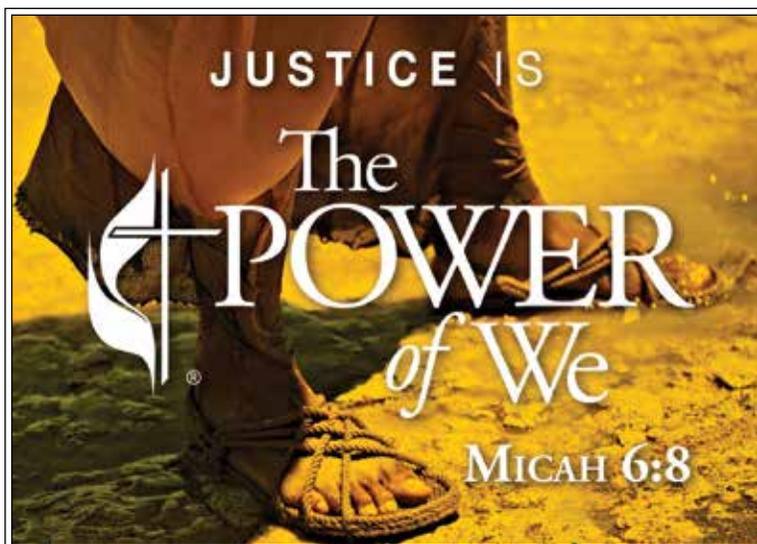


2017 Session of the
MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE
of The United Methodist Church



***2017 Pre-Conference
Journal***

June 8-10, 2017
Jackson Convention Complex

LOVE • GENEROSITY • JUSTICE • APPRENTICESHIP

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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Mississippi Area + Episcopal Office James E. Swanson Sr., Resident Bishop



WELCOME TO THE 2017 MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Hello, everyone! It's time for the yearly gathering of United Methodists across our state. I can almost hear the voices of old friends greeting each other with laughter, hugs, handshakes, high fives and big smiles. IT'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE!!! The booths are stocked with: information, free gifts, and helpful persons to share exciting ministry opportunities. Of course, Dan Parker is there with spanking brand new bibles and great books and resources from Cokesbury. The singers are rehearsing the songs, and the musicians are making sure the instruments are tuned. Presenters and preachers are prayed up.

Yes, there is business to attend to but most of all we gather to be the body of Christ and to tell a discouraged world God is in control.

This year we will focus our attention on "JUSTICE." Our guiding scripture is Micah 6:8 "He has told you, human one, what is good and what the LORD requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God" (CEB). It will be our joy to worship together, learn together, pray together and respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit among us.

I welcome you to a powerful experience.

Yours in Christ,

BISHOP JAMES E. SWANSON, SR.

WELCOME TO THE 2017 MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ!

It is a joy to once again welcome you to Jackson for our annual family reunion! Or it is what some folks call the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church. Along with our Bishop James Swanson, and all the conference staff, we are pleased to welcome you, the Annual Conference, to our yearly gathering.

The Annual Conference is not merely a time in which we order the Church and worship our Holy God. The Annual Conference is not just an “institution.” It is a people. It is you! You and I, we are the Annual Conference. So, the “conference” doesn’t set a budget, we do. The conference doesn’t send ministers out in Jesus’ name, we do! The conference doesn’t support UMCOR, or Camping Ministry, or Wesley Foundations, or any of the many, many, amazing ministries that happen here in Mississippi. We do!

We are the Conference!

This year, as we gather together, our theme is “*Justice is The POWER of We.*” It is our sincere hope that when these proceedings have ended, we will leave renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to work for justice in our communities, walking humbly with our Lord and Savior.

Again, we welcome you the 2017 session of the Mississippi Annual Conference. Enjoy the worship, embrace the fellowship, and leave with *The POWER of We* in your hearts. We pray for your safe return to your homes and families.

Blessings and Peace,

REV. ANDY STODDARD

Co-Chair, Mississippi Annual Conference Planning Committee

DR. DOROTHY TERRY

Co-Chair, Mississippi Annual Conference Planning Committee

WELCOME TO THE 2017 MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Dear Lay and Clergy members of the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference,

Greetings and on behalf of your Secretarial and Journal staff, we welcome you as we begin this time of prayerful preparation for our gathering at the Jackson Convention Complex, June 8-10. This year's gathering will remind us all of the importance of living a life that promotes and exemplifies our Core Value of Justice. We must be the voice and the servants of those whom Christ loves. The Kingdom is dependent upon it.

As usual, upon arrival in the WEST ENTRANCE LOBBY, go to your DISTRICT TABLE, check-in, and receive your badge and any additional information. Because of the Clergy Ethics Training Event, registration for Annual Conference will be open on WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7th NOON until 5 P.M. REGISTRATION FOR ETHICS TRAINING AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE ARE SEPARATE. We will also be open THURSDAY, JUNE 8th from 7 A.M. until 4 P.M. (will be closed for Opening Worship) and FRIDAY, JUNE 9th from 8 A.M. until NOON. Please note that all GUESTS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE (those attending who are not lay or clergy members) will need to check-in at the Hospitality Desk to receive a name tag and any additional information they may require. And when you check-in, offer a special thanks to your District Secretary. They deserve it!

As in years past, we will be using a THREE-COLOR BADGE CODE for our voting members. All LAY MEMBERS of the Annual Conference will receive the traditional GREEN badges. All CLERGY IN FULL CONNECTION will receive BLUE badges. All remaining, voting CLERGY will receive RED badges. If there is any question about your badge color, I will be on site to assist. Please know that in spite of our best efforts mistakes may happen. With your patience and participation, we will do our best to correct these. Should it become necessary for any member (Clergy or Laity) to leave the Conference, we ask that you return your badge to the Conference Secretary's desk or to the District Tables. Any reserve or alternate laity may pick up proper voting credentials at those locations. Reminder that ONLY CLERGY IN FULL CONNECTION are allowed to vote on the Constitutional Amendments.

In order to VOTE on the business of the Annual Conference, all eligible members must be seated within the BAR OF THE CONFERENCE and be wearing their PROPER IDENTIFICATION (badges). The BAR will be set at the opening of the Business Session. We will also try to remind you throughout the sessions as needed for voting.

During these days of worship and meeting, it is my prayer that we will reflect not only on our individual call to be a person of Justice, but that we exemplify our connection and communal calling to build places for all people. I look forward to seeing you in June.

Blessings,

REV. TREY HARPER

Secretary of the Annual Conference

SECTION I

29TH SESSION
OF THE ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
INFORMATION

SECTION I

THE 2017 SESSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A. Preliminary Agenda

29TH SESSION

Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

2017 PRELIMINARY AGENDA

“Justice is The POWER of We”

Wednesday, June 7, 2017 (Pre-Conference)

- 7:00 a.m. Prayer Room Opens
 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Childcare for Clergy Ethics Training
 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Youth Zone Open (*for ages 12+*)
 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Ethics training
 12:00 p.m. Exhibit Booths Open
 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. Registration
 2:00 - 5:30 p.m. Childcare for Workshops
 2:30 p.m. Workshop: *Kenda Creasy Dean*
 4:00 p.m. Workshop: *Thomas Kemper*
 7:00 p.m. Connected: A Night of Worship

Thursday, June 8, 2017

- 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Registration (*closed during Opening Worship*)
 8:00 a.m. Extension Ministry Breakfast with Bishop Swanson
 8:00 a.m. Prayer Room Opens
 8:30 - 11:45 a.m. Childcare Morning Session
 9:00 a.m. Opening Worship
 Registration will close for Worship
 10:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Youth Zone Open (*for ages 12+*)
 10:30 a.m. Clergy Executive Session
 10:30 a.m. Laity Executive Session
 10:30 a.m. Clergy Spouses Brunch (*pre-registration required*)
 11:30 a.m. Clergy Spouses Meeting
 11:45 a.m. Lunch Break
 Asbury Alumni and Friends Luncheon
 Duke Divinity Alumni and Friends Luncheon (*pre-registration required*)
 Emory/Candler Luncheon
 Local Pastors Lunch (*pre-registration required*)
 Memphis Theological Alumni Lunch (*pre-registration required*)
 Rust College Luncheon (*pre-registration required*)
 11:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Childcare Afternoon Session

- 2:00 p.m.** Opening Plenary
 Opening Hymn “And Are We Yet Alive”
 Welcome
 Greetings from Jackson Convention Complex
 Setting of the Bar
 Election of Tellers and *Journal Staff*
 Presentation and Adoption of Agenda
 Petitions and Resolutions
 CFA/Budget
 Constitutional Amendments Voting
 Annual Conference Board of Global Ministries Report
 UMCOR
- 4:00 p.m.** Dinner Break
 Registration Closes
 Ordination rehearsal for Worship Participants
- 7:00 p.m.** Mission Service: *Thomas Kemper, preaching*
 Remembering your Baptism

