



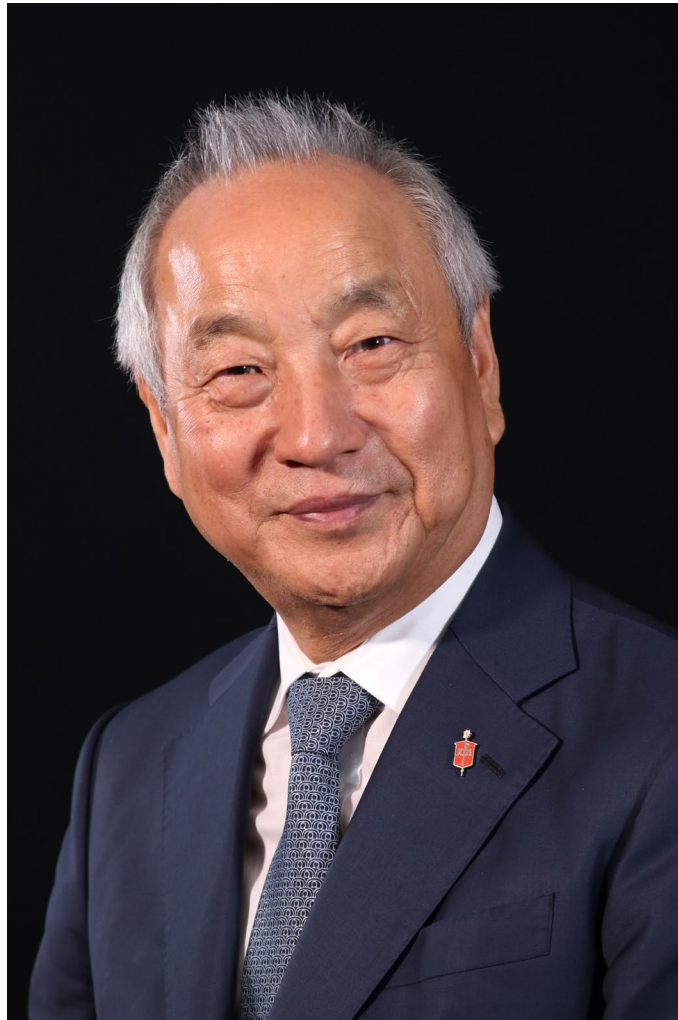
THE EAST OHIO CONFERENCE

OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



PRE-CONFERENCE WORKBOOK

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026 | JUNE 11-13



Hee-Soo Jung

Resident Bishop

Hee-Soo Jung, Presiding Bishop • Nathan Howe, Secretary

Brenda Vaccaro, Workbook Editor



**OHIO EAST AREA
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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

Beloved Friends in Christ,

As we prepare to gather, I want to extend a warm welcome to each of you. Our annual session is a special opportunity to come together in worship, fellowship, and shared purpose.

The theme for this year's session is "Celebrating Abundant Grace", inspired by Matthew 14:13-21 (NRSVA), the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. This scripture reminds us that, through God's abundant grace, we have all we need to accomplish the ministry set before us. We are blessed to be a blessing to others.

Our time together will include vital moments of worship and Bible study, providing a strong spiritual foundation for the work ahead.

We will honor those who have joined the Church Triumphant, express gratitude to those entering retirement, and celebrate those being licensed, commissioned, and ordained. Additionally, we will vote on important legislation and engage in meaningful discussions about the future of our church, including addressing the financial resources needed for our ministries to flourish.

In this *Pre-Conference Workbook*, you will find a copy of the 2026 Ohio Vision Statement, which includes the Five Strategic Pillars. I first shared this document at the Days in the Districts events earlier this spring. This resource provides guidelines for how the Ohio Episcopal Area will continue moving forward in collaboration, discipleship, multiplication, leadership, and global mission – building a unified, Spirit-led movement rooted in abundance, trust, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the pillars and commit to praying for all of Ohio.

I look forward to presiding over the conference and will hold you in my prayers until we gather at The College of Wooster.

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 11-13 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 *2026 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 font. 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 edition of the *2026 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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Resident Bishop 1

Purpose of Pre-Conference Workbook 2

Table of Contents 3

AGENDA 5

 Annual Conference Call to Order, June 11-13 5

 Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion, Thursday, June 11 5

 Service of Licensing, Commissioning, Ordination, and Retirement, Friday, June 12 7

ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION 8

 Speaker Bios 9

 Annual Conference Information 12

 Responsibility of the Lay Members of the Annual Conference 19

 Responsibility of the Clergy Members of the Annual Conference 20

ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE 21

AGENDA, RULES, AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS COMMITTEE 24

COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY 26

LEADERSHIP RECRUITMENT 27

BOARD OF MISSIONS 48

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OFFERING 50

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES 51

FRESH STARTS & NEW BEGINNINGS 51

OHIO EPISCOPAL AREA TASK TEAM 52

WHY ONE OHIO CONFERENCE 55

FAITH FORMATION AND LAY MINISTRIES 56

BOARD OF BENEFITS 58

COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION 76

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN 88

BOARD OF CAMPS & RETREAT MINISTRIES 89

2026 RESOLUTIONS

 Resolution 2026-01: “Support for Creation Care and the Green Church Movement”92

 Resolution 2026-02: “Creation of an Ohio Area Substance Abuse Task Force”93

 Resolution 2026-03: “Concerning Christian Nationalism”94

 Resolution 2026-04: “The East Ohio Conference and Disabilities”95

 Resolution 2026-05: “Answering the Call of Kairos Palestine II”96

 Resolution 2026-06: “Doing Justice: The Heart and Soul of Social Action”98

 Resolution 2026-07: “On Christian Opposition to Cruel Treatment of Immigrants by the United States Government”99

 Resolution 2026-08: “Of War, and Peace: Welcoming the Stranger in our Midst”100

 Resolution 2026-09: “Supporting Gender Inclusivity, Equal Protection, and the Sacred Worth of Transgender and Non-Binary People”101

COVENANT AGREEMENTS

 All In Community 103

 Heart 4 the City 105

 Nehemiah Missions 108

 Urban Mission 111

 West Side Community House 115

2026 INFORMATIONAL REPORTS 118

100% APPORTIONMENTS PAID LISTING 136

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026 EVALUATION FORM 137

HOW TO UNDERSTAND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE 139

Follow Annual Conference 2026 online:

- All business sessions and worship services of Annual Conference 2026 will be livestreamed on the Conference website at <https://www.eocumc.com/eoac26>.
- Articles and photo galleries will also be posted on the website.
- Join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter at #eoac26.

Annual Conference 2026 video archives:

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

57th SESSION
 EAST OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE
 THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER – WOOSTER, OHIO
 Thursday, June 11 through Saturday, June 13, 2026

“Celebrating Abundant Grace” Matthew 14:13-21 (NRSVA)

AGENDA

Wednesday, June 10

- 4:30 p.m. Missions Dinner in Kittredge Hall
- 7:00 p.m. **SERVICE CELEBRATING MINISTRIES & MISSIONS – Gault Recreation Center**

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026

9:00 a.m. **SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION AND HOLY COMMUNION – McGaw Chapel**

10:30 a.m. **BREAK**

11:15 a.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 1 – Gault**

- Prayer
- Welcome from Local Representative(s)
- Instructions/Opening Motions Nathan Howe
- Introduction to Monitoring – COSROW Lorrin Radzik
- Annual Conference Hospitality Committee Matt Williamson
- Agenda, Rules, and Administrative Process Committee Matthew Laferty
- Introduction to Resolutions Nathan Howe
- Introduction of Guest Bishop Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

12:15 p.m. **RECESS**

1:15 p.m. **BIBLE STUDY – Gault**

2:15 p.m. **BREAK**

2:30 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 2 – Gault**

- Prayer
- Episcopacy Committee Andy Call
- Leadership Committee Ivy Smith
- Budget Introduction – CCFA Steve Stultz Costello
- Board of Missions Mariellyn Grace
- North Central Jurisdiction UMVIM Tammy Kuntz
- Lay Ministry Celebration: ERT and UMVIM Julie Carter
- Conference Offering Matt Williamson
- 1/3 Immigration Ministries of Ohio

1/3 The Endowment for Theological Education in Africa,
Europe, and the Philippines
1/3 Bishop's Discretionary Fund

3:50 p.m. **BREAK**

4:05 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 2 (continued) – Gault**

Lay Ministry Celebration: CLM Academies
Discipleship Ministries
Fresh Starts and New Beginnings
Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team
Announcements

Julie Carter
Beth Ortiz
Brad Aycock
Kimberly Green
Matt Williamson

5:15 p.m. **RECESS**

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026

9:00 a.m. **MORNING WORSHIP – Gault**

10:00 a.m. **BREAK**

10:15 a.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 3 – Gault**

Prayer
Monitoring Report
State of the Conference
Cabinet Report
Resolutions
Announcements

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Angela Lewis

Matt Williamson

12:00 p.m. **RECESS**

1:00 p.m. **BIBLE STUDY – Gault**

2:00 p.m. **BREAK**

2:15 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 4 – Gault**

Prayer
Board of Ministry
Laity
Faith Formation and Lay Ministry
Lay Ministry Celebration: Deaconess and Home Missioner
Recognition of Deaconess Retirement

Jonathan Priebe
Kimberly Green
Julie Carter
Julie Carter
Rebecca Sutton

3:35 p.m. **BREAK**

3:50 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 4 (continued) – Gault**

Lay Ministry Celebration: Lay Servant Ministries
Board of Benefits

Julie Carter
Matt Merriman

Equitable Compensation	Abby Auman
Multicultural Ministries	Lisa Withrow
Resolutions	
Celebrating the 70 th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women	Lorrin Radzik
Announcements	Matt Williamson

5:15 p.m. **RECESS**

7:00 p.m. **SERVICE OF LICENSING, COMMISSIONING, ORDINATION, AND RETIREMENT – McGaw Chapel**

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026

9:00 a.m. **MORNING WORSHIP – Gault**

10:00 a.m. **BREAK**

10:15 a.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 5 – Gault**

Prayer	
Monitoring Report	
Commission on the Status and Role of Women	Lorrin Radzik
Board of Camping and Retreat Ministries Report	Allison LeBrun
Board of Camping and Retreat Ministries:	
Building the Model for Future Ministry	Ed Fashbaugh
Board of Trustees	Randy May
Resolutions	
Announcements	Matt Williamson

12:00 p.m. **RECESS**

1:00 p.m. **BIBLE STUDY – Gault**

2:00 p.m. **BREAK**

2:15 p.m. **BUSINESS SESSION 6 – Gault**

Prayer	
Lay Ministry Celebration: UWF and UMM	Julie Carter
Resolutions	
Budget Report – CCFA	Steve Stultz Costello
Fixing of Appointments	Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Final Monitoring Report	Lorrin Radzik
Concluding Business	Nathan Howe
Closing	Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

4:00 p.m. **BENEDICTION AND ADJOURNMENT**

ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION

Hee-Soo Jung, PhD
Resident Bishop, Presiding

District Superintendents & Conference Executive Staff

Dan Bryant (Interim) Central Valley District
Angela Lewis Northern Waters District
Laura White South Forest District
Kelly Brown 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 Hospitality Committee

Matthew Williamson Chairperson
Nathan Howe Conference Secretary
Kimberly Green Conference Lay Leader
Brenda Vaccaro Registration

Other Hospitality Committee Members: Wendy Bramley, Daniel Cole, Jennifer Darling-Mellott,
Edward Fashbaugh, Sallie Kilgore, 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, Bishop Jung served eight years as bishop of the Northern Illinois Conference and then 12 years as bishop of the Wisconsin Conference. Earlier in his ministry, he was a pastor and a district superintendent in the Wisconsin Conference. He also taught and chaired the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Kangnam University in South Korea, and held pastoral appointments in California, Texas, and South Korea.

Bishop 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.

Bishop 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 Ruby-Nell M. Estrella
Manila Episcopal Area

Bishop Ruby-Nell M. Estrella is the first female bishop of The United Methodist Church in the Philippines. Bishop of the Manila Episcopal Area, she was elected a bishop in November 2022.

Her journey in the ministry began when she volunteered as church secretary of Tangos United Methodist Church, the church where she was baptized and nurtured and finally heeded the call to the ordained ministry in 1987. During her ministry, she has pastored a small church in a remote village in Leyte, oversaw the multi-faceted ministry of the country's "Cathedral of Methodism", held several annual and central conference positions, and represented the Philippines Central Conference on the Connectional Table and the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of the Church.

Bishop Estrella was the first female district superintendent of the Philippines Annual Conference. She served on the Cabinets of four bishops over the span of more than 10 years. It was under her term that the first United Methodist Church in the Middle East was organized, The First United Methodist Church Dubai. She was also the first woman administrative pastor of the Central United Methodist Church in Manila. Prior

to being elected bishop, she was the first clergyperson to be elected as treasurer of the Philippines Central Conference.

Bishop Estrella graduated cum laude with a degree in Accounting from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and earned a Master of Divinity with high honors from the Union Theological Seminary in Cavite.



Bishop John L. Hopkins is a retired bishop of The United Methodist Church. Elected to the episcopacy in 1996, Bishop Hopkins served the Minnesota Conference for eight years and the East Ohio Conference for 12 before retiring in 2016. When the COVID pandemic postponed the election of new bishops in 2020, the Council of Bishops assigned him as interim bishop of the Chicago Area for two years.

From 2004-2012 Bishop Hopkins served as the first chairperson of the Connectional Table of The United Methodist Church, which provides a forum for the understanding and implementation of the vision, mission, and ministries of the worldwide denomination. During his tenure he helped lead The Call to Action-effort focused on increasing vital congregations around the world.

He currently serves on the board of Educational Opportunities, Inc., which provide clergy scholarships for study in the Holy Land. He previously served on the Council of Bishops Executive Committee, the United Methodist Publishing House Board, the General Board of Church and Society, the General Council on Ministries, and was instrumental in the formation of Operation Classroom in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Bishop Hopkins earned a B.A. with Honors in Psychology from Indiana University. He graduated from Yale Divinity School and was selected for the two-year Wheelock Residency at the Church of Christ at Dartmouth College where he practiced hospital, campus, and parish ministry.

Bishop Hopkins and his wife Elaine live in Indianapolis. They are the parents of three sons and grandparents of seven children.



Rev. Kil-Sang Yoon is a retired Elder in The United Methodist Church and a member of the East Ohio Conference. His first ministry assignment as a student at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas in 1967 was as part of summer internship for seminarians and college students sponsored jointly by the Board of Missions and Board of Evangelism. He was assigned to serve at Camp Aldersgate in Carrollton, which in those days was managed by the Steubenville District of the East Ohio Conference.

Rev. Yoon later served four years as pastor of Smithfield UMC, three years as associate pastor of Todd Avenue UMC in Warren, six years as pastor of Brookfield UMC, and four years as pastor of Canfield UMC. In 1987 he moved to Nashville, Tennessee and served 16 years in the Division of Ordained Ministry for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. He had the honor of giving the sermon during the Service of Retirement in Hoover Auditorium at Lakeside Chautauqua when he retired in 2003. In retirement he moved to California where he served as part-time director of the Center for Asian and Pacific Islanders Ministries and as a volunteer fund raiser in the Office of Finance at Claremont School of Theology. Rev. Yoon earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and a Master of Philosophy from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea.



Ray Buckley is the Center for First Nations Spirituality director and longtime faculty member of The Academy for Spiritual Formation. He has served The United Methodist Church as a United Methodist Publishing House staff member, director of the Native People Communication office, and director of Connectional Ministries and Native Discipleship for the Alaska Missionary Conference.

A teacher, preacher, lecturer, and author of multiple books and resources for all ages, Buckley is of Lakota/Tlingit/Scots descent and makes his home in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley of Alaska. His stories, poetry, and art have appeared worldwide in numerous journals, periodicals, and books. He has lived and taught in Nigeria and Ghana and is a traditional basket-maker and woodcarver.



YoungKwang "YK" Jun is music director for Annual Conference 2026. A member of the Greater New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church, Jun first served as a church pianist at the age of five. He believes music is a divine gift from God – capable of transcending barriers and speaking to the heart with power and grace. His ministry embraces global musical expressions, including Asian, Latin, and African genres, weaving them into the fabric of worship to enrich the spiritual life of the Church.

Jun's journey is deeply intertwined with that of his wife, Rev. Soah Na, an Ordained Elder in the Greater New Jersey Conference. Together, they form a dynamic ministry team, united in their passion for inspiring hearts and proclaiming God's love through the transformative power of music.

Jun has previously served many years as music director for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. He has also contributed musically to a wide range of denominational events and initiatives, including the CCLI Top 100+ Beyond Vetting Project led by Discipleship Ministries.

Annual Conference 2026**June 11-13****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 for walking between venues.
- Bring an umbrella to protect you if it rains.
- Bring a jacket because the meeting room can be cool.
- Bring a cushion, if you wish to use one on the pews of McGaw Chapel.

AC Registration

- Registration for Annual Conference opened April 1 and closes May 15.
- Registration is online only, at eastohio-reg.brtapp.com/2026EOCAnnualConferenceRegistration
- There will be no onsite registration at The College of Wooster.

Check-In

- Check-in for Annual Conference materials is in the Gault Recreation Center of the Scot Center building.
 - Wednesday, June 10 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 - Wednesday, June 10 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, June 11 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
 - Thursday, June 11 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
 - Friday, June 12 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 Annual Conference.
 - Wednesday, June 10 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, June 10 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, June 11 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
 - Thursday, June 11 5:00 p.m. – 7:30 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. It is 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 are located.

Parking for Residence Hall Check-In

- **Armington Hall (Lot #12)**, accessed off Wayne Avenue.
- **Babcock Hall (Lot #33)**, accessed off Beall Avenue.
- **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.

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.
 - 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 provide keys, room assignment, and other information for the stay.
- Check in starting on Wednesday afternoon to be able to attend the Mission Dinner, special worship service and connect with others before AC officially begins.

Residence Hall Rooms

- Each room has a bed frame and a twin XL mattress, a dresser, and a desk per person.
- Each room will be provided with a basic linens package which includes sheets, a pillow, a blanket, and towels. You may want to bring extra pillows or blankets depending your preferences.
- Items not provided in each room include lamps, hangers, floor mats, or mirrors.
- All room will be individual (unless specifically requested to share) but bathrooms are communal.
- Rooms are not ADA compliant, and there are no assistive devices available such as toilet seat riser, bed rails, etc.

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 15.
- Per the housing policy of The College of Wooster, those who choose to stay in a residence hall must purchase the AC meal plan (\$90);
 - The meal plan is all three meals on Thursday and 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 10; Thursday, June 11; and Friday, June 12
 - \$249 – which pays for the room, the 6% bed tax, and the eight-meal plan.
 - You must pay for this during online AC registration April 1 – May 15.
- Stay Thursday, June 11 and Friday, June 12
 - \$203.95 – which pays for the room, the 6% bed tax, and the eight-meal plan.
 - You must pay for this during online AC registration April 1 – May 15.

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 11 – breakfast, lunch, & dinner
 - Friday, June 12 – breakfast, lunch, & dinner
 - Saturday, June 13 – breakfast, & lunch
- The eight-meal plan must be purchased during online AC registration April 1 – May 15.
 - The meal plan and individual meals **cannot be purchased on campus**.

Additional Meal Options

- Wednesday, June 10 dinner in Kittredge Dining Hall
 - This is not included in the meal plan because Bishop Hee-Soo Jung will host a special meal with Bishop Ruby-Nell M. Estrella of the Manila Episcopal Area (Philippines) and Ray Buckley of the Alaska Conference as our guest speakers.
 - Tickets must be purchased during online AC registration April 1 – May 15.
 - Cost: \$35 for the buffet dinner.
- Off-campus dining
 - Individuals who do not purchase the meal plan during online AC registration April 1 – May 15 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.

Services

This year the Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion and the Service of Licensing, Commissioning, Ordination, and Retirement 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.

Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion – Thursday, June 11 @ 9:00 a.m.

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

Service of Licensing, Commissioning, Ordination, and Retirement – Friday, June 12 @ 7:00 p.m.

Preacher: Bishop John L. Hopkins, retired, The United Methodist Church

This year the Friday morning and Saturday morning worship services will be held in the Gault Recreation Center located inside the Scot Center, on the same stage used for business sessions.

Morning Worship Service – Friday, June 12 @ 9:00 a.m.

Preacher: Rev. Kil-Sang Yoon, retired, East Ohio Conference

Service Celebrating 70th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women – Saturday, June 13 @ 9:00 a.m.

Preacher: Bishop Ruby-Nell Estrella, Manila Episcopal Area, Philippines Regional Conference

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 11 Business Sessions:

- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – ARAP, Introduction to Monitoring, Introduction to Resolutions
- 2:30 - 3:50 p.m. – Introduction of the Budget, Board of Missions, AC Offering
- 4:05 – 5:15 p.m. – Discipleship Ministries, Fresh Starts and New Beginnings, Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team

Friday, June 12 Business Sessions:

- 10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – State of the Conference, Cabinet Report, Resolutions
- 2:15 – 3:35 p.m. – Board of Ministry, Laity Report
- 3:50 – 5:15 p.m. – Board of Benefits, Equitable Compensation, Resolutions

Saturday, June 13 Business Sessions:

- 10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Board of Camps & Retreat Ministries, Board of Trustees, Resolutions
- 2:15 - 4:00 p.m. – Resolutions, CCF&A Budget Report, Fixing of Appointments

Childcare Needs

A \$100 scholarship per child will again be available to assist families with childcare needs. Onsite childcare will not be provided during Annual Conference.

Parents of children from infancy through 10-years old may apply for this scholarship through the Connectional Ministries Office by emailing Melanie Thomas at mthomas@eocumc.com or by calling (330) 499-3972 extension 102.

A parents room will be available within the voting area of the plenary venue in the Gault Recreation Center. A playground space for children will also be available adjacent to the worship venue in McGaw Chapel.

Vacation Bible School

Annual Conference 2026 will again include Vacation Bible School for children. Westminster Presbyterian Church has graciously offered the use of its facilities once again, and volunteers from across the Conference will provide leadership and staff.

We give thanks for the many volunteers who have committed themselves to providing a Safe Sanctuary environment for our youngest participants.

Vacation Bible School will be offered for children from 5-years old through Grade 5 during the morning and afternoon sessions of Annual Conference as well as during Wednesday evening activities. The program will pause during morning worship, and the Thursday evening portion of Ministry Fair so that our VBS volunteers may participate. Parents will need to pick up their children during the lunch break each day.

We will have drinks and snacks, but lunch is not provided. Sign-up for VBS during online registration for Annual Conference April 1 – May 15 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 2026 Offering (Fund 9214) Will Support

- Immigration Ministries of Ohio
- The Endowment for Theological Education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines
- 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.

Immigration Ministries of Ohio

This ministry provides free or low-cost legal aid services, advocacy, and social support for migrants. It specifically assists those who have fled persecution in their home countries or who have survived human trafficking, domestic violence, child abuse, and other violent crimes. This ministry is supported by the Task Force on United Methodist Immigration Ministries of Ohio.

The Endowment for Theological Education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines

This ministry provides financial support for theological education in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. United Methodist clergy lead, teach, inspire, comfort, transform, heal, and serve. Their impact is immeasurable. Their responsibilities demand a dynamic, robust, theological education. Yet access to theological education varies greatly across our connection.

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 2026 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 2026 logo, and then select the red box labeled Learn More & Donate.
- Scan the QR code.



- Mail – make checks payable to East Ohio Conference UMC and write AC 2026 Offering or Fund 9214 on the memo line. Mail checks to:
EOC UMC
Attention: Eva Casey
8800 Cleveland Ave. NW
North Canton, OH 44720

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 11 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, June 12 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 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 (12-19 oz.)
- 1 deodorant (2-3 oz.)
- 1 lotion (8-10 oz.)
- 1 one-gallon resealable plastic bag
- \$2 donation for toothpaste and carrying 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

Most-Needed Items:

- Gently used: wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches, splints, braces, boots (no commodes)
- Reusable day and night feminine hygiene pads (pattern at <https://www.midwestmission.org/patterns>)
- New twin sheet sets and pillows

Anything listed in the Midwest Mission Kits and Projects Brochure will be accepted

https://www.midwestmission.org/files/ugd/7dcc67_1bf4eb6c574e4391b5cc96632234e67c.pdf. E-mail Melanie Thomas if you have any questions at mthomas@eocumc.com.

2026 Clergy Directory

During this year's Annual Conference, a photographer from Remember Church directories will be on hand in the Scot Center. All active and retired clergy are encouraged to take a few minutes to have their photo taken for the new directory.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF
THE LAY MEMBERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Lay members of the Annual Conference (AC), along with clergy members, interpret the work done by the AC session to the congregation. Each lay member has the responsibility to:

1. **participate** in all AC sessions and vote on all matters except those pertaining to ministerial relations;
2. **report** to the congregation and to the church council as soon as possible and not later than three months after the close of the conference; and
3. **serve** as a member of the charge conference, church council, finance committee, and staff/pastor-parish relations committee.

You and other lay members of the AC serve with an equal number of clergy members.

Prepare for Annual Conference

1. Study the pre-conference journal and materials submitted for action by the AC.
2. Attend any pre-conference training sessions or conversations.
3. Learn your AC process for conducting business.
4. Develop a general knowledge of *The Book of Discipline*.
5. Meet with the pastor, lay leader, and other members of your congregation to discuss issues that will be part of the AC business.

Participate during Annual Conference

1. Participate in all sessions dealing with AC business (including an AC laity session, when one is scheduled). During business sessions, you will be asked to vote on legislation, resolutions, reports, and budget.
2. Listen to proceedings to make informed decisions when voting. You do not have to vote the same as other members from your congregation or your pastor, and you may abstain if you do not feel qualified to vote on a particular issue.
3. Participate in all worship services. You will have opportunities to experience different worship styles, hear a variety of music groups and preachers, and join in new ways to worship God.
4. Attend plenary Bible study sessions, and open yourself to learn and grow.
5. Explore resource displays to gather information and ideas for ministry in your congregation. During fellowship events, at display tables, and in casual conversations, you will learn about The United Methodist Church in new ways.
6. Consider journaling as a spiritual discipline. Write your reflections about proceedings, discussions, worship experiences, special ceremonies, music, and other experiences as a way of listening to God and preparing for later sharing with your congregation. Keep an accurate record of votes taken that will have an impact on your congregation's finances, operations, and ministry.

Serve after Annual Conference

1. Share information with your congregation about your experience at AC. Remember that the report to the congregation and the church council is to be given as soon as possible and not later than three months after the close of the AC session. (Consult with your pastor regarding the most effective means of communicating your report to the congregation, e.g. during a Sunday morning worship service, written in a church newsletter, etc.)
2. Search the website, general church news sources, and your annual conference newsletters for information to share with your congregation throughout the year.
3. You may also choose to participate in annual conference and district committees or work areas throughout the year.

The Annual Conference website is a good source of information regarding the actions of Annual Conference. Consult it before, during, and after the Annual Conference session (www.eocumc.com/eoac26).

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CLERGY MEMBERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Clergy members of the Annual Conference (AC), along with lay members, interpret the work done by the AC session to the congregation. Each clergy member has the responsibility to:

1. **prepare** for AC by studying the pre-conference journal and materials submitted for action by the AC, attending any pre-conference training sessions or conversations; learning your AC process for conducting business; and meeting with lay member(s) of the AC from your congregation to discuss issues that will be part of the AC business;
2. **participate** in all worship services, Bible studies, and AC sessions and vote on all matters (as eligible), remembering that you do not have to vote the same as lay members from your congregation and you may abstain if you do not feel qualified to vote on a particular issue; and
3. **report** to the congregation and to the church council as soon as possible and not later than three months after the close of the conference; this report is an extension of the AC and should be done in consultation between the pastor and lay member(s).

You and other clergy members of the AC serve with an equal number of lay members.

The Annual Conference website is a good source of information regarding the actions of Annual Conference. Consult it before, during, and after the Annual Conference session (www.eocumc.com/eoac26).

Annual Conference Hospitality Committee Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Pastor Matt Williamson, chairperson

The Annual Conference Hospitality Committee warmly welcomes you to this year's conference at The College of Wooster. Our Committee assists in planning activities that take place outside the worship and business sessions of Annual Conference. Our primary mission is to ensure that your experience is welcoming, organized, and as seamless as possible.

Wednesday: Honoring Missions and Ministries Around the Conference

While Annual Conference officially begins on Thursday morning, members can check in to their residence hall and pick up their Annual Conference name badge and packet beginning at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday. This early arrival option will allow participants additional time to settle into their room and prepare for the conference.

This year's Mission Dinner recognizing domestic and international mission ministries will begin at 4:30 p.m. in Kittredge Hall. Tickets can be purchased during online AC registration for the dinner hosted by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung. At 7:00 p.m. the Service Celebrating Ministries and Missions will begin in the Gault Recreation Center of the Scot Center. The service will recognize the impact of ministries that received EOC grants in the past year to support and expand their work.

Thursday: Annual Conference, Ministry Fair and Suggested Meeting Night

Annual Conference begins at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday with the Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion. The tents outside the business venue will host the Ministry Fair all day Thursday, and the Midwest Mission truck will be parked in the nearby Lot #29 to receive donations.

Please note the used book exchange table will remain inside the lobby of the Scot Center, near the Help Desk.

Thursday evening is suggested as a time for meetings that are often scheduled during meal breaks. This option may allow for a more relaxed schedule throughout the conference. Groups that wish to request breakout rooms for their group meeting may do so by e-mailing the Connectional Ministries Office at connectionalministries@eocumc.com.

On Campus Residence Halls

Participants may choose to stay in campus residence halls during Annual Conference by selecting that option during online registration. Those who register to stay in a residence hall will automatically be included in the meal plan that begins on Thursday and will have towels and bed linens in their room. Residence hall accommodation can only be secured and paid for during online Annual Conference registration.

Participants staying in residence halls will receive an email from Conference staff indicating their assigned hall and information about where to park and how to pick up their residence hall keycard. Upon arrival, volunteers will be available to assist with move-in and to provide directions to the Gault Recreation Center in the Scot Center where you will check-in for Annual Conference and receive your name badge, voting device, and conference materials.

Meal Plan

An eight-meal plan is available for purchase during online registration. The plan includes all-you-can-eat breakfast, lunch and dinner on Thursday, June 11; breakfast, lunch and dinner on Friday, June 12; and breakfast and lunch on Saturday, June 13. The Lowry Student Center cafeteria offers multiple options for each meal that accommodate a variety of dietary and allergen needs.

If you would like to purchase the meal plan, you must do so during online AC registration April 1 through May 15. Individual meals cannot be purchased in the dining hall during the conference. Due to contractual requirements with the dining services provider, carry out meals are not available.

The dining hall will not be open on Wednesday, June 10.

Campus Volunteers and Courtesy Shuttles

Volunteers will be stationed in parking areas, along pedestrian pathways, and at entrances to The College of Wooster buildings to provide directions and answer questions. A campus map is included in this *Pre-Conference Workbook* and in the folder of materials you will receive at check-in.

Limited golf cart shuttle service will operate beginning 30 minutes before breakfast and will continue until one hour after the final scheduled event each day. This service will assist those who have mobility concerns.

Volunteering

The success of Annual Conference hospitality depends upon the generosity and dedication of volunteers. We are deeply grateful to those who offer their time, gifts, and energy to ensure that this gathering is welcoming and well organized.

Please take time to thank the volunteers you meet throughout the conference.

If you're called to volunteer, please indicate your interest online at <https://eastohio-reg.brtapp.com/ACVolunteer2026> or by scanning the below QR code.

**Annual Conference Offering**

This year's Annual Conference offering, Fund 9214, will be received during the afternoon business session on Thursday, June 11. The offering will be divided equally among these three ministries that reflect the mission and compassion of our Conference:

- Immigration Ministries of Ohio
- The Endowment for Theological Education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines
- The Bishop's Discretionary Fund

1 Contribute to the Annual Conference offering online at [https://secure.myvanco.com/L-](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEE2/campaign/C-13QCC)
2 [ZEE2/campaign/C-13QCC](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEE2/campaign/C-13QCC) or by scanning the below QR code. Local churches are encouraged to share
3 information about these ministries and to consider receiving special offerings in the weeks leading up to
4 Annual Conference.
5



6
7

8 **Childcare Needs**

9 A \$100 scholarship per child will again be available to assist families with childcare needs. Onsite
10 childcare will not be provided during Annual Conference. Parents of children from infancy through 10-
11 years-old may apply for this scholarship online at <https://eastohio-reg.brtapp.com/Childcare2026>.
12

13 A parent's room will be available within the voting area of the plenary venue in the Gault Recreation
14 Center of the Scot Center. A 'playground' space for children will also be available adjacent to the
15 worship venue in McGaw Chapel.
16

17 **Vacation Bible School**

18 Annual Conference 2026 will again include Vacation Bible School for children. Westminster Presbyterian
19 Church has graciously offered the use of its facilities once again, and volunteers from across the
20 Conference will provide leadership and staff. We give thanks to the many volunteers who have
21 committed themselves to providing a Safe Sanctuaries environment for our youngest participants.
22

23 Free Vacation Bible School will be offered for children from five-years old through Grade 5 during the
24 morning and afternoon sessions of Annual Conference as well as during Wednesday evening activities.
25 The program will pause during morning worship, and the Thursday evening Ministry Fair so that our VBS
26 volunteers may participate. Parents will need to pick up their children during the lunch break each day.
27 The VBS registration form will be on the Annual Conference website, www.eocumc.com/eoac26.
28

29 **Prayer Opportunities**

30 A prayer team that formed several years ago at Annual Conference will again serve this gathering. The
31 team is coordinated by the Deaconesses and Home Missioners of the Conference. Anyone who wishes
32 to join the prayer team is invited to email Wendy Bramley at eocprayerconcerns@gmail.com.
33

34 Prayer requests may be submitted at the Help Desk or sent by email to eocprayerconcerns@gmail.com.
35 These requests will be included in daily prayer times at the close of conference sessions. Participants are
36 also invited to use The College of Wooster Prayer Labyrinth and other spaces set aside for prayer and
37 meditation across the campus.
38

39 **Thank You**

40 I offer my heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Hospitality Committee whose faithful work makes
41 this ministry possible. We also express our appreciation to Rev. Ed Fashbaugh for his guidance and to
42 the staff of Connectional Ministries and the East Ohio Conference Area Center for their invaluable
43 support.

