



DISCIPLES

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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Deborah Lieder Kiesey, Presiding Bishop

Rev. Gregory L. Buchner, Annual Conference Secretary



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CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

During 2013 the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) has been following a strategic plan; aligning resources; connecting ministries and holding them accountable; providing a consistent expectation of fruitfulness; encouraging and empowering leadership; challenging unhealthiness and ineffectiveness; engaging in adaptive changes; communicating intentionally; and functioning through a process of rigorous, prayerful and transparent discernment;

So that...

- Congregations are equipped
- Relationships are nurtured
- Inclusive faith-filled communities are expanded
- Resources are strategically multiplied
- Ministries are fruitful and the world is transformed.

The CLT guiding vision is for the conference to help equip and connect congregations so that they can truly be “vital and fruitful” and be “the most significant arena for making disciples and transforming the world.”

My ministry as the Director of Connectional Ministries (DCM) is both out front and center and behind the scenes, or alongside many fine leaders. The components of this ministry coordinated by me and overseen by the Conference Leadership Team include the following:

Ministry Areas

1. Vital Church Initiative (VCI): This process began in the fall of 2010. To date the fruit of this initiative has been an investment in leadership development and steps toward transformation in more than 20% of our congregations and dozens of lay and clergy leaders. We are most appreciative of our lead team of Gary Step, Naomi García and Laura Witkowski for the excellent leadership they have brought to this ministry. We are also grateful to Dirk Elliot and Jerome DeVine of the Detroit Conference who, along with me, round out the VCI Executive Team.
2. CLT: The CLT took the following actions toward continued realignment and prioritization of supporting ministry with young people:
 - a. Established two staff positions that are currently being partially filled by one position
 - i. A full-time position of Associate Director for Discipleship Ministries
 - ii. A full time position of Interim Executive Director of Camping and Retreat Ministries
 - b. The CLT has actively engaged the Wesley campus ministries and the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry so that expectations and accountability are clear and funding challenges are mutually addressed.
 - c. Funding for these transitions in Discipleship and Camping are projected to come from the use of Reserves in 2014 and be established in the 2015 Conference Budget. The CLT continues to explore the possibilities of sharing Area staffing positions with the Detroit Conference.
 - d. The Board of Discipleship (BOD) and CLT made the joint decision to eliminate the current BOD and submit a change to the Plan of Organization to empower the CLT as the equivalent structure to fulfill this responsibility as outlined in the *Discipline*.
 - e. The CLT plans to meet early in 2014 with the Detroit Conference CLT for the purpose of intentionally looking at the creative energy and options for possible unification of our two conferences and further collaboration.
 - f. The CLT is most appreciative of Laura Witkowski who records all the minutes and cares for the many logistics of this team.
3. Hispanic/Latino Plan: The West Michigan Conference has been awarded a \$50,000 Matching Grant to be paid over the next 3 years. Sonya Luna and Nohemi Ramirez are in staff positions helping to lead this exciting ministry receiving a renewed emphasis.
4. Board of Christian Camping (BCC):
 - a. The West Michigan and Detroit Conference boards are taking positive steps toward becoming an Area Camping and Outdoor Retreat Ministry Board.
 - b. Intentional and coordinated capital fund raising efforts are being designed.
 - c. An Interim Executive Director is projected to begin serving in early 2014.
 - d. Pamela Stewart continues her passionate and careful ministry as the Camp Registrar.

5. Board of Global Ministries: Intentional dialogue has taken place so that healthy accountability and strategic sharing of resources across districts best meets our mission priorities.
6. Annual Conference:
 - a. Details are well under way for 2014 including election of our General Conference Delegation. The 2014 theme is Worship/Gather. Marcia McFee will be the keynote presenter.
 - b. 2015 theme is Discipleship/Grow. Adam Hamilton has been secured as a keynote speaker for three presentations.
 - c. 2016 theme is Mission/Send. We are planning to hold a Service of Repentance and Reconciliation with our Native American sisters and brothers in collaboration with the Detroit Conference. An overlapping annual conference is being planned using the facilities of Michigan State University.
 - d. We are grateful to Kathy Hippensteel for all her careful attention to detail as she prepares materials for distribution, the Conference Journal and maintains the conference-wide database.
7. Imagine No Malaria (INM): Molly Turner has been doing excellent work to build a team of informed advocates and coordinators. We are confident the Michigan Area will reach or exceed its goal of raising \$1.5 million. This will be comparable to saving the lives of 150,000 persons. An extra boost in giving has taken several forms such as "Giving Tuesday" prior to Christmas, the designation of the Bishop's Advent/Christmas Offering, a \$7,000 gift from a bequest, and several events that are planned for Lent in 2014 as well as a summer INM Bike Ride across the North Central Jurisdiction.
8. Ministry Shares at Work:
 - a. "Goodberry" (This ministry resource sharing service was launched in June of 2013 and has been a creative contemporary use of technology to replace and expand on the former Michigan Area Resource Center (MARC).
 - b. "MissionInsite" (This demographics resource tool is free to all our congregations and has given them valuable insights to the communities they serve.)
 - c. "Readiness 360" (This assessment tool has been provided to numerous congregations which seek to explore their ministry capacity.)
 - d. "The Center for Pastoral Excellence" at the St Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, Michigan has established an exciting continuing education partnership with our Board of Ordained Ministry and the West Michigan Conference so that critical opportunities to engage in education and spiritual disciplines are readily available.
9. Conference Center Office/Meeting Space: We have accomplished some re-arranging and improving of office and meeting spaces on the main floor. There has also been the removal of old files and furnishings, and archive storage of critical records at Albion College. A new Michigan Area of the UMC phone system will be in service by the middle of 2014 and our use of the Adobe Connect Pro on-line meeting system has saved thousands in mileage that would have otherwise had to be paid to staff and volunteers. Scherry vanHartesveldt and Kiri Salazar are always ready to care for your phone and email inquiries.
10. New Pastor Orientation: The conference program staff, district superintendents and the Board of Ordained Ministry collaborate on this series of workshops so that newly appointed pastors are best equipped for their new beginnings.
11. Advocacy Ministry:
 - a. A Michigan Area day-long training event dealing with Cross Racial and Cross Cultural Ministry was held in September of 2013. It was facilitated by leaders from the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR). A team from each conference of the Michigan Area will be part of a North Central Jurisdictional training event in February of 2014.
 - b. A task force organized by Bishop Kiesey is exploring models for dialogue around topics of interest related to human sexuality, across The United Methodist Church and our culture. Our hope is that we might discover additional forums for understanding apart from the legislative restrictions of annual conference plenary sessions or clergy trials.
12. Health & Welfare Agreements: Conversations have taken place to establish long-term agreements of mutual understanding with Clark Retirement Community, Bronson Health Care Group and the United Methodist Community House as required by the *Discipline*.
13. Reflection: As I think back across these past five years thus far as DCM, I am encouraged by all the above ministry and transitions that have taken place. We have an excellent diverse conference team who enjoy working with one another and are deeply committed to God and furthering God's kingdom.

Rev. Benton R. Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministries

WORLD SERVICE AND CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCES

Summary of the 2014 Budget

[As approved by the Conference Leadership Team]

	2012	2013	2014
	Budget	Budget	Budget
World Service & Conference Benevolences			
1. World Service	\$895,886	\$856,829	\$860,836
2. Conference Benevolences			
Commission on Christian Unity	\$500	\$500	\$500
Commission on Religion & Race	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$500
COSROW	\$500	\$500	\$500
Board of Christian Camping	\$162,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
Board of Church & Society	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$500
Board of Discipleship	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$500
CCYM (Previously in BOD)	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Board of Global Ministries	\$305,000	\$274,500	\$260,000
Racial/Ethnic Local Church	\$100,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
Higher Ed. & Campus Ministry	\$305,000	\$299,500	\$308,000
Communications Commission	\$60,000	\$93,000	\$100,000
Connectional Ministries Staff	\$562,500	\$606,000	\$618,000
Board of Lay Ministries	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Conference Personnel Committee	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Board of Evangelism	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$500
United Methodist Men	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$500
Hunger Committee	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$500
Prison Ministry	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$500
Indian Workers Conference	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$500
Disability Concerns Committee	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$500
Vital Church Initiative	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$35,000
Hispanic/Latino Committee	\$2,500	\$8,500	\$12,000
Cooperative Ministry Committee	-	-	\$1,000
Pooled Ministry Fund	-	-	\$25,000
Contingency			\$6,500
Conference Benevolences Total	\$1,527,500	\$1,597,000	\$1,645,000
Total World Service & Conf. Benevolences	\$2,440,886	\$2,453,829	\$2,505,836
TOTAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUDGET	\$5,971,495	\$6,085,389	\$6,185,660

2014 LINE ITEM BUDGETS

Conference Benevolences Programs

[As Approved By The Conference Leadership Team]

	2014
	BUDGET
COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY & INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS - 3020	
4903000 Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY - 3030	
4903000 Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
DISABILITY CONCERNS COMMITTEE - 3032	
4903000 Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500

COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATIONS - 3040

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$100,000
	From 3100	\$54,000
	Total Receipts	\$154,000
5043000	Grants-Advocate (MI Area Reporter)	\$18,000
5050513	Leadership Development	\$1,200
5053001	Rethink Church	\$225
5053010	MailChimp Services	\$1,500
5210000	Payroll-Hourly Employees	\$86,706
5223101	Pension	\$4,739
5240000	FICA/Medicare Taxes	\$5,175
5241000	Worker's Comp. Ins.	\$318
5260000	Health Insurance	\$12,871
5270000	Continuing Education	\$500
5360000	Postage and Shipping	\$100
5380000	Printing	\$1,000
5410000	Equipment Replacement	\$4,000
5420000	Equipment Repair and Maintenance	\$200
5540000	Consultant Fees	\$8,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	\$700
5740000	Promotion	\$200
5820000	Web Site Administration	\$7,000
5850000	Internet Services	\$1,000
	Total Disbursements	\$153,434

COMMISSION ON STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN - 3050

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP - 3070

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON YOUTH MINISTRY - 3076

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$5,000
	Total Receipts	\$5,000
505000	Program Disbursements	\$5,000
	Total Disbursements	\$5,000

BOARD OF EVANGELISM - 3080

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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UNITED METHODIST MEN - 3085

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES - 3100

4526010	Personnel Support	\$500
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	<u>\$618,000</u>
4904000	Distrib Rev-New Church Development	<u>\$10,000</u>
	Total Receipts	\$628,500
5050000	Program Disbursements	\$8,899
5051135	New Pastor Orientation	\$500
5200000	Payroll-Salaried Employees	\$167,608
5210000	Payroll-Hourly Employees	\$126,927
5223101	Pension Contr-CCOM Staff	\$22,659
5223102	Pension Contr-CCOM Support Staff	\$9,585
5240000	FICA/Medicare Taxes	\$16,589
5241000	Worker's Comp Insurance	\$1,033
5260000	Health Insurance	\$84,900
5270000	Continuing Education	\$3,500
5280000	Resource Materials	\$2,500
5290000	Membership Dues	\$350
5340000	Telephone	\$500
5350000	Mobile Phone	\$2,000
5360000	Postage and Shipping	\$650
5380000	Printing	\$500
5400000	Office Supplies	\$3,000
5420000	Equipment Repair and Maintenance	\$1,000
5410000	Equipment Replacement	\$500
5580000	Credit Card Fees	\$250
5620000	Admin and Meetings	\$2,500
5620000	Travel-Mileage, Staff	\$500
5633110	Travel-Mileage, Conf Dir	\$7,500
5633120	Travel-Mileage, Min Cnsult1	\$9,000
5640000	Travel-Other Than Mileage	\$1,000
5643110	Travel-O/T Mileage, Conf Dir	\$2,500
5643120	Travel-O/T Mileage Min Cnsult1	\$3,500
5720000	Insurance, Other	\$800
5800000	Miscellaneous	\$500
5810000	Computer Services	\$2,000
5830500	Computer Equipment	\$3,000
5840000	Software Purchase and Support	\$1,250
5970000	Contingency	\$500
6102130	Distrib Rev-Conf Properties	\$20,000
	Health Insurance (Liability)	\$7,500
	Distrib Exp-Hispanic/Latino Committee	\$39,000
	Distrib Exp-Area Communications	\$54,000
	Distrib Exp-Imagine No Malaria	\$5,000
	Distrib Exp-VCI	<u>\$15,000</u>
	Total Disbursements	<u>\$628,500</u>

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN CAMPING - 3200

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS & Conf Benevolences	\$175,000
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$175,000
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$175,000

BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES - 3400

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$260,000
	Total Receipts	\$260,000
5620000	Admin & Meetings	\$400
5913400	CBGM Secretary	\$900
5913406	School of Missions	\$1,200
6105850	Distrib Exp - Vol in Mission	\$1,500
6107100	Block Grant - Albion District	\$10,000
6107200	Block Grant - Heartland District	\$25,000
6107300	Block Grant - Grand Rapids District	\$126,000
6107400	Block Grant - Grand Traverse District	\$20,000
6107500	Block Grant - Kalamazoo District	\$20,000
6107600	Block Grant - Lansing District	\$55,000
	Total Disbursements	\$260,000

HUNGER/UMCOR COMMITTEE - 3440

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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HISPANIC / LATINO COMMITTEE - 3445

		\$45,000
4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$12,000
	Total Receipts	\$57,000

BOARD OF LAY MINISTRIES - 3460

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$3,000
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INDIAN WORKERS CONFERENCE BUDGET - 3450

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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CONFERENCE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - 3470

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$1,000
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PRISON MINISTRY COMMITTEE & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONCERNS - 3480

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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RACIAL ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEE - 3490

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$90,000
	Total Receipts	\$90,000
5030269	Grants-Lansing Faith	\$13,500
5030308	Grants-Washington Heights UMC	\$10,000
5033211	Grants-Kewadin Indian UMC	\$9,800
5033213	Grants-Northport UMC	\$3,900
5033218	Grants-La Nueva Esperanza	\$13,500
5050517	NOW Fund	\$4,033
5080000	Scholarships	\$900
5120000	Program-Leadership Trainings	\$467
5620000	Admin and Meetings	\$450
5740000	Promotions	\$450
6107306	Distrib Exp-Salem/Bradley	\$6,000
6107307	Distrib Exp-Nat Am Elders Program	\$13,500
6107323	Distrib Exp-GR Vietnamese UMC	\$13,500
	Total Disbursements	\$90,000

COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE - 3495

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$500
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VITAL CHURCH INITIATIVE - 3510

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$35,000
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BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY - 3600

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$308,000
	Total Receipts	\$308,000
5043610	Grants-Albion College	\$3,000
5043620	Grants-Adrian College	\$3,000
5620000	Admin and Meetings	\$600
6106026	Distrib Exp-GVUMSF/GR Youth	\$60,280
6106208	Distrib Exp-WF CMU (1)	\$60,280
6106212	Distrib Exp-WF MSU (1)	\$60,280
6106216	Distrib Exp-WF WMU (1)	\$60,280
6106222	Distrib Exp-WF FSU (1)	\$60,280
	Total Disbursements	\$308,000

COOPERATIVE MINISTRY COMMITTEE -

4903000	Distrib Rev-WS and Conf Benevolences	\$1,000
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ABUSE PREVENTION TEAM

During 2013 there have been many events that occurred. In total, there were 219 individuals who received training from approximately 70 churches throughout the West Michigan Annual Conference. This includes individuals who were trained for the Rapid Response team as well as for camp counselors. In addition, the Abuse Prevention Team held a conference-wide event in April when representatives from Church Mutual were also in attendance for presentations during the training. There were several other smaller trainings with individual churches/congregations.

As of July 1st there was a change in chairpersons for the Abuse Prevention Team. The committee would like to thank Rev. Joyce Gackler for her tireless efforts as chair during her tenure. Under her leadership congregations throughout West Michigan became more familiar with the Abuse Prevention Team and a new training DVD was developed along with many other items that are too numerous to list.

2013 saw the Abuse Prevention Team develop a spreadsheet to track those individuals who have been trained during the year. The use of this spreadsheet is strictly for the Abuse Prevention Team for purposes of acknowledging whether specific individuals have completed the training for local, district or conference events. Each individual has received verification of the training and it will be good for three years.

One of the primary goals for the Abuse Prevention Team during the year has been to identify topics to include in training sessions. Those topics have included how to involve Registered Adult Sex Offenders into the life of a congregation while maintaining safety to all vulnerable adults. Another topic has been that of assisting local congregations to develop their own Abuse Prevention Policy along with its implementation. Additional topics include awareness of the United Methodist "Weapons Free Zone" and how to implement that policy.

Perhaps the three most long lasting steps we have taken have been: first, to initiate conversations with the Detroit Annual Conference to compare policies along with training efforts. This conversation continues throughout 2014 as well. The second step has been to review the West Michigan Annual Conference Abuse Prevention Policy in order to bring it into more compliance with what is actually being done. Currently, it has been primarily focused on camps and such and the Abuse Prevention Team is bringing it into line to include local churches, districts and the conference.

The third and certainly not the least is we are pursuing on-line training for the West Michigan Annual Conference in order for individuals to become certified in Abuse Prevention. This will be completed in 2014 and will provide more consistent training for all who participate with this training. In addition, it will be accessible to everyone in the conference and allow them flexibility in when and where the trainings will be provided.

Members of the Abuse Prevention Team have participated in training ourselves in order to stay current with topics and/or information available. Those trainings include: Be a Disciple; classes towards a D.Min degree from United Theological Seminary; along with on-line training for Abuse Prevention Certification.

We have accomplished a lot during the past year and anticipate our role will be modified as we proceed with the on-line training. We look forward to the coming year with anticipation, excitement and a commitment to keep the most vulnerable of God's children safe from harm as well as convey the love of God to those who have repented.

Nona L. Spackman, Chair

AFRICA UNIVERSITY

The year 2013 can best be described as an inspiring period for Africa University. In March, the university's students, faculty, and staff emerged from the culmination of the 20th anniversary celebration invigorated and fully engaged in living out their mission and mandate from the church.

Africa University is deeply grateful to the West Michigan Conference for its robust affirmation of this ministry. For the second consecutive year, the congregations of the West Michigan Conference have invested 100% of their asking in the Africa University Fund (AUF). Construction of the Ubuntu Retreat Center was completed thanks to the Grand Rapids District, which led the conference-wide effort to raise the funds to build the million dollar facility.

We celebrate the sacrificial giving of United Methodists across the West Michigan Conference. Your gifts are an investment in changing lives for the better. Thank you, West Michigan, for helping to shape Africa University as a place where young people discern their call and gifts, and become effective global leaders!

Leadership and Service: In August, three 2013 graduates were commissioned as young adult missionaries by the General Board of Global Ministries, pushing the total number of Africa University alumni serving internationally as mission interns to seven in just two years. Their placement with faith-based organizations serving marginalized communities in countries such as Brazil, Russia and the Philippines affirm our denomination's commitment to transformational partnerships shaped by servant leaders "from everywhere to everywhere."

Student Enrollment: Sustained by the generosity of local congregations throughout the connection, Africa University's enrollment grew to 1480 full-time students from 25 African countries in 2013. Female students now account for 53% of that total enrollment.

Scholarships and Financial Aid: Second mile giving by individuals and churches enabled Africa University to distribute more than \$1.8 million in scholarships and financial aid to its students. In recognition of the particular challenges African women face in accessing higher education, the university has launched the Girl Child Scholarship Fund. Through a new initiative to increase financial contributions from its alumni and others in Africa, the institution is working towards greater sustainability.

Disciple-Making: We thank you for helping to shape Africa University as a place of opportunity, spiritual and professional growth, and transformation. More than 450 students were awarded degree certificates in June 2013. There are close to 5,000 Africa University graduates currently at work in communities across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Every day, these graduates manifest the promise and power of the Gospel to bring light and hope to a troubled world.

This work of making disciples of Jesus Christ – change agents – for the realization of more stable, just, healthy, and prosperous African nations cannot exist without your generosity and prayers. **As another decade of life-changing ministry unfolds, we are counting on the West Michigan Conference to continue to invest in the AUF at 100% of the asking or higher.** This allows the university to meet its day-to-day and operational expenses without uncertainty.

Your support matters greatly! Encourage your local church to become an annual scholarship donor. Consider leading an effort to have your church or district invest in an endowed scholarship which can support one student a year in perpetuity. As you make your estate plans, remember to include Africa University in your will. Please pray for the ongoing success of this important effort to equip Africans to contribute to a rich and vibrant future for their nations and for our global church.

Mr. James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement
Africa University Development Office

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COMMISSION

The commission expressed its gratitude to their outgoing chairperson Ken Gackler on July 1, 2013, for his many years of leadership. Rev. Melanie Young became the new chairperson, and she expressed her gratitude that Gackler will continue to sit on the commission as a consultant.

According to ¶641 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, the purpose of the Conference Commission on Archives and History (CCAH) is *to collect, preserve, and make accessible the historically significant records of the annual conference and its agencies, including data relating to the origin and history of the conference and its antecedents*. It then lists 13 duties and options as to how the commission is to act on this purpose. The central component in carrying out this purpose is the maintenance of the conference archives, which are located on the Albion College campus. The archives are overseen by the conference archivist, Nicole Garrett, who reports to the CCAH.

In 2013, Garrett reported on her work with district offices in receiving archived materials from discontinued United Methodist churches. Garrett is also updating the guidelines for local church historians. The CCAH is looking to distribute these guidelines in 2014. Garrett has also begun the process of digitizing the 1850's through 1917 microfilm versions of the *Michigan Christian Advocate* publication. Conference

archivists across the country were approached by Ancestry.com to see if they were willing to have their conference records digitized to be made available initially through Ancestry.com, and later to the larger public on the internet. Our CCAH is hesitant to work with Ancestry.com, although other United Methodist conferences have gone ahead with them.

Conference historian and CCAH secretary Dan Yakes announced that he is organizing the archival records of the CCAH itself. Also, he and the commission have begun looking into writing a post-1975 history of the WMAC to supplement the books on conference history that are already in existence. Finally, Yakes continues to make available United Methodist clergy metal grave markers for sale.

In September, Young and Gackler attended a training event for CCAH chairpersons, hosted by the General Commission on Archives and History, which was held at Drew University in New Jersey. Simultaneously, they attended the annual meeting of the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church. An urgent and sincere plea was made for any interested persons to join this society through their local conference chapter. In Michigan, the historical society is a joint venture of both conferences.

Gackler, Melanie Young, and Rosalie Young represented West Michigan at the convocation of the North Central Jurisdiction Commissions on Archives and History held in Canton, Ohio in July. West Michigan agreed to host the 2014 Convocation on July 7-10 in Petoskey, Michigan.

Rev. Melanie Young, Chair

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN CAMPING

2013 was our first year with a new board structure, with new registration software for camps, and with a new set of policies moving us toward a governance model. With all these new things, we have been doing plenty of learning.

Capital campaigns

We have spent much of the year preparing to move forward with the recommendations that came out of our 2012 planning consultation, and in April 2014 we will launch capital campaigns, eventually running one for each of the five sites. We have employed Breton Group of Grand Rapids as our development consultants, and have been training and preparing to launch these campaigns in April. Fortunately, we have already had some success in raising support for new cabins at several of our camps, and other essential work, but these things are only the beginning of a major catch-up in our facilities that will happen over the next few years, with your help.

