

THE EAST OHIO CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



RISE

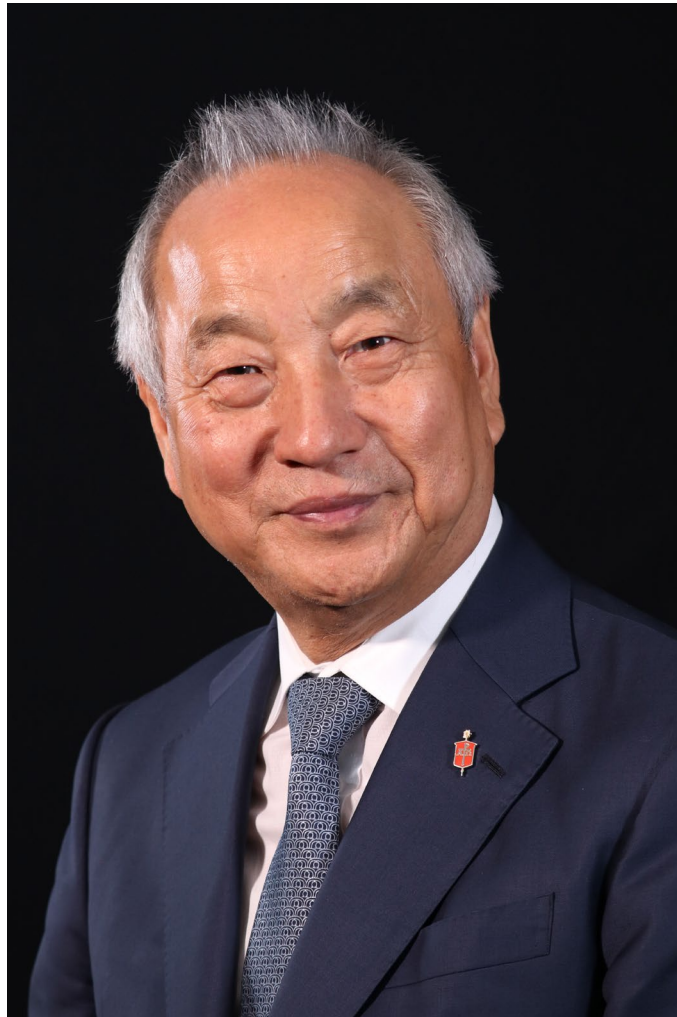
MARK
5:35-43

UP

Beloved

**PRE-CONFERENCE
WORKBOOK**

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025 | JUNE 12-14



Hee-Soo Jung

Resident Bishop

Hee-Soo Jung, Presiding Bishop • Cynthia Patterson, Secretary

Brenda Vaccaro, Workbook Editor



**OHIO EAST AREA
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

8800 Cleveland Avenue NW, P.O. Box 2800 • North Canton, Ohio 44720

Dear Siblings in Christ,

I look forward to seeing you on the College of Wooster campus June 12-14 for the 56th session of East Ohio Annual Conference. Our theme for this quadrennium is “Rise Up, Beloved” and our scripture verse is Mark 5:35-43 (NIV):

“While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. ‘Your daughter is dead,’ they said. ‘Why bother the teacher anymore?’

“Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe.’ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, ‘Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.’ But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, ‘Talitha koum!’ (which means ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was 12-years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this and told them to give her something to eat.”

In this first year of the quadrennium, our theme is “Rise Up, Beloved: Trust in God’s Promises” and we will focus on healing and restoration in the community. We’ve been through a lot: COVID-19, disaffiliation, racial conflicts, and unrest here in the United States and around the world. We will look at the beauty of the church and call upon God to heal us and restore us.

Each day during Annual Conference Rev. Dr. AHyun Lee of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary will lead us in Bible study centered on hearing God’s voice inviting us to rise amid our trauma and despair.

Annual Conference 2025 will begin with an Opening Worship Service at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 12. Bishop Seong-Bok Kim will preach the sermon. He is the resident bishop of the Seoul Annual Conference of the Korean Methodist Church. He and a delegation of clergy and lay persons from Korea will be our guests during Annual Conference. I will preach the sermon during the Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, June 13. Bishop Jonathan Keaton will preach during the Service of Licensing, Commissioning, Ordination, and Retirement at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 14.

Please make plans for you and your church to contribute to the Annual Conference offering that will support the Mary Scranton Memorial Mission Center, United Methodist Committee on Relief Global Migration, and the Bishop’s Discretionary Fund. We will collect the offering on Thursday, June 12, and you can also donate using the QR code in this workbook and online on the Conference website.

Learn more about Annual Conference 2025 at www.eocumc.com/eoac25.

Grace and peace,

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

ATTENTION LAY MEMBERS:

If you are **not to be a lay member** of Annual Conference this year, please pass this material to your successor and notify Conference Registrar Brenda Vaccaro at 1-800-831-3972 ext. 153.

PURPOSE OF THE *PRE-CONFERENCE WORKBOOK*

This workbook contains proposals submitted by the March 15 deadline, for consideration and action by the East Ohio Annual Conference Session, to be held June 12-14 at the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio. Other proposals will be distributed as they become available. None of the proposals contained on these pages are the official positions of the East Ohio Conference until they are perfected and adopted by the East Ohio Annual Conference. If adopted, they will be published as part of the official record of the Annual Conference in the *2025 East Ohio Conference Journal*.

HAVE THIS WORKBOOK WITH YOU FOR ALL CONFERENCE SESSIONS**Instructions for making larger print copies of this workbook:**

Every effort has been made to conserve Conference resources and to print this workbook in as few pages as possible in a readable typeface. If you are vision-impaired and need enlarged pages, and if you have access to a copy machine with enlargement capability, you can use the 120% setting and 8 ½ x 14" paper. If your local church is not able to do this, you may complete the form below and return it before **May 14** to: Cheryl Duell, 8800 Cleveland Ave., NW, North Canton, OH 44720, and enlarged pages will be ready for your pick-up at conference.

Requesting a Large Print pages of the *2025 Pre-Conference Workbook* to be available upon check-in:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Return this form **before** May 14 to:

Cheryl Duell, Workroom Supervisor
East Ohio Conference UMC
8800 Cleveland Ave., NW
North Canton, OH 44720-4567

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Follow Annual Conference 2025 online:

- All business sessions and worship services of Annual Conference 2025 will be livestreamed on the Conference website at <https://www.eocumc.com/eoac25>.
- Articles and photo galleries will also be posted on the website.
- Join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter at #eoac25.

Annual Conference 2025 video archives:

- Videos of the services and worship services will be archived on the Conference Vimeo page, www.vimeo.com/eocumc.

Rise Up, Beloved: Trust in God's Promises ***Mark 5:35-43 (NIV)***

8:30 a.m.	Production Meeting	
9:00 a.m.	CALLING THE CONFERENCE TO ORDER – McGaw Chapel OPENING WORSHIP Preacher: Bishop Seong-Bok Kim	
10:00 a.m.	BIBLE STUDY – McGaw Chapel	Leader: Rev. Dr. AHyun Lee
11:00 a.m.	RECESS	

THURSDAY AFTERNOON**June 12, 2025**

- 12:30 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION – Gault**
 Prayer
 Welcome from Mayor Robert J. Reynolds, Esq.
 Instructions/Opening Motions Cindy Patterson
 Annual Conference Program Committee Matt Williams
 Agenda, Rules, and Administrative Process Cindy Patterson
 COSROW – Update to Sexual Ethics Policy Lorrin Radzik
 Welcome from College President Anne E. McCall
 Introduction to Resolutions Cindy Patterson
 Introduction to Constitutional Amendments Cindy Patterson
 Episcopacy Committee Heidi Welch
- 2:30 p.m. **BREAK**
- 2:50 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION – Gault**
 Prayer
 CCFA Introduction Steve Stultz Costello
 State of the Conference Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
 Introduction of Korean Delegation Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
 Conference Offering Matt Williamson
 1/3 Scranton Mission Center
 1/3 UMCOR Global Migration
 1/3 Bishop's Discretionary Fund
 Courtesies and Announcements Matt Williamson
- 4:30 p.m. **PRAYER AND RECESS**
- 5:00 p.m. **MISSION DINNER (Reservations Required) – in Kittredge Hall**
- 7:30 p.m. **LAITY SESSION – Gault**
- 9:00 p.m. **PRAYER AND RECESS**

FRIDAY MORNING**June 13, 2025**

- 8:00 a.m. Agenda Meeting
- 8:15 a.m. Sound Check for Friday Morning Worship
- 9:00 a.m. **SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION AND HOLY COMMUNION – McGaw Chapel**
 Preacher: Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
- 11:00 a.m. **RECESS**

FRIDAY AFTERNOON
June 13, 2025

12:30 p.m.	BIBLE STUDY – Gault	Leader: Rev. Dr. AHyun Lee
1:30 p.m.	BUSINESS SESSION – Gault Prayer Board of Ministry Laity Report Ohio Episcopal Team SAS Update Leadership Committee	Jonathan Priebe Kimberly Green Ed Fashbaugh Ivy Smith
2:30 p.m.	BREAK	
2:50 p.m.	BUSINESS SESSION – Gault Prayer Board of Missions Vote on Constitutional Amendment #1 Cabinet Report Fixing of Appointments Resolutions Courtesies and Announcements	Kathy Dickriede Cindy Patterson Bruce Hitchcock Bishop Hee-Soo Jung Michael Parisher Matt Williams
4:30 p.m.	PRAYER AND RECESS	
6:00 p.m.	EVENING BUSINESS SESSION – Gault Prayer Equitable Compensation Board of Trustees/Corporate Meeting Resolutions	Gloria Brown Randy May Michael Parisher
8:00 p.m.	PRAYER AND RECESS	

SATURDAY MORNING
June 14, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Agenda Meeting
8:15 a.m.	Sound Check for Saturday Morning Worship
8:30 a.m.	Production Meeting
9:00 a.m.	SERVICE OF LICENSING, COMMISSIONING, ORDINATION, AND RETIREMENT – McGaw Chapel Preacher: Bishop Jonathan Keaton
11:00 a.m.	RECESS

SATURDAY AFTERNOON
June 14, 2025

- | | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 12:30 p.m. | BIBLE STUDY – Gault | Leader: Rev. Dr. AHyun Lee |
| 1:30 p.m. | AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION – Gault
Prayer
Board of Benefits/Wespath
Unite in Impact Stewardship Campaign
Vote on Constitutional Amendments #2, #3, #4
CCFA – Approve Budget
Resolutions
Concluding Business
Closing | Matt Merriman

Cindy Patterson
Steve Stultz Costello
Michael Parisher
Cindy Patterson |
| 4:30 p.m. | BENEDICTION & ADJOURNMENT | |

ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION

Hee-Soo Jung
Resident Bishop, Presiding

District Superintendents & Conference Executive Staff

Edgar Brady	Central Valley District
Cara Stultz Costello	Central Valley District
Bruce Hitchcock	Northern Waters District
Angela Lewis	Northern Waters District
Kelly Brown	South Forest District
Laura White	South Forest District
Nestor Nazario	West Plains District
Donna Van Trees	West Plains District
Edward Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Edward Fashbaugh	Executive Director of Connectional Ministries
Vera Milanovic	Executive Director of Financial & Administrative Services
Rick Wolcott	Executive Director of Communications

Annual Conference Program Committee

Matthew Williamson	Chairperson
Cindy Patterson	Conference Secretary
Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader
Lindsey Funtik	Co-Chairperson, AC Worship Committee
Charlene Thomas	Co-Chairperson, AC Worship Committee
Brenda Vaccaro	Registration
Other Program Committee Members:	Wendy Bramley, Jennifer Darling-Mellott, Daniel Cole, Edward Fashbaugh, Tammy Kuntz, Jeremy Roseberry, Joy Snyder, Melanie Thomas, Amy Vittorio

SPEAKERS



Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Resident Bishop
Ohio Episcopal Area

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung is resident bishop of the Ohio Episcopal Area, comprised of the East and West Ohio Conferences of The United Methodist Church. As resident bishop, he provides spiritual oversight; shares in equipping, teaching, and encouraging mission, outreach, witness, and service; and serves as a shepherd of the church in providing a prophetic witness of justice, mercy, and unity.

Prior to being assigned to the Ohio Episcopal Area in 2024, Jung served eight years as bishop of the Northern Illinois Conference and then 12 years as bishop of the Wisconsin Conference. In Wisconsin he visited every congregation, provided leadership in planting over 30 new congregations, and guided the Cabinet in achieving 49% cross-racial appointments.

Jung is a member of the Ecumenical Forum for Korea in Geneva, Switzerland, where he advocates for peace and reconciliation efforts on the Korean Peninsula. He has held several prominent roles within The United Methodist Church including president of the General Board of Global Ministries and chair of the UM Korean National Plan.

Jung holds a PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an MA from the Institute of Buddhist Studies (affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA), an MA from Dongguk University Graduate School in Seoul, South Korea, and a BTh from Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul, South Korea.

The bishop and his wife Rev. Im-Hyon are the parents of two adult sons and grandparents of two.



Bishop Seong-Bok Kim
Seoul Annual Conference

Bishop Seong-Bok Kim is bishop of the Seoul Annual Conference. He was inaugurated as the 23rd bishop of the Conference on November 1, 2024.

The bishop currently is the senior pastor of Kkotjae Church. Since being ordained a full-member pastor of The Korean Methodist Church in 1998, Kim has served senior pastor of Sungil Church in the Jungnang District and Eunhyun Church in the Eunpyeong District and been superintendent of the Seongdong-Gwangjin District of the Seoul Annual Conference. His pastoral experience also includes serving Christ United Methodist Church in Hawaii, USA.

Kim earned his bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Methodist Theological University in Seoul, South Korea. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Claremont School of Theology in Los Angeles, California.



Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton is a retired bishop of The United Methodist Church. Annual Conference 2025 is a homecoming for the bishop, as he previously served as resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference from 1996-2004.

Following his eight years in East Ohio, Keaton served as resident bishop of the Michigan Area, which included the Detroit and West Michigan Conferences, and then four years in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference before retiring in 2016.

Keaton was elected a bishop from the Northern Illinois Conference where he served two churches, was an associate council director, and later was appointed a district superintendent. During his ministry in Northern Illinois, he was elected three times to serve as a General Conference delegate.

He has served The United Methodist Church as a member of the General Council on Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry from 2009-2012. He chaired the denominational initiative Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC-21), and is serving as a member of the Council of Bishop's Leadership Team on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

Keaton earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Philander Smith College. He earned Master of Divinity Studies from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and later a Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Seminary.

The bishop and his wife Beverly have been blessed with three children and two grandchildren.



Rev. Dr. AHyun Lee is associate professor of Pastoral Theology, Care, and Psychotherapy at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. She is an ordained elder in full connection with the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church and a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC).

Lee is the author of *Selves In-Between: Offering Care and Forging Bonds with Difference* (GBHEM, 2021) and the forthcoming *Protestant Clergy Sexual Misconduct and Intercultural Pastoral Care: Invisible Mask* (Palgrave Macmillan). She serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Pastoral Psychology* and chairs PANAAWTM (Pacific, Asian, North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry). She enjoys laughing, walking, hiking, camping, and traveling with her husband, Rev. Young Tae Lee, who is also an elder in the Wisconsin Conference.

Lee offers this description of the "Rise Up and Go: Soul Care Amid Trauma and Despair" Bible study she will lead during Annual Conference plenary sessions:

"Are you feeling stuck, exhausted by life's storms, or weighed down by lingering fears? Join us as we explore how two unlikely companions – Jesus' command to Jairus' daughter, 'Talitha koum!' ('Little girl, get up!') from Mark 5, and God's call to Jonah to 'go to Nineveh!' – can bring fresh hope to our deepest struggles. We begin by acknowledging the weight of trauma and fear, move through those dark moments of feeling 'asleep' or 'swallowed up,' and discover the power of God's voice inviting us to rise. Come and dive into these transformative stories, and let them guide you toward renewed faith, resilience, and healing."

Annual Conference 2025**June 12-14**

The College of Wooster
1189 Beall Avenue, Wooster, OH 44691

The College of Wooster Campus

- The beautiful campus offers opportunities for quiet walks and meaningful conversations with friends and colleagues.
- Wear comfortable shoes because you will need to walk between venues.
 - 1/4-mile is the estimated distance between the Lowry Student Center, where meals are held, and McGaw Chapel, site of worship services during Annual Conference.
 - 1/3-mile is the estimated distance between McGaw Chapel and the Gault Recreation Center inside Scot Center, where business sessions will be held during Annual Conference.

AC Registration

- Registration for Annual Conference opened April 1 and closes May 16.
- Registration is online only, at eastohio-reg.brtapp.com/2025EOCAnnualConferenceRegistration
- There will be no onsite registration at the College of Wooster.

Check-In

- Check-in for Clergy Executive Session and Annual Conference materials is in the Gault Recreation Center of the Scot Center building.
 - Wednesday, June 11 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, June 11 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, June 12 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
 - Thursday, June 12 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
 - Friday, June 13 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Guests staying in residence halls are asked to check into their rooms first. Please then leave your vehicle in residence hall parking and walk or take the shuttle to Gault Recreation Center to check-in for Clergy Executive Session and Annual Conference.
 - Wednesday, June 11 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, June 11 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
 - Thursday, June 12 7:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
 - Thursday, June 12 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
 - Thursday, June 12 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Parking on Campus

- Park for free on the College of Wooster campus. **(See outside back cover for map)**
- Members of the Annual Conference Volunteer Team will be stationed at parking lots to greet you and assist you, as needed.

Parking for Vehicles with State-Issued Handicap Placards

- **Lot #29** – accessed from University Street, is being used for individuals who during AC registration submitted the number of their state-issued accessibility parking placard.
- A shuttle will transport individuals up the small hill to the Scot Center for check-in.

Parking for Check-In, Meal Tickets, & Business Venue

- **Lot #35**, accessed from Beall Street, is the closest lot – located catty-corner across the street from Gault Recreation Center of the Scot Center building where AC check-in and meal ticket distribution, and business sessions are located.
- **Lot #24 & Lot #28**, accessed off University Street is a short walk from the Gault Recreation Center of the Scot Center building where AC check-in and meal ticket distribution, and business sessions are located.

Parking for Residence Hall Check-In

- Bornhuetter Residence Hall (**Lot #42**), accessed off Beall Avenue.
- Brush Residence Hall (**Lot #29**), accessed off University Street.
- Gault Manor Residence Hall (**Lot #5, Lot #7, Lot #9**), accessed off Wayne Avenue.
- Luce Residence Hall (**Lot #26**), accessed off Stibbs Street.

Parking for Worship Services

- **Lot #16**, accessed off Bever Street, is located behind McGaw Chapel where worship services will be held during Annual Conference.

Parking for Production & EOC Staff Working at Annual Conference

- (**Lot #27**), accessed off University Street.

Shuttle Service for Persons with Mobility Challenges

- To assist attendees with mobility challenges, six-passenger golf carts will be available throughout the East Ohio Annual Conference to provide shuttle service between venue sites.
- Look for designated shuttle pick-up/drop-off areas.
- Individuals who indicated during AC registration that they would need shuttle service received the shuttle service contact number prior to Annual Conference.
- For assistance or more information about the shuttles during Annual Conference, please connect with an AC Volunteer Team member on-site.
- Shuttles will operate 30 minutes before breakfast each day until 60 minutes after the final session of the day.

Stay on the College of Wooster Campus During AC

- Make the most of your time at Annual Conference by staying on campus in an air-conditioned residence hall, providing a comfortable and convenient stay.
 - Choosing to stay on campus fosters deeper connections with fellow attendees.
 - Engage in evening sessions on Thursday and Friday without the stress of commuting home after 9:00 p.m.
 - Enjoy extended fellowship, networking opportunities, and shared moments of worship and reflection.
- Those who, during online AC registration, select that they wish to stay in a residence hall during the conference will receive an e-mail by June 1 providing their room and parking assignment, a recommended packing list, and other important information about their stay.
- Greeters will welcome residence hall guests in their assigned lot and assist with luggage.
- Once inside the residence hall lobby, guests will receive the keycard for their room and can move their items into the room.

Residence Hall Rooms

- Each room has a bed frame and a twin XL mattress, a dresser, and a desk per person.
 - NOTE: Twin sheets will not fit a twin XL mattress.
- You must supply your own linens – or you can rent linens for \$17.50/person.
 - If you rent linens, they will be in your room when you arrive.
- Most of the residence halls have some configuration of shared bathrooms.

Two-Night & Three-Night Packages Available

- To stay in a residence hall during Annual Conference you must select to do so and pay for the rooms during online registration April 1 – May 16.
- Per the housing policy of the College of Wooster, those who choose to stay in a residence hall must purchase the AC meal plan (\$65);
 - The meal plan is lunch on Thursday, all three meals on Friday, and breakfast and lunch on Saturday.
- The costs are the same for a single-occupancy room or a double-occupancy room.
 - If you wish a double-occupancy room, each person in the room must list the other as their roommate during the online AC registration.
- Stay Wednesday, June 11; Thursday, June 12; and Friday, June 13
 - \$179.48 – which pays for the room, the 6% bed tax, and the six-meal plan.
 - You must pay for this during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.
- Stay Thursday, June 12 and Friday, June 13
 - \$141.32 – which pays for the room, the 6% bed tax, and the six-meal plan.
 - You must pay for this during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.

On-Campus Meal Plan

- The Lowry Student Center offers a variety of food stations with options including vegetarian, vegan, diabetic-friendly, and gluten-free meals.
- The EOC has coordinated with the College of Wooster to create an AC plan that enables participants to choose from any food served in Lowry Student Center during these meals:
 - Thursday, June 12 – lunch
 - Friday, June 13 – breakfast, lunch, & dinner
 - Saturday, June 14 – breakfast, & lunch
- The six-meal plan must be purchased during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.
 - The meal plan and individual meals **cannot be purchased on campus**.

Additional Meal Options

- Thursday, June 12 breakfast
 - This is not included in the meal plan because many will be traveling to campus for the 9:00 a.m. opening worship service.
 - You may purchase Thursday breakfast for \$7.50 – but you must purchase it during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.
 - **You cannot purchase this meal on campus.**
- Thursday, June 12 dinner in Kittredge Dining Hall
 - This is not included in the meal plan because Bishop Hee-Soo Jung will host a special meal, “Celebrating Methodist Mission in Ohio, Korea, and Beyond: The 140-Year Legacy of Mary and William Scranton”.
 - Tickets must be purchased during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.
 - Cost: \$30 (chicken entrée) / \$28 (vegetarian entrée).

- Food trucks will also be on campus Thursday night in the gathering area behind Lowry Student Center.
 - AC members and guests can purchase meals onsite.
- Off-campus dining
 - Individuals who do not purchase the meal plan during online AC registration April 1 – May 16 will need to purchase meals at restaurants in Wooster.
 - Meals cannot be purchased on the College of Wooster campus during Annual Conference. Please plan accordingly.

Group-Organized Special Meals

- These meals will be in the Lowry Student Center.
- Meals must be purchased during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.
- Those who purchase the meals in advance will select from options at the food stations and then carry their meals to the locations inside Lowry Student Center where the groups will gather.
- Volunteers will be available to assist those who need help carrying plates or drinks.
- Black Pastors' Fellowship lunch Thursday, June 12 in the Tartan Room inside Lowry Student Center – included in the meal plan, or \$12.50/person.
 - The Black Pastors' Fellowship invites clergy and laypersons to gather for a meal and joyful conversation as we celebrate milestones in our churches and communities. We will also pray and share, uplifting one another and discussing ways to ensure a visible and supportive presence within and beyond the East Ohio Conference. If you have questions about this event, please e-mail Rev. David Whitt at revdwhitt@yahoo.com.
- Creation Care lunch Thursday, June 12 in Room 201, second floor of Lowry Student Center – included in the meal plan, or \$12.50/person.
 - Join documentary filmmakers Rev. Ryan and Mariellyn Grace for the East Ohio premiere of their new film, "Rivers of Life: Disaster Response in the Desert Southwest" that looks at climate change and climate resilience in the already-harsh Sonoran desert. The film will be shown over lunch and followed by a conversation on creation care and what churches and individuals can do to build climate resilience in their own communities.
- Immigration lunch Thursday, June 12 in The Alley, downstairs in Lowry Student Center – included in the meal plan, or \$12.50/person.
 - What can a church do? Who do I call to find out in my community? Connect with churches and people who have been doing this work and will help you navigate the ways you and your congregation can live out your baptismal vows to resist evil and walk with people through these challenging times.
- All In Community lunch Friday, June 13 in Room 201, second floor of Lowry Student Center – included in the meal plan, or \$12.50/person.
 - All In Community is hosting a "Healing through Lived Experience" lunch. Do you believe that God can turn the worst thing a person has done into the best thing that ever happened to them? Join us as our friends and neighbors in the East Ohio Conference share stories of finding hope and healing through their lived experiences in the criminal justice system.

- Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors lunch Friday, June 13 in The Alley, downstairs in Lowry Student Center – included in the meal plan, or \$12.50/person.
 - All associate members and local pastors in good standing are invited to a time of fellowship as we elect the 2025-2026 Board of Directors, revise our constitution, and celebrate milestone achievements within our membership. If you have questions about this event, please e-mail Pastor Jeri Johnson at pastorijkj@gmail.com.
- Methodist Federation for Social Action lunch Friday, June 13 in the Tartan Room inside Lowry Student Center – included in the meal plan, or \$12.50/person.
 - Join East Ohio MFSA for lunch and naming of the 2025 Bishop James S. Thomas Award recipient. Keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Eniko Ferenczy, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wooster, will share insights on faith-based engagement and ecumenical connections, particularly as we work to support and encourage our migrant and refugee neighbors. If you have questions about this event, please e-mail William Watts at watts.bill46@gmail.com.

Services

Annual Conference worship services will be held in McGaw Chapel on the College of Wooster campus. The main floor of the chapel sits below ground. There is an exterior staircase with handrails and a ramp without handrails that lead to the main door. There is also a ground level entrance to the building at the top of the ramp that can be used to access the staff-operated elevator that will transport worshippers between the second floor and main floor of the chapel.

Opening Worship Service – Thursday, June 12 @ 9:00 a.m.

Preacher: Bishop Seong-Bok Kim, resident bishop, Seoul Annual Conference

Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion – Friday, June 13 @ 9:00 a.m.

Preacher: Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, resident bishop, Ohio Episcopal Area

Service of Licensing, Commissioning, Ordination, and Retirement – Saturday, June 14 @ 9:00 a.m.

Preacher: Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton, retired, United Methodist Church

Sessions

Business plenary sessions will be held on the indoor track and courts of Gault Recreation Center, located inside the Scot Center on the College of Wooster campus. The seating area can be accessed in two ways: 1) from ground-level exterior doors that lead from the lower sidewalk, and 2) from stairs and an elevator from the main floor level where check-in is located.

Thursday, June 12 Business Sessions:

- 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. – ARAP. Introduction to Resolutions & Constitutional Amendments
- 2:50 - 4:30 p.m. – Budget introduction, State of the Conference Address, AC Offering
- 7:30 p.m. (Laity Session)

Friday, June 13 Business Sessions:

- 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. – Board of Ministry, Laity Report, Episcopal Area Task Team
- 2:50 - 4:30 p.m. – Constitutional Amendment, Cabinet Report, Fixing Appointments, Resolutions
- 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. – Equitable Compensation, Board of Trustees/Corporate Meeting

Saturday, June 14 Business Sessions:

- 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. – Board of Benefits, CCF&A, Resolutions, Constitutional Amendments

Childcare Scholarship Application

Parents of children aged infant to 10-years old may apply for a childcare scholarship through the Connectional Ministries Office by completing the online application form found at <https://eastohio-reg.brtapp.com/2025ChildcareScholarship>. There will be no onsite childcare during Annual Conference.

Scholarship funds requested by May 31 will be paid prior to Annual Conference. All other requests will be processed after Annual Conference.

Vacation Bible School Returns to Annual Conference

Vacation Bible School (VBS) will use the new Cokesbury curriculum “Road Trip: On the Go with God” to take children aged Pre-K through 5th grade on an adventure during Annual Conference. VBS, to be held during morning and afternoon sessions of Annual Conference, will meet near the cafeteria in the Lowry Student Center. Parents will need to pick up their child(ren) during the lunch breaks. We will have drinks and snacks, but lunch is not provided.

Sign-up for VBS during online registration for Annual Conference April 1 – May 16 and you will be contacted for further information and to complete important forms. If you have questions about VBS, please e-mail Rev. Amy Vittorio at pastoramyv@gmail.com.

Annual Conference 2025 Offering (Fund 9214) Will Support

- Mary Scranton Memorial Mission Center
- United Methodist Committee on Relief Global Migration
- Bishop’s Discretionary Fund

You are encouraged to share information about these ministries with your congregation and hold a special offering that may be brought by your lay or clergy member to the Annual Conference.

The Mary Scranton Memorial Mission Center is a proposed initiative by the Seoul Annual Conference of the Korean Methodist Church. This new mission center will serve as a hub for outreach, training, and mission work while preserving the history of Korean Methodism and its connection to The United Methodist Church. The East Ohio Conference is honored to contribute to this effort, recognizing that Mary Scranton, one of the first Methodist missionaries to Korea, once called Ohio home.

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Global Migration (Advance #3022144) addresses the global refugee and migration crisis. The fund provides relief and recovery in the form of food aid and legal and transportation services for vulnerable migrants and refugees with support to organizations working directly with these populations. It also supports migration-focused organizations that assist migrants in attaining legal status, litigating asylum claims, and resettling in U.S. communities.

The Bishop’s Discretionary Fund enables Bishop Hee-Soo Jung to support critical ministry needs throughout the East Ohio Conference and beyond. Through this fund, countless individuals and communities receive assistance in times of need.

How to Give

Your generous donation to the 2025 Annual Conference offering will make an immediate and lasting impact. You can support the offering in-person, online, or via mail.

- In-person – place your offering in the collection plate.
- Online – visit www.eocumc.com/donate, click on the Annual Conference 2025 logo, and then select the red box labeled Learn More & Donate.
- Mail – send your check made payable to East Ohio Conference, with Fund 9214 or AC Offering noted in the memo line to:
 - East Ohio Conference
P.O. Box 76019
Cleveland, OH 44101-4755

**Midwest Mission Collection Truck (Lot #29)**

Midwest Mission is part of the disaster relief supply network of United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and is an East Ohio Conference mission Advance partner (Fund 9944).

The Midwest Mission collection truck will be parked in lot #29 off University Street during Annual Conference. Staff will be present to receive donations on:

- Thursday, June 12 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, June 13 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Make plans to donate supplies for personal dignity kits and home care kits to help meet the needs of those impacted by disasters and hardship.

Personal Dignity Kit Shopping List:

- 1 hand towel (no kitchen towels)
- 1 washcloth (no dishcloths)
- 1 toothbrush (no multipacks)
- 1 bar of soap (3-4 oz.)
- 1 shampoo (12-9 oz.)
- 1 deodorant (2-3 oz.)
- 1 lotion (8-10 oz.)
- 1 one-gallon resealable plastic bag

Home Care Kit Shopping List:

- liquid household cleaner (56-80 oz.; no spray bottles)
- dish soap (42-64 oz.)
- liquid laundry detergent (100-150 oz.)
- 1 scrub brush (with or without handle)
- 1 five-gallon round bucket with resealable lid

If you'd like to help at the truck during Annual Conference, stop by and see Ramon and Mallory. Your support makes a difference!

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LAY MEMBERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

You have the honor of being elected as a lay member of the East Ohio Annual Conference. This is an assignment of great responsibility. By virtue of your office*, you are also a member of your Church Council (§ 252.5.g), Finance Committee (§ 258.4) and the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (§ 258.2a)**; (above ¶ numbers refer to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*).

Each member has the responsibility to: /

- 1) Attend all sessions of the Annual Conference and leave only under emergency conditions and with the knowledge of his/her district superintendent.
- 2) Become familiar with the organizational structure and existing programs of the Annual Conference, parliamentary procedure, and the Conference rules.
- 3) Study pre-conference reports and become familiar with specific programs and items that might be presented during the sessions. Consult with the pastor and church lay leader. While the lay member is obligated only to use his/her own best thinking in the conference, the counsel with others ahead of time should prove helpful.
- 4) Participate vocally at the Annual Conference and help in policy-making decisions.
- 5) Form his/her own opinions on issues and vote his/her convictions.

You should be aware—before you go to Annual Conference—that a report should be made to your local church congregation as an extension of the Annual Conference. This may be done at a Sunday morning worship service and/or through a more detailed report at a meeting of the Church Council. In either case, it should be done as soon after Annual Conference as feasible. It is best if this is an oral report. However, it may be written in the church newsletter. Check with your pastor before conference about scheduling and time limits for the report.

The Annual Conference website is a good source of information regarding the actions of Annual Conference. Consult it during and after conference by logging onto www.eocumc.com/eoac25. In your reporting to your local charge, we suggest that you mention the major issues raised and how they were resolved and how they might affect your local church. You may want to make reference to the inspirational speakers and leaders. We hope you will talk about the positive aspects of the conference, but it is also important to reflect upon the more controversial aspects of the conference as well. A variation could be a dialogue with your pastor with conference explained as both pastor and lay member saw it.

* When a local church has more than one lay member of the Annual Conference, the local church determines which lay member is to be a member of Church Council, the Pastor Parish/Staff Parish Relations Committee, and the Finance Committee.

** Exception: *The Book of Discipline 2020/2024*, ¶ 258.2a – “No staff members or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the pastor parish/staff parish relations committee.”