1 Agenda, Rules, and Administrative Process Committee Report to Annual Conference 2026

2 *Submitted by Rev. Matthew A. Laferty, chairperson*

3
4 The Agenda, Rules, and Administrative Process (ARAP) Committee is responsible for approving the
5 agenda of all sessions of the Annual Conference, overseeing the standing rules of the Annual Conference
6 and proposing amendments thereto, and verifying changes to administrative policy are in harmony with
7 existing conference policies and the *Discipline*. Additionally, ARAP supports the Office of the Conference
8 Secretary in the planning and implementation of the Annual Conference.
9

10 This year we welcomed the Rev. Nathan Howe as the new Conference secretary as he succeeded Rev.
11 Cindy Patterson. Rev. Howe works closely with the Journal Editor – Conference staff member Ms.
12 Brenda Vaccaro – in preparing the agenda and supplemental materials for the Annual Conference and
13 publishing approved reports, minutes, and actions of the Annual Conference. ARAP expresses its
14 gratitude to Rev. Howe and Ms. Vaccaro for their outstanding work.
15

16 Agenda

17 ARAP reviewed the schedule for the 2026 Coordinated Clergy Session of the East Ohio Conference and
18 the West Ohio Conference and approved the agenda of the East Ohio Clergy Executive Session on May 7,
19 2026, in Lakeside.
20

21 ARAP also reviewed and approved the agenda for the East Ohio Annual Conference from June 11-13,
22 2026, at The College of Wooster. The agenda seeks to balance worship, celebration, community-
23 building, and fellowship with conference business and required business actions. Post-conference
24 evaluations prove invaluable to adapting to the needs and desires of the Annual Conference and its
25 schedule.
26

27 ARAP supports the new initiative of Conversations on Legislation and Resolutions. The Conference
28 secretary is launching these conversations as pre-conference online discussions during the month of
29 May. For several years there have been various requests to provide time for further reflection and input
30 into matters coming before Annual Conference and the Conversations seek to create this space.
31

32 Rules

33 ARAP received a proposal to amend the Conference Rules to prohibit motions to refer on Conference
34 resolutions. Following a review of the standing rules of the Conference and Robert's Rules of Order, the
35 Committee did not support the proposal. However, ARAP would like to encourage the Conference to
36 understand the distinction between a *motion to refer* (or sometimes called a *motion to commit*) and a
37 *motion to postpone indefinitely*. A *motion to refer* "is generally used to send a pending question to a
38 relatively small group of selected persons – a committee – so that the question may be carefully
39 investigated and put into better condition for the assembly to consider" (Robert's Rules of Order §13.1).
40

41 If an item before the Annual Conference needs further research or study or is presented in a form that is
42 confusing, unclear, or inappropriate for the Annual Conference, then the member of the Annual
43 Conference may move for it to be referred to a Conference committee or other body for further work.
44 However, the presiding officer is obligated "to rule out of order, as dilatory, any motion to *Commit* that
45 is obviously absurd or unreasonable – such as one that (because of the time involved or any other
46 reason) would have the effect of defeating the purpose of the main question" (Robert's Rules of Order
47 §13.9).
48

1 Members may not use a *motion to refer* to prevent the Annual Conference from acting on a main
2 motion, including resolutions. Conversely, a *motion to postpone indefinitely* is a motion that “the
3 assembly declines to take a position on the main question” (Robert’s Rules of Order §11.1). If a member
4 of the Annual Conference believes that the Annual Conference should not act on a main motion, for
5 example a resolution, then they can move for the matter to be postponed indefinitely. A successful
6 *motion to postpone indefinitely* means that the matter is suppressed for the duration of the Annual
7 Conference and may not be brought back to the floor during the current session of the Annual
8 Conference.

9
10 ARAP also received a request from deaconesses and home missionaries in the East Ohio Conference and
11 the West Ohio Conference to amend the Conference Rules to include retired deaconesses and home
12 missionaries in the Conference lay equalization formula (cf. Conference Rule ¶13b). Deaconesses and home
13 missionaries are “professionally trained laypersons who have been led by the Holy Spirit to devote their
14 lives to Christlike service under the authority of the Church. They are approved through a process
15 established by United Methodist Women, consecrated and commissioned by a bishop at settings
16 approved by the board of directors of United Methodist Women” (¶1913.2 of *The Book of Discipline of*
17 *The United Methodist Church*). The Constitution already includes active deaconesses and home
18 missionaries in the Conference lay equalization formula (cf. ¶133 of the Constitution, ¶13b.3-4 of the
19 Conference Rules) but not retired deaconesses and home missionaries. ARAP postponed action on the
20 request until autumn 2026 to enable ARAP to better study the nature and implications of the proposal,
21 accountability structures, and recordkeeping management of deaconesses and home missionaries.

22
23 ARAP held conversation on rules related to motions to recommend a Conference merger in preparation
24 for the Ohio Episcopal Area Task Force’s report and recommendations to the 2027 Annual Conference.
25 ARAP at its March 2 meeting formed a consensus that 1) unity was important for a Conference merger,
26 2) a simple majority (50%+1) threshold for recommendations for conference merger is too low, 3) there
27 should be an attempt to create parity in voting thresholds in both conferences, 4) there should be
28 consultation with the West Ohio Conference Rules Committee and the Ohio Episcopal Area Task Force,
29 and 5) the Annual Conference should not be afraid to have a higher voting threshold because good work
30 and preparation will cultivate the conditions for an affirmative vote. Consultations are still ongoing at
31 the time of the submission of this report.

32 33 **Administrative Process**

34 ARAP reviewed a request by the Conference Board of Benefits to amend the Conference policy for
35 qualification for retirees’ health benefits to include years of services in the West Ohio Conference for
36 five years prior to retirement and found it in harmony with existing administrative policy.

37 38 **Looking Ahead to 2027**

39 In addition to its regular business, the 2027 Annual Conference will also hold elections for General
40 Conference and Jurisdictional Conference, hold a straw vote on recommendations for Episcopal
41 nominees, act on any proposed petitions to General Conference, and receive recommendations of the
42 Ohio Episcopal Area Task Force.

1 Committee on Episcopacy Report to Annual Conference 2026

2 *Submitted by Rev. Andy Call, chairperson*

3
4 Greetings on behalf of the Committee on Episcopacy. Our task is to:

- 5 • support and pray for the bishop in overseeing the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church,
- 6 • be available to the bishop for consultation and feedback,
- 7 • help interpret the role of our episcopal leader for our Conference, and,
- 8 • consult with our bishop and prepare episcopal reports for the North Central Jurisdictional
- 9 Committee on Episcopacy.

10
11 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung is in his second year as residential bishop in the Ohio Episcopal Area. This episcopal
12 area, comprised of the East and West Ohio Annual Conferences, was created in 2024 by the North
13 Central Jurisdictional Conference. When Bishop Jung was assigned to serve the shared episcopal area,
14 he was tasked with leading both annual conferences through a period of discernment and planning in
15 anticipation of becoming one conference in the near future.

16
17 One of the early tasks Bishop Jung assumed was the creation of a joint task group to envision how East
18 and West Ohio might come together as one. Nineteen working subgroups have been meeting to make
19 recommendations of how we could function should the Conferences vote to merge. Even if a new
20 conference is not created, the information gathered from the working subgroups allows for greater
21 collaboration and efficiency across annual conferences. This has already led to reduction in costs and
22 creative sharing of resources.

23
24 Last August, Ohio hosted the celebration of 140 years of Korean Methodism. The celebration honored
25 the legacy of missionaries, educators, and medical professionals from Cleveland through worship,
26 theological reflection, and historical lectures. The relationship between the Korean Methodist Church
27 and United Methodists from Ohio continues to grow through an ongoing joint mission relationship.

28
29 Bishop Jung continues to be a highly relational bishop. By early spring, he had touched the altars of
30 more than 250 churches throughout Ohio. Regular “Days in the Districts” provide opportunities for
31 shared worship and listening. Emphasizing development of laity and a renewed discipleship focus led to
32 a Convocation on Laity Leadership, a School for Ministry event, and Multiply Ohio, a commitment to
33 form 100 new faith communities by 2030.

34
35 It would be easy for Bishop Jung to retreat to Columbus and lead both Conferences from the geographic
36 center of the state, but he has worked hard to maintain a schedule that places him in each annual
37 conference equally and strategically spending time in districts across both Conferences regularly. This
38 means that he is constantly on the move, but also highly accessible.

39
40 The East Ohio Committee on the Episcopacy invites you to join us in praying for Bishop and Rev. Jung
41 and their family, for the bishop’s leadership in both East and West Ohio, and for the clear discernment
42 of the Holy Spirit as we live into God’s hope for us.

Leadership Recruitment Committee Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Ivy Smith, chairperson

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).

Please note, Conference rules authorize the Leadership Recruitment 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 strength of our Conference, and we are grateful to see the response of laity and clergy as they are called upon for Conference committee service. Some leadership groups are based on structures described in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

View the free online version of the new *Book of Discipline* at:

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

New to the report under Section A, group 8, is the complete purpose and tasks of the newly formed Joint Distributing Committee. Bishop Jung has appointed three East Ohio UMC members and three alternates to the Joint Distributing Committee. Its work, which includes power and authority during the merging of an annual conference, is defined in ¶639 and ¶1507 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

Please e-mail Connectional Ministries Office Administrative Assistant Melanie Thomas at mthomas@eocumc.com, if you or someone you know is interested in serving in a Conference leadership position. The recommendation should include the person's name, contact information, church, experience, education, skills, and availability.

Likewise, please email any 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, to Melanie Thomas at mthomas@eocumc.com by July 1. Otherwise, the current report will be printed in *The Journal*.

An overwhelming appreciation goes to Bishop Hee-Soo Jung for his guidance over our task of nominations throughout the year. Also, the work of the faithful committee members, the Executive Director of Connectional Ministries Rev. Ed Fashbaugh, and Melanie Thomas who maintained organization 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 chairpersons named by the bishop, are for July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028 (unless otherwise noted).

1 **2) AGENDA RULES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS (ARAP) COMMITTEE**

2 **PURPOSE:** to plan and order the business of the Annual Conference.

3 **STRUCTURE:** 11 members: one clergy and two laypersons named by the bishop; ex-officio with vote:
 4 executive assistant to the bishop, bishop, Conference secretary, *Journal* editor, chair of the Annual
 5 Conference Hospitality Committee, executive director of Connectional Ministries, executive director of
 6 Communications, and Cabinet Representative named by the bishop.

7
 8 Chair: Matthew Laferty (2028)
 9 Conference Secretary: Nathan Howe (2028)
 10 Administrative Support: Melissa McGee
 11 Named by the Bishop:

12	+Jonathan Williams	Clergy
13	Linda Crowell	Lay
14	Craig Eppler	Lay
15	TBN	Cabinet

16
 17 Ex-Officio with Vote:

18	Bishop Hee-Soo Jung	
19	Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop
20	Brenda Vaccaro	Editor, <i>Conference Journal</i>
21	Matt Williamson	Chair, Annual Conference Hospitality Committee
22	Ed Fashbaugh	Executive Director, Connectional Ministries
23	Rick Wolcott	Executive Director, Communications

24
 25 **3) ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOSPITALITY TEAM**

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

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

31
 32 Chair: Matt Williamson (2028)
 33 Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh
 34 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

35
 36 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

37	Jennifer Darling-Mellott	Clergy, Class of 2027
38	Daniel Cole	Lay, Class of 2027
39	Amy Vittorio	Clergy, Class of 2028
40	Sally Kilgore	Lay, Class of 2028
41	Jeremy Roseberry	Clergy, Class of 2029
42	TBN	Lay, Class of 2029
43	TBN	Clergy, Class of 2030
44	TBN	Lay, Class of 2030

45
 46 Ex-Officio with Vote:

47	Nathan Howe	Conference Secretary
48	Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader

1 Brenda Vaccaro Editor, *Conference Journal* and AC Registrar
 2 Joy Snyder District Administrators Liaison

3

4) ANNUAL CONFERENCE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

5 **PURPOSE:** provide design, leadership and support for worship services and music for Annual Conference
 6 sessions and services.

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

10

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

12 Executive Director, Communications: Rick Wolcott

13

14 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Jonah Mitchell	Lay, Class of 2027	+Ruthie Wheeler	Lay, Class of 2029
Jennifer Darling-Mellott	Clergy, Class of 2027	TBN	Clergy, Class of 2029
Sarah Dixon	Lay, Class of 2028	TBN	Lay, Class of 2030
Hyeran Yu	Clergy, Class of 2028	TBN	Clergy, Class of 2030

15

16 Named by the Board of Ministry:

17 Marelize Bruner

18 Andrew Scott

19

5) COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

21 **PURPOSE:** see ¶1641 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

22 **STRUCTURE:** 16 members: chair named by the bishop and elected by the Annual Conference; one
 23 representative nominated by each district; two at-large nominated by Leadership Committee
 24 (quadrennial term). Conference historian named by the bishop. Ex-officio with vote: bishop or executive
 25 assistant to the bishop; and archivist (nominated by Ohio Wesleyan University).

26

27 Chair: Donald L. Trigg

28 Executive Assistant to the Bishop: Ed Peterson

29

30 Nominated by Districts (yearly):

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

31

32 Ex-Officio with Vote:

33 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

34 TBN Archivist

35

36 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

37 Kerry King

38 Mary Ann Stotts

39

40 Named by the Bishop:

41 Donald L. Trigg Conference Historian (No Max Term)

1 **6) COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY (COE)**

2 **PURPOSE:** see ¶636 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

3 **STRUCTURE:** 12 members: two persons named by the bishop; seven at-large members nominated by
 4 the Leadership Recruitment Committee and elected by the Annual Conference; ex-officio with vote:
 5 Conference lay leader and two persons from the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. The chair is
 6 elected by the Committee.

7
 8 Chair: +Andrew Call (2028)

9 Vice-Chair: TBN

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

11 Administrative Support: Melissa McGee

12
 13 Named by the Bishop:

14 Doug Arbaugh Lay, Secretary
 15 +Allison LeBrun Clergy

16
 17 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Martha Banks	Lay	Dan Eggan	Clergy
Mark Behnke	Lay	Cheryl Emrich	Lay
+Megan Buehler	Clergy	Bohyun Yu	Clergy
Sarah Dixon	Lay		

18
 19 Ex-Officio with Vote:

20 Kimberly Green Conference Lay Leader
 21 TBN North Central Jurisdiction COE Representative, Lay
 22 TBN North Central Jurisdiction COE Representative, Clergy

23
 24 **Episcopal Residence Committee**

25 **PURPOSE:** see ¶637 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

26 **STRUCTURE:** three members: chairs of Conference Council on Finance & Administration, Board of
 27 Trustees, Conference Episcopacy Committee. All terms based on that of the office they represent.

28
 29 Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

30
 31 Ex-Officio with Vote:

32 Steven Stultz Costello Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration
 33 Randall May President, Board of Trustees
 34 +Andrew Call Chair, Episcopacy Committee

35
 36 **7) PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

37 **PURPOSE:** see ¶613.13 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

38 **STRUCTURE:** chair named by the bishop; bishop; vice-chair elected from the Committee membership;
 39 secretary elected from the Committee membership; seven persons representing Conference
 40 Connectional Table, Board of Communications, CCF&A, and Trustees; four members at-large with
 41 personnel management and/or administrative experience nominated by the Leadership Recruitment

1 Committee; ex-officio with voice: executive director of Connectional Ministries, executive director of
 2 Financial & Administrative Services, executive director of Communications; ex-officio with vote: bishop
 3 or executive assistant to the bishop.

4

5 Chair: Stefanie Bradford (2028)

6 Administrative Support: Melissa McGee

7

8 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

+Linda Bradley

+Molly Lofton

Marilyn Coney

+David Rittgers

9

10 Named by Other Agencies:

11 Kimberly Green

Connectional Table

12 TBN

Connectional Table

13 Steve Stultz Costello

Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration

14 +Matthew Merriman

Chair, Board of Benefits

15 Randall May

President, Board of Trustees

16 TBN

Chair, Board of Communications

17

18 Ex-Officio with Vote:

19 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

(Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)

20

21 Ex-Officio with Voice:

22 Vera Milanovic

Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services

23 Rick Wolcott

Executive Director, Communications

24 Ed Fashbaugh

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries

25

26 **8) Joint Distributing Committee (New in 2026)**

27 **PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE:** whenever two or more annual conferences or provisional annual
 28 conferences are to be merged, in whole or in part, or an annual conference or provisional annual
 29 conference is to be divided, there shall be elected by each conference affected three members and
 30 three alternates, who, with members and alternates from the other conferences, together shall form a
 31 joint distributing committee, in accordance with the terms of ¶1507 in *The Book of Discipline of The*
 32 *United Methodist Church 2020/2024*. See below.

33

34 **¶1507 Joint Distributing Committees**

35 *Authorizations*—whenever two or more annual or provisional annual conferences are to be merged, in
 36 whole or in part, there shall be elected by each conference affected a distributing committee of three
 37 members and three alternates, which shall act jointly with similar committees from the other
 38 conference or conferences. The joint distributing committee thus formed shall have power and
 39 authority: to allocate the pension responsibility involved; to distribute equitably the permanent funds
 40 and all other pension assets of the conference or conferences affected, taking into consideration the
 41 pension responsibility involved, such distribution to be made within twelve months of the date of the
 42 dissolution of the committee as provided in ¶1507.3d; to the extent not otherwise previously provided
 43 for by the conference or conferences involved, to apportion or distribute equitably any other assets or
 44 property and any other liabilities or obligations. It shall be governed by the legal restrictions or
 45 limitations of any contract, trust agreement, pledge, deed, will, or other legal instrument.

1 *Organization*—the committee shall be convened by the general secretary of Wespath, or by some other
 2 officer of that board designated by the general secretary in writing, and shall elect from its membership
 3 a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a secretary.
 4

5 *Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities—*a) The committee shall determine the number of years of service
 6 approved for pension credit rendered in the conferences that will lose their identity in the merging of
 7 conference territories, and the findings of the committee shall be final unless substantial evidence to the
 8 contrary is presented, and the annuity payments by the continuing conference or conferences shall be
 9 made accordingly. The determination of pension benefits in The United Methodist Church shall
 10 recognize all pension rights to which clergy are entitled under the pension plans in existence at the time
 11 of Church union; and shall recognize all approved service that has been rendered in The Evangelical
 12 United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church prior to the date of Church union. The committee
 13 shall keep complete minutes of its transactions, and a copy thereof shall be filed with the secretary of
 14 each annual conference involved and with Wespath. b) Until the committee’s work shall have been
 15 completed, the corporate organization of each conference in the process of merger shall be maintained.
 16 After the committee shall have completed its work, the officers of such corporation, subject to the
 17 completion of its business, shall dissolve or merge it, in accordance with applicable corporate laws, after
 18 being authorized to do so by the conference involved. c) The committee, having completed its work in
 19 connection with the merger or mergers for which it was organized and having filed copies of its findings
 20 and actions with the secretaries of the conferences involved for publication in the respective conference
 21 journals, and with Wespath, shall be dissolved; subject, however, to recall by the general secretary of
 22 Wespath in the event of the discovery and presentation to the Wespath board of data substantially at
 23 variance with those previously submitted, for the purpose of reviewing such data and possible revision
 24 of its previous actions. Whenever a single annual conference or provisional annual conference is to be
 25 divided into two or more conferences, the provisions of ¶1507 shall be applied, provided the
 26 distributing committee members of each resulting conference shall be named subsequent to the
 27 effective date of the division and no later than the first regular annual session of such conferences.
 28

29 East Ohio UMC Members, named by Bishop

30 +Steve Stultz Costello

31 +Randall May

32 +Matthew Merriman
 33

34 East Ohio UMC Alternates, named by Bishop

35 +Mollie Brown

36 +Dan Bryant

37 +Bill Liming
 38

39 **B) CLERGY LEADERSHIP**

40 **1) BOARD OF MINISTRY (BOM)**

41 **PURPOSE:** see ¶1634 in *The Book of Discipline of The UMC 2020/2024*.

42 **STRUCTURE:** up to 50 members named by the resident bishop, elected by Annual Conference in the year
 43 following General Conference. Vacancies are filled by the bishop after consultation with the chair of the
 44 Board. Detailed guidance for representational membership is provided in ¶1634. The Cabinet
 45 representative serves yearly. The chair, registrars, executive committee, and other leadership are
 46 elected from membership by the Board.
 47

48 Chair: Jonathan Priebe (2028)

1 Vice-Chair: Nathan Howe
 2 Executive Director, Office of Ministry: +Donnetta Peaks
 3 Administrative Support: Beatrice Barnett

4

5 Executive Committee:

6	Joseph Baker	Secretary
7	Hannah Weisbrod	Registrar for Full Membership, Ordination
8	Nathan Howe	Registrar for Conference Relations
9	Lisa Kropinak	Registrar for Provisional, Associate Member, Commissioning
10	Marelize Bruner	Chair of Candidacy and Background Check Coordinator
11	Kimberly Arbaugh	Order of Elders
12	+Carrie Antczak	Order of Deacons
13	Jeri Johnson	Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors (FAMLP)
14	Will Fenton-Jones	Chair of Board of Development
15	Andrew Scott	Chair of Finance
16	Tammy Wilden	Psychological Assessments
17	Robin Dillon	Dean of Licensing School
18	Tim Morrison	Extension Ministries Coordinator

19

20 Members:

	Carrie Antczak	Deacon W	Tal Lewis	Elder M
	Armando Arellano	Elder M	+Susan Mitchell	Lay WP W
	Carolyn Berry	Elder W	Craig Moock	Elder M
	Joseph Burkhardt	Elder M	Beth Ortiz	Elder W
	+Bob Catchpole	Lay CV M	Michael Parisher	Deacon M
	David Chrisman	Lay SF M	+Valerie Riedthaler	Lay NW W
	Will Fenton-Jones	Lay NW M	Darlene Robinson	Elder W
	Kathy Dickriede	Deacon W	Edna Stahl	Elder W
	Cheryl Emrich	Lay CV W	Dianne Tobey Covault	Elder W
	+Carol Evans	Lay SF W	Ashwin Welch	Elder M
	Jake Heskett	Elder M	Hoyt Wilhelm	Elder M
	Tina Johnson	Lay NW W	David Whitt	Elder M
	Allison LeBrun	Elder W	Karen Wolcott	Elder W

21

22 Ex-Officio with Vote:

23 Laura White Cabinet

24

25 **2) COMMISSION ON CLERGY WELL-BEING**

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

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

35

1 Chair: David Whitt (2028)
 2 Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh
 3 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

4
 5 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
 6 Kimberly Arbaugh Order of Elders
 7 +Carrie Antczak Order of Deacons
 8 Jeri Johnson Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors

9
 10 Named by the Bishop:
 11 +Bill Liming Cabinet
 12 TBN Board of Ministry Liaison

13
 14 Resource Consultants:
 15 *The Commission may name or remove resource consultants as needed.*

16
 17 **C) FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

18 **1) COUNCIL ON FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

19 **PURPOSE:** see ¶611 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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

25
 26 Chair: Steve Stultz Costello (2028)
 27 Vice-Chair: Sue Rogers
 28 Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

29
 30 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

31

Bill Young	Lay M	John C. Wilson	Lay M
Vicky Kelley	Clergy W	Andrew Scott	Clergy M
Marcia Miller	Lay W	Connor Prusha	Lay M
Steve M. Smith	Clergy M	Steve Stultz Costello	Clergy M
Tina Siroki	Clergy W	Sue Rogers	Lay W
Amy Szabo	Lay W		

32
 33 Nominated by Other Agencies:

34 Matt Merriman Pensions

35
 36 Ex-Officio with Vote:

37 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung (Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)
 38 Kimberly Green Board of Laity
 39 Vera Milanovic General Council of Finance and Administration member

40
 41 Ex-Officio with Voice:

42 Kelly Brown Cabinet
 43 Ed Fashbaugh Executive Director, Connectional Ministries

1 **2) BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

2 **PURPOSE:** see ¶1640 & ¶2512.1-8 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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

8

9 President: Randall May (2028)

10 Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

11 Administrative Support: Lori Charton

12

13 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

14	Christopher Liberati	Clergy M, Class of 2027
15	Brian Bly	Lay M, Class of 2027
16	+Claire Bank	Lay W, Class of 2027
17	Ivy Smith	Clergy W, Class of 2028
18	Gloria Brown	Lay W, Class of 2028
19	Bill Harding	Lay M, Class of 2028
20	+Christy Suffecool	Clergy W, Class of 2029
21	Janet Nevels	Lay W, Class of 2029
22	+Johua Strickland	Lay M, Class of 2029
23	Michael Farmer	Clergy M, Class of 2030
24	Belva Denmark Tibbs	Lay W, Class of 2030
25	Brian Knotts	Lay M, Class of 2030

26

27 Ex-Officio with Vote:

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

29

30 Ex-Officio with Voice:

31	Rex Miller	Chancellor
32	Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader
33	Cara Stultz Costello	Cabinet

34

35 **3) BOARD OF BENEFITS**

36 **PURPOSE:** see ¶1638 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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

43

44 Chair: Matt Merriman (2028)

45 Vice-Chair: David Palmer (2028)

46 Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Service: Vera Milanovic

47 Manager, Benefits: Robin Whitacre

48

- 1 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
 2 Paul R. Turner Clergy M, Class of 2026
 3 Erin Griffith Lay W, Class of 2026
 4 Mollie Brown Clergy W, Class of 2027
 5 Carol Rinehart Lay W, Class of 2027
 6 David Palmer Clergy M, Class of 2028
 7 Matthew Merriman Clergy M, Class of 2028
 8 Jennifer Dyer Lay W, Class of 2028
 9 Barbara Yoost Lay W, Class of 2029, Secretary
 10 Bob Hoy Lay M, Class of 2031
 11 Lisa Huston Lay W, Class of 2032
 12 Sandra Vaughn Lay W, Class of 2032
 13 +Eric Lewis Lay M, Class of 2033
 14 +Paul R. Turner Clergy M, Class of 2034
 15 +Erin Griffith Lay W, Class of 2034

- 16
 17 Nominated by Other Agencies:
 18 Linda Crowell Commission on Religion and Race

- 19
 20 Ex-Officio with Vote:
 21 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung (Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop as alternate)
 22 Kimberly Green Board of Laity

- 23
 24 Ex-Officio with Voice:
 25 +Ed Peterson Cabinet

26
 27 **4) COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION**

28 **PURPOSE:** see ¶1624 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

29 **STRUCTURE:** eight members: chair named by the bishop; six at-large members in classes with an equal
 30 balance of lay and clergy with at least one clergy and lay person each from churches of fewer than 200
 31 members nominated by the Leadership Recruitment Committee; one district superintendent with vote;
 32 ex-officio with voice: executive director of Financial & Administrative Services; ex-officio with vote:
 33 bishop, executive assistant to the bishop.

- 34
 35 Chair: +Abby Auman
 36 Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services: Vera Milanovic

- 37
 38 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
 39 Jacqueline Whatley Lay W, Class of 2027
 40 Allan Georgia Clergy M, Class of 2027
 41 William Watts Lay M, Class of 2028
 42 Kelly Collins Clergy W, Class of 2028
 43 +Janet Nevels Lay W Class of 2029
 44 TBN Clergy, Class of 2029

- 45
 46 Ex-Officio with Vote:
 47 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung (Ed Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, as alternate)
 48 Kelly Brown Cabinet

D) COMMUNICATIONS**1) BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS**

PURPOSE: see ¶1646 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop, elected by the Annual Conference; one representative nominated by each district; four representatives nominated by the Leadership Recruitment 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	SF
TBN	NW	TBN	WP

Ex-Officio with Vote:

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

E) Discipleship Ministries (formerly Strategic Ministries)**1) Board of Congregational Development**

PURPOSE: serves as the equivalent structure permitted by ¶1632.5 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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

Chair: Steven Petrolewicz (2028)

Executive Director, Discipleship Ministries: Beth Ortiz

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Preston Watkins	Class of 2027
Kimmy Farone	Class of 2027
Charlene Thomas	Class of 2027
Donna Van Trees	Class of 2028
+Sam Mohn	Class of 2028
+Darla Schnegg	Class of 2028
+Barbara Lane	Class of 2029
+JP Snyder	Class of 2029
+Diana Hall	Class of 2029

1 +Jack Steele Class of 2030
 2 TBN Class of 2030
 3 TBN Class of 2030

4
 5 Ex-Officio with Vote:
 6 +Beth Ortiz Cabinet

8
 9 **F) CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES**

10 **1) CONNECTIONAL TABLE**

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

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

31
 32 Chair: Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
 33 Vice-Chair: Kimberly Green
 34 Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh
 35 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

36
 37 Nominated by Districts (yearly):
 +Laurie Peach CV +Ed Duling SF
 +Pamela McVay NW TBN WP

38
 39 Commission, Board, or Committee Chairs (or designee of the chair)
 40 David Whitt Commission on Clergy Well-Being
 41 Lorrin Radzik Commission on Status and Role of Women (COSROW)
 42 +Steven Petrolewicz Board of Congregational Development
 43 +Jennifer Dyer Board of Missions
 44 +Allison LeBrun Board of Camps & Retreat Ministries
 45 +Tammy Palermo Spiritual Formation & Christian Education Committee
 46 Tim Morrison Board of Higher Education

1	Lisa Withrow	Board of Multicultural Ministries
2	+Martha Banks	Commission on Religion and Race (CORR)
3	Marc Tibbs	Ethnic Local Church Concerns
4	Michael Farmer	Board of Church & Society
5	Steve Knisely	Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR)
6	TBN	Board of Communications
7		
8	Named by Other Agencies:	
9	Mary McClintock	Chair, Emerging Leaders
10	Suzie Waldenmaier	Vice-chair, Emerging Leaders
11	TBN	President, United Methodist Men (inactive)
12	TBN	Representative, United Methodist Men (inactive)
13	Becky Sutton	President, United Women in Faith
14	TBN	Representative, United Women in Faith
15		
16	Named by the Bishop:	
17	Angela Lewis	Cabinet
18	+Bill Liming	Cabinet
19	Kelly Brown	East Ohio Representative to NCJ Mission Council
20	TBN	Funding Evaluation Team (inactive)
21	TBN	Stewardship Team (inactive)
22	TBN	Ministry with Older Adults (inactive)
23		
24	Ex-Officio with Vote:	
25	Kimberly Green	Conference Lay Leader
26	Nathan Howe	Conference Secretary
27	Ed Peterson	Executive Assistant to the Bishop
28		
29	Ex-Officio with Voice:	
30	Beth Ortiz	Executive Director, Discipleship Ministries
31	+Ben Wilde	Director, Camps Operations and Programs
32	+Hannah Weisbrod	Director, Camp Administration, Development & Marketing
33	+Ann Marie Carley	Director, Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults
34	Tim Beck	Associate Director, Engagement with Youth
35	Will Fenton-Jones	Director, Multicultural Ministries
36	+Mariellyn Grace	Director, Mission Engagement
37	+Julie Carter	Director, Faith Formation
38	Rick Wolcott	Executive Director, Communications
39	Vera Milanovic	Executive Director, Financial & Administrative Services
40	Steve Stultz Costello	Chair, Conference Council on Finance & Administration

41

42 (a) Connectional Table Executive Committee

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

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

4
 5 Ex-Officio with Vote:

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

11
 12 (b) Connectional Table Representative to North Central Jurisdiction Mission Council

13 **PURPOSE:** provide for the development of missions and ministries within the North Central Jurisdiction.

14 **STRUCTURE:** a Conference representative named by the bishop and elected by the Annual Conference.

15 Kelly Brown

16

17 **2) COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN (COSROW)**

18 **PURPOSE:** see ¶1644 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

19 **STRUCTURE:** 15 members: chair named by the bishop, three members nominated by the Leadership
 20 Recruitment Committee, all these proceeding elected by Annual Conference; one representative from
 21 United Women in Faith; one representative from each district; one representative nominated by Clergy
 22 Women’s Association.

23

24 Chair: Lorrin Radzik (2028)
 25 Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh
 26 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

27

28 Nominated by Leadership Committee:

29	Tennille Power	Hyeran Yu	Becky Weamer
----	----------------	-----------	--------------

30

31 Nominated by Districts (yearly):

	TBN	CV	Devani Roe	SF
	Ja’Alycia Richmond	NW	Paige Boyer	WP

32

32 Nominated by Other Agencies:

33	Linda Crowell	United Women in Faith
34	TBN	Clergy Women’s Association
35	Dianne Tobey Covault	Board of Ministry

36

37 Named by the Bishop:

38	Laura White	Cabinet
----	-------------	---------

39

40 Ex-Officio with Vote:

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

42

G) LAY LEADERSHIP**1) BOARD OF LAITY**

PURPOSE: see ¶1630 and ¶1101-1122 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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, Emerging Leaders, and two representatives each from United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith, Emerging Leaders, one district superintendent; the executive director of Connectional Ministries; the resident bishop.

