropriate immunizations has risen over the years. People

with Type 2 diabetes have seen improved blood sugar levels and fewer health problems. Yet, the most important part of our ministry is sharing the Good News with people through prayer, encouragement and witness – a focus that may change their lives forever.

As a Christ-centered health care ministry of the United Methodist Church, GraceMed’s objective is to use the platform of health care as a way to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With mission-minded and spirit-filled providers, managers and staff, led by our Chaplain, our most important goal is to show and share the love and compassion of Jesus Christ with those who are hurting, those who need care and those who need encouragement.

GraceMed’s relationship with the Great Plains United Methodist Church is very important. GraceMed was established through the church in 1979 and has maintained a strong relationship ever since. We continue to appreciate the prayers, referrals and financial support of the church as we continue to be the “hands and feet” in providing and sharing Christ with the people of south central Kansas.

Released and Restored

by Rev. Ruth Karlsson, director

Released and Restored continues to share the grace, mercy and love of Christ Jesus with an extremely marginalized population group, prison and jail inmates, the “very least of the least of these.”

Released and Restored has three amazing staff persons, two of whom have been previously incarcerated, and a fantastic corps of 19 dedicated volunteers, three of whom have also been previously incarcerated enable this organization to provide structured re-entry pre programming to individuals in the following correctional facilities:

- Lancaster County Adult Detention Facility
- Nebraska Correctional Center for Women
- Nebraska State Penitentiary
- Omaha Correctional Center

In addition, Pastor Ruth Karlsson, provides pastoral care and counseling to individuals in the following facilities:

- Lincoln Correctional Center
- Lincoln Regional Center
- Nebraska State Penitentiary
- Omaha Correctional Center
- Tecumseh State Correctional Institution

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One of our greatest joys is our collaboration with the New Visions Community in Lincoln. The Released and Restored offices, computer lab and classroom are located at the St James Campus of the NV Community in Lincoln. There we conduct our Life Skills/Re-Entry Prep program each week day, and our Safe Haven program every Saturday evening.

The Safe Haven program provides a weekly opportunity for pro-social activity for women and men who have been released from prison or jail, or who are in recovery. Safe Haven provides individuals time to enjoy fun and fellowship in an intentionally safe and sober environment, and it provides an alternative to going back to the anti-social and destructive patterns of behavior that resulted in incarceration in the first place.

More information is available at our website:

www.releasedandrestored.org

If you'd like to become involved in a truly transformational ministry, please contact us. 402-806-0565

info@releasedandrestored.org

Released and Restored is Advance #713, of the Great Plains Annual Conference.

MINISTRIES WITH THE POOR**Ogden Friendship House****United Methodist Church and the House of Hope**

Rev. Diana Chapel

To the Great Plains Conference: "Every time we think of you, we thank God for you. Day and night you're in our prayers as we call to mind your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope in following our Master, Jesus Christ, before God our Father." (1 Thess 1:2-3, the Message).

Without your prayers, financial support and volunteer labor, we could not do what God has allowed us to do in Ogden, KS. Ogden has the highest rates of poverty in Riley County, KS, with 75% of our school children on a free and reduced lunch program. Ogden lacks many basic amenities such as a grocery store, employment opportunities, banking, or medical services.

With a staff of one, (Diana, church pastor and director of outreach) cooperation, volunteers and collaboration are key. We are blessed with many volunteers from our area churches, mission volunteers and our many partner agencies. The Great Plains Conference provides much needed financial support; giving to conference askings makes it possible.

In 2015, we provided services to: **2,734** thrift store clients; **5,072** monthly mobile food pantry clients; **844** House of Hope food pantry clients; **1,529** meals to elderly, children and adults; **62** families received emergency financial aid; **24** children attended after school programs. New this year: Narcotics Anonymous began meetings in our space twice a week. Alcoholics Anonymous also meets twice a week in our meeting space. All this was done with a total church/outreach center budget of under \$85,000.

God's economy is a wonderful thing! It is only possible with the help of our donors and volunteers. Because of the many relationships that have been built, we are able to make it all happen.

Kansas State University students continue to lend a hand. Our KSU Wesley House leads the after school program. The House of Hope and KSU Leadership Studies do specific projects together every semester to improve the lives of Ogden residents. New this year: KSU School of Family Studies has provided an intern for the semester. We are hopeful that this new venture continues as a win-win for the House of Hope, Ogden residents and the student intern.

Our local churches (Ogden Bible Church and Ogden Baptist) continue to work with Ogden Friendship House UMC to provide nourishment of the spiritual kind (quarterly community worship, summer VBS) as well as nourishing meals for the entire Ogden community (quarterly potlucks, monthly dinners, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners).

A new ecumenical development is igniting excitement among our young people. "The House," a non-profit tea and coffee shop, is gearing up for a summer opening. Led by Ogden Baptist youth leaders, The House will be a spot for teens and young adults to gather, play games, watch movies and be mentored by local pastors and other Christian leaders. Job training, resume writing, dress for success and other events are planned to prepare our local young people for a more successful life. The House of Hope has assisted in this endeavor through fund raising, organizing volunteer labor, and procuring furnishings, and will continue to be a long term partner for "The House."

Our partnership with Ogden Elementary School continues to be a bright spot for the church. Every month we provide teachers with snacks and sweets, and provide meals during parent/teacher conferences. The beginning of the school year, Ogden churches came together and donated several hundred pounds of school supplies and \$2,000 to help the school purchase basic supplies, since their supply budget was cut 75%. Through some grant writing, we have helped generate even more funds throughout the year to help our school.

Finally, in order to be more responsive to the needs of our community, we are experimenting with extended hours to better meet the needs of the working poor. So far, this initiative looks promising. We look forward to continue to be blessed to be a blessing in Ogden, KS.

Justice For Our Neighbors of Nebraska

Emiliano Lerda, JD, LLM, Executive Director

Justice For Our Neighbors of Nebraska (JFON-NE) is a faith-driven, nonprofit ministry welcoming immigrants into our churches and communities by providing free, high quality immigration legal services, education and advocacy. Our goal is to reduce poverty and inequality by providing holistic legal services that empower immigrants to participate in civic life and effect systemic change. Based in Omaha, Neb., JFON-NE is a member of the National Justice For Our Neighbors (National JFON) network which consists of 14 other sites offering more than 35 legal clinics for immigration services across our nation. National JFON is a United Methodist ministry started by and affiliated with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

In 2015, JFON-NE responded to the immigration legal needs across Nebraska and southwest Iowa by working 2,011 cases for clients from 44 different countries, **achieving a 720% increase in cases served since 2010**. Only the most vulnerable immigrants who have the fewest resources are eligible for services: those living in extreme poverty, victims fleeing domestic violence, children who have been abused and abandoned, refugees, and asylees. Clients received free professional services from ten full-time, licensed attorneys; three paralegals; and three management staff members. In 2015, JFON-NE partner (and next-door-neighbor), Grace United Methodist Church, helped to accommodate the need for three new offices by renting the space to JFON-NE at a very affordable rate.

Services are partially funded through the 1% Mission Agency Support from the Great Plains Conference. With this support JFON-NE is able to fulfill the biblical mission according to Leviticus 19:33-34: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Monthly clinics continue to be held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Grand Island and First United Methodist Church/Nuevo Pacto in Lexington. Apart from these locations, JFON-NE has developed legal clinics and one-on-one immigration legal consultations and services at strategically-located sites throughout the Omaha metro area. In 2015, JFON-NE added new staff attorneys, allowing us to champion efforts that include:

- A partnership with Completely KIDS positioned our new Child Welfare Attorneys to rapidly respond to an acute rise in family casework due to the surge of children crossing U.S. borders.
- A new full-time Rural Capacity Building Attorney opened an office in Lexington, NE, and is the only immigration attorney in Nebraska from Lexington to the Colorado border.
- A new Access to Justice Attorney worked side-by-side with law enforcement agencies to streamline procedures and obtain safety and independence for victims of domestic violence.
- A three-year grant from the Weitz Family Foundation will develop and implement a partnership with the Heartland Workers Center to provide expertise at the intersection of immigration and employment law.
- The pro bono *Attorney for the Day* program channeled the efforts of volunteering attorneys, resulting in representation of virtually every immigrant child who appeared before the Omaha Immigration Court.

JFON-NE's 2015 education and advocacy initiatives helped raise awareness of the plight of immigrants:

- JFON-NE staff conducted 114 presentations reaching 2,990 individuals. Last fall, JFON-NE collaborated with the Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team in bringing a staff member from the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) to our conference for grassroots training in immigration advocacy. Another GBCS staff came in March to provide follow-up training.
- JFON-NE supported the efforts of Young Nebraskans in Action to contribute to the passage of Legislative Bill 623, allowing recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to obtain Nebraska driver's licenses.