New Executive Director

We are very excited that the Conference Leadership Team has found a way to funding a full time interim Executive Director, whom we will be hiring in the first quarter of 2014. Naomi García has been serving in the executive director role for camping ministry for many years, but she has never been allowed to put the time into the position that it desperately needs, because of her many other important responsibilities. We thank her for her many years of service, her deep fount of knowledge and passion for the ministry, and her persistent leadership in a very difficult and demanding position.

Toward an area camping ministry

Through 2013 we have also had a series of conversations that will lead in time to the combination of Detroit and West Michigan Conference camping ministries into a single organization. This is a decision based on ministry goals, so we can combine our marketing, planning, and our learning into a strong area-wide system. The Detroit Conference has four camp properties, all doing important ministry. Three independent camps in Michigan also identify with The United Methodist Church: Lake Louise, Bay Shore, and Michigamme.

Campers

All of our work in policy, development, and staffing is so that we can make disciples of Jesus Christ through outdoor ministry. We are committed to sacred hospitality, to creating community, to spiritually as well as physically safe places, where people of all ages can encounter God through great programming and beautiful places. In 2013 we had our biggest marketing campaign yet, though it turned out not to have the results we hoped for, and registrations did not rise as they did in 2012. That has brought plenty of learning, and we are optimistic that 2014's marketing campaign will strengthen the number of campers. You remain the most important element of marketing, however, as you encourage a child to go camp, as you lead your congregation in a family camping experience, and as you gather funds for sending children

and youth to camp. The failure of registration growth, combined with the fact that we are still learning a lot about demographics and planning, meant that in 2013 we failed yet again to operate in the black. We are convinced, however, that a new full-time executive director, and a more experienced marketing program, will help to grow the ministry this year.

2014 will mark the end of my term as chair of the Board of Christian Camping, though I will continue to volunteer with the camps over the next few years in their capital development campaigns. It has been a privilege to work with a ministry that is so central to the disciple-making ministry of the annual conference, with so many excellent and passionate co-workers in Christ. The camping ministry is better positioned and prepared for ministry today and in the future than it has ever been, thanks to your continued support.

Jeremy Williams, Chair

BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Members of the West Michigan Conference Board of Church and Society share concerns of justice and peace that seek to reflect the compassion of Christ for all humanity and for God's gift of life and creation. These concerns are often expressed around our table at our meetings. We always regret that with only a few meetings, we do not have time to address all issues each year. Our resources are always limited in time and money to help needs in areas of world, nation, state and local communities served by our churches. Ours is the task of prioritizing our ministry and allocating the resources at our disposal.

With regard to human resources, we continue to encourage each local church to name a person who will represent the issues of peace with justice within the local church and community and who will be a resource for the conference as our board seeks better communication, educational events and information that connect the West Michigan Conference to the general church and to the world. It still remains difficult to resource local churches without a person with whom we can communicate. At the 2011 Annual Conference, a resolution was passed that such a person be named. This was approved, but the response continues to be slow. Yet issues are before us in this often troubled world. Our denomination needs to speak and act for justice and peace. We are asked at times to represent the issues of justice and peace at district leadership events. This gives us a chance to enable local church leaders advocate for justice in local communities as well as within the larger church, state, nation and world.

We continued our presence at 2013 Annual Conference through a shared meal. There the Peace Sermon of the Year was awarded to J. D. Gore, for his work with peacemaking in Bethlehem and with the Methodist Federation for Social Action at its Washington D.C. office. The Peacemaker of the Year was awarded to Ameer Paparella who has worked for a year as a part of the staff of the General Board of Church and Society. She is presently appointed to the Wacousta United Methodist Church. It was also a decision of the board to award a Lifetime Peacemaker of the Year award to Keith Pohl, retired pastor and long-time peacemaker through writing and other forms of ministry in the West Michigan Conference and in the general church. It is always uplifting to honor those who preach peace and who carry out ministries of justice. We also participated in the Ministry Fair, sharing table space with Reconciling Ministries. We offered several varieties of T-shirts with justice and peace logos imprinted.

Several petitions were offered for discussion during the sessions of the West Michigan Conference. These dealt with Right to Work, Women's Health, No Guns in Churches and the Inclusion of LGBT Persons in the Membership and Leadership of Local Churches.

We continue to promote the Peace with Justice offering each year. This offering is shared with the General Board of Global Ministries. One half goes there for grants helping projects of justice and peace throughout the world. One half stays within our conference. We gave grants once again to HAPI, Haitian Artists for Peace International, and to JFON, Justice for our Neighbors, who works with the immigrant population in West Michigan. We also support Keep Making Peace, an event shared each spring with the Detroit Conference. The offering for Peace with Justice was well publicized in 2013, resulting in additional funds for our ministries. Besides the above mentioned resources, the board also administers peace scholarship funds available from the Brubaker/Thompson Peace Fund. In 2013 funds were granted to a Peace Advocacy ministry connected to the Wesley Foundation at Central Michigan University from Peace with Justice funds within the conference.

In 2013 we continued to bring many issues of justice and peace to board meetings. Our concerns for stewardship of the earth culminated in consolidating some of the work of Vernon Jones, a board member, into a pamphlet that was distributed in the conference. The pamphlet's purpose was to highlight and educate readers regarding several complex environmental issues and to encourage persons of faith to become more active stewards of God's creation.

Being part of the West Michigan Conference Board of Church and Society is exciting – never dull. There is always more that can be done at one time, but that is as it must be in this world. The members of the board are filled with Christ-like compassion for all of God's people and for God's creation. We will continue to work for a world that reflects God's love and grace, praying and working for justice and peace that God's reign will come on earth.

Ellen A. Brubaker, Chair

COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION and DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

2013 was a year of significant change for the Communications Commission. There was a change in the role of the Director of Communications when the position of Area Director of Communications was established. Mark Doyal and his team now produce a weekly e-mail newsletter for the entire Michigan Area combining news of activity from both conferences. A monthly summary which is printable is also distributed. The communications efforts of this team were recognized with several national awards. In addition to this activity there have been continuing marketing campaigns for camping and the Wesley Foundations. Progress has been made on integrating the web capabilities of the two conferences with a goal of a major redesign of the web sites.

The Communications Commission for the West Michigan Conference continues its support of the Director of Communications especially at the time of Annual Conference. Some progress was also made in gathering data from the local churches regarding their technology capabilities and needs. A future effort in collaboration with the Commission on Archives and History will seek ways to archive the electronic records. The Commission continues to seek ways to assist local churches in the conference to improve their electronic communications to attract new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Carole Armstrong, Chair, and Mark Doyal, Director of Communications

COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Cooperative ministry can as simple as a few churches joining together to offer a local food pantry or community Good Friday worship services. It can be as complex as two or more local churches entering into a covenant, creating a ministry team, or combining committees to carry out the mission of the church. By its nature such ministry needs to be flexible and contextual. Cooperative ministry allows individual churches to share their strengths and accomplish things they could not do on their own. ¶206 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline* outlines the variety of forms cooperative ministry can take and the various roles and responsibilities of local churches, annual conferences, and cabinets.

We held the first meeting of the new Cooperative Ministries Committee (created by legislative action of the 2013 Annual Conference) in the fall of 2013 and decided on initial goals and objectives. These include:

- Creating and providing regional events to introduce the concept of cooperative ministries and / or to resource groups of churches who are already exploring cooperative ministry. We are planning our first event for the fall of 2014 in the Lansing area.
- Identifying and developing tools, guidance, and training materials as well as identifying persons with experience in effective cooperative ministry in order to resource local churches and the cabinet. We hope to make much of this "resource library" available online and have taken initial steps in developing this.

We look forward to developing this vital ministry with local churches in the coming years.

Jodie R. Flessner, Chair

COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY CONCERNS

This year we gave out six grants totaling \$800.00. There were five grants for updating churches in our conference to increase their ability to serve those with special needs. There was one grant to help send someone to the Special Needs Camp. We answered several inquiries pertaining to resources for those with disabilities. We had a booth at the 2013 West Michigan Annual Conference where we answered questions about making the church and surroundings handicap friendly. We also handed out booklets and pamphlets to help serve those in need.

John Huizing, Chair

BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

When I became the chair of the Board of Discipleship last year, I was asked to invite the board to take some time for discernment and reflection on our role in the ministry of the West Michigan Annual Conference. Over the summer each of the members of the board contacted leaders in one or two other annual conferences within our jurisdiction to find out how they were enhancing the ministry of discipleship in their settings.

When we met in September and shared our findings we were surprised to find out that most of the other conferences did not even have a Board of Discipleship per se and that in many of them discipleship ministries were organized and led by conference staff. We also noticed that there didn't seem to be a systematic strategy at work. Instead there was a wide assortment of programs serving specific needs.

At this meeting we also listed ministries within our annual conference that promoted the work of discipleship and we were amazed at the scope and depth of these ministries. It was both humbling and encouraging that so much good work was being accomplished without the involvement of the Board of Discipleship.

Even so we recognized that there were needs that were not being met: There was no apparent coordination of all these discipleship ministries. Communication to and from the local church seemed to be sketchy. There did not seem to be clear lines of accountability in place.

As we read the job description of the Conference Board of Discipleship found in the *Book of Discipline*, it seemed quite similar to the work that is currently being done by our newly established Leadership Team.

Given all of this the question arose: "Does the West Michigan Annual Conference really need a Board of Discipleship?" We shared all of these observations with our Connectional Ministries Director, Benton Heisler, who in turn shared them with the Leadership Team.

After thoughtful deliberation the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) decided to recommend that the West Michigan Annual Conference establish staff positions that are currently being partially filled by one position; a full-time position of Associate Director for Discipleship Ministry and a full-time position of Interim Executive Director of Camping and Retreat Ministries.

The CLT is also recommending the removal of the Board of Discipleship from the Plan of Organization. The current Board of Discipleship roles, budget allocation decisions and coordination efforts would be addressed by the CLT and the new Associate Director of Discipleship position.

At a subsequent meeting the members of the Board of Discipleship concurred with this recommendation. May God continue to bless the ministry of making disciples as we move forward on a new path.

Mark G. Johnson, Chair

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

2013 proved to be another fruitful year for Children's Ministry in the West Michigan Conference. For the second year, many involved in leadership were able to join together for a Christian Educators' Retreat at Lake Louise United Methodist Camp. Under the guidance of Hillary Thurston Cox, those who gathered in this peaceful setting enjoyed a refreshing time of fellowship and learning from one another.

Our Grand Rapids Children's Ministry Network Group continues to grow. We meet quarterly, with the aim of encouraging one another and sharing ideas. Members are also in touch via our Facebook Group Page. New members are always welcome.

During 2013 many of our churches benefitted from the receipt of a Christian Education grant. The monies were used to enhance or introduce some wonderful ministries, including afterschool programs, all age discipleship events, the construction of an outdoor playground, and training.

I am excited to see what God has in store for Children's Ministry in 2014. This year, Christian Education Sunday will be held on September 14th. As we celebrate this special day together, I pray that more churches will be able to take up a Christian Education offering, so that these much needed grants will be able to enhance children's ministry throughout our conference, and enable us to continue our mission as we seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Glenys Nellist, Conference Coordinator of Children's Ministry
www.kidsministrymatters.blogspot.com

COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The purpose of the Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) is to annually propose the minimum compensation schedule for clergy in various appointment categories and to assist local churches in making disciples of Jesus Christ by helping to meet minimum compensation standards for their pastors when local church resources are not sufficient. In fulfilling the obligations of ¶342, ¶624, and ¶625 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and in using Ministry Shares to ensure compliance with their purposes, the work of the CEC is firmly rooted in our strong connectional heritage. The CEC takes seriously the stewardship of Ministry Shares resources entrusted for this purpose.

In 2013, a total of 20 charges, representing 26 churches, received \$155,182 in direct financial assistance from the Commission on Equitable Compensation for support of pastoral compensation. Grants ranged from as little as \$1500 to as much as \$18,500, with an average grant of \$7,759 per charge. Of the \$155,182 in total grants, an estimated \$70,715, or 46% of the total, went to Racial/Ethnic/Missional churches that, without funding revisions being considered, will likely remain on Equitable Compensation beyond the five-year Conference guideline. With allocated budget dollars, the CEC was also able to provide \$5,950 in pulpit supply grants for pastors on medical leave and \$255 in administrative expenses.

Given the current economic climate in Michigan, the Commission on Equitable Compensation celebrates having been able to meet the needs of churches while remaining within its approved budget of \$180,000. Grant expenditures for 2013 decreased about \$7,500 from 2012, an indication that the churches, the bishop and the cabinet, and the Commission on Equitable Compensation are working diligently to reduce the need for equitable compensation for the local churches. Individual church/charge requests and grants also decreased. Hopefully, grant reductions will continue through assistance to churches with stewardship campaign techniques, programs such as the Vital Church Initiative, and unconventional fundraising ideas.

Beginning in 2009, the CEC was more intentional about paying attention to the rate of payment of Ministry Shares from congregations receiving Equitable Compensation support. The CEC added a statement regarding the expectation of full payment of Ministry Shares to the Conference guidelines in 2010. Included in this statement was the stipulation that in consultation with the district superintendent and/or the cabinet, a church not meeting its conference obligations could find its Equitable Compensation grant reduced or rescinded.

The Commission on Equitable Compensation thanks the churches that are faithful in payment of Ministry Shares in full, making it possible for the CEC to continue its work of seeking to support local churches in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION 2013 YEAR-END SUMMARY

	SALARY SUPPORT	PENSION SUPPORT	HEALTH INSURANCE	HOUSING	TOTAL
ALBION DISTRICT:					
Constantine	1,500.00				\$1,500.00
Delton	3,324.00				\$3,324.00
Pleasant Valley/Ninth Street	2,720.00				\$2,720.00
Washington Heights	3,000.00				\$3,000.00
DISTRICT TOTAL	\$10,544.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,544.00
HEARTLAND DISTRICT:					
Brooks/Barryton/Sears	6,900.00				\$6,900.00
Evert (Pulpit Supply)	1,800.00				\$1,800.00
The Gathering	3,000.00				\$3,000.00
DISTRICT TOTAL	\$11,700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,700.00
GRAND RAPIDS DISTRICT:					
GR Vietnamese	17,000.00				\$17,000.00
La Nueva Esperanza	18,500.00				\$18,500.00
Northlawn	6,500.00				\$6,500.00
Salem/Bradley	12,000.00				\$12,000.00
Shelby	2,400.00				\$2,400.00
Whitehall/Claybanks (Pulpit Supply)	1,600.00				\$1,600.00
DISTRICT TOTAL	\$58,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$58,000.00
GRAND TRAVERSE DISTRICT:					
Bellaire	3,000.00				\$3,000.00
Baldwin Covenant Community	14,000.00				\$14,000.00
Greensky Hill	12,745.00				\$12,745.00
Kewadin/Northport	12,500.00				\$12,500.00
Petoskey (Pulpit Supply)	2,550.00				\$2,550.00
DISTRICT TOTAL	\$44,795.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44,795.00
KALAMAZOO DISTRICT:					
Dowagiac	\$5,000.00				\$5,000.00
Keeler/Silver Creek	2,600.00				\$2,600.00
Oshtemo	1,600.00				\$1,600.00
Paw Paw	11,293.00				\$11,293.00
Sunnyside	10,000.00				\$10,000.00
DISTRICT TOTAL	\$30,493.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,493.00
LANSING DISTRICT:					
DISTRICT TOTAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Administration & Meeting	\$55.00				\$55.00
2013 NACEC Dues	200.00				\$200.00
TOTAL	255.00				\$255.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$155,787.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$155,787.00

Pastor Nancy J. Patera, Chair

BOARD OF EVANGELISM

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Your West Michigan Conference Board of Evangelism has begun a season of prayerful reflection and we thank you for your prayers for us while we are doing so. We are asking questions about how we can support the local church in evangelistic work. What education needs to happen? How can we inspire pastors and laity alike to be ready to speak on issues of faith, in whatever situation the Spirit might call them to? How can we overcome the fear that surrounds what some like to call “the E word?”

These are not easy questions to answer. In some ways, it might just be easier to simply sit back and pretend that evangelism does not need to happen. Many of us fear rejection or being labeled as “Jesus freaks” if we bring our faith outside the doors of the church. The other tendency is to simply do good works, but to refrain from telling those we are working with *why* we are serving in our community.

The truth is that every time any of us walks out the door in the morning, we have the opportunity to be an evangelist. Every act of kindness or justice that we participate in has the potential to change a life not just in that moment, but for an eternity. However, for this to be true, we need to learn how to speak those words and then we need to have the courage to speak them.

May it be that the grace of God can be found in every voice and act that West Michigan United Methodists participate in. May it be that God uses us, broken vessels though we may be, to share words of grace and mercy to those who see nothing but darkness. May it be that we hear the Spirit of God when we are called to share that grace and, in obedience, share that grace.

Jonathan Van Dop, Chair

COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

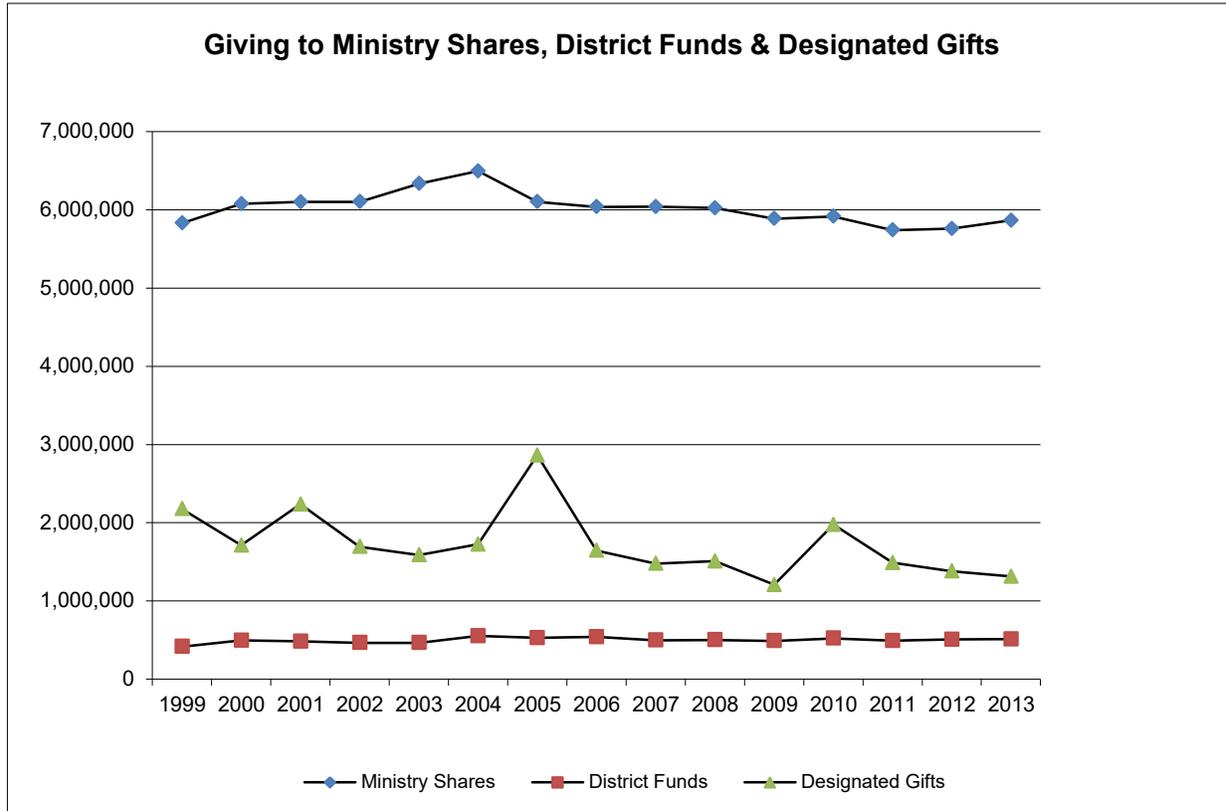
Thank You, West Michigan Churches!

On behalf of the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), we thank you, our churches for your support of our shared mission and ministry by paying your Ministry Shares. In 2013, Ministry Shares receipts came to 96.4%. We deeply appreciate your generosity in the midst of financial challenges in some of our churches. By your sacrificial giving the love of God will be experienced by many people in various places around the world. Your generosity will bring glory and thanksgiving to the Christ we follow and serve.

Annual Conference Session in June 2014. For the upcoming Annual Conference session in June, the CFA Conference Budget Recommendation will be published in April in accordance with the revised Rules of Order. An amendment to the conference policy on capital campaigns will be submitted as part of the regular Decision Items.

Investment Policy. In recognition of its fiduciary responsibilities and the mandate of the *Book of Discipline* (§613.5), the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) has developed the Investment Policy (IP) governing investment of conference funds under the care of the various conference agencies. As required by the *Book of Discipline*, the policy is hereby published to the annual conference as an appendix to this report.

Story of A Giving People. The chart below shows the generous giving of our churches. The conference received more than \$7.7 million in 2013, which was designated 76% for ministry shares, 7% for district ministry funds and 17% for advance special offerings.

History of Giving:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ministry Shares</u>	<u>District Funds</u>	<u>Designated Gifts</u>	<u>Total Giving</u>	<u>% Budget Paid</u>	<u>Budget</u>
1999	5,831,246	415,603	2,127,102	8,373,951	93.0%	6,212,681
2000	6,077,069	495,049	1,695,898	8,268,016	93.0%	6,461,164
2001	6,101,954	483,183	2,229,571	8,814,708	89.8%	6,710,319
2002	6,102,615	464,250	1,686,198	8,253,063	87.5%	6,912,025
2003	6,334,732	465,715	1,585,979	8,386,426	87.2%	7,215,846
2004	6,495,492	551,814	1,724,170	8,771,476	85.1%	7,636,830
2005	6,102,417	527,803	2,861,950	9,492,170	89.5%	7,222,355
2006	6,038,584	539,597	1,645,391	8,223,572	93.4%	6,466,961
2007	6,040,628	497,768	1,478,474	8,016,870	92.6%	6,526,221
2008	6,024,180	500,417	1,508,594	8,033,191	91.9%	6,555,913
2009	5,888,021	488,516	1,207,482	7,584,019	87.9%	6,694,890
2010	5,916,148	521,944	1,975,543	8,413,635	95.3%	6,209,076
2011	5,741,225	491,506	1,487,123	7,719,854	93.2%	6,159,550
2012	5,759,683	507,432	1,380,351	7,647,466	96.8%	5,951,495
2013	5,864,716	512,070	1,313,465	7,690,251	96.4%	6,084,889

GENERAL CHURCH APPORTIONMENTS PAID 100%: Ministry Shares is the first priority benevolence of the local church and reflects its financial commitment to the shared mission and ministry of the West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church, locally and globally. The CFA is delighted to report that our commitment to the apportioned funds that support the ministries of The United Methodist Church globally are paid 100%. To the extent possible, we intend to model 100% giving to our connectional commitment.