Chair: Kimberly Green, Conference Lay Leader (2028)

Conference Associate Lay Leader: +Eddie Courtney (2028)

Executive Director, Connectional Ministries: Ed Fashbaugh

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

District Lay Leaders (yearly):

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

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Mary Holloway	TBN	Youth
Sandra Beard	TBN	Youth
Valerie Riedthaler		

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
Mary McClintock	President, Emerging Leaders
TBN	Representative, Emerging Leaders
TBN	Representative, Emerging Leaders
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung	
Laura White	Cabinet

2) LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

PURPOSE: see ¶1630.6 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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)

- 1 Associate Director, Lay Servant Ministries: TBN
- 2 Director, Faith Formation: +Julie Carter
- 3 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas
- 4
- 5 District Directors (named yearly by districts):
- 6 Eddie Courtney, Steve Gilson, and Cyd Scarnecchia CV
- 7 Debbie Sloan and +Dalene Kelly NW
- 8 Susan Ward and +Betty Parry SF
- 9 Diane Harding WP
- 10
- 11 Nominated by Lay Servant Ministries Committee:
- 12 Nancymae Scheurer TBN
- 13 Peggy Sutherin TBN
- 14 Nominated by Other Agencies:
- 15 Mary McClintock Emerging Leaders
- 16 TBN Emerging Leaders
- 17 Named by the Bishop:
- 18 Kimberly Green Conference Lay Leader
- 19 +Deb Gilson Coordinator, Certified Lay Ministries
- 20
- 21

H) MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

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 ¶1631, ¶1643, ¶1654, and ¶1655 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

STRUCTURE: chair and one Cabinet representative named by bishop; board members nominated by the Leadership Recruitment 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

- 38 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
- 39 +Martha Banks Commission on Religion and Race
- 40 Michael Farmer Church & Society
- 41 Marc Tibbs Ethnic Local Church Concerns
- 42 Corinne Dunn and +Dan Hawk Native American Awareness Committee
- 43 Steve Knisely Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships
- 44

Racial/Ethnic Caucuses Relating to Multicultural Ministries:
 Tina Johnson Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)

1	TBN	Native American International Caucus (NAIC)	
2	TBN	National Federation of Asian American United Methodists (NFAAUM)	
3	TBN	Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans	
4			
5	Anti-Racism Task Force		
	Tennille Power	Paul Turner	Marc Tibbs
	Matt Anderson	David Whitt	
6			
7	LGBTQIA Task Force		
8	Dianne Tobey Covault	Chair	
9	Paige Boyer	Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) Representative	
10	TBN	Reconciling Ministries Representative	
11	Tim Morrison	Board of Ministry Representative	
12	William Watts	Methodist Federation for Social Action Representative	
13			
14	Reconciling Congregations Representatives		
	TBN		TBN
	TBN		TBN
15			
16	Named by the Bishop:		
17	+Angela Lewis	Cabinet	
18			
19			

1) YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES

1) EMERGING LEADERS (FORMERLY CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON YOUTH MINISTRIES)

PURPOSE: see ¶1649 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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 Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults. District representation is nominated by Emerging Leaders.

Chair: Mary McClintock (2026)

Director, Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults: +Ann Marie Carley

Executive Committee:

Suzie Waldenmaier	Vice-Chair	TBN Adult
Crystal Harvey	Secretary	TBN CV
TBN Treasurer		TBN NW
Savannah Bowman	Chaplain	TBN SF
TBN Production Coordinator		TBN WP
TBN Adult		

2) BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND COLLEGIATE CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES (BHECCM)

PURPOSE: see ¶1633 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop; eight committee members, nominated by the Leadership Committee, all elected by the Annual Conference; director of Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults ex-officio with voice, not vote.

1 Chair: Tim Morrison (2028)
 2 Director, Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults: +Ann Marie Carley

3
 4 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
 Jane Fleischer John Partridge Katie Osier
 Micah Holland TBN
 Thom Kalb Liz Piatt TBN

5
 6 **J) SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

7 **1) SPIRITUAL FORMATION & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

8 **PURPOSE:** see ¶629.2 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.
 9 **STRUCTURE:** 12 members: chair named by the bishop, 11 committee members nominated by the
 10 Leadership Committee, all elected by Annual Conference. Director of Faith Formation is ex-officio with
 11 voice.

12
 13 Chair: Tammy Palermo (2028)
 14 Director, Faith Formation: +Julie Carter

15
 16 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
 +Megan Buehler Pamela Monteith TBN
 +Bill Eckert Ellie Peiffer TBN
 +Sandy Foster +Jonathan Williams TBN
 Kira Holchin Lisa Withrow

17
 18 **2) BOARD OF CAMPS & RETREAT MINISTRIES**

19 **PURPOSE:** see ¶610 and ¶629 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.
 20 **STRUCTURE:** 15 persons: chair named by the bishop, 12 Board members are nominated by the
 21 Leadership Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. One Conference Trustee representative
 22 and one Cabinet representative shall be nominated by their respective bodies. Ex-officio member with
 23 voice will include the directors of Faith Formation and Formation and Camps & Retreat Ministries.

24
 25 Chair: +Allison LeBrun (2028)
 26 Director, Camps Operations and Programs: +Ben Wilde
 27 Director, Camp Administration, Development & Marketing: +Hannah Weisbrod
 28 Director, Faith Formation: +Julie Carter
 29 Administrative Support: Diane Hessedence

30
 31 Nominated by Leadership Committee:
 David Collier +William Graham +Harlan Rife
 +Wanda Dunn Marsha Haas +Jeremy Roseberry
 Ginny Faeth Tal Lewis Sarah Ring
 +Chuck Farone Amy Ochier TBN

32
 33 Nominated by Other Agencies:
 34 +Janet Nevels Representative, Conference Trustees

35
 36 Named by the Bishop:
 37 +Bill Liming Cabinet

K) MISSIONS ENGAGEMENT

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

1) BOARD OF MISSIONS

PURPOSE: see ¶1632 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

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; any members of the General Board of Missions (GBGM); all team leaders created by the Board of Missions to accomplish its purpose.

Chair: +Jennifer Dyer (2028)

Director, Mission Engagement: +Mariellyn Grace

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Ex-Officio with Vote:

+Michelle Lucarelli	Chair, Health & Well-Being
Tom King	Chair, Disaster Response
+Beth Saling	Education & Interpretation, United Women in Faith
TBN	Member, General Board of Missions
Karen Kilgo	Representative, UM Association & Team Leader, DisAbility Awareness

District Mission & Strategy Representatives (named yearly by districts):

+Sam Mohn	CV	+Melanie Glazer	SF
+Kim Lenahan	NW	TBN WP	

Named by the Bishop:

Kate Colbow	Conference Secretary of Global Ministries (CSGM)
+Ed Fashbaugh	Cabinet Representative

1) Health & Well-Being Committee

PURPOSE: see ¶1632 in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

STRUCTURE: chair named by the bishop; DisAbility Awareness team leader named by the bishop; five members nominated by the Leadership Recruitment 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: +Michelle Lucarelli (2028)

Director, Mission Engagement: +Mariellyn Grace

Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

Nominated by Leadership Committee:

Dan Loomis	Kathy Westlake	TBN
Rasul Welch	TBN	

Nominated by Other Agencies:

+Jamie Nathan	All In Community
Don Ackerman	Canton For All People
Angie Marvin	Copeland Oaks
Sherri Buehl	Flat Rock Homes
Brett Bartels	Heart 4 the City

1	+Graham Ball	Nehemiah Mission
2	Michael Howard	OhioGuidestone
3	Kimberly Arbaugh	Urban Mission
4	Kristen Jones	Wesleyan Senior Living
5	Rachelle Milner	West Side Community House

6
 7 Named by the Bishop:
 8 Karen Kilgo Team Leader, DisAbility Awareness

9
 10 **2) United Methodist Volunteers in Missions (UMVIM)**

11 **PURPOSE:** to equip mission teams and coordinate Volunteer in Mission ministries

12 **STRUCTURE:** a team leader and members nominated by the Board of Missions.

13
 14 Director, Mission Engagement: +Mariellyn Grace
 15 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

16
 17 **3) Disaster Response Committee**

18 **PURPOSE:** see ¶632.4(22) in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*.

19 **STRUCTURE:** members named by the bishop: chair, Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
 20 (VOAD) representative, Emotional & Spiritual Care team leader; Conference Disaster Response
 21 coordinator; district coordinator(s) of Disaster Response nominated by the district superintendent;
 22 Director of Mission Engagement; ex-officio with vote: Director of Mission Engagement, Cabinet
 23 representative, and UMCOR-certified Early Response Team trainers.

24
 25 Chair: Tom King (2028)
 26 Director, Mission Engagement: +Mariellyn Grace
 27 Conference Disaster Response Coordinator: Steven Court
 28 Administrative Support: Melanie Thomas

29
 30 District Coordinators of Disaster Response (named yearly)

31	Bob Catchpole and Michael Woodward	CV
32	Vern & Lynn Kempf and Michael Williams	NW
33	TBN	SF
34	Ted Buehl	WP

35
 36 Named by the Bishop:
 37 William Sutherin Representative to Ohio Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster
 38 TBN Team Leader, Emotional & Spiritual Care
 39 +Ed Fashbaugh Cabinet

40
 41 UMCOR-Certified Early Response Team (ERT) Trainers:
 Bob Catchpole Tom King
 Steven Court Mike William

42

1 Board of Missions Report to Annual Conference 2026

2 *Submitted by Mariellyn Grace, director, Mission Engagement*

3
4 In 2025, the Board of Missions awarded \$11,400 through Mission Micro Grants, which were designed to
5 help churches or missions experiment with new ministry to build relationships and allow people to
6 experience faith, furthering the United Methodist mission of making disciples. Mission Micro Grants are
7 made possible by generous giving to Undesignated Mission Giving, Fund 9001. Grants of up to \$2,000
8 each were provided to the following ministries:

- 9 • Caring for Haitian Orphans with AIDS (CHOAIDS)
- 10 • Church of the Savior UMC – Community Harmony through Engagement and Food
- 11 • Cory UMC – Community Flower Garden
- 12 • Vermilion Grace UMC – Community Garden
- 13 • South Street Ministries – Re-entry Services
- 14 • Willoughby UMC – Community Composting & Pollinator Garden

15
16 The Board of Missions is excited to see and support the good work happening outside the walls of these
17 churches and ministries, connecting with people in local communities.

18
19 Additionally, six of East Ohio's 10 Health & Well-Being Agencies were awarded grants totaling \$180,000
20 in 2025, including:

- 21 • All In Community
- 22 • Flat Rock Homes
- 23 • Heart 4 the City
- 24 • Nehemiah Mission
- 25 • Urban Mission
- 26 • West Side Community House

27
28 The year 2025 was also a time of transition for the Board of Missions as Rev. Kathy Dickriede stepped
29 down as director of Mission & Community Engagement, and Mariellyn Grace, already working in a
30 similar role in the West Ohio Conference, became the director of Mission Engagement for the entire
31 Ohio Episcopal Area.

32 United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM)

33 United Methodist Volunteers in Mission continues to support mission teams across the Conference as
34 they travel near and far. In 2025, 26 UMVIM teams with 244 volunteers traveled as far as Liberia and
35 Guatemala and as near as Lodi, Jefferson, and Cleveland.

36
37
38 In 2025, the Ohio Episcopal Area held its first joint Climate Justice Mission Journey to work on disaster
39 response near Asheville, North Carolina following Hurricane Helene. Eleven volunteers from the East
40 Ohio Conference participated in the journey, joining 40 more from West Ohio in working on debris
41 removal, basement muck-outs, installing insulation, drywall, and more.

42
43 Every time someone steps outside the doors of their church to serve, they are a Volunteer in Mission!
44 We want to be sure to include your church's mission in our year-end reports, so please visit the East
45 Ohio UMVIM page, www.eocumc.com/missions/umvim.html, and click on the reporting link at the
46 bottom of the page. Also, please send photos and a brief description of your journey to
47 mgrace@wocumc.org.

1 Several times each year, the East Ohio Conference offers UMVIM Team Leader training, giving guidance
2 to team leaders in trip planning, spiritual formation, budgeting, cultural awareness, and more. This
3 training is also helpful for those wanting to lead ERT or long-term disaster response teams. If your
4 church would like to host an UMVIM Team Leader Training, email mthomas@eocumc.com.

5
6 UMVIM project sites across Ohio would love to host you and your church for a day of service – or
7 longer!

- 8 • East Ohio:
 - 9 ○ Covered Bridge Mission, Jefferson
 - 10 ○ North Street Mission, Wooster
 - 11 ○ The Nehemiah Mission, Cleveland
 - 12 ○ Urban Mission, Steubenville
- 13 • West Ohio:
 - 14 ○ Good Works, Athens
 - 15 ○ Jackson Area Ministries, Jackson
 - 16 ○ Urban Farm Church, Columbus

17 18 **Global Ministries**

19 In 2025, the East Ohio Conference hosted Missionary Willie Berman of Manos Juntas, a ministry of the
20 Oriental Conference of the Methodist Church of Mexico. He spent time with Canton 4 All People, Church
21 of the Savior in Cleveland Heights, Henrietta UMC, Mentor UMC, and Wellington First UMC building
22 relationships and raising funds through the Advance. Missionaries in The United Methodist Church are
23 responsible for raising their own support through their Advance fund, as well as funding for their
24 ministry.

25
26 In 2025, the General Board of Global Ministries awarded Feeding Our Neighbor grants to Mentor UMC,
27 Painesville UMC, Seville UMC, Sunbury UMC, and The Vine Food Pantry in response to the government
28 shutdown and the delay in SNAP benefits that put an increased demand on food assistance programs
29 across the country. In addition, Crossroads UMC received a Mustard Seed Migration Grant to assist with
30 immigration ministries.

31 32 **Creation Care**

33 East Ohio is now an equal partner in the Ohio Episcopal Area's Green Church Movement, which seeks to
34 equip, empower, and encourage Ohio congregations to care for God's creation by making their
35 properties and programs more environmentally friendly. As Jesus followers and United Methodists, we
36 are charged with caring for God's good Creation, a task inextricably linked to the greatest
37 commandments: Love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.

38
39 Green Church Training was held in Ashland in August of 2025, and altogether 16 East Ohio churches
40 have participated in the training. Green Church training includes Biblical, Wesleyan, and United
41 Methodist teachings on creation care, tips for forming a Green Team at your church, and plenty of ideas
42 and suggestions for creative ways to green your church. Keep an eye out for additional training sessions
43 to be held online and in-person.

44

1 Churches can join the Green Church Movement by signing and submitting the Green Church Pledge and
 2 by using the Sustainability Audit to determine ways to improve the church's stewardship of God's
 3 Creation. Starting in 2026, the Board of Missions will provide funding for Green Church Mini Grants of
 4 up to \$750. Find more information on the Green Church Movement at www.eocumc.com/creationcare.
 5 Learn more about Mission Engagement at <https://www.eocumc.com/missions/index.html>.

8 **2026 Annual Conference Offering**

10 The 2026 Annual Conference Offering (Fund 9214) will support these three ministries:

12 **Immigration Ministries of Ohio**

13 This ministry provides free or low-cost legal aid services, advocacy, and social support for migrants. It
 14 specifically assists those who have fled persecution in their home countries or who have survived human
 15 trafficking, domestic violence, child abuse, and other violent crimes. This ministry is supported by the
 16 Task Force on United Methodist Immigration Ministries of Ohio.

18 **The Endowment for Theological Education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines**

19 This ministry provides financial support for theological education in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.
 20 United Methodist clergy lead, teach, inspire, comfort, transform, heal, and serve. Their impact is
 21 immeasurable. Their responsibilities demand a dynamic, robust, theological education. Yet access to
 22 theological education varies greatly across our connection.

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

28 **How to Give**

29 Your generous donation to the 2026 Annual Conference offering will make an immediate and lasting
 30 impact. You can support the offering in-person, online, or via mail.

- 31 • In-person – place your offering in the collection plate.
- 32 • Online – visit www.eocumc.com/donate, click on the Annual Conference 2026 logo, and then
- 33 select the red box labeled Learn More & Donate.
- 34 • Scan the QR code.



- 35 • Mail – make checks payable to East Ohio Conference UMC and write AC 2026 Offering or Fund
- 36 9214 on the memo line. Mail checks to:
- 37 EOC UMC
- 38 Attention: Eva Casey
- 39 8800 Cleveland Ave. NW
- 40 North Canton, OH 44720
- 41

Discipleship Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Beth Ortiz, executive director

Since the creation of the Office of Discipleship Ministries of the Ohio Episcopal Area in July 2025, we have been shaping both the scope and the culture of this office. The Office of Discipleship Ministries exists to cultivate and support a culture of everyday discipleship across the Ohio Episcopal Area – helping people follow Jesus in daily life and join in God’s mission in their communities. Discipleship is already alive throughout Ohio, and we are grateful to walk alongside churches, members, and clergy in this shared calling. We celebrate that each person and each faith community is uniquely called, gifted, and needed.

We trust that God has placed each of us, and each faith community in our particular locations for such a time as this. Our work, then, is not to bring something new so much as to help uncover what God is already calling forth – and to walk alongside you with joy and humility.

We believe discipleship is the heart of the Church and of every believer, and that every baptized person is called into ministry. The work of the Church is therefore our shared calling. Because God is already at work in every community and congregation, our posture is one of listening, gratitude, and building on what is already alive. One way we have found language for this is SEED: Seek, Engage, Equip, Deploy. It is not a program to implement, but a shared lens that helps us notice how God is already forming and sending disciples in everyday life. It gives common language to what many are already faithfully living. Transformation takes root through practices and relationships that form holy love – growing faith, deepening belonging, and nurturing courage for witness and service. We also believe we are stronger together. Connectional life is not simply a structure but a spiritual way of sharing gifts, learning together, and sustaining a mission we cannot live into alone.

Over the past year, we have offered opportunities to explore and take next steps in areas such as faithful church governance, small-group discipleship, and SEED (Seek, Engage, Equip, Deploy). Just as importantly, we have spent time listening – hearing stories of hope, struggle, joy, and compassion that are alive and well across Ohio’s faith communities. We are grateful to be on this journey with you and look forward to continuing to walk together wherever God is calling us.

Fresh Starts & New Beginnings Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Brad Aycock, executive director

Multiply Ohio – Bishop’s Vision for 100 New Faith Communities by 2030

“For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.” – Isaiah 43:19

Our work toward Multiply Ohio began not with strategy, but with relationships. Across the East Ohio Conference, we intentionally listened to laity and clergy, learning their hopes, their dreams, and where they sensed God already at work in their communities. Through “Let’s Start with You” gatherings held in coffee shops and local spaces throughout East Ohio, we sat with people where they were, heard their stories, and listened for the movement of the Holy Spirit. These conversations became the foundation for everything that followed.

1 As relationships deepened, we expanded the role of the District Leadership Teams to include the work
2 of District Strategy Teams, helping discern locations where new faith communities might take root. This
3 local approach ensured that multiplication efforts grew out of real communities and real opportunities.

4
5 In 2025, this momentum aligned with a bold Conference-wide vision. When Bishop Jung cast the vision
6 for planting 100 new faith communities by 2030, he invited us into more than a numerical goal. He
7 called us back to our Methodist DNA, our legacy of starting new things, entering new places, and
8 responding faithfully to God’s work on the margins. From this vision, Multiply Ohio took shape as both a
9 framework and a shared imagination.

10
11 Out of prayer and discernment emerged as the **Four Tiers of Multiplication**, offering clear and accessible
12 ways for every church and every person to participate:

13 1. **Tier 1: New Church Starts**

14 Launching new congregations through new campuses, locations, adoptions, and other models.

15 2. **Tier 2: Fresh Expressions and Micro Communities**

16 New ways of doing church that reach people outside the walls, often gathering in third spaces
17 around shared interests or needs.

18 3. **Tier 3: New Ministries Through Outreach or Church Within a Church**

19 Existing churches launching new worshiping communities or ministries focused on specific
20 cultural or ethnic groups, often connected through outreach such as ESL classes, shared meals,
21 or cultural events.

22 4. **Tier 4: Support a Multiplication Effort**

23 Individuals and congregations supporting multiplication through prayer, people, or financial
24 resources.

25
26 These tiers helped cultivate a culture of “yes,” where imagination is encouraged and people feel
27 permission to respond boldly to God’s call. Multiplication is no longer seen as something only large
28 churches can do, but as a shared calling for every church and every person.

29
30 The Office of Fresh Starts and New Beginnings is laser-focused on launching healthy new worshiping
31 communities and helping existing worshipping communities break out from trends that constrain their
32 mission. Scripturally, the work of this area helps us fulfill the Great Commission. The office will resource
33 churches and equip leaders through trainings, coaching, and funding through grants awarded by the
34 Fresh Starts Committee, all in partnership with the Appointive Cabinet.

35
36 Contacts: Brad Aycock, bradaycock@wocumc.org or Terri Rodriguez, trodriguez@wocumc.org.

37
38
39 **Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team Report to Annual Conference 2026**

40 *Submitted by all members of the Task Team**

41
42 Over the past year, the Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team has been engaged in a season of exploration
43 regarding the future of United Methodist ministry in Ohio. The task team was formed to consider what
44 might be possible if the East Ohio and West Ohio Conferences were to become one Ohio Conference,
45 and to develop a vision that could help guide that conversation.

46
47 Accompanying this report is a reflection from Bishop Hee-Soo Jung titled “Why One Ohio Conference?”
48 In this document, the bishop offers his perspective on the missional and spiritual opportunities that

1 could emerge through a unified conference. We encourage members of both Annual Conferences to
 2 read this reflection as part of the broader conversation about the future of United Methodist ministry in
 3 Ohio.

4 **Who We Are**

5 The Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team includes 18 lay and clergy members representing both East Ohio and
 6 West Ohio Conferences, along with conference leadership support. The group was formed to explore
 7 possibilities and develop a vision of what a unified conference could look like.
 8

9
 10 The task team is not a decision-making body. Our work is to study the possibilities and present a
 11 thoughtful proposal. The ultimate decision about whether to unite will be made by the members of the
 12 East Ohio and West Ohio Annual Conferences.
 13

14 **Work Completed This Year**

15 To ensure broad participation across both conferences, the task team organized 19 work teams made up
 16 of clergy and laity from across Ohio. These teams have been studying a wide range of areas that would
 17 be important if the conferences were to unite, including:

- 18 • governance and organizational structure.
- 19 • legal and constitutional considerations.
- 20 • financial stewardship and budgeting.
- 21 • Conference ministries and program alignment.
- 22 • leadership development and clergy support.
- 23 • opportunities for new ministries and engagement with younger generations.

24
 25 Each work team has been asked to:

- 26 • assess what currently exists in both conferences.
- 27 • imagine what could be possible if we worked together as one conference.
- 28 • suggest a pathway for moving from the present reality toward that future.

29
 30 More than 200 clergy and lay leaders from across both conferences have participated in these work
 31 teams. As these groups have worked together, participants have frequently noted the value of building
 32 relationships across conference lines and discovering the many ways our hopes for the future of the
 33 Church in Ohio are shared.
 34

35 **What Comes Next**

36 The work of the task teams will continue over the coming months according to the following timeline:

- 37 • August Work teams complete their initial recommendations.
- 38 • September The Task Team reviews and refines those recommendations.
- 39 • October–December Conference staff and governing bodies review the recommendations and
 40 consider implementation implications.
- 41 • Early 2027 A final report will be prepared for the *Pre-Conference Workbook*.

42
 43 Following publication of the report, there will be multiple opportunities for questions, conversation, and
 44 input across both annual conferences.

1 **The Decision Before the Conferences**

2 At the 2027 sessions of the East Ohio and West Ohio Annual Conferences, members will vote on
3 whether to unite as one Ohio Conference. The vote will simply ask whether the conferences wish to
4 unify or remain separate. The task team report will serve as a guiding proposal for how unification could
5 occur, but the report itself will not be subject to approval by vote.

- 6 • If both annual conferences vote “yes,” work toward unification would begin July 1, 2027,
7 including a joint unifying conference in the fall of 2027 to address matters such as a unified
8 budget and required legal actions. The Ohio Conference would officially begin January 1, 2028.
- 9 • If one or both conferences vote “no,” East Ohio and West Ohio will continue to collaborate
10 within the Ohio Episcopal Area. The conferences will still share a bishop and will continue
11 exploring ways to partner in mission and ministry where collaboration strengthens the work of
12 the Church.

13 **Continuing the Conversation**

14 The work of the Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team represents an invitation for the people of East Ohio and
15 West Ohio to engage in thoughtful and prayerful conversation about the future of our shared ministry.
16
17

18 We commend this report and Bishop Jung’s reflection “Why One Ohio Conference?” to the members of
19 both annual conferences as we continue discerning together how God is calling United Methodists in
20 Ohio to live out our mission in the years ahead.

21
22 Learn more about the Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team at www.eocumc.com/oeataskteam.

23
24 **Ohio Episcopal Area Task Team Members are:*

Rev. Doug Anderson, consultant

Rev. Armando Arellano (East Ohio)

Rev. Paige Boyer (East Ohio)

Bill Brownson, ex-officio (West Ohio)

Rev. Andy Call (East Ohio)

Pastor Daniel Cardenas (West Ohio)

Rev. Leroy F. Chambliss

Rev. Steve Stultz Costello (East Ohio)

Janet George (West Ohio)

Rev. Wade Giffin (West Ohio)

Kimberly Green (East Ohio)

Leslie Hall (West Ohio)

Dr. Julie Hurtig (West Ohio)

Catherine Kang (West Ohio)

Thomas Lewis (East Ohio)

Rev. Randy May (East Ohio)

Rev. Linda Middelberg, ex-officio (West Ohio)

Vera Milanovic, ex-officio (East Ohio)

Rev. Ed Peterson, ex-officio (East Ohio)

David Scott (West Ohio)

Rev. Hyeran Yu (East Ohio)

1 Why One Ohio Conference?

2 *By Bishop Hee-Soo Jung*

4 Mission, Stewardship, and Vision for a Growing Church

5 After a season of division and uncertainty in The United Methodist Church, we believe God is calling us
6 not to preserve what remains, but to reclaim our shared identity as a sent people – a people called to
7 live the gospel with integrity, to steward God’s gifts faithfully, and to lead the church into a renewed
8 future.

9
10 We seek the formation of one, new, Ohio Conference because:

12 1. Our Mission Is Larger Than Our Structures.

- 13 • The United Methodist Church is called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of
14 the world.
- 15 • One Ohio Conference would allow us to align leadership, resources, and imagination around this
16 single calling, so that evangelism, discipleship, spiritual formation, and new faith communities
17 may flourish with clarity and purpose.

19 2. Discipleship and Growth Demand Shared Commitment.

- 20 • The future of the Church is not found in preserving structures, but in forming people.
- 21 • One Ohio Conference would create a culture where discipleship is intentional, leadership is
22 cultivated, and growth is measured not only by numbers, but by spiritual depth and missional
23 engagement.
- 24 • We seek to form one, new, Ohio Conference so that churches may grow, leaders may emerge,
25 and the next generation may find their place in God’s story.

27 3. Stewardship Requires Courage and Financial Integrity.

- 28 • We are entrusted with limited resources and a sacred responsibility.
- 29 • Faithful stewardship means moving from institutional maintenance to missional investment.
- 30 • One Ohio Conference would enable us to practice transparent, accountable, and strategic
31 financial leadership – reducing duplication, strengthening local churches, and channeling our
32 resources toward life-giving ministries.

34 4. Missional Collaboration Creates New Possibilities.

- 35 • This moment offers a historic opportunity.
- 36 • One Ohio Conference would position us to move forward together – bishops, Cabinet, laity,
37 clergy, and staff – in bold collaboration toward new forms of ministry, innovative partnerships,
38 and a shared vision for the future Church in Ohio and beyond.

40 One Ohio Conference is our Way Forward:

- 41 • toward faithful mission.
- 42 • toward courageous stewardship.
- 43 • toward growing disciples and a church that dares to imagine God’s future together.

Faith Formation and Lay Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Julie Carter, director

The past year has been a season of renewed connection, Spirited creativity, and expanding leadership across the East Ohio Conference. Laity and clergy alike have stepped forward with energy and commitment, embracing new initiatives while strengthening longstanding ministries. This Year in Review celebrates the ways God has been at work through the people of East Ohio – forming leaders, nurturing discipleship, and building relationships that support vibrant ministry across the connection.

August 15-16, 2025, marked the first-ever Bishop’s Laity Leadership Convocation, a milestone event that brought together lay people for worship, learning, and connection. Participants engaged in workshops led by clergy and laity, explored emerging ministry needs, and enjoyed time in deep conversation with Bishop Jung. The gathering established a strong foundation for future convocations and reinforced the essential partnership between episcopal leadership and the laity of the Ohio Episcopal Area.

The second Laity Leadership Convocation March 20-21, 2026, built on the strong foundation of its inaugural gathering, drawing laity from across Ohio for a weekend of worship, learning, and connection. A highlight of the event was the keynote leadership of Dr. Ashley Boggan, whose insights into Methodist history, Wesleyan discipleship, and the future of lay-led ministry energized and equipped participants. Her engaging teaching invited laity to see their stories woven into the broader narrative of Methodism and inspired renewed commitment to Spirit-led leadership in local churches and communities. Through affinity groups, table conversations, and time spent in shared discernment, this year’s convocation deepened relationships, strengthened collaboration, and affirmed the essential role of laypeople in shaping the next chapter of ministry in Ohio.

One of the most exciting milestones this year was the launch of the East Ohio Certified Lay Ministry (CLM) Academy. The inaugural cohort brought together laypersons discerning deeper forms of ministry leadership. Through coursework, mentoring, and cohort-based learning, the Academy provides practical and spiritual formation opportunities for those called to serve in specialized ministry roles. Its launch represents a long-term investment in sustainable, well-supported lay leadership throughout the conference. In addition, through collaboration with the West Ohio Annual Conference, the CLM Academy offered in both annual conferences was open to members of either annual conference to participate.

Lay Servant Ministries saw significant growth this year as new and returning participants equipped themselves for preaching, teaching, and leadership. Courses across the districts drew strong attendance, and several churches reported an increased reliance on trained lay speakers and servants. This ministry continues to be one of the conference’s strongest pathways for empowering everyday disciples to lead with confidence and purpose.

This year, the 25:35 Crew launched to embody Christ’s call to serve “the least of these” through hands-on mission engagement. Volunteers of all ages responded to community needs by supporting local food ministries, uplifting neighbors, and partnering in churches seeking to care for their neighbor. Two East Ohio churches received General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) grants to support their work. The Crew’s consistent presence has become a model of practical discipleship lived out in community.

The Expanding Connection Book Club grew with new titles, broader participation, and dynamic discussions centered on faith, discipleship, mission, and justice. The book club created a space where

1 laity and clergy from different parts of Ohio and the country could gather virtually to learn and grow
2 together – strengthening relationships and building shared understanding across the conference.

3
4 We strengthened our relationship with United Women in Faith (UWF) by joining its fall meeting for
5 shared learning, ministry storytelling, and leadership development. This connection reaffirmed our
6 shared commitment to mission, advocacy, and spiritual growth, and opened doors for future
7 collaboration between conference laity leadership teams and UWF leaders across East Ohio.

8
9 During early 2026, we offered Laity Leadership Workshops at the Bishop’s Days in the Districts centered
10 on spiritual gifts discovery and utilization. These sessions equipped participants to discern how God has
11 uniquely gifted them for ministry, while helping congregations identify new opportunities for
12 engagement. Workshops were hosted in multiple districts, strengthening connections and empowering
13 church members to serve with clarity, joy, and purpose.

14
15 The Spiritual Formation Team spent this year deepening its shared mission and clarifying its purpose as
16 it continues to support the spiritual growth of laity and clergy across the East Ohio Conference. Through
17 intentional conversation, prayerful discernment, and collaborative planning, the team worked to
18 strengthen its identity as a ministry that nurtures discipleship, equips leaders, and fosters spiritual
19 practices that sustain healthy, missional churches. As the team emerges from this season of reflection
20 and refinement, it is poised to step into the coming year with a clearer sense of direction, a more
21 cohesive mission, and a deep commitment to guiding the people of East Ohio into transformative
22 encounters with God.

23
24 A major focus this year was intentionally building relationships. One-on-one conversations, collaborative
25 planning, and shared ministry opportunities helped cultivate trust, transparency, and mutual
26 encouragement. These relationships have created fertile ground for creativity and resilience as we move
27 forward together.

28
29 The All In Community initiative entered its next stage of development this year as we refined our
30 mission focus, expanded partnerships, and explored new ways to support churches engaged in re-entry
31 and recovery ministries. This next iteration emphasizes restorative relationships and equipping
32 congregations to walk alongside individuals and families impacted by the criminal justice system. A
33 renewed advisory team is guiding this work into its next chapter with faith and hope.

34
35 The past year demonstrated the courage, creativity, and faithfulness of the laity of East Ohio. From
36 leadership development to mission engagement, from spiritual formation to community building, we
37 have witnessed God fostering new possibilities and strengthening the connection that unites us. As we
38 enter a new year, we remain committed to forming disciples, supporting local churches, and building a
39 conference rooted in hope, collaboration, and Spirit-led leadership – all for the transformation of the
40 world.

41

Board of Benefits Report to Annual Conference 2026

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

The pension rate for retired clergy or local pastors of the annual conference for service prior to January 1, 1982, shall be **\$1,036** for the 2026 annuity year. **The Pension Past Service Rate (PSR) for 2026 is \$1,036 which is a 2% increase from the PSR from 2025 (\$1,015).**

2. Participation by Full-Time Local Pastors

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

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

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

Effective January 1, 1982, the pension program was changed to the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP), which was authorized by the 1980 General

1 Conference. This plan was administered under the authority of Wespath Benefits & Investments
2 and the Board of Pensions of the East Ohio Conference through December 31, 2006. A detailed
3 copy of the program may be secured from Wespath Benefits & Investments or the Conference
4 Benefits Office.