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- In 2015 JFON-NE was honored by the Women's Fund of Omaha with its *Excellence in Service to Women Award* and by the Omaha Bar Association with its *Public Service Award*.
- JFON-NE's brand-new fundraiser, Food Truck World Tour 2015, raised \$121,000.
- In January 2016, a JFON-NE attorney made a Know Your Rights presentation requested by Comunidad Cristiana (St. James United Methodist Church in Bellevue). Deportation Emergency Resource folders were distributed.
- In March, 2016, a JFON-NE attorney was one of the presenters in a webinar about welcoming refugees that the Great Plains Mercy & Justice Team offered.

The continued support from The Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church has allowed JFON-NE to build more capacity for immigration legal services where there are few or none available. Staff attorneys work alongside volunteers at each clinic site. The volunteers' sacrificial contributions of time, talent and income allow immigrants to ultimately find places to belong, ways to contribute, and friends who care about their lives here. More information regarding JFON-NE and the clients whose lives were touched through our collaboration with The Great Plains Conference is available in our 2015 annual report at www.jfon-ne.org

United Methodist Open Door

Open Door is a public charity that provides food, clothing and shelter to those in need in south central Kansas. The agency has the largest food pantry in the Wichita area, distributes government commodities to elders in 11 Kansas counties, operates a day shelter for the homeless that serves over 200 a day, provides housing and does intensive home-based case management with low income families to prevent homelessness. Last year the agency served almost 34,000 unduplicated individuals.

In February 2015 Open Door started a new program called Family Rapid Rehousing. This is a Permanent Supportive Housing program that provides tenant based rental assistance to homeless families for up to 12 months. Case management and other supportive services help the families maintain housing on their own even after the rental assistance ends. In the short time since its inception, Open Door has already housed 27 families.

Open Door is also working with our partners, United Way of the Plains and Miracles Inc., to implement a Permanent Supportive Housing program serving chronic homeless individuals with a dual diagnosis of mental health and addiction disorders. The program will provide housing to approximately 19 individuals a year when it is fully operational.

Finally, in 2014 Open Door started a \$2.75 million capital campaign to create a food distribution center in the north central part of Wichita. The new facility will replace the two existing well-worn buildings on North Mosley that house both our Community Food Ministry (largest food pantry in the area) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (government food program for elders in 11 counties in south central Kansas). This new adventure is possible through a partnership with the Great Plains Conference. In May 2015, the conference trustees closed on one of the former Cessna training buildings at 21st St. North and Opportunity Drive in Wichita. The trustees are leasing the building to Open Door until our capital campaign raises enough funds to purchase the building from the conference Trustees.

In January 2016, The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation awarded Open Door a \$500,000 challenge grant. As of April 2016, the agency needs to raise an additional \$410,000 to receive the Mabee Foundation funds and complete the capital campaign. Textron Aviation, Cargill, The Lattner Foundation, The Dwayne and Velma Wallace Foundation, The Goebel Family Star Lumber Foundation, INTRUST Bank, Delta Dental, The Daniel J. Taylor Foundation and many other private donors have given generous early gifts. A significant program readiness gift was given by the Kansas Health Foundation for equipment, furniture and fixtures. We hope to reach our campaign goal by end of summer 2016 and be operating out of our new facility by the end of the year or first of 2017.

Open Door is very thankful for the close connections between our ministry and the Great Plains Conference. Together, we are truly United Methodist in action!

For more information on the capital campaign or other ministries of United Methodist Open Door, email administration@umopendoor.org or call 316.265.9371.

**United Methodist Ministries, Missouri River District
Planting the Seeds for Another 50 Years**

2016 is a milestone year for United Methodist Ministries, marking 50 years of prophetic mission and justice work in our Conference. Founded out of the Annual Conference held at First United Methodist Church in Omaha in 1966, United Methodist Ministries has worked for justice in many arenas over the past five decades. Most notably, United Methodist Ministries had a hand in forming Youth Emergency Services, which provides services to homeless youth; Together, which offers general crisis services; and the Charles Drew Health Center in North Omaha. In addition, 2015 marked the 10th anniversary of the Big Garden, a current program that was started by United Methodist Ministries.

The Big Garden has experienced tremendous growth during the past year. First and foremost, we have increased our garden network to include more than 140 gardens in Nebraska, Kansas, and Southwest Iowa. This means that more than 140 schools, churches, and neighborhoods are benefiting from learning to grow their own food and having access to fresh, healthy produce. In 2014, we estimate that 82.5 tons of produce were grown across the Big Garden network. In 2015, the network grew more than 88 tons of produce!

In the past year, we have re-evaluated and realigned job roles and titles within our organization. Our Church and Community Worker, Deb Keeney, retired during the summer. Cait Caughey, our Education & Programming Coordinator, became a full-time employee. Matt Freeman, who had previously served as Director of the Big Garden, transitioned to Director of Development. In January of 2016, we hired Matthew Cronin to serve as Program Coordinator, which combines responsibilities from Deb Keeney's job and the former Big Garden Director role.

We had an outstanding team of six summer interns who taught classes in a dozen schools and child care centers in the Omaha area, using our proprietary 10-week children's gardening curriculum. They taught roughly 400 children each week how to grow, harvest, and preserve their own food. They also included lessons on soil health and pollinators. In addition, the children were able to meet farmers from surrounding communities, which was a big hit.

Springboarding off our summer program, in August we began teaching year-round after-school classes in three Omaha middle schools in collaboration with Partnership for Kids. This program fills

a vital niche for children who do not have a caregiver home after school. Mary Hanten, one of our summer interns, stayed on to help teach these classes.

The Big Garden continued to offer its usual programming throughout the year, as well. We welcomed mission teams from across the Conference and region, including several teams from the Church of the Resurrection. We also continued to offer our “Growing Gardeners” classes, workshops, and events for the community on topics pertaining to gardening and food systems. The Growing Gardeners events have been quite popular, reaching more than 500 people each quarter. In the fall, we held our second annual Harvest for Hunger Day of Service during which we bring church volunteers together to glean nearby farms for local pantries.

The spring of 2016 has been an incredible time of rejoicing and celebration for United Methodist Ministries and the Big Garden. After two years of non-viable options, we found and purchased our first-ever property, in Northeast Omaha. A former garden nursery, the new Big Garden campus has the necessary infrastructure to allow us to run our programs more efficiently and successfully. This infrastructure includes running water, a 3000 square-foot work shed, office space, two greenhouses, and a public building where we will be able to offer on-site classes and workshops for the community. This is all situated on nearly 2 acres of land which is ample space for public demonstration gardens and possibly even chickens and bees in the future.

In April of 2016, United Methodist Ministries celebrated its 50th anniversary by holding a two-day event at First United Methodist Church in Omaha and a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Big Garden campus. The dinner banquet drew nearly 150 people, and featured Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary and CEO of the United Methodist Women, as keynote speaker. Sharon Elrod, widow of United Methodist Ministries’ first Executive Director, Jerry Elrod, was also an honorary guest. Other pioneers and past executive directors were also in attendance, and it was a great celebration of all that United Methodist Ministries has contributed to our Conference. We are thankful for all that the past has brought us, and we look forward to 50 more years of prophetic mission and justice ministry.

Wesley House Report

by Marcee Binder

Last year was an exciting year at Wesley House. Thank you for all the donations, financial contributions and prayers we have received from all over the Great Plains; it is a blessing to be able to serve in this capacity.

In 2015, we served over 19,000 duplicated clients in the food pantry. This is incredible considering the size of the building and the number of staff that we have. If it were not for the volunteers, we would not be able to touch so many lives with bags of food.

Also in 2015, we gave out 2400 bags of supplemental food with the Children's Summer Feeding Program. Six hundred twenty-five children were helped through our Back to School program by receiving such items as jeans, shoes, backpacks and school supplies. Cozy Kids gave winter coats to 497 children. We were able to give out 147 fans thanks to a wonderful donation of fans from Westar Energy. Our biggest project of the year was the Christmas Box. We were able to give 3,575 people boxes of food, which was enough for Christmas dinner and breakfast. The box also included a wonderful selection of hygiene products and household cleaning items.

