

# VOLUME 1 REPORTS

## West Michigan Annual Conference OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Forty-first Session  
Calvin College  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
June 4-7, 2009

*Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton, Presiding Bishop  
Laura Witkowski, Annual Conference Secretary*

OFFICIAL RECORD  
VOLUME 47                      NUMBER 2-A



Welcome to The West Michigan Annual Conference of

# **THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

41st Session  
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
June 4 - 7, 2009  
Volume 1

## **Instructions:**

- 1.) To navigate in this Adobe Reader (Acrobat) .pdf file, scroll to or click on the Table of Contents.
- 2.) Place your cursor over a selection on the Table of Contents. As you do this, the cursor will change to a pointing finger. This indicates a link to a specific chapter or section.
- 3.) Click on the link of the chapter or section you would like to view.
- 4.) For information or questions, please call Kathy Cadarette at: (231) 526-2414
- 5.) To save this file on your computer:
  - a.) click on file;
  - b.) click on save a copy;
  - c.) select a location for saving;
  - d.) click save.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Conference Council on Ministries</b> .....	2
Summary of 2009 Budget .....	2
2009 Line Item Budgets .....	3
<b>Archives and History, Commission on</b> .....	9
<b>Christian Camping, Board of</b> .....	10
<b>Church and Society, Board of</b> .....	10
<b>Communications Commission</b> .....	11
<b>Congregational Transformation Committee on</b> .....	11
<b>Disability Concerns, Committee on</b> .....	11
<b>Discipleship, Board of</b> .....	12
Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts .....	12
Young Adult Ministries .....	13
Youth Ministries .....	13
Youth Worker Movement .....	13
<b>Emergency Preparedness Committee</b> .....	14
<b>Equitable Compensation, Commission on</b> .....	14
<b>Evangelism, Board of</b> .....	16
<b>Finance and Administration, Council on</b> .....	16
<b>Global Ministries, Board of</b> .....	19
Clark Retirement Community .....	19
Conference Secretaries of Global Ministries .....	20
Conference Committee on Mission Personnel .....	20
Methodist Children's Home Society .....	21
School of Christian Mission .....	22
United Methodist Community House .....	22
United Methodist Metropolitan Ministry of Grand Rapids .....	23
United Methodist Volunteers in Mission .....	23
<b>Higher Education and Campus Ministry, Board of</b> .....	24
Adrian College .....	24
Albion College .....	25
Central Michigan University Wesley Foundation .....	25
Ferris State University Wesley House .....	26
Wesley Fellowship at Grand Valley State University .....	27
Western Michigan University Wesley Foundation .....	28
Michigan State University Wesley Foundation .....	29
<b>John Wesley Association</b> .....	30
<b>Lake Louise Christian Community</b> .....	31
<b>Lay Ministries, Board of</b> .....	32
<b>Michigan Area Committee on the Episcopacy</b> .....	32
<b>Michigan Area Indian Workers' Conference</b> .....	33
<b>Michigan Area Loan Funds</b> .....	35
<b>Michigan Area School for Pastoral Ministry</b> .....	36
<b>Michigan Area United Methodist Historical Society</b> .....	36
<b>Michigan Christian Advocate</b> .....	37
<b>New Church Establishment and Development Committee</b> .....	37
<b>Ordained Ministry, Board of</b> .....	38
Candler School of Theology .....	40
Gammon Theological Seminary .....	41
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary .....	43
Methodist Theological School in Ohio .....	44
United Theological Seminary .....	45
<b>Pension and Health Benefits, Board of</b> .....	46
<b>Personnel Committee</b> .....	48
<b>Prison Ministry and Restorative Justice Concerns, Committee on</b> .....	49
<b>Religion and Race, Commission on</b> .....	49
<b>Statistician</b> .....	50
<b>Status and Role of Women, Commission on</b> .....	51
<b>Trustees, West Michigan Conference</b> .....	51
<b>UMCOR/Hunger Committee</b> .....	51
<b>United Methodist Foundation</b> .....	52
<b>United Methodist Women</b> .....	52
<b>Report on 2008 Annual Conference Motion #22: Conversation with</b> .....	54
Calvin College Representatives	
<b>Final Report on 2008 Annual Conference Motion #22</b> .....	57

## CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES

The previous year has been a season of transitions and new possibilities. Much time and energy by many had been devoted to exploring the possibilities of becoming one united Michigan Area of The United Methodist Church. Despite the decision on April 5, 2008 to not create a new annual conference, inertia developed to continue our many fine ministries, critically evaluate other priorities and consider what components of the previous four year's work might still be applicable.

The Conference Council on Ministries (CCOM) engaged in an intentional visioning process, led by Dr. Harold Wright, and it continues the refinement of ideas, visions, preferred futures and specific plans.

We are grateful for the two years of leadership as Conference Director provided by Rev. Aaron Gray. His departure in July was followed by the excellent ministry of Interim Conference Directors Dr. David Lundquist and Rev. Ed Perkins. Their compassion, experience and unique gifts created a strong bridge during the final six months of 2008.

The fruit which remains from the service given by Ministry Consultants Rev. Linda Burson and Rev. Dale Hotelling continues to be a blessing that touches us each day. Iris Naomi Garcia and Rev. Jana Lynn Almeida continue their creative and passionate ministries in the variety of arenas in which we experience their leadership as Ministry Consultants.

I only began in this role on January 1, 2009 and yet have the unique vantage point of composing comments about a year that has passed in which I had no responsibility as its Conference Director. I am indebted to those who have so graciously and willingly offered their gifts and service. Your CCOM support staff and temporary help – Hehyoung Baek, Judie Thompson, Ann Buck, David Wiltse, Valerie Mossman-Celestin, Kathy Hippensteel, Melissa Wunderly, Marian Coles, Kiri Salazar, Joan Foley, Mary Lou Fassett, Betsy Weems and, newest addition, Pam Stewart – have done conscientious work in this past year as they care for the countless details that keep the Conference Center a clearing house of information and hub of ministries. I look forward to what God holds in store for us in the year ahead as we continue effective ministry in a challenging economic period in our country.

Rev. Benton R. Heisler, Conference Director

## WORLD SERVICE AND CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCES

### Summary of 2009 Budget

[As Voted By The 2008 Conference Council on Ministries]

	2007 Budget	2008 Budget	2009 Budget
<b>C. WORLD SERVICE &amp; CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCES</b>			
1. World Service	\$933,053	\$989,190	\$989,258
2. Conference Benevolences			
Archives & History Commission	(moved)	(moved)	(moved)
Christian Unity Commission	\$460	\$450	\$450
Religion and Race Commission	5,521	7,850	7,850
COSROW	1,380	1,200	1,271
Christian Camping Board	180,000	205,382	213,312
Church and Society Board	9,202	10,000	10,070
Discipleship Board	16,563	17,000	17,000
Global Ministries Board	262,243	385,000	385,000
Racial/Ethnic Local Church	101,217	118,000	118,070
Higher Ed. & Campus Ministry	378,891	366,550	366,550
Communications Commission	92,015	103,000	97,850
Conf. Council on Ministries	616,882	638,150	633,332
Lay Ministries	4,300	4,200	3,800
Conference Personnel Committee	850	1,050	1,200
Evangelism	4,771	7,800	7,200

United Methodist Men	920	900	900
Hunger	1,840	1,950	2,000
Prison Ministry	8,281	7,500	7,500
Indian Workers' Conference	4,601	4,500	4,500
Disability Concerns Committee	1,380	1,350	1,395
Congregational Transformation	9,250	8,418	7,000
Conference Emerging Ministries	10,000	9,750	9,750
Total Conference Benevolences	\$1,710,567	\$1,900,000	\$1,896,000
3. WS/CB Contingency Fund	56,000	32,830	0
Total Conf. Ben. and WS/CB Contingency	\$1,766,567	\$1,932,830	\$1,896,000
Total World Service & Conf. Benevolences	\$2,699,620	\$2,922,020	\$2,885,258
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUDGET</b>	<b>\$6,526,221</b>	<b>\$6,558,913</b>	<b>\$6,694,890</b>

**2009 LINE ITEM BUDGETS**  
**[As approved by Conference Council on Ministries]**

		<b>2009 BUDGET</b>
<b>COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS – 3020</b>		
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	450
	Total Receipts	<u>\$450</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	450
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$450</u></u>
<b>COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE - 3495</b>		
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	7,850
	Total Receipts	<u>\$7,850</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	2,450
5051129	Cross Racial Appt Support	980
5080000	Scholarships	980
5120000	Program-Leadership Training	980
5290300	Dues-Caucus	392
5290310	Dues-NCJ CORR	784
5620000	Admin and Meetings	490
5740000	Promotions	758
	Total Disbursements	<u>\$7,814</u>
	Surplus	<u><u>\$36</u></u>
<b>COMMISSION ON STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN – 3050</b>		
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	1,271
	Total Receipts	<u>\$1,271</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	775
5380000	Printing	250
5620000	Admin and Meetings	246
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$1,271</u></u>

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN CAMPING – 3200**

4903000	Distri Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	<u>213,312</u>
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$213,312

## DISBURSEMENTS

5200000	Payroll-Salaried Employees	141312
5241000	Worker's Comp Insurance	11000
5360000	Postage and Shipping	1000
5400000	Office Supplies	500
5460000	Property Insurance	50000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	500
5740000	Promotions	9000
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u><u>\$213,312</u></u>

**BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY - 3030**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	<u>10,070</u>
	Total Receipts	\$10,070

5050000	Program Disbursements	2,500
5080000	Scholarships	500
5360000	Postage and Shipping	70
5380000	Printing	500
5620000	Admin and Meetings	500
6105809	Distrib Exp-Peace w/Justice	3,000
6107328	Distrib Exp-GR Dist Peace Cntr	1,500
6107604	Distrib Exp-Lans Dist Shalom Cntr	1,500
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$10,070</u></u>

**BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP – 3070**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	<u>17,000</u>
	Total Receipts	\$17,000

5054004	Adults in Youth Ministry	270
5054007	Christian Education Sunday Materials	90
5380000	Printing	90
5620000	Admin and Meetings	180
6103071	Distrib Exp-Childrens Council	2,362
6103073	Distrib Exp-Youth Council	9,000
6103075	Distrib Exp-Older Adult	1,373
6103076	Distrib Exp-Stewardship Task Force	540
6103077	Distrib Exp-Single Adult	1,373
6103078	Distrib Exp-Young Adult	700
6103074	Family Life	315
6105224	Distrib Exp-Worship/Music/Arts	270
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$16,563</u></u>
	Surplus	\$437

**BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES – 3400**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	385,000
	Total Receipts	<u>\$385,000</u>
6107100	Block grant - Albion District	25,000
6107200	Block Grant - Central District	32,500
6107300	Block Grant - Grand Rapids District	167,500
6107400	Block Grant - Grand Traverse District	30,000
6107500	Block Grant - Kalamazoo District	20,000
6107600	Block Grant - Lansing District	35,000
5033102	Health & Welfare Grant - Bronson Hospital	2,000
5033101	Health and Welfare Grant - Clark Community	11,000
5033103	Health and Welfare Grant - Meth Children's Home	10,000
5133306	Town & Country	1,000
5033309	UMVIM-NCJ	500
5033313	Urban	1,000
5033315	Volunteers in Mission	3,500
5033316	Health and Welfare Development	3,000
5033402	Six Lanes Book	1,300
5033406	Fund Development and Market Training	4,000
5081139	Mission Training	5,000
5120000	District Ministry Development	13,000
5360000	Postage and shipping	1,400
5380000	Printing	1,000
5620000	Meetings	2,000
5913000	Missionary Personnel	500
5913400	CBGM Secretary	1,500
5913406	School of Missions	2,500
6107325	Mission School of the North	500
5913407	Haiti Task Force	5,000
5913408	Missions Promotion	2,300
6107323	Advance Special Promotion	1,500
5800000	Miscellaneous	1,500
	Total Disbursements	<u>\$385,000</u>

**RACIAL ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEE – 3490**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	118,070
	Total Receipts	\$118,070
5030308	Grants - Washington Hgts UMC	15,000
5033211	Grants - Kewadin Indian UMC	9,888
5033213	Grants - Northport UMC	4,032
5080000	Scholarships	2,000
5120000	Program-Leadership Training	2,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	1,000
5740000	Promotions	1,000
503	Salem Bradley Indian Missions	4,000
6107315	Distrib Exp-Salem Bradley Sr Meals	15,000
6107323	Distrib Exp-GR Vietnamese UMC	11,000
6107610	Distrib Exp-Lansing Vietnamese	1,150
6108100	Distrib Exp-Church of All Nations	15,000

6108110	Distrib Exp-Lansing Faith	15,000
503	NOW/Matching grants	17,000
	Ingathering	5,000
	Total Disbursements	<u>\$118,070</u>

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY - 3600**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	366,550
	Total Receipts	<u>\$366,550</u>
5043610	Grants - Albion College	2,000
5043620	Grants - Adrian College	2,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	2,500
6106026	Distrib Exp-GVUMSF/GR Youth	32,000
6106200	Distrib Exp-WF Capital Fund	24,050
6106208	Distrib Exp-WF CMU (1)	76,000
6106212	Distrib Exp-WF MSU (1)	76,000
6106216	Distrib Exp-WF WMU (1)	76,000
6106222	Distrib Exp-WF FSU (1)	76,000
	Total Disbursements	<u>\$366,550</u>

**COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATIONS – 3040**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	97,850
	Total Receipts	<u>\$97,850</u>
5043000	Grants - Advocate	78,000
	Michigan Area Resource Center (MARC)	2,500
5053001	Igniting Ministry	5,000
5053010	CENTERpiece	3,500
5270000	Continuing Education	1,450
5410000	Equipment Replacement	1,500
5420000	Equipment Repair and Maintenance	300
5620000	Admin and Meetings	400
5820000	Web Site Administration	3,000
5850000	Internet Services	2,200
	Total Disbursements	<u>\$97,850</u>

**CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES – 3100**

4526010	Personnel Support	100
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	633,332
4905805	Distrib Rev-Youth Ministry Staff	47,000
	Total Receipts	<u>\$680,432</u>
5051135	New Pastors Orientation	750
5200000	Payroll-Salaried Employees	360,984
5210000	Payroll-Hourly Employees	17,111
5213100	Casual Help	500
5202100	Adjunct Staff	6,228
5223101	Pension Contr-CCOM Staff	36,488
5223102	Pension Contr-CCOM Support Staff	10,093
5230000	Housing Allowance	60,000
5240000	FICA/Medicare Taxes	16,457
5241000	Worker's Comp Insurance	892

5260000	Health Insurance	91,644
5270000	Continuing Education	2,500
5280000	Resource Materials	2,000
5340000	Telephone	350
5350000	Mobile Phone	3,350
5360000	Postage and Shipping	1,000
5380000	Printing	1,000
5400000	Office Supplies	4,200
5420000	Equipment Repair and Maintenance	200
5410000	Equipment Replacement	1,500
5580000	Credit Card Fees	100
5620000	Admin and Meetings	2,000
5633110	Travel-Mileage, Conf Dir	3,000
5633120	Travel-Mileage, Min Consult1	10,000
5633130	Travel-Mileage, Min Consult2	5,000
5633150	Travel-Mileage, Min Consult4	3,000
5633160	Travel-Mileage, Min Consult5	3,000
5643110	Travel-O/T Mileage, Conf Dir	2,000
5643120	Travel-O/T Mileage Min Consult1	1,500
5643130	Travel-O/T Mileage Min Consult2	1,500
5643150	Travel-O/T Mileage Min Consult4	1,000
5643160	Travel-O/T Mileage Min Consult5	1,000
5720000	Insurance, Other	700
5800000	Miscellaneous	250
5810000	Computer Services	3,000
5830500	Computer Equipment	3,250
5840000	Software Purchase and Support	250
5850000	Internet Services	400
610	Distrib Exp-Michigan Area Resource Center	22,235
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$680,432</u></u>

**BOARD OF LAITY – 3460**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	3,800
	Total Receipts	<u>\$3,800</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	1,500
5280000	Resource Materials	400
5290000	Membership Dues	400
5620000	Admin and Meetings	1,000
5640000	Travel-O/T mileage	500
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$3,800</u></u>

**CONFERENCE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – 3470**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	1,200
	Total Receipts	<u>\$1,200</u>
5620000	Admin and Meetings	1,200
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$1,200</u></u>

**BOARD OF EVANGELISM – 3080**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	7,200
	Total Receipts	<u>\$7,200</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements (Bechtle presentation)	3,000
5080000	Scholarships (grants to churches)	3,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	1,200
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$7,200</u></u>

**UNITED METHODIST MEN – 3085**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	900
	Total Receipts	<u>\$900</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	185
5081139	Program - Training	280
5280000	Resource Materials	182
5360000	Postage and Shipping	85
5380000	Printing	168
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$900</u></u>

**HUNGER COMMITTEE – 3440**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	2,000
	Total Receipts	<u>\$2,000</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	750
5080000	Scholarships	200
5120000	Program-Leadership Training	150
5360000	Postage and Shipping	150
5380000	Printing	350
5620000	Admin and Meetings	400
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$2,000</u></u>

**PRISON MINISTRY COMMITTEE - 3480**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	7,500
	Total Receipts	<u>\$7,500</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	3,500
5360000	Postage & Shipping	250
5630000	Travel-Staff Mileage	250
5620000	Admin and Meetings	800
5740000	Promotions	1,500
	Staff Education	1,200
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$7,500</u></u>

**INDIAN WORKERS CONFERENCE BUDGET - 3450**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	4,500
	Total Receipts	<u>\$4,500</u>
5050000	Program Disbursements	650
5080000	Scholarships	1,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	2,850
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$4,500</u></u>

**DISABILITY CONCERNS COMMITTEE - 3032**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	1,395
	Total Receipts	<u>\$1,395</u>

5030000	Grants-Churches	600
5050000	Program Disbursements	150
5053010	Centerpiece	150
5620000	Admin and Meetings	345
	Camp scholarships	150
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$1,395</u></u>

**CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION - 3520**

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	7,000
	Total Receipts	<u>\$7,000</u>

5051000	Program Materials and Supplies	6,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	1,000
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$7,000</u></u>

**CONFERENCE EMERGING MINISTRIES - 3500**

4570000	Interest Income	7,000
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	9,750
	Total Receipts	<u>\$16,750</u>

5030000	Grants-Churches	16,750
	Total Disbursements	<u><u>\$16,750</u></u>

<b>CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$1,949,627</b>
--	--------------------

<b>AMOUNT NEEDED FROM CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCES</b>	<b>\$1,896,000</b>
---	--------------------

**ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COMMISSION**

The Archives and History Commission was not able to hold our normal number of meetings this year, due to a death in my family and scheduling conflicts among the members.

Vice chairman Ken Gackler and I attended the North Central Jurisdiction Convocation for Archives & History at Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South Dakota, from July 7-10, 2008. One of the many speakers was former senator and presidential candidate George McGovern. Senator McGovern is 86 years of age and a life-long Methodist. His father was a Methodist pastor and George himself had gone to Garrett Theological Seminary to become a pastor.

A newsletter, "West Michigan Legacies," was issued by our Archivist Jennie Thomas in the Fall of 2008. We plan to do a workshop in 2009 and have asked for input on what subjects participants are interested in.

Our commission was deeply saddened by the death of the Reverend Ronald M. Fassett on November 1, 2008. Ron was the chair of this commission immediately before me, and was currently our Historian. His wise counsel and great knowledge of Methodist history will be sorely missed.

Rev. David Crawford became a new member on our team this year. Mary Anna (Nan) Brink had served an eight year term on our commission. We sincerely thank her for her service, especially being our secretary for many years and her faithfulness in attending meetings. Current officers and members are: Merna Francis, Chair; Ken Gackler, Vice Chair; Dan Yakes, Secretary; Assistant Secretary Jennie Thomas (also our Archivist); and Rev. David Litchfield, Treasurer. Other members are: the Rev. Paul Doherty, Lawrence Hall (Archival Consultant), Webb Scrivnor, and Youth Representative Kelsie Skeels.

The commission's main emphasis in 2009 and 2010 will be planning and hosting the North Central Jurisdiction Convocation for Archives and History at Adrian College in July 2010. We are working with the Detroit Conference Archives and History Commission in this endeavor.

OUR MISSION: "A MINISTRY OF MEMORY"

Merna Francis, Chair

### **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN CAMPING**

We have had some exciting and encouraging decisions to make during the past year. A new director was named for the Lakeview Camp site. Mike Symons assumed those responsibilities last Spring. As a result of his leadership the number of campers has significantly increased at Lakeview last Summer. Mike has also proposed that we harvest some of the trees at Lakeview and use those funds for capital improvement at our camps. A forester consultant has been involved representing the West Michigan Conference in deciding which trees are appropriate to harvest. It will be an enjoyable discussion deciding what camp improvements can be made with those funds.

The executive committee and the whole camp board have been involved in discussions around how to increase the Conference Staff administrative time devoted to camping. We definitely believe that we need significantly more administrative time than the 10 to 15 percent of staff time currently devoted to our camp program. An administrator instead of volunteers really should be administrating this vital program for the West Michigan Conference.

We began a process of board members visiting all of the camp sites last Summer and completing an evaluation form developed by our Program Effectiveness Committee under the leadership of Jeremy Williams. Each visitation team was composed of two or three board members. We have some refinement to do but believe this was a valuable experience for the board members and the camp staffs.

Funding our camps continues to be a serious issue. Declining Ministry Shares to our conference trickles down to fewer shares for this vital ministry. Some serious decisions are going to have to be made if this ministry is to continue as we know it. The Board of Christian Camping has cut the budget to bare bones and we still are short of a balanced budget.