5
6 C. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)
7

8 Effective January 1, 2014, the benefit formulas and eligibility for the Clergy Retirement Security
9 Program (CRSP) were changed by authorization of the 2012 General Conference. **Contributions
10 to CRSP terminate effective December 31, 2025. Clergy who have earned a pension in the
11 defined benefit plans will retain those benefits. For the Clergy Retirement Security Program
12 defined benefit (CRSP DB), clergy compensation used to determine benefits is the
13 Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). The DAC will continue to increase 2% annually
14 through retirement.**
15

16 The initial objective of the retirement plan changes was stewardship – balancing between
17 adequacy for the participant and affordability and sustainability for the Church.
18

19 The Defined Benefit (DB) formula was reduced from 1.25% to 1% of the Denominational Average
20 Compensation (DAC) at retirement multiplied by years of service effective January 1, 2014. The
21 DB formula of 1.25% will remain effective for all covered service prior to January 1, 2014.
22

23 The Defined Contribution (DC) changed, beginning January 1, 2014; the church will contribute
24 3% of compensation, if the participant contributes at least 1% of compensation to their United
25 Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP). If the participant does not contribute 1% to
26 UMPIP, 2% of compensation will be deposited to their CRSP DC account.
27

28 UMPIP contributions are billed directly from Wespath Benefits & Investments to the local church.
29 UMPIP contributions are 'personal' contributions of the participant, to be reduced from a
30 participant's (pastor's) compensation. UMPIP contributions are NOT church liabilities; it is the
31 function of the church to timely remit their pastor's contributions to Wespath. **Effective January
32 1, 2026, this applies only to clergy appointed 25% and 50%.**
33

34 The Clergy Retirement Security Program is administered under the authority of Wespath Benefits
35 & Investments and the Board of Benefits of the East Ohio Conference. A summary of the plan
36 may be secured from the Wespath Benefits & Investments website, www.wespath.org.
37

38 1. Effective January 1, 2014, full-time and three-quarter time (3/4) clergy are eligible for CRSP.
39

40 The Conference is required to report to Wespath all appointments in ¼ time increments for
41 the purpose of eligibility in denominational benefit plans.
42

43 The time increments are based on the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). The
44 schedule of time increments is used solely for the purpose of pension/service credit within
45 the CRSP Defined Benefit Plan.
46

47 For 2024 the CAC is \$65,048; therefore for 2024, part-time local pastors with plan
48 compensation less than \$32,524 are not eligible for CRSP.
49

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.

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)

D. Compass Retirement Plan for Clergy

Effective January 1, 2026, the Compass Retirement Plan for Clergy was implemented. Compass is administered under the authority of Wespath Benefits & Investments and the Board of Benefits of the East Ohio Conference. Compass is designed to increase plan sustainability, balance affordability with income adequacy, promote equity across different compensation levels, and provide flexibility that includes benefits portability for clergy and permits leaving account balances to beneficiaries.

Compass retains the same eligibility rules of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). Full-time and three-quarter time (3/4) appointed clergy are eligible for Compass. Deacons are treated like any other clergy for purposes of eligibility in Compass.

Information regarding the key components of the plan can be found on the East Ohio Conference website.

1. **Effective January 1, 2026, full-time and three-quarter time (3/4) clergy are eligible for Compass.**

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 Compass.

For 2026 the CAC is \$69,054, therefore for 2026, part-time local pastors with plan compensation less than \$34,527 are not eligible for Compass.

For **2027** the CAC is **\$70,435**; therefore for **2027**, part-time local pastors with plan compensation less than **\$35,218** are not eligible for Compass.

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.

Eligible clergy may not waive participation in the Compass plan.

2. Funding of Compass

The Compass Retirement Plan for Clergy is an account-based plan. Funding for each clergy account comes from both the church and the clergy. The church makes three types of contributions:

- Flat dollar amount. This amount is **\$1,800 for 2026** and will increase %2 each year (in \$5 increments).
- Pay-dependent amount. This amount is 3% of the clergy person's total plan compensation (cash salary plus housing). **The parsonage value is now defined as 35% of the cash salary.**
- Match on the clergy's contributions. This amount is 4% of the total plan compensation.

Clergy will contribute 4% of their total plan compensation (cash salary plus housing) to receive the full matching contribution from the church. By plan design, the amount of the clergy contribution will rise by 1% each year to a cap of 10%. A clergy person may elect to change the contribution amount, but a contribution of less than 4% will not receive the full match.

If a clergy person is making qualified student loan payments and cannot contribute the full 4% of plan compensation to Compass, the qualifying student loan payments may be counted like retirement contributions toward the match. For details on this option, refer to <https://www.wespath.org/assets/1/7/6156.pdf>.

2026 Compass holiday: For 2026, CCF&A voted to fund the flat dollar amount, pay dependent amount, and church match of clergy contributions without billing the local church. Churches will still remit the clergy's personal contribution and the CPP. **For 2027, all components will be billed to the local church as designed.**

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) is still billed at 3% for all full-time clergy. The **2026** CPP (death & disability) billing will be limited to two times the DAC at **\$163,206**. See Section III.

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.

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

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

E. United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP)

1. 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 the UMPIP Program, contact Wespath Benefits & Investments, 1901 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, IL 60025-1604, or the office of the Conference Director of Benefits.

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.

2. 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, director of Benefits for the Conference, is also available at (330) 499-3972 ext. 151 to help the local church establish a lay pension plan.

1
2 F. Central Conference Pension Initiative
3

4 The Central Conference Pension Fund is an independent trust created to receive contributions
5 for pension support of non-U.S. clergy. Wespeth Benefits & Investments Glenview, Illinois
6 projects that a \$25-50 million endowment is needed to help establish and maintain the fund.
7 The East Ohio Conference encourages active and retired clergy, and laity to make voluntary
8 contributions to the fund. The Treasurer's office of the East Ohio Conference has established
9 Fund 9705 for collection of Central Conference Pension Fund contributions.
10

11 II. Health Care Program
12

13 THE MISSION OF THE EAST OHIO CONFERENCE HEALTH CARE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE
14 REIMBURSEMENT FOR MAJOR ILLNESS OR INJURY EXPENSES AND TO PROMOTE WELLNESS BY
15 PROVIDING PROGRAMS TO MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS
16 EMPLOYEES.
17

18 The East Ohio Conference Board of Benefits recognizes that it has a fundamental interest in the
19 health and welfare of its members, which is partially given expression by its health care program.
20 The health care program will be designed around the needs of the members, although it may not
21 meet their entire benefit needs. It will be coordinated with, according to law, all benefits provided
22 through governmentally mandated programs. These will be partially or fully funded by the East
23 Ohio Conference, its agencies, or local churches accordingly, for such programs as Social Security,
24 Ohio Disability and Workers' Compensation, and such others as become mandated by law.
25

26 The goal of our health care program is to promote the general health and well-being of the member
27 and member's family and to reimburse the member for the major costs incurred as a result of an
28 illness or injury.
29

30 A. Health Care Benefits Enrollment for Members
31

32 Enrollment for new members in the health care program is not automatic and is the
33 responsibility of the individual. Lay employees of local churches and of other approved
34 agencies of the East Ohio Annual Conference may be enrolled upon approval of the Conference
35 Board of Benefits. The employer in each case shall ultimately be responsible for payment of the
36 premium monthly. Persons transferring into the Conference or beginning employment with the
37 Conference shall have the responsibility for enrollment. Enrollment may be completed by
38 contacting the Conference Benefits office. Effective January 1, 2002, participation in the
39 Conference-sponsored Health Benefit Plan became mandatory. (Reference II.B.2.c.) Healthcare
40 is provided by the Conference on a year-to-year basis.
41

42 As of January 1, 2018, the Conference partnered with the Center of Health through Wespeth
43 Benefits & Investments to provide health benefits under HealthFlex, which offers a wellness-
44 driven group health plan for The United Methodist Church (UMC) annual conferences and
45 employer groups.
46

47 B. Health Care Funding
48

- 49 1. As of January 1, 2018, health care coverage will be with HealthFlex, which is a fully-insured
50 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 2027 monthly premiums for active lay employees will be:

participant only - \$ 1,151 (\$13,812/year).

participant plus one - \$2,187 (\$26,244/year).

participant plus family - \$2,993 (\$35,916/year).

The 2026 monthly premiums for active lay employees will be:

participant only - \$1,029 (\$12,348/year).

participant plus one - \$1,955 (\$23,460/year).

participant plus family - \$2,675 (\$32,100/year).

The 2027 monthly premiums for retirees* will be:

participant only (less than age 65) - \$1,151 (\$13,812/year).

Participant only (age 65 & over) Medicare required - \$399

The 2026 monthly premiums for retirees* will be:

participant only (less than age 65) - \$1,029 (\$12,348/year).

participant only (age 65 & over) Medicare required - \$347 (\$4,164/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: \$345.30 per month (\$4,143.60/year)

Age 65 & over: \$119.70 per month (\$1,249.20/year).

The 2026 clergy flat rate premium is \$1,932 (\$23,184/year).

The 2027 clergy flat rate premium is \$2,166 (\$25,992/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 would 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 for 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.

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
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. **This five-year period may include service under appointment within the West Ohio Conference if the clergy person was enrolled in the West Ohio health care plan.** The five-year's 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 grand-parented 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.
 9. Retirees may add a spouse and/or dependents to the Health Care Plan after retirement, provided that the cost, as determined annually by the East Ohio Conference Board of Benefits, is paid by the retiree.
- D. Eligibility for Retiree Health Benefits – Lay Employees
1. Area Center, Area Office, **Districts**, and Camps
 - a) In order for a lay employee of the Area Center, Area office, **Districts**, and Camps to be eligible for retiree health coverage through the East Ohio Conference such employee must be age 62.
 - b) Must have a minimum of 10 years of pension funded by the East Ohio Conference.

- 1 c) Must be properly enrolled and covered under the Conference Health Benefit Plan for at
 2 least five years immediately prior to the effective date of retirement.
 3 d) Post 65: must participate in Medicare Part A and Part B.
 4 e) For funding see F.3
 5

6 2. Agencies, ~~Districts~~, and Local Churches

- 7 a) In order for a lay employee of a qualifying agency, ~~district and/~~ or local church to be eligible
 8 for retiree health coverage through the East Ohio Conference such employee must be
 9 age 65.
 10 b) Must have a minimum of 10 years of service certified by the agency, ~~district and/~~ or local
 11 church.
 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 Medicare Part A and Part B.
 15 e) For funding see F.4.
 16

17 E. Temporary Waiver of Retiree Health Benefits – Clergy and Lay

18
 19 Effective on and after July 1, 2003, when a retiree, retiree spouse or surviving spouse, is
 20 actively employed with employer-provided insurance, the participant may temporarily waive
 21 the Conference-sponsored health benefit plan without premium sharing and return to the Plan
 22 upon termination of such employer provided insurance. (Documentation will be required.) This
 23 includes clergy couples in which one spouse is retired and the other remains active.
 24

25 F. Retiree Health Care Funding

26 1. Clergy with East Ohio Pre-82 Pension Credit

27
 28 Retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan
 29 sponsored by the East Ohio Conference premium-share per Conference policy. The
 30 Conference supports the balance of their health care plan expenses by funds from the
 31 Pension and Health Care Reserve Account as directed by Judicial Council Decision #976 and
 32 approved by Annual Conference 2004.
 33
 34

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

36
 37 Retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan of the
 38 East Ohio Conference premium-share per Conference policy. Fund III supports the balance of
 39 their health care plan expenses.
 40

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

42
 43 Lay retirees, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan of the
 44 East Ohio Conference premium-share on the same basis as the clergy in the East Ohio
 45 Conference. Fund III supports the balance of their health care plan expenses.

1 4. Lay Retiree (Agencies, ~~Districts~~, and Local Churches)
2

3 Lay retirees, spouses and surviving spouses who are covered by the Health Care Plan of the
4 East Ohio Conference are billed at full amount of the base premium. Any premium sharing is
5 the responsibility of the individual agency, ~~district~~, or local church.
6

7 Agencies, ~~districts~~, or local churches may require lay employees to contribute a portion of
8 the premium cost based on the number of years worked and the age at retirement. The
9 collection of this money is the responsibility of the individual agency, district, or local
10 church.
11

12 Lay retirees must comply with all the provisions of the Conference-sponsored health benefit
13 plan document.
14

15 The Conference director of Benefits shall be authorized to terminate coverage for any lay
16 retiree whose premium is not paid.
17

18 G. Retiree Emergency Aid
19

20 1. Financial Aid & Hardship Grants
21

22 Effective January 1, 2002, the policy stated below is applicable to the retiree's secondary
23 Health Care premium sharing. In addition, the original intent of the policy will be
24 maintained.
25

26 Where emergency aid is necessary for a retired member of the Conference, a retired local
27 pastor, a surviving spouse, or other Conference claimant, it will be administered by the
28 Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Benefits. Application forms should be
29 obtained from the Treasurer's office and returned to the Treasurer/Benefits officer of the
30 East Ohio Conference.
31

32 2. Emergency Fund for retired clergy with Other Insurance
33

34 Upon appeal and application, a retiree, retiree spouse, or surviving spouse may request
35 grant money to help pay for other insurance premiums. The Executive Committee of the
36 Conference Board of Benefits will administer the Emergency Fund. Application forms may
37 be obtained from the Benefits office and returned to the director of Benefits of the East
38 Ohio Conference.
39

40 H. Delinquent Health Care Premium Payments
41

42 1. Any church/charge or agency having a balance due for health care billing from the previous
43 year (December 31), for a pastor's premium, will be notified of such balance by the Benefits
44 office, with notification also sent to the pastor's district superintendent and chairperson of
45 the Staff-Parish Committee. The Benefits office and the district superintendent will work
46 with the church/charge for payment of the delinquent amount.
47

48 2. Persons on special appointment who are enrolled in the health benefit plan and delinquent
49 at year-end (December 31) will be notified of such delinquency by the Benefits office. If a

1 satisfactory payment schedule cannot be negotiated by April 1 of the year following the
2 delinquency, the coverage will be terminated.
3

- 4 3. Laypersons who are enrolled in the health benefit plan and delinquent at year-end
5 (December 31) will be notified of such delinquency with their employing church/charge or
6 agency also notified. If a satisfactory payment schedule cannot be negotiated by April 1 of
7 the year following the delinquency, the person's coverage will be terminated with the
8 employing church/charge or agency responsible for the payment. If the church/charge or
9 agency does not make the payment, no additional person from that church/charge or agency
10 will be enrolled until the balance is paid in full.
11

12 I. Pension and Health Care Arrearage Debt Resolution Policy
13

14 Effective 1/1/2005, a church/charge with past health care and pension arrearages and is current
15 for three calendar years may apply for final resolution. A church/charge seeking resolution must
16 submit a letter requesting arrearage debt resolution with details of their proposal for settlement
17 to their district superintendent with a copy sent to the chair of the Board of Benefits. After full
18 review by Cabinet and Board of Benefits, the Board of Benefits will vote on the negotiation of
19 balance payment and any forgiveness of a determined arrearage.
20

21 The pension and health care arrearages of a closed church will be removed upon written
22 recommendation by Cabinet and consultation of the Conference executive director of Financial &
23 Administrative Services.
24

25 III. Disability and Death Benefits
26

27 A. Clergy - Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)
28

- 29 1. Long-term disability (LTD), survival and death benefits are provided through the
30 Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) for clergy under full-time episcopal appointment and
31 receiving 'plan compensation' equal to or greater than 60% of the Denominational Average
32 Compensation or the Conference Average Compensation. Clergy serving at three-quarter-
33 time participate under CPP Special Arrangements provision. (Part-time local pastors are not
34 eligible for CPP.)
35
- 36 2. The funding rate yearly for each eligible full-time clergy member (including Deacons)
37 serving local churches of the East Ohio Conference, or special appointments whose salary is
38 paid by the Conference who are under episcopal appointment is 3% of plan compensation
39 (salary plus housing) with two times the DAC as the cap. The required funding rate for those
40 under CPP Special Arrangements is 3% of the Denominational Average Compensation.
41
- 42 3. CPP LTD benefits may be approved by Wespeth Benefits & Investments for the
43 members who are granted Medical Leave by action of the Annual Conference.
44
- 45 4. The Comprehensive Protection Plan is administered by Wespeth Benefits & Investments,
46 providing monthly LTD benefits to active participants who qualify.
47
- 48 5. The income replacement payable by CPP is 70% of the plan compensation, with plan
49 compensation capped at 200% of the DAC.
50

- 1 6. The CPP disability benefit (income replacement) is reduced by any disability benefit payable
2 under Social Security. The revised benefit applies only to eligible clergy whose disability
3 effective date, as determined by Wespath Benefits & Investments on or after 1/1/02. Clergy
4 approved for CPP disability benefits continue to be credited pension contributions.
5
- 6 7. For the purpose of receiving CPP benefits, a clergyperson is considered disabled based on
7 medical evidence that he/she is unable to engage in the usual and customary duties of a
8 United Methodist clergyperson due to bodily injury, disease or mental or emotional disorder
9 or disease which will last for at least six continuous months and excluding disability resulting
10 from: 1) service in the armed forces of any country, 2) warfare, 3) intentional self-inflicted
11 injury, 4) participation in any criminal or unlawful act. After receiving benefits for 24
12 months, in order to continue receiving CPP disability benefits, a clergyperson must
13 demonstrate that he/she is unable to engage in substantially all of the usual and customary
14 duties pertaining to any employment in an occupation for which the disabled clergyperson
15 is reasonably qualified.
16
- 17 8. The disabled member is encouraged to make application to Social Security Administration
18 to determine eligibility under the government's program. Social Security disability benefits
19 may begin after a waiting period of five full calendar months.
20
- 21 9. Health care coverage upon Medical Leave is administered according to the Conference's
22 Health Benefit Plan document, and current plan language takes precedence in all cases. If
23 the member is enrolled in the Conference-sponsored Health Benefit Plan coverage prior to
24 being granted Medical Leave, coverage will continue 180 days following the date the
25 member was actively at work, at no cost to the member. The next 18 months the provision
26 of the plan for Continuation of Coverage would be applicable, at no cost to the member. If
27 the member is determined under Title II or XVI of the Social Security Act to have been
28 disabled at the time of Medical Leave, coverage would continue as a secondary coverage to
29 Medicare disability. If the member does not become Social Security disabled, the
30 Conference-sponsored Health Benefit coverage terminates after the 18 months under the
31 Continuation of Coverage Provision.
32

33 CPP death benefits are based on eligibility as an active clergyperson and as a retiree. The
34 schedule of CPP benefits for the current year can be found on the Conference website.
35

36 Educational Benefits are provided for the children of deceased members while enrolled in an
37 accredited college through age 25.
38

39 B. Clergy – UMLifeOptions (clergy not eligible for CPP)
40

- 41 1. Local churches with episcopal-appointed clergy not eligible for the Comprehensive
42 Protection Plan (CPP) may adopt an UMLifeOptions plan to provide long-term disability (LTD)
43 and life insurance coverage for their appointed pastor.
44
- 45 2. For more information regarding sponsoring UMLifeOptions, please visit Wespath Benefits &
46 Investments' webpage at [https://www.wespath.org/for-plan-sponsors/Plan-Sponsor-](https://www.wespath.org/for-plan-sponsors/Plan-Sponsor-Services/Life-Insurance-Death-Disability-Plans)
47 [Services/Life-Insurance-Death-Disability-Plans](https://www.wespath.org/for-plan-sponsors/Plan-Sponsor-Services/Life-Insurance-Death-Disability-Plans).

1 C. Lay Employees (Area Center, Area Office, **Districts**, and Camps) UMLifeOptions
2

- 3 1. UMLifeOptions formerly known as the Basic Protection Plan (BPP) of The United Methodist
4 Church covers lay employees for Long Term Disability (LTD) of the Area Center, Area office,
5 **Districts**, and Camps. The income replacement payable by UMLifeOptions is equivalent to
6 60% of the employee’s pre-disability compensation. The UMLifeOptions disability benefit
7 (income replacement) is not reduced by any disability benefit payable under Social
8 Security.
9
- 10 2. As of January 1, 2009, UMLifeOptions will make a maximum 3% of pre-disability
11 compensation contribution to the approved disabled Employee’s United Methodist
12 Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP).

13
14 IV. Special Grants
15

16 The East Ohio Conference for **2025-2026** conference year shall pay special grants calculated by the
17 Board of Benefits to such persons approved by the Board.
18

19 V. Rental/Housing Allowance Policy for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the East Ohio Conference
20 Policies and Guidelines
21

22 The following is in effect for **2027**:

23 an amount equal to 100% of the pension, severance, or disability payments received from plans
24 authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the “Discipline”), which
25 includes all such payments from Wespath Benefits & Investments (“Wespath”), during the period
26 **January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2027**, by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled
27 clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is
28 designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such clergyperson; and the pension, severance,
29 or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance designation applies will be any
30 pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the
31 Discipline, including such payments from Wespath and from a commercial annuity company that
32 provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath plan, annuity, or fund
33 authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a clergyperson rendered to this
34 Conference or that an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled clergyperson of this Conference
35 rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church,
36 other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any
37 other employer that employed the clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the
38 Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under,
39 such a plan, annuity, or fund for such an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled
40 clergyperson’s pension, severance, or disability plan benefit as part of his or her gross
41 compensation.
42

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

1 own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing
2 allowance exclusion.
3

4 VI. Service Records
5

6 A. The official years for pension are those entered on the service records on file with Wespeth
7 Benefits & Investments and certified by the Conference Board of Benefits, not the service
8 records in The Journal. Persons with questions about their service record should contact the
9 Conference Benefits office.
10

11 B. Pension credit with another conference either for effective, associate, or local pastor years
12 must be established by direct contact with that conference and by its official action.
13

14 C. The East Ohio Conference does not have any responsibility for annuity years other than
15 those served in the East Ohio Conference, or one of its predecessor conferences, except for
16 service in the former Sandusky, Lexington, or Southeast Ohio Conference assigned by a joint
17 Distribution Committee of Wespeth Benefits & Investments.
18

19 VII. For Information
20

21 A. Concerning all payments to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or the Ministerial
22 Reserve Pension Fund, and all pension payments to claimants, or other information, write to
23 Wespeth Benefits & Investments, 1901 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, Illinois, 60025-1604 or visit
24 Wespeth's website, www.wespeth.org.
25

26 B. Concerning clergy benefits and/or pension credit, service years, or credit as full-time local pastor,
27 write or contact the Conference Benefits office, 8800 Cleveland Avenue NW, P.O. Box 2800, North
28 Canton, Ohio 44720.
29

30 VIII. References
31

32 A. For the "Plan of Union", see pages 423-424, recommendation 21, 1969 Yearbook and Record of
33 the North East Ohio Annual Conference, or pages 57-58, Recommendation 21, 1969 Conference
34 Journal of the East Ohio Conference.
35

36 B. For the "Guidelines for Granting Benefits to a Person Whose Membership Has Been
37 Terminated", see pages 196-198 of the 1973 Yearbook and Record of the East Ohio Annual
38 Conference.
39

40 C. For the special action regarding "Benefits for the Surviving Spouse of a Marriage Subsequent to
41 the Member's Retirement", see the action on page 195 of the 1973 yearbook and Record of
42 the East Ohio Annual Conference, as amended in 1975, page 198, Volume II, of the Journal of
43 the East Ohio Conference.
44

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

IX. East Ohio Funds held with Wespeth 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 un-audited.

The East Ohio Conference Board of Benefits maintains four accounts with Wespeth 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.

Deposit Account – 10018001

This is the East Ohio Conference deposit account with Wespeth 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 1/1/2025	\$4,685.92
Deposit	\$5,752,663.23
Adjustment Credit	\$5,490.74
Insurance Deductions	\$231,153.72
Wespeth Annual Dstr (Chartered Fund)	\$70.09
Monthly Settlement	(\$676,506.17)
Insurance Deduction Fee	\$(2,130.87)
DB Contributions	\$0.00
Missionary Conference Funding	(\$2,455.00)
HEALTHFLEX	(\$5,210,657.49)
Realized Gain/Loss	\$3,701.74
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$94.06
Total Deposit Account at 12/31/2025	\$88,109.97

Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss is for the fiscal year, 2025.

Income Earned – Gross	\$3,939.03
Fund Operating Expenses	(\$148.34)
Income Earned – Net	\$3,790.69

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 1/1/2025	\$21,122,909.11
Debit Withdrawal	(\$3,087,488.00)
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$2,306,037.41
Total Pension & Health Care Reserve at 12/31/2025	\$20,643,724.31

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/PPP 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 1/1/2025	\$85,755.83
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$ 12,294.69
Total Health Care Reserve at 12/31/2025	\$98,050.52

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 1/1/2025	\$4,661,576.68
Change in Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$ 586,791.49
Total Boyd Trust at 12/31/2025	\$5,248,368.17

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 2025 written by the Managing Actuary of Wespath Benefits & Investments, in Glenview, Illinois, is presented below:**

XI. 2025 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

**East Ohio Conference (180)
2026 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan**

Conference Benefit Officer (or equivalent)	Robin Whitacre	08/04/2025
Conference Treasurer	Vera Milanovic	08/07/2025
Conference Board of Pension Chair	Matthew Merriman	08/04/2025
Council on Finance and Administration Chair		



1 Commission on Equitable Compensation Report to Annual Conference 2026

2 *Submitted by Abby Auman, chairperson, Commission on Equitable Compensation*

3

4 The overall purpose of the Commission on Equitable Compensation is to support the bishop and Cabinet

5 in fulfilling the mission of the Conference, which is to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ for the

6 transformation of the world. This commission provides salary support, where the bishop and Cabinet

7 deem necessary, establishes minimum salaries, and awards sustentation grants.

8

9 **I PASTORAL COMPENSATION FOR FULL-TIME CLERGY**

- 10 A. Total ministerial compensation paid directly to or for the pastor by the charge shall include:
- 11 1. Cash salary, which should be the maximum possible from the local church, but no less than
- 12 the minimum standards listed in Section V of this report. In cases where equitable support is
- 13 requested, churches must pay at least 50% of that listed in Section V of this report.
- 14 2. Parsonage provided, or housing allowance when parsonage is not available.
- 15 3. parsonage/housing utilities, to be paid by the local charge, including but not limited to:
- 16 a. Electricity
- 17 b. Heating
- 18 c. Water and sewer
- 19 d. One basic telephone line, which could be cell phone service
- 20 e. Regular trash collection
- 21 f. Basic cable service or equivalent service where available and desired by the pastor
- 22 g. Basic high-speed internet where readily available, if desired by the pastor
- 23 4. Conference health insurance and pension
- 24 5. Travel for local charge business at the IRS mileage rate with substantiation of mileage
- 25 required (see *Guidelines for Mileage*, Section VII).

- 1 6. Other general operating expenses to consider as reimbursable, such as continuing education
2 and cellular phone service, including a data package.
3 7. suggest Staff Parish use the pastor compensation worksheets to assist in calculating the
4 pastor compensation package if they are not already doing so.
5

6 **II. ELIGIBILITY FOR ALLOWANCES: CHARGES**

- 7 A. No minimum salary should be paid to a charge that has not conducted a responsible
8 stewardship campaign each year. Refer to the Conference website for information on
9 stewardship and stewardship programs.
10
11 B. Any change in clergy appointment to a charge on minimum salary support should be reported
12 immediately to the office of the Conference executive director of Financial & Administrative
13 Services.
14
15 C. No minimum salary support should be made to cover the failure of a local charge to meet the
16 pastor's salary as approved by the Charge Conference.
17
18 D. A local charge is expected to maintain its level of clergy support from previous years and must
19 set a definite salary.
20
21 E. A local charge is expected to provide a comfortable parsonage (or adequate housing
22 allowance) meeting standards adopted by the Conference for parsonage and parsonage
23 furnishings.
24
25 F. Any charge receiving minimal salary support will be given a maximum of five years to assume
26 full pastoral support. The charge must project a plan of incremental reductions effectively
27 with the second year of support. After five years, minimum salary support may be terminated
28 if substantial progress in reducing dependence on salary support has not been made.
29 Continuation of salary support beyond the five-year limit shall require concurrent action by
30 the commission and the Cabinet.
31
32 G. The Cabinet representation on the Commission on Equitable Compensation will give an annual
33 report to the commission regarding the progress each charge is making toward moving off
34 equitable compensation funding.
35

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

- 37 A. A pastor who is engaged in business, a profession, or farming, or who is engaged in a
38 nonchurch activity for remuneration, or who is employed in secular business shall not be
39 eligible for any salary supplementation, except in cases which may qualify for less than a full-
40 time appointment.
41
42 B. A retired Conference member or retired local pastor who is serving as pastor shall not be
43 eligible for any salary supplementation or any sustentation allowance.
44
45 C. For the local church to be eligible for salary supplementation, a pastor shall live on the charge
46 or in the parsonage provided by the charge. Under unusual circumstances, the commission
47 may make an exception.
48
49 D. Minimum salary support is not a contractual right but a consideration of our relationship in
50 Christian ministry.

IV. APPLICATION AND PROCEDURES FOR MINIMUM SALARY SUPPORT

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

A. The district superintendent shall apply on behalf of the local church. The district superintendent shall collect the following information when requesting on behalf of a local church.

1. A copy of the budget for each church on the charge. A completed budget includes:
 - a. The previous year's approved budget, year-end expenditures, and audit report.
 - b. The current approved budget and year-to-date expenditures.
 - c. The proposed budget for the year's support is requested.
2. A one-paragraph description of the program for stewardship education in each church, including information such as how members were contacted, use of pledge cards, percentage of members who respond to the program, use of regular financial updates, and other helpful information.
3. One copy of the church's year-end report must be returned to the office of the Conference executive director of Financial & Administrative Services by January 31.
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%
2026	\$51,485	\$46,268	\$43,663	5%	2.90%

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13

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	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Conference Average Compensation	\$69,054	\$67,700	\$65,048	\$62,750	\$61,298	\$59,740
\$ Increase From Prior Year	\$1,354	\$2,652	\$2,298	\$1,452	\$1,558	
Percentage Increase From Prior Year	2.00%	4.10%	3.70%	2.40%	2.60%	

The increase from 2021 to 2026 is \$9,314 or 15.6%.

This year, the Commission on Equitable Compensation investigated the effect of the current US inflation index (Cost of Living Index) upon East Ohio Conference districts as another input before recommending the minimum salary increase proposal for the 2026 Annual Conference. The following is a summary of the Cost of Living Index investigation:

Location	Consumer Price Index or Cost of Living, % (Based upon a 12-month comparison)	Index - Compared to National Average %	Comments
US - National Average	2.7	100	US Consumer Price Index was 2.7% annually
Ohio - Average	2.48	92	Ohio is lower than National Average
Key Cities in EOC			

Northern Waters District			
Cleveland	2.24	83	https://www.areavibes.com/cleveland-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Akron	2.27	84	https://www.areavibes.com/akron-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Lakewood	2.57	95	https://www.areavibes.com/lakewood-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Ashtabula	2.30	85	https://www.areavibes.com/ashtabula-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Euclid	2.30	85	https://www.areavibes.com/euclid-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Central Valley District			
Canton	2.21	82	https://www.areavibes.com/canton-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Youngstown	2.21	82	https://www.areavibes.com/youngstown-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Alliance	2.27	84	https://www.areavibes.com/alliance-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Wooster	2.46	91	https://www.areavibes.com/wooster-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Niles	2.27	84	https://www.areavibes.com/niles-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
West Plains District			
Mansfield	2.19	81	https://www.areavibes.com/mansfield-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Mount Vernon	2.35	87	https://www.areavibes.com/mount%20vernon-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Elyria	2.53	87	https://www.areavibes.com/elyria-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Sandusky	2.27	84	https://www.areavibes.com/sandusky-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Delaware	2.65	98	https://www.areavibes.com/delaware-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
South Forest District			
Cambridge	2.27	84	https://www.areavibes.com/cambridge-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
New Philadelphia	2.40	89	https://www.areavibes.com/new%20philadelphia-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
Dover	2.46	91	https://www.areavibes.com/dover-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette

Coshocton	2.21	82	https://www.areavibes.com/coshocton-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette
McConnelsville	2.21	82	https://www.areavibes.com/mcconnelsville-oh/cost-of-living/#google_vignette

1
 2 The above data for areas in the East Ohio Conference by district were obtained using the specific link in
 3 the table for each location based upon a 12-month comparison (December 2024 vs December 2025). It
 4 is readily observable that the inflation rate for the East Ohio Conference is slightly lower than the
 5 national average of 2.7%.