Last year was a year of tremendous blessings for Wesley House. We were selected as a final participant out of 33 other agencies for the Skubitz Foundation. We received a grant for over \$44,000, which allowed us to construct a building so that we could operate a daytime homeless shelter. This was an opportunity for us to really know who our neighbors were and to give them a safe place to go. We also decided to apply for federal grants this year and received the Emergency Solutions Grant. This grant allowed us to hire a ¾ time homeless case manager, feed our homeless clients breakfast and lunch and also pay the daily operation cost of the homeless day shelter including money to offer boots, tennis shoes and such to our clients when they find jobs. Through a grant from the Southeast Kansas Community Foundation, we were able to purchase two computers for the day shelter so the clients could search for jobs and housing. Participants of the day shelter also receive first access to laundry and shower facilities. This has allowed us to form wonderful partnerships with Kansas Legal Aid, Crawford County Mental Health, Wildcat District K-State Extension Office, Pittsburg Law Enforcement, City of Pittsburg Housing Authority and the City of Pittsburg Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention Program and many others. It has also fostered a fantastic partnership with Department of Children and Family's GOALS program and Vocational

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Rehabilitation program. Both of these programs give those who are difficult to place in employment because of mental and physical disabilities some additional services including job skills to make this process easier. All of these wrap-around services that we are able to offer are changing people's lives. Since the program went live in September, we have had 38 people enrolled in the program, and 11 have moved into stable housing. Over 150 people have utilized the homeless day shelter seeking refuge from the elements and the streets. There is still a lot of work to be done, but we know who our neighbors are and we are changing their worlds.

We have many things in place for 2016. We are getting ready to start an enewsletter. If you would like to be a part of this, please email me at wesleyhousepastor@yahoo.com. We would like to figure out emergency night time sheltering for those who are the most vulnerable when the weather is rearing its nasty head. We want a place for people to go so that they will not die on the streets. We would like to bring a service dog to Wesley House. We believe that the contact of an animal would help our most vulnerable clients when they are meeting with us. Finally, we are exploring the possibility of hiring a Family Community Health Worker. This position would help us to know who our food pantry clients are and plug them back into the community to maximize their resources. Our numbers continue to rise at a much higher rate than our donations so we would like to see how our clients are using the resources they have to move from merely surviving to thriving. We are excited about this potential to know our neighbors better.

If you have any questions, ideas or just want to chat, please feel free to contact me. My email is wesleyhousepastor@yahoo.com and my phone is 620-232-3760 ext. 2. Thank you again for everything the Great Plains does for Wesley House.

RETREAT CENTERS**Forest Park Conference & Retreat Center**

Rev. Kevin Rea, Resident Director

Jennifer Rea, Executive Director

Michael Turner, Chair

2015 was a year filled with excitement, significant changes and challenges at Forest Park. It was exciting as Forest Park began June with new park directors and held our first Summer Day Camp in connection with USD 501's Free Summer Meal Program. Children

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from the Topeka area arrived for a free breakfast, stayed for activities and lessons, then left following a free lunch. The two-week program was supported by several UM churches in the Topeka District, as well as local Topeka groups like the Topeka Zoo, 4H, Master Gardeners, and the Topeka Metro. We are looking forward to expanding our Day Camp to three weeks in 2016.

It was an exciting year as we hosted over 60 groups, a Blackwood Brothers gospel concert and 200 third-graders who attended our Science is a Blast program with Mr. Wizard, Dr. Steve Jacobs. Events ranged from week-long church retreats including the traditional Summer Assembly to weekend retreats with groups such as Boy Scouts and InterVarsity Campus Ministry. We hosted training events for the Kansas Department of Corrections and the Kansas Department of Transportation and other day use activities such as a Fourth of July Parade for Sunflower Supports, church picnics, family reunions, and weddings. Currently, the first half of 2016 reflects a higher usage than the numbers from 2015.

There were many exciting and significant changes at Forest Park. A kitchenette was added to our Quonset Hut to make it a fully self-contained building for personal retreats or small groups of 8 to 10 people. A kitchenette and projection wall were added to Hickory Hall along with new tables and chairs to address the needs of groups up to 50 for meetings and gatherings. Three unusable buildings were taken down and three more are scheduled for removal in 2016.

In January 2016, the first of two 11-person AmeriCorps teams arrived at Forest Park to give 3 months of service to the park. The second AmeriCorps team arrives in mid-April and will work at the park through mid-July.

With the help of the AmeriCorps Teams, one mile of prayer/walking trail was cut around the park. The two meeting rooms in the Tabernacle were gutted. New windows, insulation, drywall, lighting and carpeting are being installed. Heating and air conditioning ducts have been installed to make the meeting rooms usable year round for small groups. The meeting rooms are scheduled to be available for use by June 2016.

Several other cabins were re-wired, insulated dry-walled and prepped for heat and A/C. Accessibility ramps were added to several of the buildings with the help of Roger Dressler from Common Ground and the labor of AmeriCorps members. A new playground, signs, landscaping, and painting have been added to the park to enhance our guests' experience.

The excitement and significant changes at Forest Park have come about because of God's blessing of increased park usage and the support of individuals, churches and community groups. However, the excitement and changes do come with challenges of time and money. In July 2016, our Facilities Manager will move from part-time to full-time to help with the park's growing use. Upgrades to the park's infrastructure of electricity and sewage will need to be addressed to meet the growing need.

Forest Park looks toward 2016 and beyond with excitement and hope as we expand our Day Camp and community involvement, provide local churches and pastors with the resources necessary to empower their ministry through retreats and day events, add additional activities such as prayer/walking trails, recreation centers, and resource development for personal and group use. In all of this, with God's guidance, we strive to fulfill our mission: To provide Christian hospitality in a nature setting for those seeking refuge from a world of chaos for the renewal of mind, body and spirit.

SOUTH CENTRAL JURISDICTION

South Central Jurisdiction Report

The time for the 2016 Jurisdictional Conference is near. The thirteenth session of the South Central Jurisdictional Conference since unification in 1939 will be in Wichita, Kansas, July 13-16. Business sessions are at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and worship services at First United Methodist Church.

There are three bishops to be elected. Fifty-two bishops have been elected since 1944. The opening worship on Wednesday evening, July 12, will be a memorial service and Holy Communion.

There will be 216 voting delegates to this Conference. That is fifty fewer than 2012. Election of a bishop requires sixty-percent of valid ballots cast to be elected. That would be 130, if all delegates vote on a ballot. Any elder in good standing in The United Methodist Church is eligible for election.

The Conference will hear reports from the institutions and agencies of the Jurisdiction, including Southern Methodist University, Lydia Patterson Institute and Mount Sequoyah Retreat Center. Trustees for these groups will also be elected.

The Mission Council, with a representative from each of the Annual Conferences, will report, and will nominate Rev. Brian Bakeman as

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the new Executive Director of the Mission Council. Dr. David Severe, after eleven years in that position, is retiring after this conference.

The public is welcome to come and observe the conference. Registration will be open in March, and the link to it will be on the Jurisdiction website at www.scjumc.org.

Mount Sequoyah Center, Inc.

by Lamar Pettus, Executive Director

The future is bright:

Mount Sequoyah has written commitments to provide facilities and pursue a partnership with UA Wesley ministries through December 31, 2019. The goal is to solidify a relationship with college age people and expand that relationship across the jurisdiction, making Mount Sequoyah's facilities a destination for religious training and spiritual formation.

Mount Sequoyah completed an intensive review of its mission and future potential conducted by United Methodist Elders, Pamela J. Harris and Garrie F. Stevens of Run River Enterprises, a consulting firm. The review process included three-two day work sessions that were well attended by staff and Trustees. As a result Mount Sequoyah has undertaken the task of refocusing its purpose and mission in an effort to identify unique areas in which it can develop training programs to equip clergy and laity with the tools, technology and skills that will be necessary to reach the mission fields twenty or thirty years in the future and required to resolve conflicts likely to be faced by our clergy and within our churches.

The future is secure:

Mount Sequoyah is financially secure. In exchange for negotiated price increases, Mount Sequoyah orally committed to provide our largest corporate client training facilities, food service and housing through the year 2017 with full expectation to continue into 2018. The rents are fixed through 2017.

A \$550,000.00 payment is due from American Tower for a 30-year cell tower site lease.

Fayetteville Cottage is leased from 1 August through 31 December 2019 and 1011 Skyline (former District Superintendent's House) is leased through January 2017 with a verbal commitment to extend through January 2018.

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Three Host Family houses are leased through May 31, 2017.

A \$100,000.00 increase in events and programming revenue and an increase of \$75,000.00 in contributions are projected for 2016. A Development Officer has been hired.

Long-term debt is \$275,000.00 and the Line of Credit is currently \$105,000. Cash equivalent assets of \$300,000.00 are invested with the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

Mission accomplished:

Witnessing through our actions, our words, and our presence, that is what Radical Christian Hospitality is all about. Mount Sequoyah extended Radical Christian Hospitality to Christian motorcycle groups attending Fayetteville's Annual Bikes, Blues, and Barbecue Festival. The Faith Riders shared the gospel with 1063 persons and prayed with 90 persons who asked for forgiveness and to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior.

By extending Radical Christian Hospitality to youth, Mount Sequoyah touched the lives of over 700 youth who participated in swimming lessons, swim teams, tennis lessons and tennis teams, Kanakuk KampOut, youth mission camps, and group events.