Friday, June 9, 2017

- 7:00 a.m.** Prayer Room Opens
7:30 a.m. Millsaps College Alumni & Friends Breakfast
7:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Childcare Morning Session
8:00 a.m. Annual Conference Registration Opens
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Youth Zone Open (*for ages 12+*)
8:00 a.m. Morning Bible Study: *Rev. Andrea Summers*
 Business
 Faith Community Formation Report
 Advocacy Ministry Report
 Emma K Elzy Award
 Domestic Violence Task Group Report
 United Methodist Women/United Methodist Men
 UM Children’s Home
 Camping Ministry
 Camp Lake Stephens
 Seashore Assembly
 Higher Education and Campus Ministry
- 10:00 a.m.** Memorial Service Family Gathering
10:15 a.m. Break
10:30 a.m. Memorial Service: *Rev. Darian Duckworth, preaching*
 (Visitation following service)
12:00 p.m. Registration Concludes
12:00 p.m. Lunch Break
 Retiree Lunch (*pre-registration required*)
 Laity Luncheon (*pre-registration required*)
- 12:00 - 4:30 p.m.** Childcare Afternoon Session
1:30 p.m. Business
 State of the Conference
 Forming Spiritual Leaders
 Board of Ordained Ministry Report
 Celebration of Retirees

Agenda continued on the next page...

Friday, June 9, 2017, continued...

- 1:30 p.m.** Nominations Committee Report
 Parsonage Committee Task Group Report
 Vital Congregations Committee Report
 Harry Denman Award
 Administration Reports - Pensions & Insurance
 Archives and History Report
 Tobias Gibson Award
 Community Centers
 Edwards Street
 Moore Community House
 Resolutions
- 4:30 p.m.** Dinner Break
 Gammon/BMCR Dinner
- 6:30 p.m.** Clergy Gather to Robe for Ordination
- 7:00 p.m.** Service of Ordination and Commissioning: *Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr., preaching*
 Commissioning of Provisional Members
 Recognition of Associate Members
 Ordination of Elder and Deacon

Saturday, June 10, 2017

- 7:00 a.m.** Prayer Room Opens
- 7:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.** Childcare Morning Session
 Youth Zone Opens (*for ages 12+*)
- 8:00 a.m.** Bible Study: *Rev. Andrea Summers*
 Business Session
 Celebration
 Africa University
 Imagine No Malaria
 Episcopacy Committee
Journal Report
 Conference Treasurer's Report
 CFA/Budget
 Communications Commission
 Appointive Cabinet Report
 District Property
 Remembrance of Closed Churches/Celebration of New Churches
 Glory Sighting Churches Recognized
 One Matters Discipleship Award
 Where Shall the 2017 Annual Conference Meet?
 Ordering of Ministry with 2017 Pastoral Appointments
 Recognition of Local Pastors
- 10:00 a.m.** Exhibit Booths Close
- 10:45 a.m.** Conference Adjournment: Sine Die
- 10:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.** Per Diem Check Distribution
- 11:00 a.m.** Closing Worship: *Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr., preaching*
- 12:30 p.m.** Appointment List Distribution

B. Member Information & Checklist

THE SESSION OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Each year an equal number of clergy members and lay members attend their conference's Annual Conference session for worship, fellowship, and to conduct the business of the conference, which may last 3-5 days. During these sessions, members of the conference hear reports of past and ongoing work; adopt future goals, programs and budgets; ordain clergy members as deacons and elders; and elect delegates to Jurisdictional and General Conferences (every 4 years). The bishop presides over these meetings.

WHO IS INVITED?

Lay members of annual conference, along with clergy, interpret the work done by the annual conference session to the congregation. This is an opportunity to listen and learn from each other and to experience a greater variety of God's human creation than you may experience in your local congregation. Take advantage of this opportunity by getting acquainted with people sitting near you. Celebrate the diversity of The United Methodist Church!

Guests are invited to participate in workshops and worship.

WESLEYAN TRADITION

Christian conferencing in the Wesleyan tradition involves:

- Worship and study
- Spiritual growth and renewal
- Fellowship
- Business

CHECKLIST

Items to bring to conference:

- A spirit of Holy Conferencing
- *Pre-Conference Journal*, either printed or on your electronic device
- Church's mission offering for Imagine No Malaria or INM card celebrating your church's participation in saving lives to be given during the Mission Service
- Church's offering for Ministerial Education Fund to be given during Ordination Service
- Comfortable clothing and walking shoes; if you are cold natured, we recommend you bring a light jacket
- Spending money for meals, snacks, Cokesbury Store and other incidentals

WHERE IS THE 2017 SESSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD?

Jackson Convention Complex | 105 E. Pascagoula Street, Jackson, MS 39201

The Mississippi Conference is sensitive to the needs of those attending the 2017 Mississippi Annual Conference Session. Our desire is for your time at the conference to be as enjoyable and easy to access as possible. Please see the Hospitality Team, available at the Help Desk, with any questions.

Accessibility - The Jackson Convention Complex offers many features that make the facility friendly to guests with disabilities. These features include accessible parking, automatic entrance doors, wheelchair/motorized scooter accessible elevators, accessible restrooms, and phone and fire alarms for the hearing impaired.

American Sign Language - American Sign Language will be offered at the front right of the exhibit space.

Assistive Animals - The Jackson Convention Complex welcomes guests with disabilities and their assistive animals.

Hearing Impaired - Assisted listening devices are available for worship and plenary sessions at the front right of the worship space.

Parking

Persons who have Mississippi Disabled Parking tags or place cards will have access to a designated parking area (Lot C) at the corner of Court Street and Roach Street. Please be sure when you enter the designated parking lot that your tag or place card is visible for the parking attendant.

Jackson Convention Complex Parking Map



Legend for Map

- | | |
|--|---|
| A & B - Convention Center Public Parking -
Pascagoula St. | D - Convention Center Public Parking -
Corner of Farish St. & Court St. |
| C - Convention Center Public Parking -
Corner of Court St. & Roach St. | E - City Centre Garage - Corner of West St.
& Pascagoula St. |

DEADLINES

- May 1 Special Awards Nominations
- May 1 Hotels Begin to Release Special Rate Room Blocks
- May 1 Exhibit Booth Applications
- May 1 Special Meals Tickets
- May 1 Childcare Registration Forms
- May 5 Ads needing design for *Special Edition Circuit Rider*
- May 17 Camera-Ready Ads for *Special Edition Circuit Rider*
- May 18 Audio Visual Materials

SURVEY MONKEY

We offer the opportunity for you to evaluate the Session of Annual Conference. The online survey will open at noon on Saturday, June 10 and close at noon on Wednesday, June 14. Please use this link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/MN9GFBZ. Or pick up a paper survey at the hospitality desk any time on Saturday.

C. Special Guests

Kenda Creasy Dean

Kenda Creasy Dean is an ordained United Methodist pastor in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference and is the Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary. She hails from a family of Ohio farmers and Kentucky coal miners, but Kenda and her sister grew up primarily as P.K.s (“politician’s kids”), thanks to their dad’s career in the Ohio legislature, which introduced them to theological concepts like election(s), vocation, and the salutary benefits of White Castle. In off-election years, her mom and dad were both teachers (her dad was her high school government teacher and debate coach, and her mom taught third grade). When Kenda was fifteen, she attended a church camp on Lake Erie that pretty much changed everything.



Kenda has 30 years of doing ministry that wasn’t in a job description. She teaches practical theology, youth ministry, and social innovation at Princeton Theological Seminary, and has extensive experience in new ministry development, grant-writing, and nonprofit ministry, especially with youth and young adults. An ordained United Methodist pastor, Kenda serves as the coordinating pastor of Kingston United Methodist Church and serves on Path1’s steering committee. She also co-founded Ministry Incubators, Inc. with Mark DeVries to teach missional innovation and social enterprise to churches and individuals who want to turn “hare-brained ideas into sustainable ministries.”

Kenda is the author of several books including *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*, *The Godbearing Life* (with Ron Foster), *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (with Andrew Root), and *A More Excellent Way: How Youth Ministry Can Change Theological Education*, *If We Let It* (with Christy Lang Hearlson).

A graduate of Miami University (Ohio) and Wesley Theological Seminary, Kenda served as a pastor in suburban Washington, DC and campus minister at the University of Maryland-College Park before earning her doctorate in practical theology/Christian education from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1997. She and her husband Kevin live in Princeton, NJ and are the parents of two grown children, Brendan and Shannon.