Attendance has improved slightly overall at our camps which we believe is the result of the hard work of our camp directors, camp deans and their staffs and our promotional program. We encourage you to visit a camp or, better yet, use our camps for programs at your local church.

John Armstrong, Chair

### **BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

The Conference Board of Church and Society has continued in its initiatives to raise awareness about issues of justice and peace in our conference and in the wider Church. We have submitted petitions related to justice and peace at Annual Conference and supported legislation going to General Conference. We have hosted educational speakers at our Annual Conference Church and Society dinner, which in 2008 featured Amy Stapelton, field organizer for MFSA. As well, we have recognized leaders in justice and peace with our Peace Sermon of the Year Award (Rev. Jennifer Browne, First United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids) and our Peacemaker of the Year Award (Rev. Ron Fassett, a longtime advocate for peace).

We continue to work with our counterparts in the Detroit Annual Conference on the Keep Making Peace in Arenas of Violence conference, and we assist with funding for this event. As well, we continue to explore areas in which we can work collaboratively with the Detroit Annual Conference.

We also continue to hold as a priority the support of our peace centers by providing them with funding and by supporting their work through the efforts of our Peace With Justice Coordinator. As well, we have provided funding for Justice for Our Neighbors, the HAPI Peace Park, an economic justice project based in Haiti, and an environmental awareness program at a local church. As we go forward, we are focusing on better equipping local churches for peace and justice work and on building collaborative relationships with other boards and agencies in our conference and the wider Church.

Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai, Chair

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

A year of transition best describes the journey of the Communications Commission in 2008. Art Turner, who so willingly stepped into the role of leader upon the death of our dear friend and colleague Bill Myers, completed his term in June of 2008. Jim Searls replaced Art as chair.

Faced with budget reductions and staff vacancies, 2008 also became a year of waiting.

Several small changes were made to the website. Most notable: adding the ability to subscribe to sections of the web material. This opportunity can be found in the section called "Stay Connected." Stay Connected allows a much greater distribution of Grand Rapids District Superintendent Laurie Haller's weekly column "Leading From The Heart." (If you would like to subscribe, follow the instructions in the Stay Connected section.) Also notable: the conference is now capable of distributing video clips through the web site. The intention is to create a library of videos for training and information. We are also exploring the possibility of creating an online graphics library.

The 2008 General Conference mandated that each annual conference have a Director of Communications. West Michigan is in the process hiring that person. Budget constraints may slow the progress but the position will be filled as soon as possible.

During December of 2008, Communications purchased sponsorships on Michigan Public Radio. These fifteen-second announcements invited listeners to visit the Michigan United Methodist web presence at [www.umcmi.org](http://www.umcmi.org). Tracking results showed a significant increase in people visiting the web site. Did you welcome them to your church with Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors?

Jim Searls, Chair

## CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

Believing in a God who transforms, the West Michigan Conference Congregational Transformation Committee is claiming its name and is creating a vision of being an advocate for healthy congregations and providing tools necessary for this work. We know that the West Michigan Conference values healthy and vital congregations, and we see our committee's role as ensuring that our focus, funding and staff are in place for this to happen.

For several years our conference has provided the three-year Congregational Transformation program which was staffed by Susan Gray and now is staffed by Naomi García. This program has been helpful to a number of churches. The West Michigan Conference also has in place other tools that strengthen local churches through consultations, visioning workshops, training events, programs that promote spirituality of leaders, the building of healthy relationships, sound decision making processes, conflict resolution and more. We see our committee using the communication tools such as our website, the "Weekly News" and the Advocate to connect churches to the resources we have. We see ourselves as the "voice" for the health of the local congregation.

Our committee is made up of committed people, both lay and clergy, who have energy for congregational transformation. We see this transitional time of our conference as an opportunity and a call to focus on the health of our congregations. We see the West Michigan Conference going forward with healthy, vital congregations so that we will be effective witnesses to our faith in our transforming God.

Edna Fleming, Chair

## COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY CONCERNS

We continue to provide information and advocacy for persons with disabilities. On occasion we have consulted with local congregations and are willing to make site visits. Our practice of offering \$50 Disability Grants continued in 2008 with 13 churches receiving such grants. We also granted two scholarships of \$35 each for persons with special needs to attend camp. Our display at the 2008 West Michigan Annual Conference featured a video speech by Joni Erickson Tada in appreciation of The Chosen Ministries of Lansing Trinity United Methodist Church.

The 2008 Disability Grants were given to the following churches:

Battle Creek Outland UMC – Signage	St. Johns UMC – Accessible restrooms
Shelby UMC – Parking signs	Bear Lake UMC – High rise toilet seat
Grand Rapids Genesis UMC – Large print materials	Fountain UMC – Handrail on front steps

Almena UMC – Hearing assistance	Kendall UMC – Large print hymnals
Charlotte Lawrence Ave UMC – Automatic door openers	Ferry UMC – Handicap lift
Hesperia UMC – Handicap railing repair	Bellevue UMC – Elevator and accessible door
Lansing Trinity UMC through Habitat for Humanity – Ramp	

We thank all of you who have opened up ministry by changing buildings and attitudes and challenge you to keep at it.

Curtis E. Jensen, Chair

### **BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP**

The Board of Discipleship of the West Michigan Annual Conference continues to seek to lead and assist congregations and individuals to make disciples for Jesus Christ. Christian discipleship continues through various ministries including education, small groups, single adults, older adults, family/marriage/parenting, camping and many age-related ministries. Our goal is to offer training and education for local congregations and districts within our conference.

In 2008, two areas that we provided assistance to the conference, districts and churches were through the Family Life grants and Christian Education grants. The Family Life Ministries provides small grants to churches and ministries that want to support and provide activities or resources to children, parents and families that will enrich their lives. Most recently, such grants have provided materials for North End Community Ministry's Back to School Program, the Senior Meal Program through Oakdale United Methodist Church, and a Marriage Maintenance Workshop. We plan to continue support for ministries that will assist families in our conference.

The Christian Education grants are given to local churches in support of new educational ministries. A church can apply for a Christian Education grant for any new Christian Education ministry. Whenever a church takes a Christian Education offering it sends in 50% of the offering to the Conference Treasurer's Office and the local church keeps 50%. When a local church takes a Christian Education offering it lists that on the Christian Education grant application which can be downloaded from the conference web site. A local congregation can receive up to \$500 for a new Christian Education ministry each year.

The changing Michigan economy made it very difficult for individuals to attend camp in 2008. To address this problem, last year we gave over \$10,000.00 to new first-time campers within our conference. The Board of Discipleship believes that Christian Camping is a life-changing event for our young people, so this was a way we could assist in making disciples for Jesus Christ.

We continue to be in transition by developing new leaders within our existing board. As we continue to encourage local congregations and the West Michigan Conference to make disciples in this changing world, I invite you to see how we were able to use new opportunities for ministry to our members and help our conference make new disciples for Christ.

Janet Pool, Chair

### **THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED METHODISTS IN MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS, WEST MICHIGAN CHAPTER**

The past two years have been very successful for our chapter. We have doubled attendance at our events and this past Fall we tried a different approach. Our purpose is to offer help to worship leaders as they plan their worship services.

Our workshop on April 19, 2008, was held at the St. Paul United Methodist Church in Grand Rapids. We offered three topics, each one taught three times. The first was led by Paul Ryan who is Resource Development Specialist for the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. His expertise is to plan contemporary worship using elements of traditional liturgical worship but infusing worship with contemporary styles. The second track focused on handbells and was led by Jane Wright whose topics included basic techniques and musicality, repertoire, and exploring principles of high bell and low bell ringing. Dianna Goudie, pastor at Redford United Methodist Church, taught her class how to present and read scripture effectively by internalizing the reading and releasing the life and power of the message.

We really went out on a limb for the Fall workshops. We offered a mini workshop in each district. On September 27 workshops were at Cadillac, Edmore, and Kalkaska. On October 4 we went to Paw Paw, Rockford, Marshall and Lake Odessa. At each place we presented classes on seven different subjects

centering on Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Preaching, choral, handbells, worship planning, keyboard, multimedia, and altarscapes. Over 100 people attended.

This Spring, March 7, 2009, our workshop will be in Lansing at University United Methodist Church. Clinicians are Safiyah Fosua (preaching), Jorge Lockward (multi-cultural worship), and Jessica Marie Smith and Jason Warly (sacred dance). Safiyah and Jorge are from the General Board of Discipleship in New York. Check GBOD web site for biographies.

Joseph R. Jennings, President

### **YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES**

The West Michigan Conference is full of young adults who are vibrant, challenging, loving souls. Many of them are active in our campus ministries and local churches, many lead youth groups, many want to serve Christ in new and “out of the box” ways and have not found their place within the walls of traditional church leadership. This past year, we saw hundreds of passionate young adults gathered again at UnLeashed. They participated in workshops that challenged them to dive into the deep-end of their faith lives. Many young adults served as camp counselors or attended Big Kids Camp, where they were encouraged to be who they are and to share their journeys with others. The question becomes, “What’s next in young adult ministry?”

As the new coordinator I would like to challenge you to be less focused on “age” and more focused on listening to the younger people in your churches. They **do** exist, and they **do** have amazing ideas that need to be heard and acted upon. Young adult ministry is not solely about planning more events to attend, or trying to gather people who are alike. If we want to reach younger people we have to do ministry that changes lives, reaches out to those in need, and has meaning and relevance to our lives today. People all across the West Michigan Conference are teaming up to get the word out about young adult events, to network with one another in an effort to equip the local church to do ministry with younger people, and to affirm and empower new and bold young leaders for future. Please join us as we watch God work through this exciting ministry.

Devon Herrell, Conference Coordinator

### **CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON YOUTH MINISTRIES**

The Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCOYM) has been active in ministry to the youth of the West Michigan Conference. Since last June at Annual Conference, we have been very busy raising money for Youth Service Fund (YSF). We also sold Love Links at Annual Conference, and were happy to present our report to the people there.

We again went to Wesley Woods in June to hold Youth Assembly, where we shared the camp with the Confirmands’ Camp to cut down the expenses. It was a very good experience, and the council as a group became very close. At next year’s camp we look towards training all the youth to become lay speakers.

At the time of this report, we have had two meetings, one in August and one in November. Both have been overnight. The first was at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in Grand Rapids. The November meeting was held in Lansing where we reviewed and prepared the future budget. We are having our next meeting in February at Mt. Pleasant First United Methodist Church. In April we will be holding our fourth meeting in Alba, where we where we will be holding our conference-wide event again this year.

All the CCOYM members would like to thank the conference for the support and love that you have extended to us this year, and thank the district and the conference youth coordinators for their help, encouragement, and willingness to help us minister to the youth in our area.

Dennis Homminga Jr., President

### **YOUTH WORKER MOVEMENT (YWM)**

This past year West Michigan’s youth workers supported each other through emails, sharing conference attendance and spending time on retreat. Our October retreat at Wesley Woods focused on taking care of our souls under the banner of “Comfort Food.” Sandra Douglas helped us identify and maintain good working boundaries and we enjoyed a weekend together. The Youth Worker Movement is a ministry to and for adults working in youth ministry, whether paid or volunteer, part-time or full-time, ordained or lay. Our goal is to create networks of support for persons in this unique and challenging ministry. In 2009 Heather Oysti, middle school youth minister at Grand Rapids First United Methodist Church, will be taking the helm of the YWM as I step down after several years of leadership. It’s been my pleasure to serve in this capacity.

Greg Lawton, Conference Coordinator

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

This again has been a fortunate year in which we did not have any major disasters in West Michigan. We are in the process of recruiting persons who are willing to become Early Response Team Members to be able to respond in a local or regional disaster. We are asking for churches that will be willing to be a part of the Connecting Neighbors network for disaster response in their communities. This is an UMCOR program to have local churches prepared for a disaster of any kind in their community. We are working with other faith-based and secular disaster response groups to be more effective in our response to people's needs. We have upgraded our trailer and are looking for a vehicle to pull it along with the volunteers to staff it. The most important thing for people to remember is that preparedness is the key to disaster response.

Don E. Tippin, Disaster Response Coordinator and Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair

### COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The purpose of the Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) is to annually propose a minimum compensation schedule for clergy in various appointment categories, and to assist local churches in making disciples for Christ by helping to meet minimum compensation standards for their pastors when local resources are not able to do so. In fulfilling the obligations of ¶¶ 342 and 624 of *THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*, and in using Ministry Shares to ensure compliance with their purposes, the work of the commission is firmly rooted in our strong connectional heritage. The commission takes seriously the stewardship of Ministry Share resources entrusted for this purpose.

In 2008 a total of 21 charges received \$161,500 in financial support from the Commission on Equitable Compensation for direct or indirect support of pastoral compensation. Grants ranged from as little as \$482 to as much as \$32,372, with the average grant at \$7,700. Of the \$161,500 in total grants, approximately \$123,600 went to Racial/Ethnic/Missional churches that will likely remain on Equitable Compensation beyond the five-year guideline. In addition, the commission also approved Pulpit Supply funding in the amount of \$5,500 so that local congregations could continue fully funding the salaries of pastors on short-term leaves, while also paying for an appointed clergy person to serve during their leaves. On the whole for 2008, the commission was under budget, even when taking into account less than full funding of the budget due to Ministry Share shortfalls.

While the commission was able to work well within its budget in 2008, it is likely that 2009 will prove to be more difficult. At the same time the commission's budget has been reduced, we are seeing an increase in needs and inquiries about availability of support. Given the current economic climate in our state, the increasing number of churches struggling to make ends meet, and the increasing costs of clergy compensation this is not unexpected. In an effort to be more flexible in administering funds, beginning in 2009 the commission is making grants on a six-month basis, with automatic renewal should there be no change in appointment, parish alignment, or other factors that might impact the needs of local churches receiving Equitable Compensation. This shift allows the commission and Appointive Cabinet to work closely together in managing the overall Equitable Compensation budget throughout the year as changes in appointments and/or parish alignments reduce, increase, or create new needs for Equitable Compensation support.

Believing that the commission should do more to help local churches than simply grant salary support, we continue to budget some funding for scholarships for churches on Equitable Compensation which have a desire to participate in stewardship, evangelism, or church growth training opportunities. As no congregations have taken advantage of this opportunity in the past, the commission has had some discussion about planning a training event that would require attendance of clergy and lay leadership of churches on Equitable Compensation. At this time, however, no firm decision or plans have been made.

Though much of the work of the commission the last few years was aimed at bringing the salary schedules of the West Michigan and Detroit conferences into alignment in anticipation of the creation of a new annual conference, that proposal was not approved. Nevertheless, believing that such a proposal is likely to come before our conferences in the future, both commissions will continue to be in conversation as we set minimum salary schedules and Equitable Compensation policies in the coming years.

## EQUITABLE COMPENSATION 2008 SUMMARY

CHURCH/CHARGE	ACCOUNT	ITEM	AMOUNT	HOW PAID	TOTAL
<b>ALBION DISTRICT:</b>					
Washington Heights UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	7,319.00	Check	7,319.00
Quincy UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	1,942.34	Check	1,942.34
DISTRICT TOTAL					\$9,261.34
<b>CENTRAL DISTRICT:</b>					
Chippewa Indian Mission UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	7,000.00	Transfer	7,000.00
DISTRICT TOTAL					\$7,000.00
<b>GRAND RAPIDS DISTRICT:</b>					
Oakdale UMC 1/1-6/30	1110-5051101	Salary	15,000.00	Transfer	7,500.00
Church of All Nations (Adj in July)	1110-5051101	Salary	5,635.00	Transfer	5,635.00
La Nueva Esperanza	1110-5051101	Salary	20,000.00	Transfer	20,000.00
Salem/Bradley Indian Mission	1110-5051101	Salary	5,938.00	Transfer	5,938.00
GR Vietnamese	1110-5051101	Salary	17,000.00	Transfer	17,000.00
Crestwood 1/1-4/30 & 7/1-12/31	1110-5051101	Salary	8,117.00	Check	8,117.00
DISTRICT TOTAL					\$64,190.00
<b>GRAND TRAVERSE DISTRICT:</b>					
Baldwin Covenant Community	1110-5051101	Salary	16,625.00	Check	16,625.00
Kewadin Indian Mission UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	32,372.00	Check	32,372.00
Greensky Hill UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	2,700.00	Check	2,700.00
Pine River Parish UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	5,000.00	Check	5,000.00
Traverse Bay UMC 7/1-12/31	1110-5051101	Salary	1,500.00	Check	1,500.00
Harrietta UMC 7/1-12/31	1110-5051101	Salary	1,090.80	Check	1,090.80
Mesick UMC 7/1-12/31	1110-5051101	Salary	727.20	Check	727.20
DISTRICT TOTAL					\$60,015.00
<b>KALAMAZOO DISTRICT:</b>					
Fennville/Pearl UMCs	1110-5051101	Salary	2,000.00	ACH	2,000.00
Trowbridge UMC 1/1-6/30	1110-5051101	Salary	14,000.00	Check	7,000.00
Bangor Simpson UMC	1110-5051101	Salary	482.00	Check	482.00
DISTRICT TOTAL					\$9,482.00
<b>LANSING DISTRICT:</b>					
South Lansing Ministry 1/1-6/30	1110-5051101	Salary	18,000.00	Transfer	9,000.00
Grovenburg UMC 10/1-12/31	1110-5051101	Salary	2,550.00	Check	2,550.00
DISTRICT TOTAL					\$11,550.00
GRAND TOTAL					\$161,498.34

David F. Hills, Chair

## BOARD OF EVANGELISM

The Board of Evangelism presented Mike Bechtel, author of *Evangelism for the Rest of Us*, who spoke at the Board of Evangelism Luncheon and in the Commons in the evening of June 5, 2008. What's more, the board distributed to every congregation in the West Michigan Annual Conference a copy of the "Leader's Guide" to *Evangelism for the Rest of Us* for use in the local church. Mike Bechtel made the "Leader's Guide" available to us gratis and we duplicated it.

The board was also able to help underwrite several church growth programs during the year.

Edward Ross, Chair

## COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

*THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE* mandates the Council on Finance and Administration the responsibility to be the steward of the financial and administrative affairs of the conference. That responsibility includes the annual audit of the conference finances, and the audited financial report is published in volume 2 of the conference journal.

### *Thank You, West Michigan!*

The Council appreciates the fine efforts of our churches in paying their Ministry Shares which represent our financial commitment to the shared mission and ministry of the West Michigan Conference and The United Methodist Church, locally and globally in the midst of the financial challenges facing our churches due to the rising unemployment in the State and the turbulent economy in general. Actual receipts represented 91.6% of the conference budget, compared to last year's 92.6%. Two hundred sixty churches representing 62.7% of all our churches paid 100% or more, and 17 of these churches contributed more than 100% of their Ministry Shares. These figures show a downtrend from last year's 300 churches and 50 churches, respectively.

The Council is grateful for the financial stewardship of our conference agencies in reducing expenses which enabled the conference to fulfill **100% of all general church apportionments** leaving a contingency reserve of \$174,000. This action by the CFA reflects and models the commitment of our churches to support our shared mission and ministries as a connectional denomination. The West Michigan Conference is committed to support the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church world wide to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

We continue with the conference budgeting process by involving all responsible conference agencies. The process includes opportunities for direct discussions between CFA representatives and agencies about budget concerns.