Radical Christian Hospitality cemented a partnership between Mount Sequoyah and UA Wesley Ministries resulting in making our campus a second home to college students from across the South Central Jurisdiction. Our unprecedented family environment attracted over 400 parents as overnight guests while visiting.

Radical Christian Hospitality celebrated the marriage of thirty-two couples as they pledged their lives and hearts to each other on our beautiful campus under the Lord's ever-watchful eye.

Radical Christian Hospitality welcomed 30,052 guests for overnight stays and provided 18,378 delicious meals prepared by our own chef. Included in the numbers were 61 different Church groups, 13 family reunions, and 29 groups from regional colleges and universities.

Radical Christian Hospitality coupled with our Christian Education and Spiritual Formation Coordinator, a United Methodist Diaconal Minister, and produced religious education programs and workshops that attracted jurisdiction wide participation and a Lay Servant Academy praised because of its structure and skilled presenters.

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Radical Christian Hospitality was the catalyst to reestablish our in house food service. Chef Curt Harcourt received rave reviews from all guests. Some refer to our Dining Hall as “Curt’s on the Hill” a take off on a well-known local restaurant, the “Inn at the Mill”.

Radical Christian Hospitality resulted in year-end positive cash flow for the past three years and the receipt of over \$710,000.00 in contributions during said period to remodel and upgrade facilities.

Radical Christian Hospitality resulted in groups seeking Mount Sequoyah as a designation of choice resulting in events and programs already booked throughout the years 2017, 2018 and even one event in 2019.

Closing: The future looks bright as Mount Sequoyah plants seeds that, with God’s blessings, will in the near future transform the world for Jesus Christ.

UNIVERSITY & SEMINARIES**Africa University**

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

Africa University notes with gratitude and appreciation the strong support of the Great Plains Conference. The local congregations of the Great Plains Conference affirmed their commitment by investing 88.06 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2015, up from 87.03 percent in 2014. Thank you, Great Plains United Methodists, for steadily growing your support for Africa University. The upward trend in giving puts your conference in an excellent position to reach the goal of a 100 percent investment in the AUF in 2016.

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

Africa University applauds the recent efforts of members of the Great Plains Conference to engage more closely with its students, faculty and staff and explore new opportunities to partner in the university’s mission. Through campus visits, academic linkage discussions, contributions in solidarity with Africa University alumni and other initiatives, the members of the Great Plains Conference are helping to equip African young people to grow the experience of God’s promised abundance in the world.

Institutional Update: Africa University focused on the quality of life and success of its students in 2015. As a result, new development strategies are being implemented and academic programs are being restructured to make them more relevant and marketable. By 2020, full-time enrollment is projected to grow by 60 percent (to about 2,500 students annually). A new strategic plan, (2017-2021), is in development and will assign resources more effectively, while ensuring that fiscal responsibility and accountability are maintained. In addition, the university is increasing its friend-making and fundraising efforts in Africa, particularly among its graduates and their families.

Enrollment: Africa University's total enrollment remained steady at 1,500 full-time students and in 2015, 26 African countries were represented. Intentional recruitment to increase the number of African women leaders resulted in a female student component of 53 percent. 770 students pursued undergraduate and graduate degrees on a part-time basis.

Alumni: Africa University awarded degrees to 674 young people in June 2015. This graduating class was the largest one to date. Graduates now number more than 6,200 and they are engaged in vigorous efforts to improve public health, food security, peace, and the enjoyment of economic prosperity in Africa. Every life touched by these graduates is the result of the faithfulness of United Methodists across the connection!

Looking ahead: Within the next three to five years, Africa University expects a significant increase in the proportion of self-funded students. The institution is also making strides in achieving a 60:40 ratio of international to national students. To be successful in achieving its key goals, the university requires the additional on-campus student housing and recreational facilities such as the new sports complex. The availability of scholarships will also ensure access to an Africa University education for diverse students. Given the university's plan, second-mile giving from individuals and local churches—especially those gifts that are designated for infrastructure upgrades and endowed scholarships—is crucial.

All that has been achieved thus far must be attributed to faithful obedience (*Malachi 3:10*), and sacrificial giving. Africa University covets the continued support and prayers of the Great Plains

Conference. As Africa University prepares for the celebration of its 25th anniversary in March 2017, we thank the Great Plains Conference for its ongoing commitment to effective disciple-making at home and throughout the world.

Candler School of Theology

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics

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-

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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.

Drew University Theological School

The Reverend Dr. Javier A. Viera, Dean of the Theological School
Professor of Pastoral Theology

A Cohering Vision: Curriculum, Community, Co-Curricular Initiatives

After much collaborative discussion, discernment, and evaluation of the current state of theological education, those of us who lead, teach, and support Drew Theological School have launched on an ambitious course. Nearly 150 years after our founding, we envision a future as bright as the best eras in our past. I am pleased to share with you here the concrete steps we have taken— and are taking— to bring this future to light.

First, our efforts have been attentive to the history of Drew, in particular its Methodist roots, its long commitment to the Church and its ministries, and draw from this wellspring for inspiration and direction. Also, we have honored our progress to achieve denominational, ethnic, gender, and racial diversity in our faculty and student body. This rich diversity has become both a hallmark of Drew and an expansion of our wellspring. Forces beyond our campus—

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notably, that the reasons for pursuing a theological education and expected outcomes are shifting dramatically—further press the need for us to align our vision and its supporting systems with our communal reality.

Given this imperative, we are focused on the three “C’s” of our cohering vision: redesigning our *curriculum*, strengthening our *community* of learning, and deepening training through revived *co-curricular* initiatives. These three aspect of a Drew Theological School education will work together to enable us to to empower creative thought and courageous action to advance justice, peace, and love of God, neighbor, and the earth—as well as uniquely position us to lead evolving expressions of Christianity.

Designing distinct pathways from curriculum to vocation

To remain meaningful and offer the greatest value to our students, each of the six degree paths that we offer must be as distinct as the ministry to which it leads. For example, our Master of Arts in Ministry program, which forms students for the broadest spectrum of theologically-informed advocacy and ministry, or our DMin program, which has become the “new” terminal vocational degree, must be custom rebuilt for current and emerging student needs and outcomes. This also holds true for our Master of Arts, Master of Sacred Theology, PhD, and, most critically, our Master of Divinity programs.

We have achieved our roadmap for curricular change through a period of intentional discernment, which included discussion with consultants, and with colleagues at peer institutions, who led a curricular formation retreats with our faculty; through the discernment and guidance of our faculty, and with the generous financial support of the Jesse Ball duPont Fund. Our next steps include a comprehensive analysis of pedagogical and technological trends in theological education, enrollment, and outcomes. Our redesigned curricular paths will be announced in the fall of 2017, concurrent with the 150th anniversary of the founding of Drew Theological School and the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

Student experiences rooted in community

Despite the increase in students pursuing their education through evening classes and online enrollment, we remain committed to the on-campus experience of community. This begins with a student-centered educational experience that better attends to the scheduling needs of our students, offers broader course content and availability, and more intentionally integrates vocational or career aspirations with coursework.

The success of these efforts are inextricably linked to scholarship support. Only by removing the financial barriers for students pursuing vocations can we hope to attract and retain the most promising students and free them to learn and grow in community. Related to tuition support is the need for more affordable and modernized housing for those students who choose to live on campus. Together, scholarship support and housing relief will also unburden our students from unsustainable debt.

Fostering innovation in ministry and the work of spirit-filled justice

To round out changes in our curriculum and on-campus learning experiences, we are also reviving co-curricular initiatives. The existing Center for Lifelong Learning will be recast as the new Center for Innovation and Leadership in Ministry and serve students, alumni, and others seeking to find creative and courageous approaches to revitalizing ministry. Here, programming will train pastoral leaders, in particular, for service in rapidly changing church environments, as well as position them to lead fearlessly and prophetically.

Our second co-curricular center will be an expansion of the current Communities of Shalom. This initiative will focus on action, advocacy, and social justice work in both pastoral and lay environments. Projects will range from student interns supporting the work of A Future with Hope in our home state of New Jersey, advancing social justice in non-profit settings across the country and around the world, initiatives which seek to transform and end systemic poverty, expansion of our Partnership for Religion and Education in Prisons (PREP) program, and teaching residencies at Drew for prophetic leaders.

Success so far through our *One and All Campaign*

As the 14th dean of Drew Theological School, I am deeply committed to continuing our long and distinguished legacy. To this end, our vision is innovative, forward-looking, and grounded in the practical needs of our students—we hope, too, that it is an inspiration to the various constituencies we serve. I fully subscribe to the inimitable words of Antonio Machado, that “we make the road by walking.” The road to this bright future we envision will be made by the dedication, determination, and generosity of those who love Drew and believe in its future.