**RESPONSIBILITY OF THE
CLERGY MEMBERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Each clergy member has the responsibility to:

- 1) Attend all sessions of the Annual Conference and leave only under emergency conditions and with the knowledge of his/her district superintendent.
- 2) Become familiar with the organizational structure and existing programs of the Annual Conference, parliamentary procedure, and the conference rules.
- 3) Study pre-conference reports and become familiar with specific programs and items that might be presented during the sessions.
- 4) Prior to Annual Conference, consult with your lay member(s) so that he/she might understand the various reports and their implication for the life of the church. Keep in mind that the lay member(s) as well as you are obligated to express views and vote as you each feel is best. In no way should you force your view on your lay member(s) or vice versa.
- 5) Participate vocally at the Annual Conference and help in policy-making decisions.
- 6) Form his/her own opinions on issues and vote his/her convictions.

A report following Annual Conference should be made to your local church. This report is an extension of the Annual Conference and should be made to the congregation. This may be done at a Sunday morning worship service or at a meeting of the Church Council. In either case, it should be done as soon after Annual Conference as feasible. Check with your lay member(s) before conference about scheduling this. Also check with him/her about the time limit for the report.

The East Ohio Annual Conference website is a good source of information regarding the actions of Annual Conference. Consult it during and after conference by logging onto www.eocumc.com/eoac25. Encourage lay member(s) to mention the major issues raised and how they were resolved and how they might affect your local church. You may want to encourage lay member(s) to make reference to the inspirational speakers and leaders. We hope lay member(s) will talk about the positive aspects of the conference, but it is also important to reflect upon the more controversial aspects of the conference as well. A variation could be a dialogue between the pastor and lay member with conference explained as both pastor and lay member saw it.

Annual Conference Program/Hospitality Committee Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Pastor Matt Williamson, chairperson, AC Program/Hospitality Committee

The Annual Conference Program/Hospitality Committee warmly welcomes you to this year's gathering at the College of Wooster. While we assist in planning activities outside the worship and business sessions of Annual Conference, our primary mission is to ensure that your experience is as welcoming and seamless as possible.

Campus Volunteers & Courtey Shuttles

Volunteers will be stationed in parking areas, on pedestrian paths, and at College of Wooster building entrances to answer questions and offer directions. Campus maps will be provided both in this *Pre-Conference Workbook* and in the folder of materials you will receive when checking-in for AC at the Gault Recreation Center. Limited golf cart shuttle services will operate from 30 minutes before breakfast through one hour after the final scheduled event each day, assisting those with mobility concerns.

On-Campus Residence Halls Available

For those during the online registration process who choose to stay in a residence hall during Annual Conference, you will receive an e-mail from Conference staff telling you to which hall you have been assigned and where to park to receive your residence hall keycard and check into your room. Upon arrival, volunteers will be available to assist with move-in, and to provide directions to Gault Recreation, where you will check-in for Annual Conference and receive your name badge, voting device, and materials. You will not be able to stay in a residence hall unless you choose and pay for that option during online AC registration April 1 – May 16.

Meal Plan and Food Trucks

A six-meal plan is available for purchase during online registration. The plan includes Thursday lunch, Friday breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and Saturday breakfast and lunch. The cost of the meal plan is \$65. Those who choose to stay in a residence hall during Annual Conference must participate in the meal plan, which is included when you pay for the room during online registration. The meal plan offers an all-you-can-eat format with accommodations for various dietary and allergen needs. You must choose the meal plan and pay for it during online AC registration April 1 – May 16. You cannot purchase it or individual meals in the dining hall during Annual Conference.

Dinner on Thursday is not included in the meal plan, but you will have two on-campus dinner options that night:

- a Mission Dinner hosted by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, tickets for which are limited and must be purchased during online AC registration, and
- a selection of food trucks offering a variety of local cuisine that can be paid for on campus that evening.

Childcare and Vacation Bible School

Once again, this year, a \$100/child scholarship is being offered to assist with childcare. There will be no onsite childcare during Annual Conference. Parents of children aged infant to 10-years-old may apply for this scholarship through the Connectional Ministries office by [e-mailing Melanie Thomas](#) or calling her at (330) 499-3972 ext. 102.

A parents' room will be located within the voting bar of the plenary venue in the Gault Recreation Center and there will be a playground for children adjacent to the worship venue in McGaw Chapel.

Annual Conference 2025 will feature Vacation Bible School, which is returning after a five-year hiatus. VBS for children ages five through 5th grade will be held during morning and afternoon sessions of Annual Conference and will be conveniently located near the dining hall in the Lowry Student Center. Parents will need to pick up their child(ren) during the lunch breaks.

Prayer Opportunities

A prayer wall will be available within the plenary hall, providing a space for attendees to read and post prayer concerns. Those unable to attend in person may email prayer requests to eocprayerconcerns@gmail.com and those prayers will also be added to the prayer wall. We encourage all attendees to engage in this collective prayer practice. Additionally, we invite members to utilize the College of Wooster's Prayer Labyrinth and various prayer and meditation rooms.

A prayer team organically formed at last year's Annual Conference, and we invite anyone interested in joining a prayer team to support needs during this year's conference. If you feel called to serve in this way, you can e-mail Wendy Bramley at eocprayerconcerns@gmail.com.

Annual Conference Offering

The following ministries will benefit from this year's Annual Conference offering (Fund 9214), with each receiving an equal share:

- The Mary Scranton Project in Seoul, South Korea
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Global Migration
- The Bishop's Discretionary Fund

Details about each ministry can be found on page 16 of this *Pre-Conference Workbook*. Donations to the Annual Conference offering can be made in-person when the offering is collected the afternoon of Thursday, June 12 and online at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEE2/campaign/C-13QCC>.

Volunteering

The success of our efforts depends on the dedication of our volunteers. We deeply appreciate all those who give their time and talents to make Annual Conference a welcoming and enriching experience. Please take a moment to thank the volunteers you encounter throughout the event. If you feel called to serve, you can indicate your interest in volunteering on your registration form or speak with a member of the Hospitality Committee during the conference.

Thank You

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the members of the Hospitality Committee, whose commitment makes this work possible. We also extend our gratitude to Rev. Ed Fashbaugh for his guidance and to the staff of Connectional Ministries and the East Ohio Conference Area Center for their invaluable support. Special thanks to Bishop Hee-Soo Jung for his leadership and trust in our committee's mission. Most importantly, we thank the East Ohio Conference for allowing us to serve you.

Agenda, Rules, and Administrative Process Committee Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Cindy Patterson, chairperson, Agenda, Rules, and Administrative Process Committee

Agenda

The agenda of the Annual Conference has been prepared by the Conference secretary, approved by the ARAP Committee and will be presented to the Annual Conference on Thursday, June 12. We are pleased with the new flow of the agenda, enabled by the new location and focus. The agenda will be adapted as needed throughout the Annual Conference session.

The ARAP Committee along with Bishop Hee-Soo Jung submit the name of Nathan Howe to complete this quadrennium as Annual Conference secretary. Nathan will be formally elected at Annual Conference.

Rules

ARAP has updated the Conference Rules to reflect the new 2020/2024 Book of Discipline and Annual Conference practices. The complete rules follow this report and will be adopted at the Annual Conference session.

Administrative Process

It was determined that allowing each district to send 50 at-large members to Annual Conference brought us as close to equalized in 2024 as we have ever been. ARAP determined that we would continue this practice.

As we continue to update our policies, COSROW will bring an updated Sexual Ethics Policy to the floor of Annual Conference for adoption.

East Ohio Sexual Ethics Policy***Statement of Purpose & Theological Foundation***

All human beings are created in the image of God, and are beloved of God, deserving of love and respect. In the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, we honor God and one another by pursuing healthy and life-giving relationships with each other. Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” – Matthew 22:37-39 (NRSVA)

Our relationship with and knowledge of God guides and illuminates our reflections on human sexual behavior. Together we affirm that:

- God calls us to honor our bodies and gives us responsibility over our own bodies – I Corinthians 6:12-20.
- God calls us to honor the integrity of our neighbors, and their authority over their own personhood – Deuteronomy 22:25-30.
- God calls us into covenant with each other within the family of God – Deuteronomy 14:1-2; Ephesians 4:14-16.
- God calls us to support each other – 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NRSVA).
- God, through the church, calls leaders (whether ordained, consecrated, elected or appointed) to witness to the preciousness of bodies, our own and others; and to declare that each person is unique and of divine worth – I Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 4:1.

In light of these understandings, The East Ohio Conference is committed to honor the complete integrity of one another, and in doing so, we honor and remember the Body of Christ.

This policy exists to safeguard relationships, to build up the Body of Christ, and to provide guidelines for the prevention and reporting of sexual and professional misconduct to the East Ohio Annual Conference. This policy applies to all ministry professionals working in East Ohio Annual Conference churches and shall become a part of local church policies. The East Ohio Annual Conference is committed to responding to all violations of this policy in a way that promotes true justice and accountability and in such a way that promotes healing.

Definitions

Ministry Professionals - ministry professionals (paid and unpaid) are those persons (clergy and lay) serving in positions of power and authority. Ministry professionals are charged with the sacred trust of creating and maintaining environments where all can encounter the living Christ and grow in their knowledge and love of God.

Sexual Misconduct - sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another. It includes criminal behaviors in some nations, states, and communities and is a chargeable offense in The United Methodist Church. (2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #3351)

Sexual Harassment - sexual harassment is a form of sexual misconduct, defined as unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior within a pastoral, employment, ministerial (including volunteers), mentor, or colleague relationship that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or volunteer's performance. It can create a hostile, offensive environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit women, men, elders, children, or youth. (2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #3352)

Reporting & Responding to Complaints of Misconduct

1. The East Ohio Annual Conference has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment or misconduct. The East Ohio Annual Conference takes seriously any violations of the sacred trust by ministry professionals.
2. Violations of this policy may be reported to your SPRC, pastor, any United Methodist clergy person, the district superintendent, or the bishop.
3. All persons who have knowledge of alleged misconduct are encouraged to come forward.
4. SPRC chairpersons and United Methodist clergy who receive the report of alleged misconduct and/or a signed complaint shall report the allegation and/or complaint to the bishop and the district superintendent.
5. Keep a journal to document specifics surrounding all incidents in question. Include conversation and contacts with the person, dates, times, witnesses and descriptions of the incidents.
6. When the alleged conduct constitutes a criminal act, report it to the police. A complaint which involves a child under the age of 18 must also be reported to the nearest agency charged with child protection.

7. In order for a violation of this policy to become an official complaint (subject to ¶363 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*) it must be presented in writing and signed by the person making the complaint.
8. All complaints will be dealt with promptly and in confidence according to ¶363. All investigations of clergy will be conducted according to ¶2701-2706 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*. All appropriate legal reporting practices shall also be followed.
9. Confidentiality is an important part of this process. Confidentiality means that information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, at the discretion of the Bishop. In the event of a signed complaint, information will be shared as outlined in ¶363, for the purpose of accountability and repairing the harm that has been done.
10. If an allegation and/or complaint, formal or informal, is made against a ministry professional during their credentialing process and the respondent is under the care of the District Committee on Ministry or the Board of Ministry, the bishop's office shall share the allegation and/or complaint with the Board of Ministry (BOM) chairperson. Information shared with the BOM chairperson shall include the nature of the allegation and/or complaint, the signed complaint (if applicable), and any evidence presented. The East Ohio BOM will treat all information related to allegations and complaints confidentially.
11. All ministry professionals within the East Ohio Annual Conference are subject to the Behavioral Health Guidelines for Boards of Ordained Ministry, published by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and any published East Ohio Conference Behavioral Health Guidelines.
12. Remember that you are not alone in this process. All persons who bring forward complaints will be heard, affirmed for coming forward, given access to support persons, and prayed for throughout the process.
13. The East Ohio Annual Conference shall have no less than three trained support persons for survivors and three trained support persons for respondents.
14. The East Ohio Annual Conference shall have at least one trained response team that can be deployed to a congregation at the request of the episcopal office, the district superintendent, or a local clergy person in consultation with the above.
15. The East Ohio Annual Conference shall list trained support persons and response team members publicly on the annual conference website, and in the Conference Journal each year.
- ~~16. The East Ohio Annual Conference takes seriously any violations of the sacred trust by Ministry Professionals.~~

Policy Against Retaliation

The East Ohio Annual Conference has a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation against those who report misconduct or submit a complaint.

Updates to the Sexual Ethics Policy

COSROW shall update this policy at least once every four years. If any provision of this policy is in conflict with the current *Book of Discipline*, the Discipline shall prevail. Such conflict shall not be grounds for invalidating this policy.

Additional Resources

1. UM Sexual Ethics: www.umsexualethics.org
2. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women: www.gcsrw.org
3. Do No More Harm: <https://donomoreharm.org>

Adopted at Annual Conference 2023

Committee on Episcopacy Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Heidi Welch, chairperson, Commission on Episcopacy

Greetings on behalf of the Committee on Episcopacy. Our task is to:

- support and pray for bishop as he oversees the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church,
- be available to the bishop for consultation and feedback,
- help interpret the role of our episcopal leader for our Conference, and,
- consult with our bishop and prepare episcopal reports for the North Central Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy.

Like in all areas of ministry, some years are busier than others. And this year was a busy one for the Committee on Episcopacy!

At the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in July 2024, it was announced that Bishop Malone was to be assigned to the Indiana Conference beginning September 1, 2024. It was also announced that the newly formed Ohio Episcopal Area would be led by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung for the coming quadrennium.

We quickly went into celebration and preparation mode: planning a time to celebrate and say goodbye to Bishop Malone and her family, working with West Ohio to secure a home for Bishop Jung and his wife, Rev. Im, and planning a welcoming celebration for Bishop Jung.

Bishop Malone's farewell celebration was held on August 3 at Faith UMC in North Canton. It was a beautiful time to thank Bishop Malone for the ways she had led and formed us over the past eight years. We laughed, we cried, and we ate yummy food – it was a good, United Methodist gathering!

Just a few short weeks later, Bishop Jung moved into the Ohio Area episcopal residence in Worthington. This home is centrally located in the state, with easy access to highways so that Bishop Jung can easily travel the entire episcopal area. Prior to Bishop Jung moving in, individuals from both conferences gathered to clean up the outside of the residence, stock the pantry and fridge with staples, and pray around the home – for Bishop's family and the ministry we would do together.

Then, on October 19, we gathered at Wooster UMC to welcome Bishop Jung and Rev. Im into our East Conference community. We committed to working together to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world", and Bishop Jung reminded us of the ways East Ohio has already impacted the world, including playing a part in his conversion to Christianity.

Since September 1, Bishop Jung has been busy making a home in Ohio. He has gathered us together for a Day of Unity in November, and to mark Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in February. He is committed to being a "field bishop" being present in districts and local churches as much as possible. Already, he has visited each district in both East Ohio and West Ohio, spending time in bible study and conversation with both clergy and laity. And he is committed to visiting every local church within his four years here – touching each altar, praying for the ministry and people of the church, and listening to their hopes and passions.

I invite you to pray for Bishop Jung and his ministry in and through both the East and West Ohio Conferences. In the midst of transitions, we are reminded of the constant presence of God, reinvigorating us for the good work of Jesus.

Simplified Accountable Structure (SAS) Update for Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Edward M. Fashbaugh, executive director, Connectional Ministries

At last year's Annual Conference members overwhelmingly voted to replace the traditional East Ohio Conference governance structure with the Simplified Accountable Structure (SAS).

This transition was designed to enhance our focus on the Conference mission and vision as well as increase the visibility, empowerment and impact of laity at the highest levels of Conference leadership. It was expected to take two years to fully transition into the SAS model as new leaders would be provided with training and support throughout the Conference structure.

Even though the Conference knew it would be sharing one bishop with West Ohio it still made good sense to begin the process of implementing the SAS model as talks of merging the Conferences were not yet expected to take place for several years. However, when Bishop Jung was sent to East Ohio as our temporal and spiritual leader, he came with a clear vision that the Holy Spirit was calling him to begin a process to set the stage for a possible merger with West Ohio.

Now that conversations have begun, with the formation of the Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team made up of clergy and laity from East and West Ohio, it would be wise to postpone implementation of East Ohio's SAS plan until we see where those conversations lead. For this reason, I intend to bring a motion for the indefinite postponement of implementing the East Ohio SAS plan until such time as it may be reconsidered following the conclusion of the merger process.

Leadership Recruitment Committee Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Ivy Smith, chairperson, Leadership Recruitment Committee

Each year, the Leadership Recruitment Committee is tasked to nominate persons who are elected by Annual Conference to serve on councils, boards, commissions, committees, and agencies. The committee is also responsible for reviewing and recommending structure changes to all councils, boards, commissions, and committees of the East Ohio Conference. (See Conference Rules 5 & 6).

Some leadership groups are based on structures described in *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024*, this is available online here:

https://issuu.com/cokesbury/docs/the_book_of_discipline_of_the_united_methodist_church?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ

Please note, Conference rules authorize the Leadership Committee to fill vacancies between sessions of the Annual Conference. Places which are to be named (TBN) may already have possibilities identified but these people have not yet confirmed acceptance of the nomination. Talented, gifted and able individuals are the backbone of our Conference, and we are gratefully blessed to see the response when folk are called upon for Conference-level committee service.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving in a Conference leadership position, please take the Leadership Interest Survey by visiting <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NW2H32M>. You may also contact Melanie Thomas, Connectional Ministries administrative assistant, to share your interests, at mthomas@eocumc.com.

Should you have spelling corrections, editorial corrections, changes in district, or ex-officio positions, resignations, or other items that do not require a vote of the Annual Conference, please email them to

Melanie Thomas at mthomas@eocumc.com by July 1, 2025 or the report will be printed as is in *The Journal*.

I especially give thanks to Bishop Jung for the guidance over our task of nominations throughout the year. I also give a big thank you to the faithful committee members and Rev. Ed Fashbaugh, executive director of Connectional Ministries, for seeking, recruiting, and recommending clergy and laity to represent our Conference in all areas of ministry. Thank you to Connectional Ministries Administrative Assistant Melanie Thomas, for her outstanding control of this document and the entire leadership process.

On behalf of the Leadership Recruitment Committee, I move the following:

1. Terms of Office

- Persons serving ex-officio serve while holding a specific office or responsibility.
- Persons named or nominated by districts or other agencies serve for one year or until their successor is named.
- All other nominations, as well as chairs named by the bishop, are from July 1 to June 30 (unless otherwise noted)

2. Leadership Report to the Annual Conference

- In this report –
 - “+name” indicates new nominations or ad-interim changes.
 - “TBN” indicates “to be named.”
 - “Structure Change” indicates a change in the membership structure.
 - All other names renew or continue their term of office.
 - CV=Central Valley, NW=Northern Waters, SF=South Forest, WP=West Plains

A) CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

As approved by Annual Conference in June 2025 and effective July 1, 2025. For the most up-to-date leadership, e-mail Melanie Thomas at mthomas@eocumc.com.

1) Leadership Recruitment Committee (formerly Leadership Committee)

PURPOSE: to recruit, train, nurture, support, and evaluate leaders in the annual conference and to review proposed structural changes to the annual conference leadership structure and bring them to the Annual Conference for action. All Conference nominations are to be made with consideration for inclusiveness as stated in ¶610 of *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024*

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop: two lay persons and one clergy named by each district; the Conference lay leader; one representative named by each of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW), the Commission on Religion and Race (CORR), and the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM). The executive director of Connectional Ministries shall be an ex-officio member with voice and the executive assistant to the bishop shall be an ex-officio member with vote.

Chair: Ivy Smith (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh (voice no vote)

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas (voice no vote)

Nominated by Districts (yearly)

TBN	CV	Clergy
Doris Brown	CV	Lay
Megan Myers	CV	Lay

1	Abby Caseman	NW	Clergy
2	TBN	NW	Lay
3	TBN	NW	Lay
4	Tyler Rollinson	SF	Clergy
5	Betty Parry	SF	Lay
6	Nancy Collier	SF	Lay
7	Jenny Whitmore	WP	Clergy
8	Mark Milroy	WP	Lay
9	Melody Barnes	WP	Lay

10

11 Nominated by Other Agencies:

12	+Mary McClintock	Emerging Leaders, formerly Conference Council on Youth Ministries
13	Dianne Tobey Covault	Commission on the Status and Role of Women
14	Will Fenton-Jones	Commission on Religion and Race

15

16 Ex-Officio with Vote:

17	Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop (voice no vote)
18	Kimberly Green	Board of Laity

19

20 **2) Agenda Rules and Administrative Process (ARAP) Committee**21 **PURPOSE:** to plan and order the business of the Annual Conference.

22 **STRUCTURE:** 11 members: one clergy and two laypersons named by the bishop; ex-officio with vote:
 23 executive assistant to the bishop, bishop, Conference secretary (serves as chair), *Journal* editor, chair of
 24 the Annual Conference Program Committee, executive director of Connectional Ministries, executive
 25 director of Communications, and district superintendent named by the bishop.

26

27 Chair: Cynthia Patterson, Conference Secretary (2028)

28 Administrative Support: Melissa McGee

29

30 Named by the Bishop:

31	Steven Stultz Costello	Clergy
32	Linda Crowell	Lay
33	Craig Eppler	Lay
34	TBN	Cabinet

35

36 Ex-Officio with Vote:

37	+Bishop Hee-Soo Jung	
38	Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop
39	Brenda Vaccaro	Editor, <i>Conference Journal</i>
40	Matt Williamson	Chair, Annual Conference Program Committee
41	Ed Fashbaugh	Executive Director, Connectional Ministries
42	Rick Wolcott	Executive Director, Communications

43

3) Annual Conference Hospitality Team (formerly Annual Conference Program Committee)

Structure change: removed chair of the Annual Conference Worship Committee.

PURPOSE: plan all activities that are not part of the business sessions or worship of Annual Conference.

STRUCTURE: 16 members: chair named by the bishop; four classes with one clergy and one layperson per class nominated by the Leadership Committee and elected by Annual Conference; ex-officio with vote: executive director of Connectional Ministries; Conference secretary; person nominated by Conference lay leader; the committee will name team leaders and team members as needed.

Chair: Matt Williamson (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Tammy Kuntz	Clergy, Class of 2026
Wendy Bramley	Lay, Class of 2026
Jennifer Darling-Mellott	Clergy, Class of 2027
Daniel Cole	Lay, Class of 2027
Amy Vittorio	Clergy, Class of 2028
+Sally Kilgore	Lay, Class of 2028
Jeremy Roseberry	Clergy, Class of 2029
TBN	Lay, Class of 2029

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Cindy Patterson	Conference Secretary
Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader
Brenda Vaccaro	Editor, <i>Conference Journal</i> and AC Registrar
Joy Snyder	District Administrators Liaison

4) Annual Conference Worship Committee

Structure change: removed chair of the Annual Conference Hospitality Committee.

PURPOSE: provide design and leadership for worship during Annual Conference, naming the organist, naming the choir director, and providing support for all worship services.

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop; two persons nominated by the Board of Ministry (BOM), four classes of two persons each with four-year terms nominated by the Leadership Committee and elected by Annual Conference; ex-officio with vote: executive director of Communications.

Co-Chairs: +Lindsey Funtik and +Charlene Thomas (2028)

Executive Director, Communications: Rick Wolcott

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Hyeran Yu
Jennifer Darling-Mellott
Jonah Mitchell
Karen Graham
Sarah Dixon

Named by the Board of Ministry:

Andrew Scott
Jake Heskett

5) Commission on Archives and History**PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶641**STRUCTURE:** 16 members: chair named by the bishop and elected by the Annual Conference; one representative nominated by each district; two at-large nominated by Leadership Committee (quadrennial term). Conference historian named by the bishop. Ex-officio with vote: bishop or executive assistant to the bishop; and archivist (nominated by Ohio Wesleyan University).

Chair: Donald Trigg

Executive Assistant to the Bishop: Ed Peterson

Nominated by Districts (yearly):

TBN	CV
+Sandra Beard and +Mary Bronson	NW
John Miller	SF
James MacDonald	WP

Ex-Officio with Vote:

+Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

TBN Archivist

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Kerry King

Mary Ann Stotts

Named by the Bishop:

Donald L. Trigg Conference Historian (No Max Term)

6) Committee on Episcopacy (COE)**PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶636**STRUCTURE:** 12 members: two persons named by the bishop; seven at-large members nominated by the Leadership Committee and elected by the Annual Conference; ex-officio with vote: Conference lay leader and two persons from the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. The chair is elected by the Committee.

Chair: Heidi Welch (2028)

Vice-Chair: TBN

Bishop: +Hee-Soo Jung (Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)

Administrative Support: Melissa McGee

Named by the Bishop:

Doug Arbaugh	Lay, Secretary
Allison LeBrun	Clergy

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Mark Behnke	Lay
Dan Eggen	Clergy
Cheryl Emrich	Lay
TBN	Lay
TBN	Clergy
TBN	Lay
TBN	Lay

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader
Susan Achberger	NCJ COE Representative, Lay
Andy Call	NCJ COE Representative, Clergy

Episcopal Residence Committee**PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶637**STRUCTURE:** three members: chairs of Conference Council on Finance & Administration, Board of Trustees, Conference Episcopacy Committee. All terms based on the term of office they represent.

Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

Ex-Officio with Vote:

+Steven Stultz Costello	Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration
Randall May	President, Board of Trustees
Heidi Welch	Chair, Episcopacy Committee

7) Personnel Committee**PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶613.13**STRUCTURE:** chair named by the bishop; bishop; vice-chair elected from the Committee membership; secretary elected from the Committee membership; seven persons representing Conference Connectional Table, Board of Communications, CCF&A, and Trustees; four members at-large with personnel management and/or administrative experience nominated by the Leadership Committee; ex-officio with voice: executive director of Connectional Ministries, executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, executive director of Communications; ex-officio with vote: bishop or executive assistant to the bishop.

Chair: TBN

Administrative Support: Melissa McGee

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Stephanie Bradford	Vice-Chair
Marilyn Coney	
TBN	
TBN	

Named by Other Agencies:

Kimberly Green	Connectional Table
TBN	Connectional Table
Steve Stultz Costello	Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration
Christine Bell	Board of Benefits
Randall May	President, Board of Trustees
TBN	Chair, Board of Communications

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung	(Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)
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Ex-Officio with Voice:

Vera Milanovic	Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services
Rick Wolcott	Executive Director, Communications
Ed Fashbaugh	Executive Director, Connectional Ministries

B) CLERGY LEADERSHIP**1) Board of Ministry (BOM)****PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶634**STRUCTURE:** up to 50 members named by the resident bishop, elected by Annual Conference in the year following General Conference. Vacancies are filled by the bishop after consultation with the chair of the Board. Detailed guidance for representational membership is provided in ¶634. The Cabinet representative serves yearly. The chair, registrars, executive committee, and other leadership are elected from membership by the Board ¶634.c.

Chair: Jonathan Priebe (2028)

Vice-Chair: +Nathan Howe

Administrative Support: +Beatrice Barnett

Executive Committee:

Joseph Baker	Secretary
Hannah Weisbrod	Registrar for Full Membership, Ordination
Nathan Howe	Registrar for Conference Relations
Lisa Kropinak	Registrar for Provisional, Associate Member, Commissioning
+Marelize Bruner	Background Check Coordinator
Kimberly Arbaugh	Order of Elders
Kathy Dickriede	Order of Deacons
Jeri Johnson	Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors (FAMLP)
+Will Fenton-Jones	Chair of Board of Development
+Allison LeBrun	Chair of Finance
+Diane Tobey Covault	Chair of Candidacy
Tammy Wilden	Psychological Assessments
Robin Dillon	Dean of Licensing School
Tim Morrison	Extension Ministries Coordinator

Members:

+Avis Thrash	Lay CV
+Will Fenton-Jones	Lay NW
+David Chrisman	Lay SF
+Melody Barnes	Lay WP
+Carrie Antczak	
Armando Arellano	
Carolyn Berry	
Joseph Burkhardt	
Jake Heskett	
Tina Johnson	
+Tal Lewis	
Craig Moock	
+Michael Parisher	Communications
Beth Ortiz	
Darlene Robinson	

Edna Stahl
 Ashwin Welch
 Hoyt Wilhelm
 David Whitt
 Karen Wolcott

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Laura White Cabinet

2) Commission on Clergy Well-Being

PURPOSE: the primary task of the Commission on Clergy Well-Being is equipping clergy who are appointed to local churches or extension ministries with resources for the five dimensions of clergy well-being: spiritual, emotional, financial, physical, and social. This includes researching, educating, advocating, and communicating guidelines for how to access these resources.

STRUCTURE: chair, Cabinet liaison and Board of Ministry liaison named by the bishop; three clergy nominated by the Leadership Committee, one each from the Order of Elders, the Order of Deacons, and the Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors. The Leadership Committee will consult with each of the Orders when considering names to be nominated in this process. The Commission may name or remove additional resource consultants as needed.

Chair: David Whitt (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Kimberly Arbaugh	Order of Elders
Kathy Dickriede	Order of Deacons
Jeri Johnson	Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors

Named by the Bishop:

Cara Stultz Costello	Cabinet
TBN	Board of Ministry Liaison

Resource Consultants:

The Commission may name or remove resource consultants as needed.

C) FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

1) Council on Finance & Administration

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶611

STRUCTURE: 13 members: six lay persons, five clergy persons, nominated by the Leadership Committee; Board of Benefits representative, Conference lay leader; the chair, vice-chair and secretary are elected by the Council; ex-officio with voice: executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, district superintendent, and executive director of Connectional Ministries; ex-officio with vote: bishop or executive assistant to the bishop.

Chair: +Steven Stultz Costello (2028)

Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Bill Young	Lay M
Sue Rogers	Lay W, Vice-Chair
Vicky Kelley	Clergy W
Marcia Miller	Lay W
Steve M Smith	Clergy M
Tina Siroki	Clergy W
+Amy Szabo	Lay W
John C. Wilson	Lay M
Andrew Scott	Clergy M
Connor Prusha	Lay M

Nominated by Other Agencies:

Matt Merriman	Pensions
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Ex-Officio with Vote:

Bishop +Hee-Soo Jung	(Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)
Kimberly Green	Board of Laity
+Vera Milanovic	GCFA Board

Ex-Officio with Voice:

Kelly Brown	Cabinet
Ed Fashbaugh	Executive Director, Connectional Ministries

2) Board of Trustees

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶640 & ¶2512.1-8

STRUCTURE: 12 members: four classes of three persons, two lay persons and one clergy person, in each class, nominated by the Leadership Committee and elected by the Annual Conference; ex-officio with voice: bishop (executive assistant to the bishop as alternate), Conference lay leader, Conference executive director of Administrative Services, and chancellor; ex-officio with vote: The president is elected by the Board.

President: Randall May (2028)

Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

Administrative Support: Lori Charton

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Peggy Streiff	Clergy W
Janet Nevels	Lay W
Bill Harding	Lay M
Michael Farmer	Clergy M
Belva Denmark Tibbs	Lay W
Brian Knotts	Lay M
Christopher Liberati	Clergy M
Randall May	Clergy M
Ivy Smith	Clergy W
Brian Bly	Lay M
Gloria Brown	Lay W
TBN	Lay M

1 Ex-Officio with Vote:

2 Bishop +Hee-Soo Jung (Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)

4 Ex-Officio with Voice:

5 Rex Miller Chancellor
 6 Kimberly Green Board of Laity
 7 Cara Stultz Costello Cabinet

9 **3) Board of Benefits**10 **PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶638

11 **STRUCTURE:** eight-year terms arranged in classes, not less than 12 members one-third lay women, one-
 12 third lay men, and one-third clergy; one retired clergy member of the annual conference, all nominated
 13 by the Leadership Committee, one person nominated by the Commission on Religion and Race and
 14 elected by the Annual Conference; ex-officio with vote: bishop and Conference lay leader; ex-officio with
 15 voice: one Cabinet representative, executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, Benefits
 16 manager. The chair is elected by the Board.

18 Chair: Matt Merriman (2028)

19 Vice-Chair: David Palmer

20 Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Service: Vera Milanovic

21 Manager, Benefits: Robin Whitacre

23 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

24 Paul R. Turner Clergy M, Class of 2026
 25 Erin Griffith Lay W, Class of 2026
 26 Mollie Brown Clergy W, Class of 2027
 27 Matthew Merriman Clergy M, Class of 2027
 28 Carol Rinehart Lay W, Class of 2027
 29 David Palmer Clergy M, Class of 2027
 30 Jennifer Dyer Lay W, Class of 2028
 31 Barbara Yoost Lay W, Class of 2029, Secretary
 32 Bob Hoy Lay M, Class of 2031
 33 Lisa Huston Lay W, Class of 2032
 34 +Sandra Vaughn Lay W, Class of 2032
 35 TBN Lay M, Class of 2033

37 Nominated by Other Agencies:

38 Linda Crowell CORR

40 Ex-Officio with Vote:

41 Bishop +Hee-Soo Jung (Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)
 42 Kimberly Green Board of Laity

44 Ex-Officio with Voice:

45 TBN Cabinet

47 **4) Commission on Equitable Compensation**48 **PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶624

49 **STRUCTURE:** eight members: chair named by the bishop; six at-large members in classes with an equal
 50 balance of lay and clergy with at least one clergy and lay person each from churches of fewer than 200

members nominated by the Leadership Committee; one district superintendent with vote; ex-officio with voice: executive director of Financial & Administrative Services; ex-officio with vote: bishop, executive assistant to the bishop.

Chair: TBN

Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Janet Nevels	Lay W Class of 2026
Dawan Buie	Clergy M Class of 2026
+Jacqueline Whatley	Lay W Class of 2027
+Allan Georgia	Clergy M Class of 2027
+William Watts	Lay M Class of 2028
+Kelly Collins	Clergy W Class of 2028

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Bishop +Hee-Soo Jung	(Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, as alternate)
Kelly Brown	Cabinet

D) COMMUNICATIONS

1) Board of Communications

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶646

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop, elected by the Annual Conference; one representative nominated by each district; four representatives nominated by the Leadership Committee; ex-officio with vote: executive assistant to the bishop, executive director of Connectional Ministries, executive director of Communications.