### Summary of Giving By District

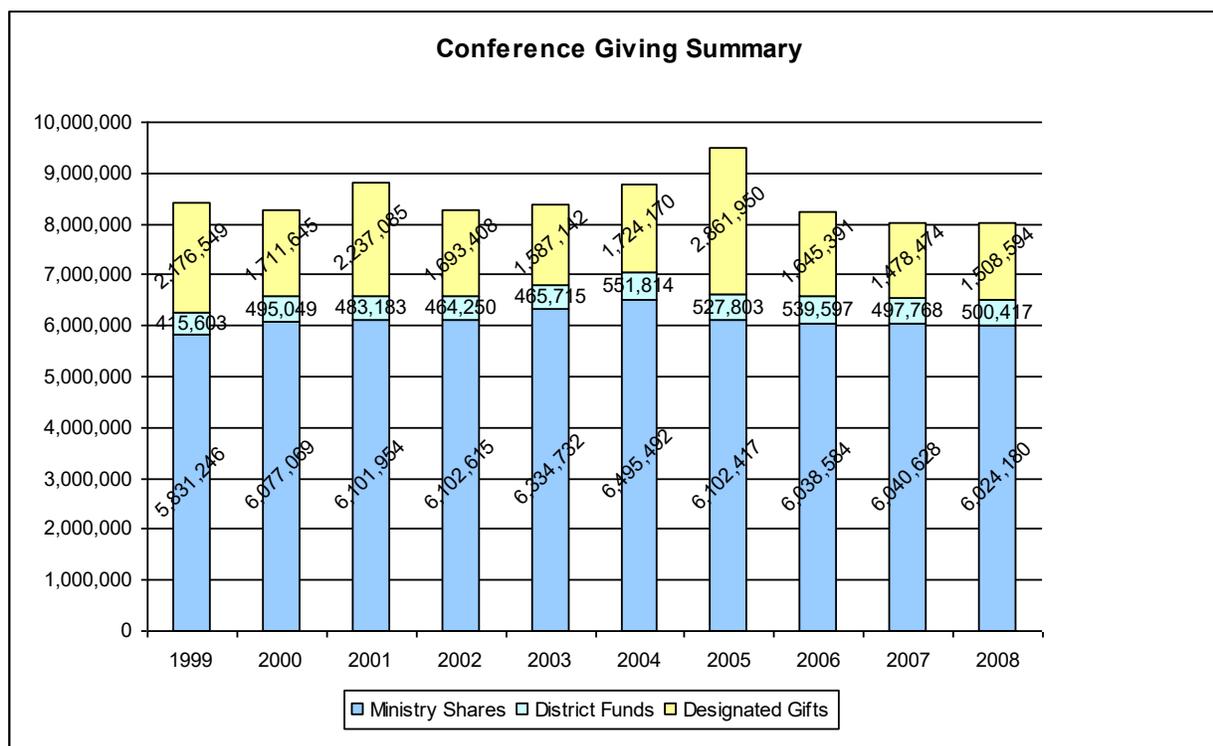
The Grand Rapids District led the conference in percentage giving to Ministry Shares followed by Albion District. Below are the charts showing the 2008 financial giving (percentages are compared to conference and district budget):

MINISTRY SHARES GIVING BY DISTRICT		<u>12/31/2006</u>	<u>12/31/2007</u>	<u>12/31/08</u>
CONFERENCE	Ministry Shares & District Funds Paid	\$6,577,829	\$6,538,396	\$6,524,597
	% Paid	93.40%	92.50%	91.6%
	Special Giving	\$1,643,459	\$1,478,474	\$1,508,595
ALBION	Remittances Year To Date	\$912,048	\$846,016	\$892,651
	% Paid	91.90%	84.00%	91.9%
	Special Giving	\$200,705	\$175,924	\$177,478
CENTRAL	Remittances Year To Date	\$717,257	\$701,797	\$721,112
	% Paid	90.70%	86.40%	91.3%
	Special Giving	\$173,622	\$166,158	\$168,013

GRAND	Remittances Year To Date	\$1,649,119	\$1,654,996	\$1,706,839
RAPIDS	% Paid	91.90%	89.90%	95.3%
	Special Giving	\$397,767	\$416,211	\$494,002
GRAND	Remittances Year To Date	\$889,807	\$901,502	\$843,740
TRAVERSE	% Paid	95.20%	92.30%	87.8%
	Special Giving	\$220,837	\$188,037	\$183,846
KALAMAZOO	Remittances Year To Date	\$1,183,972	\$1,154,893	\$1,154,453
	% Paid	90.40%	87.40%	89.6%
	Special Giving	\$346,908	\$306,737	\$292,956
LANSING	Remittances Year To Date	\$1,225,626	\$1,279,192	\$1,205,802
	% Paid	94.70%	93.70%	91.1%
	Special Giving	\$303,620	\$225,407	\$192,300

**SPECIAL GIVING**

	<u>12/31/2006</u>	<u>12/31/2007</u>	<u>12/31/08</u>	
1 Camp Endowment Campaign	\$2,047	\$676	\$1,112	
2 Christian Education Sunday Offering	8,333	6,918	5,879	
3 Racial Ethnic Local Church Sunday Offering	11,804	7,751	5,091	
4 Human Relations Day Offering	17,336	14,116	17,088	
5 Rural Life Sunday	11,214	7,902	5,990	
6 Peace With Justice Sunday	12,568	11,454	15,290	
7 Camp Sunday	18,766	10,472	8,759	
8 Native American Ministry Sunday	16,922	17,159	17,065	
9 Golden Cross Sunday Offering	11,863	9,142	8,158	
10 United Methodist Student Day Offering	13,081	11,106	9,158	
11 World Communion Offering	22,459	22,528	19,143	
12 One Great Hour of Sharing	110,377	99,357	79,581	
13 Africa University Endowment Fund	4,073	2,106	1,289	
14 World Missionary Support	243,369	212,625	197,157	
15 World Mission Projects	118,405	95,700	98,072	
16 United Methodist Children's Fund	2,011	1,354	719	
17 National Missions	79,791	75,589	66,491	
19 Appalachia Service Project	0	1,227	0	
20 U.M.C.O.R.	662,988	606,115	580,504	
21 Ethnic Ministries	38,792	47,206	27,023	
22 Conference Ministries	212,945	204,685	321,515	
23 Other Benevolences	<u>26,362</u>	<u>13,286</u>	<u>23,511</u>	
	TOTAL SPECIAL GIVING	\$1,645,506	\$1,478,474	\$1,508,595
	TOTAL GIVING	\$8,223,335	\$8,016,870	\$8,033,192

**10 Year History of Giving**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ministry Shares</u>	<u>District Funds</u>	<u>Designated Gifts</u>	<u>Total Giving</u>	<u>% Min Shares Budget Paid</u>
1999	5,831,246	415,603	2,127,102	8,373,951	93.0%
2000	6,077,069	495,049	1,695,898	8,268,016	93.0%
2001	6,101,954	483,183	2,229,571	8,814,708	89.8%
2002	6,102,615	464,250	1,686,198	8,253,063	87.5%
2003	6,334,732	465,715	1,585,979	8,386,426	87.2%
2004	6,495,492	551,814	1,724,170	8,771,476	85.1%
2005	6,102,417	527,803	2,861,950	9,492,170	89.5%
2006	6,038,584	539,597	1,645,391	8,223,572	93.4%
2007	6,040,628	497,768	1,478,474	8,016,870	92.6%
2008	6,024,180	500,417	1,508,594	8,033,191	91.6%

On behalf of the council members, we acknowledge with great appreciation the support of the Cabinet and the faithfulness of our churches. We also take this opportunity to express appreciation for the commitment of Council members: Sue Cobb (Vice Pres.), Charles Frayer, Diane Gordon (Secretary), Patti Harpole, Nolan Hudson, Joe Huston, Dave Lundquist, Susan MacGregor, David Morris, Rex Schad, Patrick Tiedt, Tom Vogeler, Patty Watson, Youth Reps Kaleb Batten and Erika Jenks, Jerry DeVine (Cabinet Rep), Wayne Barrett, Terry Euper and Bishop Jonathan Keaton. Thanks be to God, from whom all blessings flow!

Dale Kimball, President, Council on Finance and Administration  
Prospero Tumonong, Conference Treasurer

## BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

As with most ministries of the West Michigan Conference, the first quarter of 2008 was spent anticipating and planning for the possibility of a new annual conference. Meetings with our sibling Board of Global Ministries from the Detroit Conference helped us identify many areas of theological and value synchronicity, along with multiple areas of organizational and functional difference. The conversations between the boards and conversation with the Michigan Area Transition Team led the West Michigan Board of Global Ministries to have significant reservations about the plan as proposed. Even so, the board was prepared to make the transition to one body should the anticipated new conference be affirmed at the April meeting of the two annual conferences. Since the new conference was not affirmed, the West Michigan Board of Global Ministries began conversations, which continue even now, about what we learned from our sibling conference board, what we affirm in our current theology and values, and a “resurrection” of conversations around missional vision for West Michigan. Thus, we are working, once again, on the 2007 statement of mission which we will continue to work on in order to affect more work for Jesus Christ in the mission fields of West Michigan and beyond:

“You are a missionary ...

- sent by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit
- serving in response to human need
- strengthened through connection to others
- seeking personal and communal health and wholeness
- shaping disciples and being shepherds for the transformation of the world.”

Our excitement around this statement of mission was deepened as we prepared for Summer 2008 Annual Conference. As our part of a presentation on what was to be the final West Michigan Annual Conference, we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Advance, as well as the driver of West Michigan mission values, Rev. Dr. Robert Smith. A video produced by Dan Martin was one of the highlights of Annual Conference, as was the presence of United Methodist Committee on Relief past executive director Norma Kehrberg. Norma spoke at the Global Ministries luncheon and spoke about her professional relationship with Bob Smith as an UMCOR, hunger and Advance advocate.

In 2008, as we distributed funds for church and community acts of mercy through our six districts, we were again negatively affected by lower-than-budgeted Ministry Shares giving. Thus, grants to the districts were reduced by 10% in the last quarter, effectively leaving dollars to ministries doing the work of the church reduced while needs in a declining economy rose. We continue to discern ways to underwrite the ministries of our conference through appropriate block grants.

In closing, I must again express appreciation for the many sub-groups of the board involved in mission at all corners, from Volunteers-in-Mission, to Urban and Town & Country focus groups, to the Detroit-West Michigan Haiti Task Force, to our Mission Personnel team and more. The body, broken and distributed, continues to offer sustenance to fractured areas of the conference, while reaching out in Christ’s name to all the world.

Barry T. Petrucci, Chair

## CLARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Clark Retirement Community begins its 103rd year of operation, continuing its tradition of “creating a community of dignity, compassion and respect centered on the lives of older adults and those who care for them.” Beginning as a residence for retired United Methodist ministers and their spouses, donated by Melvin and Emily Clark, today Clark is a community of 517 residents on two campuses, offering a full continuum of care from independent living to skilled nursing.

Clark promises each resident the same high level of care regardless of longevity or ability to pay once personal financial resources have been depleted. Our Benevolent Care Fund serves the purpose of making up the difference between care cost and resources from personal and governmental support, and is dependent upon gifts and bequests for funding. During our fiscal year ending April 30, 2009, 66 residents depended upon benevolent care at the cost of \$1,256,000. This represents a 39% increase in care grants over the past three years.

During FY2009, Clark renovated the public areas on its Franklin Street campus, including Main Street, and equipped an area of its Keller Center to serve the needs of residents for short-term rehabilitation,

including both current residents and community members. These projects were funded by contributions from donors. In addition, Clark redecorated the public areas of its Clark on Keller Lake facilities for assisted living, the first since its purchase in 2001. Clark staff continues to plan for a new 104-unit residential facility on the Clark on Keller Lake property.

During the Spring 2008, following a comprehensive survey by a team of peer professionals reviewing over 1200 standards, Clark received a five-year accreditation in five program areas by CARF/CCAC, the industry accrediting association. Clark became the first care community in the United States to receive accreditation for its dementia care specialty program.

In November 2008, Clark launched "Clark at Home," a new home and community-based services program offering nursing, rehabilitation, personal care, social work, dementia care, and respite care in people's homes.

Clark's budget for 2009 totaled \$21 million, with expected occupancy rate at 95-98% and expected contributions to its Benevolent Care Fund at \$1 million.

Glenn Lowe, Clark Foundation Director  
Robert J. Perl, Executive Director

### **CONFERENCE SECRETARIES OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES**

West Michigan churches hosted five missionaries from April to November: Susan Reed (Justice for our Neighbors, Grand Rapids), Jamie Brunk (Redbird Missionary Conference), Paul Webster (Mujila Falls, Zambia), and Jeff and Ellen Hoover (DR Congo, Mulungwishi Seminary and TESOL). During their travels 73 congregations and ministries were visited.

Our Lane 1 of the Six Lanes (Missionary Support) said good-bye to David Draggoo, who retired from full-time service with the General Board of Global Ministries. The ministry at Looking Glass Community Services is now being directed by Andrew Highland, a Church and Community Worker. Theodore Cole, a retired missionary who served in Taiwan, died on March 4, 2008. Ted was known and supported by congregations of the conference. We welcomed another new face to Lane 1: Charissa Shawcross, the director of Community & Health Services for Joy-Southfield Clinic and Noah Project in Detroit.

The United Methodist Church celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> year of The Advance for Christ in 2008. As a leader in Advance giving for most of those 60 years through the Six Lanes, West Michigan marked the occasion with special events at Annual Conference: a DVD and guest appearance by Robert C. Smith, sharing about his passion for the United Methodist Committee on Relief; a keynote address at the Conference Board of Global Ministries banquet by Norma Kehrberg, former head of UMCOR; an appearance on the Annual Conference floor by Shawn Bakker, new Associate General Secretary for The Advance. She presented an award to the West Michigan Conference for the greatest percentage of churches in the denomination giving to The Advance in 2007.

It is worth noting that with new leadership in The Advance office in New York the system of awards to annual conferences has changed. Different categories of giving are recognized; different things are being measured. While it was the tradition for many years for West Michigan to receive numerous awards for Advance giving, this was not the case for 2006 and 2007. This does not necessarily indicate a flagging in West Michigan's generous response to God's people. It results from a different approach to mission motivation and stewardship on the part of the General Board of Global Ministries.

The Advance has a new web site full of resources and news to use in mission education. Resources include online gift-tracking, project descriptions, and an emailed monthly newsletter called, "Advancing Hope." All available at <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/advance>.

As the DeMosses conclude their eight-year term of service as Conference Secretaries of Global Ministries, we thank everyone – missionaries, pastors, local churches, missions commissions, District Mission Motivators and United Methodist Women – who have done so much for the mission outreach of Christ's Church, and with whom it has been our privilege to work.

Kay and Lynn DeMoss, Conference Secretaries of Global Ministries

### **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON MISSION PERSONNEL (CCMP)**

In The United Methodist Church, one's call to any form of ministry must be confirmed by an appropriate body. Candidates for ministry must obtain the confirmation of their local church Pastor-Parish Relations

Committee. Candidates for Local Pastor, Deacon or Elder must be approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. In the same way, candidates who believe they are called to serve as a Deaconess or missionary must have that call confirmed by the Conference Committee on Mission Personnel.

After several years with no candidates to interview, I am pleased to report that during 2008 we met with three persons. One individual appeared before us to gain our support in her desire to become a Deaconess. After a thorough interview the committee members present voted unanimously to recommend the candidate to the General Board of Global Ministries for acceptance as a Deaconess. (A Deaconess is a lay woman who is commissioned by the General Board for full-time Christian service in work that is usually peace or justice related.)

The committee also met with a young couple exploring possible missionary service. Since they were inquiring and not candidates for mission service, the meeting was not considered a formal interview that required committee action. The committee is happy to meet with inquirers as well as official candidates. Since the CCMP is the official representative of the Mission Personnel Office of the General Board, we are in a position to answer questions and interpret the modes and opportunities of mission service available through the General Board.

Finally, for the benefit of readers of this report, allow me to briefly indicate the steps involved in becoming a Deaconess or missionary. Those desiring information may ask to meet with the committee for an informal chat. If, however, the person or persons desire to apply for service, they first should download the forms found on the General Board website <http://new.qbgm-umc.org/about/us/mp/documents/>. The candidates then take the completed forms to the interview with the CCMP. Once the committee has taken formal action, the committee forwards the forms and their action to the board in New York. From that point on, the candidate works directly with the General Board Office of Mission Personnel.

Lynn A. DeMoss, Chair

#### **METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY**

Methodist Children's Home Society has been providing care for Michigan's children since 1917. Annually, Methodist Children's Home Society provides assistance to hundreds of children and families through its core programs.

The residential treatment program provides intensive treatment for 70 boys ages 6-17. Staff works to provide each child with counseling and assistance in overcoming the effects of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. "Children's Village," as it is known, served 122 children and families during 2008.

Licensed foster care is furnished for children, birth through age 17, who have been temporarily removed from their homes. A loving, caring environment is provided by foster parents in a family atmosphere for infants and older children who are waiting for a chance to return home or to be adopted. This past year, Methodist Children's Home Society foster homes cared for 125 young people. During 2008, foster care staff responded to 344 inquiries related to foster care.

Every attempt is made to reunite children in our care with their birth families. Because this is not always an option, we identify adoptive families and place children into loving, permanent homes. Methodist Children's Home Society adoption workers placed 21 children during 2008 and responded to 41 inquiries about adoption.

In 1992, Methodist Children's Home Society developed BookPartners, an after-school mentoring program in Jackson. Children receive individual attention from volunteer mentors who develop an individualized approach to reading that is centered on the interests of the child. The success of this program led to the establishment of additional programs in 2004. The additional programs are located in Shaftsbury and Howard City. Volunteers worked with 28 students in our Jackson program, 12 students in Shaftsbury and 5 in Howard City last year. Methodist Children's Home Society is continuing to expand the number of mentoring programs.

The Board of Directors and staff are proud of the agency's long tradition of caring for children in need and we value our connection to both the West Michigan and Detroit conferences of The United Methodist Church through which we carry out our ministry based on Christ's words in Matthew 19:14:

"But Jesus said, Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them;  
for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Neil Wester, President  
M. Beth Tarquinio, MSSA, LMSW, Executive Director

### SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

The West Michigan Conference School of Christian Mission is a cooperative event sponsored by the Conference United Methodist Women and the Conference Board of Global Ministries.

Drive-In-Day was held July 22, and Four-day School was held July 23-26, 2008, at Albion College.

The Spiritual Growth Study was "I Believe in Jesus" led by Rev. Melanie Baker-Streevy. The Geographic Study was "Israel/Palestine" led by Rev. Stephen Goldstein and Rev. Dr. Jennifer Jue. The Social Action issue was "Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival" led by Rev. Dr. Jerome DeVine, Rev. Dr. Theresa Little Eagle Sayles, and Barbara Brooks. Nichea Ver Veer Guy was the Youth Leader, and Adele Paxson led the Kids' School.

Special evening presentations were given by Bill Church and Stephen Goldstein. Bill gave a fascinating history of Native Americans in Michigan. Stephen told us about the work of the General Board of Global Missions from his many years on the staff.

Our mission project was to collect school supplies for the six Native American Ministries in the West Michigan Conference. About 200 pounds of supplies were collected and delivered.

John Williams, Dean 2008-2009

### UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY HOUSE

For over 105 years, United Methodist Community House (UMCH) has been a venerable, trusted resource for the residents of the South End Community, providing expanded services for everyone from infants to senior citizens in a warm, inclusive, multi-cultural atmosphere.

UMCH has been steadfast in providing basic human needs services spanning a lifetime. UMCH was a pioneer in providing, at the time, groundbreaking services such as child care during the day for working parents, after school care for "latch key" children and meals for older adults.

Today, UMCH is truly a place where constituents gravitate for their daily necessities. United Methodist Community House is committed to maintaining an agency that thrives on the creative thinking of people within our multi-cultural environment as evident in our mission of "Increasing the ability of children, youth, adults and families to succeed in a diverse community."

UMCH offers a wide array of services, high quality, accredited programs and is conveniently located near the majority of its client base. We collaborate with area agencies to offer family-friendly programs that span a lifetime through the Child Development, Youth Development, Family Development and Senior Development Departments.

In 2008, UMCH experienced a growth in the programs and services offered to the underserved in the Grand Rapids community. In 2008, approximately:

- **598 children** in our nationally accredited Child and Youth Development Centers experienced age-appropriate daycare services, as well as excellent before and after-school care for school-aged youth who may otherwise have been under-supervised during a vulnerable time of day.
- **720 individuals** were provided services on positive parenting and promoting healthy relationships, in English and Spanish, through our Family Development Department.
- **375 senior citizens** in our Senior Department were provided transportation, meals, health and wellness activities, and educational and socialization opportunities to enhance the quality of their lives.
- **5 – 7 women** have consistently been provided safe and secure housing through the First Step House, which provides transitional housing to women who are seeking a more positive lifestyle from their previous one of prostitution and/or substance use/abuse.

In 2008 the Child Development Department received a grant through the Michigan Department of Education to implement the Great Start Readiness Program, which provides free preschool to low-income children. Through this program, children who otherwise may not have been able to afford preschool have the opportunity to be prepared to succeed in school.

The Youth Development Department received a grant through the Department of Human Services to expand their Before- and After-School Programming to reach out to more school-age youth during that vulnerable out of school time.

The Family Development Department continued to seek out innovative opportunities to expand services and be a "hub of resources" for adults and families in the community. Proud Fathers/Proud Parents (PF/PP) reached out to incarcerated parents in Jail Re-entry Programs so they could benefit from the 6-week PF/PP program. Additionally, programming expanded to counties outside of Kent that include Allegan, Kalamazoo, Ottawa and Barry.

The Senior Development Department has had an increase in the number of seniors seeking support, due in large part to many seniors struggling during these difficult economic times. Through a grant from the Department of Human Services, UMCH is beginning a pilot project entitled HOME (Housing Options, Mentoring and Education), which aims to help seniors maintain their self-sufficiency, meet their basic needs and remain in their home.

UMCH continues to meet the needs of the community it serves by filling gaps in services while maintaining current programming. In 2009, we look forward to the opportunity to continue to be a "Lifeline for a Lifetime" in our community.

Sharon Boyce, Executive Director

### **UNITED METHODIST METROPOLITAN MINISTRY OF GRAND RAPIDS**

Metro Ministry's mission (March 2006) is *to inspire and equip United Methodists to serve Christ in transforming the greater Grand Rapids area.*

In 2008 Metro enjoyed an ongoing and effective partnership with the Grand Rapids District Office. The Urban Ministries Taskforce was diligent in its efforts to identify and implement strategies to revitalize our urban churches. We are working closely with several GR ethnic and urban ministries on building and leadership projects. The "Urgent Ministries Task Force Retreat" on January 19, 2008, led by the Rev. Terry Gladstone of the Detroit Conference, served to build fellowship while identifying urban church challenges and opportunities. On May 18, 2008, we launched the "Annual Joint Worship Service" followed by a fellowship meal for Grand Rapids area United Methodists. We also hosted our third "Clergy/Laity Picnic" on September 3, 2008. Bringing Dan R. Dick to Grand Rapids for a daylong workshop called "Vital Congregations," on November 8, 2008, was an ambitious effort to equip 200+ United Methodist participants. We are actively exploring the "Cluster" concept by Dr. Robert Linthicum for GR area churches and ministries. Another exciting project involves partnering with the Cabinet and New Church Committee to create an urban new church start in Grand Rapids.

Metro Ministry coordinated the Planning Team for the West Michigan Conference 2008 Habitat Build with the Blakely family at 510 Fuller SE in Grand Rapids. Metro continues to serve as "host" to the Annual Conference, and is a member of the Annual Conference Program Committee.

Metro Forum continued as an opportunity for Grand Rapids area clergy to share lunch with an invited speaker. In 2008 our speakers were: Pam Doty-Nation, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Kent County; Kurt Kimball, City Manager for the City of Grand Rapids; the Rev. Laurie Haller speaking on General Conference; and Fred Keller, CEO of Cascade Engineering presenting on "Sustainability and Faith in the Workplace."