6 Therefore, to continue to increase our minimum pastor’s salaries toward a more sustainable wage,
 7 address the current inflation rate of 2.7%, keep our churches viable, and minimize the effect on church
 8 finances, the Commission on Equitable Compensation recommends a 3% increase to each of the three
 9 minimum salaries. The proposed increase will directly affect 75 churches (19.13%) of our 392 churches.
 10 Note: 35 churches (8.93% of our 392 churches) are at the minimum salary now and the remaining 40
 11 churches would be affected somewhat less.
 12

2024	2025	2026	2027 Proposed 3% Increase	
46,698	49,033	51,485	53,029	Full members, associate members, provisional members, and ordained persons from other denominations
41,967	44,065	46,268	47,656	Full-time pastors who have completed the course of study
39,604	41,584	43,663	44,973	Full-time pastors who have not completed the course of study

13
 14 **VI. SUSTENTATION AID**
 15

16 Sustentation grants are available in cases of special need or financial emergencies to all clergy who are
 17 under appointment in the East Ohio Conference. Applications containing the criteria are available from
 18 the district superintendent, who will forward completed applications to the chairperson of the
 19 Commission. The maximum that can be granted to any pastor in any one calendar year is \$3,000. Due to
 20 inflation and growing need, donations to this fund are encouraged. The Fund # is 9917.
 21

22 **VII. FARMER FUND GRANT**
 23

24 The Farmer Fund Grant Program is available through Wespath for “distressed clergy members or former
 25 clergy members of an annual conference; their spouses, former spouses, former surviving spouses; or
 26 surviving dependent children (including adult dependent children)” for a “one-time emergency
 27 situation”. Grants are awarded up to \$3000 from the Farmer Fund with a 1-for-3 match from the annual
 28 conference.
 29

30 For guidelines, instructions, and application, clergy or their qualifying family listed above should inquire
 31 of their district superintendent, or the chairperson of the Commission on Equitable Compensation, Rev.
 32 Abby Auman at Abby.Auman@StrongsvilleUMC.org
 33

1 VIII. **GUIDELINES FOR MILEAGE**

- 2
- 3 A. In setting the pastor’s mileage, the local church(es) shall pay vouchered mileage at the rate set
- 4 for the current year by the Conference Council on Finance & Administration, which may be
- 5 obtained at the Conference website: eocumc.com/finance/index.html.
- 6
- 7 B. A church or charge may have the option of prepaying an estimated mileage figure monthly. An
- 8 accounting of actual miles driven must be reported to the local church treasurer, preferably at
- 9 month's end but no later than 90 days after prepayment. Any excess or unused portion of the
- 10 prepayment could either be returned to the treasurer or used to reduce the next prepayment
- 11 (except at year-end).
- 12
- 13 C. Standard documentation for vouchered miles shall include the date, miles driven, and purpose
- 14 (may exclude specific contact information where confidentiality is an issue), not including
- 15 commuting between home and the church.
- 16
- 17 D. When the pastor combines local charge business and personal business on the same trip, the
- 18 mileage attributed to the personal errands shall not be included in the reimbursable mileage.
- 19
- 20 E. Mileage should be paid by inviting the charge when a pastor travels to another charge to
- 21 perform services at the request of the other pastor.
- 22
- 23 F. Multiple church charges should divide travel monies in the same proportion as salary, utilities,
- 24 and other reimbursable expenses. Multiple travel logs must not be required.
- 25
- 26 G. Students who travel to the charge for weekend pastoral duties shall not include travel to and
- 27 from school as charge mileage. The charge shall be reimbursed for extra trips necessitated by
- 28 pastoral emergencies.
- 29

30 **IX. UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR SETTING THE PASTOR’S SALARY**

- 31 • When the bishop appoints a new pastor, the salary is generally the same as set at the annual
- 32 charge conference.
- 33 • Adjustments to the pastor’s compensation are generally made at the annual charge conference
- 34 for the following calendar year.
- 35 • Multiple variables should be considered when setting a professional salary for the pastor
- 36 beyond the conference’s minimum compensation schedules. Many S/PPRCs have great care and
- 37 concern for the welfare of their pastors, including their financial well-being. Because of this, we
- 38 are providing the following information to support the S/PPRC in their work. If you have
- 39 additional questions regarding clergy compensation, don’t hesitate to contact your District
- 40 Superintendent.
- 41

42 **Compensation History**

43 Review the past history of clergy salaries in your appointment. Have you accounted for the factors

44 below or is this new data for your process?

45

46 **Community Comparisons**

47 What are other professionals with similar schooling and credentials receiving in your community?

1 **Differences from Business Environments**

2 Variables determining pastoral compensation differ from other industries and businesses. Unlike the
3 methods of determining salary for a new or existing employee in for-profit businesses, it is important to
4 be aware of the following for clergy salary determination:

- 5 • Years of service and depth of experience are typically not variables when determining salary for
6 a new clergy appointment.
- 7 • With the exception of a few of our largest congregations, the salary range for clergy is not broad
8 and thus, salary growth over time is limited. The conference does not utilize a years-of-service
9 salary scale nor promotions.
- 10 • Clergy are appointed by the bishop to a missional opportunity where pastoral competencies
11 match church needs. This means that a pastor could actually make less money over time during
12 their tenure as a pastor.
- 13 • Clergy salaries for each appointed pastor are posted and public for all to see. We don't engage
14 in secret salary negotiations with pastors.
- 15 • The housing market conditions—both cost and local availability—have created significant
16 challenges for clergy with modest salaries to find satisfactory housing in the church's
17 community.

18
19 Appointment changes often place financial stress on the pastoral family. The S/PPRC's awareness of
20 these unique salary considerations and cultural differences are important.

21 **Inflation Rate**

22 An important consideration each year is the inflation rate. The current rate of inflation in 2025 was
23 2.7%. While it may be difficult for a local church to provide an increase for pastors and staff, reasonable
24 consideration should be given to adjusting to the rate of inflation. Doing nothing equates to a salary cut.
25
26

27 **Housing**

28 Refer to East Ohio Conference Journal, Section 8 for standards and policies on clergy housing (8-14
29 through 8-22 in the 2025 edition). The intent is to provide a safe home in the community at a standard
30 similar to church members' homes.

31 It is important for the S/PPRC and Trustees to do an annual inspection of a parsonage to address any
32 maintenance or improvement needs, as required prior to the annual charge conference; or pay close
33 attention to the Housing Allowance standards of VI.C.
34

35 **Job Performance**

36 Growth in effectiveness and/or responsibility should be considered when setting the salary each year.
37 Has the pastor met mutual expectations and goals for the work this past year? Please note that it's not a
38 matter of whether the pastor did everything personally, but whether the pastor provided leadership,
39 direction, and forward movement to important areas of ministry and the church. How do you reward
40 pastoral leadership and efforts through your compensation package?
41

42 **Tax Factors**

43 Clergy are treated uniquely for tax purposes. They are considered an employee by the IRS and self-
44 employed by the Social Security Administration. As a result, clergy are required to pay 15.3% of their
45 compensation (including the fair rental value of the parsonage and the utilities). This equates to paying
46 both portions of the FICA tax (7.65% for employer portion and 7.65% for employee portion).
47

48 **Benefits**

49 The congregation is expected to pay the church's portion of health insurance and retirement but also
50 realize the pastor may have deductions from their payroll for portions of those two categories.

1 Please see the EOC Clergy Handbook pages 4-5 (available on the conference website) for conference
2 policies on time off, vacation, continuing education and other paid time away for your pastor. Have you
3 budgeted amounts (e.g. pulpit supply stipend) to account for that?
4

5 **Reimbursable Expenses**

6 It is important to remember that the expenses associated with having a pastor (salary, housing, benefits)
7 are separate from the expenses necessary for the pastor to engage in ministry on behalf of the church.
8 While it is important to set an appropriate salary for your pastor, it also important to ensure that an
9 adequate amount is budgeted for Accountable Reimbursement—which is NOT compensation—so your
10 pastor doesn't end up paying for the cost of working for the church. Such expenses would include travel,
11 continuing education, equipment, professional books, hospitality (coffee and meals that were part of
12 the ministry), etc.
13

14 **Other Important Considerations for Pastoral Well-being**

15 Do you know your pastor's needs and the stressors that affect their financial well-being? Pastors are
16 reluctant to share any hint of need or distress. It could be helpful for one or two S/PPRC members to
17 carefully but intentionally deepen the relationship of trust over time, providing an opportunity to better
18 understand the financial burdens that the pastor could be experiencing and perhaps offer support and
19 some type of relief. A pastor will seldom advocate for themselves as their focus is on their calling and
20 leadership of the church. The role of these trusted individuals may be to do so on the pastor's behalf.
21 The S/PPRC has the year-round opportunity to express appreciation and support for this person and
22 family who have come to live with you and lead your church. Do you celebrate the pastor's and family's
23 birthdays, or anniversary? October is often Clergy and Ministry Staff Appreciation Month, in which many
24 churches show gratitude for the pastor's leadership and commitment to the church's mission. Most
25 church staff know they will make less than secular counterparts when they respond to God's call to work
26 for the church. Appreciation and encouragement are vital to clergy and staff morale.
27

28 **The Changing Church**

29 Over recent years, the pastor's responsibilities have likely increased to managing in-person and virtual
30 worship and other congregational connections, as well as communicating on multiple channels
31 constantly. Most churches continue in a period of significant adaptive cultural changes. The pastor
32 serving a church and community carries the stress – not only for self and family – but for the whole. The
33 Annual Conference has advocated for all clergy to take time off through its handbook policies. It would
34 be wise and considerate for the S/PPRC to discuss and consider with the pastor a plan for time off and
35 renewal in the year ahead, as well as the quadrennial renewal leave.
36
37

38 **Multicultural Ministries & Anti-Racism Report to Annual Conference 2026**

39 Submitted by Will Fenton-Jones, director, Multicultural Ministries of the Ohio Episcopal Area
40

41 Over the past year, the work of Multicultural Ministries across the Ohio Episcopal Area has continued to
42 grow in depth, breadth, and integration. What began in prior years as parallel efforts across East and
43 West Ohio is increasingly becoming a shared witness: a more connected, ecumenical, and justice-
44 oriented ministry rooted in the conviction that the Church is called not simply to discuss injustice, but to
45 confront it faithfully and collaboratively.
46

47 The Board of Multicultural Ministries in East Ohio and the West Ohio DEIB Board have begun meeting
48 together to dream, discern, and align our work. This is more than administrative cooperation. It is a
49 theological and strategic shift toward deeper connection across the Ohio Episcopal Area. We are
50 recognizing more clearly that the justice challenges before us – racism, poverty, immigration, LGBTQIA+

1 inclusion, environmental justice, and the legacy of colonizing systems – are too complex and too
2 contextual to be addressed by one office, one board, or one denomination alone.

3
4 That realization has led us to continue deepening our work through the framework of our Anti-Racism
5 Strategy: Re-Telling, Relationships, and Repair & Reinvestment. At the same time, this past year has
6 made clear that these three pillars are held together by another important conviction: ecumenism is not
7 peripheral to justice work; it is one of the ways we practice decolonizing discipleship. No one
8 denomination can solve our deepest social and spiritual challenges alone. We must live more fully into
9 the connection.

10 11 **Re-Telling: Engaging History to Form a More Faithful Future**

12 A major emphasis this year has continued to be Re-Telling – the work of revisiting history honestly so
13 that we can move forward more truthfully. Storytelling remains one of the most effective entry points
14 for churches and communities who are learning to engage anti-racism, historical memory, and public
15 witness.

16
17 This past summer, more than 50 United Methodists and community partners from East and West Ohio
18 traveled together on a pilgrimage to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati.
19 The day was intentionally framed not as a simple museum visit, but as an act of collective remembrance
20 rooted in the first pillar of our anti-racism strategy. Participants from congregations across Ohio, along
21 with groups such as Racial Equity Buddies and Sisters Embracing Oneness, engaged exhibits on slavery,
22 liberation, faith, and public memory. The day also included debrief and reflection hosted by New Vision
23 UMC.

24
25 During Black History Month 2026, that same re-telling commitment continued through an ecumenical
26 pilgrimage to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. United Methodists
27 were joined by partners from the Living Water Association of the United Church of Christ and the
28 Northwestern Ohio Synod of the ELCA. The pilgrimage focused especially on the landmark exhibit *And*
29 *Still We Rise*, strengthening the connection between honest history, shared witness, and ecumenical
30 relationship.

31
32 Together, these pilgrimages represent more than educational trips. They reflect our growing conviction
33 that the Church must help communities resist whitewashed histories, confront the ongoing effects of
34 racial injustice, and reclaim stories that form more courageous discipleship in the present.

35 36 **Relationships: Building the Networks Required for Justice**

37 This year has also been marked by a significant strengthening of Relationships – across conferences,
38 denominations, and issue areas. Increasingly, our work is shaped by the belief that justice ministry
39 depends on durable networks of trust, regional relationships, and shared capacity.

40
41 One significant development has been the move toward establishing Regional Justice Coordinators
42 across Ohio. These paid coordinators are emerging from the acknowledgment that justice work is local,
43 relational, and context specific. Different regions of the state face different realities – whether around
44 racism, poverty, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, immigration response, church-community trust, or environmental
45 concerns. A single staff person or a single Conference board cannot effectively build and maintain the
46 networks needed to respond faithfully in every context. The Regional Justice coordinator model is
47 intended to strengthen local relationships while creating a broader statewide fabric of solidarity and
48 response.

1 This work also intersects directly with broader ecumenical developments. The Ohio Council of Churches
2 is itself in a time of transition and regrouping. Following the retirement of Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr., the
3 Council named Deacon Nick Bates as interim executive director beginning January 1, 2026. The Council
4 has described itself as a long-standing movement for Christian unity, justice, and peace, and this
5 transition opens new possibilities for renewed cooperation among judicatory bodies across the state.

6
7 The Pro-Racial Equity Network has remained one of the most consistent expressions of this ecumenical
8 relationship-building. Originally a collaboration between the Heartland Conference of the United Church
9 of Christ and the East Ohio Conference of The UMC, the network continues to meet monthly and is now
10 expanding to more intentionally include the West Ohio Conference. That same relational infrastructure
11 is creating openings to collaborate more broadly with Heartland UCC partners, including their Creation
12 Care Network and Open and Affirming Network, allowing our justice work to become more integrated
13 rather than siloed.

14
15 That widening relational vision was also visible in this year’s Creation Care partnerships. We partnered
16 with the Heartland Conference UCC Creation Care Network and the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples
17 of Christ) for an annual retreat in October. We also partnered with the Catholic Social Action Office to
18 co-sponsor Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation, part of a broader movement encouraging communities to
19 organize pilgrimages during the Season of Creation as a witness shaped by the Jubilee year, the 10th
20 anniversary of *Laudato Si’*, and the 800th anniversary of St. Francis’ *Canticle of the Creatures*. These
21 threads of Creation care, ecumenism, and justice are becoming increasingly intertwined in our work.

22
23 The same spirit of relationship-building extended into other public and denominational spaces as well.
24 The Ohio Episcopal Area participated in and co-sponsored two faith legislative advocacy days and a
25 luncheon in partnership with Hunger Network in Ohio and the Ohio Council of Churches. East Ohio also
26 served as a sponsor at the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) Convocation 2025, while sending
27 representatives to participate in the broader movement for LGBTQIA+ inclusion and justice. RMN’s
28 Convocation gathered nearly 200 in-person participants and featured significant worship, workshops,
29 and resources for churches discerning how to become the Church this moment requires.

30
31 We also continued to explore what faithful public presence looks like beyond traditional church settings.
32 For a second year, we sponsored a table at Origins Game Fair as an “open gaming table” and a form of
33 marketplace ministry – an example of practicing welcome, connection, and full communion in a public
34 cultural space. Origins describes itself as a major annual tabletop convention in Columbus built around
35 the idea that there should be “a game on every table, a table for EVERYone,” language that resonates
36 meaningfully with our own commitments to hospitality and inclusion.

37 38 **Repair & Reinvestment: Moving from Reflection to Concrete Change**

39 If Re-Telling forms the imagination and Relationships build the network, then Repair & Reinvestment
40 asks how the Church responds materially, strategically, and institutionally.

41
42 This past year, I attended gatherings and conversations that sharpened this pillar considerably. One
43 stream of that work involved church property and redevelopment. The Neighborhood Economics
44 gathering in Chicago highlighted how leaders are reimagining underutilized assets such as churches as
45 community resources, urging faith communities to embrace their role as anchors of neighborhood life.
46 The conference emphasized trust-based relationships, adaptive use, and strategies that help local
47 communities benefit from redevelopment rather than be displaced by it. That work resonates strongly
48 with our ongoing questions in Ohio around redlining, racial wealth gaps, neighborhood decline, white
49 flight, and the stewardship of church property.

1 These themes are not theoretical for us. They are directly connected to ministry on the ground. In
2 Akron, the Akron First project continues to be a fundamentally ecumenical expression of
3 redevelopment, community partnership, and reinvestment, with emerging impact in areas such as
4 immigrant support and housing. Likewise, Cory United Methodist Church in Cleveland has become a key
5 site for thinking about preservation, redevelopment, and the legacy of the Black church. Cory, one of
6 Cleveland’s oldest Black churches and a historic site of Black civic leadership and civil rights organizing,
7 received more than \$1 million from the National Park Service’s African American Civil Rights grant
8 program for restoration work completed in 2024. The congregation is now working with a development
9 consultant to engage the community around redevelopment possibilities that honor the legacy of the
10 Black church while serving present neighborhood needs. This is precisely the kind of reinvestment work
11 that asks not only how buildings survive, but how communities flourish.

12
13 Repair & Reinvestment also connects to how we support clergy and congregations serving across
14 difference. East Ohio sent clergy to GCORR’s Facing the Future 2025, a national gathering for pastors in
15 cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. General Commission on Religion & Race (GCORR)
16 described the event as a three-day gathering of more than 180 pastors and ministry leaders focused on
17 the gifts, challenges, and ongoing support needed for CRCC ministry. Our participation is part of a
18 continued effort to ask how the Conference is living into its responsibility not merely to make such
19 appointments, but to resource churches and clergy so those appointments can thrive.

20 21 **Teaching, Formation, and Public Witness**

22 This year also included important work in education and formation. At the Laity Convocation in
23 September 2025, I led a class on the newly revised Social Principles. The 2025–2028 Social Principles,
24 published in June 2025, were designed for both individual and small-group study and represent the first
25 comprehensive update in decades, offering theological and practical engagement with concerns such as
26 poverty, racism, government, environment, justice, and human sexuality. As part of this work, we are
27 encouraging churches not simply to own the document, but to study it and use it as a discipleship
28 resource for faithful public engagement.

29
30 In January 2026, we gathered at Clair UMC in Columbus, a historic Black church, for the Ohio Episcopal
31 Area’s MLK Day celebration, centered on the theme “Bending the Arc 2026.” In April 2026, we hosted
32 Canadian singer-songwriter Luke Wallace for a justice gathering day titled “Carry the Hope.” Together,
33 these events reflect our commitment to formation that is artistic, spiritual, prophetic, and community
34 based.

35 36 **Wider Connectional Work Across the Jurisdiction**

37 This year also revealed growing possibilities beyond Ohio. Across the North Central Jurisdiction, there
38 are emerging efforts to connect annual conferences more intentionally around justice, peace, and cross-
39 racial/cross-cultural (CRCC) ministry. The General Board of Church and Society Advisory Team has been
40 developing frameworks for 2026 jurisdictional gatherings focused on grassroots engagement, legislative
41 advocacy, and movement-building aligned with the church’s Social Principles. In a related development,
42 Michigan Annual Conference secured NCJ Mission Council funding for a gathering around CRCC
43 appointments, and leaders from across the jurisdiction have been meeting to discern how best to live
44 into that opportunity.

45
46 We also remained connected to Pan-Methodist and Black Church leadership spaces. The Ohio Episcopal
47 Area attended NCJ BMCR in fall 2025 and served as presenting sponsor for the first Afro-Wesley
48 gathering in February 2026, organized by the Equity Center of Dayton and bringing together Black
49 church leaders from UMC, AME, AMEZ, and CME traditions. While public details are limited, the event

1 was publicly described as an Ohio Episcopal Area gathering for Black clergy and laity and reflects a
 2 growing commitment to strengthening Black Methodist relationships across denominational lines.
 3 Immigration and Faithful Public Solidarity
 4

5 Finally, this year included concrete acts of solidarity in response to immigration concerns. A group from
 6 the Ohio Episcopal Area attended Faithful Resistance, and we helped provide bus transportation. UM
 7 News described the event as a public witness in which United Methodists raised their voices in solidarity
 8 with immigrants and with those harmed by systems of exclusion and overreach. This participation
 9 reflects our continued conviction that multicultural ministry must include not only education and
 10 relationship but faithful public presence when communities are under threat.
 11

12 **Looking Ahead**

13 As we look toward 2026–2027, several priorities are becoming clearer. First, we will continue shaping
 14 the Regional Justice coordinator model so that it strengthens local networks while deepening statewide
 15 collaboration. Second, we will keep building the shared work of the East Ohio Multicultural Ministries
 16 Board and the West Ohio DEIB Board, moving from conversation into more aligned strategy and
 17 programming. Third, we will continue leaning into ecumenical partnerships – through the Ohio Council
 18 of Churches, Heartland UCC, Catholic partners, Disciples partners, Black church networks, and others –
 19 because the scale of the challenges before us requires broader cooperation.
 20

21 We also expect to deepen work around repair and reinvestment, especially as churches across Ohio
 22 wrestle with property, neighborhood change, racial inequity, and the opportunity to reimagine sacred
 23 spaces as community assets. The questions before us are not simply about preserving buildings. They
 24 are about whether the church can invest in the flourishing of Black and Brown communities, immigrant
 25 communities, struggling neighborhoods, and the next generation of leaders in ways that are concrete,
 26 sustainable, and faithful.
 27

28 Multicultural Ministry is not a side project. It is a core pillar of what it means for the Church to become
 29 more truthful, more connected, and more courageous. The work continues. And by God’s grace, so do
 30 we.
 31
 32

33 **Commission on the Status and Role of Women Report to Annual Conference 2026**

34 *Submitted by Rev. Lorrin Radzik, chairperson*
 35

36 In the East Ohio Annual Conference, the Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW)
 37 serves the Church by encouraging the full participation of all persons, and women in particular, in the
 38 total life of The United Methodist Church, in partnership with the work of the General Commission on
 39 the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW). *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* directs
 40 the work of the annual conference Commissions in areas of monitoring and research, advocacy,
 41 education, and cooperation with other conference and denominational supports.
 42

43 Below are a few highlights of your COSROW’s work this past year.

- 44 • Advocacy for additional training in the complaint process for Cabinet and the Board of Ministry.
- 45 • Continued work on a Clergy Harassment Policy.
- 46 • Collaborated with GCSRW and other annual conference COSROW leaders.
- 47 • Celebrating Women’s History Month and the 70th Anniversary of Women’s Ordination.

48
 49 This year at Annual Conference, you will hear from COSROW about our ongoing work toward a
 50 comprehensive Clergy Harassment Policy that will lead the Annual Conference in addressing the harm

1 that clergy sometimes face during their ministry. We anticipate finalizing our policies, procedures, and
2 support structures in 2026 so that they may be brought to Annual Conference 2027.

3
4 We have also introduced the practice of monitoring to this year's Annual Conference session.
5 Monitoring is a process of observing behaviors, participation, and inclusivity in United Methodist Church
6 meetings to identify barriers to full, equal access. As we convene this year, you will notice that our
7 business meetings will include updates from our monitoring team and that monitors will be collecting
8 observations and data in each gathered session and scheduled worship service to share in our reporting.
9 Monitoring is not policing but rather helping us to notice what is going well and where we can continue
10 to grow in inclusiveness as we work together. You will hear more about monitoring in our opening
11 remarks during conference this year. We look forward to supporting one another in our work!

12
13 In addition to these projects, COSROW continues to seek best practices and make appropriate updates
14 to our Sexual Ethics and Parental Leave policies. We also continue to monitor clergy salaries for equity
15 and hope to continue to expand our work in the year ahead.

16
17 This year, as we mark the 70th Anniversary of Women's Ordination, we invite you to join us in
18 celebrating the women (both lay and clergy) who make our ministries possible in East Ohio! Take a few
19 moments to review the Conference website for our article titled "Celebrating the Ministry of Women"
20 published in March for some ideas or reach out to us and we'd be happy to collaborate!

21
22 It is our prayer that COSROW's ongoing work will help move the Annual Conference closer to God's
23 vision for full and equal participation of all God's beloved children in the total life of The United
24 Methodist Church here in East Ohio and beyond. We remain committed to this work and to new
25 possibilities for service as we as we partner with you in service, prayer, and love.

26 27 28 **Board of Camps & Retreat Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2026**

29 *Submitted by Rev. Allison LeBrun, chairperson*

30 31 **A Year of Transition, Clarity, and Strategic Strengthening**

32 This past year has marked a significant season of transition for our Camps & Retreat Ministries. The Rev.
33 Gary Jones, who faithfully directed these ministries for 24 years, retired in the Fall of 2025. We give
34 thanks for his steady leadership, his heart for Camps & Retreat Ministries, and the foundation he helped
35 build across our camp sites.

36
37 This interim period, started at his retirement, in combination with ongoing post-pandemic, post-
38 disaffiliation, and East & West Ohio Conference union discussions, brought the conversation of the
39 sustainability of our Camps & Retreat Ministries to the forefront. Our current realities create the
40 opportunity to evaluate how our Camps & Retreat Ministries are structured, supported, and positioned
41 for long-term sustainability.

42
43 Out of this season, the Conference initiated a sustainability study to thoughtfully discern the most
44 faithful and responsible path forward for East Ohio's Camps & Retreat Ministries. This work is rooted in
45 ensuring that our camps remain vibrant, missionally aligned, and structurally sound for the generations
46 to come.

47 48 **Leadership Transition & Structural Clarity**

49 As part of this transition, two new Conference-level leadership roles have been established to
50 strengthen clarity, accountability, and operational effectiveness across all camp sites:

- Camps Operations and Programs Director
- Camp Administration, Development & Marketing Director

These roles reflect an intentional leadership design that differentiates ministry delivery from the systems that support and sustain that ministry. Together, they create a complementary structure designed to reduce overload, clarify authority, and strengthen both program quality and long-term sustainability.

Camps Operations and Programs Director – Mr. Benjamin (Ben) Wilde

Ben Wilde joins the Connectional Ministries team with more than 16 years of involvement in East Ohio Camping Ministry. He has served as counselor, program director, assistant director, and maintenance team member at Camp Asbury. In his new Conference-level role, Ben provides leadership for ministry direction, program quality, safety standards, and the development of site directors across all camps. His deep institutional knowledge and lived experience of camp as a formative faith community position him to strengthen consistency, collaboration, and excellence in the lived camp experience.

Camp Administration, Development & Marketing Director – Rev. Hannah Weisbrod

An ordained Elder whose faith and call were shaped at Camp Wanake, The Rev. Hannah Weisbrod now leads the administrative systems, financial coordination, development strategy, and communications infrastructure that sustains and grows camp ministry. Her role ensures long-term organizational clarity, donor engagement, and sustainable support for the transformational work taking place at our camp sites.

Purpose of the Sustainability Study

The sustainability study has been initiated to identify the administrative and operational structure that best fits the future of our Camps & Retreat Ministries – one that is missionally aligned, financially responsible, and organizationally sustainable. The study is not designed to determine whether camps should close, but rather to discern what structural model will best ensure vitality and stewardship into the future. It focuses on long-term sustainability, governance clarity, financial coordination, and ministry alignment. It is anticipated that the full report and recommendations will be ready to share with the Annual Conference.

Gratitude for Site Leadership

During this season of transition and evaluation, we extend deep appreciation to our site directors:

- Wanake Camp and Retreat Center – Julie Lantt
- Camp Asbury – John Cruz
- Camp Aldersgate – Meredith Mateer

Their steady leadership, faithful service, and daily commitment to hospitality and ministry have ensured that our camps continue to serve churches, families, and communities with excellence.

We are especially thankful for the steady and faithful leadership Julie Lantt offered as acting director of Camps & Retreat Ministries until the hiring process was concluded. Her service was essential to the continuity of camp operations during this period of transition.

Transformational Ministry Across Generations

At the heart of Camps & Retreat Ministries are the life-transforming encounters with God that take place across our sites. Children and youth experience the love of the Creator of the Universe through connections with nature. They experience the saving grace of Jesus in sacred community. They experience the power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. Camp is a safe and holy place where God meets us, to plant seeds of faith as well as bring fruit to bear. For many, camp is the first place they pray aloud, the first place they serve alongside peers, and the first place they sense that God knows them by

1 name. We also know that so many of us in our Conference experienced our call to ministry through our
2 Camps & Retreat Ministries.

3
4 Retreat ministry has continued to grow as a significant and positive dimension of our camping work.
5 Congregations, clergy groups, youth ministries, leadership teams, and community partners are
6 increasingly utilizing our sites for retreats, renewal events, and formation experiences throughout the
7 year. This expanding retreat ministry strengthens both the spiritual impact and the sustainability of our
8 camps, extending their reach beyond the summer season and deepening their connection to local
9 churches.

10
11 In 2025 the East Ohio Conference Camps – Aldersgate, Asbury, and Wanake – made God’s love real for
12 7,148 guests and campers as the sites made disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
13 In addition, more than 90% of summer campers reported that they grew in their faith and numerous
14 campers made first-time commitments to Jesus.

15
16 We are deeply grateful for the continued faithful support of East Ohio congregations whose
17 participation, volunteer leadership, financial generosity, and prayers sustain these sacred spaces.

18
19 Camps & Retreat Ministries is not simply a program of the Conference — it is a shared ministry of the
20 whole connection. Together, we steward places where lives are changed, leaders are formed, and the
21 love of Christ is encountered in tangible and lasting ways.

22 23 **Looking Ahead**

24 This is a season of thoughtful discernment and hopeful direction. By pairing strong ministry leadership
25 with strengthened administrative and development strategy, East Ohio Camps are positioned to thrive
26 in both mission and infrastructure.

27
28 We remain committed to stewarding these sacred spaces where lives are shaped, faith is deepened, and
29 leaders are formed for the transformation of the world.

30
31 Learn more about Camps & Retreat Ministries on the Conference website at
32 <https://www.eocumc.com/camps/campsinfo.html>.

33

2026 Resolutions**Resolution 2026-01****“Support for Creation Care and the Green Church Movement”**

Whereas: the Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it (Psalm 24); and God desires for people to be faithful stewards of the land.

Whereas: The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state, “We acknowledge that unsustainable human activities have placed the entirety of God’s creation in peril ... Rather than treating creation as if it were placed here solely for humanity’s use and consumption, we are called to practice responsible stewardship and to live in right relationship with the Creator and with the whole of God’s creation.”

Whereas: General Conference 2024 passed a resolution stating, “That creation care and justice will be lifted up in all areas of ministry and mission, including preaching, liturgy, communications, education, outreach, and advocacy so that the church will become an increasingly effective witness of loving God and neighbor.” (Green Team Formation Resolution)

Whereas: The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church released a letter on November 4, 2025, proclaiming, “The bishops of The United Methodist Church commit to giving continued support in this endeavor to do no harm to God’s world, to continue to advocate for creation justice, and to give voice and leadership to our commitment to care for all of God’s creation.”

Whereas: the Ohio Episcopal Area has created the Green Church Movement to equip, empower, and encourage Ohio congregations to care for God’s creation by making their properties and programs more environmentally friendly.

Therefore, Be it Resolved: that the East Ohio Conference supports and encourages local churches to join the Green Church Movement by

- signing the Green Church Pledge,
- completing the Green Church Sustainability Audit,
- attending the Green Church training, and/or
- earning Green Church certification.

Be it Further Resolved: that the East Ohio Conference urges the Connectional Ministries Team to offer resources to equip local churches to take tangible steps towards a more sustainable future; develop practical tools to assist congregations in reaching their sustainability goals; and provide information on opportunities to engage with creation care through E-News, the Conference website, district newsletters, and trainings/workshops.

Be it Further Resolved: that the East Ohio Conference encourages the Board of Missions to provide a verbal report and update on the progress of the Green Church Movement each year at its Annual Conference session.

Submitted by East Ohio Board of Missions, East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action, and East Ohio Board of Multicultural Ministries

Resolution 2026-02**“Creation of an Ohio Area Substance Abuse Task Force”**

Whereas: Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) are diseases of the mind and body and are not the result of moral failure and they do not need to be the end of one’s ministry.

Whereas: addiction to alcohol and drugs has become a pervasive crisis across the United States, representing a significant public-health emergency.

Whereas: the disease of addiction does not discriminate, affecting United Methodist clergy and laity, their families, local congregations, and the wider community.

Whereas: we are bound in covenant with one another, affirming that when one member suffers, all suffer. As people committed to grace and compassion, we pledge to care for all those impacted by addiction without judgment or distinction.

Therefore, Be it Resolved: we encourage and support the creation of an Ohio Area Substance Abuse Task Force to help increase awareness, provide support, and develop practical resources for clergy, laity, and conference or district staff who are facing substance-related challenges. The task force may review current practices, identify best practices for prevention, support, and recovery, and develop educational and communication resources such as E-News articles, podcasts, Portico resources, and other appropriate tools to strengthen understanding and compassionate response within the Ohio Area. We invite the East Ohio Connectional Table to consider convening such a task force. Should a task force be formed, it could include five persons from each annual conference to participate, in consultation with appropriate conference leadership bodies such as the Cabinets, Connectional Ministries, Offices of Financial & Administrative Services, and Boards of Ministry. In forming the task force, careful attention should be given to individuals with lived experience in recovery.

Coordination of this work may be supported through Connectional Ministries, recognizing that substance-related challenges affect both clergy and laity and require a coordinated approach to wellness, education, and recovery support.

Financial implications related to this work should be considered in consultation with the Offices of Financial & Administrative Services and conference leadership and carried out within available resources.