Andrea Summers

Andrea is a pastor, writer, preacher and mother of four. She is the Director of the Center for Women in Ministry at Wesley Seminary and serves the Lausanne Movement, facilitating mentoring relationships for their Younger Leaders global initiative. Andrea has dedicated her ministry to the local church as God’s agent of redemption in the world. She thinks in word-pictures and weaves the practical with the profound truth of God’s word. She is passionate about Biblical Justice and authentic vulnerability and their critical connection to spiritual formation. An ordained minister and a graduate of Asbury Seminary, Andrea has served as pastor in the local church and, most recently, as a denominational leader for The Wesleyan Denomination. She currently lives in Atlanta with her husband Jeremy and their four children. She wishes she had hobbies to list here... but four kids. Enough said..



Thomas Kemper

Thomas Kemper is General Secretary and CEO of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church whose US headquarters, after almost 200 years in New York City, moved in 2016 to Atlanta, Georgia, at 458 Ponce de Leon Avenue, NE. On behalf of the worldwide church, Global Ministries is responsible for personnel, projects, and mission partnerships in more than 125 coun-



tries, and is the lead agency for the church's work in global health. A native of Germany and a layperson, Kemper is the first person from outside the United States elected to lead a United Methodist agency. Prior to his position as general secretary, he was mission leader for the German Central Conference of the United Methodist Church and was Director of Ecumenical Learning at the Lippische Landeskirche, a regional church of the Association of Protestant Churches in Germany. Kemper spent eight years in Brazil as a missionary from 1986 to 1994, where he taught in the Brazilian Theological Seminary in Sao Paulo and engaged in ministry with the poor and new church development. He is married to Barbara Hüfner-Kemper and the father of three children: Ana, Lena, and Joshua.

Darian Duckworth

Rev. Darian Duckworth graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2004 with degrees in English and mathematics. After earning her Master of Divinity from Emory University's Candler School of Theology in 2007, she returned to Mississippi for commissioning as an elder in The United Methodist Church. She was ordained as an elder in full connection in 2010.

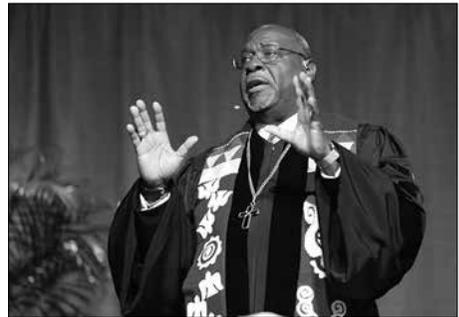
Currently serving as the pastor of First United Methodist Church of West Point, Darian has also held appointments at Grace UMC in Natchez, Shipman Chapel, and St. Luke UMC in Cleveland. She is a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry and coordinates interviews for the Executive Board. Her passion in ministry is the relationship between the local church and end-of-life care, a topic she's pursuing as a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology.



Darian is a certified Yahweh Yoga teacher (YYT-100) who enjoys baking granola and blogging at www.darianduckworth.com. Her favorite theologians include Paul Thorn, Lady Gaga, Mumford & Sons, her dog, Isaac, and her six-year-old niece, Savannah.

James E. Swanson, Sr.

James Edward Swanson Sr. was elected a bishop of The United Methodist Church during the Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference of 2004. He was assigned to the Holston Conference where the episcopal office is located in Knoxville, Tennessee. Swanson served the Holston Conference for eight years. Under his tenure, the Sudan Mission was initiated. The number of United Methodist congregations in Sudan grew from three to 30 between 2006 and 2012. A residential home for Sudan's district superintendent was built and used as a training site for clergy and laity of South Sudan. Plans were laid for a campaign to raise funds for the "Imagine No Malaria" campaign that resulted in \$1.2 million dollars raised by the Holston Conference.



On Sept. 1, 2012, Swanson began his tenure as the resident bishop of the Mississippi Annual Conference making his first visit public visit—one day earlier—to the Seashore District. He went there to be with those affected by Hurricane Isaac. The hurricane made landfall on Aug. 28, 2012, causing additional devastation to Mississippi coastal communities still recovering from Hurricane Katrina seven years prior.

Swanson listened to the people of Mississippi and discovered the Mississippi Conference held four values deep within their hearts—Love, Generosity, Justice, and Apprenticeship. And it is from the Core Four that the 1,100 churches seek to center their unique ministries.

However, none of these big values can be accomplished alone. Bishop Swanson taught there is One Church in 1,100 locations. He brought to Mississippi a contagious spirit of hospitality, a determination to excel at being “the you” God created each person to be. His spirited preaching has helped bring life, laughter and light to congregations in the conference and even an occasional non-Methodist congregation. He has continued to emphasize winning people to Christ, risk taking love, and crossing old boundaries to discover where the Holy Spirit is at work. He is modeling with the extended cabinet how coaching can revolutionize ministry. Cabinet members and other conference groups meet for two eight-hour sessions each month to be trained in Loving, Learning and Leading. Because of this coaching, Swanson continually asks Mississippians about their Glory Sightings—where they see God at work.

Swanson serves on the board of trustees for Emory University, Rust College and Millsaps College. He is the chair of the board of trustees at Gammon Theological Seminary.

Swanson is married to Delphine Yvonne Ramsey Swanson. They have the joy of being parents to six adult children, Karen Latrese Swanson Jenkins, James Edward Swanson, Jr., Shondell Swanson married to Angela Drain, Carlton Eugene Swanson married to Ivis Rosario, Janae Evonne Swanson Brown married to Vernon, and Joshua Emile’ Swanson. They have been blessed by their children with 11 grandchildren.

D. Pre-Conference Workshop Opportunities

United Methodists (beyond members of the Annual Conference) may participate in workshops Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at the Jackson Convention Complex. Leaders of all 1,000 United Methodist congregations in Mississippi are encouraged to participate in these holy conferencing opportunities!

This year we are offering two opportunities.

■ **Young Faith in a World of Nones and Dones: The Future of Children's Spiritual Lives and the Ministry That Will Sustain Them with Kenda Creasy Dean**

Young people's faith is changing fast—and youth ministry is struggling to keep up. The National Study of Youth and Religion's longitudinal research has continued since 2004, returning to the same group of young people every five years to see how their faith evolves as they grow up. As a result (and because we now have other studies to consider as well) we have gathered a few clues about how adolescence sets the stage for durable faith—or not-in young adulthood. This workshop is for parents, youth pastors, and church leaders who want to explore some of those longitudinal findings, and ask: What does this research suggest for the shape of young people's faith today? What does it mean for parents and congregations who want their children's faith to outlast high school? And how is youth ministry changing as a result of all this?

■ **A New Mission Age with Thomas Kemper**

The New Testament repeatedly calls disciples of Jesus Christ into God's mission for their time, going into "all the world," says Matthew 28, and "to the ends of the earth" in Acts 1. "The Spirit is always moving to sweep the Church into a new mission age," is the way the mission theology statement of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries puts it." This workshop with Thomas Kemper, the layman who leads Global Ministries, looks at today—2017 and forward-- as a new worldwide mission age—an age in which the church is called to exemplify God's mission of love and compassion, grace and justice "from everywhere to everywhere." It is an age not always open to the Good News of faith. The workshop will explore global mission opportunities for United Methodists in Mississippi and the church as a global community of Jesus' followers.

E. Connected: A Night of Worship

*A worship opportunity featuring music from
Shane & Shane and speaker Rev. Kenda Creasy Dean.*

Shane & Shane – “Yearn” “Psalm 46 (Lord of Hosts)” “O Come to the Altar”

*Kenda Creasy Dean – “Almost Christian” “Practicing Passion”
“The Godbearing Life”*



Wednesday, June 7, 7:00 -8:30 p.m.

Jackson Convention Complex Main Exhibit Hall

Cost: \$5 donation accepted at the door

Come join us as we unite in an intergenerational evening of connection. We as the United Methodist Church want to open our doors to the public, inviting people from all around the state—from different churches, communities, and denominations—to gather to worship the one true God under one roof. This night is going to be a powerful time of worship. Scripture says, “Seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart,” and we yearn to seek connection with all the members of Christ’s Kingdom. As a preamble to the Session of Annual Conference, we want to invite everyone to be part as we celebrate that Justice is the POWER of We.

F. 2017 Imagine No Malaria Mission Offering



During the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. will lead the celebration for what our congregations have done to save lives through our mission focus, Imagine No Malaria.

At our 2016 Annual Conference, Swanson set the goal for the Mississippi Conference to provide 100,000 mosquito nets for Imagine No Malaria by the 2017 annual conference mission offering. Churches are asked to collect generous offerings for the conference mission service in support of this great effort.

Churches that are ready to turn in their donations are urged to mail their gifts to the Mississippi Conference treasurer. Mail to: Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 1603, Jackson, MS 39215. Be sure to make checks payable to the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church with "Imagine No Malaria" in the memo line. Recognition slips noting funds received will be mailed to each church in mid-May for placing in the offering baskets during the mission service. Of course, additional funds are welcome in the offering baskets.