In 2008, Susan Hansen completed her four-year term as secretary for the NCJ Urban Network. In August she was elected co-chair for the next quadrennium. Metro served on the 2009 January Event Planning Committee, "Two Coins for Justice," held in Ft. Wayne, IN.

Metro partnered with GR Dominicans to promote a JustFAITH workshop with program founder Jack Jezreel on June 28, 2008. Four United Methodist churches are now offering JustFAITH to church members: Genesis, Wyoming Park, St. Paul's and Muskegon Central.

In May 2008 the Faith-based Sustainability Group held its first meeting. Coordinated by Metro, and representing 5 denominations and faith traditions, we have been exploring opportunities to impact Grand Rapids by collaborating on a project to model the "triple bottom line" of environmental integrity, economic vitality and social equity. Our first joint project will be an electronics recycling drive in the Spring of 2009.

Susan Hansen, Executive Director

### **VOLUNTEER IN MISSION (VIM)**

West Michigan laity and clergy again scattered throughout the nation and indeed to world to participate in VIM opportunities in 2008. As of this writing not all teams have reported. To date 36 teams, totaling 423 persons, donated 423,808 days of work to those in need. From Midwest floods, to the continued recovery

from Katrina, to Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, Appalachia, Honduras, and Cuba, volunteers have applied their skills and learned new ones and developed life-long friendships from their life changing experiences.

In addition, several persons have chosen to serve as an individual Volunteer in Mission for a short term.

Thanks to churches who received a special offering on UMVIM Sunday, the first Sunday in June, 20 first-time VIM participants received scholarships.

We participated in a Festival of Opportunities with our partners in the Detroit Conference.

David L. Morton, Volunteer in Mission Coordinator

## **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY**

2008 was a banner year for the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry. After discussion, consultation with the General Board and planning, the board conducted an evaluation of each of the five campus ministries in the West Michigan Conference: Grand Valley State University, Western Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Ferris State University and Michigan State University.

Using the rating developed by the General Board, each of the five ministries was evaluated for programs, fiscal responsibility, campus relations and policies. A team including a General Board representative, District Superintendent, Campus Minister, and board representatives met on site with Wesley Foundation boards and student members. Ratings for each ministry were approved with monitoring.

The list of items for the Wesley Foundations and the Board of Higher Education this year includes: strategic plan with plans for growth, fund development planning, management plan guidelines, evaluation standards for staff, budget building from program requests, and marketing with the Detroit Conference. In February the two conference boards and local Wesley Foundation board will be meeting in discussion of fund development with Wayne Barrett and David Bell of the United Methodist Foundation.

Reporting from the local Wesley Foundations below gives a thumbnail sketch of the important presence of these ministries at the crossroads of student life and learning. As we look at the locations where, through your reports, we know that United Methodist students are attending college, we recognize the breadth of the field of encounter.

The challenge is great and the reward is priceless.

Anne Soles, Chair

### **ADRIAN COLLEGE**

In 1859 human rights advocate and philosopher Asa Mahan founded Adrian College as an institution of higher education affiliated with the Wesleyan tradition. Today we celebrate our sesquicentennial of ministry! Adrian College offers The United Methodist Church many gifts.

The year 2008 featured continued implementation of a new mission statement for the College: "Adrian College, a liberal arts college in the United Methodist tradition, is committed to the pursuit of truth and to the dignity of all people. Through active and creative learning in a supportive community, students are challenged to achieve excellence in their academic, personal, and professional lives, and to contribute to a more socially just society." The Renaissance I program of infrastructure improvement has closed. We are now into our Renaissance II program of academic enhancement.

During 2008 our nationally-recognized pre-seminary program grew even stronger. Adrian College was visited by numerous seminary representatives, and students traveled to a series of United Methodist seminaries, as well.

Weekly chapel was celebrated under the themes "Authority Issues" and "Real Faith." The College's spiritual life groups are going strong and represent an impressive presence among the student body. Chaplain Chris Momany continued offering his signature course on "Christian Social Ethics" in the Fall and taught "The Origins of Protestantism" in the Spring of 2009. Chaplain Momany also presented research on ethics at The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and continues to write for the *Daily Bible Study* of The United Methodist Publishing House.

Adrian College was founded as an abolitionist college, and today Adrian students are leading a movement against contemporary forms of slavery. Twenty-seven million people are held as slaves in

today's world, and we are doing something about this crime. Adrian College will host the first national "Not for Sale Abolitionist Academy," April 17-19, 2009.

Each year Adrian College provides more than \$800,000 in grants/scholarships to United Methodist students. For more information, contact Dr. Chris Momany, Adrian College Chaplain, at (517) 265-5161, ext. 4211. To tour the campus and meet with an admissions representative, call 1-800-877-2246 or (517) 265-5161.

Christopher P. Momany, Chaplain, Part-Time Professor, and Director of Church Relations

### **ALBION COLLEGE**

Albion College made disciples for Jesus Christ in 2008 in a number of ways. We welcomed and nurtured a pluralistic college community. As a whole, Albion College offered the grace of God in Jesus Christ through a distinct educational ministry.

Funds from the West Michigan Conference provided for a vital spiritual life program, meeting the spiritual needs of students, faculty, and staff. Weekly student-led Christian worship, along with strong connections with the area congregations, offered the campus many ways to be fed through worship. Bible studies, service, leadership development, and further integration of spirituality in the academy, all rounded out 2008.

In 2008, disciples were made through leadership development:

- Twenty students participated in the interfaith pre-ministry interest group.
- Christian unity and leadership continued to be a major focus. The most prominent examples were our unified Christmas Service (where all Christian groups came together) and a massive week-long evangelism event: "Awaken."
- Albion's Slight Servant Leadership Program celebrated its successful third year, and helped to create a surge in leadership development based on Wesleyan principles.
- Albion has a vital ministry for African-American students, including a Gospel choir, liturgical dance team, and a Bible study. There is increasing racial/ethnic integration throughout spiritual life groups.
- Albion's interfaith leadership initiative celebrated its successful second year.

In 2008, disciples were made through strong collaboration with Albion First United Methodist Church. Under Rev. Dwayne Bagley's leadership, this congregation continued to be a beacon of light on campus, involving numerous students, faculty, and staff in worship, Bible study, fellowship, and service. Rev. Bagley and the church's leadership are to be greatly commended for this renewal of connection.

In 2008, disciples were made through one-to-one pastoral care and spiritual direction. The chaplain worked with students, faculty, and staff who suffered tragedy, loss, and abuse. The chaplain provided spiritual mentoring and discernment, helping campus constituents to find their calling, vocation, and sort through other life situations.

In 2008, Dr. Donna Randall entered her second year as Albion College's fifteenth president. Dr. Randall has engaged the campus in a visionary strategic planning process, which will only be delayed by the current economic challenges. Albion is positioning itself to be among the very best in liberal arts colleges.

Albion College remains a celebration of shared mission. West Michigan Conference and local churches have been blessed by the ministry that has been born on our campus. Most importantly, God has been glorified in this work, as new disciples have been raised up.

On behalf of Albion College, I invite members of the West Michigan Conference to visit. We are an excellent place to send your children for an education, because we focus on the highest standards in academic achievement, while developing the whole self of each student.

Please be in touch and let me know how we may continue to expand our mutual mission.

Daniel J. McQuown, Chaplain

### **THE WESLEY FOUNDATION at CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (CMU)**

**Summary of ministry for the year.** Wesley@CMU's mission is to create Christian community for CMU students. We do this through weekly Christ-centered worship and study for Christians, monthly service and off-campus fun events, Spring Break work trips, and special events. Weekly movies and meals provide an avenue for non-Christians to come in contact with our community. We started a new coffee

house in the Fall which has increased our appeal as a “hangout” for students, and are celebrating as non-Christians begin to explore our worship, study, and service events.

**Number and profile of the students, staff, and other campus members participating.** In 2008, 29 different members of the campus community regularly participated in Wesley activities. Of these, 5 moved on after Spring, and 6 joined us in the Fall. 18 of these were involved in discipleship activities; 5 served on our staff. All but two of the regular participants were undergraduate students; 65% were female (compared with 55% of undergraduates); 1 (3%) was a minority student (compared with 8% of undergraduates).

**Awards / recognitions.** The director was elected chair of the Campus Religious Leaders’ Association; two articles were printed in the student newspaper highlighting Wesley’s hospitality.

**List of outreach beyond campus.** Wesley@CMU is specifically focused at creating a Christian community on campus, but one of the things our community does is serve off campus. In 2008, we worked on reconstruction in New Orleans during Spring Break and held monthly “Random Acts of Kindness” days where we pick up trash, rake leaves, etc., around the community.

**Brief summary of cooperative activities with local churches.** Wesley@CMU has a positive relationship with Mt. Pleasant First United Methodist Church. Many of our students participate in worship and music leadership. Members of local churches serve on the Wesley board and often prepare dinners for students on Sunday evenings.

**Training received by staff.** Director Dr. Charles Farnum’s primary areas of study this year were espresso-making, postmodern theologies, and custodial care of floors. (Yes, it’s a varied job.) He also participated in the New Church Academy, and provides training for the student staff.

**Other pertinent information the Annual Conference needs to be aware of.** Each Wesley Foundation is, in effect, a “new church start” each Fall. Wesley centers are the greatest evangelistic field in Michigan, with literally tens of thousands of new freshmen each year across our state. Every year, we lose our most experienced leaders and 20-25% of our membership to graduation. Every year, we offer the Gospel to people at a pivotal point, as they decide what they are going to do with their adult lives. We covet your support – spiritual, emotional, and physical.

Charles Farnum, Director

## **FERRIS STATE WESLEY HOUSE (FSU)**

### **Summary of Ministry:**

My time here only began in early July, following Reverend Jeanne Koughn’s request for appointment to a local parish. This transition more than anything sets this year apart. Students grieved her loss, as any congregation might. This grief may have been exaggerated by the fact she is the only pastor they have known here. She was their pastor. While students sat on the board which hired me, I feel they are only now just beginning to trust me as spiritual guide and friend. But change is difficult, and, while I have tried to move slowly, there are changes I have deliberately moved towards, but perhaps I am getting ahead of myself.

The Ferris State Wesley House ran two regular programs over the Fall semester: a community meal and a Bible study. The meal attracts the largest number of students. Normally we serve no less than twenty. These meals are provided by mostly United Methodists from area churches. Following the meal we gather for Bible study. About half of those who came for the meal will remain. I have found this bothersome, to be quite honest, but the meal itself takes up so much time that it is difficult for some of them to stick around. This coming term I am creating greater opportunity through a small group ministry model which will allow students greater flexibility. It is a change some didn’t want to see, but most are excited because it not only allows for greater participation but allows them the opportunity to serve and lead. In this case Kaitlyn Cimala, a student here, and also Anne Riegler, from Third Avenue United Methodist, will be leading discipleship groups.

We spent one weekend at Manton Christian Camp on retreat. While it rained almost the entire time, we were still able to work through most of our resource *Learning to Pray Again* with Dr. Reg Johnson from Asbury Seminary. Several of our young ladies also enjoyed a canoe trip down the Manistee. While Manton is very primitive, I felt it was important to begin holding these retreats away from the campus. I feel getting away is part of the experience, though I am not entirely certain what this might look like next year. The cost of going on retreat is somewhat prohibitive.

What I am most excited about is the change I have been able to bring about with what has long been termed our rentals. When I met with Reverend Jeanne I was told the rentals were not to be considered part of our ministry. They were student residencies that were to be treated as if they were on the other side of town. After thought and reflection about our ministry here, I instituted a change going into the 2009/2010 school year. Students no longer request rental contracts. The space belongs to the ministry. Everyone who wants can apply to be a part of Journey, a student discipleship program. These students commit themselves to a weekly discipleship group, a monthly one-on-one with me, and shared residence in our ministry center. I already have three or four applications! And this is what we are about! Transformation in Christ together. This was a big step towards where we need to be.

I am also excited about our upcoming mission trip, not so much because of where it is as who is organizing it. I have handed this off to our student board. They are responsible for the trip almost in its entirety. Again, this is the direction we should be moving towards, the development of Christian leaders. My hope over the next several years is to strengthen the Journey program to include a service element. As it is, that seemed too big a change all at once.

***Numerical Profile:***

Students: About 25

Faculty: 2

Staff: 1

I say about twenty-five, because that represents about how many are involved at some level. That said, at least six are not only very involved but hold leadership positions on either the student board or board at large. Several of the students are organizing this year's mission trip. One of them will be leading a discipleship group all next term. There are others beyond this that are faithful in attendance and may become more active throughout next year.

***Awards or Recognitions:***

None.

***Ministry Beyond the Campus:***

This Spring we plan on going to work with the United Methodist Relief Center in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

Only a month ago we went caroling at a local nursing home (a large group of us, actually).

***Ministry in Connection with the Local Church:***

Our primary connection to the local church is through our community meals which people come in to serve us. They represent a myriad of United Methodist churches in this area. I encourage our students to connect to a local church, United Methodist or no, and a handful can be found at both First United Methodist and Third Avenue United Methodist Church. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to supply the Big Rapids Parish, Grant Center/Chase-Barton, and Hersey. These opportunities have allowed me to build relationships with some of our local churches and encourage involvement at the Wesley House.

***Training Received by Staff:***

I began my doctor of ministry program at Asbury! It is focused on the field of spiritual direction. This class I am currently taking focuses on hermeneutics and includes a book on John Wesley conception and use of Scripture. Our Scriptural roots run deep at Wesley's children.

Vaughn W. Thurston-Cox, Director

**WESLEY FELLOWSHIP AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY (GVSU)**

**Summary of the year.** The Wesley Fellowship at GVSU was a full-time presence at GVSU in 2008. Our mission as a group is celebrating diversity, uniqueness, and God. The Fellowship is ready to be a witness of love, acceptance, and compassion at this university. On the Allendale campus, we have been an integral part of the Spirituality Roundtable hosted with the LGBT Resource Center. Wesley Fellowship meets on Sundays from 5-7:30 pm at the Kirkhof Center on the Allendale campus for food, fellowship, and fun. We follow our dinner with Bible Study, devotion, or discussion time. Students look forward to this safe environment to talk about faith and what is going on in their lives. In 2009 our group will be meeting in our new gathering space, Wesley House, which is located just off campus on Luce Street. 2008 programming highlights included: Statewide campus ministry retreat at Western Michigan University; hosting Jeff and Ellen Hoover, UM missionaries to the Democratic Republic of the Congo; participating in the labyrinth retreat; enjoying a Thanksgiving dinner provided by our Board of Trustees, which included four alumni, the current Fellowship and friends and board members. The Thanksgiving dinner was the first official meeting at the Wesley House and a celebration of the past, present, and future.

**Profile of students and staff.** Our 2008 numbers included 15 involved throughout the Sunday meetings. There were 5 students taking on leadership responsibilities including hospitality, planning retreats, attending board meetings, creating events, and participating in district meetings. Nearly all 15 had visited various local churches, attended retreats (both local and statewide,) and began work on our new Wesley House. There were also additionally nearly 20 students who were in one-on-one conversation with our director, attended events, or on the e-mail list. We have seen many new faces and been in contact with lots of new people. We also have provided monthly community dinners on the downtown Grand Rapids campus. This is a very important ministry of hospitality because the downtown campus is very fast paced. Having this opportunity to come out of their apartments and share in a free meal is terrific. The numbers have varied between 7 and 20 students. There are always new faces each time. We currently are working with two staff members who are on our Board of Trustees and our student Advisor. We are also in conversations with the director and assistant director of the LGBT Resource Center, office of Student Life and other campus ministers on the campus. We are working on developing more relationships with the faculty and staff on campus.

**Awards and Recognitions.** We received recognition in 2008 for participating in the "Day of Silence." We are recognized as a religious student organization on campus.

**Outreach beyond campus.** The Fellowship is working with many organizations on campus to bring the play, "Seven Passages: the stories of Gay Christians" onto the GVSU campus in January 2009. Many of us have been very moved by this production of individuals' spiritual journeys. We are looking forward to being a part of this presentation and dialogue.

We took a Spring break mission trip to New Orleans with the Michigan State and Central Michigan Wesley Foundations in March. This event brought us closer to the destruction of Hurricane Katrina over two years later. We worked in home repair. It was an eye opening experience and brought our groups closer to each other. We have a better understanding of our faith and the faith of the people of New Orleans.

Members attended the yearly "UnLeashed" event in Lansing last March. It is powerful to be together with such a large group of young adults for worship and learning. Students are looking forward to the Big Kids Camp at Crystal Springs Camp in 2009. This camp offers another way to connect and worship with other young adults and college students.

Many of our other graduates are in important ministry fields as well in education, nursing, business, and engineering. We value all the ways we can be sharing God's love with each other.

**Summary of cooperative activities with local churches.** One of our supporting congregations provides a meal at each Sunday gathering. The sponsoring churches this year have included: GR: Faith United Methodist Church, White Pines United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids: First United Methodist Church and Marne United Methodist Church. We are also privileged to have many Wesley board members and their families bring dinner as well. We have enjoyed the presence of the White Pines youth groups again this year. We also welcomed the Junior High youth group from Grand Rapids First United Methodist Church for a picture scavenger hunt around campus. We welcome new guests and new churches to be involved with the Sunday gatherings, so if you are interested please let me know.

**Training received by staff.** The director, Heather Holt, is working on her Master's degree in Social Work at GVSU. She is also participating in a Family Systems group in Grand Rapids. She is also a member of Allies and Advocates at GVSU, which provides yearly trainings.

Over the next year the Wesley Fellowship is looking forward to sharing with more students about social justice, God in the midst of life, unconditional love, and grace.

Thank you for your support of campus ministries.

Heather Grubaugh Holt, Director

#### **WESLEY FOUNDATION OF KALAMAZOO (WMU)**

"An authentic, transforming Christ centered community" is the vision of the Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo. Located in the heart of Western Michigan University campus, the building offers a place for students to gather for worship, small groups and Bible studies as well as meeting to organize service and mission opportunities.

"The EDGE (Earth Defying God Experience) worship on Thursdays at 9:00 pm provides an opportunity for student leaders to plan and implement the ministry. The day and time offers an alternative to "thirsty

Thursdays,” a stereotypical way to start the weekend early. Multiple student-led small groups offer a variety of days, times, and topics for students to connect with one another and with their faith in smaller and more intimate settings.

A student-led mission weekend to Cass Community in Detroit saw 15 students serving in a homeless mission. Wesley of Kalamazoo expanded its Wesley Gone Wild Spring break mission trip to include both a domestic trip to New Orleans and an international trip to Nicaragua.

Small group gatherings are a vital part of the ministry. Students connect through Bible Study, topical studies, prayer groups, and Kappa Phi Christian Sorority. In these more intimate settings students share the joys and challenges of university life. They grow in their understanding of God and themselves through prayer and discussion. Small groups of students meet Monday-Thursday for prayer. They explore avenues of prayer and pray together.

Over 50 active students representing Caucasian, Native American Indian, Black, and Asian ethnicities participate in the many avenues of ministry. The Wesley Foundation serves as a home for an active Peace Center which represents an additional group of over 50 students who pursue justice and peace issues. University professors serve on the Board of Directors, led discussion groups at a Graduate Student lunch, and serve on Ministry Teams.

In addition to the Spring Break trips, students served in the Edison Neighborhood through a youth ministry. Outreach Tuesdays became a favorite this year. Each week a group of students provided cider and doughnuts, hot cocoa and coffee, or fresh fruit to students on campus.

The Wesley Praise Team led worship at local churches providing pulpit supply or helping congregations visualize young adult worship. The Praise Team led music at the district laypersons event and District Conference. Local churches also provide home cooked meals for the Sunday night programming. Students assisted the Paw Paw UM Men in their annual Swiss Steak community dinner as well as helped other local churches with various meals and service opportunities.

The Director and seven student staff members along with two additional student board members make up the leadership team. The Leadership Team receives Safe of Campus, Abuse Prevention, and Sexual Harassment Training in efforts to ensure a safe and welcoming space for all students to grow in their faith.

The Board of Directors has begun pursuing ways to make the 1964 building handicap accessible and update heating, electrical, and plumbing systems. In pursuit of the vision to be a “community” the board does not want those with accessibility issues to be excluded.

Wesley of Kalamazoo celebrated 85 years of ministry in September 2008 with five previous directors in attendance along with many alumni and friends. The celebration culminated with closing words by Chuck Cooley, Director 1955-1969, “Thank you God for all of the blessings!” Indeed, God has blessed those lives touched and being touched by the ministry at WMU.

Lisa Batten, Director

### **WESLEY FOUNDATION at MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU)**

The Wesley Foundation at Michigan State University strives to meet the spiritual needs of undergraduate and graduate students attending Michigan State University and Lansing Community College. Over the past year, our program has made great strides to reach out to students in new and different ways. A Sunday evening program renovation started off the year and was met with great success. Each week close to thirty students participate in a small group Bible Study before the distinctly different weekly evening program and meal. Wednesday Night Worship attendance grew slightly with an average attendance being 28 students at each service this past year. Twenty-five students participated in the alternative Spring break trip to New Orleans. The trip was a combined trip with Central Michigan Wesley Foundation and the Wesley Fellowship at Grand Valley State University. A ministry intern position was developed to assist students interested in exploring ministry as a vocation. This year the personnel committee hired one student with financial support for the initiative coming from the Asbury United Methodist Church Endowment and University United Methodist Church Endowment along with funds from the Wesley Foundation, MSU program budget.