Chair: TBN

Executive Director, Communications: Rick Wolcott

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

TBN
TBN
TBN
TBN

Nominated by Districts (yearly):

TBN	CV
TBN	NW
TBN	SF
TBN	WP

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Ed Fashbaugh	Executive Director, Connectional Ministries

E) CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

1) Connectional Table

PURPOSE: as part of the total mission of the Church, to facilitate the Church's program life in the annual conference. The task of the Connectional Table (formerly Conference Council on Ministries) is to be responsible for the development, administration, and evaluation of the program of the annual conference and to encourage, coordinate, and support the Conference agencies, districts, and local churches in their ministry and various programs in accordance with the mission of The United Methodist Church.

STRUCTURE: 48 members: the resident bishop as chair; vice-chair named by the bishop; the Conference lay leader; the Conference secretary; two district superintendents named by the bishop; four lay persons, one from each district; the chair or representative of the following boards, committees, agencies or teams: Congregational Vitality, Multicultural Ministries, Religion and Race, Church & Society, Commission on Clergy Well-Being, Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, Status and Role of Women, Council on Youth Ministries, Higher Education and Campus Ministry, Spiritual Formation & Christian Education, Camps & Retreat Ministries, Missions, Funding Evaluation, Stewardship, Communications, United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith (formerly United Methodist Women); one additional each from: Conference Council on Youth Ministries, United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith; one person representing ministry with older adults; ex-officio with vote: executive assistant to the bishop, members of the General Council on Ministries and the Jurisdictional Council on Ministries (Mission Council); ex-officio with voice: executive director of Connectional Ministries, Connectional Ministries program directors, executive director of Communications, executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, and a representative from Conference Council on Finance & Administration.

Chair: Bishop +Hee-Soo Jung

Vice-Chair: Kimberly Green

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Nominated by Districts (yearly):

TBN	CV
TBN	NW
TBN	SF
TBN	WP

Commission, Board, or Committee Chairs (or designee of the chair)

David Whitt	Commission on Clergy Well-Being
Lorin Radzik	Commission on Status and Role of Women (COSROW)
TBN	Board of Congregational Development
Katelyn Gurbach	Board of Missions
Beth Wilterdink	Board of Camps & Retreat Ministries
Carrie Antczak	Spiritual Formation & Christian Education Committee
Tim Morrison	Board of Higher Education
+Lisa Withrow	Board of Multicultural Ministries
Tina Nees	Commission on Religion and Race (CORR)
+Marc Tibbs	Ethnic Local Church Concerns
Michael Farmer	Board of Church & Society
+Steve Knisely	Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR)
TBN	Board of Communications

Named by Other Agencies:

+Mary McClintock	Chair, Emerging Leaders, formerly Conference Council on Youth Ministries
+Suzie Waldenmaier	Vice-chair, Emerging Leaders, formerly Conference Council on Youth Ministries
TBN	President, United Methodist Men (inactive)
TBN	Representative, United Methodist Men (inactive)
+Becky Sutton	President, United Women in Faith
TBN	Representative, United Women in Faith

Named by the Bishop:

Angela Lewis	Cabinet
Cara Stultz Costello	Cabinet
+Kelly Brown	East Ohio Representative to NCJ Mission Council
TBN	Funding Evaluation Team (inactive)
TBN	Stewardship Team (inactive)
TBN	Ministry with Older Adults (inactive)

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader
Cynthia Patterson	Conference Secretary
Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop

Ex-Officio with Voice:

Beth Ortiz	Director, Strategic Ministries
Gary Jones	Director, Spiritual Formation
Tim Beck	Co-Director, Young People's Ministries
TBN	Co-Director, Young People's Ministries
Will Fenton-Jones	Director, Multicultural Ministries
Kathy Dickriede	Director, Missions & Community Engagement
Rick Wolcott	Executive Director, Communications
Vera Milanovic	Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services
+Steven Stultz Costello	Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration

Connectional Table Executive Committee

PURPOSE: provides operational support for Connectional Ministries and a process for reviewing contingency requests in the Ministries and Missions funding process. All recommendations and actions of the Executive Committee are delegated by and reported to the Connectional Table at its regular meetings.

STRUCTURE: the Connectional Table Executive Committee is comprised of the bishop, executive assistant to the Bishop, Connectional Table vice-chair, executive director of Connectional Ministries, executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, and Conference lay leader.

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Bishop +Hee-Soo Jung	Chair
Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Ed Fashbaugh	Executive Director, Connectional Ministries
Vera Milanovic	Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services
Kimberly Green	Vice-Chair and Conference Lay Leader

Connectional Table Representative to North Central Jurisdiction Mission Council**PURPOSE:** provide for the development of missions and ministries within the North Central Jurisdiction.**STRUCTURE:** a Conference representative named by the bishop and elected by the Annual Conference.

+Kelly Brown

2) Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW)**PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶644**STRUCTURE:** 15 members: chair named by the bishop, three members nominated by the Leadership Committee, all these proceeding elected by Annual Conference; one representative from United Women in Faith; one representative from each district; one representative nominated by Clergy Women's Association.

Chair: Lorrin Radzik (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

+Tennille Power

Hyeran Yu

Becky Weamer

Nominated by Districts (yearly):

TBN CV

+Ja'Alycia Richmond NW

Devani Roe SF

Paige Boyer WP

Nominated by Other Agencies:

Linda Crowell United Women in Faith

TBN Clergy Women's Association

Dianne Tobey Covault Board of Ministry

Named by the Bishop:

Laura White Cabinet

Ex-Officio with Vote:

+Diane Tobey Covault General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

F) LAY LEADERSHIP**1) Board of Laity****PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶630 and ¶1101-1122**STRUCTURE:** the Conference lay leader (chair); associate Conference lay leader; the district lay leaders; three persons nominated by the Leadership Committee; two youth nominated by the Leadership Committee; the director of Lay Servant Ministries; the associate director of Lay Servant Ministries; the presidents of United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith, Council on Youth Ministries, and two representatives each from United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith, Council on Youth Ministries, one district superintendent; the executive director of Connectional Ministries; the resident bishop.

Chair: Kimberly Green, Conference Lay Leader (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Named by the Bishop:

TBN	Conference Associate Lay Leader
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District Lay Leaders (yearly):

+Luke Snyder	CV
Liz Piatt	NW
Diana Hall	SF
Rick Hatton	WP

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Mary Holloway	
Sandra Beard	
+Valerie Riedthaler	
TBN	Youth
TBN	Youth

Ex-Officio:

Deb Gilson	Director, Lay Servant Ministries
TBN	Associate Director, Lay Servant Ministries
TBN	President, United Methodist Men (inactive)
TBN	Representative, United Methodist Men (inactive)
TBN	Representative, United Methodist Men (inactive)
+Becky Sutton	President, United Women in Faith
Margaret Harvey	Representative, United Women in Faith
TBN	Representative, United Women in Faith
TBN	President, Conference Council on Youth Ministries
TBN	Representative, Conference Council on Youth Ministries
TBN	Representative, Conference Council on Youth Ministries
+Hee-Soo Jung	Bishop
Laura White	Cabinet

2) Lay Servant Ministries Committee

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶630.6

STRUCTURE: Conference director and associate director of Lay Servant Ministries, Conference lay leader (all named by the bishop); four district directors or their designee; four at-large representatives nominated by the Lay Servant Committee; two youth nominated by Conference Council on Youth Ministries; the executive director of Connectional Ministries is ex-officio with voice, not vote.

Chair: Deb Gilson, Director, Lay Servant Ministries (2028)
 Associate Director, Lay Servant Ministries: TBN
 Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh
 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

District Directors (named yearly by districts):

Eddie Courtney, Steve Gilson, and Cyd Scarnecchia	CV
Jackie McLaughlin and Debbie Sloan	NW
Yvonne Matus and +Susan Ward	SF
Diane Harding	WP

Nominated by Lay Servant Committee:

+Dalene Kelly
Nancymae Scheurer
Peggy Sutherin
TBN

Nominated by Other Agencies:

TBN Conference Council on Youth Ministries
TBN Conference Council on Youth Ministries

Named by the Bishop:

Kimberly Green Conference Lay Leader
TBN Coordinator, Certified Lay Ministries

G) STRATEGIC MINISTRIES

1) Board of Congregational Development

PURPOSE: Serves as the equivalent structure permitted by *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶632.5 parish and community development.

STRUCTURE: 15 members: chairperson and one Cabinet Representative, named by the bishop; 12 at-large members nominated by the Leadership Committee and elected by the Annual Conference; director of Strategic Ministries is ex-officio with voice, not vote.

Chair: TBN

Director, Strategic Ministries: Beth Ortiz

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

JP Snyder
Diana Hall
Jack Steele
Dawan Buie
Steven Petrolewics
Preston Watkins
TBN
TBN
TBN
TBN
TBN
TBN

Ex-Officio with Vote:

Angela Lewis Cabinet

H) MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES (FORMERLY MULTICULTURAL VITALITY)

1) Board of Multicultural Ministries

Structure change: addition of Anti-Racism Task Force; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + (LGBTQIA+) Task Force; and at-large members of Reconciling Congregations.

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶631, ¶643, ¶654, and ¶655.

STRUCTURE: chair and one Cabinet representative named by bishop; board members nominated by the Leadership Committee with specific responsibilities of focus; one member named by each of the

racial/ethnic caucuses recognized by the Connectional Table; Anti-Racism Task Force and LGBTQIA+ Task Force with representatives from relevant boards and caucuses; director of Multicultural Ministries, ex-officio with voice, not vote. Individual membership for each of these areas will be determined by the Board of Multicultural Ministries rather than be elected by Annual Conference.

Chair: Lisa Withrow (2028)

Director, Multicultural Ministries: William Fenton-Jones

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Tina Nees	Commission on Religion and Race
Michael Farmer	Church & Society
+Marc Tibbs	Ethnic Local Church Concerns
+Corinne Dunn	Native American Awareness Committee
+Steve Knisely	Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships

Racial/Ethnic Caucuses Relating to Multicultural Ministries:

Tina Johnson	Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)
TBN	Native American International Caucus (NAIC)
TBN	National Federation of Asian American United Methodists (NFAAUM)
TBN	Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans

Anti-Racism Task Force

+ Tennille Power
+Matt Anderson
+Paul Turner
+David Whitt
+Marc Tibbs
+ Kathy Dickriede

LGBTQIA+ Task Force

+Dianne Tobey Covault	Chair
+Paige Boyer	Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW)
	Representative
TBN	Reconciling Ministries Representative
+Tim Morrison	Board of Ministry Representative
+William Watts	Methodist Federation for Social Action Representative

Reconciling Congregations Representatives

TBN
TBN
TBN
TBN

Named by the Bishop:

TBN	Cabinet
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I) YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES

1) Emerging Leaders (formerly Conference Council on Youth Ministries)

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline 2020/2024* ¶649

STRUCTURE: Executive Committee elected by Emerging Leaders consisting of chair, vice-chair, secretary, chaplain, production coordinator, and five other members (no more than two adults) as well as the director of Young People's Ministries. District representation is nominated by Council on Youth Ministry rules.

Chair: +Mary McClintock (2026)

Co-Director, Young People's Ministries: TBN

Executive Committee:

+Suzie Waldenmaier	Vice-Chair
+Crystal Harvey	Secretary
TBN	Treasurer
+Savannah Bowman	Chaplain
TBN	Production Coordinator
Deena Wolfe	Coordinator, Adult
TBN	Adult
TBN	Central Valley
TBN	Northern Waters
TBN	South Forest
TBN	West Plains

2) Board of Higher Education and Collegiate Christian Ministries (BHECCM)

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶633

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop; eight committee members, nominated by the Leadership Committee, all elected by the Annual Conference; director of Young People's Ministries ex-officio.

Chair: Tim Morrison (2028)

Co-Director, Young People's Ministries: TBN

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Jane Fleischer
Micah Holland
Thomas Lewis
Tim Morrison
John Partridge
Liz Piatt
Thom Kalb
Katie Osier

J) SPIRITUAL FORMATION**1) Spiritual Formation & Christian Education Committee**

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶629.2

STRUCTURE: 12 members: chair named by the bishop, 11 committee members nominated by the Leadership Committee, all elected by Annual Conference. Director of Spiritual Formation is ex-officio with voice.

Chair: Carrie Antczak (2028)

Director, Spiritual Formation: Gary Jones

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Lauren Clawson

Marie Grmek

Kira Holchin

James Lewis

Pamela Monteith

Tammy Palermo

Ellie Peiffer

Lisa Richards

Ruth Roth

Pat Singelyn

Lisa Withrow

2) Board of Camps & Retreat Ministries

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶610 and ¶629

STRUCTURE: 15 persons: chair named by the bishop, 12 Board members are nominated by the Conference Leadership Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. One Conference Trustee representative and one Cabinet representative shall be nominated by their respective bodies. Ex-officio member with voice will include the director of Spiritual Formation and Camps & Retreat Ministries.

Chair: Kathryn "Beth" Wilterdink (2028)

Director, Spiritual Formation: Gary Jones

Administrative Support: +Diane Hessedence

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Marci Bailey

Linda Bradley

David Collier

Ginny Faeth

Marsha Haas

Allison LeBrun

Tal Lewis

Amy Ochier

Sarah Ring

Becky Stephens

Ben Wilde

Emily Young

Nominated by Other Agencies:

Peggy Streiff Representative, Conference Trustees

Named by the Bishop:

TBN Cabinet

K) MISSIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1) Board of Missions

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶632

STRUCTURE: chair and Conference secretary of Global Ministries named by the bishop; the chairs of Health & Well-Being Committee, and Disaster Response Committee; the Mission coordinator of Education and Interpretation of United Women in Faith (formerly United Methodist Women); any members of the General Board of Missions (GBGM); all team leaders created by the Board of Missions to accomplish its purpose.

Chair: Katelynn Gurbach (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Director, Missions & Community Engagement: Kathy Dickriede

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Ex-Officio with Vote:

TBN Chair, Health & Well-Being

Tom King Chair, Disaster Response

TBN Education & Interpretation, United Women in Faith

TBN Member, General Board of Missions

Karen Kilgo Representative, UM Association & Team Leader, DisAbility Awareness

Named by the Bishop:

Kate Colbow Conference Secretary of Global Ministries (CSGM)

a.) Health & Well-Being Committee (formerly Health & Welfare)

PURPOSE: see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶632

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop; DisAbility Awareness team leader named by the bishop; five members nominated by the Leadership Committee, one representative from each of the current Health & Well-Being agencies as well as historical institutions in covenant relationship with the East Ohio Conference.

Chair: TBN

Director, Missions & Community Engagement: Kathy Dickriede

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Dan Loomis

Michelle Lucarelli

Rasul Welch

Kathy Westlake

Cindy Wilcox

Nominated by Other Agencies:

Don Ackerman	Canton For All People
Angie Marvin	Copeland Oaks
Sherri Buehl	Flat Rock Homes
Brett Bartels	Heart 4 the City
+Craig Kotnik	Nehemiah Mission
+Michael Howard	OhioGuidestone
+Kimberly Arbaugh	Urban Mission
+Kristen Jones	+Wesleyan Senior Living
Rachelle Milner	West Side Community House

Named by the Bishop:

Karen Kilgo	Team Leader, DisAbility Awareness
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b.) United Methodist Volunteers in Missions (UMVIM)**PURPOSE:** to equip mission teams and coordinate Volunteer-in-Mission ministries**STRUCTURE:** a team leader and members nominated by the Board of Missions.

Director, Missions & Community Engagement: Kathy Dickriede

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

c.) Disaster Response Committee**PURPOSE:** see *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024* ¶632.4(22)**STRUCTURE:** members named by the bishop: chair, Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) representative, Emotional & Spiritual Care team leader; the executive director of Connectional Ministries serves as staff support; Conference Disaster Response coordinator; district coordinator(s) of Disaster Response nominated by the district superintendent; ex-officio with vote: Cabinet representative, and UMCOR-certified Early Response Team trainers.

Chair: Tom King (2028)

Disaster Response Coordinator: Steven Court

Director, Connectional Ministries: Edward M. Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

District Coordinators of Disaster Response (named yearly)

+Bob Catchpole and +Michael Woodward	CV
+Vern & Lynn Kempf and +Michael Williams	NW
Bob Carson	SF
Ted Buehl	WP

Named by the Bishop:

William Sutherin	Representative to Ohio Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster
TBN	Team Leader, Emotional & Spiritual Care
Laura White	Cabinet

UMCOR-Certified Early Response Team (ERT) Trainers:

Bob Catchpole
Mike Williams

Advance Specials Report to Annual Conference 2025*Submitted by Rev. Kathy Dickriede, director, Missions & Community Engagement*

In 2024, the Mission Awareness Committee was discontinued, but the Board of Missions continues its work. This includes reviewing East Ohio Conference Advance Special mission and ministry partners and Health and Well-Being agencies. Board members are encouraged to find ways to connect churches with missions in local areas. The mission agencies need the church, and the church needs the mission agencies, to teach us how to be God's agents of transformation in our communities. Disciples continually need to move out of the "Holy huddle" and into the world to bring the Kingdom of God to the here and now.

We are pleased to recommend the following as new Advances in 2025, descriptions are in the full list:

- The Humble Co-Op, Dresden, Fund TBD
- Immigration Ministries of Ohio, Conference, Fund TBD
- Unlikely Partners, Medina, Fund TBD
- Wesleyan Senior Living Foundation, Elyria, Fund 9171

A note about this fund renewal: Wesleyan Senior Living was a long-time Health & Well-Being partner that was founded and supported by The United Methodist Church. In 2020, it declined to renew this relationship with the Conference and its Advance fund was discontinued. In 2024, its new leadership reached out to Rev. Dickriede and asked about reestablishing its relationship with the Conference. The foundation is a registered non-profit in Ohio. The Board of Missions approved the renewal of Wesleyan Senior Living Foundation as a Health & Well-Being agency.

The following Advances have been discontinued in the past year:

- Christian Children's Home of Ohio, Wooster, Fund 9977 (declined to renew)
- Epworth Center, Bethesda, Fund 9140 (closed in 2024)

Total giving to our East Ohio Conference Advance funds increased slightly in 2024, which is great news considering we are fewer churches now! The totals below do not include donations made to the Undesignated Missions Fund 9001:

2024: \$128,717

2023: \$119,597

2022: \$127,033

The Advance for Christ is an official program within The United Methodist Church through which donors may designate giving to specific projects and purposes. Advance giving goes the "second mile" in generosity. It is in addition to our covenant promise to support The United Methodist Church through shared ministry funds (budgeted apportionments). The Advance designates 100% of your donation to the specific project indicated in your gift. This is possible because apportionments pay for the communication and financial networks that administer The Advance. Other charities must deduct administrative fees to process similar donations. Donations may be directed to your local church using the advance number or may be made online at <https://www.eocumc.com/finance/advance-special.html>

Advance projects are partners in mission helping us extend the love of Christ into local communities. Advance projects have been vetted as working in good financial practices and committed to the mission of the United Methodist Church in East Ohio. The Advance works ecumenically and is always looking for partners who are praying, volunteering, and donating financially. Through volunteering with and learning about these projects, we find the presence of Christ in ways and in areas beyond that which we experience as individual churches. The Board of Missions has reviewed and recommended the Advances listed in this report.

A General Church Advance project directs funds to a mission partner or purpose reviewed and approved by the Advance Committee of the General Board of Global Ministries. This can include General Advance Projects in Ohio and those around the world. Please pray for the people and communities these serve. Volunteer and build relationships with these partners. These connections have much to teach us about being “the body of Christ redeemed by His blood.”

Recommendation #1: That the following be adopted and promoted as Conference Advance Projects for support by East Ohio United Methodist churches and individuals from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. This list is grouped by ministry or mission type. The most current list of Advance projects can be found on the Conference website at <https://www.eocumc.com/finance/advance-special.html>.

A) Health & Well-Being Agencies: historically, affiliated with or in a covenant relationship with the EOC UMC.

Canton For All People | Fund 9978

Canton for All People is a community development corporation formed by Crossroads UMC in partnership with the Lemmon and DeHoff family foundations and other area United Methodist churches to bring quality housing and opportunities for all people to downtown Canton.

Copeland Oaks Care Fund, Sebring | Fund 9172

The Life Care Fund is an on-going program that provides financial assistance to aging folks in our care who can no longer afford to pay for housing, meals, prescriptions, and healthcare needs.

Flat Rock Home & Care Center, Flat Rock | Fund 9174

Flat Rock provides health care, day programming, vocational and employment services for adults with significant developmental disabilities and severe behavioral disorders in nine counties in Ohio. This project provides much needed free, charitable care and services not covered by Medicaid or other programs.

Heart 4 the City, Akron | Fund 9941

Heart 4 the City is building the front porch to the kingdom of God by prioritizing relationships and establishing programs that address needs in our community, including a food pantry and a free store.

Nehemiah Mission, Cleveland | Fund 9136

The Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland rebuilds lives and homes of physically and fiscally challenged individuals to sow seeds of hope.

OhioGuidestone, Berea | Fund 9173

OhioGuidestone's mission is to provide pathways for growth, achievement, and lifelong success by helping those we serve overcome barriers to success and find the joy that comes with self-sufficiency and accomplishment.

Urban Mission Ministries, Steubenville | Fund 9107

Urban Mission provides a holistic ministry approach to ending poverty in the Ohio Valley by providing hunger relief, housing, community development, neighborhood revitalization and spiritual care for individuals and families. Our vision is to end poverty one fresh start at a time. If you wish to donate to the Neighborhood Community Development Center, use this fund and note NCDC in the memo.

RENEWED: Wesleyan Senior Living Foundation, Elyria | Fund 9171

The Wesleyan Senior Living Foundation is the charitable arm of Wesleyan Village and Wesleyan Meadows Senior Living. Its purpose is to generate resources to support and enrich the quality of life for residents at Wesleyan Meadows and Wesleyan Village – now and in the future. As part of our Christian mission, Wesleyan Village provides care for residents should they outlive their personal resources through no fault of their own.

West Side Community House (WSCH), Cleveland | Fund 9933

West Side Community House transforms lives in the community through an array of model programs and services that strengthen and stabilize the family, encourage lifelong learning and economic self-sufficiency, promote health and wellness, foster independence, and renew the life spirit.

B) Local Ministry Partners: UMC-affiliated, ecumenical, or community ministries relating to EOC UMC mission strategy.**ACCESS Ashland Emergency Shelter, Ashland County | Fund 9953**

ACCESS Ashland Emergency Shelter provides temporary shelter and meals in a loving Christian environment to homeless women and families with children, while connecting them to resources to become empowered for self-sufficiency and family stability.

Brookdale Orchard, Cleveland | Fund 9983

Brookdale is a community orchard that is a joint mission project of Saint Matthew UMC and the Rockefeller Park Community Restoration & Development Association. Located in Cleveland's Hough neighborhood, it is creating space for peaceful community gathering and growth.

Blue Rose Mission, Mansfield | Fund 9940

Blue Rose Mission provides opportunities for people to bring Christ to homeowners-in-need in Richland County through home improvement projects. Our purpose is to use community and church groups to do housing repairs for people in need.

Covered Bridge Mission, Ashtabula County | Fund 9975

Covered Bridge Mission addresses small home improvement projects that other charitable organizations don't always provide, such as wheelchair ramps, helping the economically disadvantaged in the rural and urban areas of Ashtabula County, Ohio's largest geographic county.

Gifted Gaits, Quaker City | Fund 9919

Gifted Gaits is a ministry in the South Forest District that provides equine-assisted therapy, caregiver support and workforce development that is rooted in prayer, relationships, and horses.

Journey's End Ministries, Newcomerstown | Fund 9931

Journey's End operates a food pantry to feed the less fortunate in Newcomerstown and the surrounding area and also offers used clothing and household items.

NEW: Unlikely Partners, Medina | Fund TBD

Unlikely Partners is a new ecumenical ministry and property that will provide opportunities for those on the margins to experience the love of Jesus in ways that empower them to flourish and live out their identity as a son or daughter of the King! These opportunities could include: a camp, a retreat center, skills training (business, agricultural, and technical), and meeting a local need to provide affordable workforce housing. Through a forward-focused infrastructure including top-end, eco-friendly buildings the property would also be a revenue-generating resource, ensuring the longevity of the mission.

Martha's Cupboard, Fresno | Fund 9964

Martha's Cupboard follows Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves by helping those who have lost their jobs or are low income. It provides cleaning supplies, personal hygiene supplies, diapers, and school supplies that can't be purchased with food stamps. Martha's Cupboard is hosted by Fresno UMC.

O.P.E.N. M, Akron | Fund 9102

O.P.E.N. M Community Works Akron (CWA) assists those in poverty to become economically self-sufficient through holistic employment assistance, prioritizing financial literacy, job retention, and mentorship to reduce individual barriers to employment.

Project Hope for the Homeless (Ecumenical Shelter Network of Lake Co.) | Fund 9143

Project Hope Restoring Hope & Renewing Lives is a 50-bed emergency shelter, which includes a 12-bed family wing with extended hours (Families Moving Forward), as well as comprehensive services and aftercare services upon exit.

Royal Family KIDS Camp, multiple churches | Fund 9965

Royal Family KIDS Camp is a week-long residential camp for children who have been abused and neglected and who are often part of the foster care system. A part of the national program, For the Children, East Ohio Conference currently has three camps sponsored by Northampton UMC, Willoughby Hills UMC, and Strongsville UMC. Royal Family KIDS Camp is a place of safety, love, and hope. Donations will be shared by all three camps.

South Street Ministries, Inc., Akron | Fund 9195

South Street Ministries assists unemployed adults and addresses the spectrum of youth education and mentoring needs in the South Akron community with its many programs.

NEW: The Humble Co-Op, Dresden | Fund TBD

The Humble Co-Op is a place of learning, fellowship, and Christian witness. It hosts community meals and provides education around sustainable farming practices and animal welfare.

Thrive 10:10, Girard | Fund 9979

Serving Mahoning and Trumbull Counties, Thrive 10:10 hosts Ruth's Boutique which provides hygiene, personal care items, and accessories to women and teens in a boutique store setting. A workshop on managing finances called "Getting Ahead in a Just Getting' by World" began in 2023.

Trials for Hope, Cleveland | Fund 9982

Trials for Hope offers dignity and hope to those who fall between the cracks by delivering wholesome food, personal care items, and warmth to the Greater Cleveland, Ohio area.

Wayfinders (formerly Harmony House), Mansfield | Fund 9134

The mission at Wayfinders is to provide the homeless citizens in Richland County with a clear path to housing and hope.

C) Ministries Administered by the EOC UMC Connectional Ministries Office**Disaster Response in Ohio | Fund 9200**

Disaster Response provides immediate and long-term recovery for the community and the survivors of a disaster in the East Ohio Conference or neighboring areas.

Disaster Response Leadership Development | Fund 9648

Disaster Response Leadership Development provides funding for United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Early Response Team (ERT) training, scholarships, and leadership development sponsored by the East Ohio Disaster Response Committee.

East Ohio Conference Camps | Fund 9899

East Ohio Conference Camps provides for camperships and subsidizes other needs at the camp sites to provide a quality Christian camping program.

East Ohio Conference Camps - L.O.T. Campership Program | Fund 9186

The Least Of These (L.O.T.) Campership Endowment provides camperships for children, youth, young adults and families from poverty situations.

East Ohio Volunteers in Mission Leadership Development | Fund 9046

East Ohio VIM Leadership Development provides funding for training, scholarships, and leadership development of East Ohio Volunteers in Mission.

East Ohio Volunteers in Mission Teams | Fund 9643

East Ohio UMVIM teams provide funding for team travel, materials, and participant expenses of teams planned and organized by a United Methodist Volunteers in Mission-trained team leader.

Emerging Mission Ministries (formerly Undesignated Missions) | Fund 9001

These funds are to be used where most needed for missions. The Board of Missions approves any spending from this fund. Since 2021, almost \$400,000 in grants has been put into the mission field through the "Serving Others, Inviting Others" grant and the #GivingTuesday match for Advances.

NEW: Immigration Ministries of Ohio | Fund TBD

By providing free or low-cost legal aid services, advocacy, and other support to migrants, Immigration Ministries of Ohio answers God's call to welcome the stranger. Clients would include migrants who have fled persecution in their home countries or survived human trafficking, domestic violence, child abuse or other violent crimes. Because migrants have experienced a great deal of trauma and are generally unable to access affordable and culturally-competent mental healthcare in the U.S., the dream is to form an ekklesia/church plant/small group community where clients and other migrants could process their feelings and experiences together in community, pray and offer support to one another, and engage in Kingdom-enacting advocacy work together.

John M. Roseberry Scholarship Fund | Fund 9976

Scholarships are awarded to racial-ethnic students who have been members of The UMC for at least three years and do not have access to higher education that others may have.

Youth Service Fund | Fund 9162

The Youth Service Fund provides funding for projects that are youth-designed, youth-led, and youth-benefited. Ten percent of donations to this fund are forwarded to the General Church Youth Service Fund, 90% will be utilized at the discretion of Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM).

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Disaster Response Ministries**Midwest Mission (MMDC), Illinois | Fund 9944**

Midwest Mission is one of eight cooperating depots in the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) supply network. It distributes UMCOR supplies and other items in response to disasters nationally and internationally.

Mission Barn, New Castle, PA | Fund 9918

Established in 2008 as a ministry of Eastbrook UMC, our mission is 4-fold: collect, process, package, and ship UMCOR kits in a tri-state region; construct handicap access ramps and help with local needs; provide material support for ERT (Early Response Teams) doing disaster response; and provide education about Christian mission, especially United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM).

UMCOR US Disaster Response | Fund 1327

Donations to this fund are forwarded to the General Advance for U.S. Disaster Response, Advance 901670.

UMCOR International Relief Fund | Fund 1301

Donations to this fund are forwarded to the General Advance for International Relief, Advance 982450.

D) General Church, National, and International Mission Partners**All In Community | Fund 9984**

An initiative of the East and West Ohio Conference, All In Community (AIC) exists to engage individuals, churches, criminal justice professionals, and community leaders in local efforts to restore hope and support healing during and following lived experiences with the criminal justice system. We equip and engage congregations and individuals to care for self and others who have been harmed and who have harmed. AIC helps prepare and properly position our faithful servants to be in ministry with criminal justice-involved persons because they have felt called to enact the teachings of Matthew 25 and/or because circumstances in their own lives require a caring response.

CHOAIDS (Caring for Haitian Orphans with AIDS), Haiti | Fund 9922

CHOAIDS provides shelter, food, access to education, transportation, and medical treatment for neglected children in Haiti who are HIV positive. It also employs HIV-positive women as 'house moms' to provide direct care to these orphans.

Farmer to Farmer, Liberia | Fund 9026

Farmer to Farmer supports mission partners in Harrisburg, Liberia, whose work includes providing farm equipment and training to the Liberian farming community.

Lift Her Up, Africa University, Zimbabwe | Fund 9168

The East Ohio Conference Teach • Reach • Bless campaign raised more than \$1.5 million to build and furnish a residence hall for female students on the campus of Africa University in Zimbabwe. To continue our commitment to empower female students at Africa University, we started the Lift Her Up ministry in 2024. Lift Her Up will fund scholarships so that female students in a refugee camp who have been accepted at AU will have the funds to enroll at the Pan-African United Methodist institution of higher learning.

North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) UMVIM | Fund 9177

This fund supports the work of the North Central Jurisdiction United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM).

North Coast Haiti Mission, Haiti | Fund 9947

North Coast Haiti Mission improves the lives of the people of the Cap Haitien Circuit of Eglise Methodiste du Haiti, with a primary focus on the Methodist School and Church in Dondon.

Interchurch Social Services of Knox County | Fund 9196

Interchurch Social Services provides emergency assistance to residents of Knox County including rent, utility, and prescription assistance, pantry service, clothing, gasoline vouchers for medical appointments, and Christmas assistance.

RECOMMENDATION #2: that churches and individuals in East Ohio be encouraged to support General Advance projects and missionaries. Some projects or missionaries from years ago are no longer active, so please visit The Advance website, <https://advance.umcmmission.org/>, to confirm a project is still active before donating.

RECOMMENDATION #3: that the Conference Connectional Table, upon recommendation by the Board of Missions, be authorized to revise this list of Conference Advance projects between sessions of Annual Conference.

RECOMMENDATION #4: that every church promotes Special Sunday and Conference offerings. The local church may use traditional dates or choose any other time to promote these ministries.

World Communion Sunday – October 5, 2025 | Fund 9210

Historically, World Communion Sunday has been celebrated with an offering on the first Sunday of October. The offering supports ethnic students who will be the first generation in their families to attend college and people of color who have not historically had access to resources that make higher education possible. The offering is disbursed to:

- World Communion Scholarships: 50 percent (General Board of Global Ministries), with at least one half of the annual amount for ministries beyond the United States;
- Ethnic Scholarship Program: 35 percent (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry); and
- Ethnic In-Service Training Program: 15 percent (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry).

Human Relations Day – Sunday, January 18, 2026 | Fund 9204

Historically, Human Relations Day has been celebrated with an offering on the Sunday before the observance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. Human Relations Day calls the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other. The offering is disbursed through:

- Community Developers Program: 57 percent (General Board of Global Ministries);
- United Methodist Voluntary Services Program: 33 percent (General Board of Global Ministries); and
- Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program: 10 percent (General Board of Church and Society).

UMCOR Sunday – March 25, 2026 | Fund 9206

This offering supports the administration and foundational work of United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). UMCOR is the global humanitarian aid and development organization of The United Methodist Church. UMCOR's work can be categorized into three major areas: Humanitarian Relief / Disaster Response, Sustainable Development, and Global Health (in collaboration with Global Ministries).