Throughout this past year churches in our conference have raised funds to beat the preventable and treatable disease of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike many other diseases that are awaiting a cure, malaria was eliminated in the United States in the 1950s. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, malaria continues to kill a child every two minutes.

By improving the ways people fight the disease using bed nets, providing access to diagnostic tests and medicine, draining standing water and improving sanitation, Imagine No Malaria has already helped reduce malaria deaths by more than half. Imagine No Malaria combines integrated health infrastructure, education and advocacy to address death and the debilitating effects of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa.

An Imagine No Malaria booth will be set up during the conference. If your church would like more information about how to support this arm of The United Methodist Church, the Mississippi Conference field coordinator, Charity Gordon, will be there to answer questions. You can also learn more about how to help beat malaria at www.mississippi-umc.org/inm.

The United Methodist Church goal to raise \$75 million to eradicate malaria in places like sub-Saharan Africa started in 2008.

G. Special Meals



Several groups have sponsored meals on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. To participate in one of these special meals, you must register in advance for that specific special meal. Additional information may be found at: www.mississippi-umc.org/2017specialmeals. Most meals are eligible for online registration at: 2017umcmeals.eventbrite.com

SPECIAL DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: For those of you who are not attending a special meal and have gluten or vegetarian dietary restrictions, concession meals may be purchased in advance. You will need to register and pay in advance at 2017umcmeals.eventbrite.com. Your name will be given to the chef who will ensure that the meals you selected will be available in the food court.

Thursday, June 8, 2017

- **Extension Ministry Breakfast** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Contact: Larry Hilliard: lhilliard@mississippi-umc.org
 For those serving in Extension Ministries only.
Advance Registration is Required. No Reservations after May 1.
 Tickets may be purchased online at: 2017umcmeals.eventbrite.com.
- **Clergy Spouses Brunch** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Contact: Fawn Keen at 662-305-7280 or fawnkeen@gmail.com
 Cost: \$25.00 for Clergy Spouses or \$12.50 for Retired/ Widowed Spouses
 All clergy spouses are invited! Program will be ‘Create Your Own Sunshine’ with Susan McCay presenting. She is an artist/art teacher and clergy spouse from the Seashore District. For more information about brunch or a copy of the registration form, go to our website: www.msumccclergyspouses.org. There is a link on the site that will take you to the registration form. **Print and mail with your check by the deadline of May 1.**
- **Asbury Alumni & Friends Luncheon** – at Madison First UMC (2050 Historic Main St., Madison)
 Cost \$15. Send name and numbers attending to Tommy Artmann at artmann@fumccclinton.org or call 601-606-6263.
- **Duke Alumni & Friends Luncheon** – at Galloway Memorial UMC (305 N. Congress St., Jackson)
 Registration Contact: Don Fortenberry, by fortedp@millsaps.edu or 601-366-2611
Advance Registration is Required.
- **Emory/Candler Luncheon** – at Iron Horse Grill (320 W. Pearl St., Jackson)
 For details, please contact: Lance Presley at glpresley@gmail.com This meal with guest speaker is for Candler graduates, current students, incoming students, interested students, and spouses. Individuals will pay for their own meals at the restaurant.

- **Local Pastors Lunch** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Southern Fried Catfish Meal with special guests: Maxine Bolden, Darian Duckworth, Paige Swaim-Presley and Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr.
 Contact: Ethel Magee: 601-522-3260 or pastormagee@aol.com
 Cost: \$32.00. **Advance Registration is Required. No Reservations after May 1.**
 Eligible for online reservation at: 2017umcmeals.eventbrite.com
- **Memphis Theological Alumni Lunch** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Scholarship recipients will tell us about their experiences at MTS. We will also hear from a faculty representative about the latest happenings at MTS and about opportunities for alumni to be part of the MTS vision.
 Contact: Allen McGraw: 662-934-0749 or allenmcgraw@gmail.com
Advance Registration is Required. No Reservations after May 1.
 Register online at: 2017mtsumclunch.eventbrite.com
- **Rust College Lunch** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Southern Fried Catfish Meal
 “By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them”
 Contact: Kelvin Kosh at 662-252-8093 or Jo Ann Scott at 662-252-8000 ext. 4913
 Cost: \$30.00 **Advance Registration is Required** – rustannualconferenceluncheon@gmail.com

Friday, June 9, 2017

- **Millsaps College Alumni & Friends Breakfast** – at Galloway Memorial UMC (305 N. Congress St., Jackson)
 Cost: **Free but reservation required.**
 Contact: Paige Swaim-Presley, swaimpk@millsaps.edu
 To register call the Center for Ministry by phone at 601-974-1288 to register, or visit www.centerforministry.com to register online.
- **Laity Luncheon** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Guest Speaker, Thomas Kemper, is General Secretary and CEO of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church
Advance Registration is Required. No Reservations after May 1.
 Contact: Angela Griffin at 769-243-7033 or angela@mississippi-umc.org
 Cost: \$28.41 when purchased with cash or check from District Lay Leaders.
 Cost: \$31.00 when purchased online. This includes credit card and usage fees. Online reservations: 2017umcmeals.eventbrite.com
- **Retiree’s Lunch** – at Jackson Convention Complex
 Contact: David Stotts: 601-354-0515 or david@mississippi-umc.org
 Two plates per Retiree. Cost: Free but reservation Required. Additional Plates for \$35.
No Reservations after May 1. Refer to letter from David Stotts for reservation directions.
- **Gammon/BMCR Dinner** – at Central UMC (500 Farish St., Jackson)
 For details, please contact Rev. Fitzgerald Lovett at revlovetth@hotmail.com or Rev. Maxine Bolden at maxine_bolden@hotmail.com
 Tickets for the dinner are \$23.00
Deadline is May 1. Tickets may be purchased online at: 2017umcmeals.eventbrite.com

H. 2017 Exhibit Booths

Exhibit booths at the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference, offers conference-related agencies and organizations a place to showcase and discuss their ministries and services one-on-one with interested clergy, lay members and visitors who attend this three-day session.

Staffing:

Exhibitors' move in begins on Wednesday, June 7th at 8 a.m. - Exhibits open Wednesday, June 7th at 12 noon and will close on Saturday, June 10th at 10 a.m. - Exhibitors are expected be present in the display booth as follows:

- 15 minutes before the morning sessions begin
- During the morning and afternoon breaks
- 15 minutes before the afternoon sessions begin
- BE AWARE: Wednesday, June 7th there will be a concert on site at 7 p.m. – Please staff your booth for the duration.

Application Deadline: May 1, 2017

Exhibit booths at the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference offers conference-related agencies and organizations a place to showcase and discuss their ministries and services one-on-one with interested clergy, lay members and visitors who attend this three-day session.

Please note the application has changed since last year! Read it carefully!

Go to: www.mississippi-umc.org/2017exhibitbooths for Guidelines and Application.

For questions, please reach out to Lee Burdine at Lee@Lifebux.com.

I. Awards



The office of connectional ministries seeks to recognize churches, groups and individuals in the Mississippi United Methodist Conference that are redefining what it means to be light in a dying world. Feel free to nominate those who are shining brightly in the below mentioned categories:

The Emma K. Elzy Award: For Outstanding Achievement in Race Relations

The Elzy Award encourages reconciliation by honoring an individual, group, or institution that has shown outstanding achievement in race relations in the state of Mississippi. The Award is presented at the annual session of the Mississippi Annual Conference. 2016 recognition was awarded to Rev. Bernard Crump posthumously.

Any United Methodist in the Mississippi Conference may submit a nomination for the award named in Emma K. Elzy's honor. Nominees must have shown outstanding achievements in race relations through the building of interracial relationships, the establishment or operation of a program emphasizing race relations, work beyond the "call of duty" or any other significant activity that promotes reconciliation. Although United Methodists may receive preference, the selection process does not exclude persons or agencies from other denominations or faith traditions. Neither members of Conference Commission on Religion and Race nor directly related conference staff are eligible for the award.

This award is given in honor of Emma Elzy, an outstanding laywoman. A descendant of slaves, Emma Kimp Elzy was born on May 23, 1886. She married Charlie Elzy in Pontotoc in 1907. They had four children: Ruby, Amanda Belle, Robert Isaac and Beatrice Wayne.

Emma Elzy was a woman of great faith and built her life's foundation on the teachings of The Methodist Church. She was a woman unafraid of hard work. In the mornings she taught five grades at the Pontotoc Colored School until noon and then worked in the cotton fields until sunset. While her husband and children slept at night, she did the laundry for several white families in the community. She was a woman of prayer. When her husband left her and the four children, she relied even more on her faith in God and the church.

Emma moved to Corinth to teach after she lost her job in Pontotoc. It was there that she joined Mt. Moriah Methodist Church. She would remain in Corinth nearly all the rest of her life. Emma died in 1985 at age 98, just shy of her 99th birthday. She had been a member of the Methodist Church for about 70 years and attended Methodist Conferences of 50 years.