The Wesley Foundation, MSU is a community that consists of over forty students from different faith communities across the state and globe coming together weekly for programs, small groups, worship, fellowship, and outreach. Students representing all the different colleges at MSU come to Wesley bringing

a host of ideas, experience, and hope. Several graduate students also participate in the program. The Wesley community is blessed to be in partnership with the Lansing District and many other supportive area churches. The support for the program is tremendous with two special grants being given this year for assistance with a renovation project and updating of the website from the Lansing District Leadership Team. In addition, a renewed commitment with the Lansing District United Methodist Women has been wonderful. The following United Methodist churches provided Sunday night dinners for the students: Grovenburg, Asbury, Bath, Gunnison, Leslie, Mason, Millville, and University. Special thanks to these Lansing District Units along with a generous donation from the Fall gathering held at University United Methodist Church and the Wesley Foundation building. Strong church partnerships exist with University United Methodist Church, Mason, Grand Blanc, Howell, Holt, and several other local area local churches.

Community service continues to be a strong part of the program. Wesley averages 20 students at each monthly community service event. This year we have worked at developing a cooperative relationship with MSU Hillel (Jewish Student Organization) and St. John Student Parish in doing local outreach projects. A joint community service project was planned with MSU Hillel in October with an interfaith dialogue after the event. This year we have worked with Ele's Place, EVE, Lansing Rescue Mission, Habitat for Humanity, Joe and Shirley's Place, Mid-Michigan Food Bank, Haven House of East Lansing, Cass Community Social Services-Detroit, and UMCOR (LA).

Several building repairs as well as renovations were accomplished this year through generous gifts. The roof over Asbury Hall was repaired through the Board of Higher Education and a private donation helped to cover major costs in addition to a Lansing District Leadership grant to renovate Copper Chimney Lounge. The renovations are nearly complete as we move on toward repairing the roof in the chapel. We are very grateful for the generous support of the West Michigan Conference given to Wesley Foundations in support of student and young adult ministries. Thank you.

Timothy Tuthill, Campus Minister

## JOHN WESLEY ASSOCIATION

*THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (2004)* is the governing authority for the John Wesley Association. ¶ 323 states in part, "Each annual conference may organize a Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members." In West Michigan Conference, this Fellowship is called "The John Wesley Association." The Association has been in existence since at least 1971 (long before it was authorized by General Conference), when a constitution and bylaws were enacted, but probably existed as an informal association prior to that time. It has always served as a source of encouragement for local pastors and associate members.

The Association considers its members to be any persons involved in pastoral ministry who are not part of an Order. This includes local pastors, associate members, student local pastors, probationary elders, DSA's and persons who have completed licensing school but are not appointed or assigned.

In 2008 our activities have been focused on two streams of thought: the proposed creation of the Great Lakes Conference in the Michigan Area and the reorganization and strengthening of the Association after that did not happen.

In the Fall of 2007, following a year of negotiations with the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members in the Detroit Conference, the members of both groups voted to adopt a set of bylaws for a new entity to be called The John Wesley Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members of the Great Lakes Conference. The officers of the John Wesley Association then began to inform our membership about the issues involved in creating this new conference. They held membership meetings in each of the six districts and presented the information they had from the MATT team. The meetings produced many good questions and much discussion. The Association does not tell its members how to vote, but tries to offer all viewpoints so informed decisions can be made.

After the April Called Session of Annual Conference, plans were made to offer a version of the bylaws adopted for the merged group as the operating standards for the existing Association. A general membership meeting was held in late April at Big Rapids Third Avenue United Methodist Church, and these new bylaws were received for first reading and recommended for adoption at the meeting at Annual Conference, in accordance with the procedures spelled out in the old constitution and bylaws.

In addition, at the April meeting we began exploring ways for small membership churches to grow in numbers and strength by hearing the experiences of Mike Reigler, one of our members who has been successful in growing the Big Rapids Circuit.

As a result of this meeting Pastor Mike Reigler was nominated for the Denman Award for Evangelism, which he received at Annual Conference.

During the year, a member wrote a petition to General Conference concerning the status of retired local pastors. It was adopted without change by General Conference but then was referred to the Judicial Council because it created a new class of clergy called Retired Local Pastor. The Judicial Council rejected the petition completely with the statement that "retired local pastors are laity."

At our meeting at Annual Conference, the membership unanimously adopted the proposed new bylaws. It was noted that the present set of officers will leave office at Annual Conference in 2009 so new ones are needed. Certain persons have indicated an interest in becoming the new officers so we are excited to move into a new stage of the life of the Association.

In October, we held another general membership meeting continuing our exploration of how churches led by local pastors and associate members can grow and prosper. We met at Cornerstone United Methodist Church and held a discussion with Rev. Brad Kalajainen on some of the topics he uses to train new church-start pastors. Several other topics were included in a very useful day.

Throughout the year, Vice-president Dale Hotelling has met with the chairs of the Orders to work on projects of mutual interest. One of these projects is the clergy worship service prior to the opening of Annual Conference.

As 2008 draws to a close, the John Wesley Association looks forward to serving the Bishop, the conference and its membership as a beacon of light along the pathway of pastoral leadership and service.

Jeff Reese, Dale Hotelling and George Lawton  
The Leadership Team of the JWA

## LAKE LOUISE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Lake Louise Christian Community is proud to be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. Our staff, board of trustees and many volunteer leaders are carrying on the vision of those who in 1934 entrusted our 2400 acres of pristine Northern Michigan property to the Michigan conferences of what was then the Methodist Episcopal Church. Today, we remain the only camp that is affiliated with both conferences of United Methodism.

Three years ago, the board of trustees embarked on a strategic planning process that has resulted since then in a new executive director (Vaughn Maatman), a ministry plan and a master plan for our property. We have a fulltime operations director (Myke Sherman) and hope in the future to have a fulltime program director. In 2008, for the second Summer in a row, the number of campers coming to Lake Louise increased, following many years of decline. Our retreat numbers from Fall to Spring are also growing as we offer more than one retreat on weekends.

Lake Louise's financial situation is solid, but tight. The renovation and improvement of our facilities will have long-term benefits, but has been costly. Our new property master plan will be unveiled soon, and will call upon many persons to help us construct year-round facilities that will help us to grow further the number of persons experiencing Lake Louise ministry.

The 125 cottages around the lake, some of which are now year-round residences, provide a community that supports our ministry. The board of trustees is continuing to study the possibility of gas leasing in the remote areas of our property, in order to help to fund our needed expansion of ministry. We also continue to investigate other fund-raising possibilities, and are very conscious of the need to cherish and protect our environment.

We invite United Methodists to visit us anytime at [www.lakelouisecommunity.org](http://www.lakelouisecommunity.org) and to stop by anytime this year. Our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend will be July 10-12, but stop to see us when you can.

John Ross Thompson, President, Board of Trustees

### BOARD OF LAY MINISTRIES

On April 13, 2008, the Board of Lay Ministries had a conference call to plan for West Michigan Annual Conference and go over our budget. We had good participation and discussions.

Laurie Dahlman attended the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders (AACLL) held April 19th - 22nd in Fort Worth, TX. Ray Buckley, a former speaker at our Annual Conference, shared many stories from his experiences in Alaska. We also discussed our petitions to General Conference adding "and witness" to the membership vows and making laity more accountable for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. During a discussion, one of our leaders misspoke and out came the word "claity" referring to the clergy and laity. This a perfect term for our partnership, so let's use it! AACLL was a wonderful opportunity to listen to leaders from across the country share their ministries. For the first time we were privileged to have Betty, a lay leader from Africa, with us and it was extremely interesting to hear her experiences.

Dahlman brought West Michigan greetings to the Detroit Annual Conference, May 15th-18th. It was another informative and valuable weekend. What a great opportunity to worship together, renew friendships, meet new friends, ask questions and have time to explore possible answers.

During our West Michigan Annual Conference in June we welcomed Jenny Kroeze, representing UMW, and Annette Erbes, Grand Rapids District Lay Leader, to the Board of Lay Ministries. Dahlman shared the story from Acts 9 of Saul's transformation due in part to the obedience of Ananias. Each of us needs to be an obedient servant of God and through our witness share the Good News often and boldly. Who knows what God has planned and whose lives will be touched? Once again we presented each new ordinand with the book *PARTNERS IN MINISTRY* at Ordination.

On September 14th and October 26th, Dahlman was pleased to represent the laity of West Michigan at the Welcome Back receptions for Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton held in Lansing and Sault Ste. Marie.

God continues to bless the laity of West Michigan in numerous ways.

Laurie Dahlman, Conference Lay Leader

### MICHIGAN AREA COMMITTEE ON THE EPISCOPACY

Having its charge from *THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*, the Episcopacy Committee found itself busy during the 2008 year. The cornerstone task was the possible merger of the Detroit and West Michigan annual conferences. Much work and many hours preceded the vote. Ultimately the proposal was approved by the Detroit Annual Conference, and narrowly defeated by the West Michigan Conference.

Despite this vote the work of the church continues. So, too, does networking and annual conference cooperative efforts. Many committees, task forces, and joint projects between the conferences continue. The negative vote will not deter the areas where joint efforts enhance the ability to multiply the possibility of greater result.

This chairperson would like to thank the many people who spent hours working toward a goal of merger. Your efforts are not lost on this individual. The results made are the beginnings of bridge building for the future.

Along with the special work of merger, the Episcopacy Committee worked on its regular duties of assisting the Bishop, and the Clergy Assistant to the Bishop. Providing regular feedback from areas of our state provide useful information for discussion and dissemination of information to local churches.

As episcopal leader, Bishop Keaton keeps a varied and extremely busy schedule. Our thanks go to him for working so diligently on our behalf.

It should be said as well that many thanks go to Mrs. Beverly Keaton for her support of her husband and her overall support of the work of the United Methodist denomination. With this support comes sacrifice on behalf of both of these special people and as such deserves our thanks.

We look forward to another busy year. Should you have any questions or concerns, please let your Episcopacy Committee know.

Gary A. Sarut, Chair

## MICHIGAN AREA INDIAN WORKERS' CONFERENCE

### 2008 Indian Workers Conference (IWC) Meetings:

April 25-26, 2008, at Salem Indian United Methodist Church  
 October 3-4, 2008, at Zeba Indian United Methodist Church

### Executive Committee Members:

Chairperson, Pastor Thomas John, Sr. (Kewadin/Northport)  
 Vice Chairperson, Norm Pigeon (Salem)  
 Secretary, Val Maidens (Northport)  
 Treasurer, Judy Johnson (Greensky Hill)  
 Detroit Conference Representative, Amy Alberts (Detroit CONAM)  
 West Michigan Conference Representative  
 Youth Representative, Nicole Stickley (Salem)

**October 3-4, 2008:** Representatives from eight of the nine Native American churches in Michigan met at Zeba Indian Mission United Methodist Church. This meeting was very special because it was the first time many representatives had been to the Zeba Indian Mission located in the northwest section of the Upper Peninsula (near Baraga). The trees were in full bloom and made for a beautiful weekend trip. Pastor John Henry and his church members welcomed the group of 18 IWC representatives with warmth and joyful hospitality. Many representatives stayed overnight to worship with Pastor John and members on Sunday morning.

**2009 IWC Meetings:** April 17 & 18, 2009 at Bradley; October 9 & 10, 2009, at Mt. Pleasant.

### Church Reports:

❖ **Salem Indian United Methodist Church:** Norm Pigeon reporting.

Youth group met and cleaned church; went to a "Soaring with Eagles" conference. Two members attended the Basic and Advance Lay Speaking Course of Study in July 2008 at Greensky Hill United Methodist Church. Elders Lunch Program has been discontinued. Program taken over by group located in Grand Rapids and being held at the Plainfield United Methodist Church. Members attended a Summer concert by Calico, a blue grass folk group – great turnout. Asked for continued prayers for Salem.

Note: Carmen Misner stated "Soaring with Eagles" is a program in which all youths can participate. Program headed by Rev. Carol Lakota-Eastin with Day Spring Native American Fellowship located in Peoria, Illinois. Another youth conference is coming up in Missouri and Carmen stated she will pass along more information when she receives it.

❖ **Bradley Indian United Methodist Church:** Dwight Bixler reporting.

95% of work completed on fellowship hall; flooring needs to be put down. Have materials, need volunteer labor to complete the work. When completed, the hall will hold 70+ people. Planning a dedication in Spring 2009. Breakfast served on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month; great turnouts. Two new members and baptized – 72 people in attendance. Sunday attendance average is 20-30 people. Planning a combination Thanksgiving and Christmas worship service with Salem. Potluck to be at the Louella Collins Center afterwards. Benefit planned for Pastor Sandy's daughter who is going to Haiti. Provide support for the Senior Meals at the Plainfield United Methodist Church. Plans in the works for a Spring and Fall revival; no dates or speakers to announce at this time. Joe Sprague has been entertaining members at worship with enjoyable stories.

❖ **Mt. Pleasant:** Cynthia Floyd reporting.

Easter Revival with Marshal & Mary Collins; Camp Meeting with Bill Bird, Lennox Taylor and Charlie Nahgawabo. Mary and Marshal Collins provided the music ministry. Rented a van and traveled to South Dakota with group from Nazarene Church to distribute clothing and food. Spent 6 days at Pine Ridge. Kitchen enlarged by removing a wall. Bible Study with Nazarene Church every Tuesday and meal at 7 pm. Hold mid-week service every Thursday at 7 pm. Working with Edwin Taylor on Native American language and songs. New member Steve Roth has sound equipment experience. Fall Revival scheduled for November 27-30. Wild game dinner set for Saturday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. Spring Revival scheduled for Easter weekend 2009. We are meeting our financial needs.

❖ **Northport:** Val Maidens reporting.

Sunday worship at 12 noon, continue to share Pastor Tom with Kewadin. 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month with retired Pastor Kay Coombs. Bible Study Wednesdays at 7 pm. We had a Pancake Breakfast on June 14<sup>th</sup>; Yard Sale on June 21<sup>st</sup>; 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Pig Roast on July 26<sup>th</sup> – all fund raisers to support annual

Summer camp meeting in August. Our Annual Summer Camp Meeting held August 7-10. Speakers were David Crowell with Harvest Ministries & Marshall Collins. Mary Collins & Sam McClellan provided music ministry. Super turnout filled with the Holy Spirit. Fall Revival with Sam McClellan as speaker scheduled for November 20, 21 and 22. Continue to provide support our food pantry. Retired Pastor Bob Grigereit and Central United Methodist Church Mission Team scheduled to do handy-man type work around our church – replace broken window and missing siding, put in outdoor water faucet, new entry door to crawl space. Plan to furnish 10-15 Thanksgiving baskets to families in need. Perpetual care continues at our Onominee Indian Cemetery – clearing brush & weeds, spreading top soil, putting crosses in place. Plan to raise funds to build a Memorial Garden. Revival Meetings for 2009: Easter – March 26, 27, 28. Camp Meeting – August 6, 7, 8, 9. Fall – November 19, 20, 21.

❖ **Kewadin:** Phyllis John reporting.

Sunday worship at 9 am. New members are very active and helpful; they cleaned up beach area, camp grounds, dining hall. Held an Elder Luncheon at dining hall. Thanksgiving Revival scheduled for November 13, 14, 15. Lennox Taylor will be speaker. Mary & Marshall Collins will lead music ministry. Great camp meeting in July – 1<sup>st</sup> night 75 in attendance. Construction on new building temporarily on hold. After school youth center back in operation, have Internet connection. Continue to have Penny Roll Potlucks 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday each month to help support our two girls in Guatemala. Continue prayers for Phyllis' mother Angeline Genia, and for Church Elder Percy Anderson.

❖ **Greensky Hill:** Judy Johnson reporting.

Sunday worship at 9 am with Pastor Tim Wright; 5 pm service with Marshall Collins, Sam McClellan and Tom John on rotating Sundays; 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday is a Lay Speaker. 5 pm Sunday school temporarily suspended; searching for new teacher. Had Camp Meeting and the Lay Speaking Course of Study in July. Hosted a service at the Odawa Hotel, 20-25 in attendance – one time event. Bible Study on Monday evenings at 7 pm for 6 weeks. Studying the 5 Characteristics of a Healthy Church. Going to Grand View Nursing Home to sing on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. Nine new members. Sugar Shack up and running. Purchased new keyboard. 385 in attendance at our Fall Festival on September 27<sup>th</sup>. Summer camp meeting date has not been confirmed. Hosting a Ghost Supper on November 1<sup>st</sup> at 3 pm.

❖ **Oscoda:** Amy Alberts reporting.

3 youths attended Camp Kinawind; participated in joint community Vacation Bible School – “Surfing Through The Scriptures”; 33 members attended the Church Annual Picnic – used George Foreman grills; celebrated our 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary for Pastor Brie. She has made a positive impact within our church and community. 13+ children given backpacks and school supplies from the Back to School program; continuing to outreach to families in community; doing major repair in dining hall and will repair water damage in Spring. Amanda Nahgahgwon participated in the Basic Lay Speaking training at Greensky Hill in July; Amy participated in the Advance Course taught by Rev. Carol Lakota-Eastin (Dayspring Native American Church). Amy and Pastor Brie working on a Power Point presentation to CONAM/Detroit Conference on the three Native American churches – history, what they do, etc. She will share with IWC at the next Spring meeting.

❖ **Zeba:** Pastor John Henry reporting.

Wonderful Lenten Services – 20+ participated – offered soup and sandwiches after services; huge turnout for Easter breakfast; Vacation Bible School had an average of 70 participants and received help from Ann Arbor United Methodist Church; great August camp meeting with Judy Matson and Thomas John as guest speakers. Church care: replaced doors; cedar shakes need replacing; church needs painting; need to repair rotted wood. Attendance has been increasing; elders are returning with their children and grandchildren. Camp Meeting set for August 2-7, 2009.

❖ **Detroit Conference/Jurisdictional:** Carmen Misner reporting.

Jurisdictional held at Greensky Hill in July; participated in their camp meeting. Rev. Carol Lakota-Eastin taught the Advance Course of Study; Rev. Tom John taught the Basic/Beginning Course of Study. Pastor Carol is the Director of Course of Study and from Dayspring Native American Church in Peoria, Illinois. Five churches now have trained lay speakers. Native American Sunday packets were not completed for 2008. North Central Jurisdictional will produce 2009 packets and put on the West Michigan Conference website, which should be completed before April 2009. Hopefully this will increase coverage and revenue. Tom John asked if this information could be announced at the 2009 West Michigan Annual Conference.

❖ **Saganing:** Not present. Bev Green stated the church donated an organ to Oscoda church.

**2009 – Revivals and Camp Meetings scheduled:**

- ❖ **Northport:** Easter Revival, Mar 26-28, 2009; Camp Meeting, Aug 6-9, 2009; Thanksgiving Revival, November 19-21, 2009.
- ❖ **Kewadin:** Easter Revival, Apr 2-4, 2009; Camp Meeting, July 15-19, 2009; Thanksgiving Revival, November 12-14, 2009.
- ❖ **Mt. Pleasant:** Easter Revival, Apr 9-12, 2009; Camp Meeting, August 30-September 6, 2009; Thanksgiving Revival, November 26-29, 2009.

Thomas John, Chair / Valerie Maidens, Secretary

**MICHIGAN AREA LOAN FUNDS**  
of The United Methodist Church  
**Adrian-Albion College Endowment Fund**  
**Missions & Church Extension Trust Fund**

2008 was a year of solid operations for the Michigan Area Loan Funds. Financial pressures continued amidst unprecedented market volatility but several operational changes have prepared the Funds for fiscal vitality while preserving the quality of service established by the Funds over many recent years. The Loan Fund enjoyed a positive year while other financial institutions struggled. The high quality of our loan portfolio and the steps we have taken to protect our investors resulted in successful operations that should be sustainable going forward.

Dr. Wayne Barrett, CFP®, serves as Resident Agent of the Fund. He serves as Chief Executive of the Fund and brings certification in financial planning and a Series 63 securities license from the State of Michigan. He directs the operations of the Funds from his Grand Rapids office.

Rev. Denny Buwalda, although retired from the United Methodist Foundation, continues to serve as loan officer. Rev. Buwalda handles all loan inquiries as well as providing the linkage between the several parties involved in processing church loans.

Investor relations are administered through the Grand Rapids office. A new Offering Circular was approved by the State of Michigan and is available upon request from the Loan Fund office. Inquiries can be directed toll-free at 1-888-451-1929.

The formal name of the Michigan Area Loan Fund is The Missions and Church Extension Trust Fund. For 40 years the Fund has provided low-cost loans to United Methodist congregations across Michigan. During early 2008 the Fund completed a nearly 40-year relationship with Adrian and Albion colleges. Through the Adrian-Albion Church Loan Fund we had administered a revolving loan fund for churches funded with investments from each college. During 2007 we were notified by the colleges that they no longer wished to continue this relationship and, accordingly, the college funds were returned in the first quarter of 2008. Existing Adrian-Albion loans were transferred to the Missions and Church Extension Trust Fund for continued administration.

**The Missions and Church Extension Trust Fund** – This fund with a potential capitalization of \$10,000,000 offers interest-earning investments to Michigan United Methodist individuals, churches and agencies. Investments paid a rate of 3.5% for accounts invested throughout 2008, 3.75% for accounts of \$100,000 or more. The Fund makes loans of up to \$1,500,000 to churches and church-related organizations with amortizations up to 20 years. Interest rates are often substantially below those offered by commercial lenders. The fund is registered with the Securities Bureau of the State of Michigan and is managed by its Resident Agent. As of December 31, 2008 the loan portfolio included 32 loans and mortgages with a total value of \$6,350,000.

A complete audit of the Funds is available upon request from the administrative office, PO Box 6247, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6247.

The future of the Funds looks bright as loan demand continues to be strong. United Methodist congregations continue to expand and build at a vigorous pace. The Michigan Area Loan Funds are committed to serve this growing demand with attractive loan rates, minimal “red tape” and a spirit of cooperation for all involved. Contact the Funds to schedule a free no-obligation consultation to learn more about how we may be able to serve you.