Native American Ministries Sunday – April 19, 2026 | Fund 9207

Historically, Native American Ministries Sunday has been celebrated with an offering on the third Sunday of Easter. This Sunday serves to remind the Church of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society. Half of the offering is disbursed through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to provide Scholarships for Native Americans. Half is disbursed

1 through the Conference Native American Awareness Committee to develop and strengthen Native
2 American ministries within the annual conference.

3
4 **United Methodist Student Day – any Sunday in May | Fund 9211**

5 The offering supports United Methodist scholarships and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund.
6 United Methodist Student Day was traditionally celebrated on the last Sunday of November but
7 was moved to May as of General Conference 2024.

8
9 **Peace with Justice Sunday – May 31, 2026 | Fund 9209**

10 Historically, Peace with Justice Sunday has been celebrated with an offering on the first Sunday
11 after Pentecost. Half of the offering is disbursed through the General Board of Church and Society
12 and half through the conference Board of Multicultural Ministries. The offering supports programs
13 that advocate for peace and justice at home and around the world. If you have questions about
14 Peace with Justice grants, please e-mail Will Fenton-Jones at willj@eocumc.com.

15
16 **Golden Cross Sunday – any Sunday determined by the local church | Fund 9208**

17 The offering is divided among the Health & Well-Being residential agencies in covenant with the
18 conference.

19
20 **Disability Awareness Sunday – any Sunday determined by the local church | Fund 9212**

21 Disability Awareness Sunday calls the Church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons with
22 differing abilities and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with differing abilities
23 and health concerns. The offering is administered by the DisAbility Awareness team.

24
25 **UMVIM Awareness Sunday – any Sunday determined by the local church | UMC 9643**

26 United Methodist Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM) Awareness Sunday calls the Church to celebrate
27 those who have served in short-term missions and the work of UMVIM throughout the world. The
28 offering is administered by the Conference UMVIM team to provide training, networks, and
29 scholarships for individuals and mission teams.

30
31 Other Special Days:

32
33 **#MakeADifferenceDay – October 25, 2025**

34 Make a Difference Day occurs annually on the fourth Saturday in October. This is a good opportunity to
35 witness to the world and engage other community partners by volunteering in local mission settings.
36 Please contact an Advance Special project for ideas.

37
38 **#GivingTuesday – December 2, 2025**

39 Unlike Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday emerged to encourage generosity to benefit the
40 lives of others. The UMC encourages churches and organizations to use social media to promote giving
41 to general church and conference advance missions on #GivingTuesday. In 2024, the Board of Missions
42 matched \$6,486 in donations to about half of our Advances. Match funds come from Emerging Mission
43 Ministries FUND 9001.

44
45 **The most up-to-date list of Advances can be found online at**

46 <https://www.eocumc.com/finance/advance-special.html>

Commission on Equitable Compensation Report to Annual Conference 2025*Submitted by Dr. Gloria Brown, chairperson, Commission on Equitable Compensation*

The overall purpose of the Commission on Equitable Compensation is to support the bishop and Cabinet in fulfilling the mission of the Conference, which is to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This commission provides salary support, where the bishop and Cabinet deem necessary, establishes minimum salaries, and awards sustentation grants.

I PASTORAL COMPENSATION FOR FULL-TIME CLERGY

- A. Total ministerial compensation paid directly to or for the pastor by the charge shall include:
1. Cash salary, which should be the maximum possible from the local church, but no less than the minimum standards listed in Section V of this report. In cases where equitable support is requested, churches must pay at least 50% of that listed in Section V of this report.
 2. Parsonage provided, or housing allowance when parsonage is not available.
 3. parsonage/housing utilities, to be paid by the local charge, including but not limited to:
 - a. Electricity
 - b. Heating
 - c. Water and sewer
 - d. One basic telephone line, which could be cell phone service
 - e. Regular trash collection
 - f. Basic cable service or equivalent service where available and desired by the pastor
 - g. Basic high-speed internet where readily available, if desired by the pastor
 4. Conference health insurance and pension
 5. Travel for local charge business at the IRS mileage rate with substantiation of mileage required (see *Guidelines for Mileage*, Section VII).
 6. Other general operating expenses to consider as reimbursable, such as continuing education and cellular phone service, including a data package.
 7. suggest Staff Parish use the pastor compensation worksheets to assist in calculating the pastor compensation package if they are not already doing so.

II. ELIGIBILITY FOR ALLOWANCES: CHARGES

- A. No minimum salary should be paid to a charge that has not conducted a responsible stewardship campaign each year. Refer to the Conference website for information on stewardship and stewardship programs.
- B. Any change in clergy appointment to a charge on minimum salary support should be reported immediately to the office of the Conference executive director of Financial & Administrative Services.
- C. No minimum salary support should be made to cover the failure of a local charge to meet the pastor's salary as approved by the Charge Conference.
- D. A local charge is expected to maintain its level of clergy support from previous years and must set a definite salary.
- E. A local charge is expected to provide a comfortable parsonage (or adequate housing allowance) meeting standards adopted by the Conference for parsonage and parsonage furnishings.

- 1 F. Any charge receiving minimal salary support will be given a maximum of five years to assume
2 full pastoral support. The charge must project a plan of incremental reductions effectively
3 with the second year of support. After five years, minimum salary support may be terminated
4 if substantial progress in reducing dependence on salary support has not been made.
5 Continuation of salary support beyond the five-year limit shall require concurrent action by
6 the commission and the Cabinet.
7
- 8 G. The Cabinet representation on the Commission on Equitable Compensation will give an annual
9 report to the commission regarding the progress each charge is making toward moving off
10 equitable compensation funding.
11

12 **III. ELIGIBILITY FOR ALLOWANCES: PASTORS**

- 13 A. A pastor who is engaged in business, a profession, or farming, or who is engaged in a
14 nonchurch activity for remuneration, or who is employed in secular business shall not be
15 eligible for any salary supplementation, except in cases which may qualify for less than a full-
16 time appointment.
17
- 18 B. A retired Conference member or retired local pastor who is serving as pastor shall not be
19 eligible for any salary supplementation or any sustentation allowance.
20
- 21 C. For the local church to be eligible for salary supplementation, a pastor shall live on the charge
22 or in the parsonage provided by the charge. Under unusual circumstances, the commission
23 may make an exception.
24
- 25 D. Minimum salary support is not a contractual right but a consideration of our relationship in
26 Christian ministry.
27

28 **IV. APPLICATION AND PROCEDURES FOR MINIMUM SALARY SUPPORT**

29
30 Supplementation is not automatic but must be applied for each year or when there is a pastoral
31 change.
32

- 33 A. The district superintendent shall apply on behalf of the local church. The district
34 superintendent shall collect the following information when requesting on behalf of a local
35 church.
36
- 37 1. A copy of the budget for each church on the charge. A completed budget includes:
38 a. The previous year's approved budget, year-end expenditures, and audit report.
39 b. The current approved budget and year-to-date expenditures.
40 c. The proposed budget for the year's support is requested.
41
 - 42 2. A one-paragraph description of the program for stewardship education in each church,
43 including information such as how members were contacted, use of pledge cards,
44 percentage of members who respond to the program, use of regular financial updates,
45 and other helpful information.
46
 - 47 3. One copy of the church's year-end report must be returned to the office of the
48 Conference executive director of Financial & Administrative Services by January 31.
49

4. A report with plans for growing the ministry of the charge. Charges beyond the first year of receiving funds shall include in that report how they are progressing on their plans for growing the ministry, including anything they have learned from what did not work in the past.

B. When a pastoral change is made during the year:

1. Charges requesting support for the first time shall also submit the items listed in IV., A. 1, to 4.
2. Charges already receiving supplementation with pastoral changes need submit only a new application.

V. **MINIMUM CASH SALARY SCHEDULES**

Commission on Equitable Compensation and the East Ohio Conference delegates at Annual Conferences have systematically increased the minimum salaries since 2016 in an attempt to 1) provide a more sustainable wage, 2) address the inflation rate, 3) keep our churches viable and vital, 4) minimize the effect on church finances, and 5) increase our Conference Average Compensation (CAC). The mathematical average increase since 2016 in minimum salaries has been 45%. The following table shows the history of minimum salary increases since 2016.

History of Minimum Salary					
Year	Full Members, Associate Members, Provisional Members, and Ordained Persons	Full-Time Pastors who have completed the course of study	Full-Time Pastors who have not completed the course of study	Percent Increase	Percent Inflation
2016	\$33,806	\$30,382	\$28,671		1.60%
2017	\$34,558	\$31,058	\$29,308	2%	2.10%
2018	\$35,247	\$31,677	\$29,893	2%	2.40%
2019	\$35,982	\$33,211	\$30,491	2%	1.80%
2020	\$37,750	\$33,927	\$32,016	5%	1.20%
2021	\$39,638	\$35,623	\$33,617	5%	4.70%
2022	\$40,431	\$36,289	\$34,289	2%	8.00%
2023	\$44,474	\$39,969	\$37,718	10%	6.50%
2024	\$46,698	\$41,967	\$39,604	5%	3.40%
2025	\$49,033	\$44,065	\$41,584	5%	2.90%

In addition, one of the effects of increasing our minimum salary since 2021 was to help increase our Conference Average Compensation (CAC) as shown by the following table.

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Conference Average Compensation	\$67,700	\$65,048	\$62,750	\$61,298	\$59,740
\$ Increase From Prior Year	\$2,652	\$2,298	\$1,452	\$1,558	
Percentage Increase From Prior Year	4.10%	3.70%	2.40%	2.60%	
An increase from 2021 to 2025 of \$7,960 or 13.3% during that span of years					

This year, the Commission on Equitable Compensation continues to investigate the effect of the current U.S. inflation index (Consumer Price Index or Cost of Living Index) upon East Ohio Conference districts as another input before recommending the minimum salary increase proposal for the 2025 Annual Conference. The following is a summary of the Consumer Price Index investigation:

Location	Consumer Price Index or Cost of Living, % (Based upon a 12-month comparison)	Index - Compared to National Average %
US - National Average	2.3	100
Key Cities in EOC		
Northern Waters District		
Cleveland	2.78	96
Akron	2.72	93.7
Lakewood	2.78	96
Ashtabula	2.60	89.6
Euclid	2.78	95.3
Central Valley District		
Canton	2.64	90.9
Youngstown	2.43	85.8
Alliance	2.63	90.7
Wooster	2.65	91.4
Niles	2.49	85.8
West Plains District		
Mansfield	2.61	90
Mount Vernon	2.77	95.6
Elyria	2.63	90.7
Sandusky	2.62	90.3
Delaware	2.76	95.1
South Forest District		
Cambridge	2.64	91.1
New Philadelphia	2.64	91

Dover	2.62	90.5
Coshocton	2.62	90.3
McConnelsville	2.67	92

The above data for areas in the East Ohio Conference by district were obtained using the following link: <https://www.salary.com/research/cost-of-living/oh> for each location based upon a 12-month comparison (December 2023 vs December 2024). It is readily observable that the inflation rate for the East Ohio Conference is slightly lower than the national average of 2.9%.

(W. Watts, personal communication, February 11, 2025)

Therefore, in an effort to continue to increase our minimum pastor's salaries toward a more sustainable wage, address the current inflation rate of 2.9%, keep our churches viable, and minimize the effect on church finances, the Commission on Equitable Compensation recommends a 5% increase to each of the three minimum salaries. The proposed increase will affect 59 churches (14.86%) of our 397 churches.

2023	2024	2025	2026 Proposed 5% Increase	
44,474	46,698	49,033	51,485	Full members, associate members, provisional members, and ordained persons from other denominations
39,969	41,967	44,065	46,268	Full-time pastors who have completed the course of study
37,718	39,604	41,584	43,663	Full-time pastors who have not completed the course of study

Note: Twenty-three churches (5.79% of our 397 churches) are at the minimum salary now, and the remaining 36 churches would be affected somewhat less. In addition, since apportionments were lowered for 2026 and the district apportionments for 2026 were eliminated, the Commission on Equitable Compensation holds the position that the increase should be manageable.

In summary, the Commission on Equitable Compensations moves that the East Ohio Conference adopt a 5% minimum salary increase for 2026.

VI. SUSTENTATION AID

Sustentation grants are available in cases of special need or financial emergencies to all clergy who are under appointment in the East Ohio Conference. In making its decision, the Commission is guided by a printed set of criteria available from the chairperson and district superintendents. The maximum that can be granted to any pastor in any one calendar year is \$2,500. Due to inflation and growing need, donations to this fund are encouraged. The Fund number is 9917.

VII. GUIDELINES FOR MILEAGE

- A. In setting the pastor's mileage, the local church(es) shall pay vouchered mileage at the rate set for the current year by the Conference Council on Finance & Administration, which may be obtained at the Conference website: eocumc.com/finance/index.html.

- B. A church or charge may have the option of prepaying an estimated mileage figure monthly. An accounting of actual miles driven must be reported to the local church treasurer, preferably at month end but no later than 90 days after prepayment. Any excess or unused portion of the prepayment could either be returned to the treasurer or used to reduce the next prepayment (except at year end).
- C. Standard documentation for vouchered miles shall include the date, miles driven, and purpose (May exclude specific contact information where confidentiality is an issue), not including commuting between home and the church.
- D. When the pastor combines local charge business and personal business on the same trip, the mileage attributed to the personal errands shall not be included in the reimbursable mileage.
- E. Mileage should be paid by inviting the charge when a pastor travels to another charge to perform services at the request of the other pastor.
- F. Multiple church charges should divide travel monies in the same proportion as salary, utilities, and other reimbursable expenses. Multiple travel logs must not be required.
- G. Students who travel to the charge for weekend pastoral duties shall not include travel to and from school as charge mileage. The charge shall be reimbursed for extra trips necessitated by pastoral emergencies.

Addendum to the Commission on Equitable Compensation Report

A motion was made at the EOC Annual Conference 2024 regarding a salary scale study. That motion was referred to the Conference Council on Finance & Administration and later to the Commission on Equitable Compensation. The investigation was completed by a Commission on Equitable Compensation Task Force. The results will be presented as a part of the Commission on Equitable Compensation report at Annual Conference 2025.

Conference Board of Trustees Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Randall W. May, president, Conference Board of Trustees

According to ¶12512 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2020/2024* (hereinafter referred to as "*The UMC Book of Discipline*"), each annual conference must have a Board of Trustees responsible for receiving, collecting, holding in trust, and administering all of the conference's real and personal property. The board meets as needed but must meet at least once annually. According to ¶12512.6 of *The UMC Book of Discipline*, the board must make to each session of Annual Conference a full, true, and faithful report of its doings, of all funds, monies, securities, and property owned or held in trust by it, and of its receipts and disbursements during the conference year. In accordance with these requirements, please receive now this 2025 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of the East Ohio Conference (the "Conference") for the conference year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025 ("Conference Year").

During the Conference Year, the Board met four times for regular quarterly meetings on the following dates: July 13, 2024 (hybrid meeting – in-person and on Zoom), October 12, 2024 (virtual meeting on Zoom), February 8, 2025 (virtual meeting on Zoom), and May 10, 2025 (virtual meeting on Zoom). Also, the Board dealt with several issues requiring Board action between regular quarterly meetings using

email and online voting, pursuant to its operating rules adopted in 2020. At the July 13, 2024, meeting, the Board elected the following members as officers: Rev. Dr. Randall May as president; Brian Bly as vice president; and Brian Knotts as secretary. Vera Milanovic, executive director of Financial & Administrative Services for the Conference, serves as the Board's Treasurer and is not elected.

The Board's work can be allocated into three principal categories: 1) maintaining and managing Conference properties; 2) acquisition, sale, and leasing of Conference properties; and 3) other tasks associated with Conference properties. The following is a summary of work completed by the Board during the current Conference Year.

Maintaining and Managing Conference-Owned Properties

District Parsonages and Episcopal Residence:

The Board, in coordination with Conference Executive Director of Financial & Administrative Services Vera Milanovic, the Conference Council on Finance & Administration, and the Episcopal Residence Committee (with respect to the episcopal residence only), are responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Conference's district parsonages and episcopal residence. If the maintenance and repair work is minimal in nature, it may be handled directly by the district superintendent or the bishop from a budget allocation, while more significant maintenance and repair work is handled through the Conference Executive Director of Financial & Administrative Services Vera Milanovic. The district parsonages are currently in good condition and repair, although various repair and renovation work was completed during the Conference Year, and some additional repair and maintenance work is needed. It has been announced that the number of district superintendents will be reduced from eight currently, to four in the next Conference Year. Because of this reduction, the Board is beginning to work with the Cabinet to determine which district parsonages will be retained and which will need to be sold. In addition, with a new episcopal arrangement sharing a bishop with West Ohio, only one episcopal residence was needed, so the episcopal residence in North Canton was sold on January 10, 2025, for \$552,500.00.

Area Center:

Ordinary repair and maintenance work was conducted as needed in the Area Center in North Canton during the current Conference Year, and in addition, some deferred renovation projects were also conducted, in coordination with Conference Executive Director of Financial & Administrative Services Vera Milanovic. The work included electrical work, plumbing, door replacement, ceiling and roof work, signage, interior space reconfiguration, and painting and other interior repairs and improvements. Additional renovation work will be performed during the next Conference Year, and the Board will also be considering energy-saving and renewable energy improvements that could be implemented at the Area Center.

Other Conference Properties:

Conference Church Camps: The Board continued to review and support repairs, maintenance, and improvement projects at the two camp properties owned by the Conference (Camp Asbury and Camp Wanake), and at the one camp property leased by the Conference (Camp Aldersgate). Additional work and costs are anticipated for all three camps in the next Conference Year.

Retreat and Missional Outreach Properties:

Epworth Center: The Epworth Center property, which is owned by the Conference and had been leased to a tenant for missional outreach, was closed in 2024 and possession returned to the Conference. The Conference is considering alternate uses for the property, as well as the possibility of selling the property.

1 Siman Property: This property, located in Medina, Ohio, is partially leased to OhioGuidestone. Other
2 uses for the remainder of the property are currently being discussed.

3
4 Harbor and Bridge Property: This property, located in the Northern Waters District, is another property
5 owned by the Conference which is being considered for possible alternative missional outreach and
6 other uses.

7 8 **Acquisition, Sale, and Leasing of Conference Properties** 9

10 *Acquired Properties:* The following local churches were closed, and their properties were acquired in
11 title or trust by the Conference during this Conference Year:

12 Burton UMC (Central Valley – church): The closed church building was acquired and held in trust by the
13 Board for the Conference on April 30, 2024.

14 Clearview UMC (Central Valley – church and parsonage): The closed church building and parsonage were
15 acquired and held in trust by the Board for the Conference on July 31, 2024.

16 Canaan UMC (Central Valley – church): The closed church building was acquired and held in trust by the
17 Board for the Conference on August 25, 2024.

18 Nellie Chapel UMC (South Forest – church and parsonage): The closed church building and parsonage
19 were acquired and held in trust by the Board for the Conference on December 1, 2024.

20 Rogers UMC (Central Valley – church): The closed church building was acquired and held in trust by the
21 Board for the Conference on December 1, 2024.

22 Sebring UMC (Central Valley – church): The closed church building was acquired and held in trust by the
23 Board for the Conference on February 28, 2025.

24 Additional Closed Churches: As of the date of this report, the Board is aware of several additional
25 churches which are or may be closing or preparing to close. Other local churches have been discussing
26 their futures but have not yet made any firm decisions.

27
28 *Repossessioned Properties:* Possession of the following property, which is owned by the Conference, and
29 which is leased to another entity as a mission site, was returned to the Conference:

30 Epworth Center (South Forest – mission site): The lease was terminated by the tenant, and possession of
31 the property was returned to the Conference on June 30, 2024.

32
33 *Sold Properties:* The following properties were sold by the Conference during this Conference Year:

34 Blissfield UMC (South Forest – church): This church was closed June 4, 2023, and the building was sold
35 on July 19, 2024, to a private individual for net proceeds in the amount of \$6,100.00.

36 Bellevue Seybert Memorial UMC (West Plains – church): This church was closed September 1, 2024, and
37 the building was donated to Flat Rock Homes on August 2, 2024.

38 Canton Calvary Mission (Central Valley – mission site/church): This mission site/church was closed on
39 March 1, 2022, and the building was transferred to Canton For All People/Crossroads UMC for continued
40 operation as a United Methodist mission site.

41 Mount Hope UMC (Central Valley – church): This church was closed on July 31, 2024, and the building
42 was sold on December 27, 2024, to a private individual for net proceeds in the amount of \$163,731.00.

43 Struthers UMC (Central Valley – church): This church was closed on May 31, 2023, and the building was
44 sold on December 31, 2024, to a private individual for net proceeds in the amount of \$75,908.00.

45 Former Episcopal Residence (North Canton, Ohio – Central Valley – residence): Because Bishop Jung has
46 been appointed to serve both the East Ohio Conference and West Ohio Conference, Bishop Jung
47 decided it would be best to live in the middle of the geographical area for which he has responsibility.
48 Therefore, the former episcopal residence owned by the East Ohio Conference was no longer needed,
49 and was sold on January 10, 2025, to a private individual for \$552,500.00.

Good Shepherd UMC (East Liverpool, Ohio – Central Valley – church): This church was closed on November 1, 2023, and the building was sold on March 13, 2025, to a private individual for net proceeds of \$183,546.00.

Pending Sale Transactions: Sale of the following property is currently pending:

Salem Fredericktown UMC (South Forest – church): This church was closed on June 25, 2023, and sale of the building will likely close later in this Conference Year to a private individual for net proceeds of about \$44,599.00. This sale has been delayed due to zoning issues.

Additional District Parsonage Sales and/or Purchases: With respect to the acquisition and sale of district parsonages, the Board is seeking authorization from this Annual Conference to sell and/or acquire district parsonage properties as needed. With changes to the districts last Conference Year, and a reduction in the number of district superintendents effective next Conference Year, the Board continues to need the ability to sell unneeded or inconveniently located parsonage properties, and to acquire new parsonage properties conveniently and centrally located for district and Conference housing. Therefore, the Board seeks authorization from this Annual Conference to sell and/or acquire additional parsonage properties *ad interim* with the consent of the bishop and a majority of the district superintendents, and as approved by the Board and subject to the subsequent approval of the Annual Conference, all as provided for in ¶2515 of *The UMC Book of Discipline*.

Leasing:

Oil and Gas Rights: The Board is continuing to discuss and consider the Conference's interest in the oil and gas rights associated with several properties owned by the Conference. The Board, however, currently believes that the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church set forth in *The UMC Book of Discipline* encourage the Board not to approve the sale or leasing of such rights or minerals, as the extraction and use thereof could be damaging to the environment and to this beautiful world created by God.

Various Other Tasks Associated with Conference Properties

Camping and Retreat Endowment (C.A.R.E.) and Other Camp Assets: At the end of 2024, the total balance of all C.A.R.E. funds (restricted, unrestricted and C.A.R.E.) was \$ 3,509,637.00. The loan payable to the Conference for the Aldersgate director's house was paid off in 2024.

Trusts: The Board continues to work on resolving several trust issues associated with closed local churches. The Board is continuing to work on the trust received from the former Conotton UMC. The Goudy Educational Trust and its funds, which were formerly managed by the now-closed Beach City UMC, were transferred by the Board to the Canton Student Loan Foundation which will continue to manage the trust for the benefit of student scholarships, the purpose for which the Goudy Educational Trust was originally established. In addition, the Board is currently managing a lawsuit associated with a trust in which the Conference has been named as a beneficiary. A motion for summary judgment has been filed in the case, and the parties are currently awaiting a ruling on the motion by the probate court.

BSA Bankruptcy: The Conference has been participating in a joint legal defense and resolution effort in the Boy Scouts of America ("BSA") Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Reorganization case (the "Case.") The BSA bankruptcy reorganization plan was approved by the bankruptcy court on September 8, 2022, and affirmed by the U.S. District Court on March 28, 2023, with an effective date of April 19, 2023. A \$2.4 billion settlement trust from which all claims would be paid has been set up by the bankruptcy court and funded by various defendants, including The United Methodist Church and the East Ohio Conference on behalf of itself and all its local churches, and claims have begun to be paid out of the settlement trust to

claimants. All appeals have been resolved, and the BSA has received a discharge and exited bankruptcy. In addition to the settlement payment, all local churches in the Conference are responsible for reviewing and updating their Safe Sanctuary policies and taking other actions to protect vulnerable individuals as provided in the United Methodist Settlement Agreement.

Detterman Log Church, Historic Lyme Village: The Conference Commission on Archives and History ("Archives") financially contributed to the rescue, relocation and restoration of a historically significant log church formerly located on private land owned by the Detterman Family in Seneca County, Ohio. The church was relocated to and restored by Historic Lyme Village in Lyme, Ohio. The Board continues to work with Archives and other Conference leaders in order to clarify legal issues associated with the Detterman Log Church, and to determine if any further financial support is warranted or needed, and from where that financial support will come.

Conference Archives Project: Conference leadership and the Conference Boards of Trustees of East Ohio Conference and West Ohio Conference have been working together to establish a new location for the joint archives of both conferences. The joint archives were previously located at Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio, but because of space and financial issues, the joint archives have been relocated to Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Both conferences and the seminary have been working on organizing the joint archives and creating a new means of public access to the materials.

Community Development Corporations and Other New Ideas for Use of Conference Properties: The Board has continued to look at new ways to utilize, repurpose, and maximize the financial and spiritual value of properties owned by the Conference, such as developing relationships with new business partners or community development corporations, participating in new church planting or missional outreach efforts, and envisioning fresh expressions of church. These exciting new prospects will likely not only continue but will increase as the Conference continues to look for new ways to be and to grow the church within the Conference, including Bishop Jung's initiative to establish 100 new churches.

The Board has been extremely busy during this Conference Year, so I would like to thank all the members of the Board, Executive Director of Financial & Administrative Services Vera Milanovic, and Conference Chancellor Rex Miller, for their time and commitment during this challenging year. During the Conference Year, the Board continued to meet, communicate, and complete all work for which the Board is responsible effectively, promptly, legally, and carefully. This concludes the 2025 annual report of the Board of Trustees of the East Ohio Conference.

Board of Benefits Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Robin Whitacre, manager, Benefits

I. Pensions

A. Ministers Reserve Pension Fund (MRPF) Pre-82-Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program

The Ministers Reserve Pension Fund as outlined in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* and administered under the authority of the Wespath Benefits & Investments and the Board of Benefits of the East Ohio Annual Conference, in conformity with the Plan of Union, was the pension program and plan of the East Ohio Conference through December 31, 1981. A copy of the "Pension and Benefit Rules and Regulations for Annual Conferences of The United Methodist Church" may be secured from Wespath Benefits & Investments, 1901 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, Illinois, 60201.

- 1
2 1. The following paragraph is presented as an amendment to the action taken by the 1981
3 Annual Conference (page 237, Volume 2, 1981 Journal) pertaining to the Ministerial Pension
4 Plan and Comprehensive Protection Plan:

5
6 The pension rate for retired clergy or local pastors of the annual conference for service prior
7 to January 1, 1982, shall be **\$1,015** for **2025** annuity year. **The Past Service Pension Rate**
8 **(PSPR) for 2025 is \$1,015 which is a 2% increase from the PSR from 2024 (\$995).**
9

- 10 2. Participation by Full-Time Local Pastors

11
12 A local pastor must be an ordained Deacon, must be under episcopal appointment, must
13 have rendered not less than four consecutive years of full-time service in the East Ohio
14 Annual Conference, and shall have received a cash salary for such service which equals or
15 exceeds the minimum salary set by the East Ohio Annual Conference (or predecessor
16 conference) for the year in which the service was rendered, before annuity service years
17 began under the M.R.P.F. The name of the local pastor must be listed annually under the
18 Disciplinary Questions. In the MPP/CPP Plan, local pastors receive a pension based on
19 compensation, and CPP benefits if they receive at least the minimum salary of a full-time
20 local pastor. Vesting in MPP is immediate.

21
22 Note: This provision applies to the historical practice of ordination as a "Local Elder" or
23 "Local Deacon" which is no longer part of United Methodist policy or practice. The Local
24 Deacon's and Local Elder's orders were credentials enabling supply and local pastors to
25 perform ministry in the local churches to which they were appointed, comparable to
26 licensing as a local pastor today. This provision has no relationship to ordination as Deacon
27 under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 1992* (or previous),
28 commensurate with probationary membership in the Annual Conference, nor does it
29 pertain to ordination as a Deacon in full connection under the 1996 and 2000 Books of
30 Discipline. It applies only to local pastor and supply years prior to 1982. (Dale Jones, Client
31 Manager, Wespath Benefits & Investments, February 11, 2003.)
32

- 33 B. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP)-Supplement Three to the Clergy Retirement Security Program

34
35 Effective January 1, 1982, the pension program was changed to the Ministerial Pension Plan
36 (MPP) and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP), which was authorized by the 1980 General
37 Conference. This plan was administered under the authority of Wespath Benefits &
38 Investments and the Board of Pensions of the East Ohio Conference through December 31,
39 2006. A detailed copy of the program may be secured from Wespath Benefits & Investments or
40 the Conference Benefits Office.
41

- 42 C. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)

43
44 Effective January 1, 2014, the benefit formulas and eligibility for the Clergy Retirement Security
45 Program (CRSP) were changed by authorization of the 2012 General Conference.
46

47 The objective of the retirement plan changes is stewardship – balancing between adequacy for
48 the participant and affordability and sustainability for the Church.
49

50 The Defined Benefit (DB) formula was reduced from 1.25% to 1% of the Denominational
51 Average Compensation (DAC) at retirement multiplied by years of service effective January 1,
52 2014. The DB formula of 1.25% will remain effective for all covered service prior to January 1,
53 2014.
54

55 The Defined Contribution (DC) changed, beginning January 1, 2014; the church will contribute

3% of compensation, If the participant contributes at least 1% of compensation to their United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP). If the participant does not contribute 1% to UMPIP, 2% of compensation will be deposited to their CRSP DC account.

UMPIP contributions are billed directly from Wespath Benefits & Investments to the local church. UMPIP contributions are 'personal' contributions of the participant, to be reduced from a participant's (pastor's) compensation. UMPIP contributions are NOT church liabilities; it is the function of the church to timely remit their pastor's contributions to Wespath.

The Clergy Retirement Security Program is administered under the authority of Wespath Benefits & Investments and the Board of Benefits of the East Ohio Conference. A summary of the plan may be secured from the Wespath Benefits & Investments website, www.wespath.org.

1. Effective January 1, 2014, full-time and three-quarter time (3/4) clergy are eligible for CRSP.

The Conference is required to report to Wespath all appointments in ¼ time increments for the purpose of eligibility in denominational benefit plans.

The time increments are based on the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). The schedule of time increments is used solely for the purpose of pension/service credit within the CRSP Defined Benefit Plan.

For 2024 the CAC is \$65,048; therefore for 2024, part-time local pastors with plan compensation less than \$32,524 are not eligible for CRSP.

For 2025 the CAC is \$67,700; therefore for 2025, part-time local pastors with plan compensation less than \$33,850 are not eligible for CRSP.

For 2026 the CAC is \$69,392, therefore for 2026, part-time local pastors with plan compensation less than \$34,681 are not eligible for CRSP.

Churches with clergy appointed at half-time (1/2) or less may elect to sponsor the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP).

UMPIP is a 403b pension plan offered by Wespath Benefits & Investments in which the employer and the employee may make contributions. UMPIP administrative documents can be requested through the Conference Benefits office by phone at (330) 499-3972 ext. 151 or by email at robin@eocumc.com.

2. Eligible clergy may not waive participation in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)

3. Deacons

Effective January 1, 2007, the annual conference became the plan sponsor for Deacons appointed to a local church, charge, Conference, or entity for which the Conference has pension responsibility. (Reference: CRSP Plan Document Article A2.26 through B3.1i)

4. Annual Conference Funding of CRSP

The Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP) began January 1, 2007.

Funding for CRSP's two benefit components (defined benefit and defined contribution) will be provided for each eligible clergy member serving local churches of the East Ohio Annual Conference, and those eligible clergy under special appointments whose salary is paid by the Conference and who are under episcopal appointment.

The **2025** CRSP DB pension billing formula will be, at 11% of total compensation, limited to the DAC at **\$80,003**.

The **2025** CRSP DC pension billing formula will be, at 3% of total compensation.

The **2025** CPP (death & disability) billing will be at 3% of total compensation, limited to two times the DAC at **\$160,006**. Reference III.

5. Special Appointments (Extension Ministries) Conference Responsible

Since January 1, 1982, Conference-responsible appointments have been those in which the EOC Area Center is their salary-paying unit. Currently, those appointments include the district superintendents, the executive director of Connectional Ministries, and the associate directors of the Connectional Ministries team. These appointments are listed in the 2008 EOC Journal, Extension Ministries #1300 Within the Connection Structure of United Methodism (§344.1a.c.). As of January 1, 2007, the executive assistant to the bishop and clergy Camp director(s) are considered Conference-responsible appointments.

Salary-paying units cannot sponsor CRSP for their clergy; only annual conferences can sponsor CRSP.

6. Special Appointments (Extension Ministries) Non-Conference Responsible

Those serving under special appointments that are not paid by the annual conference are not eligible for CRSP. Their respective employing agency may sponsor the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) through Wespath Benefits & Investments in Glenview, Illinois.

7. United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP)

a) UMPIP Personal Contributions

An active participant in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) may make personal contributions through withholding either pre-tax or after-tax from their monthly salary. These withholdings must be submitted to Wespath Benefits & Investments from the salary-paying unit monthly on the appropriate forms. Members are given various options as to how personal contributions could be invested.