Submitted by the Ohio Addiction/Recovery Ministry Team

Douglas Damron, Clergy, West Ohio

Darryl Fairchild, Clergy, West Ohio

Allyssa Graves, Clergy, West Ohio

Nichole Fewell, Clergy, East Ohio

Jennifer Whitmore, Clergy, East Ohio

James Waugh, Clergy, West Ohio

Bryan Bucher, Clergy, West Ohio

Marcella Ciccotelli, Clergy, West Ohio

The following persons from East and West Ohio have signed in support of this legislation:

Rev. Rosario Picardo, West Ohio

Rev. Douglas Dean, West Ohio

Rev. Jason Hockran, East Ohio

Rev. Kathleen Herington, West Ohio

Lisa K. Wachenfeld, West Ohio

Bobbi Ruddock, West Ohio

Rev. Taelor Hickey, West Ohio

Rev. Tamara Wilden, East Ohio

Rev. Deborah Stevens, West Ohio

Rev. David Meredith, West Ohio

Rev. Karen Muntzing, West Ohio

Rev. Matthew Anderson, East Ohio

Rev. Christopher Heckaman, West Ohio

Rev. Todd Anderson, West Ohio

Rev. Brian Law, West Ohio

Rev. Jennifer K Bailey, West Ohio

Rev. Paul Risler, West Ohio

Rev. Dennis W. Miller, West Ohio

Rev. Nancy Day-Achauer, West Ohio

Rev. Rae Lynn Schleif, West Ohio

Rev. Larry C. Clark, West Ohio
 Rev. Robbie Scott, West Ohio
 Rev. Jason Wellman, West Ohio
 Rev. Lisa Kerwin, West Ohio
 Rev. April Blaine, West Ohio
 Rev. Barb Sholis, West Ohio
 Rev. Scott Russ, West Ohio
 Rev. Joon-Sik Park, West Ohio
 Rev. Barry Burns, West Ohio
 Rev. Colleen Ogle, West Ohio
 Rev. Don Wilson, West Ohio
 Rev. Thomas A. Snyder, East Ohio
 Rev. Jennifer Miller, West Ohio
 Rev. Peggy L. Welch, East Ohio
 Rev. Joseph M. Payne, West Ohio
 Rev. Michele (Mimi) Luebbers, West Ohio
 Rev. Deborah K. Stevens, West Ohio
 Rev. Jessica Stonecypher, West Ohio
 Rev. Joe Ziraldo, West Ohio
 Rev. R. Scott Miller, West Ohio
 Rev. David Weaver, West Ohio

Rev. Alexandra J. Rode, West Ohio
 Rev. Suzanne Fountaine, West Ohio
 Rev. Don Wallick, West Ohio
 Rev. Michael Slaughter, West Ohio
 Rev. Andrea Curry, West Ohio
 Rev. Bruce Dickerson, West Ohio
 Rev. Linda Wallick, West Ohio
 Rev. Stanley T. Ling, West Ohio
 Rev. Rachel Billups, West Ohio
 Rev. Stephen Bennett, West Ohio
 Rev. Glenn Schwerdtfeger, West Ohio
 Rev. Jeremy Moyers, West Ohio
 Rev. Henry Stringer, West Ohio
 Rev. Marla Elifritz Brown, West Ohio
 Rev. Joe Ziraldo, West Ohio
 Rev. Andy Wagner, West Ohio
 Rev. Caleb Henry, West Ohio
 Rev. Christian J. Taylor, West Ohio
 Rev. Bradford Olson, West Ohio
 Rev. Angie Cox, West Ohio

1

2

3 **Resolution 2026-03**4 **“Concerning Christian Nationalism”**

5

6 **General Church Budget Implications: None**7 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**

8

9 **Whereas:** Jesus taught, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that everyone who believes
 10 in him may not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

11

12 **Whereas:** Christian nationalists affirm that “God has given the United States particular blessings and
 13 privileges not available to people in other countries ...” (Retrieved from National Council of Churches
 14 [https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness-ncc/the-dangers-of-christian-nationalism-in-the-](https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness-ncc/the-dangers-of-christian-nationalism-in-the-united-states-a-policy-statement-of-the-national-council-of-churches/)
 15 [united-states-a-policy-statement-of-the-national-council-of-churches/](https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness-ncc/the-dangers-of-christian-nationalism-in-the-united-states-a-policy-statement-of-the-national-council-of-churches/), April 19th 2023).

16

17 **Whereas:** in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Free Exercise clause reads, in
 18 part, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free
 19 exercise thereof ...”.

20

21 **Whereas:** Christian nationalists affirm that “The United States was founded as a Christian nation ... only
 22 Christians are the proper custodians of this nation’s heritage ... (and) Christianity should have privileged
 23 status in the United States, particularly in matters of law and political policy.” (Retrieved from National
 24 Council of Churches, above.).

25

26 **Whereas:** the scriptures affirm the Judeo Christian priority of hospitality and mercy, “You shall treat the
 27 stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you
 28 were strangers in the land of Egypt ...” (Leviticus 19:34), and “Then the king will say to those at his right
 29 hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

1 foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me
2 something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was
3 sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” (Matthew 25:34-36)
4

5 **Whereas:** Dr. David W. Scott, a Methodist historical researcher and the director of Mission Theology at
6 the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, recently noted, “There’s a long
7 history of Christian nationalism in the United States, and it has often been the type of nationalism that
8 tries to exclude others. American Christian nationalism has tried to define the United States as a native
9 white Protestant nation and exclude all others: Catholics, African Americans, indigenous peoples,
10 immigrants, Jews, Muslims, etc.” (Retrieved from [www.umc.org/en/content/what-is-christian-](http://www.umc.org/en/content/what-is-christian-nationalism#)
11 [nationalism#](http://www.umc.org/en/content/what-is-christian-nationalism#), February 28th 2023).
12

13 **Whereas:** Christian nationalists affirm that “People who practice other religions or none cannot be fully
14 American – they are not welcomed, their voices are discounted, and they are not to be trusted with
15 political and cultural leadership.” (Retrieved from National Council of Churches, above).
16

17 **Whereas:** there is no precedent or reference for the establishment or support of Christian theocratic
18 government in the United States Constitution, or in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist*
19 *Church*.
20

21 **Therefore, Be It Resolved:** that the East Ohio Conference support the Conference Board of Church &
22 Society document, stating that the philosophy, goals, and values espoused by Christian nationalism are
23 inconsistent with the United States Constitution, and with the history, teachings, and practice of the
24 United Methodist Church, and as such, the advocacy of Christian nationalism is unacceptable in the
25 congregations of the East Ohio Conference. The document shall also include supporting information and
26 attach Study Materials on Christian nationalism for use by congregations and groups.
27

28 **Be It Further Resolved:** that the East Ohio Conference request that the Conference Board of Church &
29 Society distribute the Document to all congregations in the East Ohio Conference, to be distributed to
30 their membership, and also to distribute a copy of the Study Materials to each congregation.
31

32 *Submitted by East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action, East Ohio Board of Multicultural*
33 *Ministries, and East Ohio United Women in Faith.*
34
35

36 **Resolution 2026-04**

37 **“The East Ohio Conference and Disabilities”**

38

39 **Whereas:** the Lord Jesus Christ set the example of ministering to those with disabilities as a priority of
40 his earthly ministry.
41

42 **Whereas:** we as United Methodists have a policy of “Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors” .
43

44 **Whereas:** people around the world are affected by disabilities caused by land mines, war, disasters and
45 natural causes, and one in five Americans have one or more disabilities.
46

47 **Whereas:** *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, in paragraph 2533.6, mandates that
48 each local church remove barriers to full participation for people with disabilities. In addition, it requires
49 trustees to conduct annual accessibility audits of buildings and grounds focusing on parking, entrances,
50 restrooms and communication.

1 **Whereas:** *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, in paragraph 140 calls the church to be
 2 an inclusive church. This means the freedom for total involvement of all persons who meet the
 3 requirements of *The Book of Discipline* in the membership and leadership of the church at any level and
 4 in every place.

5
 6 **Whereas:** United Methodist Resolution 3002, “The Church and Disabilities”, requires that The United
 7 Methodist Church supports the full implementation of the provisions of the United Nations’ Standard
 8 Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, it urges all congregations and agencies to
 9 implement and enforce the provisions of the Standard Rules, ADA, and all disability-related programs
 10 within every area that members of The United Methodist Church reside with the same vigor and interest
 11 as they would any other law affecting their able-bodied constituency. Furthermore, the General
 12 Conference of The United Methodist Church will show its adherence to the Standard Rules and ADA by
 13 meeting in an accessible location and budgeting for accommodations needed by delegates and non-
 14 delegates.

15
 16 **Therefore, be it resolved,** that the East Ohio Conference shall urge each local congregation to submit
 17 annual Accessibility Audits and take steps to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

18
 19 **Be it further resolved:** that the East Ohio Conference consider providing accessible accommodation for
 20 persons with disability at all meetings, assemblies and conferences and urge that conference boards and
 21 agencies do the same.

22
 23 *Submitted by Ohio Disabilities and Ministries Collaborative and East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social*
 24 *Action. Co-Sponsored by East Ohio Board of Multicultural Ministries.*

25
 26
 27 **Resolution 2026-05**

28 **“Answering the Call of Kairos Palestine II”**

29 **General Church Budget Implications: None**

30 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**

31
 32 **Whereas:** we read in the New Testament, "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were
 33 together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering"
 34 (Hebrews 13:3).

35
 36 **Whereas:** the United Methodist Social Principles state, "We further believe that God calls all members
 37 of the human family to recognize and protect the dignity and worth of all people and to work for the
 38 well-being of all God’s creation. We, therefore, support structures in the church and in civil society that
 39 honor the basic freedoms and rights of all human beings and protect God’s creation."

40
 41 **Whereas:** in the resolution “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land,” adopted and re-
 42 adopted by the United Methodist General Conference in 2012, 2016, and 2024:

- 43
 44
 45
 46
 47
 48
 49
- The United Methodist Church has repeatedly affirmed our solidarity with Palestinian Christians and their message in the original Kairos Palestine Document and has urged all United Methodists to "read about the suffering of Israelis and Palestinians and nonviolent ways of ending the Israeli/Palestinian conflict from the perspective of all faith communities including the ‘Kairos Palestine’ document" of 2009.

- 1 • The United Methodist Church has stated that our church opposes, "continued military occupation
2 of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water
3 resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish
4 settlements, and any vision of a 'Greater Israel' that includes the occupied territories and the
5 whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings."
6

7 **Whereas:** Palestinians in Gaza continue to struggle for survival in the midst of devastation after two
8 years of genocidal assault, while world powers either support or accept plans being developed for
9 endless occupation, dispossession, and ethnic cleansing in Gaza without reference to the inalienable
10 rights and the wishes of the indigenous people of Palestine.
11

12 **Whereas:** Palestinians in the West Bank including East Jerusalem are experiencing a terrifying escalation
13 of military operations, settler attacks, expansion of illegal settlements, and ethnic cleansing from their
14 land, which have reached record levels in 2024-2026, with tens of thousands being displaced, entire
15 Palestinian communities being erased, and plans for permanent annexation of occupied Palestinian
16 territory moving forward in the Israeli government.
17

18 **Whereas:** Palestinian Christians, in the Kairos Palestine II document, titled "A Moment of Truth: Faith in
19 a Time of Genocide" and issued in November 2025, have said to us:
20

- 21 • Referring to the original Kairos Palestine document of 2009: "After prayer and reflection on the
22 suffering of our people under occupation, we released that cry of hope in the absence of hope,
23 affirming our faith in God and our love for our homeland, convinced that our struggle is ultimately
24 about human life and dignity."
25
- 26 • "We live now in a time of genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement unfolding before the
27 eyes of the world. This moment demands from us a new stand, one unlike any before it. It is both
28 a decisive moment and a moment of truth. Today, we renew our stand for truth and our
29 commitment to fundamental religious, theological and moral principles. We look at our reality and
30 take a renewed stand, responding to the voice of the Holy Spirit deep within us, listening to the
31 call of faith in this time of genocide. We renew our message of faith, hope, and love – offering a
32 faith-inspired vision for the time after genocide."
33

34 **Whereas:** in Kairos Palestine II, our Palestinian Christian siblings are calling Christians around the world
35 to repentance for past inaction and to costly solidarity today, a call to "learn to do good; seek justice;
36 rescue the oppressed" (Isaiah 1:17).
37

38 **Whereas:** their call includes rejection of Christian Zionism and all theology that would justify the
39 oppression and destruction of the Palestinian people, as well as rejection of the conflation of
40 antisemitism with opposition to Israeli apartheid and ethnic cleansing.
41

42 **Whereas:** Palestinian Christians, in 2009, issued an urgent call to Christians, "to engage in a process of
43 study, reflection and confession concerning the historic and systemic deprivation of the rights of the
44 Palestinian people, and the use of the Bible by many to justify and support this oppression."
45

46 **Whereas:** three Christian organizations, including United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR), have
47 developed a Congregational Study Guide that provides guidance for in-depth study and discussion of
48 Kairos Palestine II, in addition to valuable supplemental materials for learning, liturgy and more.
49

1 **Whereas:** having heard the Gospel imperative to love our neighbors, pursue justice, and care for the
2 vulnerable, we know that we cannot fulfill that call while remaining silent about the oppression of the
3 Palestinian people and that our solidarity with our Christian siblings in Palestine is urgently needed
4 today.

5
6 **Whereas:** the East Ohio Annual Conference has previously adopted the Resolution 2025-02: “Identifying
7 and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land”.

8
9 **Therefore, Be It Resolved:** that the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
10 supports and endorses the Kairos Palestine II document.

11
12 **Be It Further Resolved:** that the East Ohio Conference strongly urges its congregations and all United
13 Methodist laity and clergy of the conference to engage in study and discussion of Kairos Palestine II with
14 the Congregational Study Guide found at the website of United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)
15 (www.kairosresponse.org), with the goal of the actions and advocacy called for in Kairos Palestine II to
16 follow.

17
18 **Be It Further Resolved:** that the East Ohio Conference also strongly urges each voting member to bring
19 this resolution to their congregation.

20
21 *Submitted by East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action and East Ohio United Women in Faith. Co-*
22 *Sponsored by East Ohio Board of Multicultural Ministries.*

23
24
25 **Resolution 2026-06**

26 **“Doing Justice: The Heart and Soul of Social Action”**

27 **General Church Budget Implications: None**

28 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**

29
30
31 **Whereas:** justice is the foundation of Jesus’ ministry.

32
33 **Whereas:** while the Old Testament addressed the relationship between God and humans, The New
34 Testament recounts Jesus’ life, teachings, and actions that illustrate God’s intentions for humans to be in
35 relationship with one another.

36
37 **Whereas:** the purpose of our collective human lives as asked in one simple question: **“What does the Lord**
38 **require of thee, oh human?”** is answered by the prophets Isaiah and Micah as: **“to do justice, to love**
39 **mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”**

40
41 **Whereas:** Jesus identified behaviors that are unjust and merciless in Matthew 25:41-43 (CEV) “41 Then
42 the king will say to those on his left, ‘Get away from me! You are under God’s curse. Go into the everlasting
43 fire prepared for the devil and his angels! 42 I was hungry, but you did not give me anything to eat, and I
44 was thirsty, but you did not give me anything to drink. 43 I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me,
45 and I was naked, but you did not give me any clothes to wear. I was sick and in jail, but you did not take
46 care of me.”

47
48 **Whereas:** ICE raids targeting immigrant populations in selected U.S. cities and states have caused fear,
49 intimidation, separation, terror for parents and their children, AND resulted in death for some of those
50 aggressively targeted.

1
2 **Whereas:** Immigrant populations which had been welcomed into communities in Ohio have recently
3 experienced increased fears of being targeted and deported as hate speech and ICE raids spread across
4 the country.

5
6 **Whereas:** the long history of The United Methodist Church, along with other major religions, teaches,
7 models, and calls us to welcome the stranger, to love one another, to respond wherever we see need,
8 and where our skills, our commitments, our love calls US to work for justice.

9
10 **Whereas:** each year, United Women in Faith develops justice-focused Biblical curricula. The very origin of
11 United Methodist Women, from which United Women of Faith evolved, is rooted in Ohio's Branche
12 Rickey's Seminole role in integrating/desegregating American baseball leagues, and the Methodist
13 teachings of his mother.

14
15 **Whereas:** Ohio has a long history of social justice initiatives and action: from a plethora of church-
16 sponsored colleges that admitted both females and Black people long before the prestigious Eastern
17 colleges did, to historic secreted "Underground Railroad" sites, to a history of social justice advocacy,
18 writers, speakers, and religious leaders.

19
20 **Whereas:** "Ohio land" has a LONG history of demonstrating John Wesley's core directive, as articulated
21 from Micah: **DO JUSTICE - LOVE MERCY ... WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD.**

22
23 **Therefore, Be It Resolved:** MAY THE PEOPLE OF OHIO LAND CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN OUR LONG
24 COMMITMENT TO "doing Justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with GOD," as we see the needs
25 around and among us, not only in our congregations, but in our neighborhoods, among immigrants,
26 children, and wherever love, grace, and God's love is needed.

27
28 *Submitted by East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action, East Ohio Board of Multicultural Ministries,*
29 *and East Ohio United Women in Faith.*

30
31
32 **Resolution 2026-07**

33 **"On Christian Opposition to Cruel Treatment of Immigrants by the United States Government"**

34 **General Church Budget Implications: None**

35 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**

36
37 **Whereas:** recent and ongoing policies of the United States related to immigration enforcement,
38 detention, and deportation have included practices that subject migrants, immigrants, refugees, and
39 asylum-seekers to cruel and dehumanizing treatment.

40
41 **Whereas:** these policies and practices include large-scale raids and roundups that tear apart families,
42 destabilize communities, and inflict fear and trauma on individuals and neighborhoods across the United
43 States.

44
45 **Whereas:** policies and practices that separate parents and children inflict deep spiritual, emotional, and
46 physical harm on families and are inconsistent with Christian understandings of justice and compassion.

47
48 **Whereas:** Jesus identifies himself with those who are hungry, thirsty, and far from home, declaring, "I
49 was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

50

1 **Whereas:** The United Methodist Social Principles (2025–2028) affirm the dignity, worth, and rights of
2 migrants, immigrants, and refugees, and urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees, and
3 immigrants into their congregations and to provide concrete support.

4
5 **Whereas:** in our Wesleyan tradition, Christians are urged to engage public issues with both conviction
6 and charity, speaking the truth in love, praying for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1–2).

7
8 **Therefore, be it resolved:** that the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby
9 expresses its opposition to the current immigration policies and practices that criminalize, dehumanize,
10 or inflict cruelty upon allies, migrants, immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers.

11
12 **Be it further resolved:** that this opposition is grounded not in partisanship but in our allegiance to Jesus
13 Christ, our obedience to Scripture, and our commitment to the Social Principles and resolutions of The
14 United Methodist Church concerning the dignity and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees.

15
16 **Be it further resolved:** that members, congregations, and ministries within the East Ohio Annual
17 Conference are encouraged to consider practices consistent with our Social Principles, which may
18 include: sustained prayer for migrants, refugees, and immigrants and for those in authority;
19 opportunities for study and holy conversation about immigration, Scripture, and the Social Principles;
20 building relationships of mutual support and solidarity with immigrant communities.

21
22 **Be it further resolved:** that this resolution shall have no direct financial implications for the general
23 church or for the East Ohio Annual Conference beyond minimal administrative costs associated with its
24 dissemination.

25
26 *Submitted by East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action and East Ohio United Women in Faith. Co-*
27 *sponsored by Peninsula United Methodist Church and East Ohio Board of Multicultural Ministries.*

28
29
30 **Resolution 2026-08**

31 **“Of War, and Peace: Welcoming the Stranger in our Midst”**

32 **General Church Budget Implications: None**

33 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**

34
35 **Whereas:** in Matthew 5:44 Jesus says, “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who
36 harass you.”

37
38 **Whereas:** in Matthew 26:52 Jesus says, “Put the sword back into its place. All those who use the sword
39 will die by the sword.”

40
41 **Whereas:** the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 2:4 says, “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their
42 swords into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war
43 anymore.”

44
45 **Whereas:** John Wesley described war as a “monster” that excludes reason, virtue, and Humanity. He
46 believed it stemmed from “evil desire, envy, or hatred.”

47
48 **Whereas:** The United Methodist Social Principles, Paragraph 164.F “War and Military Service” states,
49 “The church deploras war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all
50 disputes.”

1
2 **Whereas:** United Methodist Resolution 6129 “The United Methodist Church and Peace” States, “But we
3 are called to be peacemakers and ministers of reconciliation until our Lord comes.”
4

5 **Whereas:** *war occurs when self-interests of powerful groups conflict with respecting and maintaining the*
6 *health and wellness of all people.*
7

8 **Whereas:** because the temptation to fight is often self-serving, we must examine both the purpose and
9 our objectives before speaking out for or choosing words or actions of aggression.
10

11 **Whereas:** war IS divisive, pitting the interests of select groups, and their actions that will likely cause
12 harm, suffering, even death to our brothers and sisters, but also harming irreparably those causing the
13 harm.
14

15 **Whereas:** unequal access to societies’ resources, unjust treatment of our brothers and sisters,
16 unprovoked attacks of violence on innocent people create *injustices* that call for those who seek to
17 follow God’s will to speak out. Not for OUR own gain, but to sustain the health and wellness of brothers
18 and sisters in Christ, and thus a holy harmony.
19

20 **Whereas:** as some have said, remaining silent, ie., *NOT speaking out* against injustice, which may seem
21 “divisive”.
22

23 **Whereas:** there is, however, a distinction between aggressive action, and standing with others who are
24 experiencing injustice, standing with them, and speaking FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE.
25

26 **Whereas:** Mahatma Gandhi, and HIS witness as he answered a call for JUSTICE, hearing God's voice ask,
27 *"whom shall I send?"* And the prophet answered, *“here am I, send me.”*
28

29 **Whereas:** there is a call, throughout the ages, to do good, to do no harm, and *“To stay in love with the*
30 *Lord...”*
31

32 **Therefore, Be It Resolved:** we are called to live as messengers and models of God’s love: to comfort,
33 feed, protect, and love one another, our brothers and sisters, The Stranger, The IMMIGRANT ...
34 whoever, wherever, they may be ... SO, MAY IT BE, WITH ME!
35

36 *Submitted by East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action, East Ohio Board of Multicultural*
37 *Ministries, and East Ohio United Women in Faith.*
38
39

40 **Resolution 2026-09**

41 **“Supporting Gender Inclusivity, Equal Protection, and the Sacred Worth of Transgender and Non-**
42 **Binary People”**

43 **General Church Budget Implications: None**

44 **East Ohio Conference Implications: Yes**
45

46 **Whereas:** Scripture affirms that God said, “Let us make humankind in our image,” (Genesis 1:26) and
47 that “in the image of God he created them” (Genesis 1:27) which claims the inherent dignity of every
48 person.
49

1 **Whereas:** Jesus proclaims in John 10:10, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly,” which
2 reveals God’s desire for every person to flourish without fear, exclusion or harm.

3
4 **Whereas:** The United Methodist Social Principles state, “all people are of sacred worth and certain basic
5 human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties and
6 protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.” (Social Principles, The
7 Political Community, Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities).

8
9 **Whereas:** The Social Principles further affirm, “We see clear issues of equality and justice in protecting
10 the rightful claims of those with shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual
11 powers of attorney, and other lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve
12 shared contributions, responsibilities and liabilities, and equal protection before the law.” (Social
13 Principles, The Political Community, Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities).

14
15 **Whereas:** The Social Principles also recognizes, “gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by
16 social stigmas, discrimination, coercion and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and
17 civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights
18 and protections for all.” (Social Principles, The Political Community, Sexual Orientations and Gender
19 Identities).

20
21 **Whereas:** The United Methodist Church has approved an amendment to Paragraph 4, 1 Article 4 of The
22 Constitution to add the categories gender and ability so that the constitution now reads, “All persons
23 without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status or economic condition, shall be
24 eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism
25 be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become
26 professing members in any local church in the connection.” (United Methodist Constitution, Paragraph
27 4, Article 4).

28
29 **Whereas:** the United Methodist Baptismal Vows call on us to, “resist evil, injustice, and oppression in
30 whatever forms they present themselves.” (Book of Worship, The Baptismal Covenant 1).

31
32 **Therefore, Be It Resolved:** that the East Ohio Annual Conference, its churches, program areas,
33 ministries, and camps consider adopting non-discrimination policies that include gender identity and
34 gender expression.

35
36 **Be It Further Resolved:** that the East Ohio Annual Conference support civil rights protections for
37 transgender people in employment, housing, education, healthcare and public accommodations.

38
39 **Be It Further Resolved:** that East Ohio Annual Conference and all churches consider providing coverage
40 for gender-affirming healthcare to include hormone therapy, surgical care, counseling, and voice
41 therapy.

42
43 **Be It Further Resolved** that gender identity is not a barrier to candidacy, ordination, or appointment for
44 clergy or to employment for lay people within the East Ohio Annual Conference and its churches.

45
46 *Submitted by East Ohio Methodist Federation for Social Action and East Ohio United Women in Faith. Co-*
47 *Sponsored by East Ohio Reconciling Ministries Network, Commission on the Status and Role of Women*
48 *(COSROW), and East Ohio Board of Multicultural Ministries.*

Covenant Agreements

***Covenant Statement of Relationship
between
The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church
and
All In Community
July 1, 2026-June 30, 2030***

I. History

All In Community is a local ministry initiative that was started in the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2015 and has grown to include the East Ohio Conference in its work. All In Community has a vision of a world of justice, love, and peace filled with people healed from crime and incarceration growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

II. The Meaning of Church Affiliation

Annual Conference affiliation of a Health & Well-being ministry signifies that said ministry is integral to the mission and ministry of the Conference. Through affiliation, the Annual Conference witnesses the accountability of such ministries and publicly commends them as worthy ministries. It testifies that the services provided to nurture healing and wholeness are worthy of the support of the United Methodist churches in East Ohio. It also testifies that both services and employment are non-discriminatory.

III. Theological Statement

Because of affiliation with The United Methodist Church, Health & Well-being institutions have a responsibility to see themselves in a different way than do secular service providers. All In Community considers cooperating with God's ongoing work of helping the "least of these" as central to its mission.

All In Community exists to engage individuals, churches, criminal justice professionals, and community leaders in local efforts to restore hope and support healing for those impacted by the criminal justice system. All In Community is committed to reducing the shame and stigma that comes with criminal justice system involvement and promoting transformational relationships with our justice-involved members and neighbors. We equip and engage congregations and individuals to care for self and others who have harmed and who have been harmed.

IV. Mission

The mission of All In Community is to train, resource, and connect United Methodist churches to embrace members and neighbors impacted by crime and incarceration.

V. Particular Considerations

1. Parties Involved

This Covenant Statement of Relationship is between All In Community and the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. This covenant statement has been reviewed by All In Community, the Health & Well-Being Committee of The East Ohio Conference, and the Connectional Table of The East Ohio Conference. This covenant has been approved by action of the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. Review and Renewal

This Covenant Statement of Relationship will be renewed every quadrennium (every 4 years) unless significant material changes warrant an earlier review and renewal and shall continue in existence until either party, upon a one (1) year notification, indicates the desire to terminate the covenant.

3. Ownership and Control

The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and All In Community shall hereafter recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. Any financial gifts and support between these two bodies would be determined by each independently, weighing the merits of each other's programs and needs. By this affiliation, The East Ohio Conference does not assume a right to exercise control over the management of All In Community.

4. Financial Relationship with the Annual Conference

Each year, All In Community may request financial support from the East Ohio Conference as a Health & Well-Being ministry. Requests will identify specific ministries or purposes.

In addition, All In Community will be considered a Conference Advance Special, which includes use of contact information for the churches and pastors of the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and a designated fund number for financial donations.

5. Responsibilities of Conference Affiliation

Encourages All In Community to hold membership in the Methodist Ministries Network or pursue accreditation in one of the faith-based accreditation bodies, approved by the Health and Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference, which encompass programmatic standards, self-study, and peer review appropriate to church-related institutions.

6. Legal Liability

In accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, All In Community and the East Ohio Conference recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately and without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. It is understood that each party shall not be legally or financially responsible for the other party or any of its affiliates.

7. Reporting

All In Community will voluntarily provide a summary report of a current audit, conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards, annually to the East Ohio Conference for informational purposes, in addition to submitting a year-end report.

8. East Ohio Conference Presence on the Governing Bodies

Because of the deep connection with the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, All In Community pledges a strong commitment to having a significant number of East Ohio Conference United Methodist members on appropriate governance bodies. Where legally possible, All In Community will ask the Bishop of East Ohio for the names of potential members for consideration. It is understood that these persons would serve as advocates of this Covenant and provide connection between the Health & Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference and All In Community.

Affirmation by the East Ohio Conference does not include the right of the Conference to nominate, appoint, and/or reject proposed directors. The control of the nomination and appointment of directors resides solely with All In Community and its Board of Directors.


9. Partnership with East Ohio and the Health and Well-Being Committee

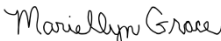
All In Community commits to begin this partnership by naming a representative that will actively participate in the work of the Health and Well-Being committee for the benefit of strengthening

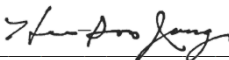
partnerships, networking, and advocacy, discovering, and sharing best practices, engaging in community development and Kingdom work, and building the Beloved Community together.

This Covenant, establishing affiliation relationship between All In Community and The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, entered upon the date stated below, is mutually subscribed to by the parties listed below, signing as authorized representatives of their respective organizations.


 February 13, 2026
 (signature and date)
 Jami Nathan, Ministries Coordinator
 All In Community West Ohio Conference of the UMC


 February 15, 2026
 (signature and date)
 Karen Cook, Executive Director, Connectional Ministries
 West Ohio Conference of the UMC


 February 16, 2026
 (signature and date)
 Mariellyn Grace, Director of Mission Engagement
 East Ohio Conference of The UMC


 February 20, 2026
 (signature and date)
 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
 Resident Bishop of the East Ohio Conference of The UMC

**Covenant Statement of Relationship
 between
 The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church
 and
 Heart 4 The City Mission Church
 referred to herein as “the agency”**

July 1, 2026-June 30, 2030

I. History

Heart 4 The City began in 2011 as an extension of ministry from Northampton United Methodist Church. The D.S. at the time, Valerie Stoltz, closed Faith UMC, and gave the property/building to NUMC to begin a new outreach. We started out as Heart 4 The City, an outreach center for the United Methodist Church and served as such for about 10 years before officially becoming Heart 4 The City United Methodist Mission Church, which we currently still serve as.

II. The Meaning of Church Affiliation

Annual Conference affiliation of a Health & Well-being ministry signifies that said ministry is integral to the mission and ministry of the Conference. Through affiliation, the Annual Conference witnesses the accountability of such ministries and publicly commends them as worthy ministries. It testifies that the services provided to nurture healing and wholeness are worthy of the support of the United Methodist churches in East Ohio. It also testifies that both services and employment are non-discriminatory.

III. Theological Statement

Because of affiliation with The United Methodist Church, Health & Well-being institutions have a responsibility to see themselves in a different way than do secular service providers. The agency considers cooperating with God's ongoing work of helping the "least of these" as central to its mission.

As a United Methodist Church and part of the East Ohio Conference, Heart 4 The City adheres to and abides by the expressed theology and disciplines of the United Methodist Church as evidenced in the Book of Discipline.

IV. Mission

As a "mission" church, we seek to serve others in our community and to partner with other members of the community and like-minded organizations in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in ways that help our community grow stronger practically and spiritually. Examples include a weekly food distribution, a monthly community store, providing space for recovery groups to meet, and a Nepali worship church.

V. Particular Considerations

1. Parties Involved

This Covenant Statement of Relationship is between the agency and the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. This covenant statement has been reviewed by the agency, the Health & Well-Being Committee of The East Ohio Conference, and the Connectional Table of The East Ohio Conference. This covenant has been approved by action of the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. Review and Renewal

This Covenant Statement of Relationship will be renewed every quadrennium (every four years) unless significant material changes warrant an earlier review and renewal and shall continue in existence until either party, upon a one (1) year notification, indicates the desire to terminate the covenant.

3. Ownership and Control

The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and the agency shall hereafter recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. Any financial gifts and support between these two bodies would be determined by each independently, weighing the merits of each other's programs and needs. By this affiliation, The East Ohio Conference does not assume the right to exercise control over the management of the agency.

4. Financial Relationship with the Annual Conference

Each year, the agency may request financial support from the East Ohio Conference as a Health & Well-Being ministry. Requests will identify specific ministries or purposes.

The agency will be considered a Conference Advance Special, which includes use of contact information for the churches and pastors of the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and a designated fund number for financial donations. The agencies will also receive an equal share of any Golden Cross Special Sunday offerings collected by conference churches.

5. Responsibilities of Conference Affiliation

Encourages the agency to hold membership in the Methodist Ministries Network or pursue accreditation in one of the faith-based accreditation bodies, approved by the Health and Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference, which encompass programmatic standards, self-study, and peer review appropriate to church-related institutions.

6. Legal Liability

In accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, the agency and the East Ohio Conference recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately and without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. It is understood that each party shall not be legally or financially responsible for the other party or any of its affiliates.

7. Reporting

The agency will voluntarily provide a summary report of a current audit, conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards, annually to the East Ohio Conference for informational purposes, in addition to submitting a year-end report.

8. East Ohio Conference Presence on Governing Bodies

Because of the deep connection with the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, the agency pledges a strong commitment to having a significant number of East Ohio Conference United Methodist members on appropriate governance bodies. Where legally possible, the agency will ask the Bishop of East Ohio for the names of potential members for consideration. It is understood that these persons would serve as advocates of this Covenant and provide connection between the Health & Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference and the agency.

Affirmation by the East Ohio Conference does not include the right of the Conference to nominate, appoint, and/or reject proposed directors. The control of the nomination and appointment of directors resides solely with the agency and its Board of Directors.

9. Partnership with East Ohio and the Health and Well-Being Committee

The agency commits to begin this partnership by naming a representative that will actively participate in the work of the Health and Well-Being committee for the benefit of; strengthening partnerships, networking, and advocacy; discovering and sharing best practices; engaging in community development and Kingdom work; and building the Beloved Community together.

This Covenant, establishing affiliation relationship between the agency and The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, entered upon the date stated below, is mutually subscribed to by the parties listed below, signing as authorized representatives of their respective organizations.