Our vision is coming to light, in part, because of the generosity of our many alumni-donors and friends. Our *One and All* fundraising campaign has raised more than \$12 million to date for the Theological School and has seed-funded many of our burgeoning efforts.

Also, I encourage our alumni to embrace your power of influence to help grow philanthropic support for Drew Theological School. Many of our largest gifts have come from the influence of alumni, particularly pastors who serve in our church communities. Yes, the needs ahead are many, yet our hope is high for a bright future for Drew Theological School. The road is made by walking. Let's walk it together.

Iliff School of Theology

Rev. Dr. Thomas V. Wolfe, President and Chief Executive Officer

Greetings from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. We wish you blessings as together we share the work of strengthening the Church and offering a compassionate presence to the World.

The Iliff School of Theology's commitment to the Wesleyan ethos of providing hopeful, intellectually alive, and spiritually grounded theological education for each and every student over the course of their lifetime continues. Iliff's identity is focused on educating leaders for three primary publics: the world, the church, and the academy. At Iliff, we refuse to choose between being a training home only for ministerial candidates, a center only for activists and scholar-activists, or a school only for academics. We believe all three are inseparable and enhance one another as we deliberately situate ourselves in the world and critically operate out of the world's complexities.

As such, we recognize that the world's religious landscape is changing and there is much at stake. Iliff recently completed its strategic plan, revised its curriculum, transformed its library, and initiated new relationships with other institutions. In collaboration with the people of Africa, we've started a discussion with Africa University (AU) to foster an educational alliance that will benefit Iliff and AU students. We have also joined a multi-institutional collaboration facilitated by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the HANA Scholarship to create a pipeline for Hispanic students from United Methodist related secondary schools and historically black colleges leading to graduate level theological education.

Iliff's enrollment continues to be strong with 365 students joining us this academic year, 60% female and 40% male, 35% Methodist – all actively engaged in a host of ministry contexts. Their interest continues to be strong in Iliff's online and hybrid classes. A concerted move by Iliff to reduce student debt and grow the ability of students

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to lead financially sound, engaged communities continues with many MDIV students participating in the Spiritually-Integrated Financial Resiliency Program, funded by a \$250,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment.

Iliff's numerous events for area clergy and supporters remains part of our foundation. Via forums and conferences on social justice, food justice, the role of faith in politics, environmental stewardship, theology and disability inclusion, and more. Campus speakers included Rev. Gerald Durley, nationally-known civil rights leader and this year's Jameson Jones Preacher, Heather Jarvis, student debt reduction advocate, and more. Our efforts were duly noted by McCormick Theological Seminary's Center for Faith and Service when we were named as one of the nation's "Seminaries That Change the World" and our Master's of Theology Program was ranked seventh in the nation by OnlineColleges.net.

We welcomed two new scholars to our faculty this year, Rev. Dr. Jennifer Leath, Assistant Professor of Religion and Social Justice and ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Rev. Michelle Watkins-Branch, Gerald L. Schlessman Professor in Methodist Studies and Assistant Professor of Theology and ordained in the United Methodist Church.

We continue to look forward with a courageous theological imagination. We are sincerely grateful for your support of theological education and the Ministerial Education Fund.

Perkins School of Theology

William B. Lawrence, Dean and Professor of American Church History

Perkins celebrates our vital connections with the Great Plains Annual Conference. Two students affiliated with the Great Plains Conference are enrolled at Perkins – both Master of Divinity students.

Qualifying students receive \$6,000 each in need-based aid.

One Perkins student has been placed as an intern within the Great Plains Conference this year in the following setting: Colby United Methodist Church.

Enrollment at Perkins for the 2015-16 academic year totals 365 students, of which more than two-thirds are United Methodist and more than 40 percent are ethnic minority students. Master's degree programs comprise approximately 53 percent male and 47

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percent female students. The D.Min. program includes students from southern Asia taking classes in Singapore and Dallas. Our Ph.D. program has 32 students.

Please note the following faculty additions:

Dr. O. Wesley Allen Jr. (Ph.D., Emory) joined the Perkins faculty as the Lois Craddock Perkins Chair in Homiletics in August 2015.

Dr. Evelyn L. Parker (Ph.D., Northwestern), Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Perkins, was appointed to the Susanna Wesley Centennial Chair in Practical Theology at Perkins.

Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison (Ph.D., University of St. Andrew's) joined Perkins as the school's Associate Dean for External Programs.

Dr. Tom Spann was named director of the Perkins Intern Program, succeeding Dr. Bill Bryan, who was named to the newly created position of Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

Dr. Paul Barton (Ph.D., Southern Methodist University) was named director of the Mexican American and Hispanic-Latino/a Church Ministries Program.

Highland Park United Methodist Church provided a \$1.5 million gift to Southern Methodist University that endowed the Umphrey Lee Professorship in Methodist History at Perkins as well as support the HPUMC Future Church Leaders Program.

The Center for the Study of Latino/a Christianity and Religions at Perkins was awarded a \$500,000 grant by The Henry Luce Foundation's Theology program. The three-year grant will significantly expand the Center's work in promoting an understanding of the different religious expressions within the Latino/a communities in the United States and in Latin America.

Perkins unveiled a new degree option, the Master of Theology (Th.M.), which began enrolling students in the Fall 2015 semester. The Th.M. degree is a second master's and requires 24 term hours within one of four divisions of study: The Biblical Witness, The Heritage and Context of Christianity, The Interpretation of the Christian Witness and The Theology and Practice of Ministry.

Additionally, Perkins revealed that it will begin offering a Spanish-language Master of Theology (Th.M.) degree beginning in fall 2017. The degree, the first of its kind among the 13 United Methodist-

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related schools of theology, will be a nonresidential program designed for experienced full-time pastors or church/academic leaders.

Perkins also announced the creation of a first-of-its-kind degree, the Doctor of Pastoral Music, which will begin enrolling students in 2016. Areas of focused study will include liturgy, congregational song, worship leadership, performance skills and the theological basis of church music.

Perkins thanks our many colleagues, friends, and alumni/ae across the connection for generous support in many ways, including referrals of prospective students, as we continue our vital mission of preparing women and men for faithful leadership in Christian ministry.

I will retire as Dean of Perkins School of Theology on May 31, 2016. It has been my privilege to serve in this capacity since 2002. In our mission to prepare women and men for faithful leadership in Christian ministry, the students who have passed through the halls of this school and into the world of ministry are the focus of our work. I am honored to have been a part of their journey.

Saint Paul School of Theology

Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary of the United Methodist Church that educates leaders to make disciples for Jesus Christ, renew the Church, and transform the world. We are one institution with two campuses, in Oklahoma and Kansas.

This past academic year, Saint Paul enrolled 199 students from 14 annual conferences and 6 countries on both campuses. The Course of Study School at Saint Paul served 222 students in four Midwest locations.

The Saint Paul Board of Trustees named Dr. Nancy Howell, Saint Paul Professor of Theology and Philosophy, as the Acting President this spring. Her term began March 2 as Rev. H. Sharon Howell retired. Dr. Nancy Howell brings multiple years of experience serving in administration.

Saint Paul and Kansas Wesleyan University signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a 3+3 theological studies undergraduate-graduate program. The agreement is thought to be the first of its kind to be established between a United Methodist-based university and a United Methodist seminary. Under this arrangement, Kansas Wesleyan students condense the four-year course of study for the Christian Ministry major into three years, followed by the

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completion of the three-year Master of Divinity degree at Saint Paul. The 3 +3 program with Kansas Wesleyan will begin Fall 2016. 3+3 collaborations with other undergraduate institutions are currently in discussion.

Dr. Young-Ho Chun is serving as the Director of Asian Studies for Saint Paul. He is currently recruiting the 4th Korean Doctor of Ministry track of students. The model of theological education designed for this highly successful and unique program is currently being considered by other global communities.

Saint Paul will offer two fully online courses starting fall 2016 and two in the spring semester of 2017. We will continue to offer popular hybrid courses as well as video link every course between our two locations.

Two new components in the MDiv program are practicums taught by ministry practitioners and off-campus spiritual formation retreats. Practicum offerings include such real-life skill areas as budgets and finance, funerals and ministry with children. Spiritual formation retreats deepen students' spirituality for a lifetime of ministry.

The Fellows program equips candidates called to full-time ministry with academic formation and real-life pastoral experience. The award covers tuition, books and fees for three years. Each Fellow will receive a pastoral mentor and a student appointment with a stipend to cover living expenses.

The Oklahoma Campus had its second recognition dinner celebrating eight years of seminary excellence in Oklahoma. The Celebrate Saint Paul dinner has become an annual event including the Bishop Robert E. Hayes, Jr. Leadership Award

The trustees, faculty, staff, and students of Saint Paul thank you for your interest, prayers and support.