Since January 1, 1974, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, now known as Wespath Benefits & Investments, has made available a program of tax-deferred annuity contributions for members of the Pension Fund. There are two basic requirements: 1) a prior agreement must be made between the member and the local church (or Conference agency); and 2) all remittances under this program must be made by the church treasurer (or agency treasurer). The members shall be given various options as to how their contributions shall be invested. For a packet of information regarding UMPIP Program, contact the Wespath Benefits & Investments, 1901 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, IL 60025-1604, or the office of the Conference Benefits manager.

All interest credited on contributions made under a pre-tax basis, is subject to tax following retirement or withdrawal and not in the year that it is credited. It should not be included in a member's income for tax purposes currently.

b) Lay Employee Pension Plan

On May 7, 2004, General Conference, in an important move toward greater equity among all church workers, approved legislation regarding retirement benefits for lay employees of the local church and annual conference.

According to *The Book of Discipline*, ¶258.12, the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff parish relations “shall recommend that the church council provide, effective on and after January 1, 2006, a 100-percent vested pension benefit of at least three percent of compensation for lay employees of the local church who work at least 1,040 hours per year, are at least 21 years of age, and have at least one year of permanent service.”

For additional information on the lay pension benefit plan and all other Wespath administered plans, please visit its website or call its Participant Response Center at 1-800-851-2201. Robin Whitacre, Benefits manager for the Conference, is also available at (330) 499-3972 ext. 151 to help the local church establish a lay pension plan.

8. Central Conference Pension Initiative

The Central Conference Pension Fund is an independent trust created to receive contributions for pension support of non-U.S. clergy. Wespath Benefits & Investments Glenview, Illinois projects that a \$25-50 million endowment is needed to help establish and maintain the fund. The East Ohio Conference encourages active and retired clergy, and laity to make voluntary contributions to the fund. The Treasurer’s office of the East Ohio Conference has established Fund 9705 for collection of Central Conference Pension Fund contributions.

II. Health Care Program

THE MISSION OF THE EAST OHIO CONFERENCE HEALTH CARE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE REIMBURSEMENT FOR MAJOR ILLNESS OR INJURY EXPENSES AND TO PROMOTE WELLNESS BY PROVIDING PROGRAMS TO MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS EMPLOYEES.

The East Ohio Conference Board of Benefits recognizes that it has a fundamental interest in the health and welfare of its members, which is partially given expression by its health care program. The health care program will be designed around the needs of the members, although it may not meet their entire benefit needs. It will be coordinated with, according to law, all benefits provided through governmentally mandated programs. These will be partially or fully funded by the East Ohio Conference, its agencies, or local churches accordingly, for such programs as Social Security, Ohio Disability and Workers’ Compensation, and such others as become mandated by law.

The goal of our health care program is to promote the general health and well-being of the member and member’s family and to reimburse the member for the major costs incurred as a result of an illness or injury.

A. Health Care Benefits Enrollment for Members

Enrollment for new members in the health care program is not automatic and is the responsibility of the individual. Lay employees of local churches and of other approved agencies of the East Ohio Annual Conference may be enrolled upon approval of the Conference Board of Benefits. The employer in each case shall ultimately be responsible for payment of the premium monthly. Persons transferring into the Conference or beginning employment with the Conference shall have the responsibility for enrollment. Enrollment may be completed by

contacting the Conference Benefits office. Effective January 1, 2002, participation in the Conference-sponsored Health Benefit Plan became mandatory. (Reference II.B.2.c.) Healthcare is provided by the Conference on a year-to-year basis.

As of January 1, 2018, the Conference partnered with the Center of Health through Wespeth Benefits & Investments to provide health benefits under HealthFlex, which offers a wellness-driven group health plan for The United Methodist Church (UMC) annual conferences and employer groups.

B. Health Care Funding

1. As of January 1, 2018, health care coverage will be with HealthFlex, which is a fully-insured medical benefit plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

2. The following health care premiums are based on current data and may be changed as needed:

- a) The 2025 monthly premiums for active lay employees are:
- participant only - \$979 (\$11,748 year).
 - participant plus one - \$1,860 (\$22,320 year).
 - participant plus family - \$2,546 (\$30,552 year).

The 2026 monthly premiums for active lay employees will be:

- participant only - \$1029 (\$12,348 year).**
- participant plus one - \$1,955 (\$23,460 year).**
- participant plus family - \$2,675 (\$32,100 year).**

- b) The 2025 monthly premiums for retirees* are:
- participant only (less than age 65) - \$979 (\$11,748 year).
 - participant only (age 65 & over) Medicare required - **\$330 (\$3,960 year).**

The 2026 monthly premiums for retirees* will be:

- participant only (less than age 65) - \$1029 (\$12,348 year).**
- participant only (age 65 & over) Medicare required - \$330 (\$3,960 year).**

*Eligible clergy retirees, their spouses, and surviving spouses, premium share with the Conference based on the clergy retiree's years of pension funded by the East Ohio Conference, as stated in C.6 of this report.

NOTE: based on the Conference policy stated in C.6, most retirees premium share at 30% of the above rates (30% is the minimum):

Less than age 65: \$308.70 per month (\$3,704.40 year)
Age 65 & over: \$99 per month (\$1,188 year).

- c) The 2025 clergy flat rate premium is \$1,826 (\$21,912 year).
The 2026 clergy flat rate premium is \$1,932 (\$23,184 year).

The clergy flat rate shall be billed for each episcopal-appointed clergy (including Deacons where health coverage is not provided from another source) serving a local church full-time

or three-quarter-time* including the executive director of Connectional Ministries and the associate directors in the Connectional Ministries office, the executive assistant to the bishop and district superintendents. Each pastoral charge shall be invoiced an amount for health care coverage where applicable. (*Not applicable to part-time local pastors at 75%)

NOTE: The mandatory health care provision outline above was implemented in 2002 and revisited in 2019 by the Board of Benefits. The key factors of implementing the provision continue to be relevant as the church/Conference continues to evolve and since our number of plan participants has decreased over the years. Removing the mandatory provision will cause appointment challenges and potential financial hardship for churches and plan participants.

ALL premiums will be remitted to the Conference through direct billing issued by the Financial & Administrative Services Office.

3. Effective 1/1/2018, eligibility for the Conference-sponsored Health Benefit Plan through HealthFlex requires participants to be working a minimum of 30 hrs./week.
4. In cases involving a multiple-point charge, each church shall be billed for both health & pension as instructed by the district office. Premiums for coverage shall be in the amount as determined by the Board of Benefits for flat rate, single, participant + 1 or family as appropriate.
5. The **apportionment for benefits (Fund III) for 2026 will be \$916,574.40**. Fund III primarily supports retiree health care for eligible retirees, their spouses and surviving spouses who began their service on or after January 1, 1982.
6. The amount paid by the local church under II. B. 2. a) & c) shall not be included in the total base figure used to calculate apportionments.
7. Enrolled employees of Conference-employing-agencies shall be direct billed for the appropriate premium for the participant's coverage.
8. No Conference money shall be used to pay for health and/or life insurance coverage other than the Conference- sponsored plan.
9. Participation in Workers' Compensation by episcopal-appointed clergy is required.
10. The East Ohio Conference Health Insurance Policy offers a wide range of benefits that compare favorably to other health plans. The EOC Board of Benefits would like to note that our plan, like similar plans, expects Workers' Compensation to be in effect to cover workplace-related accidents, including automobile accidents occurring during the course of business travel and their related cost of claims. The East Ohio Conference Health Insurance Policy DOES NOT provide benefits for injuries sustained during the course of a clergy's employment duties, because that coverage is provided by the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Therefore: to avoid the possibility that no benefit will be available, all clergy under appointment to a church within the bounds of the East Ohio Conference must be enrolled as a participant with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Premiums for this coverage must be paid by the church or churches to which the clergy is appointed.

C. Eligibility for Retiree Health Benefits – Clergy

For a pastor to be eligible to retiree health coverage through the East Ohio Conference such pastor:

1. Must be a member (full member or local pastor) of the East Ohio Conference.
2. Must retire under the provisions of Paragraph 358.2b or 358.2c. (2012 *Book of Discipline*) Members retiring under Paragraph 358.2a (with 20 years of services) are not eligible.
3. Effective on and after July 1, 2010, must have a minimum of 10 years of pension funded by the East Ohio Conference. Deacons must have a minimum of 10 years of service certified by the local church or an approved agency.
4. Must be properly enrolled and covered under Conference-sponsored health benefit plan at the time of retirement. Effective on and after July 1, 2010, must have been covered by the Conference-sponsored health benefit plan for at least five years immediately prior to the effective date of retirement. The five-years health care participation is not applicable to Deacons. Those individuals who are aged 60 or older in 2009 and who would have been eligible for retiree healthcare coverage under the previous policy who are adversely affected by the five-year rule shall be grandfathered/grandmothered to the rules which previously existed. This policy exception extends only to 16 individuals.
5. Post-65: Retirees must participate in the Medicare Part A and Part B programs.
6. Eligible retirees, spouses and surviving spouses shall contribute an amount toward the premium based on the policy effective August 1, 2004; whereas, retirees who have 25 or more accumulative years of pension credit service funded by the East Ohio Conference will pay 30% of their health care premiums. For service less than 25 accumulative years, the retiree will pay 30% plus 2.8% for each year less than 25 years of service. (For example: a retiree with 15 years of service will pay 58% of the premium).
7. effective 7/1/28, new retirees, spouses and surviving spouses shall contribute an amount toward the premium based on the following policy which becomes effective 7/1/28. Retirees who have 30 or more accumulative years of pension credit service funded by the East Ohio Conference will pay 30% of their health care premiums. Retirees who have less than 30 accumulative years of pension credit funded by the East Ohio Conference will pay 30% plus 2.3% for each year less than 30 years of pension credit.
8. The retired clergy's surviving spouse will be provided health care coverage in the same manner as the retiree (see C.6 above) until such time as they remarry or die. Should this remarried spouse later become single, eligibility for health care insurance coverage shall be returned to this surviving spouse. A surviving spouse of an active clergy will be provided health care coverage until such time as they remarry or die. Should this remarried spouse later become single, eligibility for health care insurance coverage shall be returned to this surviving spouse. Dependent children of active clergy will be provided health care coverage until such time as they no longer meet the requirements to remain "Eligible Dependents." Premium sharing shall be calculated in the same manner as stated in C.6, above.

- 1 9. Retirees may add a spouse and/or dependents to the Health Care Plan after retirement,
2 provided that the cost, as determined annually by the East Ohio Conference Board of
3 Benefits, is paid by the retiree.
4

5 D. Eligibility for Retiree Health Benefits – Lay Employees
6

7 1. Area Center, Area Office, and Camps

- 8 a) In order for a lay employee of the Area Center, Area office, and Camps to be eligible for
9 retiree health coverage through the East Ohio Conference such employee must be age
10 62.
11 b) Must have a minimum of 10 years of pension funded by the East Ohio Conference.
12 c) Must be properly enrolled and covered under the Conference Health Benefit Plan for at
13 least five years immediately prior to the effective date of retirement.
14 d) Post 65: must participate in the Medicare Part A and Part B.
15 e) For funding see F.3
16

17 2. Agencies, Districts, and Local Churches

- 18 a) In order for a lay employee of a qualifying agency, district, and/or local church to be
19 eligible for retiree health coverage through the East Ohio Conference such employee
20 must be age 65.
21 b) Must have a minimum of 10 years of service certified by the agency, district and/or local
22 church.
23 c) Must be properly enrolled and covered under the Conference Health Benefit Plan for at
24 least five years immediately prior to the effective date of retirement.
25 d) Post 65: must participate in Medicare Part A and Part B.
26 e) For funding see F.4. 4.
27

28 E. Temporarily Waiver of Retiree Health Benefits – Clergy and Lay
29

30 Effective on and after July 1, 2003, when a retiree, retiree spouse or surviving spouse, is
31 actively employed with employer-provided insurance, the participant may temporarily waive
32 the Conference-sponsored health benefit plan without premium sharing, and return to the
33 Plan upon termination of such employer provided insurance. (Documentation will be
34 required.) This includes clergy couples in which one spouse is retired and the other remains
35 active.
36

37 F. Retiree Health Care Funding
38

39 1. Clergy with East Ohio Pre-82 Pension Credit
40

41 Retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan
42 sponsored by the East Ohio Conference premium-share per Conference policy. The
43 Conference supports the balance of their health care plan expenses by funds from the
44 Pension and Health Care Reserve Account as directed by Judicial Council Decision #976
45 and approved by Annual Conference 2004.

2. Clergy with East Ohio Pension Credit on and after 1/1/1982 with No Pre-82 Pension Credit

Retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan of the East Ohio Conference premium-share per Conference policy. Fund III supports the balance of their health care plan expenses.

3. Lay Retirees (Area Center, Area Office, and Camps)

Lay retirees, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan of the East Ohio Conference premium-share on the same basis as the clergy in the East Ohio Conference. Fund III supports the balance of their health care plan expenses.

4. Lay Retiree (Agencies, Districts and Local Churches)

Lay retirees, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan of the East Ohio Conference are billed at full amount of the base premium. Any premium sharing is the responsibility of the individual agency, district, or local church.

Agencies, districts, or local churches may require lay employees to contribute a portion of the premium cost based on the number of years worked and the age at retirement. The collection of this money is the responsibility of the individual agency, district, or local church.

Lay retirees must comply with all the provisions of the Conference-sponsored health benefit plan document.

The Conference Benefits manager shall be authorized to terminate coverage for any lay retiree whose premium is not paid.

G. Retiree Emergency Aid

1. Financial Aid & Hardship Grants

Effective January 1, 2002, the policy stated below is applicable to the retiree's secondary Health Care premium sharing. In addition, the original intent of the policy will be maintained.

Where emergency aid is necessary for a retired member of the Conference, a retired local pastor, a surviving spouse, or other Conference claimant, it will be administered by the Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Benefits. Application forms should be obtained from the Treasurer's office and returned to the Treasurer/Benefits officer of the East Ohio Conference.

2. Emergency Fund for retired clergy with Other Insurance

Upon appeal and application, a retiree, retiree spouse, or surviving spouse may request grant money to help pay for other insurance premiums. The Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Benefits will administer the Emergency Fund. Application forms may be obtained from the Benefits office and returned to the Benefits manager of the East Ohio Conference.

H. Delinquent Health Care Premium Payments

1. Any church/charge or agency having a balance due for health care billing from the previous year (December 31), for a pastor's premium, will be notified of such balance by the Benefits office, with notification also sent to the pastor's district superintendent and chairperson of the Staff-Parish Committee. The Benefits office and the district superintendent will work with the church/charge for payment of the delinquent amount.
2. Persons on special appointment who are enrolled in the health benefit plan and delinquent at year-end (December 31) will be notified of such delinquency by the Benefits office. If a satisfactory payment schedule cannot be negotiated by April 1 of the year following the delinquency, the coverage will be terminated.
3. Laypersons who are enrolled in the health benefit plan and delinquent at year-end (December 31) will be notified of such delinquency with their employing church/charge or agency also notified. If a satisfactory payment schedule cannot be negotiated by April 1 of the year following the delinquency, the person's coverage will be terminated with the employing church/charge or agency responsible for the payment. If the church/charge or agency does not make the payment, no additional person from that church/charge or agency will be enrolled until the balance is paid in full.

I. Pension and Health Care Arrearage Debt Resolution Policy

Effective 1/1/2005, a church/charge with past health care and pension arrearages and is current for three calendar years may apply for final resolution. A church/charge seeking resolution must submit a letter requesting arrearage debt resolution with details of their proposal for settlement to their district superintendent with a copy sent to the chair of the Board of Benefits. After full review by Cabinet and Board of Benefits, the Board of Benefits will vote on the negotiation of balance payment and any forgiveness of a determined arrearage.

The pension and health care arrearages of a closed church will be removed upon written recommendation by Cabinet and consultation of the Conference executive director of Financial & Administrative Services.

III. Disability and Death Benefits

A. Clergy - Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

1. Long-term disability (LTD), survival and death benefits are provided through the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) for clergy under full-time episcopal appointment and receiving 'plan compensation' equal to or greater than 60% of the Denominational Average Compensation or the Conference Average Compensation. Clergy serving at three-quarter-time participate under CPP Special Arrangements provision. (Part-time local pastors are not eligible for CPP.)
2. The funding rate yearly for each eligible full-time clergy member (including Deacons) serving local churches of the East Ohio Conference, or special appointments whose salary is paid by the Conference who are under episcopal appointment is 3% of plan compensation (salary plus housing) with two times the DAC as the cap. The required funding rate for those under CPP Special Arrangements is 3% of the Denominational Average Compensation.

3. CPP LTD benefits may be approved by Wespath Benefits & Investments for the members who are granted Medical Leave by action of the Annual Conference.
 4. The Comprehensive Protection Plan is administered by Wespath Benefits & Investments, providing monthly LTD benefits to active participants who qualify.
 5. The income replacement payable by CPP is 70% of the plan compensation, with plan compensation capped at 200% of the DAC.
 6. The CPP disability benefit (income replacement) is reduced by any disability benefit payable under Social Security. The revised benefit applies only to eligible clergy whose disability effective date, as determined by Wespath Benefits & Investments on or after 1/1/02. Clergy approved for CPP disability benefits continue to be credited pension contributions.
 7. For the purpose of receiving CPP benefits, a clergyperson is considered disabled based on medical evidence that he/she is unable to engage in the usual and customary duties of a United Methodist clergyperson due to bodily injury, disease or mental or emotional disorder or disease which will last for at least six continuous months and excluding disability resulting from: 1) service in the armed forces of any country, 2) warfare, 3) intentional self-inflicted injury, 4) participation in any criminal or unlawful act. After receiving benefits for 24 months, in order to continue receiving CPP disability benefits, a clergyperson must demonstrate that he/she is unable to engage in substantially all of the usual and customary duties pertaining to any employment in an occupation for which the disabled clergyperson is reasonably qualified.
 8. The disabled member is encouraged to make application to Social Security Administration to determine eligibility under the government's program. Social Security disability benefits may begin after a waiting period of five full calendar months.
 9. Health care coverage upon Medical Leave is administered according to the Conference's Health Benefit Plan document, and current plan language takes precedence in all cases. If the member is enrolled in the Conference-sponsored Health Benefit Plan coverage prior to being granted Medical Leave, coverage will continue 180 days following the date the member was actively at work, at no cost to the member. The next 18 months the provision of the plan for Continuation of Coverage would be applicable, at no cost to the member. If the member is determined under Title II or XVI of the Social Security Act to have been disabled at the time of Medical Leave, coverage would continue as a secondary coverage to Medicare disability. If the member does not become Social Security disabled, the Conference-sponsored Health Benefit coverage terminates after the 18 months under the Continuation of Coverage Provision.
- CPP death benefits are based on eligibility as an active clergyperson and as a retiree. The schedule of CPP benefits for 2020 can be found on the Conference website.
- Educational Benefits are provided for the children of deceased members while enrolled in an accredited college through age 25.

B. Clergy – UMLifeOptions (clergy not eligible for CPP)

1. Local churches with episcopal-appointed clergy not eligible for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) may adopt an UMLifeOptions plan to provide long-term disability (LTD) and life insurance coverage for their appointed pastor.
2. For more information regarding sponsoring UMLifeOptions, please visit Wespath Benefits & Investments' webpage at <http://www.wespath.org/center-for-health/plans/umlifeoptions/>

C. Lay Employees (Area Center, Area Office and Camps) UMLifeOptions

1. UMLifeOptions formerly known as the Basic Protection Plan (BPP) of The United Methodist Church covers lay employees for Long Term Disability (LTD) of the Area Center, Area office, and Camps. The income replacement payable by UMLifeOptions is equivalent to 60% of the employee's pre-disability compensation. The UMLifeOptions disability benefit (income replacement) is not reduced by any disability benefit payable under Social Security.
2. As of January 1, 2009, UMLifeOptions will make a maximum 3% of pre-disability compensation contribution to the approved disabled Employee's United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP).

IV. Special Grants

The East Ohio Conference for **2024-2025** conference year shall pay special grants calculated by the Board of Benefits to such persons approved by the Board.

V. Rental/Housing Allowance Policy for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the East Ohio Conference Policies and Guidelines

The following is in effect for **2026**:

an amount equal to 100% of the pension, severance, or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the "Discipline"), which includes all such payments from Wespath Benefits & Investments ("Wespath"), during the period **January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026**, by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such clergyperson; and

the pension, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from Wespath and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled

clergyperson's pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: the rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal (and, in most cases, state) income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2), and regulations thereunder, to the least of: (a) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (b) the amount actually expended by the clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (c) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year. Each clergyperson or former clergyperson is urged to consult with his or her own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing allowance exclusion.

VI. Service Records

- A. The official years for pension are those entered on the service records on file with Wespath Benefits & Investments and certified by the Conference Board of Benefits, not the service records in The Journal. Persons with questions about their service record should contact the Conference Benefits office.
- B. Pension credit with another conference either for effective, associate, or local pastor years must be established by direct contact with that conference and by its official action.
- C. The East Ohio Conference does not have any responsibility for annuity years other than those served in the East Ohio Conference, or one of its predecessor conferences, except for service in the former Sandusky, Lexington, or Southeast Ohio Conference assigned by a joint Distribution Committee of Wespath Benefits & Investments.

VII. For Information

- A. Concerning all payments to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or the Ministerial Reserve Pension Fund, and all pension payments to claimants, or other information, write to the Wespath Benefits & Investments, 1901 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, Illinois, 60025-1604 or visit Wespath's website, www.wespath.org.
- B. Concerning clergy benefits and/or pension credit, service years, or credit as full-time local pastor, write or contact the Conference Benefits office, 8800 Cleveland Avenue NW, P.O. Box 2800, North Canton, Ohio 44720.

VIII. References

- A. For the "Plan of Union", see pages 423-424, recommendation 21, 1969 Yearbook and Record of the North East Ohio Annual Conference, or pages 57-58, Recommendation 21, 1969 Conference Journal of the East Ohio Conference.
- B. For the "Guidelines for Granting Benefits to a Person Whose Membership Has Been Terminated", see pages 196-198 of the 1973 Yearbook and Record of the East Ohio Annual Conference.
- C. For the special action regarding "Benefits for the Surviving Spouse of a Marriage Subsequent to the Member's Retirement", see the action on page 195 of the 1973 yearbook and Record of

the East Ohio Annual Conference, as amended in 1975, page 198, Volume II, of the Journal of the East Ohio Conference.

- D. For the special action regarding "Equalization of Benefits Related to Required Personal Contributions", see pages 197-198 of the *1976 Journal of the East Ohio Conference, Volume II*. (References are available in the Conference Treasurer's office).

IX. East Ohio Funds held with Wespath Benefits & Investments

Per action by the 1994 Annual Conference, the Board of Pensions (now known as the Board of Benefits) will include in their report to Annual Conference a report of all funds held, beginning balance, income for the previous year, expenses for same, and ending balances audited or unaudited.

The East Ohio Conference Board of Benefits maintains four accounts with Wespath Benefits & Investments in Glenview, Illinois. The first account is a deposit account for CRSP and CPP liabilities. Second is our holding account for the money raised in the Capital Funds Campaign and its accrued interest. The third deposit account holds a portion of our Health Care Reserve, and the fourth account holds proceeds from a 1929 trust and earned interest. Following is a brief description of each account and its related balances and activity for the previous year 2017.

Deposit Account – 10018001

This is the East Ohio Conference deposit account with Wespath Benefits & Investments and is our 'primary' account. Money raised through Apportionments and Direct Pension Billing in East Ohio for HealthFlex, CRSP, (Clergy Retirement Security Program), CPP (Comprehensive Protection Plan), and Past Service obligations are forwarded from East Ohio to this account. On a monthly basis, the GBOP charges and transfers money from this account to all the individual clergy accounts currently funded.

Summary

	Market Value	
Beginning Balance 1/1/2024	\$268,436.03	
Deposit		\$6,537,118.85
Adjustment Credit		\$35,000.00
Insurance Deductions		\$0.00
Wespath Annual Dstr (Chartered Fund)		\$0.00
Monthly Settlement		(\$723,061.89)
Insurance Deduction Fee		\$0.00
DB Contributions		\$0.00
HEALTHFLEX		(\$6,118,324.84)
Realized Gain/Loss		\$5,567.80
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss		(\$50.03)
Total Deposit Account at 12/31/2023		\$4,685.92
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss is for the fiscal year, 2024.		
Income Earned – Gross		\$5,668.29
Fund Operating Expenses		(\$156.80)
Income Earned – Net		\$5,511.49

Deposit Account-Pension and Health Care Reserve Account (P&HCR)

This account was formerly known as the Capital Funds Campaign Account. By action of Annual Conference 2001, this account was redesignated as the Pension and Health Care Reserve Account and approved to be maintained to provide a reserve for Conference pension and health care plan liabilities subject to disbursement only upon recommendation of the Conference Board of Pensions and approval of Annual Conference. This action was questioned at Annual Conference 2003. Judicial Council ruled on the question in October 2003; therefore, the guiding principle of this account was amended to read:

“The East Ohio Annual Conference is directed (Judicial Council decision #976) to fund the pre-1982 past service account meeting the donor intent of the 1988-92 capital funds campaign. The appropriate amount should be based on the current actuarial projections for the pre-1982 past service account. All remaining funds including accrued interest shall be held in the East Ohio Annual Conference Pension and Health Reserve Account for pension and health benefits for pre 1982 clergy, spouses, and dependents.”

In addition, the EOC BOP will adhere to the following guidelines concerning this fund:

On an annual basis, an amount not to exceed \$2.5 million may be withdrawn from this account for pre-82 benefits. All activity around these accounts will be printed in the annual *Pre-Conference Workbook*, as well as in *The Journal*.

Pension & Health Care Reserve

Beginning Balance 1/1/2024	\$19,697,520.02
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$1,443,389.09
Total Pension & Health Care Reserve at 12/31/2024	<u>\$21,122,909.11</u>

Healthcare Reserve

As the Conference recovered from its critical financial problems associated with its Health Care Program in 1990, we began to build a reserve. In 1992 this deposit account was established to hold that reserve. Prior to 2003, most of the reserve was maintained with the General Board (GBOP) and some health care funds were maintained locally as working capital. The General Board ceased paying interest on accounts as of February 28, 2003. For the balance of 2003, monies were transferred from this account to the deposit account to care for monthly MPP/CPP liabilities. The East Ohio United Methodist Credit Union, paying interest, then became the holder of most of the reserve. These reserves aid cash flow and protect our Health Plan against unplanned and catastrophic events not covered by existing stop loss insurance. Finally, it allows us to stabilize fluctuation in our premium charges.

Healthcare Reserve

Beginning Balance 1/1/2024	\$79,895.89
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$ 5,859.94
Total Health Care Reserve at 12/31/2024	<u>\$85,755.83</u>

David Charles Boyd Trust

This trust was drafted in 1929 with distribution to the "Trustees or other proper governing body of the Northeastern Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church or its successors for the benefit of the Itinerant Minister's Conference Claimants' Endowment Fund".

The actual distribution of \$556,859.97 was made in June of 1996. The proceeds were deposited with the GBOP in Evanston. In 1998, \$11,774 from the Superannuants Fund was donated to this fund. In 2014, the final distribution of \$904,453.78 from the Boyd Estate was received. In 2016, \$6,216.25 was donated from the estate of Warren Sartwell and deposited to this fund.

This fund has been used to provide financial assistance to clergy retirees, spouses and surviving spouses with regard to their required health care premium-sharing amounts and to fund monthly conference health care expense for disabled clergy and their families who do not have pre-82 pension claim.

Boyd Trust

Beginning Balance 1/1/2024	\$4,357,847.91
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$ 303,728.77
Total Boyd Trust at 12/31/2024	<u><u>\$4,661,576.68</u></u>

X. The Funding Plan

General Conference 2012 approved legislation requiring each conference to annually submit to Wespath Benefits & Investments a comprehensive funding benefit plan (CFBP) for addressing its benefits obligations. **The responding opinion for 2024 written by the Managing Actuary of Wespath Benefits & Investments, in Glenview, Illinois, is presented below:**

**East Ohio Conference (180)
2025 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan**

Conference Benefit Officer (or equivalent)	Robin Whitacre	06/17/2024
Conference Treasurer	Vera Rebrovich	06/17/2024
Conference Board of Pension Chair	Matthew Merriman	08/06/2024
Council on Finance and Administration Chair		



Opinion on **East Ohio Conference 2025 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan**

The funding plan meets the standards for a Pre-82 funding plan as established by Wespath Benefits and Investments and the favorable opinion requirements for a funding plan. Note: The statement above and any written opinion provided by Wespath do not imply any representation as to the ability or probability of the applicable plan sponsor to fulfill the obligations included in the funding plan.

Wespath Benefits and Investments

Wespath Benefits and Investments
1901 W Chestnut Ave
Glenview, IL 60025

XI. 2024 Record of Benefit Payments

This table reflects payments made to annuitants, beneficiaries and other recipients from the Clergy Retirement Security Program, Ministerial Pension Plan Annuitants Reserve for Pre-82 Pension; Conference Special Grants; and from the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) for disability, minimum surviving spouse and dependent children benefits.

Recipients	Membership	Number of Participants	Benefits Paid
Ministerial Members	Inside	519	13,004,246.09
	Elsewhere	210	2,148,210.46
	Total	729	15,152,456.55
Local Pastors	Inside	111	689,092.21
	Elsewhere	21	75,732.27
	Total	132	764,824.48
Surviving Spouses	Inside	185	1,990,759.53
	Elsewhere	144	1,184,747.98
	Total	329	3,175,507.51
Other Recipients		109	1,083,841.41
Conference	Inside	815	15,684,097.83
	Elsewhere	484	4,492,532.12
	Total	1299	20,176,629.95

Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCF&A) Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Steve Stultz Costello, chairperson, Conference Council on Finance & Administration

Rise Up Beloved, Trust in God's Promises

"They were overcome with amazement." – Mark 5:42b

In our theme text for Annual Conference, Jesus enters a room of despair, uncertainty and anxiety, takes the hand of a 12-year-old girl, and calls for her to rise up. When she does, they were overcome with amazement. We too are overcome with amazement when we see how Jesus continues to enter today's places of despair, uncertainty and anxiety raising people up, restoring them to places of health, joy, vitality, faith and abundance.

At every level of our connectional church, God's people are rising up, trusting in God's promises and approaching the challenges of our current context with hope, faith and a spirit of abundance that is a witness of Jesus' abiding presence.

In February 2025, the General Council on Finance & Administration (GCFA), held its quadrennial training in Houston, Texas. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last time they met for training was in 2016.

Conference staff and leaders from across the connection gathered for worship, prayer, collaboration,

learning and reflection. I was amazed to learn about the many ways staff and leaders at the general church level are rising up to reduce general apportionments so that conferences and local churches can do more for the mission, making more disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. For East Ohio, our general church apportionment was reduced by \$657,862. At every level of our connectional church, God's people are rising up, trusting in God's promises. Praise God.

In October 2024, CCF&A held a called meeting to discuss reducing conference apportionments. Vera Milanovic our Conference Treasurer, brought to our attention that even with a reduced conference budget in 2025, because we now have fewer churches, the formula for shared ministry apportionments would have resulted in all churches paying a higher shared ministry apportionment to support the conference budget, even at the reduced level. It was an invitation for us to respond proactively. With Vera's guidance and leadership, trusting in God's promises, we unanimously rose up to support a plan to reduce 2025 shared ministry apportionments by a reduction of 20% from the 2024 level. This reduction coupled with \$0 district apportionments in 2025 saved the church I serve over \$29,000, as one example.

Recognizing that the local church is the primary mission outpost for making disciples, over the last several years, as a conference we have taken bold steps to maximize every dollar including:

- transitioning from 10 to four districts resulting in significant savings.
- selling the episcopal residence.
- using funds from church closures to support new faith communities/ministry expressions.
- recommending a 2026 budget that is the same as 2025.
- developing a proposal for a new, simpler, biblically grounded, apportionment formula.

At every level of our connectional church, United Methodists are rising up, trusting in God's promises. We see this most vividly at the local church and we are indeed overcome with amazement. Each of our conference superintendents is eager to share about what Jesus is doing through the churches in East Ohio. One example is New Way UMC in Navarre, where Rev. Keith Brown, a bi-vocational licensed local pastor, is serving. As featured in the Canton Repository on March 8, New Way launched Exhale a new worship service for those with neurodiversity such as PTSD, ADHD and social anxiety, or people who are just looking for a calmer, quieter worship experience. Rev. Brown said, "Our goal is to create a safe space and normalize the use of fidgets, weighted blankets, flex seating and more to create an inclusive atmosphere for worship." Through Exhale, Jesus is entering places of despair, uncertainty and anxiety raising people up, and restoring them to places of health, joy, vitality, faith and abundance.

Examples abound. Check out Story Church in the Northern Waters District, the Urban Mission in Steubenville in the South Forest District, and Off Our Rockers community choir ministry in the West Plains District. Or better, share how you are seeing Jesus raising people up through your local church or ministry context trusting in God's promises.

Let us be overcome with amazement for the gift of 399 local churches that continued to rise up and faithfully serve their mission fields across the East Ohio Conference for the 12 months of 2024. We celebrate the faithful commitment of 204 of those churches that paid 100% of their apportionments last year. We also give thanks for the 299 churches that increased their giving to apportionments in 2024, 53.5% more than the previous year!

The pay-in rate from local churches to our East Ohio Conference budget was 62.1% in 2024 compared to 65.3% in 2023 with \$5.9 million contributed towards the mission and ministry of East Ohio.

The question was asked, "how much was received from disaffiliated churches?" Total funds received through disaffiliations toward apportionments (current and in arrears) came to approximately \$3.1

million. Disaffiliation receipts for medical and pension arrearages came to approximately \$95,000. Disaffiliation receipts pertaining to pension liabilities was approximately \$3.8 million. Total disaffiliation receipts came to just shy of \$7 million.