Rev. Kenneth McCaw, President, Board of Trustees  
Rev. Dr. Wayne Barrett, Resident Agent

### MICHIGAN AREA SCHOOL FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

The 2008 Michigan Area School for Pastoral Ministry convened the third week in August, at the Lansing Sheraton Hotel. Our theme was, "*Holey? Wholly...Holy!*" – *Restoring the Soul for Ministry*. The School for Pastoral Ministry is the only event designed specifically for the care and nurture of persons in pastoral ministry in the Michigan Area.

This year's MASPM featured Dr. Kenneth Carter, senior pastor of Providence United Methodist Church, and Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock, Founding Co-Director of Faith Voices of the Common Good. In addition to practical workshop options, there were many opportunities for personal renewal time. The overall attendance was about 140.

The school began with a thought-provoking plenary by Dr. Brock. She questioned the historic emphasis on the death and suffering as a means of atonement, over and above the notion of a promised paradise to which Jesus' sacrifice guarantees true believers access. Her thesis was that the promise of paradise helps Christians cope with the evils of this world.

Our second presenter, Dr. Kenneth Carter, emphasized the need for personal renewal for pastors. He strongly encouraged all clergy to establish and maintain devotional practices. Throughout the conference he provided many helpful resource ideas and suggestions.

For the first time a children's ministry was offered. Clergy parents were encouraged to enroll their children in this VBS-style endeavor. The event included field trips and outings. The positive response was overwhelming!

Throughout the week pastors were offered intentional opportunities for renewal, relaxation and restoration. There was massage, embodied prayer, a labyrinth, morning and evening prayer services, and prayerful meditation during the creation of a mosaic. The Tuesday-Thursday format allowed for travel time and encouraged greater participation from the Upper Peninsula.

Bishop Jonathan Keaton led an open dialogue in which all clergy were invited to ask questions. His presence was a great support and much appreciated. He offered sincere and heartfelt encouragement in a season of political change and economic uncertainty.

Our 2009 theme is "*Taking it to the next level!*" – *Preaching, Teaching and Growing Disciples*. Our preacher will be Dr. John Ed Mathison. He is the former senior minister of the Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, one of the fastest growing United Methodist churches in America. Frazer also has the largest Sunday School attendance for United Methodist churches in America. Frazer is committed to involving lay people in ministry. Eighty-three percent of the resident members are involved in a specific area of ministry. In retirement our resident teacher has founded the John Ed Mathison Leadership Ministries. One of the major objectives of this ministry is to provide training opportunities for young pastors. Dr. Mathison will share with us the best practices that he has developed over the last forty-five years.

Our teacher for 2009 is Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniels. She is the senior minister of First Congregational Church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. She is also the co-host of Chicago's "30 Good Minutes" television program, which features the leading voices in religion today. Dr. Daniels is a noted author, former preaching professor at Yale University, frequent contributor to the Christian Century, wife and mother. She has much to offer us, and will do so with much enthusiasm and wisdom. The 2009 school is August 18-20<sup>th</sup> at the Lexington Lansing Hotel (formerly known as the Sheraton).

Faith E. Green Timmons, Dean of the School Senate

### MICHIGAN AREA UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Michigan Area Historical Society (MAHS) met several times this year, with other meetings scheduled.

The president of this group, the Reverend Ronald M. Fassett, had to resign his position in the Spring of 2008 due to illness. We were saddened to learn of his passing on November 1, 2008. The Reverend John Park, pastor of the Dixboro United Methodist Church in the Detroit Conference, was elected as the new president. The vice president position is vacant; Jennie Thomas is the secretary, with Diana Spitnale Miller as treasurer. The MAHS is composed of members from both the Detroit and West Michigan

conferences, and the understanding is that the presidency and vice-president positions are rotated between the conferences.

Our main focus has been the researching, planning and printing of a book on Methodism in Michigan. This is in conjunction with the 200th anniversary of when the Methodists first arrived in the Detroit Area. We plan to have the book available for sale by Annual Conference time.

In conjunction with the North Central Jurisdiction Convocation on Archives and History in South Dakota in July 2008, the annual meeting of the United States Historical Society of The United Methodist Church took place. Ken Gackler, vice-chair of the West Michigan Conference Archives and History Commission, and I attended their business sessions.

Merna Francis, Chair, Commission on Archives and History

### **MICHIGAN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE**

The Board of Directors of the Michigan Christian Advocate continues to deal with the overall future of the magazine. Despite the sharp downturn in the economy and the tightening of budget dollars, the staff of the Advocate continues to produce a very high quality, award-winning publication that truly is the “face” of The United Methodist Church in the State of Michigan. Continual improvements to the graphic and editorial content make the Advocate a strong voice for the people of our congregations across the entire state. The board continues to look for partnership opportunities with both the Detroit and West Michigan conferences in an attempt to provide a strong and viable communication tool. As the Advocate tells the story of Michigan’s United Methodists it also showcases the many wonderful mission and outreach programs that are taking place across the world. We continue to look for ways to improve the publication and look forward to bringing the news of The United Methodist Church to readers for many years to come.

Tom Ferguson, President, Board of Directors

### **NEW CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Our Council of Bishops and our general agencies set four priorities for The United Methodist Church this quadrennium and one of the top four is new church development. Our bishops realize that the most effective way to reach un-churched people in our culture is through new churches. New churches are more able to address and connect with the culture which is constantly changing. Existing churches can learn from our new churches and can also join in and give support to our new churches so the establishment of new churches is a win for everyone.

Our committee works hard at planting new churches and giving continuing support and guidance to our new churches. Our newest church plant is Windward United Methodist Church in the Grand Traverse District. They launched public worship in 2008 and are moving ahead and growing. In the dead of Winter they averaged 65-70 each week in worship with an additional 25 children and youth. Those are heart-warming numbers to read, because those are all people who weren’t connected with a local church before and they are people that God loves and seeks connection with.

Of course our other new churches continue to worship and move ahead in ministry in their locations. Each congregation has its own challenges as every church does, and we encourage everyone in the conference to pray for these new churches often. We also hope that you will all seek ways to reach out and encourage a new church that is in your district. We are connected and we are all in this together.

For more information on each of these new churches we have included a list of their website addresses. We pray that you will check them out from time to time and keep track of their progress. They are a growing arm of The United Methodist Church in the West Michigan Conference. The web sites of new churches are:

[www.sycamorecreekchurch.org](http://www.sycamorecreekchurch.org)  
[www.crosswindcc.org](http://www.crosswindcc.org)  
[www.windwardchurch.org](http://www.windwardchurch.org)

[www.Golifespring.org](http://www.Golifespring.org)  
[www.Outlandchurch.org](http://www.Outlandchurch.org)

[www.whitepinesumc.org](http://www.whitepinesumc.org)  
[www.gatherchurch.org](http://www.gatherchurch.org)

Barbara Flory, Chair

## BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

*THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE* reads:

“The licensed or ordained ministry is recognized by The United Methodist Church as a called-out and set-apart ministry. Therefore, it is appropriate that those persons who present themselves as candidates for licensed or ordained ministry be examined regarding the authenticity of their call by God to ordered ministry.” (*THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE 2004*, ¶ 310)

Those persons who respond to God’s call by offering themselves in leadership as ordained and licensed ministers are the particular concern of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). Working in cooperation with the District Committees on Ministry, persons heeding this call to servant leadership are guided through the process of becoming certified candidates on the local pastor or ordained track, as the district committees look for their “readiness” for ministry.

The most visible and well-known task of the Board of Ordained Ministry is its work with persons who then seek to enter ordained ministry. The board is the instrument that The United Methodist Church uses to affirm God’s calling and meet the standards and qualifications necessary for this calling and the life of service as God’s servants within West Michigan Annual Conference.

In this responsibility, as outlined by *DISCIPLINE*, each candidate for ministry on the deacon and elder track, at both the commissioning and elder levels, is asked to submit written materials, evaluations, professional examples of their ministry and be a part of a yearly interview process, as the board looks at their “readiness for” and “effectiveness in” ordained ministry.

It is always a moment of deep exultation for district and board members, when, in the ordination service at Annual Conference, we are asked, along with the gathered community: “Do you trust that these candidates are worthy to be ordained?” Knowing the hearts, the hard work and the dedication of each candidate, our members can respond, with honesty and enthusiasm: “Yes. Thanks be to God!”

Yet, the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry includes more than entry into the covenant relationship. It also includes enlistment of potential candidates, guiding transfer candidates, and the care, nurture, and support of all clergy. The board is also responsible for tracking all changes in clergy status, encouraging and financially supporting renewal leaves and continuing education opportunities, providing short-term counseling for clergy and their families and providing needed funding toward seminary, Course of Study and Licensing School costs.

Our board is presently working on:

- Ways to be more supportive of clergy and clergy families in life crisis situations, with easy access to support persons and directional steps through our Board of Ordained Ministry web page on the conference web site [www.westmichiganconference.org](http://www.westmichiganconference.org).
- Clarifying the process for both the BOM and Cabinet for handling recognition of denominational credentials and appointments within the West Michigan Conference.
- Offering three mentor training classes around the conference in the Spring.
- Seeking ways to enhance our continuing contact with all West Michigan Conference seminary students and how we might better support and respond to those persons who answer the Bishop’s call to ministry at the conclusion of the ordination service.

Our Board of Ordained Ministry is most grateful to the conference for the trust placed in us for this work, and we ask for your prayers for discernment as we attempt to provide the conference with those who will effectively lead the Church of Jesus Christ in the West Michigan Annual Conference.

Lynn E. Grimes, Chair

## ORDER OF DEACONS

*The ministry of the deacon exemplifies and leads the Church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live, both in the Church and the world. The deacon embodies the interrelationship between worship in the gathered community and service to God in the world. (THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE 2004, ¶ 305)*

The West Michigan Order of Deacons is growing and deepening. Our congregations are producing ever more persons who perceive and follow God’s call to service through this unique expression of ordained

ministry. The Holy Spirit is moving throughout The United Methodist Church to empower the ministry of the deacon, which complements and works with the ministry of elders, laity and local pastors.

2008 was a year of transition and restorative fallowness in the West Michigan Order:

- The Rev. Pam Mathieu completed six years of service as Chairperson of the Order of Deacons. We are grateful for her faithful service.
- The Order met in the Spring with Bishop Keaton and the Detroit Conference Order of Deacons, anticipating a merger of conferences and sharing ways in which to be in ministry with one another. We expect that that day of conversation may still yield good fruit as West Michigan and Detroit Conference Deacons find way to work together, whatever our structure.
- The annual “Seat Covers” drive during Annual Conference received much-needed underwear for agencies within the conference and in Haiti.

2009 offers new opportunities for joyful, creative and passionate work for Jesus Christ. *As ordained ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ and representatives of the ministry to which Christ calls all persons, the foundation of the deacon’s ministry – no matter what the specific ministry role – is to connect what the congregation does in worship with how we live and work and play in the world.* It is to co-lead worship from the chancel with an eye on the door, welcoming whoever comes in and supporting all who go out from our gathering at the table of Jesus. The role of the deacon is to love the world so much that we bring it to the finest seat at Christ’s table; and to love the church so much that, along with laity, elders and local pastors, we make it the place where the world discovers God’s healing, joy and grace.

Julie Dix, Chair, Order of Deacons

#### ORDER OF ELDERS

***<sup>4</sup> Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. <sup>6</sup> He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (NIV)***

As clergy we are committed to fulfill our call to make disciples for Jesus Christ in the West Michigan Conference and around the world. As such, the Order of Elders seeks to nourish “a bond of unity and common commitment to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference” (2000 BOOK OF DISCIPLINE, Section III, ¶ 312-2). With varying gifts and graces, unique to each one of us, we affirm our covenant as sisters and brothers in Christ as we fulfill our ministry as Local Pastors, Deacons and Elders.

This commitment continues to be evident in the following priorities:

- On the evening prior to the opening of the 2008 West Michigan Annual Conference, a pre-conference worship experience took place in the chapel of Calvin College with Rev. Dr. Robert Hundley bringing the message.
- An updated “**Tending the Holy**” which is a listing of spiritual directors in the Michigan Area has been completed and is available on the conference website.
- In service to the larger Church, The Order of Elders chair supports the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and its executive committee, as spiritual director and process consultant. Our desire is to discover and live out the wisdom and insight of God and God’s presence as we carry out the ministry of the board for the annual conference.
- The respective chairs of the John Wesley Association, Order of Deacons and Order of Elders from across the Michigan Area continued to meet on a regular basis during 2008. Under the guidance and direction of Bishop Keaton, we participated in conversations with regard to how we could best serve our colleagues in ministry throughout the Michigan Area.

Other priorities for the Order of Elders chair include the following: continued meetings with the Bishop and Michigan Area chairs in 2009; continued service to the West Michigan Board of Ordained Ministry and its executive committee.

May we be of one heart and mind as we reach out to those persons who are physically and spiritually under-resourced in our communities, our conference and throughout the world.

William M. Beachy, Ph.D., Chair, Order of Elders

### ENLISTMENT AND MENTORING COMMITTEE

The Committee on Mentoring helps make disciples for Jesus Christ by ensuring that pastoral candidates receive mentoring that will help them become effective pastors.

Three members of the board, Daniel Hoffman, Jane Ellen Johnson and Mike McDonald, attended a seminar in Louisville, KY, in November to receive training in conducting training sessions for candidacy mentors. Our plans are to conduct training sessions for candidacy mentors during April and May of 2009. Candidacy Mentors are assigned by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, in consultation with the district superintendent, to mentor candidates for ministry until they begin serving as commissioned provisional members or local pastors.

The board continues to sponsor regular meetings of each class of commissioned provisional members as they move toward ordained ministry. These groups meet regularly throughout the year to support one another and share their experiences in ministry. We appreciate and affirm the dedication and time commitment each provisional member and the clergy mentors make to be a part of these experiences. Devon Herrell and Mary Ivanov are responsible for organizing these groups each year.

The board also works in consultation with the district superintendents to ensure that each commissioned provisional member has a clergy mentor assigned.

Mike McDonald, Co-Chair, Enlistment and Mentoring Committee

### CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

With a new building, new faculty and staff, new curriculum, newly expanded financial aid initiatives – and even new art! – Candler School of Theology is moving with enthusiasm and grace through changes that enhance its ability to fulfill its mission: *to educate faithful and creative leaders for the Church's ministries in the world*. To this end, Candler is constantly working to deepen its already vital relationship with The United Methodist Church.

As one of the 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is grounded in the Christian faith and shaped by the Wesleyan tradition of evangelical piety, ecumenical openness, and social concern. As one of nine graduate level, professional schools of United Methodist-related Emory University, Candler provides a context for learning and formation that engages the most complex and difficult issues of our day. As a school located in the major metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia, Candler offers students the opportunity for practice in a highly diverse community, a global crossroads where church growth is expected, cultivated, and actually happening! There is no better place for preparation that resonates with and addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

On September 25, 2008, and with abundant joy, we dedicated Phase I of the new Candler School of Theology Building. A LEEDS silver certificate building, the "CST" includes offices and classrooms that provide the opportunity for technologically sophisticated work and community in an environmentally sound setting. Phase II, to be built in due time, will house the Pitts Theology Library, the Wesley Teaching Chapel, and additional offices and classrooms.

This year we welcomed the arrival of six new faculty and senior staff, five of whom are United Methodists. Forty-two percent of the faculty and senior staff is United Methodist, and all but five are ordained. Two new staff positions were created: the Director of Lifelong Learning, filled by Dr. Bob Winstead, a member of the North Georgia Annual Conference, and the Associate Dean of Methodist Studies, filled by Dr. Anne Burkholder, a member of the Florida Annual Conference. Both of these new positions serve the larger church as they connect clergy with new opportunities for learning; connect conferences and students who are ultimately seeking ordination; engage with denominational organizations at a variety of levels; oversee denominational certifications and the Course of Study; advise students; and teach courses. In addition, Bishop Ruediger Minor is with us for two years as the inaugural holder of the Hankey Chair in World Evangelism and Bishop Walter Klaiber is with us as Bishop-in-Residence during the Spring semester.

Candler is in the second year of its new curriculum, designed to assist students in aligning their course selection with their call to ministry and integrating the classroom with their contextual education settings. This emphasis is accomplished through the selection of a concentration, the opportunity for special

certifications, and joint programs and initiatives with three other Emory graduate schools: Goizueta Business School, Emory Law School, and Rollins School of Public Health.

We are delighted to report that in spite of the difficult economic realities that have had a serious impact on us all, Candler School of Theology and Emory University are faring well, due to sound fiscal stewardship and excellent donor support. The Emory Capital Campaign has achieved \$881 million of its \$1.7 billion goal. Candler's goal of \$60 million will enable us to achieve strategic priorities regarding facilities, student support, lifelong learning, endowed professorships, programs and curriculum development, and international initiatives.

Candler has always been deeply committed to assisting students with generous financial aid, but in light of the current economic climate, we have deepened our commitment to significant student support in two very important ways. This academic year, 80 percent of eligible students received scholarships or grants, with an average award covering 79% percent of tuition. Through these awards, more than \$2.5 million was provided to 196 United Methodist students. In addition, we created "Leadership Candler," an all-expenses-paid discernment experience that draws together distinguished prospective MDiv students from across the country and the world to explore the richness of life and study at Candler.

As a part of its contribution to the new building, Emory University provided Candler with a major grant for the purchase of new artwork. As a result, Candler is now home to the world's largest collection of original works by John August Swanson. Comprising both serigraphs and paintings, the collection focuses on biblical narratives and reflects the storytelling traditions of Swanson's Mexican-Swedish heritage as well as the influence of mosaics and stained glass from the Byzantine and medieval eras.

Candler's student body truly reflects the denominational emphasis on the importance of attracting younger and more diverse people. Our enrollment stands at 493, with 401 seeking the Master of Divinity, 50 the Master of Theological Studies, 18 the Master of Theology, 13 the Doctor of Theology, and 11 enrolled as Special, Non-Degree students. Eighty-three percent are enrolled full-time. The total student population is 24% US ethnic minority, 12% international, and 51% women. More than 50 denominations are represented, with 52% of MDiv students being United Methodist from 40 annual conferences, including Bulgaria, East Angola, Mozambique, and Korea. Other Methodist denominations include African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, and the Methodist Church of Korea. The average age of our students is 32, with 56% under thirty. The median age of our MDiv students is 27.

Candler is deeply committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the development of persons for Christian ministry, especially in The United Methodist Church. We are grateful for your support of Candler through the Methodist Education Fund, visits, prayers, nurture of our students, and direct donor support. Come and see us! We would love to welcome you on campus to share your interest, your concerns, and your ideas!

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics

### **GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Gammon Theological Seminary is one of thirteen accredited theological institutions of The United Methodist Church. Gammon is the only historically African American theological school related to The United Methodist Church.

Gammon is in its 126<sup>th</sup> year of operation. The Methodist Episcopal Church founded Gammon Theological Seminary in 1883. Bishop Gilbert Haven and the officers of the Freedmen's Aid Society had purchased nearly 500 acres of high land in the southern suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. Gammon initially began as a Department of Theology at Clark University. Through the efforts of Bishop Henry White Warren and the gift of \$20,000 for endowment from the Rev. Elijah H. Gammon, superannuated Methodist minister of the Rock River (Illinois) Conference. The enthusiasm of these two men led to the construction of Gammon Hall. The Rev. Wilbur Patterson Thirkield was elected dean, and Gammon School of Theology was officially opened on October 3, 1883.

April 1887, the official connection between Gammon and Clark was dissolved. The seminary was granted a charter on March 24, 1888, and the name was officially changed December 28 of that year to Gammon Theological School. The Rev. Thirkield served as the first president.

Gammon is the United Methodist member of the consortium of theological schools, known across the world as The Interdenominational Theological Center located in Atlanta, Georgia. We offer a broad curriculum in the scholar-minister tradition and also offer a holistic educational experience that continues to stress scholarship and service.

Students prepare for administration and leadership, counseling, teaching and preaching and a range of other spiritual and secular roles, with a blend of scholarship in the classroom and practical experience in the community.

The interdisciplinary curriculum integrates theological studies with preparation for the ministry, merging theory with practice to equip the student for scholarship in the academy, service in the parish, and leadership in the community.

Degree programs offered are Master of Divinity; Master of Arts in Christian Education; Master of Arts in Church Music; Doctor of Ministry; Doctor of Ministry with a Specialty In Pastoral Counseling; and Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling. Dual degrees in Christian Education and Master of Divinity; Church Music and Master of Divinity and Christian Education and Church Music.