Emma K. Elzy went beyond the norm to bring unity and inclusiveness to the body of Christ. She gave liberally of her time, talent, money and ingenuity to promote better race relations, human relations, church relations and family relations.

Nomination may be submitted throughout the year beginning in July until the cut-off date established for annual conference. **The current cut-off date is May 1, 2017.** Please be thorough and provide details pertinent to our understanding your nominee and his/her ministry.

Go to www.mississippi-umc.org/2017awards for nomination forms and submit your materials for nomination to: Mississippi Conference CORR Emma K Elzy Award Nomination 320 Briarwood Ave, Jackson, MS 39206 .

Nominations Requested for 2017 Tobias Gibson Award:

Nominations are now being solicited by the Commission on Archives and History for its annual Tobias Gibson Award. Nominees should have made significant contributions to the preservation of the history of Methodism in the Mississippi Conference, ideally within the last year. The award nominee must be a living person and able to be present at the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference to receive the award. **Nominations are due by Wednesday, May 1, 2017.** They are to be emailed to commission chairperson, Rev. Rob Webb at rowebb16@bellsouth.net. For more information on submitting nominees call Debra McIntosh, archivist at J.B. Cain Archives at 601.974.1077.

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award: Celebrating Local Church Evangelism:

The Mississippi Annual Conference is now accepting nominations for The Harry Denman Evangelism Award which will be presented during the Session of Annual Conference.

Each year the Harry Denman Evangelism Award honors United Methodist clergy, youth, and lay persons who have made a difference in the lives of people, the church and the community — exhibiting outstanding efforts in Wesleyan evangelism by faithfully carrying out the mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ.” This award, named for the late Dr. Harry Denman, whom Dr. Billy Graham called “my mentor in evangelism,” is made possible by The Foundation for Evangelism, founded by Dr. Denman in 1949.

Nominated by individuals, churches, and districts, recipients of the Harry Denman Evangelism Award have a passion for helping others experience God's transforming love. Recent honorees have been involved in ministries ranging from food pantries to suicide prevention, disaster cleanup to campus outreach, and Bible studies to overseas missions. Neither the size of the local church with which the person is affiliated, the age or gender of the person, nor the length of service should limit one's eligibility.

Recipients of the 2016 Harry Denman Evangelism Award were Rev. Paul Jeffrey Lawrence (Clergy Award); Cristyn Holder (Lay Award); and Mary Elizabeth Hilliard (Youth Award).

The deadline to submit nominations is Wednesday, May 1, 2017.

To nominate someone, download and complete the nomination application below:

- Clergy Nomination Form
- Lay Nomination Form
- Youth Nomination Form

Go to www.mississippi-umc.org/2017awards for nomination forms.

J. Metro Jackson Area Hotels

Special Rates for the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference

If the hotel of your choice is missing, please contact Cat Foster, connectional ministries coordinator at 601-354-0515 or cfoster@mississippi-umc.org and she will try to work out an agreement with your preferred lodging.

FLOWOOD

■ **Hilton Garden Inn**

Rate for 2017: \$129, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/5/2017

Reservation code: C-MCO

118 Laurel Park Cove, Flowood

Distance to Conference: 9.9 miles

601-487-0800

Outdoor Saltwater Pool

■ **Holiday Inn Express & Suites**

Rate for 2017: \$109, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/23/2017

112 Ridge Way, Flowood

Distance to Conference: 9.9 miles

601-992-7773

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

JACKSON

■ **Baymont Inn & Suites**

Rate for 2017: \$65, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/26/2017

5709 I-55 N, Jackson

Distance to Conference: 7.5 miles

601-206-1616

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Cabot Lodge Millsaps**

Rate for 2017: \$94, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/22/2017

2375 North State St., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 2.6 miles

601-948-8650

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Comfort Inn**

Rate for 2017: \$92, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/24/2017

Reservation code: 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference

465 Briarwood Dr., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 7.8 miles

601-956-3611

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Fairfield Inn**

Rate for 2017: \$99, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/16/2017

5723 I-55 North, Jackson

Distance to Conference: 7.7 miles

601-957-8557

Indoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Hampton Inn & Suites**

Rate for 2017: \$97-119.00 depending on room type, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/22/2017

Reservation code: UMC 2017

320 Greymont Ave., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 1.3 miles

601-352-1700

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Hilton Garden Inn - King Edward**

Rate for 2017: \$124, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/15/2017

235 West Capitol St., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 0.29 miles

877-782-9444

Indoor Pool

\$10 Parking fee

■ **Hilton Jackson**

Rate for 2017: \$116, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/19/2017

Reservation code: UMCC06

1001 East County Line Rd., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 9.4 miles.

601-957-2800

Outdoor Pool

■ **Holiday Inn Express & Suites - Downtown**

Rate for 2017: \$109, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/18/2017

310 Greymont Ave., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 1.6 miles

601-948-4466

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Jackson Marriott**

Rate for 2017: \$99, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/25/2017

Reservation code: CNMCNMA

200 East Amite St., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 0.5 miles

601-969-5100

Outdoor Pool

■ **Residence Inn Marriott**

Rate for 2017: \$109, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/15/2017

1248 Eastover Dr., Jackson

Distance to Conference: 4.9 miles

601-362-8003

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

RIDGELAND

■ **Cabot Lodge North**

Rate for 2017: \$94, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/22/2017

120 Dyess Rd., Ridgeland

Distance to Conference: 9.3 miles

601-957-0757

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Drury Inn & Suites**

Rate for 2017: \$104.99, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/5/2017

Reservation code: 2299812

610 East County Line Rd., Ridgeland

Distance to Conference: 9.4 miles

601-956-6100

Indoor/ Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Holiday Inn Express & Suites**

Rate for 2017: \$92, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/26/2017

6485 Frontage Rd., Ridgeland

Distance to Conference: 9.5 miles

601-977-6111

Outdoor Pool

Free Breakfast

■ **Hyatt Place**

Rate for 2017: \$119, per night

Reservations must be made by: 5/17/2017

1016 Highland Colony, Ridgeland

Distance to Conference: 11.5 miles

601-898-8815

Indoor Pool

Free Breakfast

K. Advertise in the Special Printed Edition of *The Circuit Rider*

This issue will highlight the events of the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference. To place an advertisement in the special edition, send an email to receptionist@mississippi-umc.org or call, 601-354-0515.

Deadline for ad placement:

- Ads requiring design and layout: 3:00 p.m. Friday, May 5, 2017, email information to receptionist@mississippi-umc.org.
- Camera-Ready Ads (Press Quality PDF): 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 17, 2017, email to receptionist@mississippi-umc.org.

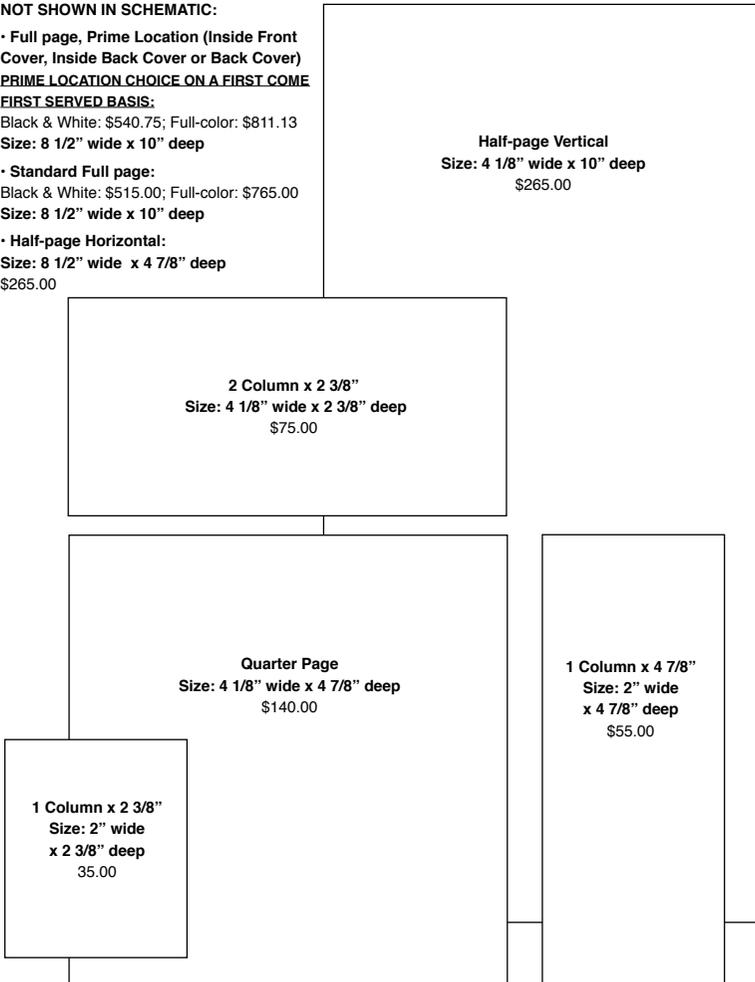
Publication Date: Saturday, June 10, 2017

Circulation: 2,500 issues distributed to members of the 2017 Mississippi Annual Conference.