Giving to Advance Specials in 2024 totaled \$995,166, an increase of \$75,862 (8.3%).

For the 20th year, our East Ohio Conference paid 100% of our General Church apportionments, continuing to trust in God's promises. The East Ohio Conference sent the General Church \$2,075,680 for our share of the anticipated General Church apportionment amount. The General Church funds support global efforts of the church through seven general funds: World Service, Ministerial Education, Episcopal, Black College, Interdenominational Cooperation, Africa University, and the General Administration Fund. As United Methodists we believe and support the saying, "the world is our parish."

Looking beyond apportioned funds to areas of direct billing, the medical insurance direct bill pay-in rate in 2024 was 92% because of payment of older payment made in 2024. The pension direct bill pay-in rate for 2024 was 109%.

Because of the faithfulness and generosity of our local churches, the East Ohio Conference was able to support its apportionment payment for Africa University again in 2024. Our 2024 apportionment payment to the Africa University fund was \$36,932.

Looking ahead, CCF&A proposes keeping the 2026 budget the same as the 2025 budget for the five apportioned shared ministry funds. The reduced number of churches in the conference necessitates a change in the apportionment formula. Changing the apportionment formula will better support the local church as the focal point of mission and ministry. Approving the change in the apportionment formula will be a part of our action at Annual Conference.

As we journey together in 2025, we pray that you will be overcome with amazement by the continued movement of God's Spirit that is always moving into places of despair, uncertainty and anxiety raising people up, restoring them to places of health, joy, vitality, faith and abundance.

With the assurance of God's presence, and the foundational comments above, CCF&A proposes these policy items to the Annual Conference:

I. PAYMENTS AND REPORTING

A) **Local Church Apportionment Payments** – all payments to Conference budget items shall be made at least monthly to the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services on supplied remittance forms. Special offerings should be sent only with the regular monthly remittance. Please do not send them separately. Payments should be sent directly to the bank lock box in the envelopes provided. There is also a separate remittance form for the directly billed Health Care & Pension program. Please follow the directions on the separate remittance forms. New in 2024 was an online payment option through the conference's Ministry Financials site.

1) **Timing** – items in the Conference budget that are apportionments are expected to be paid in full. One-half of the apportionment should be paid by June 30. To do less causes hardship for the programs and people of the East Ohio Conference.

- 2) **Reporting** – The district superintendent will receive up-to-date reports on the apportionment giving levels of the local churches and is asked to be an advocate for full fair-share giving by each local congregation.
- 3) **Staying current** in all five apportionment funds is expected. Any church that wishes to support the ministry of any of the funds at greater than 100% is encouraged to do so.

- B) **Annual Church Reports** – the reports for 2024 were due on February 3, 2025. Annual church reports for 2025 shall be submitted by January 19, 2026, but an extension may be granted in cases of emergency, provided the request is made in writing and received by the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services before January 19, 2026. This extension is automatically granted to multiple church charges.

PLEASE NOTE: shared ministry apportionment payments must be received at the bank by the third business day of the new year. In 2025 that date was January 6 and in 2026 it will again be January 6. The cut-off date is imposed on us by our audit firm. The cut-off date is always the third business day of the new year every year. Please make note of this date! Monies received after the third business day will be credited to 2026 business. Be aware that credit card transactions and ACH payments take one business day to process. Please plan accordingly.

When churches do not file a year-end statistical report, those churches' next apportionments will remain at the same level as the last year for which they filed a statistical report.

- C) **Audit Reports** – ¶ 617.2 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2020/2024*. All agencies receiving financial support from conference benevolences or from any other authorized conference-wide appeal shall make audited reports to the council concerning all such receipts and the disbursements thereof in such detail and at such times as the council may direct. These audits shall be due on March 31, or 90 days following the closing of the fiscal year and shall be sent to the Funding Evaluation Committee of the Connectional Ministries office. Any agency that fails to provide a satisfactory audited report by said deadline will have its current-year funding suspended until the committee accepts the report. The council has established minimum guidelines for audits and an Audit Committee has provided a standard form for use by all districts commencing with the 1995 audit using generally accepted accounting principles or an acceptable comprehensive basis of accounting other than generally accepted accounting principles and including a listing of property values and all fund balances including investments, restricted and non-restricted funds. All audits are to be duly signed by the person performing the audit. Copies of district audits shall be available to local churches at the district conferences.
- D) **Investment Reports** – the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services is authorized, in consultation with CCF&A, to invest a portion of the Huntington Sweep Account fund in AAA Commercial Paper. Monthly reports of investments shall be made at CCF&A meetings.

II. BUDGET

- A) **Timeline** – all program agencies asking for funds shall participate in a one-year budget.
- B) **Ministries and Missions Balances** – carry-over balances in the Fund I Conference Connectional Mission Apportionments accounts shall be channeled into a Ministries and Missions Contingency Fund. At year-end, all un-vouchered project/program funds shall be retained in the Connectional Table Ministries and Missions Contingency account. Final disbursements of

unspent balances will be determined by the Connectional Table at the end of each 12-month period. The Ministries and Missions contingency balance can be accessed by procedures adopted by the Connectional Table.

C) **Payout rates** – all funds are budgeted for a 100% payout rate.

D) **Contingency and Reserve Funds**

1) **Contingency Funds** – by action of the 1976 Annual Conference, two contingency funds were established, Administrative and Ministries and Missions. CCF&A and CCOM (now the Connectional Table) agreed that unused balances at the end of the year are put into the respective unbudgeted Conference Contingency Funds. The Connectional Table may initiate requests for Ministries and Missions Fund through its established procedure. Non-Connectional Table-related groups may appeal directly to CCF&A for Administrative Contingency Funds. Any such request must stand five tests:

- a) does not duplicate budgeted funding
- b) has not been turned down in the budgeting process
- c) does not circumvent the budgeting process
- d) funds are available
- e) where applicable, there are specific bid figures attached to the requests. Ministries and Missions grants are paid only upon submission of a documented voucher, in the same manner as budgeted item grants are made.

2) **Reserve Funds** – these funds consist of interest earnings from short-term investments and restricted funds, and some unspent contingency funds voted to the Unrestricted Reserve Fund by CCF&A. This fund is used under the jurisdiction of CCF&A primarily as a reserve for capital or administrative expenditures. Since October 18, 1972, CCF&A's goal, upon recommendation of the General Council on Finance & Administration, has been to set the Unrestricted Reserve Fund Limit at one and one-half times the average monthly income from the preceding year's Conference apportionment receipts. The current limit for 2024 was \$918,313. The Unrestricted Reserve Fund had a balance of \$918,313 on December 31, 2024.

III. COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

A) **District Superintendent's Salary** – the formula for district superintendent's salary was established at the 2002 Annual Conference. Because of the numerous voluntary wage freezes taken by the district superintendents over the years, the formula for their salary was updated in 2009 by Annual Conference. The formula salary is equal to 1.80 times (formerly 1.90 times) the Conference Average Cash Salary of the 2024 year for pastors as computed by the Wespath Benefits & Investments for the 2026 year. For 2026 salary, we will use the 2024 Conference Average Cash Salary of \$52,807 which will calculate a salary of \$95,052 for 2026. The salaries for the executive director of Connectional Ministries, the assistant to the bishop, the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, the executive director of Communications, and the executive director of Discipleship Ministries are set by using the same formula, but with a housing allowance adjustment.

B) **Travel Allowance** – effective January 1, 2025 the mileage reimbursement rate for Annual Conference staff shall be the maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service, currently \$0.70 per mile.

C) **Housing/Utilities**

- 1) District superintendents shall be provided housing with full utilities and maintenance provided.
- 2) The executive assistant to the bishop, the executive director of Connectional Ministries, the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, and the executive director of Communications shall receive a housing allowance – or if not clergy a salary adjustment – equal to 25% of the salary figure that is established in part A.
- 3) Connectional Ministries associate directors (full-time) shall receive a housing allowance at a rate established by CCF&A, plus full utilities, if clergy.

D) **Expenses** – the conference treasurer audits all line items and requires substantiation for reimbursable expenses. Outside auditors review the treasurer's expense account.

E) **Minimum Salary** – minimum requirements detailed in the Commission on Equitable Compensation report are to be applicable to all charges.

F) **Health Insurance** – each pastoral charge shall be billed an amount for health care coverage where applicable. For 2025 it is anticipated that the premium will increase slightly. The East Ohio Conference Board of Benefits will set the final premium charges. Employing agencies will be charged the appropriate premium for their participants. Amounts will be remitted on Health Care Forms provided by the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services.

G) **Pension/Disability CRSP/CPP Direct Billing** – (See worksheet provided with Omnibus Form). each pastoral charge will be billed an amount for CRSP and/or CPP.

H) **Travel Reimbursement** – the rate for mileage reimbursement for Conference business, for other than Conference staff, shall be paid only in cases of critical need at \$0.14 per mile.

IV. **MOVING EXPENSES**

The purpose of this policy is to describe how the East Ohio Conference will help defray the costs of household moves related to clergy assignment within the Conference and to clearly state the rules which apply so that local charges and affected individuals may recognize in advance the maximum amount of financial help they might receive from the Conference. Moving expenses, subject to conditions and limitations that follow, are to be shared by the Conference and the charge accepting the minister. The Conference-share reimbursement rate will be determined by CCF&A based upon available funding. Moving arrangements are to be made by the individual who will move, and such arrangements are subject to approval by the charge sharing the cost. It is recommended that a professional mover be used. On a non-professional move, the Conference will not reimburse for labor or wages and the Conference will assume no liability for such a move. All exceptions to this move reimbursement policy may be referred to CCF&A for resolution.

A) **Conditions and Limitations**

- 1) **Positions Covered** – situations eligible for reimbursement are those which involve either a parsonage or a housing allowance from a local church or the Conference for clergy under Episcopal appointment. An appointment beyond the local church may be covered only if it is a position in which the East Ohio Conference funds full salary. Also covered would be newly retired pastors being hired as supply pastors (see also B-1). In negotiating with candidates for Conference professional positions approved in *The Conference Journal*, this policy should be used as a guideline.

- 2) **Reimbursements** – the charge receiving a pastor is to pay the carrier and submit a documented voucher to the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services for reimbursement of the Conference share. The Conference will reimburse the local church/charge 50% (subject to limitations) of the moving costs of each pastor under Episcopal appointment. All local churches/charges with a valid moving bill incurred at the usual moving time, at the end of June, must submit that bill to the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services by August 1 each year. The executive director of Financial & Administrative Services will subsequently reimburse to the local churches an amount of 50% of the moving bill (subject to limitations). Mid-year moving bills shall be submitted with prior approval of the Cabinet.
- 3) **Apportionment Requirement** – if half-year apportionment payments of Shared Ministry Funds II, III, IV as well as directly-billed Pension and Health Care are current as of June 30, a charge will be eligible for moving reimbursement as per established policy. In charges whose current-year apportionments are not paid to date, only churches of said charges which have these apportionments paid will be proportionally reimbursed the Conference-share of moving expense.
- 4) **Distance, Packing and Weight Limitation**
 - a) **Distance** – this is limited to mileage within the Conference boundaries following the shortest route acceptable to the carrier.
 - b) **Packing** – Conference reimbursement to local churches for packing materials and/or packing charges is limited to \$500.
 - c) **Weight** – only household goods are included. Specific exclusions include cars, boats, and trailers, as well as storage charges and overtime for movers.
 - d) **Estimate** – As part of exercising stewardship while planning the move, the pastor being moved shall obtain two written estimates of the full cost of the move (including insurance from licensed movers) and shall submit all estimates, as well as the final bill, as attachments to the reimbursement request.
- 5) **New Seminary Graduate Appointments** – graduates entering the East Ohio Conference to assume their first full-time appointments will be given total moving expense reimbursement from the place of origin of their move to their new appointment in the Conference if they use a self-move method. If using a professional move, the graduates shall be under the conditions and limitations of Section IV.A. If moving from outside the Conference the local church/charge to which the incoming graduate is appointed shall be expected to pay the appropriate moving expense prorated from the nearest Conference boundary to the new residence. The mode of move shall be determined by the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor, church, and Cabinet.
- 6) **Out of Conference Transfers In** – churches receiving persons transferring into East Ohio from other annual conferences shall have their related moving expenses reimbursed by the annual conference under the terms specified in A1-4 (except 4a, Distance). The local church/charge will be expected to pay one-half of the actual cost of the move, but not more

than half of the cost of the average professional move over the prior two years as listed in this report. The East Ohio annual conference will pay the balance subject to payout rates specified in A1-4.

The Average Professional moving expense over the prior two years:
2023 and 2024 average (used in 2025) = \$2,887.

B) **Retirees and Disability**

NOTICE: All benefits described in this section are to be applied for those retiring in the current year. Anyone retiring in a prior year should consult the language in The Conference Journal for the year in which they retired. Reimbursed moving expenses for retirees is a taxable transaction and will receive a Form 1099 at year-end, appropriately.

- 1) **Retirees** – full-time local pastors and clergy under appointment as district superintendents, Conference staff, or on a pastoral charge, serving with pension funded by the Conference, shall be eligible to receive a non-recurring moving expense allowance at the time of their retirement under ¶ 358.1, 2.a., 2.b., 2.c of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, provided that such clergy shall not have been re-admitted for the purpose of retirement. Retirees eligible per the previous language that are approved to continue working in retirement will remain eligible for this non-recurring moving expense allowance at such time as they end their work. This allowance must be used within six months of the end of their work unless granted an extension in writing by the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, and with prior approval of both Cabinet and CCF&A. The development and administration of policy governing the allowance shall be the responsibility of the Conference Board of Benefits.
- 2) **Payment Amount**
 - a) **Inside Conference** – clergy retiring and moving to a retirement residence within the East Ohio Conference at the time of their retirement shall receive full reimbursement for actual expenses in accord with the conditions and limitations of Section IV.A.1-4.
 - b) **Outside Conference** – clergy retiring and moving to a retirement residence outside the East Ohio Conference at the time of retirement shall receive actual expenses up to a maximum equal to the average cost of a professional move reimbursed by the Annual Conference over the two years prior to their actual retirement.
 - c) **Other Than Time of Retirement** – retired clergy moving to a retirement residency either inside or outside the East Ohio Conference (and who have not already used their non-recurring retirement move reimbursement), shall be reimbursed actual expenses up to a maximum equal to the average cost of a professional move reimbursed by the annual conference over the two years prior to their actual retirement.
- 3) **Disability/Death** – a similar non-recurring moving expense allowance will be granted to eligible members granted disability, full-time local pastors granted disability benefits, and surviving spouse of eligible members or full-time local pastors.

V. **APPORTIONMENT PROCESS**

- A) **Formula** – CCF&A recommends the following formula for determining apportionment of Shared Ministry Funds: apportionments to local churches will be based on non-benevolent and non-

building expenditures (referred to as "total base figure"). A "grade figure" will be derived for each local church so that it may readily figure its share of any Conference-budgeted item.

The "grade figure" shall be computed as follows:

Local Church Total Base Figure / Conference Total Base Figure = Local Church Grade Figure

- 1) **Total Base Figure** – total base figures are the sum of the church program expenses, other current expenses, salary paid pastor and associates, and travel and utilities paid to pastor and associates by the church for them. The total base figure is listed annually in *The Conference Journal*.
 - a) **Travel** – travel at the Conference-approved rate per vouchered mile for each pastor and/or diaconal minister will not be counted in total base figure. If a flat rate or allowance is used, the total amount is taxable to the recipient, and the total amount will be included in the calculation of the total base figure.
 - b) **Moving Expense** – the moving expenses paid by the church are not added to the total base figure but must be reported by each church as outlined in the local church report to annual conference.
 - c) **Health Insurance** – the health insurance premiums for lay and clergy paid directly by the charge shall not be considered in establishing the charge's apportionments.
 - d) **Pension** – pension provided for lay employees is not considered in establishing the charge's apportionments. Pension charges billed directly to the local church/charge for clergy shall not be considered in establishing the charge's apportionments.
 - e) **Housing Allowance** – housing allowance for apportionments shall exclude amounts expended on either rent or mortgage and interest payments. Taxes, maintenance, insurance, and utilities will remain a part of the formula.
- B) **Timeline** - preliminary apportionments for 2026 will be mailed in September 2025 and will be based on the local church report for the year 2024. Final apportionments will be mailed in October 2025.
- C) **New Churches** – a new church will be apportioned by the Conference and the district 10% of its "full" amount during the first year after the effective charter year. During the second year the apportionments will be at 15%; during the third year 20%; fourth year 40%; fifth year 60%; sixth year 80% and 100% in the seventh year and thereafter. Existing new churches will be considered as in their first year. The term "apportionments" is meant to include all apportioned funds.
- D) **New Program Staff Position Salaries** – these salaries will be exempt from total base figure calculation for a period of two years from the date of hire. During this time, new program staff position salaries will be reported along with the date of hire each year on the local church report to annual conference.
- E) **Merged Churches** – as part of the merger process, the congregations involved will create a proposed budget for the merged church which will go into effect on the date the merged church begins worshipping and meeting as one congregation. This budget will be worked out in consultation with, and given approval by, the district superintendent and the district Committee on Church Building and Location. This budget will then be forwarded to the office of the

executive director of Financial & Administrative Services to be used to formulate the current year's apportionment figures for the newly merged church. A new total base figure will be calculated for the merged church based on the formula outlined in ¶ V.A) above.

This new total base figure will be in effect until the actual financial records of the merged church are reported for the first full year of its existence and can be used to calculate a total base figure based on actual expenditures.

A new classification of merged churches will be VITAL Mergers. Those mergers fulfilling the VITAL Merger qualifications will be considered as a new church start by the Board of Congregational Development and will consequently be considered a New Church for apportionment purposes.

VI. EAST OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE CENTRAL TREASURY

All Conference assets, liabilities, and fund balances are to be accounted for by the office of the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, who will provide a Central Treasury for the East Ohio Annual Conference (See 2020/2024 Discipline ¶613.12). The executive director of Financial & Administrative Services is charged with the accounting for all financial activity of the Conference, including all boards, agencies, and committees. No group or individual may perform this accounting function in lieu of the executive director of Financial & Administrative Services, who must account for all receipts, disbursements, and fund balances.

The executive director of Financial & Administrative Services is not currently expected to perform the accounting function for the district offices, or the United Women in Faith. These bodies perform their own accounting function and are both separately audited and reported to the annual conference.

VII. CONFERENCE LOAN POLICY

CCF&A may borrow up to 2% of the Conference annual apportioned budget in any given Conference year for current expense purposes.

2025 Resolutions**Resolution 2025-01 “United Methodist Immigration Ministries of Ohio:
Forming an Ohio Site of the Immigration Law & Justice Network”****Submitted for consideration by both the East and West Ohio Annual Conferences:**

Whereas: the Word of God implores all Christians to welcome migrants into our churches and communities and to treat noncitizens as our native-born citizens (E.g., Leviticus 19:33–34, Matthew 25:35); and

Whereas: the state of Ohio is home to more than 594,000 foreign-born people, including migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and immigrants, who worship in our pews, stand behind our pulpits, and lead within and beyond the walls of our churches (See United States Census Bureau, QuickFacts: Ohio). In the East and West Ohio Conferences of The United Methodist Church, we are grateful for the ways that U.S. citizens and noncitizens share in leadership and witness as we seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

Whereas: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph fled Herod’s persecution and sought refuge in Egypt (Matthew 2:13–18). Likewise, refugees and asylum-seekers from around the world have fled persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, and sought refuge in Ohio. In 2024, Ohio resettled more than 4,300 refugees from 47 countries, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nicaragua, Ukraine, and Venezuela (Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services). Additionally, more than 16,740 noncitizens have pending cases in the Cleveland Immigration Court, including asylum-seekers from Venezuela, Mauritania, Haiti, Honduras, and Guatemala (TRAC, Immigration Court Backlog); and

Whereas: in the East and West Ohio Conferences of The United Methodist Church, “[w]e oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees” (Social Principles, The Political Community, ¶ 163.G); and

Whereas: unjust immigration laws and policies separate families, detain migrants in inhumane and unsanitary conditions for profit, restrict access to employment authorization and other necessary benefits, and deprive vulnerable migrants of protections like asylum. For example, due to policy-driven backlogs in the Cleveland Immigration Court, asylum-seekers must wait an average of 2,050 days before they are able to present their asylum cases (TRAC, Immigration Court Backlog). And, when they finally get their day in immigration court, only 29% of represented asylum-seekers and 9% of unrepresented asylum-seekers win asylum (TRAC, Asylum Decisions); and

Whereas: racism and xenophobia have led to discrimination and violence against migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and immigrants, including members of our churches, communities, and families. For example, in September 2024, Springfield, Ohio was subjected to at least 30 bomb threats due to the racist anti-Haitian rhetoric of our politicians (AP News); and

Whereas: our Social Principles urge all United Methodists to “welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment and other kinds of support” (The Political Community, ¶ 163.G); and

Whereas: in 1999, United Methodist Committee on Relief (“UMCOR”) established the Immigration Law & Justice Network (formerly Justice For Our Neighbors (“JFON”)) to provide free immigration legal services to low-income immigrants, education, and advocacy for migrant rights. Through 19 sites across the United States, the Immigration Law & Justice Network continues to fight for “[a] nation where every immigrant has access to justice in an anti-racist immigration system that honors the dignity of all people” (Immigration Law & Justice Network, Our Purpose: Vision); and

Whereas: the East Ohio Annual Conference has encouraged “all churches to educate and equip their members to provide hospitality and welcome to migrants and refugees in their communities” (East Ohio Annual Conference Resolution 2017-02). Likewise, the West Ohio Annual Conference has encouraged all clergy and congregations to support United Methodists who “organize to provide material, legal and spiritual services to the refugees and immigrants among us” (West Ohio Annual Conference Resolution 2018-06); and

Whereas: the Task Force on United Methodist Immigration Ministries of Ohio, including lay and clergy members of the East and West Ohio Conferences (“Task Force”), has encouraged local churches to offer sanctuary, housing, and food to asylum-seekers and other migrants; distributed educational and Know Your Rights materials to our churches and communities; and advocated for policy change toward migrant justice; and

Whereas: the Task Force recommends forming an Ohio site of the Immigration Law & Justice Network to provide immigration legal services to low-income noncitizens, education about the immigration system, and advocacy for migrant rights, or to otherwise further our work of sharing God’s love and justice with noncitizens in our churches and communities;

Therefore, be it resolved: that the Annual Conference supports the Task Force’s efforts to establish an Immigration Law & Justice Network site in Ohio; and

Be it further resolved: that, upon recommendation of the conference council on ministries in consultation with the conference council on finance and administration (Book of Discipline, ¶ 265), the Annual Conference establishes an annual “Welcoming Migrants Sunday” or similar special offering to begin in Calendar Year 2027. Members of local churches will be invited to financially support an Ohio Immigration Law & Justice Network site or its predecessor organizations, including the Task Force, through an Advance established by the East Ohio Conference; and

Be it further resolved: that the Annual Conference recommits itself to boldly living out our baptismal vows to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves, including xenophobia, racism, religious discrimination, and all other forms of intersectional oppression; and

Be it further resolved: that the Annual Conference supports all other efforts of clergy and congregations to provide tangible support to migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and immigrants.

Respectfully submitted by: the Task Force on United Methodist Immigration Ministries of Ohio and other supporters:

West Ohio Conference:

Rev. Emily Kvalheim, Esq. (she/her), Co-Chair
 Rev. Elizabeth Ortiz (she/her), Co-Chair
 Mr. Samuel Alatorre (he/him)

Dr. Robert W. Keith (he/him)
 Rev. Lisa Kerwin (she/her)
 Rev. Larry Kreps (he/him)

Ms. Nichole Amicucci (she/her)
 Rev. Dr. Todd D. Anderson (he/him)
 Mr. Landon Balmos-Ruddock (he/him)
 Ms. Christine Bieri (she/her)
 Rev. Brandi Blackstone (she/her)
 Dr. James Bodle (he/him)
 Rev. Karen Brantley (she/her)
 Ms. Linda Brown (she/her)
 Ms. Bonnie Carroll (she/her)
 Mr. Charles Carroll (he/him)
 Rev. Ruth Carter-Crist (she/her)
 Rev. April Casperson (she/her)
 Rev. Karen Cook (she/her)
 Rev. Nancy Day-Achauer (she/her)
 Ms. Ronda Deel (she/her)
 Mrs. Kathy Elasky (she/her)
 Ms. Dianne Ellis (she/her)
 Rev. Robert English (he/him)
 Mr. Andrew Gifford (he/him)
 Ms. Marcia Hartsock (she/her)
 Rev. Joelle Henneman (she/her)
 Rev. Kathleen Herington (she/her)
 Rev. Scott Hicks, Esq. (he/him)
 Rev. Kara Jones (she/her)
 Dr. Samantha A. Jones (she/her)

Ms. Janice Kummer (she/her)
 Mr. David Allan Kvalheim (he/him)
 Ms. Jill Kvalheim (she/her)
 Rev. Abby Lightle (she/her)
 Rev. Sarah Lowden (they/them)
 Rev. David Meredith (he/him)
 Rev. Madet Merove (he/him)
 Ms. Joyce Miyasato (she/her)
 Mr. James Clark Sayre (he/him)
 Ms. Marisa Schoening (she/her)
 Rev. Becky Schofield Motter (she/her)
 Rev. Glenn Schwerdtfeger (he/him)
 Ms. Mary Sheldon (she/her)
 Rev. Kate E. Smith (she/her)
 Mrs. Janet Steele (she/her)
 Rev. Katharine L. Steele (she/her)
 Rev. Jessica Stonecypher (she/her)
 Ms. Kathy Thornton-Keith (she/her)
 Rev. John Wagner (he/him)
 Ms. Kimberly Wagner (she/her)
 Rev. James Waugh (he/him)
 Rev. Beth Weisbrod (she/her)
 Rev. Katy Wheat Borhauer (she/her)
 Rev. Xema Whitley (she/her)

East Ohio Conference:

Board of Ministry
 Board of Multicultural Ministries
 Methodist Federation for Social Action
 Multicultural Ministries

Reconciling Ministries Network
 UMVIM NCJ
 United Women in Faith

Dr. Martha E. Banks (she/her)
 Pastor Amy Barr (she/her)
 Rev. Steven K. Brown (he/him)
 Mrs. Kate Colbow (she/her)
 Rev. Kathy Dickriede (she/her)
 Mr. Robert J. Dunn III (he/him)
 Ms. Corinne Rudman Dunn (she/her)
 Mr. Will Fenton-Jones (he/him)
 Br. Harry N. Finkbone (he/him)
 Rev. Lindsey Funtik (she/her)
 Rev. Don Kraps (he/him)
 Rev. Dr. Donald Kuntz (he/him)
 Rev. Tammy Kuntz (she/her)
 Rev. William L. McFadden, DMin. (he/him)
 Ms. Judith L. Nedel (she/her)

Rev. Tammy Palermo (she/her)
 Rev. Kristen A. Patt (she/her)
 Dr. Liz Piatt (she/her)
 Rev. Shannon V. Pitorak (she/her)
 Rev. Lorrin Radzik (she/her)
 Dr. Valerie Riedthaler (she/her)
 Rev. Shane Russo (he/him)
 Ms. Patsy Simons
 Rev. Dianne Tobey Covault, OSL (she/her)
 Dr. Timothy Van Meter (he/him)
 Pastor Preston Watkins (he/him)
 Mr. William Watts (he/him)
 Rev. Rebecca Weamer (she/her)
 Dr. Cynthia Wilcox (she/her)
 Kimberly Yoak (she/her)

Resolution 2025-02: "Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land"**General Church Budget Implications: None****East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes****Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land**

Whereas: in most of the region between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, Israel is the sole governing power, and, in the remainder, Israel maintains primary control over Palestinians' lives, and

Whereas: Israeli authorities have demonstrated a clear intent to maintain domination over Palestinians by enacting a system of laws and policies that grant full self-determination exclusively to Jewish Israelis and enforce systematic oppression of Palestinians, which is the essence of an apartheid system, and

Whereas: apartheid is not defined by the conditions that existed in South Africa, but by the United Nations Convention on Apartheid of 1973 and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1993,¹ and

Whereas: apartheid is named as a "crime against humanity" under international law and the primary features of apartheid include:

- codifying into law a preferred group of people and giving that group preferential access to resources, benefits and services,
- segregating the population into geographic areas based on identity, and
- establishing laws and policies designed to suppress opposition to the regime and enforcing domination through arbitrary imprisonment, torture, cruel and inhumane treatment, and other violations of human rights, and

Whereas: within Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), the Israeli government has established its control over the lives of Palestinians with discriminatory laws and policies specifying where they can live, whom they can marry, where and when they can travel short distances, which roads they can drive on, how much water they can use, when they can access their own farms, what land they can purchase, which justice system they are subject to, whether they will receive due process, and the kinds of punishment they will receive, and

Whereas: Israel has seized more than three-quarters of the land of its Palestinian citizens and continues their dispossession today, and Palestinians in the OPT have lived under Israeli military law for generations without any protected civil rights, and

Whereas: Israel has blatantly codified a racist governing principle in the Nation State Basic Law of 2018, which grants self-determination exclusively to the Jewish citizens of Israel, and

Whereas: many authoritative scholars and organizations have conducted in-depth investigations and issued reports regarding Israeli apartheid, including:

- in 2009, a thoroughly documented, 302-page report on the OPT by an international group of legal scholars, commissioned by the South African government,
- in 2017, the 74-page report commissioned by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA): "Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid,"
- in 2020, a 58-page report published by the Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din: "The Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid;"

- in January 2021, a strong indictment of the Israeli government from Israel's most eminent human rights center, B'Tselem: "A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This Is Apartheid,"
- in April 2021, another extensively documented report, this from the world-renowned Human Rights Watch: "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution," and
- in February 2022, the powerful and comprehensive report from the global leader in human rights advocacy, Amnesty International: "Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians," ² and

Whereas: these commissions, legal scholars, and human rights organizations have all come to the same unavoidable conclusion: that the Israeli government is committing the crime against humanity known as apartheid, and

Whereas: if apartheid is to be opposed and abolished, it is essential for the international community to recognize and name apartheid where it exists, and

Whereas: Kairos Palestine, the Palestinian Christian movement endorsed by all the major Christian denominations in Palestine, in their "Cry for Hope" of 2020 has called upon the Church around the world to nonviolently oppose both "apartheid and occupation" in the Holy Land and to "uphold a vision of inclusivity and equality for all peoples of the land," ³ and

Whereas: the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that United Methodists "commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society," and furthermore "call the Church to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities," ⁴ and

Whereas: The United Methodist Church has forcefully declared its opposition to the crime of apartheid, calling it a "heresy" and "a sin" that must be "condemned unequivocally – within Southern Africa and neighboring countries and throughout the world." ⁵

Therefore, be it resolved: that the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church affirms that apartheid is antithetical to the Gospel message and that we recognize and oppose Israeli apartheid as we strive to "resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves," and

Be it further resolved: that the Conference recommends that the U.S. government condition U.S. funding to Israel upon Israel's willingness to dismantle its apartheid system and implement all the rights due to Palestinians under international law, and

Be it further resolved: that the Conference urges all United Methodist clergy and laity to listen to the voices of Palestinians regarding their situation, by meeting with them in their homeland, by seeking opportunities to hear from them at online events, and through the study of the Palestinian Christians' landmark 2020 document entitled "Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action."

FOOTNOTES

1. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, United Nations –
<https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cspca/cspca.html>

- 1 The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court –
2 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf>
3
- 4 2. Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa report –
5 “Occupation, colonialism, apartheid? A re-assessment of Israel's practices in the occupied
6 Palestinian territories under international law”
7 <https://repository.hsra.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/4619>
8 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) report – “Israeli Practices
9 towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid,”
10 https://www.kairosresponse.org/it_is_apartheid.html
11 Yesh Din Report –
12 “The Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid” [https://www.yesh-](https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/)
13 [din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/](https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/)
14 B’Tselem Report –
15 “A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: It is
16 Apartheid ”
17 https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid
18 Human Rights Watch report –
19 “A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution”
20 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/19/israeli-apartheid-threshold-crossed#>
21 Amnesty International report –
22 “Israel’s Apartheid against Palestinians: A Look into Decades of Oppression and Domination”
23 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>
24
- 25 3. Kairos Palestine Statement –
26 “Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action ”
27 <http://www.cryforhope.org>
28
- 29 4. Social Principles: The Social Community
30 The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016
31 <https://www.umc.org/en/content/social-principles-the-social-community>
32
- 33 5. “Southern Africa,” United Methodist Book of Resolutions, adopted 1988; “Web of Apartheid. South
34 Africa and the destabilization of its neighbors,” United Methodist Book of Resolutions, adopted
35 1992
36

37 *Submitted by:* East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action, East Ohio Multicultural Ministries
38 Board, and East Ohio Reconciling Ministries Network
39
40

41 **Resolution 2025-03: “What Are We Called To Do?”**

42 **General Church Budget Implications: None**

43 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**
44

45 **What Are We Called To Do?** 46

47 **Whereas:** as members of a Christian denomination, those gathered have heard, read, and discussed
48 Jesus’ history of teaching and acting on behalf of “the people.” His messages have provided a new
49 understanding, and new practices, of the God of Moses, Abraham, Jacob (et al) of what we call the “OLD
50 Testament.” An astute observer has asked, “Did God change, or did human understanding of God

change? The most relevant answer comes from the life of Jesus as chronicled in the “gospel” narrations of Jesus’ work in just three decades 2,000 years ago. It is Jesus’ messages, and his accounts of interactions with ordinary people, and with those in positions of authority, who provide the answer, and

Whereas: while Jesus’ life work and his messages reflect different situations and conditions from those of the “Old Testament world,” they clarify and confirm the persistent insights and commandments of “the Old Testament.” The message/s are clear: ‘love’ your neighbor as you desire to BE loved— “love” being synonymous with such concepts as being seen and heard, respected, trusted, accepted/included, and cared for. “Loving others” is opposite of ignoring, criticizing, ridiculing, demonizing, hating, insulting, or abusing, and

Whereas: the essential directives given by Jesus to urge – *direct* – us humans to care for one another according to *their needs* and *our abilities* to do so. Somewhat like a collective of trees – along a highway, in a grove, or a forest. They share earth to sustain them, water to nurture them, and air that, along with rain, may keep their leaves and branches healthy and clean. Nourishing their collective life ... How does this image relate to humans?