Our range of innovative special programs provide research and learning opportunities for students and faculty, while serving society as a whole. Some of the programs are: (1) The Institute of Church Administration and Management (ICAM) supplement theological education with leadership training and administrative skills development, addressing topics such entrepreneurial concepts, time management, organizational development, and policy formulation. (2) Black Women in Church and Society Program establishes networks among African American church women locally and nationwide through an institute, a research and resource center and seminars. (3) The Religious Heritage of the African World initiative conducts research and advocacy activities, gathers data, and examines issues related to the religious heritage of people of African descent around the globe. (4) Faith and The City is one module of a collaborative relationship among local seminaries that addresses civic and community interest by engaging the public theologians, local church leadership and their congregations in active pursuit of a spirit of mutual community and shared responsibility with its specific emphases on environmental justice and wholistic health. (5) The Womanist Scholars Program recognizes and promotes the scholarly activities of academicians in areas of Black Women, religion and spirituality. This program enables womanist scholars to pursue a research project of their own design. Scholars are engaged in teaching, lectureships, and consultation on issues affecting Black women and religion and Black women and spirituality. This program invites two Black female scholars annually to be in residence, teach a course in the scholar's research area and develop publishable contributions to womanist works. (6) The Youth Hope Builders Academy seeks to provide high school youth an opportunity to explore their present and future lives theologically and discover ways in which their lives can contribute to a hope-bearing church and society. During the program an intensive four-week Summer residential academy is held. A second component of the Academy is year-round forums, including the Annual Youth and Family Convocation, for young people and their families, where church and community leaders focus on current issues of youth and resources for problem solving. (7) The Urban Theological Institute is an exciting initiative designed to address the need to develop effective religious and public leaders for urban transformation. The vision is to become a major partner with local churches, neighborhoods, and faith-based organizations in the war against urban blight. (8) The Student, Local Church and Agency Internship Program functions with an opportunity for partnerships with organizations, local churches, social action and advocacy agencies, which helps prepare students and fosters a vision of excellence in ministry in general, and pastoral ministry in particular. This program seeks to accomplish its nurturing and mentoring goals through the development and utilization of strategic partners. (9) The Conference on Ministry, which is held during the Spring of each year, is an opportunity for persons who feel they have been called to ministry to come and visit our campus and explore their call to ministry as they visit classrooms, engage students who are currently matriculating at the seminary and dialogue with the Financial Aid/Scholarship officers as well as the president of the seminary. This three-day program stimulates and helps prospective students to clarify their call to ministry and also helps them to consider the seminary that will best help them to achieve their goals for preparing for ministry. (10) The Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series was established by alumni, family and friends for Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield and Bishop Robert E. Jones. Each person had an individual lectureship, "Thirkield's Lectureship was on Preaching and Social Services, and Interracial Goodwill." Jones' family, alumni and friends established the "Alumni Lectureship". The two

lectureships were combined in 1947. The Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series is held annually during Gammon's Founders' Day celebration in October.

Gammon has been known as "The School of the Prophets" and has trained many bishops; district superintendents; annual conference staff executives; general agency administrators; college presidents; preachers; teachers; Christian educators; pastoral counselors; military, hospital, and children's home chaplains; Wesley Foundation directors and campus ministers; ministers of music; church administrators; religious journalists and authors; biblical scholars; and social activists the last 126 years. Our graduates hold the promise of hundreds of local church ministries around the world in Africa, Asia, and India and our gifts and graces will continue to honor our historic mission and embrace its promising future. To learn more about Gammon, please visit our website at [www.gammonseminary.org](http://www.gammonseminary.org).

Dr. Walter H. McKelvey, President  
Madelyn C. Greene, Alumni & Student Affairs Director

### **GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

As we say often and mean sincerely, **Garrett-Evangelical is a seminary that cares about the church.** Now in our 156th year, we look to the future absolutely determined to prepare highly regarded spiritual leaders – bold leaders – for the church, the academy and the world.

We have been buoyed this year by the **largest first-year class we've seen in many years**, an extraordinary and diverse group of students. Our Admissions Office is working hard to build on that momentum.

The school's administration has given considerable attention to the economic challenges ahead due to the dramatic drop in the financial markets. We are involved in significant planning to emerge from this time with even greater vitality and focus in our programs. Based on the strength of our **capital campaign**, "Honoring Our Heritage, Forging Our Future," and seeing the needs and great opportunities before us, the Board of Trustees has increased the campaign to \$60 million by 2012.

We are listening carefully to students, faculty, alums, pastors, lay and clergy conference leaders, and persons outside the church to discover how we might better accomplish our core purpose: **"To know God in Christ and, through preparing spiritual leaders, to help others know God in Christ."** As a result of this ongoing discourse, we are moving forward with a number of exciting initiatives, including:

- Bolstering our ***M DIV Plus*** program, the only one of its kind in the country. It provides executive education for our graduates for the initial three years after graduation and works closely with annual conferences during preparation for ordination. We value our partnership with Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and the Samaritan Centers in this initiative. Together, we will offer a joint Certification in Church Leadership and training for clergy coaches. Through ***M DIV Plus*** we are doing our best to prepare highly regarded, effective spiritual leaders for a church and world in those critical first three years.
- Increasing the **Distance Learning and Intensive Courses** offered. New courses in a video simulcast format and/or on-line format have been developed. These can be found on the seminary's website ([www.garrett.edu](http://www.garrett.edu)).
- Establishing a **Center for United Methodist Studies**, which, under the leadership of Dr. Barry Bryant, has an expanding program of lectures, conferences, scholarships and publications.
- Revitalizing our **Doctor of Ministry** program. The program includes distinguished faculty in the areas of spiritual formation, leadership and evangelism with many classes taught by leading practitioners.
- Building **stronger bonds with The United Methodist Church**. Rev. James W. Haun works with the ***M Div Plus*** initiative and also directs the **Course of Study** for Licensed Local Pastors, including schools taught in English, Spanish and Hmong.
- Strengthening the **Center for the Church and the Black Experience**. We hosted the inaugural meeting of a new Board of Visitors for the Church and the Black Experience. Our student group, **Garrett-Evangelical Black Seminarians**, continues to play an extremely vital role in the life of our seminary.
- Launching an **initiative to better serve Hispanic students and churches**. In August 2008 Hispanic leaders met with seminary administration and faculty on our campus. A program of new initiatives was

laid out that includes: forming a Hispanic Council, enhancing the Hispanic Course of Study (Escuela del Curso de Estudio), adding more Spanish content to the seminary website, and developing a plan for additional Hispanic faculty and scholarships for Hispanic students.

- **Increasing the number of full-tuition scholarships** for persons preparing to be pastors and teachers and expanding opportunities for lay education and continuing studies for pastors through online and extension education.

Garrett-Evangelical serves over **550 students** in degree-related courses, certificate programs and our Summer Course of Study School. We encourage you to visit our website, [www.garrett.edu](http://www.garrett.edu), and, if at all possible, to visit us on campus. We are proud to serve The United Methodist Church, and we ask for your continuing prayers and support as we pursue our mission and our renewed vision. Thank you.

Philip A. Amerson, President

### METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO

Greetings from Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO), where five students from the West Michigan Conference worked toward Master of Divinity degrees in the 2008-09 school year.

**Accreditation:** As part of MTSO's once-a-decade accreditation process, teams from the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools visited campus in October 2008. The teams' reports recommended continued accreditation for a new 10-year term.

**Alumni:** In October 2008, West Michigan Conference Director Benton Heisler received the John and Ruth Mount Alumni Award for Distinguished Service in Parish Ministry. Those nominating Rev. Heisler, a 1986 Methesco MDiv graduate, described him as a passionate spiritual leader and conflict resolution facilitator with a great sense of humor.

**Students:** The school enrolled 224 students from 20 denominations in master's-level courses in the Fall semester of 2008. An additional 15 students are pursuing Doctor of Ministry degrees. Two-thirds of all master's level students are United Methodists; the second most common denomination on campus is United Church of Christ, with 8 percent of students. Five percent of students now identify themselves as non-denominational, a marked increase over the previous year. The student body is younger than in the previous year, with 55 percent under 40. Students come from 25 states and Korea; 62 percent are Ohioans, followed by Michiganders (9 percent).

**Faculty:** Academic Dean John Kampen has chosen to end his tenure as dean following the 2008-09 school year. President Jay Rundell expressed his regard for Dr. Kampen "not only as a scholar and academic administrator but as a friend and guide," and he recommended that Dr. Kampen be appointed Professor of New Testament Studies in the Dunn Chair in Biblical Interpretation effective July 1. Paul Burnam was appointed director of the Dickhaut Library, replacing Paul Schrodtt, who retired. Professor Lisa Withrow was installed in the Norman E. Dewire Chair in Christian Leadership.

**Scholarships:** Seventy-five percent of the students at Methodist Theological School received some form of scholarship aid in 2008-09; 88 percent received some form of financial aid through work-study, loans or scholarships.

**Events:** In March, MTSO hosted "Women in Ancient Religion," a major interdisciplinary, international conference co-sponsored by Yale Divinity School and several entities within Ohio State University. This followed a Fall season that featured a number of successful events. The Schooler Institute on Preaching focused on the practical theme "Rethinking Your Advent Series," featuring Dr. Sharon Ringe, a former MTSO faculty member now teaching at Wesley Theological Seminary. At the Mission and Evangelism Institute, whose theme was "Offering Christ in a Multi-religious World," Dr. Ajith Fernando, national director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka, was the keynote speaker. "Equipping Christian Leaders to Abolish Modern Slavery" was the theme for the Liberation! Conference, a student-led event coordinated by the local chapter of the Beatitudes Society. Four experts in nuclear regulation and the Church's role in it participated in the forum "New Directions for a New Nuclear Age: Church Influence and Public Policy." And Bishop John Shelby Spong, the progressive Christian author, spoke to an overflow crowd in the Alford Centrum.

**Strategic Plan:** The MTSO Board of Trustees adopted the school's strategic plan for 2008-2015. The tone for the detailed plan was set by the following statements.

**Our Aspiration:** In response to the grace and call of God in Jesus Christ, Methodist Theological School in Ohio will prepare and invigorate transformational leaders to engage the Church and the world in leadership and service.

**Our Identity and Purpose:** Methodist Theological School in Ohio is a center for rigorous theological inquiry, spiritual formation and professional development which is rooted in the scriptures and traditions of the Christian faith. We provide a vibrant learning environment for the preparation of skilled, passionate transformational leaders for churches, religious institutions, emerging faith communities, and the wider world. Grounded in our Wesleyan tradition and influenced by our ecumenical and interfaith commitments, we attend to the theological, spiritual, and vocational formation of a diverse group of students involved in a wide range of pursuits. Expecting active participation in our community of learning, we maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness, teaching how to engage in conversation with the past and with others so that new and faithful perspectives may emerge. We strive for our graduates to demonstrate a deep understanding of the heritage disciplines of religious study, to be highly competent in areas of practical theology, and to show evidence of thoughtful reflection. We are committed to individual wholeness, social justice, inclusiveness, and religious diversity. We take seriously our responsibility for stewardship of the intellectual life of the Church and our commitment to a just and sustainable world.

Danny Russell, Director of Public Relations

#### UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

"Spirit led, Renewing the Church  
For the Mission of Jesus Christ in the World!"

**What Would Jesus Do** with a United Methodist seminary? We think Jesus would recruit faithful disciples and educate them with the best mentors and sources, starting with the Bible, and shape them to lead a life-changing mission that would turn the world upside down! The disciples would learn to embody a renewed Church led by the Spirit and unafraid to live out God's holy purposes!

United has itself been renewed by the Spirit for the mission of Jesus Christ in the world, and we invite your prayers and participation in this renewal and this purpose! The seminary been serving Christ and the Church for 138 years, but we have recently taken steps to update our offerings:

- A recently revised 78 hour Master of Divinity curriculum!
- A growing number of online and blended courses!
- New Doctor of Ministry degree focus groups and mentors!
- Deep learning opportunities for clergy and laity!
- Emphases in Church Renewal, African American Ministry Studies, Pastoral Care and Liturgical Ministries!
- Appreciative theological reflection on the central doctrines and beliefs of the Christian faith!
- Spiritual formation in a variety of cultural contexts, including international communities!
- A technologically advanced, fully accessible, state-of-the art campus!
- A youthful, diverse, widely-published faculty committed to the Christian faith!
- Friendly and helpful staff and students!
- Many new scholarship offerings!

Enrollment at United is growing steadily and **we invite you to call, visit or sign up for a class** that meets your needs! For more information, contact [admissions@united.edu](mailto:admissions@united.edu) or visit our web site [www.united.edu](http://www.united.edu).

Thank you for your prayers, partnership and service in the ministry of Jesus Christ!

Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards, President

## BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS

### CLERGY RETIREMENT SECURITY PLAN (CRSP)

The new clergy pension program called the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP) took effect on January 1, 2007. The CRSP is a combination of a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan. The defined contribution portion is 3% of the clergy's plan compensation (cash salary plus housing). In this new pension plan, the "overfunded" or credit balance in our pre-82 defined benefit account in the General Board of Pension became available to the conference to the extent of the Defined Benefit contribution due from the conference in the amount of \$1,761,016 for 2008. The amount of the defined benefit contribution to the new pension plan (CRSP) paid by the churches will be redirected to fund the retiree health care. Thus, the churches' Ministry Shares for retiree health care will not have to be increased.

### CENTRAL CONFERENCE PENSION PROJECT SUPPORT

The 2005 Annual Conference directed that "a portion of the Cokesbury contribution to the West Michigan Annual Conference shall be donated to the Central Conference Pension Project which was created to support the pension needs of retired clergy in developing countries." By the end of 2008, the board has contributed the total of \$35,970 of the monies received from Cokesbury since 2005.

### COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN (CPP)

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides additional benefits for active and retired pastors in the form of group life and long-term disability insurance. The long-term disability insurance takes effect upon approval by the GBOPHB when the clergy participant is not able to perform ministerial duties due to disabling medical reasons for at least six months.

**Payments to Annuitants and Beneficiaries Report:** There were 561 participants who received benefits and total payments to annuitants were \$6,433,367 including Disability payments of \$211,486. A detailed report showing payments to individual beneficiaries is available upon request from the Conference Treasurer's Office.

### MINISTER'S RESERVE PENSION FUND (MRPF/Pre 82)

The MRPF is the Pension plan covering the years 1948-1981. As a **defined benefit** plan we annually recommend a **2% increase** in the Past Service Rate (PSR). The PSR in 2008 was **\$669**. The General Board of Pension reported that for 2008 actuarial study, our pre-82 Ministerial Reserve Pension Fund is funded at 157% and showed a credit balance (over-funded) of \$25,695,090 based on the PSR of \$669 and the surviving spouse benefit of 85%.

Inasmuch as any pre-82 excess funds cannot be accessed by the conference except to pay the Defined Benefits contributions of CRSP, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits approved to swap portion of the excess funds with underfunded conferences to the extent approved by the General Board. The Conference Treasurer arranged a swap with Central Texas for \$2,335,431, with Eastern Pennsylvania for \$3,250,960 and with Mississippi for \$1,557,789 (Total \$7,144,180). These monies are designated for Postretirement Health Care Liability.

### POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS LIABILITY FUNDING

Our Health Care Reserve Fund at year end 2007 was \$8,739,549 which included the \$5,308,808 infusion from the two conferences and growth in investments. Actuarial study has been done to gain sound basis for determining the funding for retiree health care. The last actuarial study was by Watkins, Ross and Co. The estimated unfunded liability was \$13,291,363 as of December 31, 2007.

Our long-term strategy is to provide for current retiree costs from the pre-82 overfunding and build up reserves from investment income and further infusion from swap with other conferences to the extent allowed by the General Board. In 2009, we are requesting \$100,000 support from Ministry Shares for health care expenses.

### HEALTH CARE PLANS

#### Health Care for Clergy and Lay on Active Status

The active health care plan provides medical, prescription drugs, dental and vision benefits for active pastors and their dependents, as well as eligible retirees and spouses under age 65. The premium for active clergy is shared by the pastor and the local church while the premium for retirees is paid by the

conference. Active clergy and lay participants contribute to the cost of their health care on a sliding scale of 5-15% of the composite per capita rate based on their salary bracket. These rates are published annually.

Retirees pay a minimum of 10% of actual premium plus 5% for every year that is short of the 20 years service to the church. Changes have been made in each of the last few years in our plans and are expected to continue in our effort to continue to provide a high level of benefits at a time when industry and other conferences are cutting back. The board continues to study the option of moving to a self insured program.

The board has established a medical benevolence fund to assist both active and retired health care participants who are in financial distress brought about by medical needs. Application form is available upon request from the Conference Treasurer's Office.

#### **Health Care for Clergy and Lay on Retired Status**

The Retiree Health Plan provides coverage for medical, prescription drugs, dental and vision benefits. Medicare has primary coverage under Parts A and B (physician and hospitalization), and our plan provides supplemental coverage equivalent to Medicare Part G.

**Medicare D Implementation:** Integration of our prescription drugs benefit with the newly approved prescription drug coverage under Medicare Part D of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 was approved by annual conference in 2005. In implementing Medicare D, the government used private insurance companies and drug providers to sell certain plans. Our plan will be with the United American Insurance Company starting January 1, 2006. The Medicare D prescription drug plan adopted in the retiree plan does not have the infamous donut hole. Our financial results show savings in prescription drugs of approximately \$250,000 annually since 2005.

#### **Financial Report of the Health Care Programs for the year ended December 31, 2008**

##### **HEALTH CARE FUND WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE Twelve Months Period Ending December 31**

(Unaudited)	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Income:		
Interest Income		9,750.26
Premiums collected-Churches & Conference	3,063,114.21	2,982,038.70
Premiums collected-Active Participants	293,944.92	315,007.25
Conference Ministry Shares receipts	91,761.46	88,229.60
Contributions-Non Participating Churches	100,591.32	123,330.37
Premiums collected-Retirees	213,927.64	253,991.11
Redirected from CRSP DB	1,334,514.63	1,560,970.67
Other Income	16,022.14	16,726.27
Total Receipts	5,113,876.32	5,350,044.23
Disbursements:		
Medical Premiums-Actives BCBSM	3,095,843.89	3,313,086.45
Medical (Gap) Plan Reimbursements-Actives	239,304.58	246,483.32
Dental Benefits-Actives	247,658.38	250,811.97
Vision Benefits-Actives	42,003.73	41,785.44
Third Party Administrator-Actives	40,383.00	39,973.50
Medical Premiums-Retirees	580,896.20	604,789.00
Third Party Administrator-Retirees	27,860.00	27,650.00
Prescription Drugs-Retirees	301,915.42	347,551.60
Dental- Retirees	132,831.95	131,332.81

Vision-Retirees	2,255.47	2,246.26
Wellness Program	0.00	0.00
Administrative Office Expenses	100,000.00	103,000.00
Legal Fees	795.00	1,525.00
Actuarial Study Fees	4,960.00	1,584.00
Postage & Shipping	0.00	3764.79
Financial Services	0.00	0.00
Third Party Administrator-FSA	5,866.00	7,294.00
Counseling supplement	9,722.53	10,866.00
Medical Benevolence Grants	0.00	0.00
Travel	777.92	933.95
Administration and Meetings	820.85	621.48
Total Disbursements	4,833,894.92	5,135,299.57
Excess Revenue over Expenses	279,981.40	214,744.66
Unrealized Investment Gains/(Losses)	407,326.00	(1,878,006.05)
Received from Pre-82 Surplus Swap Arrangements	5,308,808.00	7,144,180.00
Beginning Balance, January 1	2,743,433.95	8,739,549.35
Ending Balance, December 31	8,739,549.35	14,220,467.96

We gratefully acknowledge the leadership and dedication of the board members: Molly Turner (Vice Chair), Jeanne McCaw (Secretary), Peggy Boltz, David Dekker, Sue Graybill, Carole Lyman, Robert Richards, David Selleck, Anthony Shumaker, Ronald Stoll, and Chantel Thom. Representatives from the Cabinet and the general board were Jerry DeVine and Bill Neuert. As always, we thank God for the support of our churches in providing for the health care and pension needs of our clergy and lay employees.

Michael Anthes, Chair  
Pros Tumonong, Treasurer and Benefits Officer

### CONFERENCE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Much of Spring 2008 was spent preparing for the proposed merger of the West Michigan and Detroit annual conferences. Three of our clergy staff, including our Conference Director Rev. Aaron Gray, Rev. Linda Burson and Rev. Dale Hotelling were appointed to a local congregation or took a leave of absence. The net result as of July 1, 2008, was one full-time and one half-time consultant remained on staff – Iris Naomi García and Rev. Jana Lynn Almeida, respectively. We were pleased to have David Lundquist agree to serve for three months as an Interim Conference Director followed by Rev. Ed Perkins, who also served for three months. Both Dave and Ed worked to begin rebuilding our staff and helped us in the process of hiring our current Conference Director, Rev. Benton R. Heisler.

To date, we have not filled 1½ Ministry Consultant vacancies. Budget constraints have slowed this process, and the Conference Council on Ministries (CCOM) is considering recommendations regarding short-term and long-term staffing of the CCOM. We are already appreciating Benton's guidance as we review job descriptions and realign resources.

Our committee would like to thank Rev. Dan Duncan who ably served as our chair through June of 2008 and Rev. Jerry Hagans who subsequently took over as chair. Unfortunately, Jerry had to take some time off due to health concerns. Feel free to contact our committee and let us know how we can best serve your needs through the deployment of annual conference ministry staff and resources.

Karen Grettenberger, Interim Chair

## COMMITTEE ON PRISON MINISTRY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONCERNS

*And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God. [Micah 6:8]*

While information and education continue to be important to the committee, alerting local congregations in the conference as to just how they might respond to the needs will be another major focus.

Short term goals for the committee include but are not limited to:

1. Connecting with corrections officials and judges for better understanding of the issues.
2. Educate churches and communities about Restorative Justice.
3. Submit a Restorative Justice article for publication in the Michigan Christian Advocate.
4. Ask that a representative from each district be on the committee.
5. Raise money for Camp New Day.
6. Alert local congregations to the various re-entry systems and how they can be of help.

Camp New Day will be 11 years old this Summer and it continues to meet a serious need, that of providing a camping experience for children whose parents are incarcerated. Well-trained camp deans, counselors, and Albright Camp staff as well as the Camp New Day steering committee all work ceaselessly to make this a good and often healing experience for each camper. This year, however, funding sources have dried up and past funding is no longer available. Those who wish to make a donation to Camp New Day may send a check to the West Michigan Conference Treasurer and write Camp New Day on the memo line. All gifts and prayers are much appreciated.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the committee: Rev. Clifford Allen, Joseph Beavan, Rev. Thomas Reaume.

Restorative Justice principles are being used in Kent County. Our committee will undergird city commissioner David LaGrand as he begins this serious project.

The Prison Ministry & Restorative Justice Committee will have a table at Annual Conference in 2009 and we look forward to speaking with you and learning about how we might partner with your churches around this most important subject.