Southern Methodist University

by R. Gerald Turner, president

Over the past five years, Southern Methodist University has celebrated the centennial of its founding in 1911 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and its opening in 1915. Highlights of recent developments follow:

- In fall 2015 SMU's total enrollment of 11,643 included 6,411 undergraduates and 5,232 graduate students. Ethnic minority students made up 26 percent of total enrollment.

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An international enrollment of 1,652 (14 percent of total enrollment) represented 92 foreign countries, with the largest numbers from China, India and Saudi Arabia.

- SMU ranks among the nation's top universities. In the 2016 *U.S. News & World Report* listings, SMU ranks 61st among 270 of the "best national universities." Several individual schools and academic programs also earned national rankings.
- SMU received \$26 million in external funding during 2014-15 for research in the U.S. and worldwide. Current research subjects include water quality, natural hazards, cyber security and treatments for cancer and other diseases.
- SMU Unbridled: The Second Century Campaign reached its \$1 billion goal ahead of schedule in Sept. 2015. It provided funds for 607 student scholarships; 62 endowed faculty positions, making a total of 114; 66 academic programs, including major endowment support for two schools; and 18 capital projects, including new and renovated facilities.
- The Meadows Museum at SMU celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2015 with exhibitions never before seen in the U.S. The museum houses one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain.

SMU treasures its Methodist heritage, and we ask for your continued prayers and support.

United Theological Seminary

Dr. Kent Millard, Interim President

United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio continues to educate a significant number of pastors and local church leaders for the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church.

United has always focused on developing faithful, fruitful, inspired and inspiring pastors and local church leaders. 83% of the 2015 graduates of United are now serving in local congregations. 53% of the 2015 graduates from all other seminaries affiliated with the Association of Theological Seminaries are serving in local congregations.

Furthermore, 44% of the current 449 students at United are African American which makes United one of the most racially diverse seminaries in the United States. An average of 12% of the student body at most seminaries in the United States are African American. 43% of the students at United are female compared to

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an average of 33% at other United States seminaries.

United is one of the most racially and gender diverse seminaries in the United States and produces a higher percentage of local church pastors than most other seminaries in the United States..

United is also in the process of leadership transition. In November, 2015 President. Wendy Deichmann resigned as President and, after a well deserved sabbatical, will return to serving as a Professor of History and Theology. Under President Deichmann, United was listed as one of the 12 fastest growing seminaries in the United States largely because of the growing Doctor of Ministry program and our on line degree programs. 44% of United's students are in the Master of Divinity program, 41% are in the Doctor of Ministry program and 15% are in other degree or certificate programs.

In January, 2016 The United Board of Trustees selected Dr. Kent Millard, former pastor at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, as Interim President while they search for a new President.

St. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy these words of advice:

:"I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands." Second Timothy 1:6

United Theological Seminary along with the other 12 United Methodist Seminaries in the United States is committed to helping persons "rekindle the gift of God that is within" to provide educated, inspired and inspiring spiritual leaders for the United Methodist Church throughout the world. .

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.

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- The new Institute for Community Engagement is forwarding Wesley's mission of raising prophetic leaders in the public square through classes, partnerships, conferences, and resources.

Wesley Students Are Answering God's Call

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

- Two Master of Divinity students who are exploring ordination in the UMC that have created outreach opportunities for people who ordinarily would not consider going into a church. **Zach Spoerl** and **Matt Wilke**, working with three United Methodist Churches and Wesley, have started Pub Theology in downtown D.C., drawing spiritual-but-not-religious young adults into Christian community.

- Master of Theological Studies student **Jane Adams** is working with denominations and congregations on issues of poverty and hunger in the U.S. As an intern at the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, she provides tools for building on charitable activities such as food pantries and backpack ministries. As a member of a local United Methodist congregation, she's putting her knowledge to work in her local church and neighborhood, too.

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

Mourning the Loss of a Christian Leader

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

To ensure Pinckney's legacy continues, Wesley has established scholarships in his name for Doctor of Ministry candidates seeking

to empower their congregations, engage their communities, and influence public discourse. Additionally, **Wesley has developed a Doctor of Ministry track exploring the intersection between public life and church leadership.** This degree focus amplifies Wesley's mission and location and, we hope, will raise up leaders to continue Pinckney's legacy. <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/>

Seeking Connection

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

MISCELLANEOUS

United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

Kim Moore, President

The Health Ministry Fund continued its efforts in three strategic areas in 2015:

- *Access to Health Care
- *Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration Rates
- *Young Children's Social and Emotional Health

Seven rural sites became operational with projects to improve care coordination and integration of mental health, as well as start one of the first community paramedicine projects in Kansas. Hospitals in Cheyenne, Smith, Phillips, Osborne, Kearny and Clark (Ashland and Minneola) Counties lead these projects, which are supported by a combination of private and public funders for three years of work. These hospitals and several state level groups—Kansas Hospital Association, Kansas Association of Mental Health Centers, Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved, Great Plains Health Alliance and the Health Ministry Fund—have formed the Kansas Frontier Health Improvement Network to work together on issues facing rural health care providers.

Grants also partially supported six navigators in Wichita, Garden City, Pratt, Coffeyville, Beloit and Hutchinson to serve consumers seeking health insurance through the federal insurance marketplace.

Assistance was provided to 2600 persons and educational events reached almost 9000 Kansans. Cooperating with other health philanthropies, the Health Ministry Fund supported formation of a broad-based collaboration, Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, to develop grassroots and policy support for an expansion of KanCare; those efforts will increase in 2016. Support was provided to E. C. Tyree Health/Dental Clinic (Wichita), Rawlins County Dental Clinic (Atwood) and Project Access (Wichita) to assist with special circumstances facing those safety-net programs.

The advocates and programs working on improving breastfeeding initiation and duration rates had a good year. Joining with Kansas Health Foundation, the Health Ministry Fund awarded ten grants totaling \$1,000,000 for large breastfeeding projects. High Five for Mom & Baby, a program developed and operated by the Health Ministry Fund, provides training, support and education for staff to change policies and practices in birthing facilities. Since its start in October 2013, High Five has trained 51 Kansas hospitals, provided thirty-two scholarships for lactation training, and completed recognition in nineteen hospitals. The hospitals involved with High Five cover more than 95% of Kansas births. Five Kansas hospitals started the process of becoming Baby-Friendly (ten World Health Organization best practices) and the Health Ministry Fund provided \$20,000 grants which assisted those hospitals in becoming part of a national CDC project as well as implementing the changes to merit the title: Baby-Friendly. Mini-grants totaling \$42,850 were awarded to fifteen programs across the state permitting local breastfeeding efforts to start and expand. Finally, the Business Case for Breastfeeding managed by the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition received the Janet Sevier Gilbreath Project Recognition Award for 2014 from the Health Ministry Fund. This successful project helps employers and their employees with the often challenging transition when breastfeeding mothers return to work.

Two new projects were funded to implement systems of universal screening for young children (ages 0-6) for social/emotional health, using the ASQ-SE tool. Center for Counseling and Consultation in Great Bend and PrairieView, Inc. in Newton are undertaking leadership of these efforts in their respective catchment areas.

With the opening of the Healthy Congregations program to Nebraska churches, the number of health ministry teams grew to 42 by the end of 2015. Churches in the program receive annual \$1000 grants, complete team training, participate in quarterly webinars on health ministry topics, attend an annual two-day retreat, and engage in planning for congregational and community impact. Those

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congregations also are offered special funding opportunities; at the present time, grants are available to assist Healthy Congregations in starting up community/church gardens and starting up or expanding summer food programs for children/youth.

Information about the Health Ministry Fund, including our electronic annual report with a complete list of grants, is available at www.healthfund.org.

Kansas Area United Methodist Foundation

by Alan Herndon, Exec. Director

BY-LAWS

of

**KANSAS AREA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION,
INCORPORATED**

(As amended and approved April 21, 2016)

PREAMBLE

The Board of Trustees of the United Methodist Foundation does hereby adopt the following Amended and Restated By-Laws of the Kansas Area United Methodist Foundation, Inc. hereinafter referred to as By-Laws. It is the purpose of these Amended and Restated By-Laws of the Kansas Area United Methodist Foundation, Inc. to amend the previous By-Laws and all amendments thereto of the Kansas Area United Methodist Foundation, Inc. and to repeal all provisions of the previous By-Laws and all amendments thereto of the Kansas Area United Methodist Foundation, Inc. in conflict herewith.

ARTICLE I**1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1.1 Name. The name of the corporation is the KANSAS AREA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION, INC.

1.2 Registered Office and Resident Agent. The corporation shall have and continuously maintain in this State a registered office and a registered agent, and may have other offices within the State of Kansas as the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine. The registered office and registered agent shall be designated in the Articles of Incorporation, as amended from time to time.