Brett Bartels, 03/10/2026

(signature and date)
Heart 4 the City Pastor

Wendy Cline, 03/10/2026

(signature and date)
Administration Team Chair – Heart 4 The City

Marcellyn Grace 3/18/2026

(signature and date)
Marcellyn Grace,
Director of Mission Engagement, East Ohio Conference of The UMC

Hee-Soo Jung 3/20/2026

(signature and date)
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Resident Bishop, East Ohio Conference of The UMC

**Covenant Statement of Relationship
between
The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church
and
The Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland
*referred to herein as “the agency”***

July 1, 2026-June 30, 2030

I. History

The People’s Hope UMC was founded in the Gordon Square Neighborhood of Cleveland in the late 1800s and became The Nehemiah Mission in 2003, after the congregation of the People’s Hope UMC became too small to sustain itself. Nehemiah was founded by a team including the North Shore District Superintendent, Rev. H. Dan Drew, and Rev. Dr. Jan Yandel. In the decades since, Nehemiah has partnered with dozens of local UMC congregations and hosted mission trip groups from around the country to serve its community in the heart of Cleveland. Nehemiah’s Bread on Bridge program, in particular, has given UMC congregations from across the region the opportunity to put their faith into practice by preparing and serving a community meal.

II. The Meaning of Church Affiliation

Annual Conference affiliation of a Health & Well-being ministry signifies that said ministry is integral to the mission and ministry of the Conference. Through affiliation, the Annual Conference witnesses the accountability of such ministries and publicly commends them as worthy ministries. It testifies that the services provided to nurture healing and wholeness are worthy of the support of the United Methodist churches in East Ohio. It also testifies that both services and employment are non-discriminatory.

III. Theological Statement

Because of affiliation with The United Methodist Church, Health & Well-being institutions have a responsibility to see themselves in a different way than do secular service providers. The agency considers cooperating with God’s ongoing work of helping the “least of these” as central to its mission.

“Send me to the city... so that I can rebuild it.” — Nehemiah 2:5

“Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” — Luke 3:11

Nehemiah’s work is grounded in prayer and service, trusting that Jesus’ love guides our actions and sustains our ministries. We provide food, shelter, clothing, and fellowship with no pretense or expectation from those who receive it. We strive to create a community where everyone can feel God’s love and be welcome.

In our weekly bible study before the community meal, our volunteer Chaplain guides community members in reflection on scripture, giving all who participate a unique perspective on the word of God and how meaningful it is to folks from all walks of life. The conversations had during bible study make their way to tables of the community meal and to the streets of Cleveland outside. We find this combination of food for the body and soul to be transformative for both those who give and those who receive it.

IV. Mission

Inviting and empowering volunteers to provide housing, meals, and programs rooted in faith, while working with international newcomers and neighbors to create a safe and welcoming community.

V. Particular Considerations

1. Parties Involved

This Covenant Statement of Relationship is between the agency and the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. This covenant statement has been reviewed by the agency, the Health & Well-Being Committee of The East Ohio Conference, and the Connectional Table of The East Ohio Conference. This covenant has been approved by action of the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. Review and Renewal

This Covenant Statement of Relationship will be renewed every quadrennium (every four years) unless significant material changes warrant an earlier review and renewal and shall continue in existence until either party, upon a one (1) year notification, indicates the desire to terminate the covenant.

3. Ownership and Control

The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and the agency shall hereafter recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. Any financial gifts and support between these two bodies would be determined by each independently, weighing the merits of each other's programs and needs. By this affiliation, The East Ohio Conference does not assume the right to exercise control over the management of the agency.

4. Financial Relationship with the Annual Conference

Each year, the agency may request financial support from the East Ohio Conference as a Health & Well-Being ministry. Requests will identify specific ministries or purposes.

The agency will be considered a Conference Advance Special, which includes use of contact information for the churches and pastors of the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and a designated fund number for financial donations. The agencies will also receive an equal share of any Golden Cross Special Sunday offerings collected by conference churches.

5. Responsibilities of Conference Affiliation

Encourages the agency to hold membership in the Methodist Ministries Network or pursue accreditation in one of the faith-based accreditation bodies, approved by the Health and Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference, which encompass programmatic standards, self-study, and peer review appropriate to church-related institutions.

6. Legal Liability

In accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, the agency and the East Ohio Conference recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately and without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. It is understood that each party shall not be legally or financially responsible for the other party or any of its affiliates.

7. Reporting

The agency will voluntarily provide a summary report of a current audit, conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards, annually to the East Ohio Conference for informational purposes, in addition to submitting a year-end report.

8. East Ohio Conference Presence on Governing Bodies

Because of the deep connection with the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, the agency pledges a strong commitment to having a significant number of East Ohio Conference United Methodist members on appropriate governance bodies. Where legally possible, the agency will ask the Bishop of East Ohio for the names of potential members for consideration. It is understood that these persons would serve as advocates of this Covenant and provide connection between the Health & Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference and the agency.

Affirmation by the East Ohio Conference does not include the right of the Conference to nominate, appoint, and/or reject proposed directors. The control of the nomination and appointment of directors resides solely with the agency and its Board of Directors.

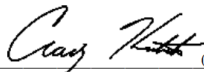
9. Partnership with East Ohio and the Health and Well-Being Committee

The agency commits to begin this partnership by naming a representative that will actively participate in the work of the Health and Well-Being committee for the benefit of; strengthening partnerships, networking, and advocacy; discovering and sharing best practices; engaging in community development and Kingdom work; and building the Beloved Community together.

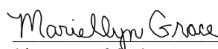
This Covenant, establishing affiliation relationship between the agency and The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, entered upon the date stated below, is mutually subscribed to by the parties listed below, signing as authorized representatives of their respective organizations.

 03/12/2026

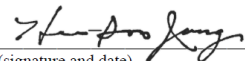
(signature and date)
Graham Ball, Executive Director
The Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland

 03/12/2026

(signature and date)
Craig Kotnik, President of the Board
The Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland

 3/18/2026

(signature and date)
Mariellyn Grace, Director of Mission Engagement
East Ohio Conference of The UMC

 3/20/2026

(signature and date)
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Resident Bishop of the East Ohio Conference of The UMC

**Covenant Statement of Relationship
between
The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church
and
The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc.
*referred to herein as “the agency”***

July 1, 2026-June 30, 2030

I. History

1950s & 1960s

In 1959, the Urban Mission received its start as the Mill Men's Hostel, an outreach to Wheeling-Pittsburgh Company workers. For fourteen years, the Mill Men's Hostel and its only Director, the Rev. Robert Henthorn, provided hard-working mill workers with a place of refuge between shifts. Workers would come to rest, refuel, worship and receive pastoral care. Once the mills began to shut down, the purpose of the Mill Men's Hostel changed. There was now a need to reach out to an entire community - a community hurting from severe economic decline.

1970s

In the early 1970's, the Urban Mission was established. In 1973, Rev. Fred Gaston was appointed as Urban Minister to the Steubenville area under the United Methodist Church. His mandate was to explore places and situations where a Christian presence and ministry seemed viable.

1980s

With the retirement of Rev. Gaston, Rev. Robert Hutton was appointed Director in 1981. He served until his death in 1987. Rev. Hutton was influential in expanding the ministry of families and the homeless, as well as to Vietnam Veterans.

The Mission operated from the Calvary United Methodist Church until 1984 at which time the agency moved to Adams Street. These facilities proved to be too small and in December 1986, a three-story building, located at 317 North Street, became available.

Rev. Roger Skelley-Watts was appointed Executive Director in April 1988. The ministry with the homeless was enlarged with the establishment of the Hutton House, a temporary shelter for families in need.

In 1989, the Mission was given a Mission Center on 301 North Fifth Street, which was the former Fifth Street United Methodist Church.

1990s

In 1992, Rev. Ricky Riggs became the Executive Director and during his years of ministry the Mission continued to expand. In 1994, a four-story building was purchased to serve as the Warehouse.

In 1993, a local Women's Center based out of the Simpson Community Developer's Program merged with the Urban Mission. This merger combined two inner city ministries of the United Methodist Church. This program was renamed the Neighborhood Community Development Center to reflect the inclusiveness of the ministry.

Mrs. Sharon Kirtdoll, founder and director of the Community Developer Program, continued as Director of the outreach ministries to the African American community of the Steubenville area, and serves to this day.

2000s

In 2002, Rev. Bruce Hitchcock stepped into the Executive Director's role. During his tenure, the Mission provided approximately 1,400 families with food each month, over 300 hot meals each week, an annual Christmas Kids program providing gifts to 800 children and teens, the expansion of the Hutton House to house up to 12 families, a JOSHUA work camp ministry, and a variety of children's programs. Rev. Hitchcock was also involved in the creation of the 4th Street Health Center in Steubenville, OH, a separate non profit.

2010s - 2020s

In 2011, Rev. Ashley Steele became the first female Executive Director at the Urban Mission. During this time, the Urban Mission has expanded its homeless ministry, adopted a Client Choice Food Pantry model, opened a thrift store, purchased an abandoned grocery store and is now renovating this space to create a one-stop center for the community to access resources, education, training and employment.

In, 2025 Rev. Dr. Kimberly Arbaugh became the Executive Director at the Urban Mission. In the past year the Mission has begun the hard work of re-aligning its work to its mission and vision and asking the hard questions of where is God leading us now as we strive to meet the needs of an ever our ever changing communities.

II. The Meaning of Church Affiliation

Annual Conference affiliation of a Health & Well-being ministry signifies that said ministry is integral to the mission and ministry of the Conference. Through affiliation, the Annual Conference witnesses the accountability of such ministries and publicly commends them as worthy ministries. It testifies that the services provided to nurture healing and wholeness are worthy of the support of the United Methodist churches in East Ohio. It also testifies that both services and employment are non-discriminatory.

III. Theological Statement

Because of affiliation with The United Methodist Church, Health & Well-being institutions have a responsibility to see themselves in a different way than do secular service providers. The agency considers cooperating with God's ongoing work of helping the "least of these" as central to its mission.

Our Ministry Philosophy

As a faith-based organization, we believe that every person is made in the image of God, and is a person of value, full of purpose and possibility. At the Urban Mission, we have the unique opportunity to speak these truths into the lives of others through the power of relationships founded on trust, love, and belonging. The Urban Mission was founded on the principles of love, compassion & service. We value our history & all those who have come before us to lay a strong foundation for the future.

- We utilize food and other essential services as a tool to build trust, eliminate barriers, and bring healing and restoration for individuals and families. We provide opportunities for transformation through service, education and hands-on training for people in need of a fresh start. We collaborate on community development and economic initiatives to bring transformational change.

IV. Mission**Our Mission**

We exist to create spaces, conditions, and opportunities where people can experience God's restorative and transformative power, all within a supportive community.

Our Vision

The Urban Mission seeks to be a catalyst for change in our community by sharing God's promises in tangible and visionary ways. We want our community to see that it is full of abundance, purpose and possibility.

V. Particular Considerations

1. Parties Involved

This Covenant Statement of Relationship is between The Urban Mission Ministries and the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. This covenant statement has been reviewed by The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc., the Health & Well-Being Committee of The East Ohio Conference, and the Connectional Table of The East Ohio Conference. This covenant has been approved by action of the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. Review and Renewal

This Covenant Statement of Relationship will be renewed every quadrennium (every four years) unless significant material changes warrant an earlier review and renewal and shall continue in existence until either party, upon a one (1) year notification, indicates the desire to terminate the covenant.

3. Ownership and Control

The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. shall hereafter recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. Any financial gifts and support between these two bodies would be determined by each independently, weighing the merits of each other's programs and needs. By this affiliation, The East Ohio Conference does not assume the right to exercise control over the management of The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc.

4. Financial Relationship with the Annual Conference

Each year, The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. may request financial support from the East Ohio Conference as a Health & Well-Being ministry. Requests will identify specific ministries or purposes.

In addition, The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. will be considered a Conference Advance Special, which includes use of contact information for the churches and pastors of the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and a designated fund number for financial donations.

5. Responsibilities of Conference Affiliation

Encourages The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. to hold membership in the Methodist Ministries Network or pursue accreditation in one of the faith-based accreditation bodies, approved by the Health and Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference, which encompass programmatic standards, self-study, and peer review appropriate to church-related institutions.

6. Legal Liability

In accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, the agency and the East Ohio Conference recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately and without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. It is understood that each party shall not be legally or financially responsible for the other party or any of its affiliates.

7. Reporting

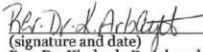
The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. will voluntarily provide a summary report of a current audit, conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards, annually to the East Ohio Conference for informational purposes, in addition to submitting a year-end report.


8. East Ohio Conference Presence on Governing Bodies

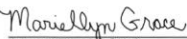
Because of the deep connection with the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. pledges a strong commitment to having a significant number of East Ohio Conference United Methodist members on appropriate governance bodies. Where legally possible, The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. will ask the Bishop of East Ohio for the names of potential members for consideration. It is understood that these persons would serve as advocates of this Covenant and provide connection between the Health & Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference and The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc.

Affirmation by the East Ohio Conference does not include the right of the Conference to nominate, appoint, and/or reject proposed directors. The control of the nomination and appointment of directors resides solely with The Urban Mission Ministries, Inc. and its Board of Directors.

This Covenant, establishing affiliation relationship between the agency and The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, entered upon the date stated below, is mutually subscribed to by the parties listed below, signing as authorized representatives of their respective organizations.


 (signature and date)
 Rev. Dr. Kimberly D. Arbaugh, Urban Mission Executive Director

 3/10/2026
 (signature and date)
 Tim Long, Urban Mission Board President

 3/18/2026
 (signature and date)
 Mariel Lynn Grace,
 Director of Mission Engagement, East Ohio Conference of The UMC

 3/20/2026
 (signature and date)
 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
 Resident Bishop, East Ohio Conference of The UMC

**Covenant Statement of Relationship
between
The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church
and
The West Side Community House
*referred to herein as “the agency”***

July 1, 2026-June 30, 2030

I. History

Community House (WSCH) was founded in 1890 as the Methodist Deaconess Home of Cleveland. WSCH has operated as a private, nonsectarian nonprofit 501(c)3 social service agency since 1964, owned and operated by a board of managers. We work to meet the needs of community residents by providing an array of model programs and services for children, families and older adults. Services are open to all social, racial, ethnic and income groups but are targeted to those who are most vulnerable and at-risk. Our programs strengthen the family, provide opportunities to learn and grow, support independent living, encourage economic self-sufficiency, and renew the life spirit.

II. The Meaning of Church Affiliation

Annual Conference affiliation of a Health & Well-being ministry signifies that said ministry is integral to the mission and ministry of the Conference. Through affiliation, the Annual Conference witnesses the accountability of such ministries and publicly commends them as worthy ministries. It testifies that the services provided to nurture healing and wholeness are worthy of the support of the United Methodist churches in East Ohio. It also testifies that both services and employment are non-discriminatory.

III. Theological Statement

Because of affiliation with The United Methodist Church, Health & Well-being institutions have a responsibility to see themselves in a different way than do secular service providers. The agency considers cooperating with God’s ongoing work of helping the “least of these” as central to its mission.

West Side Community House envisions a people transformed in mind, body and spirit. We will continue to create and refine programs that empower and inspire, and to build relationships that support and sustain our mission. We will cultivate a spirit of neighbor caring for neighbor, which speaks of the 2nd of the greatest commandments of loving your neighbor as yourself. This will give the community back to the people with hope for a brighter future. Leadership walks in a high degree of accountability and transparency that reflects the servant leadership of Jesus and the Disciples.

IV. Mission

To be a resource and support to our community by providing innovative programming and strong partnerships through cultural humility.

V. Particular Considerations

1. Parties Involved

This Covenant Statement of Relationship is between the agency and the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. This covenant statement has been reviewed by the agency, the Health & Well-Being Committee of The East Ohio Conference, and the Connectional Table of The East Ohio Conference. This covenant has been approved by action of the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. Review and Renewal

This Covenant Statement of Relationship will be renewed every quadrennium (every four years) unless significant material changes warrant an earlier review and renewal and shall continue in existence until either party, upon a one (1) year notification, indicates the desire to terminate the covenant.

3. Ownership and Control

The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and the agency shall hereafter recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. Any financial gifts and support between these two bodies would be determined by each independently, weighing the merits of each other's programs and needs. By this affiliation, The East Ohio Conference does not assume the right to exercise control over the management of the agency.

4. Financial Relationship with the Annual Conference

Each year, the agency may request financial support from the East Ohio Conference as a Health & Well-Being ministry. Requests will identify specific ministries or purposes.

The agency will be considered a Conference Advance Special, which includes use of contact information for the churches and pastors of the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and a designated fund number for financial donations. The agencies will also receive an equal share of any Golden Cross Special Sunday offerings collected by conference churches.

5. Responsibilities of Conference Affiliation

Encourages the agency to hold membership in the Methodist Ministries Network or pursue accreditation in one of the faith-based accreditation bodies, approved by the Health and Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference, which encompass programmatic standards, self-study, and peer review appropriate to church-related institutions.

6. Legal Liability

In accordance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*, the agency and the East Ohio Conference recognize each other as independent entities, governed and financed separately and without fiscal or legal responsibility for each other. It is understood that each party shall not be legally or financially responsible for the other party or any of its affiliates.

7. Reporting

The agency will voluntarily provide a summary report of a current audit, conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards, annually to the East Ohio Conference for informational purposes, in addition to submitting a year-end report.

8. East Ohio Conference Presence on Governing Bodies

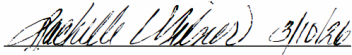
Because of the deep connection with the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, the agency pledges a strong commitment to having a significant number of East Ohio Conference United Methodist members on appropriate governance bodies. Where legally possible, the agency will ask the Bishop of East Ohio for the names of potential members for consideration. It is understood that these persons would serve as advocates of this Covenant and provide connection between the Health & Well-Being Committee of the East Ohio Conference and the agency.

Affirmation by the East Ohio Conference does not include the right of the Conference to nominate, appoint, and/or reject proposed directors. The control of the nomination and appointment of directors resides solely with the agency and its Board of Directors.


9. Partnership with East Ohio and the Health and Well-Being Committee

The agency commits to begin this partnership by naming a representative that will actively participate in the work of the Health and Well-Being committee for the benefit of; strengthening partnerships, networking, and advocacy; discovering and sharing best practices; engaging in community development and Kingdom work; and building the Beloved Community together.

This Covenant, establishing affiliation relationship between the agency and The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, entered upon the date stated below, is mutually subscribed to by the parties listed below, signing as authorized representatives of their respective organizations.

 3/10/26

(signature and date)
Rachelle Milner, West Side Community House

 3/10/26

(signature and date)
Dr. Linda Crowell, Board President, West Side Community House

 3/18/2026

(signature and date)
Mariellyn Grace,
Director of Mission Engagement, East Ohio Conference of The UMC

 3/20/2026

(signature and date)
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Resident Bishop, East Ohio Conference of The UMC

2026 INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**Personnel Committee Report to Annual Conference 2026**

Submitted by Dr. Stephanie Bradford, chairperson

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, and
- leadership moves us forward.

We have continued to work with Bishop Jung in sharing the episcopal leadership with the West Ohio Conference. This has expanded to exploring and working toward further shared leadership positions of East and West Ohio Conferences, enhancing and sharing ministries.

The Personnel Committee, at the guidance and recommendation of Bishop Jung, is beginning to review and address the functioning of the Committee as related to the overall issues related to employment practice. This began through the review of the Personnel Handbook, making effort to secure the finalization of the handbook revisions so that complete implementation can occur.

The Personnel Committee has been successful in now having full committee membership as directed by *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024*. The committee has also continued to consistently meet remotely providing flexibility and ability for efficiency to committee members.

I appreciate the dedication of each member of the Personnel Committee, their willingness to work in new directions to the Committee's work, as well as the opportunity to work with and support the Conference staff and the executive directors in the implementation of ministry of the Church and the East Ohio Conference.

The Personnel Committee has no motions for this Annual Conference.

Board of Congregational Development Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Beth Ortiz, executive director, Discipleship Ministries; and Steven Petrolewicz, 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 grow in 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 the promotion of innovative ministries.

A major focus of the 2025–2026 year was navigating the transition from Strategic Ministries to the newly formed Office of Discipleship Ministries. While offices and structures shifted, the purpose and heart of the Board’s work remained the same.

The Office of Discipleship Ministries exists to cultivate a culture of everyday discipleship across the Ohio Episcopal Area – helping people follow Jesus in daily life and join God’s mission in their communities, celebrating that each person is uniquely called, gifted, and needed. We believe God has placed each of us, and each faith community, in our particular locations for such a time as this. Our work is to help uncover what God is calling forth and to joyfully walk alongside you in that calling.

Discipleship is the heart of the Church and of every believer. Every baptized person is called into ministry, and the work of the Church is therefore a shared calling. Because God is already at work in every community and congregation, our posture is one of listening, gratitude, and building upon what is already alive. Our goal is alignment with God’s design for abundance.

In 2025–2026, the Board and the Office of Discipleship Ministries served the East Ohio Conference in a number of ways, including:

- creating an introductory small-group discipleship course.
- expanding and sharing SEED (Seek, Engage, Equip, Deploy), a discipleship culture and shared language across Ohio that celebrates the faithful work already happening and equips leaders for their next steps.
- continuing microgrants for a fourth year, awarding \$32,420 to 13 local churches and charges launching bold and courageous ministries to reach people not already connected to their faith communities.
- awarding TAP Grants totaling \$29,000 to nine churches and United Methodist faith organizations to support emerging ministries that serve their communities and further the vision of East Ohio. We will have already awarded another round of grants by Annual Conference 2026.
- supporting multiple cohorts and coaching opportunities for strategic planning, helping congregations gain renewed focus and energy for ministry.
- leading transition training to support congregations and clergy during pastoral changes.
- offering Simplified Structure workshops, cohorts, and coaching to help congregations develop governance that frees leaders to focus on mission.

This year we celebrate several markers of the faithfulness of East Ohio and its members. Across the East Ohio Conference, more than \$1,000,000 has been distributed to local churches to support ministry, revitalization, and new initiatives. For more information see the Vitality Grant report on page 123. This represents more than 10% of our churches receiving a ministry grant from the Conference. We also celebrate the vision and hope we continue to witness in our congregations. We are grateful for the continued alignment with God’s abundance throughout our Conference and honored by all those who have allowed us to journey alongside them through resourcing, encouragement, and partnership.

As we look toward the coming year, the Board of Congregational Development and the Office of Discipleship Ministries will continue forward with a posture of listening – listening for the movement of the Holy Spirit, listening to one another, and listening to the communities where God has placed us. We trust that God is already at work among our congregations and in the places we serve. Our role is to pay

attention, to encourage what is bearing fruit, and to respond faithfully together. As the prophet Micah reminds us, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). We give thanks for the faithfulness already present across East Ohio and look ahead with gratitude for the ways God continues to guide our shared ministry.

Disaster Response Committee Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Tom King, chairperson

Should a disaster strike near Methodist churches, the Disaster Response Committee encourages and equips churches to be assets for their community’s relief. We encourage and train church members to assist disaster response providing cleanup and stabilizing homes, but most importantly offering emotional and spiritual care.

In September 2025, Bob Catchpole, our Central Valley District Disaster Response coordinator, led an Early Response Team with six volunteers to Central New York state. They cleaned out homes and cleared downed trees from major storm damage. The Conference has 42 trained Early Response Team (ERT) volunteers who are ready to deploy after first responders and assist disaster survivors. So far, two training events have been held in 2026. We are also expanding the Conference’s capability to respond to an Ohio-based disaster. Sixty-five churches have identified local church contacts for Disaster Response. The local church contacts are to communicate needs and ready their churches should disaster strike locally. UM churches can then better be community assets providing care to impacted areas and promote this ministry engaging volunteers to build the Conference’s capacity in this mission.

We have three United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)- certified ERT trainers, so if you have even several people interested in becoming ERT certified, contact me for training opportunities. If you have questions about the Disaster Response Committee or would like to name a lay member to represent your church as a Disaster Response coordinator in this ministry, please e-mail Committee Chairperson Tom King at kings7565@gmail.com.

Learn more about Disaster Response, ERT, and Connecting Neighbors on the Conference website at <https://www.eocumc.com/missions/disaster-response.html>.

Committee on Lay Servant Ministries Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Deb Gilson, director, Lay Servant Ministries

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” - Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV)

In the above scripture, Paul summarizes the nature of the Christian community. In order to build up the body of Christ, each of us have been provided with giftedness. John Wesley recognized this and valued the role of laity, encouraging the church to equip those who are called and provide them with educational opportunities.

Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) programs provide training opportunities and experiences to equip disciples of Jesus Christ for the purpose of serving the body of believers and God. By developing an awareness of their individual giftedness, laity become better servants of Jesus Christ, and in partnership with clergy, develop stronger church families.

The Committee on Lay Servant Ministries has continued this past year to offer numerous training opportunities through the East Ohio Conference. Goals which have been accomplished include:

- increasing training opportunities within each district.
- increasing the education of clergy. As the Conference director, I had the opportunity, for a second year, to assist with the Polity course at MTSO, focusing on the relationship between clergy and laity.
- increasing the professional appearance of the Conference Committee by having name badges, LSM shirts, and an LSM banner prepared for use at the Annual Conference.
- increasing utilization of the Conference website as well as E-News and district newsletters.
- providing information tables regarding the LSM program at district events.
- increasing the involvement of youth by including a representative of Emerging Leaders on our EOC team.

The Conference Committee continues to focus on the aforementioned goals, as well as identify new areas which need to be addressed.

A Conference sub-committee worked together to relaunch the Certified Lay Minister program in the East Ohio Conference. The first session began in February 2026, and our six candidates will graduate this coming July. A special thank you to those who served on the sub-committee as well as the course instructors who include Pastor John Armstrong, Rev. Steve Court, Pastor James Lance, and Rev. Peg Welch.

Regarding the Conference Committee, we said goodbye to two of our district directors, Jackie McLaughlin, and Yvonne Mattus. Our prayers continue for these individuals on their new paths. I want to personally thank all of the Conference Committee which include the district directors: Diane Harding (West Plains), Steve Gilson (Central Valley West), Eddie Courtney (Central Valley Central), Cyd Scarnecchia (Central Valley East), Betty Parry (South Forest), Susan Ward (South Forest), Dalene Kelly (Northern Waters), and Debbie Sloan (Northern Waters). In addition to Mary McClintock (Emerging Leaders), Peggy Sutherin, Nancymae Scheurer, Kimberly Green, Julie Carter, and Melanie Thomas.

I continue to have the pleasure of assisting the East Ohio Conference on Lay Servant Ministries move forward by: attending training opportunities in each district, working with other Conference directors as a participating member of the North Jurisdictional Conference on Lay Servant Ministries, being a member of the planning committee for the Bishops' Laity Leadership Convocation, working with the Conference director of Lay Servant Ministry in the West Ohio Conference as well as Conference directors in other states, serving on the Central Valley District Strategy and Superintendency Team, and serving local churches.

Due to the winter weather the ACDLSM Conference in Nashville, TN in January was postponed until September 2026.

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 serving all of you and making disciples to serve God.

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

Spiritual Formation and Christian Education Committee Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Carrie Antczak, chair at the time reports were due in March 2026

The Spiritual Formation Committee spent the past year reviewing the new resource, *Safer Sanctuaries*, an updated book on safer practices for congregations as they seek to protect children, vulnerable adults, volunteers, and staff, in their congregations. We found the resource to be helpful in gaining a better theological and practical understanding of safe sanctuary practices. In a more narrative, and less prescriptive form, we found the resource helpful for teams who are creating or updating their policies and guidelines. If your congregation would like assistance with your Safe Sanctuary guidelines, please contact our committee for guidance.

Moving to a new location for the Annual Conference last year, we opted to share joy and spiritual refreshment by hiding Easter eggs across campus with a treat and a promise from Scripture. We hope you enjoyed them! We will again be making spiritual practice “place mats” for conferences this year.

We welcomed Julie Carter to our team, as our new Conference staff person. We are looking forward to collaborating with her and new friends in West Ohio as we consider how to best equip both Conferences for Spiritual Formation in their congregations.

We continue conversations on how to best support congregations in the areas of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation, for all ages, and for all sizes of churches. We are carefully considering what kinds of formats and programs (online/in person, etc.), as well as what kinds of digital resources would be most helpful. Please look forward to a variety of opportunities to gather, connect, and support each other in Spiritual Formation.

Learn more at <https://www.eocumc.com/faithformation/index.html>.



United
Women
in Faith

United Women in Faith Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rebecca Sutton, president

United Women in Faith (UWF) is in a Season of Unstoppable Growth, United Women in Faith launched its growth campaign to increase giving and membership in August 2025. The Unstoppable Campaign is not simply about increasing membership numbers. It is about activation, leadership development, spiritual formation, and social justice engagement. As “Influencers,” we are boldly working toward growing beyond 500,000 members by 2029. That growth will happen through:

- invitations to join our organization.
- flexible engagement pathways.
- intergenerational leadership.
- digital access through our All-Access Membership.

Stronger local units Unstoppable Growth means expanding access, deepening commitment, and strengthening sustainability for the future of faithful women. Engagement Pathways that Fuel Unstoppable Growth Women can engage through:

- Soul Care
- Mission u
- Assembly
- social justice campaigns

- UWFaith Digital
- All Access Membership

Local Units in Every United Methodist Church

While we celebrate digital and national engagement, the foundation of United Women in Faith remains the local unit! According to the governing documents of The United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline* and organizational bylaws require every United Methodist congregation to organize a United Women in Faith unit. This expectation ensures that women in every congregation have structured access to mission education, leadership development, and social justice advocacy. Also, just a reminder that pastors of United Methodist congregations are members of United Women in Faith by virtue of their appointment. The presence of an active unit is part of how The United Methodist Church lives out its connectional structure. To obtain an application to organize a unit in your local church, please visit this link, <https://uwfaithresources.org/prodDetail.cfm?productID=10121&catid=2196>.

Mission u is United Women in Faith's annual flexible faith-formation and leadership development curriculum, designed to equip men, women, children, and youth for deeper discipleship and faithful engagement in the world. Although organized through United Women in Faith, Mission u serves the entire Church. The 2026 theme "Experiencing Emmanuel" focuses on what it means to live with the assurance that God is with us. East Ohio Conference United Women in Faith will hold its Mission u July 10-12, at University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio.

Assembly 2026 is a once-every-four-years gathering of women who come to be nurtured by deep, soul care experiences. They come to be equipped through cutting-edge workshops, to be inspired by top women experts in their field, and to become influencers through networking opportunities. On May 14, 2026, over 40 United Women in Faith members from East Ohio will travel to Indianapolis, Indiana to attend Assembly 2026. Some will travel by bus. Along with West Ohio we have committed funds to bring four UWF Leaders from North Katanga to Assembly 2026.

Working together with the West Ohio Conference, we have planned a Spiritual Retreat LOL (Live Out Loud) to be led by Julie Cater, director of Faith Formation & Lay Ministries for the Ohio Episcopal Area on Saturday, August 15 at Methodist Theological School in Ohio in Delaware.

Learn more at <https://www.eocumc.com/uwf/index.html>.

Vitality Grant Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Kelly Brown, superintendent, West Plains District; and Rev. Beth Ortiz, executive director, Discipleship Ministries

The East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church has a long history of offering Vitality Grants for congregational revitalization and new church development. Funding for this work comes from three primary sources: the Closed Church Fund, the Closed Urban Church Fund, and the Trinity Fund. The first two are guided by *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, while the Trinity Fund is a fund created by the East Ohio Conference.

These funds represent the legacy of faithful churches and members across our Conference. While the season of ministry for some congregations has come to an end, their stewardship and discipleship continue to bear fruit. Through these funds, their witness continues to shape the faith and ministry of East Ohio today.

For the appointment year of July 2025 through June 2026, East Ohio awarded **19 Vitality Grants**, directly impacting **34 East Ohio United Methodist faith communities**. Many of these grants are part of multi-year initiatives. Collectively, these awards total **\$951,700** for the appointment year.

In 2025, at the request of Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, a group was convened to review and update the Vitality Grant guidelines to ensure the continued faithful stewardship and strategic use of these resources.

Funds from the **Closed Church Fund** were utilized in **seven grants**, impacting **16 East Ohio United Methodist churches**. The number of churches exceeded the number of grants because several awards supported **cooperative parish ministries**. Cooperative parishes can be spaces of vibrant revitalization and new ministry as congregations align with the abundance God has already placed among them. Paragraph 206 of *The Book of Discipline* calls annual conferences to create, support, and resource cooperative parishes, and East Ohio's commitment to that call is reflected in many of the grants awarded in recent years. Grant recipients included:

- Fusion Community UMC (Central Valley)
- Ohio River Cooperative Parish (South Forest)
- Sunbury UMC (West Plains)
- Smith's Chapel UMC (South Forest, partnered with a West Ohio congregation)
- Center on Faith First Cooperative Parish (South Forest)
- Faith United Cooperative Parish (Central Valley)
- Cuyahoga Falls First UMC

Funds from **Closed Urban Church resources** carry additional requirements through *The Book of Discipline*, including guidelines regarding demographic contexts and ministry focus. These funds were utilized in accordance with those provisions. From these resources, East Ohio awarded grants to:

- Parma Area Cooperative Parish (Northern Waters)
- Westbrook Park UMC (Central Valley)
- Harbor and Bridge (Northern Waters)
- Girard First UMC (Central Valley)
- Rocky River/Story UMC (Northern Waters)
- Family of Faith UMC (Northern Waters)
- South Arlington UMC (Northern Waters)
- Centenary UMC, Akron (Northern Waters)

The **Trinity Fund** supported **five grants**, directly impacting **nine East Ohio churches**. Recipients included:

- 5-Points Cooperative Parish (West Plains)
- Rural Chapel UMC (West Plains)
- Northampton UMC (Northern Waters)
- Howland UMC (Central Valley)
- North Canton Grace UMC (Central Valley)
-

While these numbers are important, the deeper impact is found in the stories behind them.