Where Ministry Shares Dollars Go: *Praise God for the provision that is given to administer God's grace in various forms (1 Peter 4:10).*

District Superintendent & Clergy Support	27%	\$1,579,171
Conference Program Ministries	26%	\$1,512,670
New Church Development	5%	\$313,317
Administrative Support Ministries	14%	\$808,381
World Service & General Church Apportionment	28%	\$1,663,322
	100%	\$ 5,876,861

CHURCHES GIVING PERCENTAGES:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Churches giving 100% or more	301	260	242	282	272	285	251
Percent of total churches	73%	63%	59%	69%	67%	71%	62%
70% to less than 100%	49	51	61	34	44	34	44
Percent of total churches	12%	12%	15%	8%	11%	8%	11%
Less than 70%	65	104	104	90	89	83	107
Percent of total churches	<u>16%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>27%</u>
Total Churches	415	415	407	406	405	402	402

GIVING BY DISTRICT:

WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE FINANCIAL COMMITMENT REPORT

MINISTRY SHARES & DISTRICT MINISTRIES FUNDS

GIVING		<u>12/31/11</u>	<u>12/31/12</u>	<u>12/31/13</u>
CONFERENCE	Ministry Shares & District Funds Paid	\$6,219,893	\$6,267,114	\$6,376,785
	% Paid	85.1%	86.3%	84.5%
	Special Giving	\$1,487,123	\$1,380,352	\$1,313,466
ALBION	Remittances Year To Date	\$809,364	\$798,167	\$860,773
	% Paid	86.2%	88.6%	87.8%
	Special Giving	\$145,273	\$140,765	\$145,846
HEARTLAND	Remittances Year To Date	\$746,739	\$763,798	\$707,015
	% Paid	90.4%	89.6%	81.9%
	Special Giving	\$158,557	\$147,875	\$151,600

GRAND	Remittances Year To Date	\$1,798,355	\$1,859,502	\$1,882,400
RAPIDS	% Paid	93.9%	95.6%	92.2%
	Special Giving	\$443,378	\$450,411	\$372,921
GRAND	Remittances Year To Date	\$812,061	\$799,746	\$825,705
TRAVERSE	% Paid	85.7%	83.5%	82.0%
	Special Giving	\$203,349	\$163,241	\$166,035
KALAMAZOO	Remittances Year To Date	\$1,000,986	\$924,915	\$989,888
	% Paid	76.9%	72.9%	76.9%
	Special Giving	\$266,379	\$242,486	\$255,334
LANSING	Remittances Year To Date	\$1,052,388	\$1,120,986	\$1,111,004
	% Paid	76.2%	83.9%	81.0%
	Special Giving	\$270,187	\$235,574	\$221,730

SPECIAL GIVING	<u>12/31/11</u>	<u>12/31/12</u>	<u>12/31/13</u>
1. Imagine No Malaria	-		\$ 76,896
2. Camp Endowment Campaign	\$720	\$1,543	285
3. Christian Education Sunday Offering	5,259	3,884	4,111
4. Racial Ethnic Local Church Sunday Offering	4,363	6,804	5,724
5. Human Relations Day Offering	15,192	14,002	13,983
6. Rural Life Sunday	4,962	4,091	5,047
7. Peace With Justice Sunday	12,711	12,756	10,798
8. Camp Sunday	7,858	5,877	7,675
9. Native American Ministry Sunday	12,922	14,150	17,246
10. Golden Cross Sunday Offering	5,614	5,338	5,353
11. United Methodist Student Day Offering	10,154	7,915	9,061
12. World Communion Offering	17,335	17,808	18,887
13. One Great Hour of Sharing	72,687	77,190	71,208
14. Africa University Endowment Fund	3,046	142	487
15. World Missionary Support	174,584	137,073	139,581
16. World Mission Projects	148,692	183,436	208,629
17. United Methodist Children's Fund	1,048	0	1,010
19. National Missions	60,001	51,186	47,132
20. Appalachia Service Project	0	0	0
21. U.M.C.O.R.	685,359	558,275	596,494
22. Ethnic Ministries	22,635	19,013	26,402
23. Conference Ministries	218,298	267,683	138,154
24. Other Benevolences	<u>3,683</u>	<u>-7,815</u>	-90,698

GIVING SUMMARY:	Special Giving	\$1,487,123	\$1,380,351	\$1,313,465
	District Funds	\$491,506	\$507,432	\$512,070
	Conference Ministry Shares	\$5,741,225	\$5,759,683	\$5,864,716
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$7,719,854	\$7,647,466	\$7,690,251
	Conference Budget	\$6,159,550	\$5,951,495	\$6,085,389
	% of Conference Budget Received	93.2%	96.8%	96.4%

Giving Trend is a Concern. Our giving pattern raises concern. While we received \$105,000 more in Ministry Shares, as a percentage of the budget we were behind by about half a percent. The decline in the number of churches that paid 100% was more dramatic with a drop from 71% to 62%. This pattern was also reflected in the decline of percentage giving to Ministry Shares in five of our six districts (with the

exception of Kalamazoo in above table). Some of the reasons are: a) the per capita giving of new members is possibly less than the giving of mature members who passed away; b) the endowment funds or reserves of churches have been depleted; c) debt load from building/capital improvements.

Rays of Hope. There are signs of growth in the spirit and numbers in some churches. The Vital Church Initiative and the new ways of birthing churches are starting to bear fruit. The dynamism in some of our mature and new congregations is encouraging as you will see in the other reports. Our strength is in the Lord and our hope is strong. The faithfulness of our people continues to inspire and encourage us as a council. Again, thank you for what you do in the name of Christ.

CFA Members. We take this opportunity to express appreciation for the work of council members: Phil Bickel, (Vice Pres.), Susan MacGregor (Secretary), David Lundquist (Asst. Secretary), Kathleen Anderson, Brad Bartelmay, James Bossard, Patricia Bromberek, Nolan Hudson, Georgia Marsh, Russell McReynolds, Patrick Tiedt, Bill Vert, Patricia Watson, Molly Williams, Benton Heisler (Director of Connectional Ministries), David Hills (Cabinet Rep), David Bell (Pres. UM Foundation), Bill Dobbs and Bishop Deb Kiesey. Thanks and praises to our God.

Susan Cobb, President, Council on Finance and Administration
Pros Tumonong, Conference Treasurer

Investment Policy
Council on Finance and Administration
West Michigan Annual Conference

I. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Investment Policy (IP) is to provide governance and oversight to investments of Conference funds under the control and responsibility of the West Michigan Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA). The intent is to facilitate and not hinder conference agencies in the execution of their duties related to the management of their investment portfolios and in the use of their funds as provided in the *Book of Discipline*.

In recognition of its fiduciary responsibilities and the mandate of the *Book of Discipline* (§613.5), the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) has developed this Investment Policy (IP) governing investment of their respective conference funds.

II. Delineation of Responsibilities

- 1) Under the *Book of Discipline* (§612.1), the purpose of the CFA shall be to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference. Accordingly, the CFA is responsible for establishing principles, policies, standards and guidelines for the investment of all monies, assets and properties of the conference.
- 2) The CFA is ultimately responsible for the financial integrity and oversight of Annual Conference financial resources. Under this Investment Policy all operational and implementation of policy decisions may be delegated to the Investment Committee.
- 3) The CFA shall at least once per year review the Investment Policy, the effectiveness of the Investment Committee and the overall results of the investments, and will acknowledge in writing that they have done so.
- 4) The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) shall pass a resolution approving the Investment Policy and creation of the Conference Investment Committee.

III. Members of the Investment Committee

The Conference Investment Committee shall be composed of five members selected by CFA. The members' individual terms shall not exceed eight years and shall be staggered to provide for continuity and experienced leadership. The chairperson and other officers shall be nominated by the Committee from among its members and approved by CFA.

Responsibilities of the Investment Committee

- 1) to define and develop investment goals, and other operational guidelines;
- 2) to recommend to the CFA the selection and discharge of the Investment Managers;
- 3) to monitor and evaluate the performance results and risk posture of the Investment Managers;
- 4) to provide semi-annually to the CFA a written account of the investment results, accounting summary and any significant developments;
- 5) to provide annually to the CFA a written annual evaluation of the Investment Managers;
- 6) to require all portfolios will be managed with the aim of maximizing funds available for mission in a manner consistent with the preservation of capital, the Policies Relative to Socially Responsible Investments and the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church;
- 7) to establish effective communication procedures between the Committee, the CFA, the staff and the outside service providers;
- 8) to monitor and control investment expenses;
- 9) to delegate the execution and administration of certain Committee responsibilities as appropriate to the Conference Treasurer who serves as its staff;
- 10) to carry out any other duties required for the legal operation of the investments, including but not limited to hiring outside vendors to perform various services;
- 11) to report to the CFA any significant deviations from this policy for prior approval before they are implemented.

IV. Investment Managers

To achieve its investment objectives and to ensure alignment with United Methodist Policies Relative to Socially Responsible Investments and Social Principles, the Investment Managers of Conference Funds, shall be **The United Methodist Foundation of Michigan**, and **Wespath, a division of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits**.

V. Investment Performance Benchmarks

The investment performance of total portfolios and asset class components will be measured against the published benchmark for the respective investment funds, as well as against commonly accepted performance benchmarks. Consideration shall be given to the extent to which the investment results are consistent with the investment objectives and guidelines as set forth in this Investment Policy. The standard of care when making decisions is the Prudent Expert Standard, defined as:

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

VI. Responsibilities of Investment Managers

The Investment Managers shall provide the Investment Committee quarterly or as necessary the following written reports:

- 1) the portfolio's complete holdings;
- 2) a review of the investment performance measured against the respective benchmarks;
- 3) a commentary on investment results in light of the current investment environment and the goals and guidelines;
- 4) a review of the key investment decisions and the rationale for these decisions;
- 5) a discussion of the manager's outlook and what specific decisions this outlook may indicate;
- 6) any recommendations as to changes in goals and guidelines in light of material and sustained changes in the capital market; and any significant change in the manager's investment outlook, ownership or key employees.

VII. Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines

As an annual conference of The United Methodist Church we are committed to implementation of the socially responsible investment policies in *The Book of Discipline* (§717).

“*Socially Responsible Investments* – It shall be the policy of The United Methodist Church that all general boards and agencies, including the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and all administrative agencies and institutions, including hospitals, homes, educational institutions, annual conferences, foundations and local churches, shall, in the investment of money, make a conscious effort to invest in institutions, companies, corporations or funds whose practices are consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles; and shall endeavor to avoid investments that appear likely, directly or indirectly, to support racial discrimination, violation of human rights, sweatshop or forced labor, gambling, or the production of nuclear armaments, alcoholic beverages or tobacco, or companies dealing in pornography, or the management or operation of prison facilities. The boards and agencies are to give careful consideration to shareholder advocacy, including advocacy of corporate disinvestment.”

VIII. Target Asset Allocations and Rebalancing Guidelines

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

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

IX. Asset Classes

- 1) **Equities:** The Investment Managers should maintain the equity portion of the portfolio at a risk level roughly equivalent to that of the equity market as a whole. Equity holdings may be selected from the New York Stock Exchange, the American Exchange, or equities traded on other regional exchanges or the NASDAQ markets. The securities should be aimed at appreciation potential and/or income generation. The Manager is prohibited from investing in private placements, letter stocks, options, short sales and margin transactions. No assets shall be invested in securities whose issuers have filed a petition for bankruptcy.
- 2) **Fixed Income:** Investments in Fixed Income securities will be managed actively to pursue opportunities from a variety of sources. The Manager may select from appropriate obligations guaranteed by the U. S. government and its agencies, foreign governments, utility stocks, preferred stocks, municipal obligations, and corporate obligations.
- 3) **Mutual funds, commingled funds, and funds in general:** When mutual funds or commingled funds are used as an investment vehicle, then it is understood the Investment Committee has adopted the investment policies of those funds.

X. Investment Accounts

The following table outlines the accounts with target allocation and the minimum and maximum allocation limits of each asset class:

- 1) General Fund Account

Target Allocation

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Equities	40%	50%	60%
Fixed Income Securities	40%	50%	60%
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0%	0%	20%

2) Deposit Account

Target Allocation

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Equities	10%	20%	30%
Fixed Income Securities	20%	30%	40%

3) Healthcare Deposit Account

Target Allocation

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Equities	50%	65%	75%
Fixed Income Securities	25%	35%	50%
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0%	0%	10%

XI. Records

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

Address: 11 Fuller Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Custodian of the Records: Conference Treasurer

XII. Amendments and Revisions

Amendments or changes to this Investment Policy may be made by the CFA and incorporated directly into the policy as a revision and restatement or acknowledged and noted in an addendum until such time as the Investment Policy is revised and restated.

XIII. Investment of Other Conference Funds

The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits and the Board of Trustees are given separate authority and responsibility in the *Discipline* for the management and investment of funds under their control. In carrying out their investment responsibilities, they may, if they determine, engage the services of the Investment Managers under this Policy to manage their funds, provided such funds shall be maintained in separate accounts. They shall also acknowledge that the responsibilities of the Investment Committee and Investment Managers and other investment guidelines as outlined in this Policy shall apply to their separate funds.

XIV. Policy Adoption

Approved by the Council on Finance and Administration on December 16, 2013.

By _____
 Susan Cobb, President

BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

Board Leadership and Membership: This report is provided by Lynda Zeller, chairperson in her second year of leadership. Since January 2013 Lynn and Kay DeMoss have returned to the role of **Conference Secretary of Global Ministries**. Lynn and Kay continue to do a tremendous job leading and managing some of the most labor intensive and critical work of the board, particularly itineration of missionaries and managing the conference Advance Special resources.

Also playing a very important role are **District Mission Secretaries**. District mission secretaries provide support and expertise to district leadership and represent important local ministries on the West Michigan Conference Board of Global Ministries (BGM). We are grateful for the following dedicated and talented individuals for their support this past year in the district mission secretary role: John Williams, Albion; Robert Eckert, Grand Rapids; Dave Hamman, Grand Traverse; Kathy Shepard, Heartland; and Delberta Troutman, Kalamazoo.

Finally, absolutely key to a strong West Michigan Conference Board of Global Ministries leadership is our **District Superintendent Representative** Rev. Anita Hahn. We are exceedingly grateful to Superintendent Hahn for very capably providing the important liaison role to other district superintendents. Rev. Hahn has been an excellent resource and has provided superb support to the board and connection to district and conference leadership.

The remainder of the **BGM membership** consists of persons representing specific areas of ministry as well as board members representing the church at large. Representative and at-large membership 2013-2014 are as follows:

Health & Welfare – Wendy Clark; **Town Country** – Linda Burton Collier; **UMCOR/Hunger** – Robert Freysinger; **Hispanic/Latino Ministries** – Stacy Caballero; **Refugee and Immigration** – Shirley Freeman; **Women’s Division/UMW** – Nichea Ver Veer Guy; **UMW Mission Education** – Shirley Chappell; **Volunteer in Mission** – David Morton; **Cooperative Ministries** – Jodie Flessner. **Members At Large:** Duane Bagley, Patricia Catellier, Wendy Clark, Julia Deemer, Jane Hoekwater, Vipin Singh.

Current Vacancies: Conference Council on Youth Ministries, Urban Ministries, Bible Distribution, and Lansing District Mission Secretary.

WMC GBGM Highlights 2013-2014: In order to keep this report to a manageable length, I will not list all activities of the committee this year, but provide a sampling of both exciting activities and challenges.

Selected Activities of Note:

- **Missionary Itineration and Advance For Christ** – This has been a very busy time of missionary itineration. Lynn DeMoss continues to refine the process of itineration to maximize connection to local churches and minimize cost and inefficiencies in this labor intensive process so that maximum financial resources support ministry. We take this opportunity to remind local churches that the offering which is taken during an itineration event is to be given to the Conference Secretary (for the itineration fund). The offering should not be given to the missionary directly. It is from the itineration fund that logistical expenses of itineration are covered for the missionary. Because Lynn does such a great job with efficient itineration, logistical costs remain as low as possible. Historically a great amount is collected through local offerings than logistical costs require, therefore allowing the missionary to receive the remainder of funds for their ministry. These funds can then be used by the Missionary for their ministries in the ways they deem most appropriate.
- **Advance For Christ** – Under the leadership of Kay DeMoss much progress has been made this year managing the resource guide for the conference. Kay has provided in depth analysis that has helped the committee see where resource investment and interest exist with Advance ministries, where ministries should be removed from the conference resource booklet, and where items should be added. The committee is also working to update guidelines that will help determine when a ministry should be added to Lane Six (a conference specific ministry) and how Lane 6 and district block grants and district ministries all work together.
- **UMCOR/Hunger** – We are grateful that Robert Freysinger has accepted leadership for UMCOR/Hunger. In a very short time Robert has honed a clear vision and strategic goals for UMCOR/Hunger efforts. His goals include providing more tools for churches and pastors, especially newer pastors. He also is working diligently to strengthen the commitment to the very important One Great Hour of Sharing offering.
- **District Block Grants** – District block grants continue to be the major line item in the Board of Global Ministries conference budget. The district mission secretaries and district leadership continue to do a great job evaluating requests for grants in their districts. However, requests always far exceed available resources. Below, in her own words Kathy Shepard communicates the importance and impact of this work:

“As the Heartland District mission secretary, I work closely with our district superintendent, administrative assistant, and members of our Outreach/Missions Team to promote local, state, national, and international projects. To assist our churches with these projects financially, we promote funding offered by the West Michigan Conference Board of Global

Ministries Block Grant Program through and from District Boards of Mission and WMC Racial/Ethnic Local Church. We are proud to announce that we successfully increased our recipients receiving this funding from one church in 2013 to three churches in 2014, and on behalf of these three churches, we thank the West Michigan Conference and Board of Global Ministries for your generosity.” [Kathy Shepard, Heartland District]

- **Mission U** – Shirley Chappel provided the following update for Mission U, formerly known as the School of Christian Mission. Mission U met in July for a four day school with just over 100 men, women and children attending. In 2014 the school will be shortened to three days. It is hoped the shorter school will enable more working people to attend, lessening the amount of time they need to take away from work. One of the studies in 2013 was the Roma people of Europe. Both Mission U (held in July) and School of the North, (held in October), are multi-generational events focused on raising awareness and connection to mission. In 2014 Mission U is seeking new membership and leadership for Mission U.
- **Annual Conference Dinner Speaker-Native American Ministry** – Under the capable leadership of new member Jane Hoekwater, a very successful dinner event was held at the 2013 West Michigan Annual Conference. More than 69 people registered were able to hear Brandon Ahmicasabe Smith speak about an emerging ministry to Native American youth in the Grand Traverse District called “Spirit Journey.” Inspired by the importance of camping ministry and building community in his own life, Brandon shared his dreams and plans for Native American youth ages 8 to 14 to have camping and community experiences that shape faith and life perspective. Spirit Journey allows youth to celebrate the depth and traditions of their heritage while deepening faith and knowledge of Christ.
- **Hispanic/Latino Ministries** – Stacy Caballero is the Hispanic/Latino ministry representative. She reports we received matching grant monies from the National Plan to support new and existing Hispanic/Latino Ministries in the West Michigan Conference. The three main focus areas are: Leadership Development, New and Existing Faith Communities, and Community Outreach.

Notable Challenges:

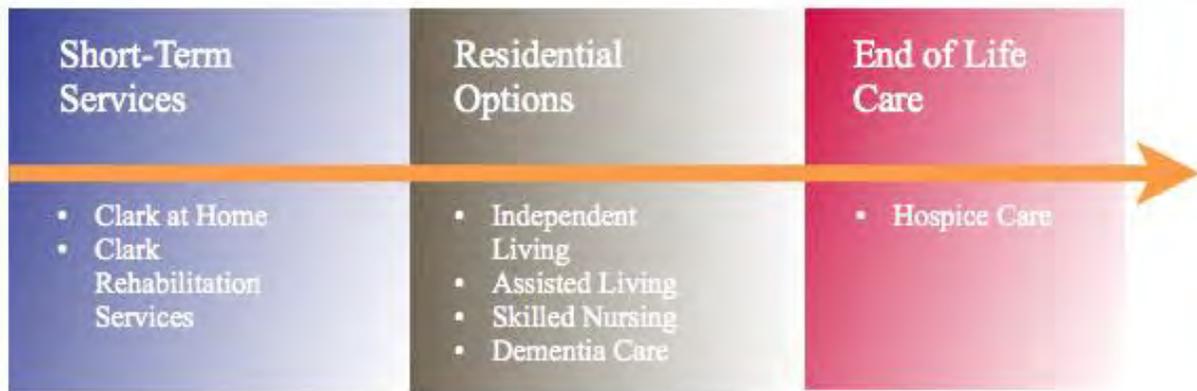
- **Conference Loan Fund** – As of the writing of this report (January 2014), there have been no applications for loans submitted to the board for the two years Lynda Zeller has been chair. We are grateful to the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan for now administering the fund, but continue to struggle with the low level of inquiries and absence of applications for this fund. The fund is intended to help local churches invest in infrastructure at rates lower than prime. The committee needs to continue working to promote this fund as a catalyst for ministry and work to discern barriers to its use.
- **Funding – Impact on District Block Grant and Conference Items** – The board is very grateful for the ongoing support by the conference through block grants, which are made available to the districts to support ministries of their choice. Even so, many challenges remain. The board continues to discuss many complex topics like proportional distribution of funds across the districts, districts that use their funds to support broader geographical ministries that did not grow out of their districts yet have been historically housed in those districts, and the reality that available funding has been flat and/or decreasing over the past several years. The year 2015 is expected to be a particularly difficult year for block grants based on early budget figures. This item is one that will require great care as we discern how best to manage the resources with which we have been entrusted.

In conclusion, and on behalf of the board, we thank you for your attention and support of global ministries, and the promotion of the same in local churches and districts. We trust you find these highlights from the board of value.

Lynda Zeller, Chair

CLARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Clark Retirement Community was founded in 1906, and for more than 100 years has created a community of dignity, compassion and respect centered on the lives of older adults and those who care for them. Clark provides a full continuum of care to residents on two campuses in Grand Rapids, and also provides services to people throughout the community.



In May 2012, the Clark Board of Trustees approved plans for a \$7.5 million, 3-year advancement campaign. As of December 2013, more than \$5.5 million of that total has been donated. The Clark Foundation is spearheading the *Vibrant Community* campaign to address three needs within our community and beyond:

1. Changes to physical space and technology at both campuses. We must redesign the way we incorporate resident safety into physical space, and also create integrated spaces that are safe for and enjoyed by all residents, regardless of health constraints or disease symptoms.
2. Premier dementia services. Clark has pioneered a new model of care for people with dementia, and now would like to spread this award-winning model to all locations on both campuses. We will also invest resources to address significant unmet community needs related to dementia assessment and in-home care.
3. Benevolent care. When residents come to Clark, they are making a commitment to use all the available resources to pay for the care that is needed. We make a commitment too: when the money is gone, we will still be here. The funds needed for us to keep that commitment continue to rise as the senior population increases and care requirements become more intense. A portion of the campaign proceeds will be used to fulfill our annual commitment to the benevolent care program.

More information about the campaign can be found online at www.vibrantcommunitycampaign.org.

During the 2013 fiscal year, revenue received by Clark Retirement Community for operations totaled \$24 million, of which \$23.1 million, or 96%, came from direct resident care. Expenses for the year totaled \$24.2 million. The Foundation received \$1,226,270 in gifts and bequests, with the majority of those gifts going towards the *Vibrant Community* campaign. The Foundation is extremely grateful to the individuals, families, corporations and organizations whose gifts make it possible for Clark to fulfill its commitment to benevolent care and enrich the lives of seniors.