1.3 Term. The term for which this corporation is to exist is perpetual.

1.4 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE II

2. **PURPOSE**

2.1 Not for Profit. This corporation is organized not for profit and shall have no authority to issue capital stock.

2.2 Objects and Purposes. This corporation is organized to operate solely and exclusively as a charitable, religious, literary and educational organization to help maintain and further the programs and missions of The United Methodist Church; provided, however, that nothing herein shall restrict the ability of the corporation to accept gifts that provide benefits to other not for profit, tax exempt organizations.

2.3 Powers of Corporation. To further such objects and purposes, the corporation shall have and may exercise all the powers conferred by the laws of the State of Kansas upon corporations formed under the laws pursuant to and under which this corporation is formed, as such laws are now in effect or may at any time hereafter be amended. Specifically, this corporation shall have power to acquire, purchase, hold, lease, convey, mortgage and pledge such real and personal property in Kansas, other states of the United States and elsewhere, as shall be necessary or convenient to the transaction of its business and the realization of its objects and purposes.

2.4 Exempt and Charitable Purpose. This corporation shall not have or exercise any power or authority, either expressly, by interpretation, or by operation of law, not shall it directly or indirectly engage in any activity that would prevent this corporation from qualifying, and continuing to qualify, as an organization described in Subsection 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

2.5 Compensation. Compensation or payment shall never be paid or made to any member, officer, Trustee, creator or organizer of this corporation, or substantial contributor to it, except as an allowance for actual expenditures or services actually rendered to or for this corporation as an employee of the corporation, and neither the whole nor any portion of the assets or net earnings, current or accumulated of this corporation, shall ever be distributed to or

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divided among any such persons; provided, further, that neither the whole nor any part or portion of such assets or earnings shall ever be used for, accrued to or insure to the benefit of any member or private individual within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

2.6 Prohibited activity. This corporation shall never be operated for the primary purpose of carrying on a trade or business for profit.

2.7 Dissolution. Upon the dissolution of this corporation, the governing body shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation by distributing such assets to the Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, or its successor organization. If such organization does not exist or is not qualified, the assets shall be disposed of in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Subsection 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law, as the governing board shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the district court of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

ARTICLE III**3. MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 Voting Members. The duly elected Trustees shall constitute the membership of the corporation. All rights, powers, duties and obligations usually vested in the members of a not for profit corporation shall be vested in the Trustees in accordance with law, the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV**4. GOVERNANCE**

4.1 Corporate Governance. Responsibility for governing the affairs of the corporation shall be vested in the Board of Trustees of the corporation and conducted through the delegated authority of its officers, Executive Committee and other organizational elements of the corporation.

ARTICLE V

5. TRUSTEES

5.1 Number. The Board of Trustees shall consist of twenty one (21) voting members.

5.2 Qualification. Trustees shall be selected from persons at least twenty one (21) years of age who accept in principle the purposes of this corporation, are deemed qualified to meet the responsibilities of serving as a Trustee and who otherwise meet the membership requirements provided herein and as stated in the Articles of Incorporation. A Trustee shall be deemed qualified as such when they have been duly elected as a Trustee as provided herein.

5.3 Trustee Nomination. The Trustees are to be chosen from among lay members of The United Methodist Church in the state of Kansas, and clergy members of The Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church serving in Kansas. At least a majority of the Trustees shall be lay persons. A slate of nominees shall be forwarded to The Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church by the Board of Trustees for election by the annual conference.

5.4 Conference Representation. The geographical representations of the Kansas area of The Great Plains Annual Conference should be included in the consideration of Trustees when they meet the other criteria for membership.

5.5 ExOfficio Trustee. The Bishop of The Great Plains Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church shall be an *exofficio* Trustee of the corporation, in addition to the twenty (20) elected Trustees. Each ex officio Trustee shall serve as long as he or she holds the respective office.

5.6 Term. All elected Trustees shall serve three (3) year terms. The Trustees shall be divided into three (3) equal classes, with consecutive expiration dates, in order for one third (1/3) of the Trustees to be completing their term each year. For Example: Class 1: 7 Trustees, Class 2: 7 Trustees, Class 3: 6 Trustees. A Trustee may be eligible for re-election for additional three (3) year terms. The invitation to serve will be determined by the Board of Trustees and their expression of commitment to continue service in achieving the mission of the corporation.

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5.7 Duties. The Trustees shall govern all affairs of the corporation in accordance with Kansas law, the Articles of Incorporation, these by-laws, *the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and its decisions in annual, regular and special meetings.

5.8 Resignation. Any Trustee of the corporation may resign upon filing a written resignation with the Secretary of the corporation, and such resignation shall become effective when so filed unless some subsequent effective date is set forth in the resignation. Any trustee who is absent from two (2) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without notifying the Foundation office in advance of the meetings will be considered to have resigned. Likewise, any Trustee who is absent with or without notice from four (4) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings will be considered to have resigned.

5.9 Vacancy of Position. In the event that any Trustee who is elected by the annual conference changes their residence to a location outside of the state of Kansas, they shall be deemed to have vacated their position as Trustee of the corporation, and a vacancy in the position shall be declared. In the event that any Trustee changes their residence to Nebraska, then said Trustee may complete the year of service, and their position shall be vacated as of the close of the next annual conference session of the Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

5.10 Vacancies. Vacancies on the Board of Trustees may be filled by a majority of the remaining Trustees, though less than a quorum, and any Trustees so chosen to fill a vacancy as provided herein, shall be able to serve from the date of their election by the Board of Trustees until the next session of the Great Plains Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and until their successors are elected or confirmed.

ARTICLE VI**6. MEETINGS OF TRUSTEES**

6.1 Place of Meetings. All meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at the principal place of business in this state, or at such places as may be designated by the Board of Trustees or the Chairperson of the Board, either within or out of the state of Kansas.

6.2 Meeting Time.

6.2.1 Annual. The annual meeting of the Trustees of this corporation shall be held in the last calendar quarter of each year

for the purpose of (1) election of Officers, and (2) transaction of any other business as may properly be presented and come before such meeting.

6.2.2 Regular. Regular meetings shall be held periodically at such specified times as are deemed necessary by resolution of the Board of Trustees, but not less than three (3) times a year, including the annual meeting.

6.2.3 Special. Special meetings of the Trustees may be called by the Chairperson as deemed necessary, or upon request of any ten Trustees, the Chairperson shall call a special meeting of the Board within twenty one (21) days of the request. Business to be transacted shall be limited to matters specified by the notice given.

6.2.4 Telephone and Video Conference. Members of the Board of Trustees, or any committee thereof, may participate in a meeting of such board or committee by means of conference telephone, video conference or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in a meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.

6.3 Notice. Notice of any meeting may be given by mailing in writing to the person entitled thereto at the last known address shown on the records of the corporation at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting.

6.3.1 Waiver. Whenever notice is required to be given by these bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation, or by statute, a written waiver thereof, signed by the persons entitled to notice, whether before or after the times stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to notice. Attendance of a person at a meeting constitutes a waiver of notice except when the person attends for the express purpose of objecting at the beginning of the meeting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

6.3.2 Action by Consent. Unless otherwise provided in the Articles of Incorporation, any action required to be taken at any annual, regular or special meeting of the Trustees of the corporation, or any action which may be taken at any annual, regular or special meeting of such Trustees, may be taken if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by a majority of the Trustees entitled to vote thereon. In the event that such action which is consented to is such as would have required the filing of a certificate under the General Corporation Code, if such action had been voted upon by Trustees at a meeting thereof, the certificates

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filed under such other section shall state, in lieu of any statement required by such section concerning a vote of Trustees, that written consent has been given in accordance with the provisions of this section.

6.4 Pre-Agenda. A written agenda of matters to be considered insofar as reasonably ascertainable should be mailed in advance of any meeting, except in instances when telephone, video conference or similar communication methods are used to conduct a meeting or when a waiver of notice may apply.

6.5 Quorum. A majority, being fifty one percent (51%), of the total members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the Trustees for the transaction of business except as otherwise required by law or by these bylaws. In the event such a number is not a quorum, the members present in person shall have the power to adjourn the meeting from time to time without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until the requisite number of voting members shall be present at such adjourned meeting, and any business may be transacted at the meeting as originally notified.

6.6 Voting Procedure. All nominations of Trustee, elections of Officers and votes upon any other question, except as otherwise provided by law or unless otherwise provided by resolution of the Board of Trustees, may be held by ballot, email response, via voice, or by showing of hand.

ARTICLE VII**7. OFFICERS**

7.1 Designated Officers. Officers of the corporation shall be a Chairperson, one or more Vice Chairpersons, a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The officers of the corporation shall be the same persons as the officers of the Board.