The **Faith United Cooperative Parish** previously engaged in a visioning process that revealed a growing concern: food insecurity among seniors in its community. In response, its grant is helping launch a **county-wide warm meal ministry**, ensuring that older adults have access not only to food but also to community and care.

The **5-Points Cooperative Parish** recognized a different need: the absence of places where people could belong and express creativity. In response, it launched a **senior citizen choir** that has become a faith

community for many of its members. It also created a **Creator Lab for youth**, offering young people a place to explore their creative gifts and discover a sense of belonging.

In Cleveland, **Harbor and Bridge** has grown from a Fresh Expressions-style ministry into a flourishing community space. What began as a small gathering has developed into a place where neighbors can safely gather, build relationships, and participate in an emerging ecumenical worshipping community.

These are only a few of the many stories unfolding across East Ohio.

These grants represent more than financial support or institutional investment. They represent the living faith of our Conference as we **seek, engage, equip, and deploy** disciples of Jesus Christ. Through these ministries, lives are being transformed. Communities are being renewed. Hope, joy, and love are being made visible.

Most importantly, these grants reflect the faithful stewardship of the legacy entrusted to us by generations of East Ohio United Methodists who believed that the mission of Christ would continue beyond their time.

Young People's Ministry Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Ann Marie Carley, director, Engagement with Children, Youth and Young Adults; Tim Beck, associate director, Engagement with Youth

Young People's Ministries continued to serve youth and those who lead them in a rapidly shifting ministry landscape. In 2025, roles within the Office of Young People's Ministries shifted to a broader focus across children, youth, and young adults across the Ohio Episcopal area.

Throughout these shifts, we have completed the following in East Ohio:

- facilitated the preparation of nearly 30,000 ready-to-eat meals through Project Feed, bringing together more than 200 youth.
- continued youth leadership programming focused on discipleship and mission, while exploring ways to expand these efforts into a more comprehensive approach that empowers youth and equips them for leading within their local context.
- equipped adult leaders through applicable education opportunities that allowed them to explore adaptive leadership skills and the stages of faith development.
- deepened our investment in young adults by offering grants that support ministries on college campuses, disbursing a total of \$82,689 in ministry grants and \$45,812 in individual scholarships.

We also worked towards creating common commitments across the Ohio Episcopal Area in Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults. Those core commitments are:

- celebrating revitalizing ministry occurring with children, youth, and young adults across the connection.
- encouraging a culture of call where all generations can live as disciples, using their unique gifts and graces within their congregation and community.
- equipping laity and clergy so they are empowered to nurture children, youth, and young adults through intergenerational Christ-centered community.
- facilitating collaboration across congregations – locally, regionally, statewide, and jurisdictionally – for retreats, camps, leadership development, outreach, missional involvement, and more.

- providing space for those working with children, youth, and young people to gather, learn, and support one another.
- working across the connection to develop systems that empower young leadership.

Learn more at <https://www.eocumc.com/youngpeople/index.html>.

Methodist Foundation of Ohio Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Brian Sheetz, executive director

The past year for the Methodist Foundation of Ohio has been fully immersed in its mission while continuing to look to the future.



In October the Foundation took a group of 27 to tour Wesley's England as part of its travel program for young and new clergy. Participants visited the Wesley family home in Epworth, the New Room, Bristol, Bath, Oxford and other relevant sites. We were pleased to have Bishop Jung and his wife Rev. Im join us, giving those on this pilgrimage a chance to make these important connections. This is the fifth international travel excursion sponsored by the Foundation since 2020. More than 200 travelers have joined us on these trips.

As the East and West Ohio Annual Conferences dialogue about a potential merger, the two Methodist Foundations in the state are doing the same. While the missions of the two entities are very closely aligned, there is significant difference in the corporate structures. In East Ohio we have a Foundation that is separate from the annual conference, while West Ohio has a Foundation that is a part of the annual conference.

Supporting local churches with our planned giving services remains one of the most important parts of our mission. During their lifetimes, Americans give more to religious organizations than any other branch of the philanthropic world. But in their wills and other estate plans, giving to organizations like ours falls behind both private higher education and private higher education, in spite of our churches playing an increasingly important role in the lives of many retired members. We must continue to have conversations with our potential planned giving donors and build the infrastructure in our churches to not only attract these gifts but receive and steward them in a way that promotes additional such gifts and provides the resources to continue the kingdom work we are called to do.

We continue to see a decline in the number of those attending worship on Sunday mornings, a trend that goes back to the COVID-19 pandemic. But at the same time churches are facing increasing costs and increased expectations that church staff will provide leadership in areas once led by volunteers. This is putting increased strain on church budgets. The Foundation remains committed to serving churches with stewardship help that is professional, scripturally based, theologically sound and respects our people sitting in the pew. If this is a need in your church, please remember that these services are provided at no cost to your church.

As always, please let us know how we can help.

Learn more at www.methodistinvesting.org.



Boston University School of Theology Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by G. Sujin Pak, dean

Your partnership, prayers, and support are a cherished gift as BUSTH seeks to serve the Church and the world! In a year like 2025, 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:** the academic year 2025-26 entering class was among our most diverse, with 106 new students, 40% of whom are international students from 17 different countries.
- **Faculty:** in July, Rebecca Copeland and Luis Menéndez-Antuña were promoted to associate professor. In September, Nicolette Manglos-Weber became associate dean of Students & Community Life, and Rady Roldán-Figueroa ('05) started as associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Timothy Adkins-Jones ('09,'21) joined as assistant professor of Homiletics.
- **Expanding Online/Hybrid Programming:** BUSTH launched a fully Online Master of Divinity (OMDiv) program in November and the first cohort is planned for Fall 2026. Learn more at bu.edu/sth/omdiv. In May, the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program graduated its largest class ever, 18.
- **Faculty Research:** Professor Steven Sandage is a co-principal investigator for "Training and Treatment Integration Research for Virtue and Flourishing in Mental Healthcare: A Team Science Project," which received a \$5.2 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation to address a growing need among therapists for training on how to integrate relational virtues and human flourishing in clinical practice. Faculty published more than 130 books, scholarly articles, op-eds, presentations, and book reviews during 2025. Many were interviewed by media publications or featured on podcasts for their scholarship in topics such as trauma-informed care, humility among religious leaders, and biblical agriculture. Selected stories: bu.edu/sth/research/faculty-research/.
- **Scholarships:** BUSTH continues to benefit from nearly 125 scholarships overall, donated to by school alumni, other BU alumni, and friends of BU including more than 20 named scholarships from living alumni and/or their family members.
- **Contextual Education:** Funded by the Lilly Endowment, Director of Contextual Education Anastasia Kidd and Director of Enrollment Chad Moore will lead "The New Wineskins Network" \$1 million initiative to build sustainable, collaborative infrastructure for student and clergy formation across the Boston region.
- **Online Lifelong Learning:** BUSTH offers online courses for professional and spiritual enrichment of religious leaders. Recent offerings include "Digital Ministry as Contemplative Practice." Learn more at bu.edu/sth/oll.
- **Development:** Recent accomplishments include a generous pledge to endow a Praise & Worship Fund as well as some new operating funds including the Manoog C. Peters Chaplaincy Fund to further support the school's chaplaincy curriculum, and the Center for Global Christianity and Mission Film Project Fund to promote the Center's ministry.

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE and COMPASSION:

- BUSTH's inaugural Fr. Vincent Machozi ('15) Colloquium will be held in February to honor the life's work of our alumnus, martyred in the DRC for his work advocating for civilian victims of political violence. "Ecologies of Peacemaking" will bring together scholars in the areas of social conflict, economic inequalities, and environmental degradation. Register at bu.edu/sth/machozi-colloquium.

- Our Fall 2025 Lowell Lecture presented the work of Rev. Dr. Micah L. McCreary, whose topic “Leading Through and Beyond our Wounds” focused on becoming trauma-responsive leaders.
- 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.

Duke Divinity Report to Annual Conference 2026

Duke Divinity School celebrated its 99th Opening Convocation in August 2025 with a sermon from Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric to begin the Nicene Creed Preaching Series at Duke Divinity School. He emphasized that the Nicene Creed is both a Pentecost profession and a peace proclamation:

“Perhaps this is the season for untangling the Nicene Creed from state theology and church theology. Perhaps this is a task for a divinity school whose mission claims to 'engage in spiritually disciplined and academically rigorous education, in service and witness to the Triune God in the midst of the church, the academy, and the world.' ... Christ did not preach peace looking for recognition or awards. His life is a single extended sermon on peace. Peace is believing that our lowest point does not limit our highest hope, because we acknowledge the power of baptism, the possibility of repentance, and the forgiveness of sin. *We believe. We believe.* This is a Pentecost profession, a peace proclamation, and also a praise pronouncement.”

This year we have joined with Christians around the world to commemorate the 17th centennial of the Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed. Duke Divinity scholars and ministry leaders published the book *Trinitarian Matters: 1700 Years of Shaping Christian Identity and Practice*. The school hosted two conference events to explore and learn from Nicaea: Convocation & Pastors’ School, focused for those in church and vocational ministry; and “Visible and Invisible: Surprising Encounters in Theology and the Arts,” with musical performances, poetry, and artistic expressions informed by the richness of the Nicene Creed.

Through God’s sustaining grace, we continue to welcome students from across the nation and around the world to be trained for faithful ministries serving God in churches, chaplaincy, and community service. In 2025, we were joined by 219 students. The Master of Divinity program gained 120 new students in both residential and hybrid programs, a 10 percent growth over last year. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled six new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 34; Master of Theology, seven; Master of Theological Studies, 32; and the Doctor of Theology welcomed five new students to campus. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed 14 students.

Duke Divinity is committed to facilitating clear and supportive pathways into theological education to encourage and equip those who are discerning a call to ministry. We confirmed an MOU with Huntingdon College, reaffirming our mutual dedication to nurturing vocations, strengthening the United Methodist tradition, and investing in the next generation of Christian leaders.

We welcomed four new faculty this year: Jonathan Tran, professor of theological ethics; Natalie Carnes, professor of theology; Matthew Whelan, associate research professor of theology; and Nina Balmaceda, Irene and William McCutchen Associate Professor of the Practice of Reconciliation and director of the Center for Reconciliation.

Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church and partnership with this annual conference. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as

we join the leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing people for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

Respectfully submitted by Edgardo Colón-Emeric
Dean of Duke Divinity School

La Escuela de Divinidad de Duke celebró su nonagésima novena Convocatoria de Apertura en agosto de 2025 con un sermón del decano Edgardo Colón-Emeric, dando así inicio a la Serie de Predicación del Credo Niceno. Colón-Emeric enfatizó que el Credo Niceno es tanto una profesión de Pentecostés como una proclamación de paz:

Quizás esta sea la temporada para desenredar el Credo Niceno de la teología estatal y eclesiástica. Quizás esta sea una tarea para una escuela de teología cuya misión afirma 'participar en una educación espiritualmente disciplinada y académicamente rigurosa, en servicio y testimonio del Dios Trino en medio de la iglesia, la academia y el mundo'. ... Cristo no predicó la paz buscando reconocimiento ni premios. Su vida es un extenso sermón sobre la paz. La paz es creer que nuestro punto más bajo no limita nuestra mayor esperanza, porque reconocemos el poder del bautismo, la posibilidad del arrepentimiento y el perdón de los pecados. *Creemos. Creemos.* Esta es una profesión de Pentecostés, una proclamación de paz y también un pronunciamiento de alabanza.

Este año nos hemos unido a cristianos de todo el mundo para conmemorar el decimo séptimo centenario del Concilio de Nicea y el Credo Niceno. Los académicos y líderes ministeriales de la Escuela de Divinidad de Duke publicaron el libro "*Asuntos Trinitarios: 1700 años moldeando la identidad y la práctica cristiana*". La escuela organizó dos conferencias para explorar y aprender de Nicea: la Convocatoria y Escuela de Pastores, dirigida a quienes trabajan en la iglesia y en el ministerio vocacional; y "Visible e Invisible: Encuentros Sorprendentes en la Teología y las Artes", con presentaciones musicales, poesía y expresiones artísticas informadas por la riqueza del Credo Niceno.

Gracias a la gracia sustentadora de Dios, seguimos recibiendo estudiantes de todo el país y del mundo para capacitarles en ministerios fieles al servicio de Dios en iglesias, capellanía y servicio comunitario. En 2025, se nos unieron 219 estudiantes. El programa de Maestría en Divinidad incorporó a 120 nuevos estudiantes, tanto en el programa residencial como en el híbrido, lo que representa un crecimiento del 10 % respecto al año anterior. La Maestría en Artes en Práctica Cristiana inscribió a seis nuevos estudiantes; el Doctorado en Ministerio, a 34; la Maestría en Teología, a siete; la Maestría en Estudios Teológicos, a 32; y el Doctorado en Teología recibió a cinco nuevos estudiantes en el campus. El Certificado en Teología y Salud recibió a 14 estudiantes.

La Escuela de Divinidad de Duke se compromete a facilitar caminos claros y de apoyo hacia la educación teológica para animar y equipar a quienes están discerniendo un llamado al ministerio. Confirmamos un memorando de entendimiento con Huntingdon College, reafirmando nuestra dedicación mutua a fomentar vocaciones, fortalecer la tradición metodista unida e invertir en la próxima generación de líderes cristianos.

Este año dimos la bienvenida a cuatro nuevos profesores: Jonathan Tran, profesor de ética teológica; Natalie Carnes, profesora de teología; Matthew Whelan, profesor asociado de investigación en teología; y Nina Balmaceda, profesora asociada de la práctica de la reconciliación y directora del Centro para la Reconciliación.

La Escuela de Divinidad de Duke continúa agradecida por su participación constante en la Iglesia Metodista Unida y por su colaboración con esta conferencia anual. Esperamos con ansias continuar trabajando con ustedes, uniéndonos a la guía del Espíritu de Dios en la tarea de preparar personas para el ministerio cristiano. Para obtener más información sobre la Escuela de Divinidad de Duke, visite nuestro sitio web: www.divinity.duke.edu.

Respetuosamente sometido por Edgardo Colón-Emeric
Decano de la Escuela de Divinidad de Duke

Candler School of Theology Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Office of Communications

As Candler School of Theology at Emory University continues in its second century of educating faithful and creative leaders for the Church's ministries throughout the world, we are heartened by the work and witness of The United Methodist Church and look forward to our enduring partnership as the denomination moves into its next chapter with a vision to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously.

An official seminary of The United Methodist Church, Candler has a strong Methodist presence among our students, faculty and staff, while holding true to the Wesleyan value of ecumenical openness. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 507 from 11 countries, 42 states, 45 denominations, 34 UM annual conferences, and 50% 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.

Last fall Candler welcomed its largest incoming class in over a decade. This strong enrollment reflects years of intentional work to reimagine programs, continue to invest in faculty excellence, and offer robust scholarship support through the generosity of alumni and friends. And even more importantly, it reflects that God is still calling people to join the holy work of transforming the world in Jesus' name.

Candler offers six degrees, most of which are available in hybrid or online formats. Nearly a quarter of MDiv students participate in Candler's Teaching Parish program, earning course credit by serving as student pastors in local churches. And our proven DMin program – with a remarkably high 94% 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.

Reducing financial barriers to high-quality theological education remains a top priority at Candler. This year, we are on track to award nearly \$8.5 million in scholarship support across degree programs. All MDiv students receive scholarships, with those who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receiving full tuition.

Several programs beyond our formal degrees make Candler a true hub of Christian learning. The Candler Foundry, our public theological education initiative, offers in-person and online courses, events, and certificate programs. The United Methodist Course of Study School at Candler worked with 19 annual conferences to educate licensed local pastors in 2025. The Candler Center for Christian Leadership, which trains United Methodist leaders in best business practices, now has certified facilitators in 33 annual conferences. And a recent \$10 million grant from Lilly Endowment will further develop Candler's

La Mesa Academy, a multicultural, multilingual program dedicated to the theological education of lay ministers.

We are preparing for a leadership transition in summer of 2026, as Jonathan Strom completes his tenure as dean of Candler in July. We invite your prayers as we search for the school's next dean.

When we talk to Candler alumni and students about their call, one thing becomes clear: The specifics may be different, shaped by their unique gifts, contexts, and life experiences, but their drive to join God's work of transforming lives and the world is a constant. We recently launched a series called "Candler Changemakers" highlighting the range of fascinating ways our alumni are leading change as they fulfill their call.

Follow along on our website (candler.emory.edu) and social media to see how God is working through them. You'll be inspired!

Drew University Theological School Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Rev. Edwin David Aponte, PhD, ThD (honorary), dean and professor of Religion & Culture

Drew University Theological School is a global seminary with a global student population serving the worldwide church. Drew 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, reflecting an ongoing trend among 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 program in South Korea. Regular chapel services are offered in a hybrid way on Tuesdays and Thursdays with people participating from Seminary Hall as well as online. Chapel worship is livestreamed so that students, alumni, and friends around the world can participate.

In Fall 2025 Drew Theological School welcomed 88 new students in all degree programs, with total student enrollment (by headcount) in Fall 2025 semester being 365. Enrollment of international students at Drew is very strong at 140 students in Fall 2025. 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 the teaching, learning, and the formation of students. These values are: 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 continues to experience an increase in United Methodist students, including United Methodist Global Fellows pursuing further education for ministry. UMC graduates are serving in conferences of The United Methodist Church across the United States, and especially within nearby regional episcopal areas of Greater New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Susquehanna, Upper New York, New York, and New England.

Gammon Theological Seminary Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Dr. Candace M. Lewis, president & CEO

Gammon Theological Seminary remains the only Historically Black Theological Institution (HBTI) of The United Methodist Church. Gammon Theological Seminary's mission is to provide academic and degree-granting programs that help prepare individuals who understand their vocation as working in partnership with God in forming a just and generative world for all, for the practice of Christian ministry and public leadership.

Accreditation

- Launched Gammon's independent Master of Divinity program in 2024 as a key step toward separate accreditation with SACSCOC and ATS.
- Hosted initial SACSCOC site visit in October 2025, received affirmation of 93% compliance on all SACSCOC Standards, final review pending the June 2026 SACSCOC Board meeting. Starting the ATS Accreditation process in 2026 with a goal of full ATS accreditation awarded by December 2027.

Enrollment

- As of Spring 2026, Gammon enrolls 41 students (10 new and 31 continuing), reflecting sustained growth since the Fall 2024 launch of the independent MDiv program.
- Student body includes 30 United Methodist-affiliated students (73.2 percent), with 28 specifically identifying as UMC (68.3 percent), demonstrating Gammon's deep denominational roots.
- More than 70 percent of students are directly engaged in or preparing for ordained and licensed ministry: 42.5 percent actively discerning call and 30 percent already certified candidates or licensed local pastors.
- Student-to-faculty ratios have remained healthy (4:1 to 7:1), with more than 70 percent of students enrolled full-time each term, demonstrating stable instructional capacity and careful scaling.

Fund Development

- Secured a three-year, \$975,000 capacity-building grant from GBHEM to underwrite Gammon 3.0 operational expansion and strengthen institutional infrastructure.
- Received a \$375,000 grant from the William I. H. and Lula E. Pitts Foundation to support Phase III renovations, modernizing classrooms, offices, and the faculty hub for collaborative learning and academic planning.
- Obtained a \$250,000 scholarship grant from The SOMA Foundation to provide current-use aid for students in the 2025–2026 academic year, directly reducing educational debt.
- Launched the "Become 1 of 1 Million" endowed scholarship campaign fund to raise \$1 million in scholarship funds for Gammon students, enabling students to answer their call to ministry without incurring significant debt.

We offer profound thanks to God and to the entire United Methodist connection – bishops, cabinets, annual conferences, congregations, alumni, donors, and friends – for your faithful partnership in this season of renewal. Your prayers, apportionment support, special offerings, and generous gifts are establishing the work of our hands and making it possible for the vision of Gammon 3.0 to become a lived reality for current and future students. Together, we are strengthening Gammon as a vital, sustainable, and innovative seminary forming leaders for the church and the world.

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Javier A. Viera, president

Garrett Seminary continues to embody a trajectory of growth, innovation, and deepening partnership across the connection. Rooted in its Wesleyan heritage and animated by its mission to form courageous leaders in the way of Jesus, the seminary looks toward the future with confidence and hope.

For the fifth consecutive year, Garrett welcomed an entering class that reflects sustained enrollment growth. This steady expansion signals renewed confidence in our approach to theological education and in Garrett's distinctive role within The United Methodist Church and the global Christian community. The newest students represent geographic and cultural breadth, coming from across the United States and more than twenty countries throughout the worldwide connection. They prepare for ministry in congregations, chaplaincy settings, nonprofit leadership, academia, and mission contexts, reflecting the increasingly diverse and global nature of the Church's leadership needs.

In response to the evolving realities of ministry and lifelong learning, Garrett launched The Garrett Collective, a comprehensive digital platform offering theological resources, courses, learning experiences, and stackable microcredentials. Designed to serve laity and clergy alike, The Garrett Collective expands access to high-quality theological education in multiple languages and modalities. Content is curated and developed in partnership with annual conferences, congregations, and mission-driven organizations to address expressed needs across the connection. This initiative strengthens ongoing professional development for clergy, equips lay leaders for faithful witness, and extends Garrett's reach to communities that may not otherwise have access to formal theological study. The Garrett Collective represents a significant step toward greater accessibility, affordability, and contextual responsiveness in theological education.

The seminary also announced a historic agreement with its long-standing campus partner, Northwestern University. Through this agreement, Garrett will relocate to newly designed, state-of-the-art facilities on the southern end of campus. These buildings will support the seminary's increasingly multi-modal student body – those studying on campus, in hybrid formats, and in fully immersive online programs from across the nation and around the world. The new facilities will allow Garrett to invest more fully in vibrant residential theological formation while simultaneously expanding global access through digital and hybrid degree offerings. This agreement reflects a deep and mutual commitment between the seminary and the university, positioning both institutions for a strong and collaborative future. Most importantly, it enables Garrett to remain focused on mission-driven initiatives for generations to come.

Garrett has also experienced significant success in foundation and grant support for innovative learning and leadership initiatives. Strategic investments have strengthened The Garrett Collective, the Center for Ecological Regeneration, the Job Institute for Spiritual Formation, the National Initiative to Strengthen Hispanic Pastoral Leaders and Congregations, the Mageto Fellows Program in partnership with Africa University, and the Faith and Leadership Collaborative. Each of these initiatives extends the seminary's relationship with congregations and their leaders, resourcing the Church in areas of ecological justice, spiritual formation, intercultural ministry, global partnership, social impact, and leadership development. Together, they represent a widening circle of accessibility and impact, ensuring that theological education is responsive to the needs of diverse communities throughout the connection and beyond.

Garrett Seminary remains deeply committed to the vitality of The United Methodist Church. Through enrollment growth, digital innovation, historic institutional partnerships, and expanding grant-supported initiatives, the Seminary is strengthening its capacity to serve the Church in a season of significant

transition and opportunity. Guided by the conviction that God continues to call and equip leaders for this moment, Garrett looks forward to continued partnership with annual conferences, congregations, and ministries across the connection.

Methodist Theological School in Ohio Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Danny Russell, director, Communications

MTSO is Selected to Offer Clinical Pastoral Education through CIPP

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) of The United Methodist Church has chosen MTSO as the new academic home of the Center for Integrative Pastoral Practice, its Clinical Pastoral Education program. The CIPP program, which GBHEM had operated since 2018, is a vital component in the preparation of future chaplains, spiritual care providers and pastoral counselors, integrating theological knowledge with practical clinical training.

CIPP@MTSO uses students' existing ministry settings for the clinical assignments required for CPE certification. It serves students who are forging ministry pathways in both traditional and non-traditional contexts.

With a Lilly Endowment grant, MTSO Will Help Strengthen Children's Worship

Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded MTSO a \$1.25 million grant to establish "Kids Incorporated: Incorporating the Next Generation into the Full Life of Congregational Worship." The program is funded through Lilly Endowment's Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative.

The program will empower partner congregations to better serve children and their families by enhancing children's spiritual development and increasing understanding, accessibility and engagement opportunities for children within worship settings. With a focus on children ages 4-12, MTSO is addressing developmental differences across various age groups and promoting intergenerational worship experiences.

New Technology Enhances the Blending of In-Person and Online Learning

Five MTSO classrooms have received significant technology upgrades, making the school's blended learning experience even better. The new tech in these "Zoom Rooms" includes 360-degree cameras and microphones for more seamless classroom discussions, along with an updated platform that records and transcribes lectures.

With MTSO's HyFlex (short for "hybrid-flexible") education, students can attend classes in-person, remotely or some of both. No matter how they participate, they're engaged in an immersive real-time experience.

Learn more at www.mtso.edu.

St. Paul School of Theology Report to Annual Conference 2026

Submitted by Jay K. Simmons, president, St. Paul School of Theology president



What does God require of us? To act justly, love mercifully, and walk humbly with God. At Saint Paul School of Theology, this call from Micah 6:8 shapes everything we do – from preparing pastors to serve rural communities to fostering a beloved community where all belong. Centered in Christ and rooted in

the Wesleyan tradition, we are committed to forming innovative leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

A Year of Growth and Vitality

2025 has been marked by remarkable momentum. Our Course of Study School educated 248 students – a 6% increase – with 628 course registrations, representing a 14% growth. These servant leaders are making a tangible difference: 42% serve rural communities with populations under 2,500, and 22 students serve as pastors of three or more churches. We celebrated 21 students completing the 20-course program, equipping them for licensed ministry.

Seminary enrollment grew by 9%, with a 33% increase in new students for Fall 2025. Our commitment to diversity is bearing fruit, with 29% racial diversity among students and almost even gender distribution. Students from 31 states and 220 cities connect with us through flexible online and hybrid learning options, while 16 graduates of the Course of Study School have transitioned into our degree programs.

Living Our Strategic Vision

Our Board of Trustees has recently endorsed a strategic plan that reflects our values and responds to the changing contexts of the Church and the world. We are striving to become a beloved community that embodies belonging, justice, equity, and inclusion. Our new Doctor of Ministry track in Spirituality, Innovation, and Adaptive Leadership exemplifies this vision, developing change agents grounded in contemplative spirituality and equipped with emotional intelligence and intercultural competence. These same principles permeate our Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Christian Ministry programs.

Saint Paul remains financially healthy, operating with a balanced budget, no debt, and an endowment 10 times our annual expenses. This sustainability, rooted in community donations, enables us to invest in scholarships, technology, and evolving academic programs that serve our students and the church.

Looking Ahead

In 2026, we are strengthening our foundation and expanding our horizons by cultivating a vibrant alum network – a lifelong professional and spiritual home. Through mentorship, resource sharing, and collaborative ministry, we are building a dynamic ecosystem that empowers graduates from their first day of classes through retirement and beyond.

Saint Paul School of Theology invites you to join us in this journey of formation, innovation, and transformation. Together, we are preparing leaders who embody justice, mercy, and humility as they serve Christ and His church.

Learn more at www.spst.edu.



Thank you and congratulations to these churches which have paid **100% of their Apportionments**

Central Valley

Alliance Christ
 Berlin Center
 Boardman First
 Brookfield
 Burbank Trinity
 Centenary
 Coalburg
 Crystal Park
 E Liverpool First
 East Fairfield
 East Palestine Emmanuel
 Easton
 Gustavus Federated
 Hubbard First
 Lisbon
 Malvern
 Massillon Trinity
 Mt Zion Columbiana
 N Canton Grace
 New Franklin
 New Way UMC
 Niles New Hope
 North Lima Calvary
 Ohltown
 Palmyra
 Poland
 Smithville (Wooster)
 Sterling
 Uniontown
 Werner
 Wooster Church Of The Cross

Northern Waters

Aldersgate
 Bay
 Berea
 Bulah Calvary
 Ch Of The Redeemer
 Chagrin Falls
 Cherry Valley

Colebrook
 East Shore
 Garfield Heights
 Garrettsville
 Hope Ridge
 Jefferson
 Lakewood
 Light House
 Madison Chapel
 Mayfield
 Montrose Zion
 Nelson
 Orwell
 Pearl Road
 Perry
 Rockport
 Shoregate
 Strongsville
 Westlake
 Windham

South Forest

Adena
 Bannock
 Batesville
 Belle Valley
 Belmont
 Bolivar
 Brooks Run
 Carrollton
 Chalfant's Chapel
 Claysville
 Coshocton Grace
 Fairview
 Fresno
 Greenbrier
 Isleta
 Keene
 Lore City
 Maynard
 Mt Ephraim
 New Guilford

New Moscow
 Orange
 Powhatan Point
 Salineville
 Scott Memorial
 Sewellsville
 Strasburg
 Winterset

West Plains

Amherst UMC
 Ashland First
 Brandon
 Bucyrus
 Clarksfield
 Columbia
 Danville
 Ebenezer
 Gay Street
 Green Valley Chapel
 Harmony Chapel
 Hopewell
 Kilbourne
 Laporte
 Lock Federated
 Lorain Wesley
 Mansfield First
 Melmore
 New London
 Olivesburg
 Plankton
 Port Clinton Trinity
 Republic Trinity
 Sandusky Trinity
 Seville
 Shelby First
 Sycamore
 Tiffin St Paul
 Wadsworth
 West Salem

Annual Conference 2026 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 reside?
 - 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 the most helpful in equipping you and your church?

6. What was one highlight for you personally at Annual Conference 2026?

7. What suggestions do you have for designing next year’s Annual Conference to better equip you and your church?

For questions 8-14: 5 is the highest rating, 1 is the lowest rating

8. Please rate the online registration process. _____

9. Please rate the Annual Conference worship services. _____

10. Please rate the Annual Conference business sessions. _____

11. Please rate your experience of The College of Wooster campus. _____

12. Please rate the food and service in the Lowry Student Center if you ate meals there during Annual Conference. _____

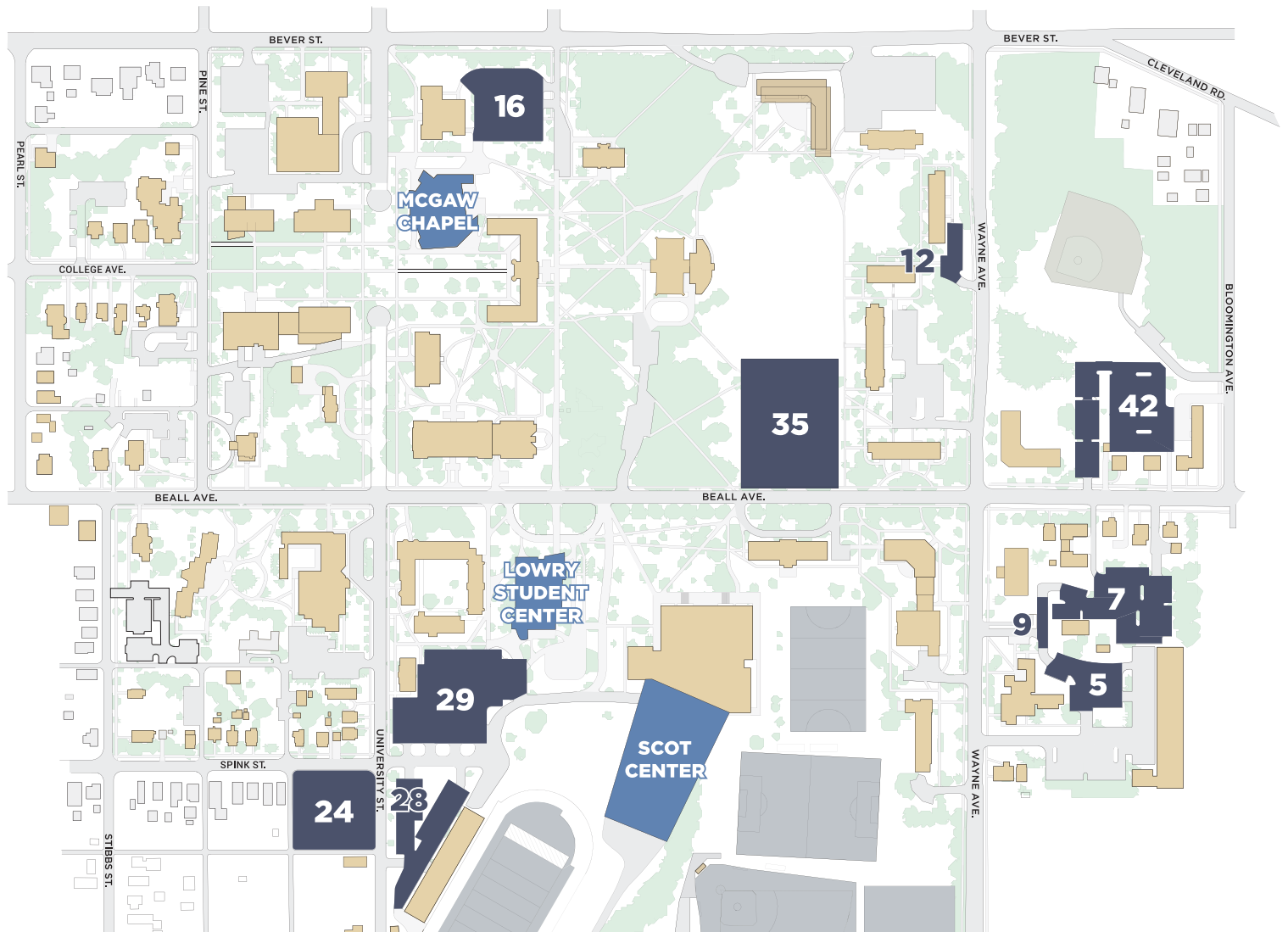
13. Please rate your experience of the residence halls if you stayed there during Annual Conference. _____

14. Please rate your experience of the shuttle service if you used it during Annual Conference. _____

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, #12, #29, #35 and #42

PARKING FOR WORSHIP SERVICES

Lot #16