Rates and Ad Size Specifications

NOT SHOWN IN SCHEMATIC:

- Full page, Prime Location (Inside Front Cover, Inside Back Cover or Back Cover)
PRIME LOCATION CHOICE ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS:
Black & White: \$540.75; Full-color: \$811.13
Size: 8 1/2" wide x 10" deep
- Standard Full page:
Black & White: \$515.00; Full-color: \$765.00
Size: 8 1/2" wide x 10" deep
- Half-page Horizontal:
Size: 8 1/2" wide x 4 7/8" deep
\$265.00



L. Childcare Information

Ages 8 weeks to 18 years old

Once again we are offering two different programs for childcare at the Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference. This year we are also offering childcare on Wednesday for clergy at the Ethics training or those who are attending workshops.

For youth, 12 years old through 17 years old, there will be The Zone. The Zone is a space within the Jackson Convention Complex that will be transformed into a supervised arcade retreat where youth can gather. Mike Howington, Mississippi Conference Youth and Family Ministry coordinator, hopes that The Zone will foster communication and fellowship among the youth. This is a free open door space. While this is a supervised area, it serves as a hang-out location that youth can use to connect. For this age group, there is no official check in or check out. There is no food or drinks offered in the Zone. Parents are reminded to connect with your youth for lunch and throughout the day. The Zone staff will follow state regulations and safe sanctuary guidelines. As we are following these regulations, we ask that you respect the age minimum of 12 years old.

The childcare option for children aged 8 weeks to 11 years old will be supervised care by professional child care workers who will be following state regulations as well as safe sanctuary guidelines. The Director and workers plan various activities so that the weekend is enriching for the young attendees of the session of Annual Conference. Some of the planned activities include: Bible stories, crafts and even ball pits.

There is a \$20 registration fee per family, plus a fee of \$15 per session per child with a family max of \$50 a day for sessions. These fees aid in offsetting program cost. Pre-registration (by May 1) is imperative to ensure that there are an appropriate number of childcare workers on duty for the child to worker ratio required by law. Registration forms with specific details can be found on the next page or at www.mississippi-umc.org/childcare2017.

**2017 SESSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI ANNUAL CONFERENCE
 CHILDCARE REGISTRATION FORM
 (Ages 8 weeks through 11 years old)**

Child's Full Name: _____

Nickname: _____ Male Female

Child's Date of Birth: _____ Grade Completed: _____

Child's Medical Concerns (allergies, asthma, disability, etc.) _____

_____ (include additional page if needed)

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent Name (Mother) _____ (Father) _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Cell number: _____ In case of an emergency, may we text you? Yes No

Who else has permission to pick up child listed above? Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Cell Number: _____

Insurance Information

Name of Insurance Company: _____ Phone# _____

Policy #: _____ Group # _____

Name of Insured's Employer: _____

Fees

\$20 registration fee, non-refundable. One registration fee per family.

\$30 registration fee, non-refundable for registrations received after May 1, 2017. One registration fee per family.

Each session is \$15. Family max of \$50 a day for sessions.

Lunch is optional, bring a bag lunch or buy a \$5 lunch ticket for each child.

Please check which sessions your child will be attending:

Wednesday

- clergy ethics training (\$15)
- lunch (\$5)
- workshops (\$15)

Thursday

- morning session (\$15)
- lunch (\$5)
- afternoon session (\$15)

Friday

- morning session (\$15)
- lunch (\$5)
- afternoon session (\$15)

Saturday

- morning session (\$15)
- lunch (\$5)
- afternoon session (\$15)

Registration

Mail payment (registration fee per family plus session fees and lunch ticket per child) with completed registration form to MS United Methodist Annual Conference, Attn: AC Childcare, 320 C Briarwood Drive, Jackson, MS 39206. Make checks payable to Mississippi Conference. Questions? Please reach out to Cat Foster at cfoster@mississippi-umc.org.

SECTION II

CONNECTIONAL
MINISTRY
UPDATES

SECTION II

CONNECTIONAL MINISTRY UPDATES

Connectional Ministries

The Office of Connectional Ministries focuses and guides the mission and ministry of The Mississippi Conference. This group is led by the Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications. Committees include:

Mississippi Partnerships, (Wesley Pines Conference, Camping, and Retreat Center; Camp Lake Stephens; Seashore United Methodist Assembly; Gulfside Association, Inc.; Methodist Children's Homes of Mississippi; Choctaw Mission; Good Shepherd Community Center, Inc.; Edwards Street Fellowship Center; Moore Community House; Wesley House Community Center, Inc.; Bethlehem Center, Inc.; St. Andrew's Mission; United Methodist Hour), United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Church and Society, Board of Global Ministries (Missions, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, and Health and Welfare), Council on Youth Ministries and Commission on Communication. Other areas of care include: Congregations for Children, Personnel Committee, Journal, Resolutions and Petitions and Standing Rules.

The Offices of Connectional Ministries coordinates staff, boards, agencies and committees to uphold and promote shared ministries of the Annual Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, General Conference as each local church lives out our Core Values.

As we continue "Living Out the POWER of We" and keep the Parent (BOT) MAP before us we strive to maintain alignment and a consistent vision. Loving, Learning, and Leading have become an essential part of all team meetings. We continue to build partnerships with Cabinet & Vital Congregations Committee toward better information gathering and training for local churches through Charge Conference data.

Mission Grants for 2016, of 40 applications 28 grants were awarded to local churches for a total of \$68,883. \$760,000 was recommended for partnerships and camping ministries through the Annual Conference Board of Global Ministries. Scholarship for The Gathering, Nexus and Convo resulted in scholarship to 26 churches for a total of \$6753 for youth events.

The Office of Connectional Ministries and Communication casts the vision for Living Out The POWER of We. These two offices intentionally organize, align, and communicate the work of staff, boards, agencies, committees, and the local churches to be more responsive to the movement of the Holy Spirit and our purpose: The Mississippi Annual Conference—empowered by love, generosity, justice and apprenticeship—forms spiritual leaders, faith communities and connections so more disciples of Jesus Christ transform the world.

Bethlehem Center, Inc.

920 N Blair St., Jackson, MS, 39202 | 601-355-0224 | bethlehemchildren.org

Bethlehem Center is a United Methodist National Institution serving Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area. Its mission is to provide educational, health and community program and services for children and families within a spiritual environment. Bethlehem Center seeks to provide an environment through which God can transform all who participate in its program and services, encouraging them to become who God calls them to be.

Bethlehem Center provides quality childcare to forty-two low to moderate income families.

Each year we provide a free income tax site, partnering with United Way VITA services, we provided service for one hundred ninety eight individuals whose income was less than fifty thousand.

Each year we provide space for the AKA Sorority to provide a free home cooked meal to the community surrounding the Bethlehem Center which served one hundred ninety five meals.

Our mission vision is achieved through the families we serve, knowing we have provided the best service to each of them through our childcare and the knowledge of the bible through our Summer Enrichment program our students attend Vacation Bible School at several of the United Methodist Churches to get God vision for them.

Our goal was to enroll seventy children in our childcare program. We did reach that goal through the help and support of the Annual Conference these families cannot afford childcare anywhere else without your help.

A Word of Witness

A single mother living in the homeless shelter with three children, unable to work or even look for work because she had no one to keep her children. She was told about Bethlehem Center and came to us for help, we were to help her and she is now working and paying her childcare fees.

Camp Lake Stephens

117 Camp Lake Stephens Dr., Oxford, MS, 38655 | 662-234-3350 | www.camplakestephens.com

Camp Lake Stephens, a United Methodist Camp and Retreat Center, is committed to being a place where children, youth and adults can encounter God and respond in faith to God's call to transform the world.

For 70 years Camp Lake Stephens has been a place for people to come and experience the love of God while in the midst of God's incredible creation. The camp grounds are sacred for so many people who have had life-changing experiences while they were at Camp Lake Stephens. One of our main goals is to make sure that Camp Lake Stephens continues to be this kind of place for years to come.

In order to achieve this goal, Camp Lake Stephens is committed to:

- Providing the highest quality Christian camping experiences possible.
- Providing spiritual growth opportunities for children and youth through out the year.
- Providing opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth for our older adults.
- Providing opportunities to develop spiritual leaders.
- Being intentional about building relationships and connections with local congregations.
- Being intentional about reaching out and serving needs in our local community.