Joanna Hogan, CFRM, Vice President of Development
Brian A. Pangle, President/CEO

CONFERENCE SECRETARIES OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES / COMMITTEE ON MISSION PERSONNEL

This position, which answers directly to the bishop and the Conference Board of Global Ministries, has three primary responsibilities: 1) to itinerate missionaries; 2) to promote Advance Special giving; and 3) to serve as the link between the annual conference and the General Board of Global Ministries.

We are retirees who returned to this position in 2013 and immediately attended the first national gathering of conference secretaries (CSGMs) at the General Board of Global Ministries in New York. This proved to be a crucial meeting as many new personnel, policies and procedures have been put in place. Thomas Kemper, the only non-American to serve as the General Secretary and the only recent one to have extensive experience as a missionary, has brought an exciting breath of fresh air and purpose to the board.

The single biggest change initiated by the board is an increased emphasis on the recruiting, training and deployment of young adult missionaries. We celebrate the fact that six young people from West Michigan are currently serving as mission interns or US-2s. They are J.D. Gore (Grand Rapids Plainfield United Methodist Church serving in Washington D.C. with Methodist Federation for Social Action); Ash and Stephanie Norton (Kalamazoo Westwood United Methodist Church serving the Mobile District in Alabama); Darlene Logston (Sodus United Methodist Church serving Primavera Foundation in Tucson, Arizona); Kelly Schaefer (Kalamazoo Milwood United Methodist Church serving Asia Rural Institute in Japan); and Stephanie Plotas (Bellevue United Methodist Church serving at Iskashitaa Refugee Network in Tucson, Arizona).

As at previous board meetings, West Michigan Conference was lauded and used as a positive example due to West Michigan's historic leadership in mission. Although several larger conferences have passed us in their mission support, West Michigan continues to stand out in terms of dollars raised and the number of churches that support missionaries and/or give to Advance Specials.

In October, West Michigan hosted the North Central Jurisdictional Fellowship of CSGMs for a retreat at Wesley Woods Camp. The significance of this retreat lies in the fact that the Fellowship, with 50 years of service to the cause of mission, had nearly died out and was born afresh at the retreat.

In 2013 the following career missionaries itinerated in West Michigan: David Persons from Congo, Dr. Elma Jocson from Liberia (on her way to Afghanistan), and Helen Sheperd from Mongolia. Itinerations anticipated for 2014: Nkemba and Mbwizu Ndjungu (Cameroon); Dieudonne Karihano (Mozambique); Paul Webster (Zambia); and Ut To and Karen Vo-To (Vietnam).

The two most important challenges we face as CSGMs are: 1) to more effectively itinerate young adult missionaries; and 2) to partner with the UMCOR/Hunger Committee to boost annual conference giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. While many churches readily give to United Methodist Committee on Relief disaster and development work, the OGH offering is the sole source of UMCOR's administrative funds that enables the committee to give 100% of all Advance Special donations to the specified projects.

Kay and Lynn DeMoss

METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

Methodist Children's Home Society (MCHS) responds to the needs of abused and neglected children by providing an array of housing, educational, clinical and therapeutic services. From the moment we opened our doors in 1917, our vision has been to care for children when no one else could or would. This involves providing integrity, respect and love to children and their families during their most difficult times. This care sparks hope and promise for a better future...a future that is better for children and families, and ultimately the entire community.

Our Programs...

Residential Care – We raise responsible young men on our 72-acre campus in Redford, known as The Children's Village. Our seven cottages house up to 70 boys who are in need of sanctuary from a chaotic past.

Foster Care – Foster care provides safe havens for children who have been removed from their parents' care because of abuse and neglect. Foster parents provide compassionate daily care until these children are able to return to their biological families or are adopted.

Adoption – Adoption creates forever families for children whose biological parents can no longer care for them. There is pure joy when children and adults join together to become a family.

Literacy Programs – MCHS has created programs to help students excel academically, both on our Redford campus and in area schools. The new virtual academy enables students to earn high school credits on campus.

Transitional Housing – In September of 2013, MCHS was approved by the state to provide a voluntary program for young men aged 18-22 who have “aged out” of the foster care system. These young men will have the opportunity for structured housing while receiving guidance and mentoring. Attending school or working for 20 hours per week is a requirement of the program.

2013 Highlights....

- MCHS cared for 76 young men in our residential program and 58 MCHS foster homes cared for 141 vulnerable children.
- The Transitional Housing Program was approved and added to the agency contract.
- Redford Schools and MCHS took one step closer to finalizing the plan for a classroom on campus starting September of 2014.
- Campus wide activities included summer picnics, Family Fun Day, Summer Bridges program, Trunk or Treat Event, Foster Care bowling party and a Holiday Open House.
- Connected with hundreds of friends, donors, volunteers and Methodist church mission groups.
- Bishop Kiesey visited campus for a tour and meeting with the MCHS Executive Committee.
- Reverend Paul Perez toured the MCHS campus.

In 2013, with the help of many, Methodist Children’s Home Society was able to fulfill its mission: To meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the children in our care, develop personal, family and community relationships that will contribute to healthy opportunities for the children to reach their fullest potential, and to advocate on behalf of all children.

M. Beth Tarquinio, MSSA, LMSW, Executive Director
Kelly Kirkpatrick, Director of Development and Marketing

SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

There is no mission without u! Learn more about how you can be a part of mission through United Methodist Women and The United Methodist Church by attending Mission u. This mission education opportunity is for everyone. Mission u is a cooperative event sponsored by the Conference United Methodist Women and the Conference Board of Global Ministries.

In 2013 we met at Central Michigan University and studied:

1. Geographical Study – The Roma of Europe, led by Phyllis Jackson and Wayne Banks. The Roma are the largest minority group in Europe, who have been enslaved, shunned, shut-out, and shot. We learned their history, how they are treated today, their life style and spirituality, and how the church is working alongside them.
2. Social Issue – Poverty, led by Rev. Julie Liske. Our Christian faith invites each of us and our faith communities to become agents of God’s compassion and healing in a wounded world. Poverty has a grave impact on women and children.
3. Spiritual Growth – Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly, was led by Nancy Fancher. This study looked at our spirituality and engagement in mission in light of John Wesley’s two-fold thrust on “personal holiness” and “spiritual holiness.”

Children and youth studied migration with stories from the Bible, the world and the United States. The children had Nichea Ver Veer Guy and Ronda Libbert as leaders. Patsy Coffman and Rev. Mark Mitchell led the youth.

The Mid-West Distribution Center truck was at Mission u to collect items for flood buckets for UMCOR.

Julia Deemer, Dean

TOWN AND COUNTRY MINISTRIES

The second half of 2013 was a busy time for Town and Country Ministries. We welcomed and responded to scholarship requests from local pastors and seminary students with a heart for small town and rural ministry. We were able to put together a packet for new pastors that was handed out at School for Pastoral Ministry in August. The packet included such items as: an overview of the smaller membership church, planning for effective ministry; financial stewardship, Christian education, spiritual formation, and music in the small membership church; cooperative ministry, dynamics of the small membership church, and many more areas of interest. November found us supporting the Detroit Conference's Circuit Riders Retreat in West Branch with our presence. Bishop Kiesey was the keynote speaker and she shared with us her journey through ministry with its trials and joys. We are hoping to continue our involvement with the Detroit Conference in this event. The time of retreat and sharing with other town and country ministers is invaluable.

Linda Burton-Collier, Chair

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY HOUSE

Summary of ministry:

United Methodist Community House (UMCH) has been a venerable, trusted resource in Grand Rapids, MI, providing expansive services for everyone from infants to senior citizens in a warm, inclusive, multi-cultural atmosphere since 1902. UMCH continues to fulfill its mission *"to increase the ability of children, youth, adults and families to succeed in a diverse community"* by treating people with dignity and respect while providing the support services they need. Some of UMCH's strengths include:

- Proximity of the facility to its client base.
- Proven and recognized history of innovation in a full spectrum of services.
- The series of support services that UMCH provides (child care, food, transportation) that eliminates barriers for people in need of services and,
- UMCH's long history of collaboration with other service providers in and around Grand Rapids.

Community Impact:

The work we do at UMCH is a direct result of the needs that are emerging in our target population. We are centrally located in a neighborhood that is vulnerable and whose residents are in need of a trusted community center that has supportive services. Increased pressures on families and single-parent homes, reductions in school services, increases in crime and drugs, prostitution, alcohol and tobacco addictions combine to create a situation of crisis for many of the individuals in our neighborhood. Programming includes:

- ⇒ Need: Quality, affordable child care
Addressing the Need: UMCH Nationally Accredited Child Development Center
Impact: UMCH served over 65 children in 2013
- ⇒ Need: A safe and nurturing place for children to go before and after school
Addressing the Need: UMCH After-School services
Impact: UMCH served over 100 youth during the school year and summer
- ⇒ Need: Assistance for seniors adults (meals, activities, transportation)
Addressing the Need: UMCH Senior Development Center
Impact: UMCH served on average 65 seniors on a daily basis
- ⇒ Need: Assistance for women involved in the vicious cycle of prostitution and substance abuse
Addressing the Need: UMCH First Step House (transitional housing for women)
Impact: UMCH served over 15 women through transitional housing

As UMCH looks ahead, we are committed to the future and will work diligently to ensure that this diversely rich organization will continue to support unmet needs in the community. We encourage you to visit www.umchousegr.org, where you can keep up-to-date on UMCH activities and agency funders, upcoming events and opportunities for involvement and to sign up to receive agency communications.

Richard Clanton, Chief Executive Director

UNITED METHODIST METROPOLITAN MINISTRY OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS

Vision We see a day when God's peace and justice is a reality for all people in the greater Grand Rapids community.

Mission The mission of United Methodist Metropolitan Ministry of Greater Grand Rapids (Metro Ministry) is to inspire and equip persons and congregations to serve God in transforming the greater Grand Rapids community.

About Us Metro Ministry is a cooperative of representatives of Grand Rapids United Methodist congregations seeking to transform the area into a more peaceful and just community. We are called and committed to healthy, ecumenical, multi-cultural relationships that empower our mutual work toward this common goal. We are guided by the principles of *Communities of Shalom*, and by the ministry of John Wesley, who viewed his parish not as a building or a single congregation, but as the world God loves. Our primary focus through 2016 is to mobilize United Methodist congregations for vital urban ministry through practical support and partnership.

Progress Toward Goals in 2013

- Strengthen connections and relationships between and among United Methodist congregations.
 - Offered a three-week, all-Metro group study of "Bearing Fruit," attended by 20 persons from eight congregations.
 - Participated in critical conversations and process with two fragile Grand Rapids United Methodist congregations discerning and moving into their future.
 - Organized, helped implement, and helped finance a major renovation of the La Nueva Esperanza parsonage in preparation for the new pastor.
 - Executive Director and one Metro leadership team member attended a conference on cooperative ministry; learned of the Circles Initiative, a process to form supportive partnerships with persons attempting to rise out of poverty. Circles may become a significant portion of Metro's focus.
- Support new ministry initiatives.
 - Granted funding totaling \$11,750 to three start-up ministry initiatives and three ongoing programs.
- Serve as wise stewards of Metro-owned buildings.
 - Continued collaboration with Dwelling Place, local renovation/revitalization non-profit agency, to re-purpose 100 Burton Street into affordable senior living, including working with neighbors, Conference Chancellor, city government, architect, and others.
 - Discerning future of Hope Center (1933 Buchanan, formerly Olivet United Methodist Church).
 - Partnering with current rental tenant toward sale of 2319 Prospect as she works to repair credit and apply for mortgage through Inner City Christian Federation.
- Increase financial stability.
- Communicate well and often Metro's vision for and service in the greater Grand Rapids community.
 - Revamped website is up and running; discerning best practices for most effective use of website.

The Metro Leadership Team is deeply grateful for the continued financial support of Grand Rapids congregations through Ministry Shares giving, and to the Grand Rapids District Board of Missions/Conference Board of Global Ministries, from both of whom we receive the bulk of our funding. We believe that as our ministry focus narrows, the coming years will find Metro much better positioned to apply for grant funding beyond the churches and district.

Rev. Julie A. Liske, Executive Director

VOLUNTEER IN MISSION

The Year of our Lord 2013 saw a continued growth in the number of teams churches are sending in response to natural disasters, domestic or internationally, and/or in response to opportunities to build new facilities, conduct vacation schools, provide medical assistance and be a presence to people in need.

I cannot state strongly enough the importance of being vigilant in being sure that team leaders have received appropriate training regarding the responsibilities of the leader and the team. A major concern is always the safety of the team and its members.

At the end of 2013 a major change occurred in the insurance available to teams. The General Board of Global Ministries will no longer be making available insurance for teams. NO TEAM SHOULD BE COMMISSIONED WITHOUT INSURANCE COVERAGE.

Currently there are three options available through jurisdictional offices of Volunteer In Mission.

1. North Central Jurisdiction, contact umvimncj.org/NCJVIM/Forms.html or
2. South East Jurisdiction, contact umvim.org or
3. North East Jurisdiction, contact www.sites.google.com/site/nejumvim1/home/forms

We are in the North Central Jurisdiction. Each offers a little different coverage depending upon the needs of the team.

A new resource for team leaders and members has been published by Discipleship Resources and is entitled "A MISSION JOURNEY – A Handbook for Volunteers." It is available from Discipleship Resources, Cokesbury, Amazon and is even available for the Kindle Reader.

Rev. Dave Morton, Volunteer in Mission Co-coordinator

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

The West Michigan Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (BHECM) advocates, secures and allocates resources, holds accountable, promotes and evaluates United Methodist campus ministries in West Michigan which offer opportunity to:

- proclaim the Gospel,
- offer hospitality to all,
- deepen, enrich and mature the Christian Faith of students, staff and faculty through commitment to Jesus Christ, and
- assist them in their service and leadership to the world – in, through and beyond the Church.

Through BHECM the ministry of the Church is extended to five campuses and our two Michigan United Methodist-related schools:

- Central Michigan University
- Ferris State University
- Grand Valley State University
- Michigan State University
- Western Michigan University
- Adrian College
- Albion College

Their individual reports are in this same volume.

Campus ministry takes seriously its role in the single stream of Christian discipleship that runs through the local church, Sunday school, youth group, and Christian camping. We faithfully receive all persons who come to campus, and come of age in heart, soul, strength and mind during their campus years.

Campus ministry is fertile soil for leadership development and vocational discernment. Our Central Michigan University Wesley Foundation Director, Charlie Farnum, and eight students (including one high school senior) participated in the every-two-year *Exploration* event. It is an event for young adults age 18-26 to hear, discern, and respond to God's call to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. This year's event was in Denver, Colorado. In the words of Jenna Johnson, a WMU Wesley student leader and church musician at Hartford United Methodist Church:

"I am also grateful to the greater church community on behalf of the friends who journeyed with me. Exploration was an encouraging, uplifting reminder that not all young people have abandoned the church and that none of us who are experiencing the call to ministry have to enter a new and potentially radical lifestyle alone."

In 2013 each of our five campus ministries successfully completed accountability studies and site visits which identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). This was in accordance with our responsibility outlined in *The Book of Discipline*:

“To evaluate schools, colleges, universities, and campus ministries related to the annual conference, with concern for the quality of their performance, the integrity of their mission, and their response to the missional goals of the general Church and the annual conference.” (The 2012 *Book of Discipline*, ¶634.4a7. Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry).

Our Conference Merit Award program is funded by our United Methodist Student Day offerings and faithfully administered by Kathleen Kline-Hudson. The award is given to a student from the West Michigan Annual Conference attending any United Methodist-related institution in the United States who has a minimum one-year membership in The United Methodist Church and a GPA of 2.5 or higher. Since the 2001/2002 academic year we have awarded \$16,200 to 28 different West Michigan Conference United Methodist students attending United Methodist-related schools, primarily Adrian and Albion colleges. The 2013-14 recipient is Grace Freeman, attending Albion College.

We rejoice in the opportunities to extend the outreaching love of Christ on campus! Thank you, West Michigan Conference, for your continued financial investment in ministry with the most concentrated population of young adults in our culture.

Jeff Williams, Incoming BHECM Chair

ADRIAN COLLEGE

Adrian College continues its nationally-recognized theological leadership in several ways. We are committed to street-level, student-centered ministry, and we combine this movement with academic depth.

We don't say that we have been a part of the Wesleyan family since 1859 without taking the claim seriously. We lead through concrete, living expressions of the tradition.

There are eight different spiritual life groups on campus and weekly chapel services. Our staff includes one chaplain and six student ministers. Chaplain Chris Momany teaches as a member of the philosophy/religion department and publishes in both academic and popular church journals. Dr. Momany's work appears in the national edition of the *United Methodist Reporter* and in the online resource *Ministry Matters*. He has also been published recently in the *Christian Century*. His book on the Wesleyan/Holiness ethic of love is titled *Doing Good: A Grace-Filled Approach to Holiness* and is published by Abingdon Press.

The Adrian College Chaplaincy is grounded in a theological commitment to the intrinsic worth of all people. This conviction guides our approach to campus community and drives our current witness against “human trafficking” or modern-day slavery.

Highlights of this year's ministry include:

- A Wednesday Noon Chapel Series focused on “Old Testament Royalty” (Fall) and “Miracles” (Spring).
- Adrian College students wowed the professional organization Historians Against Slavery at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, September 2013.
- Our Adrian College student delegation to “Exploration 2013” in Denver was the largest from any single ministry site in United Methodism.

In March of 2014, Chaplain Momany joined scholars from several seminaries in presenting to the Wesleyan Theological Society, Nampa, Idaho. Momany will also be a featured lecturer at the Bay View Association in June of 2014.

For more information about Adrian College's ministry, contact Dr. Chris Momany at 517-265-5161, ext. 4211. To tour the campus and meet with an admissions representative, call 800-877-2246 or 517-265-5161.

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

ALBION COLLEGE

In 2013, Albion College nurtured disciples of Jesus Christ through living out John Wesley's vision for higher education – nurturing knowledge and vital piety. United Methodist students engaged their faith in their academic experience, through a rigorous and acclaimed liberal arts education.

Albion College's spiritual life continued to engage the heart. In Christian life, Albion College Chapel (under the Chaplaincy) continued to provide a visible, ecumenical, and deep sharing and fellowship experience. As always, United Methodist students preparing for ministry were core Chapel leaders. Chaplaincy continued to lead Christian unity efforts on campus and in the community. Student organizations provided a wide array of Bible study opportunities.

For all students, spiritual life at Albion College continued to be centered on engaging pluralism. This included a very strong interfaith council, twelve diversity organizations, and partnerships with numerous academic departments and area interfaith communities of faith. Out of this rich diversity context came a variety of expressions of learning. Here are some examples:

- Chaplaincy led the campus in its second and third year of participation in the President's Interfaith and Community Service Challenge.
- Continued participation in the Network for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges).
- A vibrant exploring ministry peer group.
- Over 250 students, faculty, staff, and community members attended both Taste of Blackness in February and Diwali in November.
- Extensive mentoring work with under-represented students at Albion College and in the Albion community.
- Vital support for Albion College's LGBTQ-Christian community.
- Continued partnership with Motown Mission and Cass Community Social Services, both in the City of Detroit.
- Chaplaincy's support of First United Methodist Church of Albion's relationship-building trip to Haiti, working through Haiti Artisans for Peace International (HAPI).

Through it all, disciples continued to be nurtured through one-to-one clinical pastoral care and spiritual mentoring with the College Chaplain. This included direct support for the bereaved, victims of discrimination and abuse, campus leaders, and those discerning their vocation.

Albion College continues to be an amazing celebration of shared mission. God has been glorified through this historical relationship.

On behalf of Albion College www.albion.edu, I warmly welcome members of the West Michigan Annual Conference to campus. In particular, please encourage youth to consider Albion College in their college discernment process, and to get involved in spiritual life once they get here. Albion College is a great place to develop as the person God intends.

Please be in touch! chaplain@albion.edu or 517-629-0492. Let me know how we may continue to expand our mutual mission.

Rev. Daniel J. McQuown, College Chaplain and Director, Global Diversity

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, exercise classes, and meals provide an avenue for non-Christians to come in contact with our community. Every year is a "new church start" – every year, we lose our most experienced leaders and 20-35% 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 appreciate your support – spiritual, emotional, and physical.

Number and profile of the students, staff, and other campus members participating

In 2013, 30 different members of the campus community regularly participated in Wesley activities. Twenty of these were involved in discipleship activities. This is a 50% increase overall and a 17%

increase in discipleship from 2012, as a new staffing model helped stabilize our administrative support. At year end, we had a full-time director, 20 hour/week administrative assistant, and five hour/week music leader. We are moving in 2014 to a quarter-time director (20-30 hours/week during the semester), 25 hour/week assistant director, and 50 hours/week of student staff as we continue to seek ways to efficiently operate with an under-funded budget. 77% of the regular participants were undergraduate students; 60% were female (compared with 55% of undergraduates); two (7%) were members of ethnic minorities (compared with 13% of undergraduates).

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 2013, we helped start the "Isabella County Restoration House," an organization working towards a permanent homeless shelter in Mount Pleasant; the ICRH just started a rotating shelter, which opened the first week of 2014 at Wesley. We also held monthly "Random Acts of Kindness" days where we picked up trash, raked leaves, etc., around the community, and won the "Golden Shoe" for raising the highest amount per walker in the Mount Pleasant Area CROP Hunger Walk. In cooperation with the other Wesleys, we raised \$6,000 for Hispanic outreach in 2013, as pledged at the 2012 Annual Conference.

Brief summary of cooperative activities with local churches

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 in organizational health. He provides training in leadership, family systems theory, and in running non-profit organizations for the student staff.

Other pertinent information the Annual Conference needs to be aware of

I'm often asked "How many students do you have?" This question has no simple answer. I have hundreds if you count each person I see over the course of a semester; I have under 20 if you count those I see every week. But among those 20, growth happens that I rarely saw in nine years pastoring local churches. Our culture heavily invests in the college years, and for good reason. I encourage our conference to do the same.

Charles Farnum, Director, Wesley@CMU

WESLEY FOUNDATION AT FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY (FSU)

The past year has been a period of transition, challenge and growth for the Wesley Foundation at Ferris State University. We have been without a full time director since July and are currently in the midst of a director search. We have been very fortunate to have Dennis Dull, Director of Albright Park Camp, serving as interim development director since the beginning of the fall semester. Local pastors, board members, and students have stepped up over the past school year to help fill the void during this time of transition.

The 2013-14 school year has been characterized by an increase in student leadership and ownership of the ministry as well as an improved connection between the foundation board members and the students. Dennis, our interim development director, has been a catalyst for much of the change. Having expertise in the areas of board development and donor development, he has led the board and students through a visioning process that has resulted in significant changes in culture and focus. Under Dennis' leadership, the board has been examining our vision for the future, the gifts that individual board members bring to the table, how these gifts can best be used in the ministry and how we can engage the larger church body in our work. During the past months the board has doubled the frequency and increased the productivity of board meetings as well as increasing their engagement in the lives of the students. Our student leadership team has expanded from five members to eight adding three new positions: worship leader, campus outreach, and church outreach. The students meet weekly to assess the previous week's events and to plan upcoming activities.