Whereas: the most poignant example was published after a Dow Chemical plant exploded into fire one night in Bhopal, India. A group of poor people immediately rushed toward the fire, thinking to help in such an emergency. Many suffered injuries in their “thoughtless” effort to help others. We learned those who rushed TO the fire, and into the burning factory itself, were the “outcasts”: those ostracized as the least desirable caste in their society, living in camp away from the city. But their first thought was to help. *Would we have been so brave, we wondered? Would you?* That story, that image, is its own lesson.

Whereas: America today is heralded as a “superpower” among nations, but what does that mean? We have considerable wealth, numerous communities of sometimes elaborate structures, schools, shopping areas, plenty of entertainment for our leisure time. We have hospitals and clinics – some world renowned – busy airports, respected universities, award-winning museums, popular concert halls, and packed sports arenas. We also have “the poor” (*which we hear ‘will always be with us,’ as if that means it is ok to accept poverty as inevitable?*). There are fine restaurants, expansive interstate highways, and numerous vacation sites with a plethora of fun activities to entertain us in our leisure hours. Aren’t these measures the proof, and entitlement that we are good people? We have golf courses, yacht clubs, amusement parks, cathedrals, museums, and national parks ... *WHEW!* We really ARE living “the good life.” And we are entitled to do so, aren’t we? Jesus’ message – lived and spoken – is to assess, in the simplest terms, what am I doing with the life I have? In a sense, what IS the purpose of life? In other words, for what am I living?

Therefore, be it resolved: this “Resolution” asks us, each, personally, to consider reflectively “my” – personal – role and purpose as a proclaimed follower of Jesus. In other words, what IS Jesus’ message, and his life, asking ME to do, to be, with the time and resources I have ... Perhaps we, too, might list a few things each week that I did, as “The Jesus Way of living ... ” MAY IT BE SO.

Submitted by: East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action and East Ohio Reconciling Ministries Network

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

General Conference 2020/2024 approved several proposed amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. To amend the Constitution, legislation approved by General Conference must receive approval by a 2/3-majority of aggregate votes cast by members of all annual conferences around the globe. Annual Conferences in 2025 will vote on Constitutional amendments with a separate ballot on each of the four proposed amendments.

The bishop and Conference secretary from all 127 United Methodist annual conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the United States will send the voting results from their Annual Conference to the Council of Bishops no later than October 31, 2025. The Council of Bishops will tally all votes, certify any amendment ratifications, and announce results in early November.

[Learn more about all proposed Constitutional amendments.](#)

Constitutional Amendment #1: Worldwide Regionalization

Regionalization was developed collaboratively by United Methodists across the globe. Regionalization creates equity across the Church without privileging one region as the center and others as peripheries. Existing central conferences will be renamed as regional conferences, and a new U.S. Regional Conference will be created. All regional conferences will share the UM Constitution, doctrinal standards, theological task, The Ministry of All Christians, and The Social Principles. [Learn more about Constitutional Amendment #1.](#)

Constitutional Amendment #2: Paragraph 4, Article 4 - Inclusion

Say “YES” to Inclusion! Approval of this amendment would add “gender” and “ability” to The UMC Constitution’s membership protections in Paragraph 4, Article 4 of the Constitution. [Learn more about Constitutional Amendment #2.](#)

Constitutional Amendment #3: Article V – Racial Justice

Proposed changes to Article V of The UMC Constitution will explicitly recognize the Church's role in combatting racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy. [Learn more about Constitutional Amendment #3.](#)

Constitutional Amendment #4: Educational Requirements for Clergy Members

This paragraph outlines the educational requirements for clergy members of annual or provisional conferences who are eligible to vote for clergy delegates to the General Conference. The UMC Constitution currently requires a clergy delegate to have completed a “course of study or an M. Div. degree ...” The proposed amendment would change The UMC Constitution language to state “course of study or Master of Divinity from a University Senate approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a Central Conference...” [Learn more about Constitutional Amendment #4.](#)

2025 INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**Personnel Committee Report to Annual Conference 2025**

Submitted by Susan Achberger, chairperson, conference Personnel Committee

The Conference Personnel Committee is responsible for working with representatives from Conference committees, boards, and agencies to establish executive and professional leadership positions, to review requests by executive directors for support staff, positions, and to set policies and procedures for the employment, evaluation, and supervision of all employees of the East Ohio Annual Conference.

We are aware of and are in conversation about the importance of providing meaningful compensation for highly qualified, experienced, and dedicated leadership. Adjustments to staffing will continue to be prioritized around missional and strategic needs in a very complex and transitional time in the life of the church. East Ohio Conference staff at all levels are instrumental in fulfilling the mission and vision of the Conference recognizing that:

- discipleship is our foundation,
- covenant guides us,
- connection strengthens us, and
- leadership moves us forward.

Since the last report, we have been visioning and working with Bishop Jung to navigate sharing an episcopal leader with the West Ohio Conference. The two Conferences have been sharing ideas and best practices with each other to ensure that both Conferences have the necessary personnel to carry out their mission and vision and that we are using our personnel efficiently and effectively. This past year has brought many good discussions and opportunities for learning and growth.

The Personnel Committee has no motions for this Annual Conference.

I would like to thank the East Ohio Conference for this opportunity to serve as I conclude my term as chair of the Personnel Committee. I began serving as chair in 2020 and the pandemic required us to adapt and make changes to how we conducted our meetings. During the past five years, the Personnel Committee has been able to successfully conduct its business exclusively remotely providing flexibility to committee members and empowering me to conduct the meetings efficiently. I am truly grateful for this experience and the relationships I have developed with the gifted individuals on the Personnel Committee.

Please continue to be in prayer for God's assistance to our Conference staff as they adjust to the wide variety of changes and concerns that they confront each day.

(To be included in both the Pre-Conference Workbook and Journal)

Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Lorrin Radzik, chairperson, COSROW

In the East Ohio Annual Conference, the Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) serves the church by encouraging the full participation of all persons, and women in particular, in the total life of The United Methodist Church, in partnership with the work of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW). *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* directs

the work of the annual conference commissions in areas of monitoring and research, advocacy, education, and cooperation with other conference and denominational supports.

Below are a few highlights of your COSROW's work this past year:

- assisted with a denomination-wide grassroots movement to improve parental leave in The UMC. Led discussions and connected with GCSRW to utilize East Ohio's Parental Leave Policy and Procedures as a model for this work.
- requested that East Ohio's Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CCF&A) study the implementation and impact of a salary schedule for all clergy based on years of service.
- discussed the need for bishop's response teams and trained support persons for navigating the complaint process.
- continued our ongoing collaboration with the Board of Ministry and the Cabinet.
- updated the Sexual Ethics Policy for approval at AC 2025.
- attended the GCSRW quadrennial training "Collaborative Paths to Gender Equity" in Atlanta.

Perhaps the most important work of COSROW this year is around the constitutional amendments passed at General Conference 2020/2024. And this is where you can most easily partner with us! At General Conference, United Methodists from around the world voted to add the words "gender" and "ability" to the existing social categories in Paragraph 4, Article IV of The United Methodist Church's Constitution. These critical additions allow for persons of any gender and all abilities to be included as members of The United Methodist Church. This year United Methodists will be asked to affirm these additions with a vote at their Annual Conference sessions. Every vote "yes" on these changes is critical, as the threshold to ratify these changes requires a 2/3 majority of aggregate votes cast. Your "yes" vote can help us make the Church a more inclusive and welcoming space for all of God's beloved children!

In the year ahead, we expect to continue work on a Clergy Harassment Policy, as well as produce additional procedure and supporting documents to accompany the Sexual Ethics Policy update and the forthcoming Clergy Harassment Policy. COSROW will also work to analyze further data surrounding clergy salaries. In so doing, we look forward to reviewing the results of the CCF&A Salary Schedule Study so that we can continue working in partnership with other annual conference commissions, boards, and committees as we pursue a more just and equitable means of compensation for clergy in our annual conference.

It is our prayer that COSROW's ongoing work will help move the annual conference closer to God's vision for full and equal participation of all God's beloved children in the total life of The United Methodist Church here in East Ohio and beyond. We remain committed to this work and to new possibilities of collaboration with the West Ohio Annual Conference as we as we partner with you in service, prayer, and love here in "Ohio Land".

Board of Camps and Retreat Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Beth Wilterdink, chairperson, Board of Camps & Retreat Ministries & Rev. Gary Jones, director, Camps & Retreat Ministries

The Board of Camps and Retreat Ministries recognizes that we have been entrusted with a large portion of ministry for the East Ohio Conference. This year, we are asking that each local church take seriously the mission of making disciples and find at least one child or youth to send to camp. Many of our churches do not have children to send to camp from within the walls of the church, but our camps are a great chance for us to reach beyond our walls – and to sponsor a child in our community to spend a week at camp.

Camp provides an outdoor setting and a temporary community where children, youth and adults are given the opportunity for Christian birth, growth, and renewal. Camps and Retreat Ministries are:

- reaching a new generation of children and youth with the Gospel.
- helping children and youth acquire Christian leadership skills.
- assisting children and youth to mature as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Since the COVID shutdown, we have been working hard to rebuild. Below is the breakdown of how many individuals East Ohio Camps has helped mature campers as disciples of Christ during the summer and retreat seasons. Our camps not only provide an avenue for the Gospel to be shared with children and youth during the summer they also provide sacred space for healing, wholeness, and renewal in and around our summer camp season.

	Summer Camp Children, Youth & Families	Retreat Guests
2019	1771	6269
2020	304	4610
2021	985	5017
2022	1064	6299
2023	1212	6164
2024	1142	5626

Campership funds, pooled together from multiple generous sources, provided grants to 261 campers in 2024, allowing them to attend.

With a variety of programming and use, our facilities require continual upkeep for our campers, guests, and staff. Improvements in 2024 include (but are not limited to):

- green shower house upgrades, forestry work, roof replacement at Wanake.
- Otterbein Retreat Center bathroom remodel, roof replacement, waterfront improvements, new windows in the office/residence at Asbury.
- new (to us) golf cart, new waterfront equipment, water system upgrade at Aldersgate.

Our camps depend on a combination of usage fees, block grant funding, Connectional Ministries office (CMO) administrative funds that cover salary and benefit costs for the camps CMO office staff, board administrative funds that cover marketing and administrative costs, Advanced Special funds for camperships, Foundation funds that provide campership funds, the Camp & Retreat Endowment (CARE) fund that supplies capital monies and camperships, and gifts from alumni and friends that are derived from our development efforts at each site. These funding sources together make it possible for us to operate our Camps & Retreat Ministries.

Running camp facilities, recruiting staff, marketing, offering hospitality, keeping up older facilities, and so much more is an amazingly challenging job, and our site directors Meredith Mateer, John Cruz, Julie Lautt, and Conference director Rev. Gary Jones work tirelessly to make this ministry possible. Our board says “thank you” to each of them for their hard work and the lives they are changing for Christ!

Board of Congregational Development Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Beth Ortiz, director, Strategic Ministries, and Rev. Mikayla Doecker, chairperson, Board of Congregational Development

The purpose of the Board of Congregational Development is to creatively increase congregational vitality in East Ohio so that congregations may increase their capacity to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The vision of the board is to inspire, equip, and empower local church leadership to risk bold and innovative ministry. The core values of the Board of Congregational Development are leadership training, financial resourcing, congregational networking, and promoting innovative ministries. The Board of Congregational Development works closely with the Connectional Ministries office of Strategic Ministries to serve East Ohio faith communities and leaders.

In 2024, the Board of Congregational Development and Strategic Ministries focused on supporting the local church and pastoral leaders as they seek to live out God's vision for their community by continuing to provide coaching, consultants, training opportunities, and more.

Some of the ways we have served the East Ohio Conference over the last year include:

- leading transition training for pastoral changes.
- continuing microgrants for a third year; awarding \$13,910 to local churches/charges attempting new, bold and courageous ministries to reach those not already in their faith communities.
- assisting in the relaunching and awarding of TAP grants with a total of \$36,185 awarded to 12 churches and UMC faith organizations to support emerging ministries which serve their communities and further the vision of East Ohio.
- supporting multiple cohorts and coaching for strategic planning leading to congregations having a renewed focus, and increased energy.
- Simplified Structure workshops, cohorts, and coaching to assist congregations develop this governance that empowers mission to be the main driver of the congregation.
- maintaining and developing online curriculum for Portico, the Conference's online learning platform.

Board members also help provide accountability to churches receiving grants, such as grants from the Trinity Fund, for new or revitalizing congregations. These are often multi-year commitments to help support the revitalization of East Ohio congregations, create new expressions of faith, and provide additional ways of supporting congregations that continue to seek to live out God's call in their community.

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 5, verse 36 Jesus says to the synagogue leader, "Don't be afraid; just keep trusting." The Board of Congregational Development is committed to trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit as together we explore new ways to support churches and clergy as they seek to faithfully serve God. The Board of Congregational Development looks forward to sharing details in the future about discipleship initiatives, contextual cohorts, and more.

Learn more at www.eocumc.com/strategicmin.com.

Disaster Response Committee Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Tom King, chairperson, Disaster Response Committee

The Disaster Response Committee encourages and equips churches should a disaster strike their vicinity to be ready with assistance and be assets for their community's relief. We encourage church members to

receive training to assist in disasters by providing cleanup, stabilizing homes and providing emotional and spiritual care.

In December, we led a team of volunteers to South Georgia, providing relief from Hurricane Helene damage, removing felled trees allowing homeowners to regain access to their homes.

We currently have 37 trained Early Response Team (ERT) volunteers who are ready to deploy after first responders when needed and provide relief to disaster survivors.

The East Ohio Conference reorganization from 10 districts to four offers a better opportunity for the Committee to recruit Disaster Response district coordinators and build team cohesion with a larger pool of churches and mission volunteers. We continue to expand our network by enlisting local church coordinators for Disaster Response from names submitted with Charge Conference reports. Online training is being offered to these volunteers so that they may equip their churches in readiness should disasters strike locally; to respond with donations and service to other impacted areas; and, to promote this ministry locally to recruit more volunteers to build the East Ohio Conference's capacity for this mission.

We have three United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) certified ERT trainers, so if your church has a group of people interested in becoming ERT certified, contact me about having a training scheduled. If you have questions about the Disaster Response Committee or would like to represent your church as a Disaster Response coordinator in this ministry, please [e-mail me](mailto:deb.gilson@eocumc.com).

Learn more at www.eocumc.com/missions/disaster-response.html.

Committee on Lay Servant Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Deb Gilson, director, Lay Servant Ministries

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” - Matthew 28:19 (NRSVA)

John Wesley valued the role of laity in the early days of his ministry and described what he considered to be essential qualities of a lay person. While it is God who calls us into ministry, both clergy and laity, it is the responsibility of the church to equip those individuals who are called and provide them with educational opportunities. The UMC has created a training pathway of programs to help individuals answer God's call.

Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) programs provide training opportunities and experiences to equip disciples of Jesus Christ. Each disciple is “gifted” with gifts/skills by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of serving the body of believers and God. The LSM program strives to assist disciples develop an awareness of their specific God-given gifts by offering educational opportunities to enhance and develop these gifts. Examples would include becoming better servants of Jesus Christ, becoming stronger church family leaders, and learning to assist clergy more capably.

The Committee on Lay Servant Ministries has worked to offer numerous training opportunities through the East Ohio Conference. Goals were set to move the LSM program forward. These goals include:

- increasing training opportunities within each district.
- furthering the education of clergy and others regarding LSM programs and ways in which trained lay servants can assist local churches.

- increasing the professional appearance of the Conference Committee by having new name badges and shirts.
- having an LSM banner created for the table at Annual Conference.
- Increasing utilization of the Conference website as well as E-News and district newsletters.
- having district directors present at each district charge conference as well as having informational tables at each event.
- increasing involvement of youth through Young People's Ministries and Camp and Retreat Ministries.

The Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries continues to work on all these goals.

Regarding the Conference Committee, I would like to personally thank all the district directors, at-large members, Kim Green, Melanie Thomas and Rev. Ed Fashbaugh for their dedication to the LSM program. I would also like to recognize certified lay servant ministers Roxie Roush, Dalene Kelly and Elizabeth Piatt.

I have the pleasure of assisting with moving the East Ohio Conference on LSM Ministries forward by: attending training opportunities in each district; attending the ACDLSM Conference in Nashville, TN to meet with conference directors nationwide; increasing knowledge about launching new LSM programs and new CLM opportunities; working with the conference directors of Lay Servant Ministries in West Ohio and Pennsylvania on LSM course opportunities; and becoming a participating member of the North Central Jurisdictional Conference on Lay Servant Ministries.

Thank you for allowing me to serve all of you as the East Ohio Conference director of Lay Servant Ministries. Our team and I look forward to continuing to make disciples to serve God.

Learn more at www.eocumc.com/laity/lay-servants.html.

Board of Missions Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Kathy Dickriede, director, Missions & Community Engagement

Late last year, all East Ohio Advances and Health & Well-Being Partners were given the opportunity to give the Conference an update about their ministry, here's what a few of them had to share, in their own words:

"All In Community exists to engage individuals, churches, criminal justice professionals, and community leaders in local efforts to restore hope and support healing during and following lived experiences with the criminal justice system. We equip and engage congregations and individuals to care for self and others who have been harmed and who have harmed. All In Community helps prepare and properly position our faithful servants to be in ministry with criminal justice-involved persons because they have felt called to enact the teachings of Matthew 25 and/or because circumstances in their own lives require a caring response."

Brookdale Orchard: "Over the next year, we will build on the many strides toward realizing our vision for Brookdale Orchard as we continue: developing fruit and vegetable gardens on our 27 parcels of land situated over three streets, including our first culinary and medicinal herb garden under the tutelage of volunteers from the Western Reserve Herb Society; employing a part-time grounds crew of neighboring residents; expanding our Wisdom Garden program for fourth- through eighth-grade neighboring students; hosting summer mission teams in partnership with Next Step Ministries and Nehemiah Mission with adults and youths hailing from 13 states to date as we prepare for the arrival of our first

2025 teams in June; harvesting and preserving salsa and jam from pears growing in Eden, our first planted garden; hosting St. Matthew's "Jammin' for Jesus" community event as part of our fall Harvest Festival, and most significantly, kicking off our capital campaign to fund the restoration and retrofitting of the building that will house our future Harriet Tubman Hall education and production center, with annexes for a greenhouse and café."

"C.H.O.A.I.D.S. (Caring for Haitian Orphans with AIDS) has moved far away from the dangerous Port-au-Prince to a Cap-Haitien safe house. Facilities are more spacious and better meet the needs of our 22 children and youth, plus 14 staff. Now in our 21st year of ministry, six of our young adults are learning a trade and transitioning out, with C.H.O.A.I.D.S.' blessing and temporary support. Our very first college student, Zachary Vilme, begins in the spring. Please pray for the USA to presume PEPFAR, which provides life-saving medical care. C.H.O.A.I.D.S. needs a bus, handwashing station, and a library. God bless your generosity."

"Flat Rock Homes & Care Center Ministries supports adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities in residential facilities, supportive living group homes, and community-based programs. Flat Rock Care Center provides one-on-one, 24/7 care for 34 residents with significant intellectual/developmental disabilities, many of whom also have additional physical, emotional, and psychiatric diagnoses. Flat Rock Community Services supports 26 adults in 10 group homes in Seneca, Erie, and Lorain Counties, offering long-term support for independent living. Flat Rock's Adult Day Support programs offer community integration and life skills development. Since 1866, Flat Rock has equipped the local church in making disciples of Christ through sermons, messaging, workshops, and curriculum to inform; volunteer ministry opportunities to engage; and on-going support to create long-term relationships."

"Royal Family KIDS Camp mobilizes the local church to confront child abuse and neglect. We host children in foster care, ages 6-12, to experience a life-changing moment with the unconditional love of God's people. There are three United Methodist churches in East Ohio Conference alongside other partners helping to address our almost 20,000 in Ohio foster care. Come and be a part of one week of camp with other adult volunteers and enjoy God's beautiful kids. Can you pray and advocate during Foster Care awareness month in May annually or visit one of the camps or mentoring programs, or spend one day visiting a camp? Pray about attending a training to learn more and be a child advocate for your local church or to send a child to camp at \$600 per child (which includes the cost of materials to bring home; Bible, camp music, school bag, some clothing and adult support staff)."

South Street Ministries: "There is a reason why South Street Ministries is plural – we have a lot going on! RICH Kids works with grade-school youth year-round. Kids and adults earn bicycles at the Bike Shop. Reentry meets weekly with over 70 returning citizens stepping towards support and restoration. Young adults step into deeper faith at Restoration House and women rebuild their lives after incarceration at Restoration House. In all these ministries, God moves powerfully to transform lives and transform communities!"

"Thrive 10:10 has created a pathway out of scarcity that starts with diapers and shampoo at Ruth's Boutique, leads to exploring a better future in Getting Ahead and Money Matters, and ends with the ability to become a guiding light for others as they begin their own journey in Staying Ahead. Walking alongside those who feel stuck, yet want more for their lives, we help individuals overcome barriers between where they are and where they want to be by challenging a fixed mindset, reigniting the ability to dream, and restoring a sense of control to their lives. We serve under-resourced individuals as well as professionals and community members through our outreach and education programs. Evidence-based professional development and community courses such as Mental Health First Aid, Bridges Out of Poverty and WISE programs are provided to assist everyone on their path to thrive."

“Urban Mission Ministries provides a holistic ministry approach to ending poverty in the Ohio Valley by providing hunger relief, housing, community and workforce development, neighborhood revitalization and spiritual care for individuals and families. Our vision is to end poverty one fresh start at a time.”

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) connects us to God’s mission all over the world – from disaster response to projects in health care, agriculture, education and church revitalization. Through GBGM, your local church can support a missionary, be part of a mission project in another country, register for training in creation care and receive grant funding to serve migrants and refugees in your local community. Last year, East Ohio gave over \$500,000 through GBGM to meet the needs of people all over the world. Where are you called to connect with God’s mission this year? To learn more, visit <https://umcmmission.org/>

The Board of Missions awarded the following “Serving Other, Inviting Others” grants in 2024:

Grant	Recipient	Project
\$ 1,000	Church Hill UMC	Garden at Liberty School
\$ 4,500	Church of the Cross UMC	Food Pantry Expansion
\$ 10,000	Harbor and Bridge Community Center	Recovery Home
\$ 3,000	Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland	Redevelopment Project
\$ 5,000	OPEN M	OPEN M Health Services
\$ 4,500	Rocky River UMC	Intercultural Art Initiative, Story Church
\$ 10,000	Thrive 10:10	Getting Ahead in a Just Getting’ By World
\$ 3,000	Centenary UMC Akron	Getting Ahead Tech Equipment

The Board of Missions awarded the following Health & Well-Being Ministries and Missions grants in 2024. The following are divided by 12 and paid out over the year.

- Canton For All People: \$20,000
- Flat Rock Homes: \$40,000
- Heart 4 The City: \$20,000
- Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland: \$40,000
- Steubenville Urban Mission: \$120,000
- West Side Community House: \$20,000

The Board of Missions also hosted a training day for Ministry with People who are Differently Abled in October 2024 and a Resourcing the Local Church and Nonprofits in February seminar in 2025.

The list of suggested Advances for 2025-2026 can be found in the Advance Special report on page 47: (Advance Report that gets voted on)

Learn more about EOC Missions & Community Engagement at www.eocumc.com/missions/index.html.

Multicultural Ministries & Anti-Racism Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by: Will Fenton-Jones, director, Multicultural Ministries, East & West Ohio Conferences

Over the past year, the work of Multicultural Ministries in the East Ohio Conference has continued to grow in depth and reach. The expansion of these efforts reflects a commitment to building relationships, telling our stories, and engaging in tangible steps toward racial equity and justice. The Board of

Multicultural Ministries provides a space for the intersectional work of the Commission on Religion and Race (CORR), Church and Society, Native American Awareness, Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR), and Ethnic Local Church Concerns as well as our Anti-Racism team.

Since last Annual Conference we Launched and completed two iterations of anti-racism cohorts, where participants engaged deeply in discernment and action steps toward equity in their communities. These cohorts are focused on our anti-racism strategy: Re-Telling, Relationships, and Repair and Reinvestment.

Re-Telling: Engaging Our History to Transform Our Future

A major focus this year has been Re-Telling, recognizing that storytelling serves as an essential on-ramp for churches and individuals engaging in anti-racism work. Through key events, cohorts, and storytelling initiatives, we have sought to deepen our understanding of history – both within The United Methodist Church and our local communities. In this past year we:

- hosted John Elford, author of *Our Hearts Were Strangely Lukewarm*, for a Conference-wide Re-Telling event exploring the history of racism within The UMC.
- supported a pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama, where participants from West and East Ohio Conferences visited the Equal Justice Initiative's museum and memorial, confronting the legacy of racial injustice.
- co-sponsored a storytelling workshop with InterPlay Cleveland, an ecumenical event designed to encourage churches to explore their own histories.

Churches across the Conference have been engaging in local storytelling projects, exploring their own histories and those of their surrounding communities. These efforts have served as a gateway for deeper work in racial justice, helping congregations recognize past harms and opportunities for reconciliation.

Relationships: Expanding Ecumenical & Community Partnerships

Recognizing that no church or conference can do this work alone, we have leaned into the Lund Principle: "Everything we can do together, we must do together." This commitment to collaboration has led to meaningful ecumenical and community partnerships. In this past year we:

- continued the pro-racial equity network, a partnership with the Heartland Conference UCC and East Ohio UMC, meeting monthly to network and support anti-racism work across denominations.
- hosted two ecumenical gatherings focused on deepening partnerships across denominations and faith traditions.
- hosted the North Central Jurisdiction Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) and Commission on Religion & Race (CORR) meeting in Cleveland, furthering our commitment to Pan-Methodist and regional racial justice work.
- sponsored Jim Wallis at an Ohio Council of Churches event, where he addressed the dangers of Christian Nationalism and the need for a faith-rooted response.
- supported local churches in anti-racism training, intercultural competency development, and community engagement efforts.

Repair & Reinvestment: Taking Tangible Action Toward Equity

The work of anti-racism cannot stop at conversation – it must lead to action. This year, we have begun to focus on what Repair & Reinvestment looks like within our churches and communities. Together we:

- explored church redevelopment, especially of historically Black churches, as a means to congregational and community renewal and to heal the harms of past policies like redlining and Urban Renewal.
- provided John Roseberry Scholarships, supporting students of color pursuing higher education, as well as clergy and programming grants for clergy of color.

- engaged churches in social determinants of health analysis, helping them identify and address racial disparities in their communities.

These steps represent a growing commitment to ensuring that racial justice work moves beyond education and into tangible investments in communities of color.

Expanding into West Ohio and Looking Ahead to 2025-2026

This year also marked a significant expansion of Multicultural Ministries into the West Ohio Conference, allowing for greater collaboration and impact across the state. As we look ahead to 2025-2026, we are committed to:

- hosting joint East/West Ohio events, furthering our shared commitment to racial justice and equity.
- creating more ecumenical connection opportunities and training programs to support churches in this work.
- expanding anti-racism cohorts, ensuring more leaders are equipped with tools for change.
- Increasing the number of Perspectives events to foster deeper conversations and learning opportunities.

The work of anti-racism and multicultural ministry is ongoing. It requires deep listening, commitment, and collective action. As a Conference, we continue to ask: Are we willing? Are we willing to engage in self-reflection, confront systemic racism, and take bold steps toward justice?

We invite every church, every leader, and every disciple of Jesus Christ to join in this work -not as a separate initiative, but as part of our shared call to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in all forms. Together, through re-telling, relationships, and repair/reinvestment, we move toward the vision of a church and world where racial equity is the norm, not the exception.

Strategic Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Beth Ortiz, director, Strategic Ministries

United Methodist Vitality Grants: Empowering New Faith Communities and Church Revitalization

United Methodist vitality grants support churches, cooperative parishes, and faith communities within the East Ohio Conference United Methodist Church that have a clear and well-developed vision for revitalization. Rooted in contextual knowledge, these grants help congregations implement strategic initiatives that align with the United Methodist mission and the East Ohio vision for ministry.

Strengthening Congregations & Planting New Faith Communities

Vitality grants are designed to strengthen churches by funding ministries that reflect their mission and vision while also fostering the creation of new faith communities. Eligible applicants must demonstrate:

- a well-defined vision for revitalization.
- a strategic plan with measurable goals.
- committed leadership and congregational support.
- a plan for financial sustainability beyond the grant period.

A Strategic and Accountable Grant Process

Grants are awarded through the vitality resources process, a multi-tiered system of review and approval. Funding comes from the sale of church properties and the Trinity Fund, the latter of which is overseen by its own board. Grant recipients also participate in a system of accountability and ongoing support, ensuring long-term impact.

Vitality Grants in Action

In 2024, 18 vitality grants were awarded in East Ohio, with most being multi-year commitments. There is no single model for a grant recipient – funded faith communities exist in urban, rural, and suburban areas and include churches of all sizes. Notably:

- eight grants support multipoint appointments and cooperative parishes.
- three grants support new faith communities.
- in total, 33 faith communities were directly involved in a vitality grant initiative in 2024.

A Call to Action

Vitality grants serve as a powerful resource for churches seeking to renew their mission and expand their impact in their communities. By providing financial support to congregations with a clear vision, these grants help sustain and grow vital ministries within The United Methodist Church.

If your congregation is exploring revitalization or new faith communities, reach out to your district superintendent to learn how a vitality grant could help bring your vision to life.

Young People's Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Pastor Christy Suffecool & Tim Beck, co-directors, Young People's Ministries

Young People's Ministries continues to serve youth and those who lead them in a rapidly shifting ministry landscape. As youth ministry evolves in the wake of the pandemic, we remain committed to adapting and responding to the needs of young people and youth leaders in our churches and communities. This year, we facilitated the preparation of nearly 30,000 ready-to-eat meals through Project Feed and launched an Emerging Leaders program focused on discipleship, mission efforts, and leadership training for teens.

We also equipped leaders through trainings on The Future of Youth Ministry and initiated a Youth Ministry Innovation cohort to explore fresh approaches to discipleship. Additionally, we deepened our investment in young adults by offering grants that support ministries on college campuses and beyond. Through it all, we remain focused on relational ministry, embracing change, and seeking new ways to connect the next generation with Christ.

Learn more at www.eocumc.com/youngpeople/index.html.

Methodist Foundation of Ohio Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Brian Sheetz, executive director, Methodist Foundation of Ohio

While many doing the congregational development work in our church are rightfully concerned about the increasing average age in our congregations, I encourage each of our churches to seize one of the positive aspects of this.



This is a great time to be talking with our members about planned gifts. A gift made at or near the end of life can provide an important undergirding of your church's finances moving forward. These gifts may be through the will, trust document, or as a beneficiary in a life insurance policy, retirement account, stock portfolio, or several other options. Some church leaders dream of a congregation with members named Gates, Buffet, or Rockefeller but know that your members have more modest means. According to Giving USA, the largest annual study of philanthropy in the world, last year people with estates of less than \$1 million gave \$7.7 billion to charity at the end of their lives.

The Foundation recommends the following to begin to develop a culture of generosity through planned gifts: establish a permanent endowment fund, even if there is no money to deposit into it. A well-developed policy can provide potential donors with an understanding of how such a gift would be cared for in the church and a vision for how such a gift can support ministry. Similarly, a planned gifts acceptance policy clearly outlines how such a gift would be managed by church leaders. Which church committee would have the responsibility to receive and steward the gift? How can the church protect itself against gifts that may not be helpful? What assurances can you provide that the donor's wishes will be followed?

When you receive a gift, manage it wisely. Your people are watching, so be sure that your policies are being followed, and that care is being taken with the gift. Celebrate the gift publicly. While this will probably not involve announcing the actual dollar amount, reminding your members of another's generosity and how it will support the ministries of the church can be a strong nudge.

A hard sell is not necessary, but suggestions can be effective. Publish sample will language in your newsletter. Remind your flock that the new carpet, the youth mission trip, or the upgraded sound system were made possible, in whole or in part, by these gifts and suggest they consider doing the same.

On your pledge card have a spot where members can indicate they have included the church in their will. The Foundation is here to support you in all these endeavors, from sample policies to a visit with a member who would like to learn more, we are only a phone call away.

I challenge you to commit yourself to getting this important part of your stewardship work going in the coming year.

I remain grateful to serve you and your churches.

Africa University Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by James H. Salley, president/CEO, Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. and associate vice chancellor, Institutional Advancement, Africa University.

Greetings and thanks to you, the members of the East Ohio Annual Conference, for your love of Africa University! Your love, lived out in the local church, and across every level of The United Methodist Church worldwide, is a source of hope and transformation.

Through its missional engagement with Africa University, the East Ohio Annual Conference equips change leaders who share the gospel of Jesus Christ, reduce hunger, improve public health, nurture thriving congregations, and build peaceful communities.

Africa University's students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni thank you for graciously investing 100 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2024 and for continually striving to open doors and address crucial needs.