Mary TerMeer and Molly Tate, Co-chairs

## COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

The year 2008 was filled with transitions, uncertainty, and opportunity for the Conference Commission on Religion and Race. It was also a year of dialogue and discernment within the commission and with the General Commission on Religion and Race, seeking to resolve disconcerting issues within the life of our conference.

The year saw a transition of leadership as the Rev. Neil Davis gave up his chairmanship to the Rev. Scott E. Manning. Davis transitioned into the role of a district superintendent and continues to serve as a member of the commission as a liaison to the Cabinet. It also served as a year of transition and uncertainty as the commission lost a very dedicated and loyal conference ministry consultant from its team and conference leadership.

Uncertainty loomed during the first part as the commission awaited the April 5 vote to determine if West Michigan Conference would continue or if a merger with Detroit Conference would take place. In the midst of this uncertainty the commission realized an opportunity that was opening in the form of a stronger and more meaningful relationship with the Detroit Commission on Religion and Race. The two commissions will continue forward working together on many important matters of inclusion and monitoring together as we seek to improve race and religion dialogue and attitude changes within the Michigan Area of The United Methodist Church.

The commission was part of difficult matters during 2008. We continued to monitor as best we could situations relating to clergy and laity complaints with racial implications. The commission was and is deeply distressed at insensitivity and cultural disrespect that has taken place and the inability to find just resolutions to cultural/racial concerns. The commission is committed to being a positive force for

developing programming as well as monitoring that may help our conference improve its sensitivity to cultural, racial, and ethnic identities when seeking to be about the building and healing of the kingdom for Christ. At the same time, we must not fall prey to the misuse of culture, race, or ethnicity as a means of being exclusionary or insensitive towards others, doctrine, or the *DISCIPLINE*. We understand the difficult challenges faced with monitoring and calling the church to inclusivity and sensitivity and we commit to face these challenges for the glory of God.

The year 2008 was a time for regrouping and discerning. It was a time for formational dialogue to begin. This process will lead forward in 2009 as the commission revitalizes its role as a monitor and a catalyst for inclusive ministries that break down the walls of division and shame based on race. Further, the commission committed itself in 2008 to working more closely with other commissions and agencies monitoring and calling for more openness and inclusivity within the life of The United Methodist Church.

During 2009 the commission envisions dialogue and conversation around the conference on matters of religion and race. Cross racial appointments, clergy recruitment, new church start planning, leadership development, and continued monitoring will be focal areas for the commission. The commission made an intentional move in 2008 to be more involved in monitoring and discerning activities within the West Michigan Conference and will begin unfolding and implementing its action plans during 2009 as we seek to make the West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church a place where all God's children can find a welcoming Christ-centered and Spirit-filled house of worship/community of faith, regardless of race, ethnicity, or color of skin. We have also committed to working with our connectional partners in the Detroit Conference and across the North Central Jurisdiction to do the same.

The commission will continue to monitor the Annual Conference session in 2009 as it has in previous years. The commission will expand this monitoring process to include other boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church within the West Michigan Conference, in accordance with the *DISCIPLINE*. The commission will seek to do a better job in 2009 of working with caucuses and task forces related to the commission's work and mandate set forth in the *DISCIPLINE*. And the commission will call for committed disciples of Jesus Christ in the life of The United Methodist Church – active and committed disciples of all races, ethnicities, cultures, and gender identities building the Church of Jesus Christ within the covenantal community called West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church.

As we seek to do the commission's work we ask for the prayers, presence, service, and blessed cooperation of the members of the West Michigan Conference and the congregations of our conference area. Together we can build a Church that looks like God's diverse community that truly welcomes all God's children in, so that they may receive the gift of Christ's love and truth and light. May we work together for the glory of God. Amen!

Scott E. Manning, Chair

## CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

In my other life, apart from Conference Statistician, I spend a great deal of time working with groups to set goals for the next 3-5 years. A large part of that work includes strategic planning. Most people moan when you say, "strategic planning," and I have to admit that I was one of those people. That was until I began to see results that happen when it is done well.

Any good strategic planning has to begin with a SWOT analysis – a review of a program's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It is a time to take a serious look at our successes and those things that impeded us from reaching others; and we look outside ourselves to see potential for our future and what might prevent us from grabbing hold of those things.

In each of our churches we are challenged to do some form of SWOT analysis so that we can be about the work that Christ calls us to do. Only by taking an honest look at ourselves can we set our churches on a course that moves us toward the ministry we want to be doing in Christ's name.

Every January your church is required to complete several reports. One of those is the Statistical Report. For some it may appear to be a bother, for others a nuisance, gathering and entering all this data, especially when there are so many other pressing needs within the church and community.

Imagine if we reframe our thinking – recognize that the information provided in the statistical reports becomes a part of a SWOT analysis for your church, the conference, and the whole denomination. The

information you provide becomes critical information that will be used to set the church's direction for the future.

So my deep appreciation to those in the local churches who spent the time gathering the data; and thanks as well to Pros Tumonong, John Kosten, and the other staff members of the Treasurer's Office for bringing all this data together.

And thank God that we can be doing God's work wherever we are called to be.

Patricia Wagner, Conference Statistician

### **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN**

Last year found COSROW looking for a future. We had the challenge of the possibility of becoming a new conference. We had hoped to meet with the commission in the Detroit Conference but due to weather and schedule our plans did not materialize.

Bishop Keaton has called together chairs/representatives from several groups to look over and revise the procedures in regard to clergy families, clergy issues and how various groups can empower and enable situations in the life of the individuals and families during both difficult and challenging times. That work will continue into 2009.

Partnering the commission of Race and Religion, we helped to provide monitoring at the West Michigan Annual Conference session in June 2008. We will share in that "ministry of monitoring" again this year.

We look forward to a new, bright year of once again getting going on the work/purpose of COSROW "to challenge The United Methodist Church to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making at all levels of the Church's life." We are seeking how to best live that out in our West Michigan Conference.

Judy Coffey, Chair

### **TRUSTEES, WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE**

During the past year the West Michigan Conference Board of Trustees purchased parsonages for the Kalamazoo District Superintendent and the Conference Director. The Board of Trustees also concluded the sale of the Lane Boulevard church and parsonage in Kalamazoo. The Ellis Corners (Albion District) church was deeded back to the original owner of the property. The East Lansing Aldersgate church and parsonage were transferred to the Lansing Korean United Methodist Church. The Oakdale church (Grand Rapids District), which was assigned to the Trustees for disposition, was assigned to the Grand Rapids District temporarily pending a decision about continued use of the space for ministry.

Updated Parsonage Guidelines were agreed to by a joint task force from the Board of Trustees of the Detroit Conference and the West Michigan Conference. Those Guidelines were presented and adopted by the 2008 West Michigan Annual Conference.

The attendance and commitment of board members has been at a high level and we are grateful to have been of service to our church in this way.

Theodore J. Carlson, President

### **UMCOR/HUNGER COMMITTEE**

The mission of the conference UMCOR/Hunger Committee is to "sensitize and energize West Michigan United Methodists to the realities of local and global hunger so that informed and appropriate response can be made."

The current committee has not felt that we, as a committee, are very effective in carrying out this mission. The West Michigan Conference continues to be a leader in giving-per-member, but this activity runs independently of the UMCOR/Hunger Committee. Our attempts to increase our effectiveness by holding district-level events and empowering district-level coordinators have met roadblocks.

At this time, we are proposing that the UMCOR/Hunger committee become a sub-committee of the Board of Global Ministries. It is our hope that a better coordinated and focused leadership of conference ministry with the hungry and the poor will result.

Charles Farnum, Chair

### UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN

2008 was a year of considerable turbulence for the Foundation. Assets under management were eroded by an almost unprecedented market decline with total funds under management of \$55 million, down from \$65 million as the year began. The Foundation is nevertheless proud of the investment performance of its pooled investment options for local congregations in Michigan, each of which exceeded their benchmarks. One of our funds, the **Pooled Congregation Fund**, earned a full 12% more than the S&P 500 Index. Currently nearly 300 churches have established an investment relationship with the Foundation.

The Foundation continued to exhibit its commitment to the very highest standards of fiduciary care by registering all of its pooled investments with the State of Michigan. The offering circulars now present all material information to assist churches in making informed investment decisions. The initial responses we have received from the churches have been uniformly positive. Copies of the circulars may be obtained from the Foundation offices.

The Foundation experienced its first-ever staff retirements as long-time staff members Rev. Denny Buwalda and Peggy Patterson retired in the Spring. Rev. Buwalda had been our Vice-President of Development since 1999. Ms. Patterson served as Vice-President of Operations since 1981. While each of these persons will be missed, the Foundation is pleased to have retained Ms. Marian Coles and Rev. David Bell. Marian became Director of Operations upon Ms. Patterson's retirement and David joined us as Vice-President of Stewardship. Ms. Coles brings strong skills to the task as well as a graduate degree in human resources. Rev. Bell brings an outstanding set of skills and credentials to his ministry with the Foundation. He is a recognized leader in the ministry of stewardship across our denomination. We are delighted to have him with us.

The Foundation continues to provide all administrative services for the Michigan Area Loan Funds of The United Methodist Church. This relationship has proven to be mutually beneficial as our staff has been able to achieve economies in operations while expanding the services of the Loan Fund to the churches of Michigan.

In spite of the decision not to merge the two annual conferences, the creation of this statewide Foundation in 2006 has proven to be a positive development across the Michigan Area. More churches are being served, new philanthropic options are now available to donors, and more comprehensive services are provided for our congregations.

The Foundation enjoys an outstanding Board of Directors, laity and clergy, who provide strong guidance and encouragement for the staff. The strategic vision of the board is powerful and optimistic. We are fortunate to have the skills and commitment of an outstanding board of volunteer leaders to establish policies and guidance for the Foundation's professional staff.

The Foundation is grateful for the support of the annual conferences and the client congregations that enable our ministry.

Wayne C. Barrett, President and Executive Director  
Geraldine Wright, Chair

### UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

United Methodist Women seek to know God by becoming whole persons through Jesus Christ, to be supportive of The United Methodist Church and the global ministries of the Church.

These are the goals of all United Methodist Women whether it is in the local church, in their districts, or in the West Michigan Conference.

They support shelters for women and children seeking safety, work in soup kitchens, donate to food pantries to help feed hungry persons and many other special projects that may be unique to their area.

Schools of Christian Mission are sponsored by United Methodist Women and the Board of Global Ministries and teach about mission projects around the globe as well as close to home. These schools strengthen faith journeys and put that faith into action.

United Methodist Women units can be found on college campuses, young women's groups within the local church, newly retired women and of course well established units. This collective knowledge is shared to give us a strong organization for now and the future as we seek to live out our faith.

United Methodist Women is a mission organization that strives to make the lives of women, youth and children a little better.

We are fortunate to have a national mission in our conference. United Methodist Community House in Grand Rapids is strongly supported by United Methodist Women both financially and physically as many local units as well as the district and conference donate time and material items to this local mission.

We are blessed to share our journey with our bishop, district superintendents and pastors.

It is my privilege to speak on behalf of all West Michigan Conference United Methodist Women as we look forward to another blessed and successful year.

Ruth Whaley, President

## WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

### TREASURER'S REPORT

CONFERENCE PLEDGE TO MISSION 2008		\$232,317.00
MISSION GIVING 2008		
Pledge to Mission	\$276,292.75	
Special Mission Recognition	8,605.00	
Gift to Mission	6,679.37	
Gift in Memory	5,500.00	
World Thank Offering	<u>16,469.63</u>	
TOTAL MISSION GIVING		\$313,546.75
MISSION GIVING PLUS 2008		
Call to Prayer and Self-Denial	\$ 10,376.45	
Supplementary Gifts	1,109.00	
World Missions	2,895.00	
National Missions	26,935.83	
UMCOR	<u>6,855.24</u>	
TOTAL MISSION PLUS GIVING		<u>\$48,171.52</u>
TOTAL REMITTANCE TO WOMEN'S DIVISION		\$270, 122.60
ADMINISTRATIVE & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT		\$91,595.67

Linda Luce, UMW Treasurer

## REPORT ON 2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE MOTION #22: CONVERSATION WITH CALVIN COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Presented by the Annual Conference Program Committee and Conference Board of Church and Society, for Volume 1, 2009 Conference Journal.

The Fortieth Session of the West Michigan Annual Conference, meeting June 5-8, 2008, at Calvin College approved the following item, Motion #22:

### MOTION:

1. That the Annual Conference Program Committee and Board of Church and Society request that key representatives of Calvin College engage in serious conversations to raise questions and voice concern about the College's recent decision to allow its safety and security personnel to carry handguns on campus;
2. We request that these conversations include the College President, officers of its Board of Trustees, key leaders of the Student Body and any others they determine; and
3. That in preparation for these conversations our annual conference representatives review the *United Methodist Social Principles*, *Book of Resolutions* and other resources regarding handguns, dangers and violence associated with such weapons and related topics and present this information as part of their conversations with the Calvin College representatives; and
4. That the results and outcomes of these conversations be reported to the 2009 Annual Conference in the Pre-Conference materials.

Due to construction plans on the campus of Calvin College, The Annual Conference Program Committee was required to first address a possible need for relocation of the 2009 Annual Conference, before following through on Motion #22. For several weeks in the Fall we explored facilities and costs involved in moving to an alternate site for the 2009 Annual Conference. However, after the construction schedule at Calvin was confirmed and new facilities opened up for availability, we determined that a move away from Calvin College was not required. With the holidays approaching, further action was postponed until after Christmas.

A second issue was cause of additional delay in our response. In preparation for conversation with representatives from Calvin College, we gathered information from the Calvin website regarding campus polices and procedures. In the course of this research we found information suggesting that campus officers do not carry weapons. Bill Johnson contacted Calvin's office of Conferences and Campus Events Director Jeff Stob, who reported that two campus officers are designated to carry weapons.

In early 2009, Rev. Bill Johnson and Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai contacted President Gaylen Byker of Calvin College requesting a meeting in order to carry out the wishes of the 2008 Annual Conference (a copy of letter follows this report). At this writing a meeting has been scheduled for March 18, 2009. Bill Johnson, Kennetha Bigham-Tsai and David Lundquist, maker of the motion, plan to represent the West Michigan Conference. Along with President Byker, Mr. Jeff Stob, Director of Conferences and Campus Events, and Mr. William Corner, Director of Campus Safety, are the designated representatives from Calvin College.

In preparation for this meeting, documents were exchanged between the parties which included United Methodist Social Principles paragraphs undergirding our theology, and The *United Methodist Book of Resolutions*, Resolution #3426, "Gun Violence" as well as "A *Theological Explanation for the Use of Force Policy*" prepared by the Student Life Division of Calvin College.

Because the meeting had not yet taken place at this writing, an update report will be provided as soon as possible for the 2009 Annual Conference Session.

Bill Johnson  
Kennetha Bigham-Tsai

Dr. Gaylen Byker  
Office of the President  
Calvin College  
3201 Burton SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49546

Dear Dr. Byker:

It has been a pleasure for the West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church to be guests on the campus of Calvin College since 1998. Jeff Stob, Michael Wildschut and their staff in the Office of Conferences and Campus Events have annually extended fine hospitality and genuine warmth toward us. We can't say enough about the treatment we've received, and want you to know what a joy it is to work across denominational lines in a spirit of Christian friendship with you. Thank you for allowing us this splendid opportunity.

We are writing now to share information raised at our Annual Conference meeting June 5-8, 2008 at Calvin, in which a matter of legislation made its way through our Conference in the form of a petition. Our purpose in this letter is to inform you of the matter, and ask for your consideration in addressing it with us. The issue is shown below in the form in which it was approved by our Annual Conference.

**MOTION:**

1. That the Annual Conference Program Committee and Board of Church and Society request that key representatives of Calvin College engage in serious conversations to raise questions and voice concern about the College's recent decision to allow its safety and security personnel to carry handguns on campus;
2. We request that these conversations include the College President, officers of its Board of Trustees, key leaders of the Student Body and any others they determine; and
3. That in preparation for these conversations our annual conference representatives review the *United Methodist Social Principles*, *Book of Resolutions* and other resources regarding handguns, dangers and violence associated with such weapons and related topics and present this information as part of their conversations with the Calvin College representatives; and
4. That the results and outcomes of these conversations be reported to the 2009 Annual Conference in the Pre-Conference materials.

Our *United Methodist Social Principles* and *Book of Resolutions* are the official United Methodist documents that address social issues. As such, they attempt to inform our people and others of positions approved by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. As you are no doubt aware, the quadrennial General Conference meets to speak on behalf of the denomination and therefore acts as our voice in dialogue between church and society. The 2008 Resolution on Gun Violence is enclosed with this letter.

As your guests on campus we fully expect differences between the traditions of the Christian Reformed Church and The United Methodist Church. We respect the diversity of opinion that exists, and we recognize that you administer the life of Calvin College as you and your leaders discern God's will. Our purpose is to share in a dialogue so that whatever similarities and differences may be discovered, they can be acknowledged as opinions that offer opportunities for further Christian discourse rather than to become matters of conflict. A guiding principle for United Methodists includes some precious words of St. Augustine, quoted in a sermon by John Wesley: "*In essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity, in all things, charity.*" Our challenge, and no doubt yours as well, is always to discern which matters are essential, and which are non-essential.

As noted above, our 2008 Annual Conference directed us to request a meeting with you and others whom you would determine advisable. Therefore we are asking for such conversation with you in order for us to understand the history and rationale for the decision to authorize handguns for security officers. We would welcome an opportunity at your earliest convenience, to discuss this matter. In preparation for our conversation we have reviewed a helpful paper, "*A Theological Explanation for the Use of Force Policy,*" which was forwarded to us by Michael Wildschut.

Once again, we thank you for your hospitality and openness with which you govern your outstanding institution. We consider it a privilege to be in relationship with Calvin, and respect the superb quality of Christian formation you contribute to the world of higher education and ministry.

Blessings,

Rev. William C. Johnson  
Chair, Program Committee  
West Michigan Conference  
United Methodist Church

Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai  
Chair, Board of Church and Society  
West Michigan Conference  
United Methodist Church

c: Laura Witkowski, Conference Secretary  
Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton

**Contact Information:**

Rev. William C. Johnson  
Wyoming Park United Methodist Church  
2244 Porter St. SW  
Wyoming MI 49519  
616.532.7624  
Fax: 616.532.4668  
Cell: 616.366.2421  
Email: [wj47@comcast.net](mailto:wj47@comcast.net)

Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai  
University United Methodist Church  
1120 S. Harrison Rd.  
East Lansing MI 48823  
517.351.7030

**FINAL REPORT RE: 2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE MOTION #22  
ADDRESSING USE OF HANDGUNS  
ON THE CAMPUS OF CALVIN COLLEGE**

The motion of that petition is stated below.

**MOTION:**

1. **That the Conference Program Committee and Board of Church and Society be instructed to request that key representatives of Calvin College engage in serious conversations to raise questions and voice concern about the College's recent decision to allow its safety and security personnel to carry handguns on campus;**
2. **We request that these conversations include the College President, officers of its Board of Trustees, key leaders of the Student Body and any others they determine; and**
3. **That in preparation for these conversations our annual conference representatives review the United Methodist Social Principles, Book of Resolutions and other resources regarding handguns, dangers and violence associated with such weapons and related topics and present this information as part of their conversations with the Calvin College representatives; and**
4. **That the results and outcomes of these conversations be reported to the 2009 Annual Conference in the Pre-Conference materials.**

In accordance with the motions of this petition, passed at Annual Conference 2008, the Annual Conference Chair of the Program Committee and the Chair of the Conference Board of Church and Society met with representatives of Calvin College, including President Gaylen Byker; Director of Campus Safety, William Corner; Vice president of Student Life, Shirley Hoogstra; and Director of Campus and Conference Events, Jeff Stob. This meeting was held on March 18, 2009 with the express purpose of discussing concerns about Calvin's Use of Force Policy. This policy allows Calvin's safety and security personnel to carry handguns on campus. The meeting was preceded by written correspondence with President Byker regarding our concerns as well as the forwarding to Calvin of information on United Methodist Social Principles and our Book of Resolutions.

During the meeting, we expressed, on behalf of the West Michigan Conference, our concerns about the policy. We voiced concerns about training and raised questions about who would be allowed to carry firearms and how those firearms would be secured and used. We also queried Calvin officials about their motivation for the policy and how it had been developed and approved. We discussed our Social Principles and shared with them Resolution 3426 in the 2004 Book of Resolutions, which addresses gun violence. We especially expressed concern about how their policy might be viewed in the context of the recent proliferation of conceal and carry laws around our country. We asked them to consider the special call upon the Christian Church to be a prophetic witness in a world awash in violence.

Calvin representatives responded to our concerns by outlining the policy in detail and discussing some of the issues that influenced the development and eventual adoption of the policy. They also outlined the training required of their security personnel and the procedures they would use in case of an incident. They also shared their theological rationale for the policy.

Calvin sighted as a particular justification for their policy, the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007, the openness of their campus and the many different people that frequent it, as well as the geographical expanse of the campus that puts certain parts of the campus under three police jurisdictions: Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, and Kentwood. They noted that being under multiple police jurisdictions can slow down police response time in the case of a threatening situation. They also noted that security personnel are in uniform, only carry weapons on duty and are not allowed to carry personal weapons. They noted, as well, that only supervisors, not student safety officers, would carry weapons and that these supervisors are retired police officers who have had extensive training.

Calvin representatives were very open in answering concerns and questions. Though there were clear differences in theological understandings and in how our respective denominations apply faith principles to the issue of gun use, our conversation with representatives of Calvin was marked by openness and respect for varying opinions.

Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Chair, Board of Church and Society  
Bill Johnson, Chair, Annual Conference Program Committee