The number of students attending our Thursday evening home-cooked meals has increased by 50% over the past school year to an average of 18 while the number of students staying for the post-meal worship/study has more than doubled to an average of 15 students. Worship has been student led and studies have been led by a combination of pastors and students. During the past year we have seen an increase in the number of students taking leadership roles in the ministry; we've seen students stepping

out in faith beyond their comfort zones; and we've seen students opening up, sharing with each other, and growing spiritually from their study and their engagement in ministry.

A large part of our focus this school year has been on getting the word out about our ministry: making people aware of who we are, what we are doing, and how they can be involved. During the fall semester the Wesley students responded to an invitation from Anita Hahn and a group from the Grand Traverse District to be an integral part of a worship team leading services in Ludington, Petoskey, and Traverse City. The students, along with instrumentalists from the district, led worship and shared testimony with the congregations. Students have spoken at seven churches in the Heartland District and have hosted after-service coffee hours. They have hosted a New Orleans-style meal and cake auction introducing themselves to the church, sharing their stories, and raising awareness of and support for their upcoming mission trip. Chelsey Treglia, our half-time Program and Communications Coordinator, has been instrumental in spreading the word about our ministry as well.

Another highlight of the year was our Fall Retreat at Albright Park Camp which was themed "building a foundation and lighting a fire." Twelve students participated in a powerful weekend which climaxed in a baptism renewal service held in the Hersey River. Several students renewed their baptismal vows and one student was baptized!

We have continued most of our service and campus outreach activities from previous years including the monthly planning, preparing, and serving of a free community meal to 30-60 people at Third Avenue United Methodist Church.

Twenty students and five chaperones will be heading to New Orleans in March for a week of mission work with the Epworth Project, an organization best known for repairing hurricane-damaged homes. This is the largest group of students we have taken to date!

In conclusion, despite many of the challenges we have faced this year (such as funding cuts, leadership changes, flooding in our student gathering space, roof replacement) God has been good to us! We have seen growth in numbers of students, spiritual growth, growth in awareness of the ministry, and growth in the engagement of the board of directors. We look forward with great anticipation to what God has in store for us in the coming year. Thank you all for your continued prayers and support!

Dan Adsmund, Chair, Board of Directors

WESLEY FELLOWSHIP AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY (GVSU)

Be you. With us. This motto was adopted by the Wesley Fellowship Board of Trustees and by the student ministry in February 2013. It describes our ministry very well. At Wesley, all persons are encouraged to bring their full selves: their gifts, their convictions, and their doubts. Together we are building a ministry that treats all persons with grace and respect, hoping that those who need comfort at this point in life will find it with us and those who need challenging will also find it. We strive to be diverse, inclusive, hospitable, and God-honoring in all that we do.

We form community through weekly worship services, Sunday meals; fellowship gatherings around movies, crafts or games; and service opportunities. Over spring break twelve students and I worked with the Motown Mission Experience and Motor City Blight Busters helping to restore Detroit. We also engaged the interfaith community of suburban Detroit by visiting a progressive synagogue, an Islamic mosque, the Holocaust Memorial, and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Our Fellowship is smaller in size, having an average worship attendance of fifteen persons this past spring semester and six in the fall semester and typically six to eight on Sunday for a meal, but through events like our Random Act of Holy Communion, we are able to engage a broader segment of the campus and be a blessing to many. Several times over the year, students have stopped in to our worship service (held in semi-public space on campus) because they needed to hear a word from God right then.

The ministry of presence on a college campus means constantly building community, training new leaders, reaching out, and offering events to meet changing student needs and availability. It can be a daunting task. We look forward to 2014 when we'll use grant money from the Division on Ministry with Young People to employ two students to help us engage the campus even more effectively and continue to offer Wesleyan theology in a public university dominated by other voices.

Rev. Gregory W. Lawton, Director

WESLEY at WMU (Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo)

As the Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo celebrated 90 years of ministry, we were able to reflect on how we have engaged in ministry on and off campus through maintaining a culture of mission, building a system of connection, intentional leadership development and discipleship.

Wesley engaged in monthly mission, collaborating with area churches in serving the homeless through Martha's Table, and partnering with Sunnyside United Methodist Church at the Kalamazoo Free Store. We again offered several spring break opportunities. Nine students were in mission with Rev. Stephen and Karen Small through their ministry in Quilali, Nicaragua. Twelve students worked with United Methodist Women and St. Paul United Methodist Church in New York City learning and serving in areas of food justice. Six students stayed locally to serve with various agencies that offer services to the homeless in our first annual "Staycation" Kalamazoo spring break service opportunity.

Wesley of Kalamazoo continues to partner with the Voices of WMU Gospel Choir, offering Bible study, fellowship and worship. Wesley continues its long history of support of the Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center with a strong emphasis in peace making/keeping and works of justice.

This year saw the birth of a new ministry in collaboration with local churches. The Wesley Rethink Intern to Local Church program placed ten students to serve in a variety of ministry areas while learning leadership skills and engaging in growing as disciples. Additionally Wesley trains up new leaders through its ministry coordinator program in which six students plan and lead ministry on campus. We also celebrate sending five students to Exploration, the United Methodist conference for young adults discerning a call to ordained ministry.

Wesley has added a new worship service to the weekly schedule which has enabled students the opportunity to experience different styles of worship and opportunities to be in worship amidst busy schedules. Fall and statewide retreats, along with the small group ministry, gave students the opportunity to grow in their faith.

Wesley of Kalamazoo was blessed with a grant from the General Board of Discipleship for leadership development and discipleship ministries and has been recognized by the general board for our work in these areas.

Wesley of Kalamazoo continues to enjoy an ongoing relationship with Western Michigan University that has enabled our ministry to remain in the current facility while embarking on plans for a new student ministry center, to be built only 1200 feet west of the present building. Wesley of Kalamazoo has the reputation for being "the church on campus that reaches out in mercy and justice to the campus community." –Chris Sligh, WMU Student Affairs Staff

As we look to the next 90 years of ministry on campus, we know the way in which we continue to be "the church on campus" will change. We will need to reach out to the ever-increasing number of military and international students. Forms of worship and the way we offer small groups will look different. But at Wesley of Kalamazoo we look forward to continuing to move toward our vision "to be an authentic, transforming, Christ-centered community."

Lisa Batten, Director

WESLEY at MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU)

Wesley at Michigan State University seeks to be a Christian Community of young adults that loves without exception, serves without judgment and rejoices without restraint. At the core of this intentional Christian community is a group of 60 young adults who move beyond the attractional model of ministry by reaching out in mission with the MSU community of over 50,000 students. We build Christian community through three facets: worship, discipleship and mission.

Worship – MSU Wesley campus ministry is edified by an evening worship that we call Thank God It's Thursday. The service begins at 8pm and involves 25 to 30 students offering praise and worship to God on an evening that is traditionally a popular party night. Eric Aten is our worship director and together with Pastor Bill Chu they lead a team of students in designing worship that connects young adults to the gospel through music, media, message, and meditation. MSU Wesley holds on-campus worship events at places like Wells Hall and the Brody Complex throughout the year. In September we partnered again with the Shalom Centre for Justice and Peace, and the MSU Interfaith Council, to host the International Day of Peace service. This event featured a number of faith perspectives including Christian, Muslim and

Judaism. And it was the first year we were able to have a rabbi, imam and pastor in a room together. There were over 100 participants in attendance at this event. In 2014 we are looking forward to collaborating with Sycamore Creek Community in a new church start venture.

Discipleship – MSU Wesley builds disciples in community through small group ministry and fellowship events. Lauren Niswonger and Kaitlyn Szczypka are the student leaders who attend to this key area of ministry. It is in the small group where a message from worship and the reading of Scripture has the greatest impact on the life of a young adult. We offer an ever-expanding number of small groups including Makers Club, Men’s Bible Study, Women’s group, Pub Theology, and Holy Club. Sharing the joy of Christ is a big part of Christian Disciplined Discipleship, so MSU Wesley offers a variety of events for students to enjoy. We hold cookouts, concerts, tailgate parties, and movie nights. Fun-Day Monday is an on-campus event where we connect with students in the wild! On April 5, 2014 we are hosting the 2014 Keep Making Peace Conference featuring Bishop Deborah Kieseey and Logan Mehl-Laituri. Logan is the author of *For God and Country: in that Order*, and is a conscientious objector who is committed to veterans’ care. We expect 300 people to attend this event; you can register at www.msuwesley.org/kmp2014.

Mission – When MSU Wesley engages in mission and service with others the gospel is vivified. Our leadership teammate Keeley Davenport helps to create mission opportunities for our community. This year we are heading to Jamaica to work with Kay and Merlin Pratt at www.pappasministries.org for our alternative spring break. In 2014 we will partner with the Lansing District on an emerging urban ministry initiative, and continue building our relationship with Cass Community Services and Motown Mission in Detroit.

William W. Chu, Campus Minister

COMMITTEE ON HISPANIC / LATINO MINISTRIES

The vision of Hispanic/Latino Ministries in the West Michigan Conference is to be a vibrant connection of disciples of Jesus Christ transforming our church and our communities by intentionally training leaders to be engaged in the creation of faith communities who are responsive, inclusive, multicultural, multigenerational, and proactively practicing social justice.

We have received the first year of matching grant monies of a three-year grant from the National Plan of Hispanic/Latino Ministries to support new and existing Hispanic/Latino ministries in the West Michigan Conference. The three main focus areas are: leadership development, new and existing faith communities, and community outreach.

2014 will bring assessments, workshops and plans for action throughout the West Michigan Conference in the following areas: congregational and community resources, worship and celebrations, language and literacy, mentoring of new Hispanic/Latino lay adult and youth leadership, and ministry sustainability.

In 2013, we also welcomed two new positions in the conference to aide in the development of Hispanic/Latino ministries. In July 2013, Sonya Luna started working as the Michigan Area Conference Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministries. Her role is to work with the committee to support the development of Hispanic/Latino ministries. In July 2013, Rev. Nohemi Ramirez started working as the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Faith Community Developer and Mentor for the West Michigan Conference. Her role is to partner with both the director and with the committee to work with local churches to develop faith communities and to mentor Hispanic/Latino leaders.

Stacy Mabus Caballero, Chair

JOHN WESLEY ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PASTORS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

The John Wesley Association of Local Pastors and Associate Members (JWA) had an active and fruitful 2013. In April, the JWA met at Lansing Central United Methodist Church. New officers were elected. Mike Riegler will remain as chair, Jeremy Wicks is now the vice-chair, and Jon Pohl is serving as the secretary-treasurer. Many thanks were offered for the long-time service of out-going officers George Lawton and Nancy Patera. The most important event of the day was a shared lunch with clients of Lansing Central’s “Open Door Ministry.” The JWA also held another “Preachapalooza.” Four pastors preached, bringing the grand total to 21 Local Pastors and Associate Members who have preached sermons for critique and

comment. A panel of experts provided immediate feedback for the edification of the speakers and the audience (mostly other pastors). This year's panel included district superintendents David Hills and Tamara Williams, and (a first time event!) our bishop. Thank you, Bishop Kiesey. The event was a huge success, and will be repeated in the spring of 2014. In June a lunch meeting of the JWA was well attended during annual conference. In September, George and Beverly Lawton represented the JWA at the annual meeting of The United Methodist Church National Association of Associate Members and Local Pastors. In October, a plan of district-level meetings was implemented. The JWA stands ready to support all of our pastors and churches in any way possible, as we seek to become "the best pastors we can be," in the effort to be ever more effective in "making disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world."

Michael A. Riegler, Chair

LAKE LOUISE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, CAMP and RETREAT CENTER

Lake Louise came into being in 1934 through the generosity of the Horner family of Eaton Rapids as a gift "to all the Methodists of Michigan." The Horners had acquired a large tract of cut-over timberland after the logging era of Michigan was over. As the Great Depression descended upon the country, the Horners approached their pastor, Rev. Stanley Niles, with the idea of giving 5,500 acres away. The idea of a church youth camp began to take shape. Through the action of a group of visionary people, the plan culminated in the creation of the Lake Louise Christian Community, encompassing a youth camp and creating cottage sites around the lake upon which clergy families could build a place of their own. The Lake Louise Christian Community would hold the land in trust for the two Michigan conferences. Christian camping began at Lake Louise in 1935 and has continued without interruption ever since. Approximately half of the original gift was sold to the State of Michigan in 1935 to provide for the development of the site. LLCC still holds title to 2400 acres of the original gift. The land is managed under the Conservation Forestry Act, providing for the sustainable harvesting of timber and insuring the undeveloped character of the land and the lake.

Lake Louise is a cottager community of 126 families connected to a camp, retreat and conference ministry affiliated with both West Michigan and Detroit conferences of The United Methodist Church. Lake Louise is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees, including four members appointed by Detroit Annual Conference and four members appointed by the West Michigan Annual Conference. By Lake Louise bylaws, trustees generally serve three (3) three-year terms, for a total of nine (9) years.

The West Michigan appointees and their year of appointment are:

Rev. Deborah Johnson, President (2005)	Inge Whittemore (2008)
Rev. Phil Friedrich (2010)	TBA

The Detroit Conference appointees and their year of appointment are:

Rev. Amy Mayo-Moyle (2005)	Rev. Mark Johnston (2010)
Rev. George Covintree (2011)	Mr. Les Ryckman (2011)

Lake Louise's summer camping ministries grew by 13.9% in 2013 making this the seventh consecutive summer of increase. In the summer of 2013 there were four high school camps, a family camp, a multi-age Choir Camp (grades 4-12), five elementary camps and a middle school camp, in addition to a variety of volunteer groups, an adult retreat, and a training experience for mission interns from Detroit and West Michigan conferences. Lake Louise's year-round retreat ministry involved over 1,000 participants in 2013, serving pastors, lay people and youth from Detroit and West Michigan conferences, regional Protestant and Catholic parishes, the local community, and service groups including Habitat for Humanity.

In May of 2013 Lake Louise Christian Community was awarded a Forest Legacy Grant setting aside 750 acres in a conservation easement protecting a significant portion of this special property from future development in perpetuity.

The Boyne Country Service Project, June 16-22, 2013, involved 42 participants in 13 projects around Charlevoix and Otsego counties. BCS is a week-long work mission experience for youth groups. Groups stay at Lake Louise and work each day with community service agencies around our area. Fifty registrations for this program have already been received for 2014. If your youth group is looking for a work mission within Michigan we invite your participation.

Lake Louise continues to pursue a scheduled program of facility improvements supported by major gifts from donors and volunteers from churches. We are indebted to work groups from Mason, Alden, Holland First, Dearborn First, Traverse City Central and Epsilon United Methodist churches. These groups gave countless hours and immeasurable skill to projects ranging from painting to helping construct new summer cabins. The new Vogel summer cabin was finished in September and is ready for the 2014 camp season. The Carr Cabin, the second new summer cabin, is under construction and planned to be ready for the 2014 camp season. These new cabins will include toilets and showers. As new summer cabins come online we will be able in time to close the old central bath houses.

Lake Louise is proud of its heritage as a “gift given to all the Methodists of Michigan.” We remain an asset to churches, clergy, ministry professionals and community groups seeking a place of rest and renewal in a beautiful natural setting. We invite all members of the two United Methodist conferences in Michigan to pay us a visit, to join us for a retreat, to send their children to our camps, and to volunteer as a counselor or work camp volunteer. We are glad to be partnering with you in this ministry.

Rev. David G. Gladstone, Executive Director

MICHIGAN AREA COMMITTEE ON THE EPISCOPACY

The work of the Michigan Area Committee on the Episcopacy is defined by the *Discipline*. We meet four times a year with Bishop Kiesey and her clergy assistant, Rev. Dr. Bill Dobbs. Our main function is to support the bishop in the oversight of the Michigan Area. In addition the committee keeps the bishop advised concerning conditions within the area.

Our committee is blessed to work with Bishop Deb and Rev. Dobbs sharing experiences on how together we can work to fulfill the mission of the church, especially in the Michigan Area. We also acknowledge the work of their two assistants, Deana Nelson and Vicki Gibbs.

Bishop Kiesey’s leadership is felt throughout our state, and we are grateful that we can work side by side with her to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Genie Bank, Chair

MICHIGAN AREA INDIAN WORKERS’ CONFERENCE (IWC)

IWC Executive Committee:

Chairperson: Norm Pigeon

Vice Chairperson: Carmen Misner (Detroit Conference)

Secretary/Interim Treasurer: Valerie Maidens (Northport)

Detroit Conference: Jerry DeVine, Director of Connectional Ministries

West Michigan Conference: Benton Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministries

2013 Meeting Dates:

April 26-27 @ Mt. Pleasant Chippewa Indian Mission

October 4-5 @ Kewadin Indian Mission

IWC Church Delegates:

Phyllis John – Kewadin

Donna and Jack Squires – Northport

Carol White Pigeon – Mt Pleasant Chippewa

Lillian DeKoning – Bradley

Judy Johnson – Greensky Hill

Betty McBride – Salem

Carmen Misner – Detroit Conference; Saganing; Zeba

Amy Alberts – Oscoda

Native American Church Pastors:

Thomas John, Sr – Kewadin and Northport
 Jonathan Mays – Greensky Hill
 Owen White Pigeon – Mt Pleasant Chippewa
 Nancy Boelens – Bradley and Salem
 Briony Desotell – Oscoda
 Stephen Rhoads – Zeba

Church Reports (April/October 2013):**Mt Pleasant Chippewa – Pastor Owen White Pigeon:**

- Pastor Owen and Carol celebrated their 26th anniversary this year.
- Sunday service at 11 am; evening service at 7 pm; Bible study at 7 pm (Tuesdays); mid-week service at 7 pm (Thursdays).
- Eight children baptized (each received a Bible and hand-made blanket); three new members joined (2013).
- Sunday school attendance average 20 children for two classes. Our attendance has been steadily growing through steadfast faith and prayers. Our congregation continues to do outreach ministry and the growth is a blessing.
- Discipleship class on Thursdays. Disciples have begun their outreach to develop ministries.
- Youth Ministry – Rob White Pigeon is youth leader.
- Our disciples/lay pastors have stepped up to do complete services on Sunday. As they continue to grow and work with our people to resolve problems and differences, we see Jesus doing awesome work through them.
- Easter Revival with Brother Sam McClellan, well attended.
- Camp Meeting August 25 - September 2, 2013, with Brother Sam McClellan. We had great attendance for all services and fed a lot of people. Our camp cooks did an excellent job planning and preparing the meals – inviting, resourceful and good. Our camp meeting was a spiritual success in song, word and fellowship.
- Thanksgiving Revival – November 28 - December 2 with Brother Sam McClellan and the Peters Family Singers from Canada. We fasted and prayed October 19 - November 27 (40 days).
- Watch Night Service – December 31 with Brother Sam McClellan. We fasted and prayed December 24 - December 30.
- Church front completed, will seat an additional 80 people and includes a new sound room.

Bradley Indian UMC - Pastor Sandy VandenBrink (April 2013):

- Sunday worship at 10 am with great attendance and tithing; monthly brunch continues.
- Centennial celebration being planned – looking for old photos. Spring cleaning: install new carpet; repair and paint pews. Gun Lake Tribe will repair the old pews and do the landscaping.
- Church in need of alternate music accompaniment. Looking into the possibility of purchasing UMC CDs and CD player; maybe an iPod for contemporary songs.
- Bradley and Salem continue to sponsor the PaWaTing MeGedWin Kikaajik Native American Elders program in Grand Rapids. Current location closing and looking for a new facility. This outreach ministry has been in operation for over 30 years and continues to offer 150 to 200 meals on a weekly basis.
- Gun Lake Tribe will match a challenge grant for a new van. To date Keweenaw Band has pledged \$500; Pokagon Band \$2500; Grand River Band \$600; Port Huron Band \$500, Zeba Band \$500.
- Finances are good and monthly WMC Ministry Shares have been paid in full.

Salem Indian UMC – Pastor Sandy VandenBrink (April 2013).

- Sunday worship at 11:45 am; potluck after service.
- The church has issues with a wet basement; need space for Sunday school.
- Church Elder Phoebe Hall's 80th birthday was on May 6 and a celebration took place.
- Fran Church-Pratt organizing the church membership and contacting people.
- August 23-25 (Friday-Sunday) camp meeting with Sam McClellan at Camp Jijak in Hopkins, Michigan.
- Bradley and Salem youth group very active.
- Finances are good and monthly WMC Ministry Shares have been paid in full.
- Pastor Sandy retired end of June (2013).

Salem/Bradley UMC – Pastor Nancy Boelens (Oct 2013):

- In June, membership said goodbye to Pastor Sandra VandenBrink who had faithfully served for 8.5 years. She was wished a well-deserved retirement from pastoral ministry.
- New pastor (Nancy Boelens) on board July 1. Pastor Boelens and membership are not strangers. They have known each other for over four years. She is honored to be serving as their current pastor.
- There hasn't been a camp meeting in this area for over 40 years. Salem and Bradley Indian Missions hosted a blessed and successful All Nations for Christ Camp Meeting at Camp Jijak on August 23-25. Included eight worship services with numerous evangelists and special music groups and craft sessions. Eight meals, lodging and camping was provided. The services well attended and souls were blessed and lives have changed. The Holy Spirit blessed all with its presence throughout the three-day event. The camp meeting event came together so perfectly and all expenses were covered by offerings and contributions.
- Plans have begun for next summer's camp meeting to be held August 22-14, 2014. The Gun Lake Tribe will continue to offer their facilities at Camp Jijak every year hereafter.
- Salem membership is growing. There is a strong need for a Sunday school and parents have specifically requested formation.
- Bradley and Salem welcomed Bishop Deborah Kiesey on Monday, September 30. Over 50 people attended the open house.
- Lost Lynn Feaster on May 17, her spiritual gifts, leadership, smile and loving nature will be greatly missed.
- The Administrative Board and Staff Pastor Relations Committee are in place at Salem and Bradley. Leadership continues to evolve as these volunteers attended training for their positions in March. Meetings will be held every month.
- Fran Church-Pratt (Salem) is organizing an outdoor church reunion this summer to honor and recognize our elders who attended and contributed their talents to Salem. Date hasn't been decided.
- Bradley finished landscaping around their church with addition of flowers. Renovations continue. Church pews have been renovated and fitted with new custom-made cushions.
- Bradley had one baptism and added two members to date.
- Bradley has begun planning a 100 Year Centennial to be held on May 16-17, 2014. If anyone has old photos they would like to share, please send copies to Pastor Boelens or Lillian DeKoning.