The East Ohio Conference and Africa University celebrated the formal dedication of the Bishop Tracy S. Malone Hall of Residence in February. More than 90 female students now enjoy safe, first-rate campus housing because of the conference's Teach • Reach • Bless campaign which funded construction of the facility. In August, four refugee women began their four-year college journey thanks to second-mile gifts for scholarships through the Lift Her Up East Ohio initiative supported by East Ohio United Methodists.

These deeply meaningful and life-changing interventions affirm the members of the East Ohio Conference as believers who stand on the promises of God.

As 2025 unfolds, Africa University is urging East Ohio Annual Conference congregations to:

- **maintain their support for the Africa University Fund (AUF) at the 2016 budget level and continue working to achieve 100% investment to the AUF each year.**
- **explore becoming a “Keystone Congregation” for Africa University by making a multiyear commitment of \$7,000 a year to provide a scholarship for one undergraduate student.**

East Ohio United Methodists are integral to our shared mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ to change the world. You nurture servant leaders with ethics, empathy, and an audacious, can-do mindset. Having experienced God’s grace through your love in action, the young people who attend Africa University deepen their faith and become more effective in their witness. Here are 2024 highlights of the impact of Africa University students, faculty, and administrators:

- Africa University start-up, Reagan Technologies, earned a semi-final finish in the Hult Prize Global Accelerator competition. Known as the “*Nobel prize contest for students*” the three-student AU team impressed the Hult Prize judges with an innovative concept for generating electricity from footsteps. The team’s climate-smart pavement tiles stood out against the competition from more than 60 universities.
- Another AU trio is transforming education by bridging the digital divide in Africa. Three students majoring in computer science won the top prize at the UbuntuNet Alliance Women’s Hackathon with FUNDISA. It’s a chatbot that delivers instant, curriculum-aligned explanations to students who lack internet access, but have phones with SMS functionality. The chatbot enables students to simply send a text to a short code to receive educational support.
- Africa University’s Doctor of Ministry program, a first for the continent of Africa, was accredited by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education, with options for specialization in Mission and Evangelism, Liturgical Theology, Church Administration, Church and Society, and Chaplaincy Ministry. A pioneer group of 10 senior officers in the military, prisons and policing from Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have completed the program, thanks to a collaboration between Africa University and Wesley Theological Seminary. Their doctoral research projects generated new knowledge that addresses deployment trauma, reducing drug abuse among officers, and the use of psalms of lament for facilitating healing in families of inmates.

This is the transformation story that East Ohio Conference United Methodists, in their faithfulness, are writing through Africa University. Thank you for showing up, East Ohio Annual Conference, so that promise, calling, and a just future can be realized. Your leadership and generous contributions are as pivotal today as they were at Africa University’s inception, 33 years ago. Thank you and may God continue to bless and keep you always.

Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by G. Sujin Pak, dean, Boston University School of Theology



Boston University School of Theology

Your partnership, prayers, and support are a cherished gift as BUSTH seeks to serve the church and the world! In a year like 2024, BUSTH’s commitments to equip transformational leaders for peace and justice are more necessary and significant. We are hopeful and vigilant in our continued partnership with you.

News

- *Students:* Our academic year 2024-25 entering class was among our most diverse, with 109 new students enrolling, 33% of whom are international students.
- *Faculty:* In July, Shively T. J. Smith was promoted to associate professor of New Testament, and in September we welcomed new faculty member Emilie m. Townes, Martin Luther King, Jr. professor of Religion and Black Studies. In January we welcomed new Assistant Professor of Religion and Society Luther Young, Jr.
- *Expanding Online/Hybrid Programming:* BUSTH's first fully online master's degree – the Master of Religion and Public Leadership (MARPL) – continues to expand since launching in fall 2022. MARPL seeks students who wish to be prepared for leadership roles that creatively engage the challenges of public life. An online Master of Divinity program is planned for Fall 2026.
- *Faculty Research:* Associate Dean Cristian De La Rosa received a second Lilly Endowment Parenting Grant for \$1.25 million. Faculty published more than 130 books, scholarly articles, op-eds, presentations, and book reviews during 2024. Many were interviewed by media publications or featured on podcasts for their scholarship in topics such as social justice activism, historical Methodist leaders, responding to trauma, and the use of AI to predict religious extremism. Selected stories are found at bu.edu/sth/research/faculty-research/.
- *Scholarships:* We continue to offer free tuition to UMC-registered candidates for ordained ministry and leadership fellowships that support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality studies. New funds include Rev. James M. Smith ('51) Fund for Latinx Lay Education and Rev. Tom Sears ('59) Chaplaincy Operating Fund. We have increased an endowed fund for students specializing in Hebrew Bible.
- *Accreditation and Curriculum:* BUSTH concluded a thorough curriculum revision for the MDiv and MTS programs which launched in fall 2024.
- *Online Lifelong Learning:* BUSTH offers online courses for professional and spiritual enrichment of religious leaders. Recent offerings include "A Womanist Ethic of Care." To learn more, visit bu.edu/sth/oll.
- *Development:* Recent accomplishments include endowing the Raíces Latinas Program in Theology, Leadership, & Research and meeting a \$250K match in support of the Religion & Conflict Transformation Program.

Commitment to Justice and Compassion

- BUSTH's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers webinars on timely inclusion efforts, such as "Spiritual Leadership in Divided Times: Trauma and Thurman," and \$500 DEI scholarships are offered to students with financial need to participate in our travel seminars.
- Our Fall 2024 Lowell Lecture premiered "Simulating Religious Violence," which captured the work of computer scientists and religious scholars to seek to address conflicts rooted in religious violence.
- Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing as written in our 2030 Strategic Plan. BUSTH is the first certified Green School at BU and is active in the Green Seminary Initiative.

Candler School of Theology Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Office of Communications, Candler School of Theology

Since 1914, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has educated faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United Methodist Church, Candler holds true to the Wesleyan value of ecumenical openness, welcoming students from more than 40 denominations. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 416 from 13 countries, 41 states, 32 annual conferences, and 43% persons of color. We

see this diversity as a blessing, enriching our life together and providing the perfect context for training for relevant ministry in the 21st century – ministry that cultivates community across difference, welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies Christ’s love in and among us.

Candler offers six degrees (Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Religion and Leadership, Master of Religion and Public Life, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry), most of which are available in hybrid or online formats. Response to our hybrid-format Master of Divinity, blending online classes and in-person intensives, continues to be strong: 63% of 2024’s MDiv entering class chose the hybrid model. Nearly a quarter of MDiv students participate in Candler’s Teaching Parish program, earning contextual education credit by serving as student pastors in local churches. And our proven DMin program – with a near 90% completion rate – is 90% online. These flexible options along with Candler’s recognized academic excellence and hands-on learning opportunities are opening possibilities for more people to follow God’s call to ministry.

Generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2024-2025, we are on track to award nearly \$6.5 million in scholarship support across all degree programs. All MDiv students receive scholarship support, and those who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in The UMC receive full-tuition scholarships. Plus, a remarkable gift this year of \$20 million from the O. Wayne Rollins Foundation promises to have a transformative impact on the school and future students alike, fueling a considerable expansion of our scholarship program and reducing financial barriers to high-quality theological education.

Several programs beyond our formal degrees make Candler a hub of Christian learning for an expanding audience. Those who are not seeking a graduate degree can engage in learning through The Candler Foundry, which offers in-person and online short courses, events, and certificate programs; the United Methodist Course of Study for educating licensed local pastors; the Candler Center for Christian Leadership for refining business skills of United Methodist leaders; and La Mesa Academy, offering a graduate certificate in theological studies via a two-year hybrid program with courses in Spanish, English, and Korean.

Candler continued to strengthen the already robust United Methodist presence among our faculty with four key appointments this year: Geordan Hammond, associate professor of Methodist and Wesleyan studies; Soren Hessler, assistant professor in the practice of leadership and administration; Jennifer Quigley, assistant professor of New Testament; and Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, who joined us as bishop-in-residence following the retirement of Bishop Larry Goodpaster.

Jonathan Strom became dean of Candler in August 2024, when former dean Jan Love returned to the faculty. Strom has served on Candler’s faculty since 1997 as professor of church history, with nearly a decade as senior associate dean of faculty and academic affairs, and a number of years as director of international initiatives. He is committed to nurturing the school’s deep connection with The United Methodist Church.

Candler is strengthened by your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of the church. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu and follow us on social media to stay informed of all we offer throughout the year.

Drew University Theological School Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Rev. Edwin David Aponte, PhD, ThD (honorary), dean and professor of Religion & Culture

Drew University Theological School educates and mentors pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, thought leaders, and change agents for ministry and service in the church, society, and the wider world. Building upon its Wesleyan and Methodist foundations, Drew Theological School is diverse in theology, vocations, age, as well as racial, ethnic, national, and international identities of its faculty, students, and staff. Many Drew students are just beginning their ministry, while others come to graduate theological education with prior ministry experience. The latter reflects a growing trend among all theological schools in the United States and Canada. In providing theological education to the world, Drew holds in-person classes in Madison, New Jersey, classes that meet exclusively online, while others meet in hybrid fashion, i.e., partially online, partially in-person, as well as in-person Doctor of Ministry cohort in South Korea and a pilot in-person Master of Divinity cohort in Liberia. Regular chapel worship originates on campus in Seminary Hall, but also is livestreamed so that students, alumni, and friends around the world can participate. Drew Theological School is a global seminary with a global student population serving the worldwide church.

In Fall 2024 Drew Theological School welcomed 94 new students in all degree programs, with total student enrollment (by headcount) in Fall 2024 semester being 388. Enrollment of international students at Drew increased from 120 students in Fall 2021 to 157 students in Fall 2024. This number includes students who are studying full-time in the U.S.A. on a student visa, students who are studying online from their home country, and students in the South Korean Cohort of the Doctor of Ministry program.

Drew's interdisciplinary degree programs provide real-world apprenticeships, promote adaptive leadership skills, and encourage innovation through team-taught core courses as well as a variety of electives that integrate theological disciplines and faith practices. The Drew faculty's shared values are infused across all aspects of the teaching, learning, and the formation of students: 1) a commitment to anti-racism; 2) gender and sexual-identity equality; 3) eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and 4) interfaith understanding and cooperation. Drew Theological School has an increase in United Methodist students, additionally, Drew has many United Methodist Global Fellows pursuing further education for ministry. UMC graduates are serving in conferences across the United States, and especially within nearby regional episcopal areas of The United Methodist Church in the annual conferences of Greater New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Susquehanna, Upper New York, New York, and New England.

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Report to Annual Conference 2025

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary continues to live into its mission of "Forming courageous leaders in the way of Jesus to cultivate communities of justice, compassion, and hope ... for the thriving of the Church and the healing of the world." We do this work in partnership with the annual conferences of the United Methodist Church and other partners who share our values. Now in our 172nd year of ministry to the church, the academy, and the world, Garrett is a strong, growing, thriving community of faith and learning that represents the fullness of the global church's witness.

During this past academic year, Garrett welcomed its largest entering class in over a decade for a fifth straight year, with 135 new students, and a current enrollment of 324 students representing 38 states and 24 nations from across the globe. We continue to see growth in our student body from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, adding to an already richly diverse student body. While our denominational diversity

also continues to grow, we also proudly welcomed growth in our United Methodist students who constitute more than half of our student body. Our faculty also reflect this regional and global diversity, with fully half originating from nations outside the United States.

Our growth in recent years continues to reflect patterns seen across theological education, mainly in distance and online learners. For the first time in our history, distance learners in the entering class outnumbered residential students. This has allowed for truly global learning spaces that have enriched our conversations and our overall learning environment. We're blessed to have the world represented in our classrooms, which also impacts how our faculty teach, what they research, and for whom.

Over the last year Garrett has also been blessed by multiple major grants to fund faculty research and institutional priorities. A major grant is funding the work of our Center for Ecological Regeneration, allowing the seminary to partner with local congregations in the Midwest to equip them to respond to climate change in their communities and the disproportionate impact it tends to have on the poor and local economies. Another major grant is funding work in our Centro Raíces Latinas to strengthen Hispanic-Latiné pastoral leaders and congregations, helping clergy and communities build institutional capacity and expand their ministries. Yet another grant is helping to expand the reach and impact of our Garrett Collective, our lifelong learning and resource platform that seeks to make theological education accessible and affordable to a significantly broader audience.

Garrett's world-class faculty continues developing curricular innovations that are responsive to the church's growing needs, while also contributing a significant body of scholarly work to their respective fields. They also partner with annual conferences and local churches in delivering much needed programming for leadership development and faith formation, an expanding focus of our Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships division. Garrett is proud to be a United Methodist institution, and proud to continue to deepen its partnership and programming with annual conferences around the globe.

Seminario Teológico Evangélico Garrett

Informe a la Conferencia Anual
2024-2025

El Seminario Teológico Evangélico Garrett sigue cumpliendo su misión de formar líderes valientes que siguen el camino de Jesús para cultivar comunidades de justicia, compasión y esperanza... para el florecimiento de la Iglesia y la sanación del mundo. Hacemos este trabajo en asociación con las conferencias anuales de la Iglesia Metodista Unida y otros compañeros en misión que comparten nuestros valores. Ahora en nuestro 172.º año de ministerio para la iglesia, la academia y el mundo, Garrett es una comunidad de fe y aprendizaje fuerte, en crecimiento y próspera que representa la plenitud del testimonio de la iglesia global.

Durante el último año académico, Garrett dio la bienvenida a su clase entrante más grande en más de una década por quinto año consecutivo, con 135 nuevos estudiantes y una matrícula actual de 324 estudiantes que representan a 38 estados y 24 naciones de todo el mundo. Seguimos viendo un crecimiento en nuestro cuerpo estudiantil proveniente de Asia, África y América Latina, que se suma a un cuerpo estudiantil ya muy diverso. Si bien nuestra diversidad denominacional también sigue creciendo, también recibimos con orgullo el crecimiento de nuestros estudiantes metodistas unidos, que constituyen más de la mitad de nuestro cuerpo estudiantil. Nuestro cuerpo docente también refleja esta diversidad regional y global, ya que la mitad proviene de países fuera de los Estados Unidos.

Nuestro crecimiento en los últimos años sigue reflejando patrones observados en todas partes de la educación teológica, principalmente en los estudiantes a distancia y en línea. Por primera vez en nuestra historia, los estudiantes a distancia en la clase entrante superaron en número a los estudiantes residenciales. Esto ha permitido espacios de aprendizaje verdaderamente globales que han enriquecido nuestras conversaciones y nuestro entorno de aprendizaje. Tenemos la suerte de tener al mundo representado en nuestras aulas, lo que también impacta la forma en que nuestro cuerpo docente enseña, qué investiga y para quién.

Durante el último año, Garrett también ha sido bendecido con múltiples subvenciones importantes para financiar la investigación del cuerpo docente y nuestras prioridades institucionales. Una importante subvención está financiando el trabajo de nuestro Centro para la Regeneración Ecológica, lo que permite al seminario asociarse con congregaciones locales para equiparlas para responder al cambio climático y los impactos ecológicos que tiene en las comunidades y economías locales. Otra subvención importante está financiando el trabajo en nuestro Centro Raíces Latinas para fortalecer a los líderes pastorales y las congregaciones hispanas, ayudando al clero y a las comunidades a desarrollar capacidad institucional y expandir sus ministerios. Otra subvención está ayudando a expandir el alcance y el impacto de nuestro Garrett Collective, nuestra plataforma de aprendizaje y recursos para individuos y organizaciones que busca llevar la educación teológica a una audiencia significativamente más amplia.

La facultad de Garrett continúa desarrollando innovaciones curriculares que responden a las crecientes necesidades de la iglesia, al mismo tiempo que contribuye con investigaciones académicas en sus respectivos área de especialización. También están caminando con conferencias anuales e iglesias locales para ofrecer programación muy necesaria para el desarrollo del liderazgo y la formación en fe, un área de enfoque en crecimiento del seminario. Garrett se enorgullece de ser una institución Metodista Unida y de continuar profundizando su compañerismo y programación con conferencias anuales en todo el mundo.

Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO) Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Danny Russell, director, Communications, Methodist Theological School in Ohio

Field education students will benefit from Liturgy and Leadership cohort program

To equip the next generation of leaders with the ability to navigate complexity with resilience and adaptive leadership skills, MTSO has developed the Liturgy and Leadership Field Education Cohort Program. Funded with a grant from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry through the Ministerial Education Fund, the program is presented by United Methodist pastors Rachel Billups and Matt Rawle, built upon their deep-rooted dedication to creativity and innovation within the church. Over the course of three academic years, we are convening three cohorts of seven promising ministry candidates to immerse them in the methodologies that foster church growth and community impact.

Lisa Allen-McLaurin and Beth Stroud elected to faculty

We began the 2024 Fall semester with two newly elected faculty members. Assistant Professor of History Beth Stroud, an ordained United Methodist elder, comes to MTSO from Princeton University, where she served as a lecturer in the Princeton Writing Program. She also has taught at Union Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary and Sarah Lawrence College. Professor of Worship, Music and Spirituality Lisa Allen-McLaurin, an ordained elder in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, is the author of *Worship Matters! A Collection of Essays on the Practical and Spiritual Discipline of Worship*. Prior to her election to the faculty, Dr. Allen-McLaurin served under appointment at MTSO starting in July 2023. Previously, she chaired the Church Music and Worship Department at Interdenominational Theological Center.

Racial Resilience project launched

Beginning in April, MTSO brought together congregational clergy, lay leaders and youth for training around anti-racism and justice as part of a new project, Cultivating Racial Resilience, made possible by a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. While many anti-racism training programs ask participants to set aside the complex feelings about race and racism, this program treats those feelings as effective guideposts for sustainable anti-racist work. Three cohorts will participate in Cultivating Racial Resilience over the next two to three years.

Learn more at www.mtso.edu.

St. Paul School of Theology Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Jay K. Simmons, president, St. Paul School of Theology president



Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary serving a diverse community dedicated to forming leaders for innovative, creative ministry. Our integrated theological education, enriched by faith and social justice, combines real-world experience with academic rigor. Through our FLEX schedule offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning options, our Master's and Doctorate programs provide customized education guided by dedicated faculty, experienced pastors, and community leaders. Our graduates emerge equipped with the tools and first-hand experience to pursue diverse paths in ministry, service, and leadership locally and globally.

Saint Paul recently launched an innovative Doctor of Ministry program: Spirituality, Innovation, and Adaptive Leadership. This program focuses on developing contemplative spirituality practices that empower students to become change agents in church and society. Grounded in divine listening, students engage with innovative ministry practices while learning to manage and sustain them through adaptive principles, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competence. The program prepares leaders to forge renewed paths for faithful leadership in a challenging world. Discover more about the Saint Paul DMin at www.spst.edu/doctor-of-ministry/.

In July 2024, the Pause/Play Center for Preachers welcomed its first cohort of 12 preachers from five denominations nationwide. These leaders sought to revitalize their preaching through spiritual direction, coaching, retreats, and specialized resources. The Center's inaugural public gathering drew 50 pastors nationwide for a two-day event featuring keynote speaker and Saint Paul alumna Dr. Marcia McFee. The Center accepts applications for the next pastor cohort open in March, with registration for the July 30-August 2, 2025, Kansas City gathering beginning in January.

Saint Paul School of Theology earned the distinction of hosting the Smithsonian traveling exhibit "Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean to Be Human?" through a national competition by the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) and American Library Association (ALA). Scientists and experts from the NMNH Human Origins Program will visit our Kansas Campus in Leawood to lead community events, including clergy programs, educator workshops, and community conversations. The exhibit, running February through May 2025, features interactive panels, kiosks, hands-on displays, and videos that explore humanity's evolutionary journey. This free public exhibition encourages meaningful dialogue about human origins while embracing diverse perspectives from both scientific and theological viewpoints.

The 2024-2025 academic year brought significant leadership changes to Saint Paul. The Board of Trustees appointed Mrs. Dana Aldridge as Board chair and welcomed Tom Cochran as executive director

of Development and Alumni Relations. Cochran's extensive experience strengthens our donor relationships and alums network. We are actively reconnecting with alums across the Midwest and beyond through regional events, fostering collaboration and sharing recent achievements.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover more and answer the call. Your advocacy for the seminary and generous financial support have been vital in realizing our accomplishments. Many thanks for the innumerable ways you have helped Saint Paul. Your prayers and actions on behalf of the seminary are a blessing to all of us.

Learn more at www.spst.edu.

United Theological Seminary Report to Annual Conference 2025

Submitted by Dr. Kent Millard, president, United Theological Seminary

Since 1871, United Theological Seminary has prepared faithful and fruitful Christian leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ. United welcomes all who are following God's call on their lives, and many are answering God's call! In the 2023-2024 academic year, the seminary served 595 graduate students, making it the second largest of the 13 United Methodist seminaries in the United States, according to the Association of Theological Schools.ⁱ

A diverse community of many denominations, races and nationalities, United welcomed students from 35 states, 21 nations, and 48 denominations, with United Methodists representing the largest group at 30 percent of the student body.ⁱⁱ

Academics

In large part, enrollment growth is due to continued interest in United's Houses of Study programs, which offer master's and certificate tracks to equip students for the unique ministry needs of the communities, movements, and denominations in which they serve.

In summer 2024, United welcomed its inaugural cohort of Doctor of Theology students. The advanced research degree program is conducted primarily from a distance, requiring only four weeks of in-person intensives during the three-year program. During their program, students develop original research with a focus on church renewal.

United's Doctor of Ministry program continues to attract students looking for an advanced professional degree to expand their ministerial and leadership capabilities. In the 2023-2024 school year, 267 students participated in the mentor-led program.

Finances

United celebrated becoming debt free in May 2024, after making its last payment on a \$3.3 million debt to its endowment. In addition to eliminating the seminary's debt, United has been focused on reducing the educational debt of its students. The Fresh Wind campaign to raise \$10 million for the endowment will expand scholarship opportunities for students for generations to come. With the increase in scholarship gifts from the Fresh Wind campaign and the reduction of United's own debt, the seminary has significantly increased scholarship support for United students.

Innovation Center

The Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center celebrated the third anniversary since its launch as United's "research and development" hub for ministry practitioners and thought leaders seeking to create and

provide innovative resourcing for congregations. In 2024, the Innovation Center engaged over 2,200 participants through more than 30 live webinars, training events and courses.

In Romans 10:14, St. Paul writes: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? *And how shall they hear without a preacher?*" United's students and graduates are going out into the world to proclaim the Good News of God's unconditional love. Thanks be to God!



Thank you and congratulations to these churches which have
paid **100% of their Apportionments**

Central Valley

Alliance Christ
Atwater
Bigelow
Boardman First
Braceville
Brookfield
Bunker Hill
Burbank Trinity
Canfield UMC
Coalburg
Creston Canaan
Crystal Park
Deerfield
E Liverpool First
East Canton Mt Tabor
East Fairfield
East Greenville
East Palestine Emmanuel
East Rochester
Elkton
Gustavus Federated
Howland
Hubbard First
Loudonville
Malvern
Massillon Epworth
Massillon Trinity
Moreland
Mt Zion Columbiana
N Canton Faith
Negley
New Pittsburg
New Springfield Trinity
Newcomers Chapel of Pigeon
Run
Niles New Hope
North Lima Calvary
Oak Chapel
Ohltown
Otterbein
Palmyra
Perrysville

Rittman
Southington
Sterling
Union Avenue
Werner
Western Reserve
Wooster
Wooster Church Of The Cross

Northern Waters

Akron Park
Aldersgate
Bay
Berea
Brecksville
Bulah Calvary
Calvary Lakewood
Celebration UMC
Ch Of The Saviour
Chagrin Falls
Cherry Valley
Cleveland Christ
Colebrook
Cuya Falls First
Garfield Heights
Garfield Memorial
Garrettsville
Hope
Hope Ridge
Hudson
Independence
Jefferson
Kent
Lake Brady
Lake Shore
Lakewood
Leon
Light House
Madison Park
Mayfield
Mentor
Monroe

N Mentor Centenary
Nelson
New Leaf
Nottingham
Orwell
Painesville
Pearl Road
Peninsula
Perry
Pleasant Hills
Portage Faith
Rocky River
Shoregate
St Paul
Strongsville
Twin Falls
Westlake
Willoughby Hills
Windham
Windsor

South Forest

Adena
Amity
Antrim
Ava
Bannock
Barnesville Main
Batesville
Bell Chapel
Belle Valley
Belmont
Bethel
Bolivar
Bridgeport First
Brooks Run
Caldwell
Cambridge First
Cambridge Ninth St
Carrollton
Center
Christ



Thank you and congratulations to these churches which have
paid **100% of their Apportionments**

Claysville
Conesville
Coshocton Grace
Cumberland
Dellroy
Fairview
Flushing
Fresno
Gaysport
Gnadenhutten
Greenbrier
Hiramburg
Isleta
Jacobsburg
Keene
Londonderry
Lore City
Lowell
Maynard
Morristown
Mt Pleasant PGBMT
New Concord
New Guilford
New Matamoras
New Moscow
Orange
Otsego
Pleasant City
Powhatan Point
Quaker City

Rayland
Rural Dale
Scott Memorial
Sewellsville
Smith's Chapel
Unionport
Winterset
Woodsfield

West Plains

Amherst UMC
Ashland First
Bennetts Corner
Beulah
Brandon
Bucyrus
Chippewa Ch At Lake
Clarksfield
Clyde First
Columbia
Danville
Delaware Asbury
Ebenezer
Green Springs
Green Valley Chapel
Greenwich
Harmony Chapel
Henrietta
Hopewell

Huron
Kelleys Island Zion
Kilbourne
Lakeside
Laporte
Liberty Chapel
Lodi
Mansfield First
Melmore
Mount Pleasant (Medina)
Mt Gilead Trinity
New London
New Washington
North Fairfield
Red Haw
Republic Trinity
Rust
Sandusky Trinity
Savannah
Seville
Sharon Center
Shelby Trinity
Tiffin Faith
Tiffin St Paul
Vermilion Grace
Wadsworth
Wellington
West Salem
Williamsport

Annual Conference 2025 Evaluation

Please take a moment to complete the brief post-conference evaluation. The Annual Conference Hospitality Committee appreciates your feedback and takes it into consideration when planning the next conference.



You can access and complete the online Annual Conference evaluation by scanning this QR code with your smart phone camera.

If you prefer to print the survey and complete it by hand, please e-mail a request for the printable pdf to Melanie Thomas, Connectional Ministries office administrative assistant, at mthomas@eocumc.com

1. What is your East Ohio Conference relationship?
 - ☐ Clergy (active)
 - ☐ Clergy (retired)
 - ☐ Lay (representing a church)
 - ☐ Lay (at-large representing district or Conference)
 - ☐ Guest
2. Age
 - ☐ Youth in grades 6-12
 - ☐ 18-35
 - ☐ 36-50
 - ☐ 51-65
 - ☐ 66+
3. In which district do you live?
 - ☐ Central Valley
 - ☐ Northern Waters
 - ☐ South Forest
 - ☐ West Plains
 - ☐ I live outside of the East Ohio Conference
4. Select the option that best describes your travel to and from Annual Conference:
 - ☐ I stayed in a residence hall.
 - ☐ I stayed in a hotel.
 - ☐ I commuted.
 - ☐ Other
5. What part of Annual Conference was been the most helpful in equipping you and your church?

6. What was one highlight for you personally at Annual Conference 2025?

7. What suggestions do you have for designing next year's Annual Conference to better equip you and your church?

Please rate the online registration process for this year's Annual Conference.

8. Please rate your experience of the College of Wooster campus.

9. Please rate the food and service in the Lowry Student Center, if you ate meals there.

10. Please rate your experience of the residence halls, if you stayed there during Annual Conference.

11. Please rate your experience of the shuttle service, if you used it during Annual Conference.

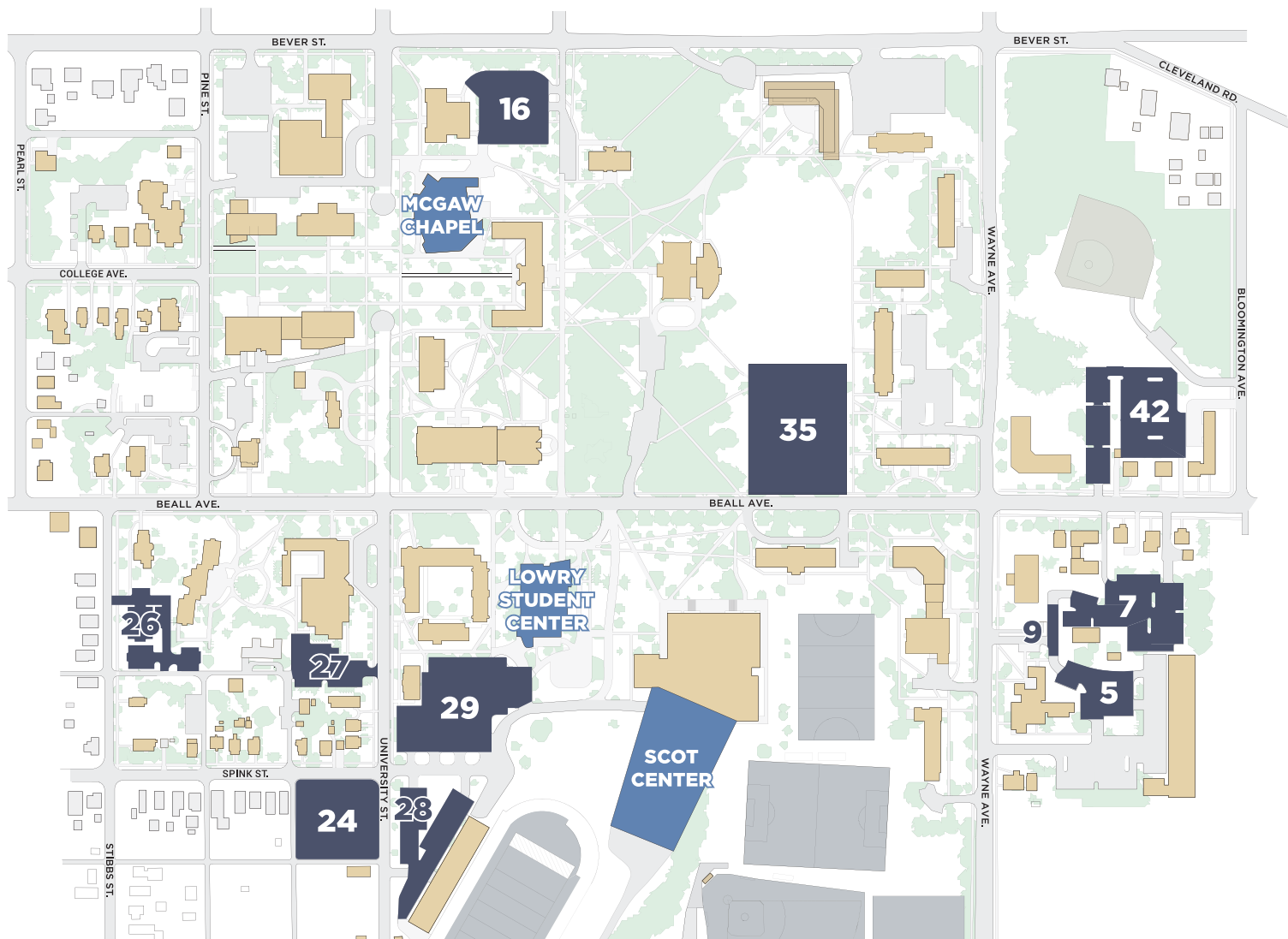
12. Please rate the Annual Conference worship services.

13. Please rate the Annual Conference business sessions.

Optional: Name and contact information _____

Please leave any additional comments for the Annual Conference design team here:

HOW TO UNDERSTAND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE						
EACH TIME YOU WANT TO DO THIS: ¹ ¹ Motions or resolutions made from the floor shall be reduced to writing on forms provided by the Conference secretary	FIRST GIVE YOUR NAME AND YOUR DISTRICT, AND THEN SAY THIS:	Interrupt Speaker?				
		Second Needed?				
		Motion debatable?				
Amendable?						
Vote?						
MAIN MOTIONS as tools to introduce new business						
Introduce business	“I move that...”	no	yes	yes	yes	majority
Take up matter previously tabled	“I move that we take from the table”	no	yes	no	no	majority
Reconsider matter previously voted	“I move we reconsider...”	no	yes	*	no	majority
SECONDARY MOTIONS in order of preference						
Adjourn	“I move to adjourn”	no	yes	no	no	majority
Recess	“I move we recess until...”	no	yes	no	no	majority
Suspend debate without calling for vote	“I move that we table”	no	yes	no	no	majority
End debate	“I move the previous question”	no	yes	no	no	2/3 majority
Limit debate	“I move debate be limited to...”	no	yes	no	no	2/3 majority
Postpone to specific time	“I move to postpone this matter until...”	no	yes	yes	yes	majority
Have matter studied further	“I move we refer this matter to...”	no	yes	yes	yes	majority
Amend a motion or substitute	“I move to amend by...” or “I move to substitute...”	no	yes	yes	yes	majority
Postpone indefinitely	“I move to postpone indefinitely...”	no	yes	yes	yes	majority
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS grow out of the business the Conference is considering						
Correct error in parliamentary procedure	“Point of order”	yes	no	no	no	Chair rules
Obtain advice on parliamentary procedure	“I raise a parliamentary inquiry”	yes	no	no	no	Chair rules
Request information	“Point of information”	yes	no	no	no	none
* yes, if the matter was debatable, no, if the matter was not debatable.						



Parking for Vehicles with State-Issued Handicap Placards

Lot #29

Parking for Check-In, Meal Tickets, & Business Venue

Lots #24, #28, and #35

Parking for Residence Hall Check-In

Lots #5, #7, #9, #26, #29, and #42

Parking for Worship Services

Lot #16

Parking for Production & EOC Staff Working at AC

Lot #27