7.2 Election of Officers. The officers of the corporation shall be elected annually by the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting. In the event that such election does not take place at the annual meeting, then such election shall take place at the next regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees.

7.3 Other Officers and Agents. The corporation may have such other officers and agents as may from time to time be determined and appointed by the Board of Trustees, and for such terms as the Board of Trustees may determine.

7.4 Terms and Qualification of Officers. The officers of the corporation shall hold their office from their election until the next annual meeting of the next year, unless their respective terms of office have been terminated by resignation in writing, duly filed with the Secretary of the corporation, or they have been removed from office.

7.5 Removal of Officers. Any officer elected or appointed by the Board of Trustees may be removed from office with or without cause at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board of Trustees; provided, however, that if any officer is an employee of the corporation, and their employment is to be terminated, then their termination shall be subject to the Personnel Policies of the corporation as to any termination procedures.

7.6 Chairperson. The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee, and shall perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to that office. The Chairperson shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

7.7 Vice Chairperson. In the absence or disability of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall perform all the duties of the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson shall have such other powers and duties as from time to time may be prescribed for her or him by the Chairperson, the Board of Trustees or these bylaws. The Vice Chairperson shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

7.8 President and CEO. The President and CEO shall be the chief operating officer of the corporation, who shall be employed to perform specific duties and responsibilities as outlined in their job description approved by the Board of Trustees, and as such job description may be amended from time to time, and for such compensation as approved by the Board of Trustees. The President and CEO shall organize the activities and affairs of the corporation to accomplish its operation on sound business principles. The President and CEO shall define the responsibilities of and employ employees under his or her supervision.

7.9 Secretary. The Secretary may or may not be a Trustee of the corporation. The Secretary shall attend all sessions of the Board of Trustees and, in the absence of a Recording Secretary, record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings, including rules and regulations and policy decisions, in a book to be kept for that purpose. The

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Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the Board of Trustees and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Trustees or Chairperson.

7.10 Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary may or may not be a Trustee of the corporation. The Recording Secretary shall attend all sessions of the Board of Trustees and record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings, including rules and regulations and policy decisions, in a book to be kept for that purpose.

7.11 Treasurer. The Treasurer may or may not be a Trustee of the corporation. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the corporation, deposit all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Trustees, provide accountings of the transactions of the corporation, and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson, the President and these bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII

8. COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

8.1 Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of nine members of the Board of Trustees, and shall include ex-officio the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and chairpersons of the standing committees of the Board of Trustees, except as stated hereafter. The remaining members of the Executive Committee and any vacancies thereof shall be elected at large from the Board of Trustees by the Board of Trustees. If the Secretary and/or Treasurer of the corporation are not members of the Board of Trustees, then they shall not qualify to serve in such ex-officio positions on the Executive Committee.

8.1.1 Ad Interim Powers. Unless the Board of Trustees specifically direct otherwise, during the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee shall have, and may exercise, all the powers of the Board of Trustees in the management of the business and affairs of the corporation in such manner as such committee shall deem in the best interests of the corporation, except that the Executive Committee may not amend or repeal the Articles of Incorporation or bylaws of the corporation, or as restricted by policies of the Board of Trustees. The Executive

Committee shall report its actions to the Board of Trustees no later than the next Board of Trustees' meeting.

8.1.2 Quorum. The quorum for the Executive Committee shall be a majority, being fifty one percent (51%), of the members of the committee for the transaction of business.

8.1.3 Meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet as needed, but not less than two times each calendar year.

8.1.4 Special Called Meetings. Special called meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairperson or upon request of any three members of the Executive Committee, with at least ten (10) days written notice to all members of the Executive Committee.

8.2 Additional Committees and Organizations. The Board of Trustees may establish and elect other committees, councils or other groups and designate their specific tasks and duties, and shall designate the chairperson of such committee or other groups.

8.3 Rules and Quorum. All committees, unless otherwise provided in these bylaws or by direction of the Board of Trustees from time to time, shall adopt their own rules of procedure. At all meetings of committees, except the Executive Committee, those members present shall constitute a quorum and the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum shall control for the transaction of business.

8.4 Non-Trustee Members. Additional members of any committees other than the Executive Committee may be elected by the Board of Trustees, and such members are not required to be a Trustee of the corporation. Such non-Trustee committee members shall have the right of voice and vote in such committee deliberations.

8.5 Staff Support. The President and CEO, ex-officio, shall attend all meetings of the committees of the corporation, and provide staff and administrative support for the work of the various committees at the direction of the chairperson of each committee.

ARTICLE IX

9. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

9.1 Fund Distributions. All funds received and administered by the corporation shall be distributed for the benefit of United

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Methodist churches, institutions and agencies, and any other tax-exempt organization designated by the donor of the funds, consistent with the objectives and purposes of the corporation as set out in the Articles of Incorporation.

9.2 Permanent Funds. Unless specified otherwise by the donors and contributors, all sums of money, property and donations of every kind and character shall be considered as permanent funds of the corporation.

9.3 Administrative Fee. Notwithstanding various historic bases for funding the corporation's activities, the corporation may levy on the permanent funds of the corporation and funds managed by the corporation, an administrative fee, to be paid first from income, and second from principal. Said administrative fee shall not exceed an amount equal to one percent (1%) of the principal fund balance to underwrite the operational expenses of the corporation, but said administrative fee shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the annual operational expenses of the corporation.

ARTICLE X**10. CORPORATE SEAL**

10.1 Seal. The seal of the corporation shall be circular in form, and shall have the inscription: "Kansas Area United Methodist Foundation, Inc."

ARTICLE XI**11. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

11.1 Policy on Conflicts of Interest. No contract or transaction between this corporation and one or more of its Trustees or officers, or between the corporation and any other corporation, partnership, association or other organization in which one or more of its Trustees or officers are Trustees or officers, or have a financial interest, shall be void or voidable solely for this reason, or solely because the Trustee or officer is present at or participates in the meeting of the Board or committee thereof which authorizes the contract or transaction, or solely because his or her or their votes are counted for such purposes, if either:

a. The material facts as to the relationship or interest and as to the contract or transaction are disclosed or are known to the Board of Trustees or the committee, and the Board or committee in good faith authorized the contract or transaction by the affirmative votes of a majority of the disinterested Trustees, even though the disinterested Trustees be less than a quorum; or

b. The contract or transaction is fair as to the corporation as of the time it is authorized, approved or ratified by the Board of Trustees or a committee thereof duly authorized. Common or interested Trustees may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Trustees or of a committee which authorizes the contract or transaction.

ARTICLE XII

12. INDEMNIFICATION AND INSURANCE

12.1 Indemnification. The corporation shall reimburse and indemnify each Trustee and each officer of the corporation for or against all liabilities, losses, fines, costs and expenses, including counsel fees and including amounts reasonably paid otherwise than to the corporation, in settlement or to secure the termination of litigation, reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him or her in connection with or resulting from any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, hereinafter called "action", to which he or she may be made a party by reason of his or her being or having been such Trustee or officer, whether or not he or she continues to be such Trustee or officer at the time of incurring or becoming subject to such liabilities, losses, fines, costs or expenses and whether or not the action or omission to act on the part of such Trustee or officer which is the basis of such action occurred before or after the adoption of this Article or the bylaws, if he or she acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interest of the corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful. Each person who shall act as a Trustee or officer of the corporation shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon such right of reimbursement or indemnification. The foregoing right of reimbursement or indemnification shall not be exclusive of other rights to which any Trustee or officer may otherwise be entitled (specifically including K.S.A. 17-3010) and, in the event of his or her death, shall extend to his or her heirs and legal representatives.

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12.2 Insurance. The corporation may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any Trustee, officer, employee or agent of the corporation against any liability asserted against such person and incurred in such capacity, whether or not the corporation would have power to indemnify such person against such liability under the provisions of the above section.

ARTICLE XIII

13. AMENDMENTS

13.1 These bylaws may be altered, repealed or amended in whole or in part by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Trustees present and voting at any annual, regular or special meeting of the Trustees, provided that all Trustees have received at least ten (10) days written notice of the proposed amendments. Any amendments to the bylaws shall be subject to the approval of the Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, except as provided for hereafter.

13.2 The Trustees of the corporation shall have authority at any time and from time to time at any annual, regular or special meeting to make such amendments to or revision of these bylaws if such amendment or revision is necessary or proper to secure, maintain or expand the status of the corporation as a not for profit, tax-exempt organization under the laws of the State of Kansas and the Internal Revenue laws of the United States.

ARTICLE XIV

14. EFFECTIVE DATE

14.1 These bylaws shall be effective from and after April 21, 2016.

ADOPTED by the members of the corporation on the 21 day of April, 2016.

APPROVED BY THE GREAT PLAINS ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH THIS 3rd DAY OF June, 2016.