Greensky Hill Indian UMC – Pastor Tim Wright (April 2013); Pastor Jonathan Mays (Oct 2013):

- Sunday worship 9 am and 5 pm. Our new pastor, Jonathan Mays, offers the morning message and Pastors Sam McClellan, Bob Dominic and Thomas John provide alternating Sunday evening messages. We continue to use our lay servants as needed. We have been blessed with new member George Pamp who offers the message when needed. Our communion service is the first Sunday and a Native flute player participates in the service.
- Sunday morning attendance averages between 40-60; evening attendance averages between 15-40.
- Both morning and afternoon Sunday school programs continue to grow with an average 8-10 students each. Our morning kids sponsor a child as their mission project. Our evening kids did a pageant for the Christmas Eve service. The youngsters at Greensky Hill are our greatest thanksgiving.
- The Women's Drum Group have been very active this past year: dedication service for the new boat wash in Paradise Lake for the LTBB, Boyne City Community Picnic, and Love Concert for the Collins, Praise Worship for the Northport Spirit Journey; and the Alden Community United Methodist Church.
- Memorial Service for Brother Marshall Collins was held on Sunday, April 21; well attended.
- Fund Raisers included a dinner by the UMW to help support the church's Ministry Shares. The Men's Club had a variety show and sold maple syrup to raise funds to help those in need and for our church expenses. Outreach Ministry includes Christmas giving to our Elders, children and local charitable agencies.
- Other events included dedication of veterans' plaque placed in our "new" cemetery on Memorial Day; Membership classes; Craft Show/Flea Market/Appraisal Fair on June 29; and our Annual Harvest Dinner on Saturday, Sept 28 served over 450.
- Our July Camp Meeting was very successful with the KleenSL8 music group; Sam McClellan served as camp coordinator.
- Met with Bishop Kiesey at the Charlevoix United Methodist Church open house and highlighted Greensky Hill with a picture board.

- We provided housing for 40 adults and high school students biking from South Bend, Indiana to Mackinac in July 2013. While at Greensky, they scraped and painted the bell tower and entrance door to the church.
- Youth Heritage Camp – 39 youths participated in the three-day event in July. Some students stayed overnight in tents, some came as day campers leaving each evening, some stayed only one or two nights. We were extremely blessed to have many volunteers help with the camp project and the many donations received to make our summer camp very successful. We plan to do the camp again in 2014. We thank IWC for their generosity in providing funding for food and cots.
- Farewell gathering held June 2 for Pastor Tim, as his appointment ended June 30. In July, Pastor Jonathan Mays was assigned as our new pastor.
- Two funerals this summer – Rose Greane and Mildred Spigle; one baptism – Grace Willis-Taylor.
- Future Projects: search for needed funds to restore the church historic logs; the July Youth Heritage Camp expenses; chapel repairs; and upper age youth worship programming needs.
- Greensky Hill separated from the two-point charge with Horton Bay United Methodist Church.
- Monthly WMC Ministry Shares have been paid in full.

Kewadin Indian UMC – Pastor Thomas John:

- Sunday worship service at 9:30 am; Bible study on Mondays.
- Tom and Phyllis celebrated their 50th anniversary on March 3 and enjoyed a well-deserved trip to Hawaii.
- Pastor Tom celebrated his 70th birthday on May 18.
- Pastor Tom participated in memorial service for Marshall Collins on Sunday, April 21 at Greensky Hill.
- Easter Revival with Sam McClellan was very well attended.
- Two church youths are graduating from high school this spring.
- Youth Mission Team from Chillicothe, Illinois came in June (2013) and enjoyed themselves tremendously. Adam Danner of 4 Directions Healing Foundation pointed the mission team to Kewadin. There were 20 youths and adults. They added a new handicap ramp, painted the beach pavilion, cleaned up around the church and camp grounds. Church members served a Native traditional meal one evening complete with fry bread and Indian tacos.
- With funding from IWC, 100+ dining room chairs were reupholstered and a dead tree was removed near the small dining hall.
- Camp Meeting July 18-20 with Pastor Dave Hiser, New Community Church in Bellaire, as speaker. His church group also sponsored the Vacation Bible School for the young people.
- Held Pancake Breakfast/Bake Sale and raised \$1400 for the Willis-Carroll family whose 14-year-old daughter has cancer.
- On March 3, 2013, Waylind Willis-Carroll of Troop 46 Elk Rapids was presented with an Eagle Feather from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in honor of his accomplishment of receiving the highest rank for Eagle Scouts.
- Fall Revival (2013) – November 21-23 – Sam McClellan was our speaker; well attended.
- Our Advent services were awesome with children participating and a well-attended NYE Night Watch service.
- Monthly WMC Ministry Shares have been paid in full.

Northport Indian UMC – Pastor Thomas John:

- Continue to share Pastor Tom with Kewadin Indian United Methodist Church. Sunday worship at 12:30 pm; Bible study on Wednesdays.
- Sunday, March 3 – Pastor Tom and Phyllis celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary; well attended service and celebratory meal with family, friends and membership.
- Easter Revival (March 14-16) with Pastor Jerry Huffman from Elmira, Michigan. Well attended.
- Easter Sunday, March 31 – Pastor Tom baptized Stacey Wonegeshik and her two daughters and teenage son. Stacey also joined our church membership. Well-attended service with a delicious Easter meal shared afterwards.
- May 18 – 11th Annual Campground Cleanup with the Central United Methodist Church mission team. The NIM Busy Bees provided lunch for the mission team.
- May 27 – Memorial Day Service at our Onominee Indian Cemetery with Peshawbestown Post 120 doing the honors; 15 in attendance; hand drummer Clay Clifford provided several traditional honor songs.

- June 1 – Church Elder Val Maidens attended the West Michigan Annual Conference session June 1 and posted pictures and history of the Native churches. Many visitors stopped by our table. For the 2014 West Michigan Annual Conference event, Val will ask each Native church to submit a history and list of activities/events into a brochure-type format. She noted people were asking for a brochure to take with them. Brandon Smith was one of the featured speakers on Saturday for Spirit Journey. After his presentation, the free-will offering collected over \$5,000 for our Spirit Journey ministry.
- June 15-20 – The Kemo Smith family and volunteers from the Grand Rapids Trinity United Methodist Church came to our campgrounds to construct and erect a traditional-style teepee for Spirit Journey. The group also worked very hard to clear a teaching trail around the perimeter of the campgrounds. Church members prepared a Native traditional meal complete with fry bread, traditional corn soup and white fish. We spent several evenings in fellowship during their week-long stay. The Greensky Hill lady hand-drummers participated in one evening of fellowship.
- July 13 – Chicken Dinner to raise funds for our summer camp meeting expenses. Well attended; delicious fried chicken and fixings.
- August 8-12 – Summer camp meeting with Terry and Darlene Wildman of Rain Song Ministries. Terry and Darlene were absolutely awesome, musically and spiritually. Large attendance on all three evenings.
- FEMA Grant – Applied and received a food grant for our food pantry. Largest food grant received to date. We were able to purchase meat products for the first time. Truly a blessing for many of our people in need.
- Spirit Journey Fall Feast – Saturday, October 26 at our campgrounds; well attended.
- Fall Revival – November 14-16 with Charlie Nahwegahbo as our speaker; well attended and spiritually awesome.
- Spirit Journey Sledding/Pizza Party – Held on December 21 for the kids; well attended and each child received a saucer.
- December 22 – Christmas celebration meal; gave each child a candy/gift bag.
- December 24 – Christmas Eve service; very well attended. Special music by Brenda Hendley, Brandon Smith, Ruby and Cindy John and the Northport Children's Choir. Scripture reading by Robert Wonegeshik, Jr.
- Monthly WMC Ministry Shares have been paid in full.

Benton Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministries – West Michigan Conference (October 2013).

Benton pastored at Greensky Hill from 1988 to 1992. He welcomed Pastor Jonathan Mays as their new pastor. Benton gave Pastor Tom additional Native CDs for distribution. Benton stated the funding for Indian Workers Conference would be reduced from \$2000 to \$500 for 2014. Benton, Jerry DeVine and Bill Dobbs are working on a reconciliation project for the 2016 Annual Conference. Benton mentioned the free-will offering taken at the June 2013 Annual Conference for Spirit Journey was the largest single offering collected for any special ministry. People are always spiritually motivated when a ministry involves young people. Benton will look into an UMCOR flood grant for the Salem church foundation issue. Benton suggested to Pastor Boelens and Fran Church-Pratt they check with the Albion College archives for any information on Salem's and Bradley's histories.

Benton requested the April 2013 IWC minutes be amended to include the special meeting held on Friday, April 26 at Mt Pleasant Chippewa which included the presence of the following cabinet members:

- Bishop Deborah Kiesey, Rev. Dr. William Dobbs.
- West Michigan Conference: Reverends Benton Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministry; David Hills, Heartland DS; Anita Hahn, Grand Traverse DS; Tamara Williams, Albion DS; Neil Davis, Kalamazoo DS.
- Detroit Conference: Reverends Jerry DeVine, Director of Connectional Ministry; Mark Spaw, Ann Arbor DS; Joanne Bartelt, Bluewater DS; Tara Sutton, Crossroads DS; Jeff Maxwell, Saginaw Bay DS.

Pastor Owen White Pigeon presented Bishop Kiesey with a Pendleton blanket at the April 2013 IWC meeting.

Leslie Pigeon – Update Native CD (Oct 2013).

Leslie asked IWC to consider recording a new CD of hymns in our Native language. Leslie mentioned her brother has a recording studio and has offered it free of charge. IWC would incur the costs of copying the CDs only. This subject was first brought up at the April 2012 meeting by Pastor Sandy VandenBrink

and a committee was formed. At the April 2012 meeting, Phyllis John, Leslie and Norm Pigeon, Valerie Maidens and Ruby Ogemagededo volunteered to be on the committee. The committee would research costs, suggestions for hymn selections and bring to the IWC October 2012 meeting. The CD update will be placed on the IWC agenda for further discussion at the April 2014 meeting.

MEETING DATES for 2014:

Northport Indian UMC

Easter Revival – April 3-5, 2014; speaker not selected.

Summer Camp Meeting – August 7-9, 2014; speaker not selected.

Kewadin Indian UMC

Easter Revival – April 10-12, 2014; speaker not selected.

Summer Camp Meeting – July 17-19, 2014; speaker not selected.

Mt. Pleasant Chippewa Indian UMC

Easter Revival – April 17-20, 2014; speaker not selected.

Summer Camp Meeting – August 24-September 1, 2014; speaker not selected.

Greensky Hill Indian UMC

Youth Heritage Camp – July 8-11, 2014 (Tues-Fri).

Summer Camp Meeting – July 11-12, 2014 (Fri-Sat).

Indian Workers Conference 2014 Dates:

May 2-3, 2014 at Greensky Hill Indian UMC.

October 3-4, 2014 at Salem/Bradley Indian UMC.

Norm Pigeon, IWC Chair / Valerie Maidens, IWC Secretary

MICHIGAN AREA LOAN FUND of The United Methodist Church Missions & Church Extension Trust Fund

2013 was an encouraging year for the Michigan Area Loan Funds in spite of pressures from the weak economy, the regulatory climate, and struggles for congregational finances. The Loan Fund operations continued steady and met the challenges of both investor and borrower relationships.

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 Fund from his Grand Rapids office.

Rev. Denny Buwalda serves as Loan Officer. Rev. Buwalda handles all loan inquiries as well as providing the linkage between the several parties involved in processing church loans.

Office operations are directed by Marian Coles and Kay Yoder from the Grand Rapids office. Ms. Coles handles correspondence and operational management while Ms. Yoder is staff accountant.

Our website, www.michiganarealoanfund.com, is being used by prospective investors and borrowers alike. You are invited to visit our site for updates on interest rates.

Investors were rewarded during 2013 with a rate of return that was attractive in comparison to many similar investment options. Investors earned 2.75% on their investment accounts. Larger accounts (\$100,000 or more) earned 3.00%. This fund offers both investment opportunity for congregations and individuals within the state of Michigan and a loan source for the 920 congregations of The United Methodist Church in Michigan. Mortgage loans are available with a variety of amortization schedules and a current rate of 4.74%. Promissory notes are also available for smaller funding needs at a rate of 5.24%.

The Fund is registered with the Securities Bureau of the State of Michigan and is managed by its Resident Agent. As of December 2013 the loan portfolio included 31 loans and mortgages with a total value of approximately \$8,091,450. Investments burgeoned during 2013 and exceeded \$10,700,000 for the first time in the fund's history.

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

The future of the Fund looks strong in spite of weakened loan demand. The financial strength of the Fund should be secure as the net corpus of Fund assets continues to grow and allow the Fund to serve the needs of Michigan United Methodist congregations. The board continues to look for ways to expand our fund base so we may be competitive in the broader loan market. Congregations as well as individual United Methodists are invited to invest in our Fund.

The Fund is grateful for the leadership of a fine volunteer Board of Trustees that guides the vision of our ministry.

Charles Veenstra, President
Dr. Wayne Barrett, Resident Agent

NEW CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Our mission is to lead the West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church in establishing and nurturing new faith communities in sustainability.

Communicate the vision of new church development to the conference

“We seek to be successful in inspiring (and equipping) congregations in the West Michigan Conference to be as creative as possible in reaching new people for Jesus Christ.” This includes explaining the importance of church planting as the most effective way to reach people for Christ and communicating our vision to the annual conference in a variety of ways. A video of churches capturing this vision can be found at: <http://www.westmichiganconference.org/newchurch2014>.

Plan for future new faith communities in the West Michigan Conference

This includes reviewing demographics, identifying partnering churches and recommending possible areas for new church starts.

Advise the cabinet in the assessment and selection of pastors to plant churches and nurture the pastors and families during the process of planting

The assessment and selection of people to plant new churches is of vital importance. The committee should be knowledgeable about the assessment and selection of pastors for this important responsibility and also should be involved in monitoring and nurturing their progress.

Oversee the budget for New Church Development and work to find ways to maintain and develop resources for the mission

A strategic plan was created by our New Church Team to put a vision around a passion for planting. This plan was structured last year around the four strategies of church planting which are: *finding, equipping, planting and multiplying*. We are continuing with a comprehensive plan to change our conference culture from a passive involvement to active participants; this includes encouraging and equipping congregations to play a key role in planting or helping launch these new faith communities. The first step on this path requires *finding* the personnel and congregations to help accomplish this mission.

Find

The first priority is to *find* for the cabinet a pool of pastors who are called, assessed and equipped for *planting*. This process will take a multi-pronged approach. The director will work with the district superintendents and an assessment team to help identify pastors who are fruitful and show an aptitude for leading vital congregations. Part of this *find* process will take place at Annual Conference where we host a dinner for newly-commissioned and ordained pastors. We also intend on visiting seminaries in order to encourage up-and-coming pastors to recognize the call to *planting*. Once the New Church Establishment and Development (NCED) Committee gathers the candidates, we will then evaluate the prospects and their churches for viability in the program.

The second priority of the *find* process is to continue to invite pastors into the discernment process that was created last year. As folks enter into the discernment process, they will be taking various pre-screening tests outlined by Path 1. Path 1 is the committee which provides the oversight and the national strategy for new church starts for our denomination. Church Planting 101 was held on September 18th and 19th in partnership with Detroit Annual Conference. We are re-visioning on how to do this differently in 2014. CP101 and the New Church Academy do not appear to be effective at casting a wide enough net to bring new pastors and lay people into the discernment and assessment process for

planting churches. The idea is to offer a conference in the fall focused on reaching new people. Then beginning in January of 2015, we would offer twelve weeks of group coaching around issues related to reaching new people. (This was formerly called the New Church Academy.) Those who feel called to *multiplication* will be challenged to pray and ultimately ascertain whether they wish to move on in this process. Once the pastors are identified and trained, the NCED director will work closely with the cabinet in their appointments.

The third priority of the *find* process is identifying churches that are ready to *multiply*. To help identify prospective sites, we have two exciting tools: the “Readiness 360 Survey” and the “MissionInsite” program. “Readiness 360 Multiply Your Impact” is a comprehensive, user-friendly, cutting-edge online data collection tool. This survey informs the pastors and congregations whether they are ready to launch a new worshipping community. It provides a detailed response in terms of readiness but also highlights growth areas that need to be addressed before attempting to multiply. The “Readiness 360” survey can be utilized in conjunction with “MissionInsite” for churches to study their surrounding demographics. The “MissionInsite” programming helps identify opportunities and the prime mission fields that God is calling us to reach out to. Both The “Readiness 360” survey and “MissionInsite” will be available conference-wide from the New Church Team for any interested churches. Now that we have *found* churches that are ready to plant and invited and encouraged candidates to enroll, identified their strengths and weaknesses, and confirmed their readiness, it is time to *equip* them for success.

Equip

The next step will be *equipping* the conference, churches and planters to create fertile ground for new birth. At the conference level, we plan on bringing in national speakers to present workshops to help move churches to a multiplication mentality.

Equipping also requires training each planter and their *planting* team. It is difficult work to plant a church; not everyone can do it. A church planter should be gifted, called, trained, and supported. We have learned that church planters perform better when surrounded by a team committed to their success. Each pastor and their team would go through different training opportunities including attending our denomination’s “Boot Camp.” During this time, a very specific strategic plan would be created around their specific mission field. In addition, a coach is supplied to each planter to encourage them along this journey. Ongoing support will be provided to all new church plants, such as the five-year “tune up” with Jim Griffith. Finally, each year in August the New Church Team, current planters and potential church planters will attend training at the School of Congregational Development (SCD) to stay on top of the most current developments in church *planting*. Assessment, training, mentoring, and support groups provide valuable assistance enabling church planters to plant larger, healthier, and more successful churches. Once we *Find* the right people and *Equip* them to succeed, then it is time to *Plant* the seed.

Plant

Planting continues to become more organic, missional and multidimensional. Organic in the sense that churches are beginning to raise up laity who are being called to *planting*. The churches that are being planted are much more focused on disciple making and being missional in nature. *Planting* has moved away from creating just a unique worship experience. It is now more Wesleyan – by engaging the people of God on a distinct path to discipleship, ministry is moved from insular communities out into the wider world.

In order to accomplish these lofty goals, financial resources will be available on an annual basis to churches that are willing to *multiply*. The New Church Team has developed a very gracious, short, grant application to aid churches that are seeking funding to be part of this exciting plan of expanding our faith communities. We just updated our grant process to include a pre-conversation with the pastor and their teams in order to first discern if a grant is applicable and secondly, to help create a timeline while adhering to our “best practices” for starting a new congregation.

Grant applications are now available for multi-sites, vital mergers, adoptions, restarts and any other creative ideas that God gives us to reach new people for Christ. There is a simple application available on the conference web site www.westmichiganconference.org.

The final stage of this cultural shift in the new plant process is *multiplication* – new faith communities planting other new faith communities!

Multiply

Finally we come to the *multiplication* factor. *Multiplication* will be the driving force behind new church planting in the coming years. To help with this endeavor NCED created a video that will be shown at the 2014 Annual Conference to help promote the idea that existing churches can play a key role in helping plant new faith communities. Highlights will include: **Valley Church**, which officially chartered with over 100 new partnerships; **Cornerstone Church Heritage Hill Campus**, which was launched this past fall in East Grand Rapids. They are currently averaging two hundred people in worship since the launch. On January 1, 2014, **Plainfield United Methodist Church** officially began the process of restarting and is now called **Rivercrest Church**. Kel Penny, the plant pastor, hopes to have weekly worship starting in the fall of this year.

It is a steep task we assign ourselves: finding talented and imaginative people to take up the challenge of creating new paths of worship; evaluating, training and equipping these apprentices to plant new ideas; and encouraging United Methodists to expand their range of options for building avant-garde worship communities beyond traditional platforms and comfort zones. John Wesley put it best when he said: "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can." With this sentiment to light our way, it is possible to measure a new row for planting and cultivating God's harvest.

Gary Step, Director of New Church Development
and Congregational Transformation
Tom Arthur, Chair

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) is the instrument The United Methodist Church uses to affirm God's calling to ordained and local pastor ministry and meet the standards and qualifications necessary for this calling and the life of service as God's servants within the West Michigan Annual Conference. Yet, the work of the BOM includes more than entry into the covenant relationship, as the BOM is responsible for the care, support and guidance of clergy throughout their years of service in Christ's Church.

The BOM works closely with the bishop and cabinet, although we have distinct functions. The bishop and cabinet are responsible for appointment and supervision of clergy. The BOM is responsible for the credentialing of clergy. This is a very important system of checks and balances and is a very positive part of the United Methodist connection.

Much of that work of the BOM is done through the following:

Conference Relations Committee: This committee responds to the changing circumstances in the lives of ordained elders, deacons, associate members and local pastors. It monitors and tracks all changes in clergy status, recommending leave of absences, transition or family leaves, medical leaves, honorable locations and retirements. It also monitors candidates attempting to transfer into the conference from other annual conferences or other denominations. In the unfortunate event of an administrative complaint, it would serve as a hearing body. Rev. Wade Panse is the chair of the Conference Relations Committee.

Support and Development: This committee continues to explore ways to be more supportive of the clergy and their families. Major life changes happen to all of us; death of a spouse, parent or child; health issues that can occur at any time; the reality of "burn out"; family issues that impact ministry. In all of these arenas, the BOM seeks to find ways to be supportive. Rev. Jeff Reese is the current chair of the Support and Development Committee.

Registrar Committee: This committee maintains contact with all clergy candidates, local pastors, and district committees on ministry. They guide, monitor and facilitate the candidacy tracks of all attempting to come into the covenant connection of clergy. They facilitate the interview process through the receipt of theological, personal and professional materials that are evaluated by the full BOM. They guide the BOM through its standards of fitness, readiness and effectiveness as candidates are evaluated. The registrars are moving the BOM into full electronic capability through a program called Pathways. Rev. Dean Prentiss is the facilitator of the registrars and is the Registrar for Candidates for Elders Orders and Full Membership. Rev. Kathy Kursch is Registrar for Deacon Candidates. Rev. Marty Culver is Registrar for

Local Pastors. Rev. Lyle Heaton is the chair of a new committee called the Candidacy Committee. Rev. Sue Babb is Registrar for Specialized Ministry Certification.

Finance Committee: This committee monitors the budget of the BOM, both the Operating Fund and the Ministerial Education Fund. The Operating Fund supports the day to day work of the BOM, including interview weeks and regular meetings. The MEF helps clergy and candidates with their educational responsibilities, including seminary, course of study and continuing education grants. It also has funds to help with counseling for clergy. Both of these funds are supported by Ministry Shares. Rev. Diane Gordon is our fiscal agent.

Enlistment and Mentoring Committee: This committee has a dual function. First, it determines and enacts ways to recruit and enlist potential candidates for ministry. Especially for those who express an interest at Annual Conference, this committee follows up with them and gets them on the right track for candidacy. It also coordinates visits to our United Methodist seminaries, both for the purpose of maintaining contact with our seminarians and for the possible recruitment of other candidates. Second, this committee implements our mentoring program. This includes the training of all candidacy and clergy mentors, and the establishment and operation of mentoring groups for probationary members. Rev. Jane Ellen Johnson is the chair of this committee.

Orders: The BOM works with the Order of Elders, the Order of Deacons and the John Wesley Association in looking at ways to work together to facilitate ministry in the conference. Rev. Lynn Pier-Fitzgerald is the new chair of the Order of Elders. Rev. Greg Lawton is the chair of the Order of Deacons. Rev. Mike Riegler is the chair of the John Wesley Association.

Administration: The BOM has an Executive Committee which performs much of the administrative work of the full BOM. We are assisted in this work by Sus'ann Busley, administrative assistant, who is also the administrative assistant for the Lansing District, with her office in Okemos. We very much appreciate her excellent work.

The BOM covets your prayers as we seek to do our work in building the Body of Christ for servant ministry in this world.

John W. Boley, Chair

ORDER OF DEACONS

In 2013, the Order of Deacons continued to build bridges between congregations and the communities they serve in a variety of ways. Whether through discipleship training, advocacy, education, or direct support deacons make an impact on students, clients, church members and the world at large.