Camp Lake Stephens recognizes that in our changing world it is necessary to adapt and innovate in order to minister effectively in the years to come. Barriers exist that make it hard for all people to come to camp, so our staff and Board of Directors are working on ways to break through these barriers. Currently, they are working on ways to makes more scholarships available and developing a Traveling Day Camp program where a camp experience can be taken to local churches in our Conference.

Camp Lake Stephens deeply values the relationship it has with the Mississippi Annual Conference as a connectional ministry and looks forward to our next 70 years of ministry!

The primary way Camp Lake Stephens accomplishes our mission is through our summer camp program. We provide various camp options for the children and youth of the Mississippi Conference, with the majority of our campers coming from the northern 5 districts of the Annual Conference. We provide day camp options starting with children who have finished kindergarten, various resident camp options starting with children who have finished the first grade, adventure camp options starting with youth who have finished the 6th grade, and leadership development options for youth who have finished the 9th and 10th grades. This past summer we were able to minister to almost 1,500 campers through our various summer camp options.

During the school year, Camp Lake Stephens ministers to the children and youth of the Mississippi Conference through Spiritual Life Retreats for children and youth. We offer a Confirmation Retreat in January to enhance the Confirmation programs children are experiencing in their local churches. Also, for over 30 years we have provided a youth retreat for youth known as Overflow.

Camp Lake Stephens serves the older adults in the Mississippi Conference by providing Older Adult Days at camp. These events provide times for older adults to come together in fellowship as well as have multiple spiritual growth opportunities through workshop and special programs.

Over the past few years Camp Lake Stephens has been reaching out to our local community in Oxford and Lafayette County through various community events. The outreach that has been the most successful is our annual Christmas at Camp. Families with youth children are invited to camp to celebrate the joy of the Advent season. We provide those who come with supper, an opportunity to meet Santa, arts and crafts, s'mores & hot chocolate, live nativity scene, hayride, Christmas Caroling, and more. Over 100 families participated last year and we expect more this year.

We are also proud to offer an Environmental Education program for school groups. This year, through the help of volunteers, we have been able to add a barn (complete with sheep, goats, horse, cow, and pig) and a composting facility. This program gives us an incredible opportunity to teach children about caring for creation.

Camp Lake Stephens achieves our mission by providing as many opportunities as possible for children, youth, and adults to come and “retreat”. Being in the midst of God’s creation is an incredible experience in itself. Summer campers, retreat participants, and all who come to camp have the opportunity for God’s creation to speak to them. Camp experiences provide participants the chance to get away from the routine of life and things that often distract us in our spiritual journey and focus on God. In preparation for summer camp, we do everything possible to hire the best young men and women available to serve on our summer staff. These staff go through two weeks of intense training where they learn not only how to lead activities and to keep campers safe but also how to interact with and minister to the campers in their care.

One thing that is stressed in all our programs is that God loves us and is always there for us in any and all situations. We want every camper to feel loved by our staff and other campers while they are at camp and we work hard to provide an atmosphere that allows this to happen. Camp Lake Stephens seeks to develop spiritual leaders in many ways. All summer long we run three-week leadership training camps for youth who have just finished the 9th or 10th grades. Participants are given multiple opportunities to lead activities and to share their faith through leading devotions for the younger children who are also at camp. After going through this program participants normally choose to work the following summer as a Counselor in Training and then later as a full Counselor. It is incredible to watch elementary and junior high campers “move up the ladder” and become leaders themselves. We celebrate so many who through their experience at camp have felt called into full-time vocational ministry.

Camp experiences are somewhat unique in that they provide opportunities for people from different places and different socio-economic groups to come together and to be in community with one another. Things that often divide us out in the “real world” don’t seem to matter at camp. At camp everyone is accepted and loved and therefore able to be in community.

This past summer Camp Lake Stephens had 1,459 campers participate in one of our various summer camp options. Unfortunately, this number fell 41 campers short of our goal. Camp Lake Stephens awarded almost \$20,000.00 in scholarships this past summer, which we think is the most we have ever awarded in a single year.

A Word of Witness

Camp Lake Stephens: a lake, a creek, a ropes course, a bunch of campers, and one summer that deepened my relationship with the living God and with the church. My experience as a counselor – waking up at 6:40, assuring kids that yes breakfast casserole is delicious, lifeguarding day in and day out, shepherding elementary girls from activity to activity – pushed my faith every single day. From capture the flag in blistering heat to thunderstorms during cookout, camp challenges souls – especially the souls of counselors! My patience and wisdom were tested daily, yet, somehow, I never felt an iota of resentment towards any job I’d been tasked with or any situation I found myself in. Because, there’s something about leading a troop of six or seven girls up Heart Attack Hill on a Friday night after you’ve rolled your ankle for the second time in three weeks, when your flashlight has gone out so you’ve had to borrow your co-counselor’s, and you’re counting heads and checking you’re watch because yes, bonfire ran a little over again, that just makes you whisper, “God”, and truly, from the depths of your soul, and really mean it. Because there’s no way you’re getting up that hill otherwise.

Camp Lake Stephens revealed parts of me I didn't like; my impatience, my perfectionism, and my total dependency on God. At the end of the summer, I looked back and thought about the impossible job I'd just complete. That God had just let me complete – the late nights and early mornings and smoky bonfires and worried nurse visits (they were almost always just mosquito bites, Jordan) – and all I could do was sit back and marvel at the noble work I had been allowed to participate in. For a minute, I glimpsed the kingdom at work. A kingdom composed of late night staff meetings where all we did was sing hymns, of quiet talks on the cabin porch about what God really desired of us, of hearing the same Bible stories reinvented each week by a different storyteller.

Camp Lake Stephens didn't change me all at once, or transform my life. But it did allow God to work in me and through me, in ways I previously didn't think possible. It gave me an avenue to connect more deeply with the living God and to see what the church truly looked like when at work. One of my eight-year-old campers said it best: "here, I just feel like this is a really special place and God's here, and he's got us right in his hands."

Edwards Street Fellowship Center

P.O. Box 17532, Hattiesburg, MS, 39404-7532 | 601-544-6149 | www.ESFCntr.org

The mission of Edwards Street Fellowship Center is to shine the light of God's love. The purpose of ESFC is to provide a helping hand to the poor, the underserved, the suffering in the greater Hattiesburg area.

The ESFC food pantry supplies emergency and supplemental food to around 1,100 households per month from seven counties across the Pine Belt: Covington, Forrest, Jasper, Jeff Davis, Jones, Lamar and Wayne. We are an approved distribution agency of the Mississippi Food Network, a USDA distribution center.

The people served by our children's programming (Boy Scouts, Girls' Club, girls' dance class and summer programs) primarily live within 5 miles of our center and attend an under-performing K-8th grade neighborhood school. The senior adult ladies who attend our weekly Bible study and fellowship live in that same 5-mile radius.

The ESFC Thrift Store draws people from across the Pine Belt as shoppers, donors, and volunteers and serves people of varying races, religions, ages and socioeconomic levels. While offering "second chances" for generous donors' gently used clothing and household items, our thrift store also provides "new chances" for people. The ESFC Thrift Store serves as a DHS SNAP workfare job site; a Senior Community Service Employment Program partner for low-income seniors age 55+; a placement site for Forrest County Justice, Youth and Municipal Courts; a community service site for special needs youth and adults; and a work site for various rehabilitation programs.

Fellowship Health Clinic serves uninsured and underinsured adults from Forrest and Lamar counties. Eligibility for services is needs based, not income based. An extensive screening process, conducted by volunteer social workers and nurses, reviews potential clients' income, expenses, and health insurance. Clinic services, which are all provided at no cost to clients, include non-controlled prescription medication, referrals for tooth extractions and dental cleanings, chronic and acute medical care, and social work case management.

Wellness programs are regularly offered in our food pantry lobby. These include free HIV testing; free assistance in enrolling in healthcare marketplace insurance, CHIP and Medicaid; healthy cooking demonstrations; blood pressure checks and body mass index assessments; diabetes and hypertension education; and free assistance in enrolling in SNAP (food stamps). Our facility has an outdoor walking trail, as well as fruit, vegetable and flower gardens. All food grown on site is distributed through our food pantry.

We strive to meet the physical needs of our community through no-cost food at our food pantry, low-cost clothing and household items at our thrift store, and free medical and wellness programs.

We work to meet social and emotional needs through the fellowship of our ongoing boys' and girls' programs and senior ladies' Bible study and meal. We also serve as a host location for special events such as Junior Auxiliary's Smart Art and Coat Giveaway.

We are excited about the educational, medical, business and faith partnerships formed through Fellowship Health Clinic. We have affiliation agreements and formal partnerships with the William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine, WCU School of Nursing, the University of Southern Mississippi College of Nursing, USM School of Social Work, the Pearl River Community College dental hygiene program, and the PRCC medical laboratory technology program. We recently signed an agreement with Hattiesburg Clinic and Forrest General Hospital for their provision of the software, hardware, installation, data lines and support for Epic electronic medical records in our clinic. Our pharmacy is a partnership with St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy of Biloxi. Medical providers and volunteers are from the Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, United Methodist, and other faith communities.