While deacons serve individually at their appointments, we meet collectively to nurture and support each other and look for ways to make a greater impact on society. This was done in a special way this year as Rev. James Kraus of St. Joseph First United Methodist Church attended the world-wide Diakonia gathering in Berlin. It also happened as we met with Bishop Kiesey in the spring and as an Order in the fall. At the 2013 Annual Conference we celebrated as one deacon, Rev. Jan Lancaster, was ordained and another, Rev. Nancy Fancher, was commissioned.

Our desire is to continue to strengthen our bonds of community and to nurture those expressing a call to servant ministry. We also continue to advocate for the many paths to ministry offered to all by the grace of God and the structure of The United Methodist Church.

Rev. Gregory W. Lawton, Chair, Order of Deacons

ORDER OF ELDERS

Reflections on the Question: How would I respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peers during this stressful time of change for the Church, and for a deepening relationship with God?

I have a sense, in this time of stressful change, that clergy have very full plates. I do not think that adding another layer of structure or program will be helpful in responding to that spiritual hunger. What is needed is Sabbath rest and renewal, the challenge of accountability and for the existent structures of our Church to be as responsive and as supportive as possible. As chair of the Order of Elders, I would want to inquire about what has been done in the past? What is in place already – in the BOM, in the conference programs, and in the districts? How might we make the layers of our support structures for clergy more

connected, coordinated and effective? The work of cooperating with the John Wesley Association chair and the Order of Deacons chair would be essential to doing this work well.

Sabbath rest and renewal: Several years ago, Jerry Toshalis made an extensive list of retreat centers and places offering spiritual direction available. An updated list would be helpful, as well as testimonials of individuals who receive direction or practice a regular retreat. It is time for another round of information and resources on the formation of covenant groups for mutual support and spiritual growing. Sharing “best practices” of elders who are intentional and persistent in deepening their relationship with God would let others know what is possible.

Accountability around lifelong learning might take place in cooperation with the Continuing Education section of the BOM. We would benefit from clear guidelines and stated expectations for elders as they plan and report their continuing education each year. This seems like an untended part of our life together; guidelines from the BOM would be a place to begin.

I am intrigued with the Disciplinary call for the Orders to “gather.” I would envision a creative response in digital gatherings. Given the constraints of time and travel, connection might take place in a variety of other ways. My young clergy friends meet monthly for support and connection with other young clergy from across the nation. I do not have the technical skill to suggest the “how,” but I know that there are ways of connecting and mutual support that we might explore toward a bond of unity and common commitment.

I do have a heart for Christ, a love for the connection, and wisdom to bring to the role of being chair of the Order of Elders. I appreciate your consideration.

Lynn Pier-Fitzgerald, Chair



CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY – Atlanta, Georgia – www.candler.emory.edu

Candler School of Theology prepares *real* people to make a *real* difference in the *real* world. Our commitment to authentic discipleship and relevant ministry enables us to develop uniquely well-rounded leaders who are challenged academically, encouraged spiritually, and immersed in Christian service from the first day they arrive on campus.

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. As one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, Candler provides a rich context for learning and formation supported by the extensive resources of a top-tier research university. As a school located in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Candler offers a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of our 21st century world. There is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

Candler celebrates its centennial in 2014, marking our 100th anniversary with commemorative events that reflect on our past and a conference on theology and the church that envisions the future. The yearlong celebration begins in August with the opening of the second phase of Candler’s new 128,600-square-foot, LEED-certified building, seven years in the making.

Not only is Candler expanding its physical space this year – it is expanding degree offerings as well. In response to the changing needs of the church, Candler is introducing five new degrees to equip Christian leaders: the Doctor of Ministry, the Master of Religious Leadership, the Master of Religion and Public Life, and two dual degrees pairing divinity and social work and divinity and development practice. With these newest additions to our degree programs, Candler graduates truly will be ready to lead wherever God calls.

Candler’s student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. Our enrollment stands at 441, with 340 seeking the Master of Divinity, 47 the Master of Theological Studies, 21 the Master of Theology, 15 the Doctor of Theology, and 18 enrolled as non-degree students. The student population is

32 percent U.S. ethnic minority, 49 percent women, and the median age of the entering class is 27. Students represent 39 denominations, with half identifying as United Methodist.

We continue to emphasize preparing our students for leadership in an increasingly global context, and now offer 14 academic exchanges with theology schools in 12 countries across five continents. In addition, Candler has an ongoing summer internship program with the Methodist Church in the Bahamas, and participates each year in travel seminars to the Middle East and in World Methodist Evangelism Institute evangelism seminars, traveling in 2014 to Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Brazil.

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

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics



GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – Evanston, Illinois – www.garrett.edu

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary continues its commitment to develop and nurture skilled, bold and articulate leaders for the church, the academy and the world. Since our founding 161 years ago, we have articulated and lived our core purpose: to know God in Christ and, through preparing spiritual leaders, help others know God in Christ.

Last fall, we welcomed 171 new students, bringing the fall Master of Divinity enrollment to 399. The gender/ethnic profile is: 51% female; 55% white; 20% black; 5% Asian; 3% Hispanic/ Latino. Fourteen percent of the student body is international. Thirty-five denominations, four continents, 13 countries and 33 states are represented in the student body.

Seventy percent of the students in all degree programs are United Methodist. Currently, nine students from the West Michigan Annual Conference are enrolled in the various degree programs at the seminary.

Garrett-Evangelical is committed to making seminary education affordable, and easing the financial stress on students. This academic year, the seminary awarded over 2.5 million dollars in financial aid, offered numerous federal work-study positions, and assisted with paid internship opportunities in diverse settings through field education.

In fall 2014, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary begins a guaranteed tuition rate initiative for master's level students. Students are guaranteed the same tuition rate for two or three years, depending on the program in which they enroll. Tuition rates for new Master of Divinity students will be guaranteed through the summer 2017 term. Tuition rates for new Master of Arts or Master of Theological Studies students will be guaranteed through the summer 2016 term. This initiative is yet another step in insuring that students enter the world of ministry with as little student debt as possible.

Last September, the seminary celebrated the establishment of the fully-endowed Rueben P. Job Chair of Spiritual Formation. At the same time, we installed Dr. Frederick W. Schmidt as the Rueben P. Job Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation. Garrett-Evangelical is the first among Protestant seminaries in the United States to have a fully funded chair in spiritual formation.

Two revered faculty retired this past year. Larry Murphy, professor of the history of Christianity, retired after 39 years of service. He was a key individual in developing the seminary's Center for the Church and the Black Experience. Ruth Duck, professor of Christian worship, retired in December. A world-renowned

hymnist, her most recent book, [*Worship for the Whole People of God: Vital Worship for the 21st Century*](#), was published in October 2013.

Several initiatives to support clergy and lay education are under way. During the spring semester, 15 academic classes were offered in an online format, some with a continuing education option. Among the options are:

- *Plus*, a first-of-its-kind cooperative executive education program of Garrett-Evangelical and Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, involving two years of seminars led by experts in non-profit and church leadership for professionals in ministry.
- *Intersection*, an online continuing education opportunity, incorporating readings, online presentations by seminary faculty, and reflection on contemporary issues of life and ministry. Topics range from theology, biblical interpretation, and church history to ethics and the church in society. Continuing education credit is available. Additional information is available at <http://www.garrett.edu/intersection>.
- A *Doctor of Ministry* program offering five tracks of study: Congregational Leadership; African American Congregational Leadership; Spiritual Direction; Mission in the Contemporary United States; and the Association of Chicago Theological School's (ACTS) D.Min. program in preaching.

In the coming months, Garrett-Evangelical will roll out new programs online, in Evanston, in congregational settings, and on the campuses of select United Methodist-related colleges.

Garrett-Evangelical serves over 550 students in degree-related courses, certificate programs and the summer Course of Study School.

We encourage you to visit our website, www.garrett.edu, and to visit us on campus. We are grateful to serve The United Methodist Church and the church at large.

On January 1, 2014, I became president of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the seminary and the church in this capacity. Garrett-Evangelical is blessed with a great heritage and a strong future. Please let us know if there are ways we can work with you as we continue to seek to be a seminary for the church and the world. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Lallene J. Rector, President



METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO – Delaware, Ohio – www.mtso.edu

Thank you for this opportunity to bring you an update from MTSO, where six students from West Michigan currently are preparing for ministry.

Sustainability initiatives

We take seriously our commitment to a just and sustainable world. This year we strengthened that commitment in key ways. Dr. Timothy Eberhart was named assistant professor of theology and ecology, in joint appointment with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. In addition, we have begun farming a portion of our 80-acre campus. The farm offers unique educational opportunities and will eventually provide all produce served in our dining hall. We also plan to partner with those who are typically underserved by the growing movement toward quality, locally sourced food.

Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity and commitment to theological education of many donors, MTSO is able to offer an unprecedented level of financial aid. One in three degree-seeking MTSO students now receives a full-tuition scholarship, and our average non-load aid award is \$8,600 per year.

Vocational discernment services

MTSO is one of the few seminaries to provide an Office of Vocational Discernment. Our new office is led by Katherine Dickson, who previously spent seven years as director of career development at Bluffton University. She will serve both students and alumni and has launched an alumni-mentoring initiative.

Insights on the “nones”

Drawing on five years of research, MTSO Professor Linda Mercadante has published *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious*. Among other topics, the critically acclaimed book considers what we in organized religion can learn from the “nones” and what we have to offer them.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our news with you, and we’re honored to be entrusted with the vital work of theological education. Please stay in touch by visiting www.mtso.edu.

Danny Russell, Director of Communications



UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – Dayton, Ohio – www.united.edu

Is God calling you to the ministry of Jesus Christ? I invite you to explore how United can assist you in fulfilling God’s purposes. Come and check out amazing opportunities for study and spiritual growth in person or online at www.united.edu!

Students at United receive an excellent theological education in a community of genuine faith and learning in both traditional and hybrid/online programs.

One of the fastest growing seminaries in the US, United specializes in preparing persons for ordination and pastoral ministry with long track records of successful service.

If church vitality is important to you, you may wish to explore United’s focus upon church renewal. If you are already in ministry with a master’s degree, the advanced, Doctor of Ministry degree may be what you need to take your learning and ministry to the next level.

One of thirteen United Methodist theological schools in North America, United was founded in 1871 and lives to serve the church of Jesus Christ and its mission. United is committed to teaching the Bible and the historic Christian faith, cultivating spiritual formation for personal and social holiness, and renewing the Church for the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. What could be more interesting, important or exciting?

In addition to expanding residential offerings in Dayton, United continues to extend its service across the Midwestern US. Using technology, United delivers theological education in underserved regions in North America and beyond. United’s hybrid/online Master of Divinity degree is accessible anywhere with Internet service in conjunction with periodic intensive weeks of class in Dayton.

Please let us know if you have questions about how United can best assist you or, if you would like to help make it possible for an American or international student to study at United.

Enrollment at United continues to grow, and we invite you to call or visit soon!

For more information, please contact admissions@united.edu.

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

Wendy J. Deichmann, President



WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WASHINGTON, DC

WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – Washington, DC – www.WesleySeminary.edu

The past year has brought many blessings, change and growth to Wesley Theological Seminary. We continue to focus our work on preparing our students for leading churches that go out into the world and moving people to live the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Here are a few of the newest developments at Wesley:

- The Rev. Dr. **Robert K. Martin** joined the seminary as Dean and Professor of Christian Formation and Leadership.
- The Rev. Dr. **F. Douglas Powe** joined Wesley as the James C. Logan Professor of Evangelism and Urban Ministry. He directs the Urban Ministry program and Course of Study. **Paul Kang-Kul Cho** is serving as assistant professor of Hebrew Bible. The Rev. Dr. **Doug Tzan** is now teaching Church History part-time and is mentor to United Methodist students.
- **Mike McCurry** (former press secretary in the Clinton presidency) has been named Distinguished Professor of Public Theology and co-director of the National Capital Semester for Seminarians. The Rev. Dr. **H. Beecher Hicks**, senior minister of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Largo, Maryland, will serve as Distinguished Visiting Professor of Homiletics. With support from Lilly Endowment Inc., the Rev. Dr. **James P. Wind** (former president of the Alban Institute) has joined the faculty as Visiting Distinguished Professor. He joins our faculty for three years to lead a research project studying large congregations and the leadership they and their pastors wield in church and society.
- Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded Wesley a grant to research and develop a program to strengthen United Methodist elders' and future elders' financial literacy and financial-management skills.
- The Lewis Center for Church Leadership celebrated ten years of offering resources to help congregations reach more people and fund their ministry. See www.ChurchLeadership.com.
- Our Heal the Sick Initiative has graduated its inaugural classes for the Health Minister certificate and the Faith Community Nurse Certificate. The initiative is a unique program at Wesley to help congregations become involved in public health initiatives in their parish, part of our Center for the Missional Church.
- Lewis Center director the Rev. Dr. **Lovett Weems** and Wesley Board of Governors Chairman the Rev. **Tom Berlin** released the book *Overflow: Increase Worship Attendance & Bear More Fruit*.
- Completed construction of a new, LEED-certified residence hall.
- Now offers course auditing for \$100 per credit hour and CEUs for \$100 per unit.
- Five pastors from Beijing, China, joined us for the spring semester in a special program of study through the work of the Rev. Dr. **Kyunglim Shin Lee**, Vice President of International Relations.
- Wesley was named to Faith3.org's list, Seminaries that Change the World. This list was announced in the Huffington Post on November 12, 2013. One of the several reasons for the tribute was Wesley's Center for the Missional Church, which is headquartered at Wesley Downtown, in the heart of Washington, D.C.

Please be in prayer for Wesley Theological Seminary. We cannot do our ministry alone, and your participation with us in the greater mission of God enhances us mightily. We are striving to provide you with the kinds of educational opportunities that will take your ministry to the next level. In turn, we depend upon your participation in and contribution to our ministry as well. *So, pray for us often, avail yourself of the school's offerings, give to Wesley, and identify and send us persons who are called and who have a high capacity for fruitful ministry.*

David McAllister-Wilson, President

BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS

Greetings! We are pleased to report on the status of the conference pension and health benefits plans. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits serves in concert with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to execute church pension and welfare benefits plans approved by the general conference and acts as the administrator of the health care plans on behalf of the annual conference.

In collaboration with the Board of Ordained Ministry, new policy regarding the implementation of the changes in the denominational plans approved by the 2012 General Conference was approved by the 2013 West Michigan Annual Conference. The following conference policy and implementation procedures were communicated conference-wide and posted on the conference web site.

Changes to CRSP Eligibility

Currently, clergy who serve in quarter-time or greater appointments receive benefits in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). Under the new plan rules, only full-time clergy are guaranteed coverage in CRSP and clergy serving less than half-time are no longer eligible. However, an annual conference has the discretion to define its eligible group. In the last annual conference session in May 2013, the West Michigan Annual Conference elected to continue CRSP participation by part-time clergy appointed by the bishop at half-time or three-quarters time.

Changes to CRSP Defined Contribution (CRSP DC)

For clergy who remain in CRSP, retirement benefits will change effective January 1, 2014. The church currently contributes an amount equal to 3% of plan compensation to clergy CRSP DC accounts. Beginning January 1, that contribution will be reduced to 2%. Clergy will have the opportunity to earn up to an additional 1% CRSP DC contribution by contributing at least 1% of their plan compensation to United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP). So if a clergyperson contributes at least 1% of plan compensation to UMPIP, the church's contribution to his or her CRSP DC account will be 3%, which is the same as today. (Plan Compensation is the sum of clergy cash salary and housing allowance. If the clergy is provided a parsonage, Plan Compensation is the cash salary multiplied by 1.25).

Changes to CRSP Defined Benefit (CRSP DB)

Changes have been made to the formula used to determine benefits under CRSP DB, as well as the surviving spouse benefit. Additionally, a new election is available to retirees, allowing them to designate a disabled adult child as a secondary contingent annuitant.

- The benefit formula for determining a clergyperson's annual DB benefit is currently 1.25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) at retirement multiplied by years of service. Beginning January 1, 2014, the multiplier has been reduced to 1.00%. The current CRSP benefit formula will remain effective for all service prior to January 1, 2014.
- Surviving spouse benefit – Married and unmarried participants currently receive the same initial benefit amount (assuming all other factors are the same). Beginning January 1, 2014, the initial dollar amount of the benefit paid to a married participant will be reduced to offset the value of spousal benefits. This change only applies to service on or after January 1, 2014. Benefits already earned are not affected.
- Disabled adult child as secondary contingent annuitant – Beginning January 1, 2014, CRSP allows participants to designate a disabled adult child as a secondary contingent annuitant, so the disabled child can receive a reduced benefit after both the participant and spouse die. As with spousal coverage, the participant's initial benefits will be reduced to pay for this extra benefit.

West Michigan CRSP and UMPIP Billing Procedures effective 2014

1. Half-time to Full-time Clergy appointment: The church will be billed the usual 12% for CRSP (9% for DB and 3% for DC.) The 3% will be billed instead of the 2% on the assumption that our clergy will avail themselves of the maximum 1% matching by the church. In the unlikely event that a particular clergy does not qualify for the church's matching contribution, the 1% or the amount paid by the church will be reimbursed to the church by the conference.
2. Less than Half-time appointment:
 - a. Clergy with less than half-time appointment are not eligible to participate in CRSP, but their participation in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) shall be encouraged and supported, by churches matching their personal savings in UMPIP up to 1% of the clergy's plan compensation.

- b. So that clergy in this category can make personal savings in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP), the local church should have a plan adoption agreement with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) directly, and the clergy must complete the UMPIP Participant Contributions Agreement form. The local church will be billed by the General Board based on the completed agreement and the church will remit the amounts withheld from clergy salary. The matching amount up to 1% of clergy plan compensation will be billed to the conference by GBOPHB.
- c. The conference will bill churches with less than half-time clergy appointment the amount of 1% of the clergy's plan compensation. If the clergy does not make any savings in UMPIP, the amount paid by the church to the conference will be reimbursed to the church.

Helpful Links to more Information

- *Before-Tax and After-Tax Contributions Agreement* – allows clergy to indicate UMPIP contributions amount. (**This is the same form that pastors must submit every time they move to a different church.**) <http://www.gbophb.org/thewell/root/UMPIP/3255.pdf>
- *Saving for Your Future – It's Easier than you'd Think* – explains the advantages of saving in UMPIP and how to get started. Click *Save in UMPIP* or go to the following address: <http://www.gbophb.org/TheWell/Root/UMPIP/3543.pdf>

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. When the clergy participant is not able to perform ministerial duties due to disabling medical reasons for at least six months, application for CPP benefits may be submitted for review by the Joint Committee on Incapacity. CPP Benefits takes effect upon approval by the GBOPHB. The 2012 General Conference approved a number of changes intended to strike a balance between maintaining adequate benefits for clergy and ensuring long-term plan sustainability through reduced costs, while aligning the UMC plan with comparable plans of other major denominations and with insurance industry standards for disability and death benefit plans. These changes are effective January 1, 2013, except where another date is indicated.

CPP Benefits

- Benefits are payable upon the death of an active or retired participant, his or her spouse or surviving spouse, and his or her children under the age of 19. Benefits also may be payable for a child over the age of 19 if the child was disabled prior to age 19, or if the child was receiving a surviving child educational benefit.
- Supplemental benefits for surviving spouses may be available upon the death of an active participant.
- Educational benefits for surviving children may be available upon the death of an active or retired participant.
- Comprehensive disability benefits include:
 - monthly benefit payments,
 - annual increases,
 - continued retirement contributions,
 - enhanced return to work program, and
 - assistance with application for Social Security disability benefits.
- For additional information, please review the CPP summary plan description. (*CPP*) – summary of long-term disability and death benefits available to eligible clergy. <http://www.gbophb.org/thewell/root/ CPP/3992.pdf>

Payments to Annuitants and Beneficiaries Report: There were 608 participants who received benefits and total payments to annuitants were \$7,912,273. A detailed report showing payments to individual beneficiaries is available upon request at the Conference Treasurer's Office.

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

The MRPF was the Clergy Pension plan covering service years 1948 to 1981. The General Board of Pension reported that in 2013, our pre-82 Pension Fund is funded at 109%, therefore no contribution was required. The Pre-82 Plan account had a balance of \$42,279,218 with a surplus of \$3,373,517 based on the Past Service Rate of \$726 and 85% surviving spouse benefit. For various reasons, it is possible that the funded status may be reduced and contributions required due to lower investment income than originally projected in this actuarial study. For example, actual participant demographics, investment returns, benefit rates, or other reasons may vary from assumptions.

HEALTH CARE PLANS

Health Care Participants Survey: The Health Care Participants Survey commissioned by the board was completed in November 2013. The survey was conducted by Perspective Consulting Inc. by phone and by mail for those who could not be reached by phone. About 60% of all active and retired participants responded to the survey questionnaire.

Summary of Health Care Participants Survey Results

- Service providers like PBS, HPA, United American (for retirees) had about 87% Good to Excellent rating.
- Express Script had about 37% Good to Excellent rating.
- WMC Plan had 78% Good to Excellent rating – probably pulled down by Express Script.

Board of Pension took action in response to the survey findings and approved replacement of Express Script effective February 1, 2014, by 4D Pharmacy, which is a Michigan pharmacy benefits manager. Copy of the survey consisted of 78 pages and was distributed to the board and the cabinet.

Self-Funded Medical Benefits 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. 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 secured concurrence of the annual conference to implement a Self-Funded Medical Plan for clergy and lay in active service who are under age 65 effective September 1, 2009. Benefits remained unchanged with the exception of medical coverage for auto-related injuries in order to protect the plan from potentially excessive claims. The Benefits Guide for this Plan is posted on the conference web site and a printed copy is available from the Treasurer's Office upon request.

The implementation of the Self-Funded Plan has mitigated the cost increases of the Plan. In 2013 the rate increase was only 4.2% when industry increases were in the double digit range.

Medtipster Drug Benefit Program: The Medtipster Drug Benefit Program provides free eligible generic drugs to participants. It was introduced to the Active Plan in 2011 and to Postretirement Health Care Plan in 2012. The Medtipster Drug Program has been very successful in helping our participants and the Plans realize significant annual cost savings in prescription drug expenditures over the past couple of years.

Postretirement Medical and Prescription Drug Benefits

Retired clergy and lay who are eligible under Medicare (age 65 and older) and those on Medicare qualified disability status are placed in the Retiree Plan. The Retiree Health Plan provides coverage for medical and prescription drugs. Medicare has primary coverage under Parts A and B (physician and hospitalization), and our Plan provides supplemental coverage equivalent with the United American Insurance Company.

Significant changes in the Postretirement Medical Benefits took effect starting January 1, 2013. These changes were communicated to participants and churches in meetings and by mail. More detailed information is posted on the conference web site. The 2013 modifications in the age and service requirements to the conference's Post-retirement Medical and Prescription Drug Benefit programs are illustrated in the following table:

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM COST SHARING FOR RETIREMENT COVERAGE

Eligibility Age 60 with 25 years of service, age 62 with 20 years of service or age 63 with 15 years of service.

**Consolidated Schedule of Post-retirement Premium/Funding Contribution Percentage
Payment Levels for Retired Participants and their Eligible Dependents under the Early
Retirement and Normal Retirement coverage Programs of the West Michigan Conference
Of The United Methodist Church Effective January 1, 2013
Participant's Age Level at Retirement Date**

Early Retirement Coverage						Normal Retirement Coverage
Years of Credited Service at Retirement	Age 60 (Minimum 25 years)	Age 61 (Minimum 20 years)	Age 62 (Minimum 15 years)	Age 63 (Minimum 15 years)	Age 64 (Minimum 15 years)	Age 65 & Over (Minimum 15 years)
Below 15 years	Not Eligible					
15 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	55%	55%	60%
16 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	52%	52%	58%
17 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	49%	49%	56%
18 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	46%	46%	54%
19 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	43%	43%	52%
20 years	N/A	N/A	50%	40%	40%	50%
21 years	N/A	N/A	47%	38%	38%	48%
22 years	N/A	N/A	44%	36%	36%	46%
23 years	N/A	N/A	41%	34%	34%	44%
24 years	N/A	N/A	38%	32%	32%	42%
25 years	50%	40%	35%	30%	30%	40%
26 years	48%	39%	34%	29%	29%	38%
27 years	46%	38%	33%	28%	28%	36%
28 years	44%	37%	32%	27%	27%	34%
29 years	42%	36%	31%	26%	26%	32%
30 years	40%	35%	30%	25%	25%	30%
Over 30 years	40%	35%	30%	25%	25%	30%

Footnotes:

- (1) Early Retirement Coverage is provided under the WMC Self-funded Medical and Prescription Drug Benefit Plan.
- (2) Normal Retirement Coverage is provided under the WMC Post-retirement Supplemental Medical Benefit Plan and/or the WMC Post-retirement Prescription Drug Benefit Plan.
 - A maximum monthly premium support of \$300.00 per month for each retired participant and/or eligible spouse (i.e., \$3,600.00 per year) was established to limit the funding payments by the churches and the conference to provide the post-retirement medical and prescription drug benefit coverage for both current and future retired participants and their covered spouses under the Normal Retirement Coverage (i.e., after age 65). This maximum annual support became effective January 1, 2013, and for future plan years.

- The premium funding payments by the churches and the conference for the Post-retirement Dental and Vision Care Benefit Programs were eliminated for both current and future retired participants and their eligible dependents beginning in January 2013.
- For future retirements only, working spouses of retired participants under the conference's post-retirement medical benefit plans (i.e., both the early and normal retirement coverage), who qualify for post-retirement medical and prescription drug benefit coverage through their employer, will **not** be eligible for the post-retirement medical and prescription drug coverage maintained by the conference. This exclusion provision for working spouses only applies to future retirements (i.e., early and normal retirements) effective after January 1, 2013; and,
- Certain benefit coverage provisions of the post-retirement medical and prescription drug benefit programs will be subject to revision as needed for future plan years.

Postretirement Health Care Funding

Our Health Care and Pension Reserve Fund at the end of 2013 was \$17,828,336. (If needed a portion of this amount may be used to contribute to any unfunded liability in pension funds as the General Board will determine.) An actuarial study will be conducted by Watkins Ross, a certified actuary, to take into account changes in the benefits coverage or plan design and increases in participants' and churches' contributions. This actuarial study is important to assure that the board is properly guided in its commitment to provide a sustainable health care plan for our clergy and conference employees during their retirement years.

Financial Report of the Health Care Benefits Programs for the year ended December 31, 2013

HEALTH CARE RESERVE FUND

(Does not include Pre-82 Fund)

	2013	Retiree (Medicare)	Active (pre- Medicare)
Balance carried forward from last year	169,306.47	4,119.03	165,187.44
Receipts			
Premiums collected	4,581,941.18	223,626.91	4,358,314.27
Transfers-in from investments	-		-
Receipts from Redirected CRSP DB	1,242,524.21	1,242,524.21	-
Other Income	31,939.50		31,939.50
	<u>5,856,404.89</u>	<u>1,466,151.12</u>	<u>4,390,253.77</u>
Benefits Expenses	(5,393,240.82)	(1,082,748.23)	(4,310,492.59)
Administrative Expenses	(316,419.23)	(95,585.91)	(220,833.32)
	<u>(5,709,660.05)</u>	<u>(1,178,334.14)</u>	<u>(4,531,325.91)</u>
Increase/(Decrease) in Assets from Health Care	<u>\$316,051.31</u>	<u>\$291,936.01</u>	<u>\$24,115.30</u>
CRSP DB/Pension Payments	(1,903,954.00)		
Churches' Contributions to the Post-Retirement Health Care Fund	369,457.82		
Investment Gains/(Loses)	<u>2,395,222.01</u>		
Increase/(Decrease) in Assets	\$1,176,777.14		
Net Asset, beginning of year	<u>16,651,559.40</u>		
Net Asset, end of year	<u><u>\$17,828,336.54</u></u>		

Comprehensive Benefits Funding Plan

A Comprehensive Funding Plan is a new requirement that describes how to pay for benefit obligations, including those obligations that are dependent on the conference continuing its current benefit programs. This plan balances benefit design with benefit funding – realistically aligning design expectations with funding patterns. As a result, the conference is better able to plan for the payment of all benefit obligations. After review and approval by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the conference Funding Plan will be published in the conference journal.

Medical Benevolence

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 up to a maximum of \$5,000 in a calendar year. Application form is available upon request from the Conference Treasurer's Office.

BENEFITS GUIDES

Benefits guides for health care plans are posted on the conference web site. Printed copies of Benefits Guides and/or plan documents will be provided by the Conference Treasurer upon request.

We gratefully acknowledge the leadership and dedication of the board members: Wendy Clark (Secretary), David Dekker, Deborah Fennell, Joseph Huston, Norm Kohns, Jennifer Loding, Kelly Potes, Robert Richards, Eric Simmons and Walter Urick. Representatives from the cabinet and the general board were David Hills and Patricia Gilleran, respectively. We also recognize the support of the Conference Treasurer's Office staff: John Kosten, benefits coordinator; our consultants Michael Anthes and Ronald Stoll; and Professional Benefits Services, our third-party administrator for the health care plans. 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. We thank God for the opportunity to serve those who serve.

Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits
Rev. Louis Grettenberger, Chair
Pros Tumonong, Treasurer and Benefits Officer

CONFERENCE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Conference Personnel Committee worked together with Rev. Benton R. Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministries, to encourage our conference staff, to realign staff, and clarify and review processes. Bishop Deborah L. Kiesey and her Clergy Assistant Rev. Dr. William D. Dobbs are supportive and often present for the work of this committee and conference staff.

During 2013:

- Benton Heisler provided updates, informed us, and consulted on items on his agenda as well as items from other groups, such as the Conference Leadership Team, that might affect personnel and their assignments. We encouraged him in his plan to take a renewal leave.
- We rejoice in the continuing progress of Gary Step as he develops the role of Director of New Church Development and Congregational Transformation in his second full year.
- Naomi García, Ministry Consultant, has seen her role change as the needs of the conference transform. The committee has worked to understand her changing role and facilitate her ministry effectiveness in whatever ways we can.
- We consulted on and assisted in the transition to a Michigan Area Director of Communications position with the Bishop's office and the Detroit Conference leadership. Mark Doyal, who has been the Director of Communications for the West Michigan Conference, is now the Michigan Area Director of Communications.

- Our committee has provided input to the continuing development of and sharing of personnel resources with Detroit Conference, such as with the Latino/Hispanic Ministry position of Sonya Luna.
- We continue to try to align personnel policies with other boards and agencies that also have personnel responsibilities per the *Discipline*.

The Conference Personnel Committee and I want to thank our committed staff and committee for all they do to support our conference vision, mission, and ministry.

Ellen K. Zienert, Chair

COMMITTEE ON PRISON MINISTRY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONCERNS

If 100 people in the West Michigan Conference read this report, at least a couple will know someone, either family or friend, who is incarcerated or has been recently. This last year, our committee has wrestled with the fact that ministry and aid to those in Michigan's correctional system needs to be a priority simply because so many are involved. Another fact is that prison ministry is a very unpopular ministry. Many are either uncomfortable with the idea, or openly suspicious that we are trying to help people who simply may not be deserving of our time and resources. When we think about reaching out and filling the pews, we become nervous about them being recently released prisoners. And if we hand the clipboard around to sign up to go into jails and prisons to offer support, we are often skeptical about what good we might be able to do.

Our committee meetings this year have not schemed and dreamed about clip boards being passed around. This is a ministry for those who are led, comfortable or not, to help a population which is more marginalized than any other. We have, though, spent a great deal of time trying to figure out how we may get your attention throughout the conference. By "your" we mean the thousands of folks in the pews. We simply want everyone in West Michigan Conference to be aware that prison ministry is part of what we do in West Michigan.

At our booth at the 2013 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids last spring, we spoke to many persons about some of the work done, and of some resources we will help to try to find for those incarcerated and their families. In 2014, we will try to make available displays which can be borrowed for a week or so in any church – a display which offers information about who we are so that in a time of need, the members of the churches can have a place to turn. As well, we will be planning another event for formerly incarcerated with the terrific folks at Prison Fellowship.

We gave donations to three ministries which do wonderful work: Camp New Day, which offers summer camp experience for children of incarcerated parents; Open Door Ministries, which offers a much-needed hand to people as they leave the jail in Lansing; and Angel Tree Ministries of Prison Fellowship, which works to offer Christmas to the children of the incarcerated. We will be seeking more involvement with Keryx Ministries, which offers weekend (Emmaus Walk like) spiritual retreats for inmates in the prison system.

As chair, I would like to thank Victor, Dennis, Denny, Gary, Jim, John, Bev, and District Superintendent Bill Haggard for all of their work in 2013.

Richard D. Moore, Chair

COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

The work of the Commission on Religion and Race is to create a Church, which at all levels reflects the values and diversity of God. We hope to build the capacity of The United Methodist Church to become contextually relevant and reach more people, younger people and more diverse people as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We do this through work in three core areas.

Institutional Equity

We will critically examine expressions of ethnic, racial and cultural injustice in local and global contexts: setting goals for overcoming them, intentionally measuring progress, and resourcing culturally competent leaders to promote and sustain systemic equity.

Intercultural Competency

We will partner with leaders in the denomination to develop inter-culturally competent leaders who are engaged in ministry that promotes and honors intentional diversity and equity.

Vital Congregations

We will work with the churches in the conference to create churches which reflect the diversity of the community in which they are located. We hope that churches will initiate holy conversations about race, cultural diversity and systemic equity. We will share the results of these conversations in the hope that they will grow a movement that honors all of God's creation.

We would like to thank the cabinet for holding a church growth conference this past fall. We were encouraged by the message coming from the members of the General Commission on Religion and Race. We believe that local churches will grow when the members of those churches engage in conversations with members of the community who are not connected with a church home. These conversations do not start with an invitation to church, but with a genuine desire to get to know another person. Getting to know more people, younger people and persons unlike oneself should be the goal. These conversations may lead to an understanding of something missing in the program of the local church, a possible place for new disciples to become connected in ministry.

We would pray that local churches would seek us out for ideas on how to start these conversations.

Michael Johnson, Chair

SCHOOL FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

The 2013 School for Pastoral Ministry (SPM) convened the third week in August at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. Our theme was "Breaking Chains, Shattering Bondage." This year's school featured Rev. Rudy Rasmus and Rev. Dr. Chris Momany. The school began with a personal testimony from Rev. Rasmus. As a child, Rudy assisted his father with his motel business which serviced local prostitutes. As Christ drew Rudy closer, he found it more and more difficult to remain in the "family business." Over the next couple of days, Rudy shared how God has used his past to live in the trenches with others struggling on the streets of our cities today. He taught us that by helping people to believe that they can transform their communities through taking action, reflecting on the experience, and then taking further action as the role of a missionary, we can be part of the solution, rather than the problem.

We were also challenged by one of our colleagues from the West Michigan Conference, author, professor, and campus chaplain Rev. Dr. Chris Momany. His work with the anti-trafficking movement is well informed and life changing. He blew our minds by the width and breath of slavery right under our noses in the Michigan area. But he didn't leave us there. Chris offered hands-on ways to join the effort to shed a light on both sex and labor slavery in our communities. He also dug deeper into the need for holiness in our lives and ministries. Christianity in its purest form involves putting God's love into action. Wesleyans have traditionally understood this embodiment and expression of God's love as holiness.

Bishop Deb Kiesey attended her first SPM this year and her presence among us was greatly appreciated. In addition to a question and answer time, she also officiated communion for us at University United Methodist Church during one of our worship opportunities. Women at Risk, International, joined us for the first time, as well. Their grass roots organization helps those who have been rescued out of slavery to create an income through exquisite products like jewelry, purses, clothing, and more. Registrants at SPM

were able to become part of the solution by purchasing many of W.A.R.'s products, directly affecting rescued woman today.

In addition to stories shared and challenges offered by our speakers, the school offered workshops in the areas of technology, spiritual practice, personal renewal and administrative practices. You can continue to count on workshops being offered in each of these categories in the upcoming school, as well. Multiple opportunities for worship and fellowship, a Clergy Lounge, *The Wesley Open* golf outing and *The Crossing the Red Cedar* canoe/kayak trip added an important component for peer relationship development. Michigan State University's Kellogg Center was a gracious host, catering better than ever to our very unique needs as pastors on retreat. Attendance was down again this year, but with our new website, easier online registration, and the stellar reviews we have received the past two years, we are confident attendance will begin to grow again as word of mouth spreads from one colleague to the next. More than 80% of our registrants came through our new website this year. With the level of speakers that have been acquired, the intimacy of teacher/student ratio, and the peer interaction that is available, what the Senate is able to offer pastors is exceeding other much more expensive and geographically difficult to attend training opportunities. We are proud to claim that the School of Pastoral Ministry is the only event designed specifically for the care and nurture of persons in pastoral ministry in the Michigan Area.

Our 2014 theme is "Reanimation: It's Alive/Worship. Church. You." and will feature Bishop Robert Schnase and Dr. Marcia McFee, worship consultant extraordinaire! Bishop Schnase serves as bishop in residence in the Missouri Conference and is doing some cutting-edge work with Vital Congregations. We will be exploring these vital statistics, as all of our churches are seeking to revive, renew, and realign with the needs of the communities we serve. Dr. McFee has planned and led worship all over the world, including both the West Michigan and Detroit annual conferences in 2014. She will be stripping the layers and going behind the scenes to offer a plethora of worship resources, tools, and inspiration for any size church. You saw it done; now find out how and the best ways to adapt these ideas within your own worship context. Worship doesn't have to be rote or boring anymore. It can be vital and exciting, with a firm foundation to stand on.

The 2014 School for Pastoral Ministry will convene Tuesday, August 19th through Thursday, August 21st at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing on the campus of Michigan State University. It is our hope in 2014 that the SPM will reach out to more clergy than ever to experience the benefits of our top notch speakers, in addition to the walking trails, screened porches, babbling brook and outdoor patios. This year we will be offering a movie night and a hilarious comedian, Andy Beningo, as part of the evening fellowship opportunities, as well. Detroit Metro Times dubbed Andy "Best Comedian" and a writer from the Jay Leno Show called Andy "One of the most likable, funny people out there!" Register today and invite a few colleagues to join you. www.SchoolforPastoralMinistry.com.

Melany A. Chalker, Dean of the School Senate

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) is one of 13 general agencies of The United Methodist Church and is financed through the World Service Fund (apportioned giving from local congregations). The commission is accountable to the General Conference, the church's chief law-making body, and is a member of the Connectional Table, which coordinates the program and administrative life of churchwide agencies.

COSROW is governed by a 19-member board of directors representing annual conferences across the United States and in the Philippines, Norway, Nigeria and Mozambique. General Secretary Dawn Wiggins Hare and commission staff work from offices in the historic Chicago Temple, the skyscraper home of First United Methodist Church of Chicago, the oldest church in the city.

COSROW advocates for the full participation of women in the total life of The United Methodist Church. The agency works to encourage the church to recognize every person – clergy and lay, women and men, adults and children – as full and equal parts of God's human family. The commission believes that a fully engaged and empowered membership is vital to The United Methodist Church's mission "to make

disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” Through training, education, research and monitoring, COSROW lists its ministry activities as follows:

- Addresses gender discrimination and sexism within church structure.
- Nurtures clergy and lay leaders in the church.
- Raises awareness of women’s issues and opportunities.
- Educates church leaders and seminarians on sexual ethics and policies.
- Supports victims/survivors of sexual harassment or abuse.
- Develops guidelines for inclusive and expansive language.
- Trains and supports Central Conferences women.
- Monitors annual conferences and the General Conference for inclusiveness.

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) for West Michigan Conference met in October 2013 for the first time in several years. The commission is asking for input to identify and develop the future of this ministry in our area. Please provide any ideas and feedback to Amy Latimer, Chair, at 989-224-2293 or latimer.amy@gmail.com.

Amy Latimer, Chair

TRUSTEES, WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

The Board of Trustees of the West Michigan Conference is incorporated in the state of Michigan and is organized and functions under the mandate of the 2012 *Book Of Discipline*, ¶2512.

The Board of Trustees is pleased to report to you a brief review of major activities in 2013:

1. The board and other agencies diligently cared for conference property and equipment with acquisition value of \$5.6 million and \$2.6 million net of depreciation. The board holds the deeds of all conference real property. The five conference camp sites (Albright, Crystal Springs, Lakeview, Lake Michigan and Wesley Woods) are owned by the trustees but are operated by the Conference Board of Christian Camping. Other conference real property directly managed by the board includes the Director of Connectional Ministries parsonage in Grand Rapids and four district parsonages (in Lansing, Kalamazoo, Traverse City and Mt. Pleasant), the Conference Center in Grand Rapids, and the bishop’s residence in DeWitt Township which is jointly owned with the Detroit Conference. The annual budget for the Board of Trustees in 2013 was \$193,000. There are 12 members elected by the conference to the board and three ex-officio members.
2. A motion was passed at both 2013 annual conferences that authorizes the West Michigan and the Detroit conferences to jointly purchase property and structure to develop a Michigan Area Ministry Center to house the Michigan Area Episcopal offices and other ministry offices. It also authorizes the Board of Trustees of both conferences to form a legal entity to carry out the requirements of the purchase and development. The trustees have been working with the Detroit Conference trustees to carry out the provisions of this motion. As of December 31st a building has been purchased, final design plans completed and bids let to build out the interior of the building. The cost for this project is expected to be about equal to the cost of leasing the existing Episcopal offices but will also provide for additional space.
3. The Lansing District parsonage was sold in the summer because it is not being used by the present district superintendent and it does not meet current conference standards. The net proceeds from the sale of \$188,087 were added to investments in the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan.
4. The Board of Trustees administers land contracts for the properties of the discontinued Potter Park and Oakdale United Methodist churches for the benefit of Lansing District and Grand Rapids District, respectively.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and diligence of the board members, namely: Mark Baker (vice chair), Lyle Ball (secretary), James Baker, David Bloss, Michael Belt, Judy Leach, James LeBaron, Cliff Radtke, John Scott; and ex-officio members Benton Heisler (Director of Connectional Ministries), Kennetha Bigham-Tsai (Cabinet representative) and Pros Tumonong (Conference Treasurer).

William Gehman, President

UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN

The United Methodist Foundation of Michigan is privileged to serve so many congregations and United Methodist organizations throughout the Michigan Area. The Foundation has continued to partner with an ever-growing number of churches. Together with these local churches, we seek to assist and to inspire congregations in fulfilling their ministry. The Foundation offers a wide continuum of financial stewardship, investment management, and donor-focused services for local churches, districts, conferences, agencies, and institutions and their constituents. Our staff provides service to Michigan Area churches of wide-ranging demographics. We strive to serve all in our Michigan Area of The United Methodist Church.

We are excited to share with you a recent staff expansion. Last July, we hired Jeff Regan as Senior Director of Stewardship. Jeff brings a rich history to this position. He hit the ground running and quickly filled up his calendar with stewardship consultations, preaching assignments, and investment cultivation calls.

While we are the primary provider of investment services to Michigan Area United Methodist churches, we are striving to serve even more churches. We have built a socially responsible investment model that is far beyond the quality and performance that most local churches can attain on their own. We are value-aligned with the church's mission. We have lower fees than the vast majority of commercial firms, resulting in local churches having more resources for ministry. With a focus on partnership with church leaders, we are focused on helping faithful people live generous lives. As an investment service enhancement, we are expanding our socially responsible investment (SRI) practices. We are moving to an even higher level of SRI practices by voting all of our proxies. Proxies will be voted in accordance with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church and other appropriate benchmarks.

More importantly, our board and staff are raising questions, inviting conversations, and leading from the edge to be "at the table" in discussions of church vitality, clergy leadership, denominational renewal, and most importantly, discipleship. Like most United Methodist foundations, we are uniquely positioned within the framework of the denominational and annual conference structure to offer perspective and impact that those directly within the organizational system are less adept, by definition, to provide. We are extremely excited about the adaptive possibilities that stand ahead of us. We are not suggesting that we are heading in some radical departure away from our primary purpose. Rather, we intend to remain positioned on the leading edge with forward thinking momentum and to keep asking, "How can we help for such a time as this?"

David S. Bell, President and Executive Director
Joy Barrett, Board Chair

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The past year has been one of working with all levels of our organization as we work to continue the work of our heritage and be transformed into productive women in mission in today's environment.

The organizational makeup of the local unit is evolving because of the nature of those units. Many of our local churches that have enjoyed being active in United Methodist Women are finding their membership decline because of aging members, working women, busy mothers, and so many other things taking priority. We keep reminding each unit that as our units become smaller, the needs of our communities and the world continue to grow. Those in small units may want to combine their group with a neighboring unit. We also have an active district unit in the Grand Rapids area.

Mission u was held at Central Michigan University again this year. It is an exciting event that brings the women of our conference together for four days each July to be challenged to grow in the knowledge of another people of the world as well as in our own spiritual journeys.

Our conference Annual Celebration was a wonderful event as we conducted the required elements of the day and once again were blessed with great worship, the witness of Rev. Faith Fowler as she challenged us in mission, and the wonderful breakout sessions that each of us attended.

We will always have the special needs of Grand Rapids United Methodist Community House brought to

our attention as we own this building. The roof is still a major concern; the repair has been done in stages. We are about two-thirds complete; we need to raise another twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars to complete this project. There are always maintenance items that need attention. As we continue to support this national mission in our own area, we also continue to pledge to the bigger picture of caring for women, youth and children.

Keep up the wonderful work you all do in the name of Christ.

Jenny Kroeze, President

WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

TREASURER'S REPORT

CONFERENCE PLEDGE TO MISSION 2013		\$187,847.00
MISSION GIVING 2013		
Pledge to Mission	\$205,241.14	
Special Mission Recognition	7,405.00	
Gift to Mission	2,615.00	
Gift in Memory	4,482.00	
World Thank Offering	<u>11,291.42</u>	
TOTAL MISSION GIVING		\$231,034.56
MISSION GIVING PLUS 2013		
Call to Prayer and Self-Denial	\$ 7,665.25	
Supplementary Gifts	111.50	
World Missions	0.00	
National Missions	11,703.00	
UMCOR	<u>6,932.66</u>	
TOTAL MISSION PLUS GIVING		<u>\$26,412.41</u>
TOTAL 2013 REMITTANCE TO UNITED METHODIST WOMEN, INC.		\$209,008.77
ADMINISTRATIVE & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT		\$94,421.39*

* Money retained by Conference for Conference Expenses

Susan E. Franklin, UMW Treasurer