In addition to reaching out to our community through programs and services, we have the unique opportunity to share the love of Christ with volunteers who work beside us every day. Our volunteers at the main center and the thrift store represent a diverse mix, including college and high school students seeking community service hours, drug court and youth court participants, special needs students from area high school and adult organizations, Camp Shelby Youth Challenge cadets, and MS Dept. of Human Services TANF Work Program participants. In addition to these volunteers, we are exceedingly grateful for the many good-hearted individuals who come alone or with a church or civic group to help neighbors in need. We host youth and children's groups (Vacation Bible Schools, confirmation classes, youth groups) for tours of the center, reflection/worship at our outdoor worship center, and hands-on mission projects.

- **Food Pantry:** We provided a three- to five-day supply of food to an average of around 1,100 households per month, distributing an average of 10 pounds of food per individual in the first ten months of 2016. We added a food redistribution partnership with KFC and are in discussion with a Panera Bread location slated to open in Hattiesburg in December 2016. Additionally, Old River Road Deer Processing is working with us through the Hunter's Harvest program to provide our clients with donated deer meat.

- **Children's & Senior Programming:** Attendance at our Boy Scout troop and Girls' Club remains steady. We have two new attendees joining us for the weekly senior ladies' Bible study and fellowship. Members of Leaps of Faith, our free ballet class for elementary girls, will be performing as Candy Canes in "The Nutcracker" at Hattiesburg's Saenger Theater in December. Three retired adults continue to volunteer as weekly tutors at Earl Travillion Attendance Center, the school which most of our children's programming participants attend.

- **Wellness Programming:** William Carey University School of Nursing students offer free blood pressure checks, body mass index analyses, and health education in our food pantry lobby and at our thrift store. Enrollment assistance for the ACA Healthcare Marketplace, Medicare, and CHIP is ongoing at our facilities throughout the open enrollment period (11/01/16 to 01/31/17). We serve as a weekly host location for free HIV testing in partnership with Southeast Mississippi Rural Health Initiative. University of Southern MS College of Nursing students provide diabetes and hypertension education two days per month to our pharmacy clients. A representative from the MS State University Extension Service offers healthy cooking demonstrations in our food pantry lobby using pantry staples.

- **Fellowship Health Clinic:** Statistics reflect data from 01/01/16 to 10/31/16: 2,851 prescriptions mailed to clients' homes; 183 patients treated at 442 medical appointments; 806 off-site lab tests performed by LabCorp; 115 patients referred to have at least one tooth extracted by general dentists or oral surgeons; 7 patients referred for free cleanings and X-rays; 115 patients received social work case management through 251 social work appointments.

- **Thrift Store:** On average, sales for the first ten months fell slightly below our goal, coming in at over \$17,000 per month. In May, we experienced an unexpected change in store managers. Since our new manager accepted the position the last week of May, monthly sales have averaged nearly \$26,000 per month! In addition to this amazing increase in sales figures, we are delighted with our new manager's commitment to treating everyone who enters the store with love, dignity and respect. Her values are contagious among the staff and volunteers, causing donors and customers to repeatedly comment on the positive Christian environment of the ESFC Thrift Store.

A Word of Witness

“Jana,” 9-year old in our weekly Girls’ Club: “Jana” has participated in Girls’ Club for four years. Her temperament was best described as angry and her academic record as failing. Through working with our tutors at Girls’ Club, Jana was diagnosed as dyslexic. Thanks to a scholarship and the generosity of a friend of ESFC, Jana began the 2016-17 school year as a student at the 3-D School (Dynamic Dyslexia Design) in Petal, MS. She is a transformed child! Her anger has been replaced with joy and enthusiasm. Her grades have turned around and she has an eagerness to learn. Her behavior at Girls’ Club has pivoted from antagonistic and non-participatory to loving and engaged.

Good Shepherd Community Center, Inc.

629 Cherry St., Vicksburg, MS, 39183 | 601-636-7687 | gssc86@att.net

The fundamental philosophy of Good Shepherd is that of prevention. We believe that it is better to prevent bad things from happening to children, youth, adults, and families than to attempt to rehabilitation after they have failed. Good Shepherd provides a holistic program that will enable the very poor and disadvantaged of society to meet the demands of life on closer parity with other, more affluent and advantaged members of society.

We do our ministry through the following programs:

- Daycare - for children six weeks through four years of age
- Tutorial/After School Program
- Family Literacy Program (GED)
- Free Medical Clinic
- Specific Aid to Individuals
- Summer Programs
- Community Center Activities
- Thanksgiving & Christmas Assistance
- Emergency Food Service

We serve people in the west central part of Mississippi and east Louisiana. These people are from all walks of life: single parents, Daycare for children ages 6 weeks through 5 years, any age seeking their GED, after school tutoring for elementary aged children, we see those without medical insurance in our clinic, plus specific aid to individuals or families, and a small emergency food program. This year we have had 84 children in our Daycare with 13 graduating in May and moving on to kindergarten. Our free clinic will see almost 3000 patients this year. Due to the new GED test that was implemented in January of 2016 we have only had 7 persons get their GED through our program from August 2015 through May 2016.

We also give out food at Thanksgiving for elderly and disabled individuals and families. This year we gave out over 2800 meals. For Christmas, we have adopted 320 children to get adopted so they can receive toys and clothing. As in the past, we will take between 60-70 more with the generous gifts of extra toys and clothing.

We held our second Bridges Out of Poverty program here at Good Shepherd with five people completing the course. This is a wonderful program where participants enroll in a 16 week course to study the causes of poverty and how to overcome these challenges. This was in conjunction with the Episcopal diocese in our area as well as the United Way of West Central Mississippi.

We achieve our mission to provide for the least, the lost, and the last by a variety of programs. We work to empower all those who come through our doors to better their lives by getting or keeping their job, or by getting a better education to further their carrier. We offer GED preparation classes and daycare for their children so they can to that. We look at everyone who comes to us as a child of God who is loved, and we treat them that way in all we do. We work to be very generous in our helping by providing low cost daycare, free medical services, and specific aid to individuals, none of which would be possible without mission share support from the annual conference.

We continue to advocate for people in a wide variety of ways through support in their daily lives.

Apprenticeship is not a new idea for us. We try to hire those who have gone through our programs and

give them an opportunity to succeed. We also work with many who come to us for help by giving them volunteer opportunities to gain skill needed to better their opportunities in the work place.

We had 70 of our daycare children who had learned the skills necessary to move into kindergarten or the next age level in our program.

- By the end of the year we will have seen almost 2400 patients in our clinic and provided medical care that includes seeing our physicians, helping them fill out paperwork to get their medications at no charge, and donating them medications we purchased to distribution. We will spend almost \$20000 for this medication this year. Some of these funds come from our mission shares from the Annual conference

- We have registration in our GED program with 29 enrolled and more than 16 on our waiting list. We also had 7 who received their GED.

- The second Bridges Out of Poverty program was a great success. There were five women who enrolled and finished the 16-week program. Three of these were employees of Good Shepherd and because they have completed the program they received raises from us and have worked hard to get their finances in much better shape. Though they are not on secure sound financial footing they have made great progress. All of them have also begun meeting with some of those who have completed the course in 2015 for support.

- We have provided over 2400 meals to the elderly and disabled this year at Thanksgiving

- We have all of our 330 children adopted for Christmas and with the generous donation of toys, clothing, and money we will be able to provide for another 60+ children.

- We are continuing to work with several agencies in our area – United Way, the Episcopal Diocese in town, most of the United Methodist churches as several churches from other denominations, the city of Vicksburg, and others.

A Word of Witness

I enrolled in the Good Shepherd GED Program in March of this year because they offered childcare and transportation for me and children. I have three children and this has been the reason I have not gotten my GED but at Good Shepherd I have been able to work on my skills and should receive my GED in December of this year or January of next year. Rev. Miller and the staff at Good Shepherd have helped make this possible. I plan to keep my kids at Good Shepherd after I graduate because of the great care my kids receive and for what they have learned this year.

Gulfside Association

102 Johnson St., Waveland, MS, 39576 | 228-467-4909 | gulfsideum@att.net

- What we value: We value our heritage and the legacy we create. We value and practice Christian principles, spiritual development, renewal and re-creation. We value human dignity and justice for all God's people.

- What we envision: We envision a caring community where all God's people are transformed by the love of Christ.

- What we do: Gulfside provides facilities and programs that further the development of ministries by the whole person through education, spiritual renewal, and family support for all ages.

- Motto: We have the unmitigated gall to believe Gulfside is the Mecca on the Gulf.

Our service to small local churches in Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia have been the major portion of what we do over the past 5 years. Providing health related services in Hancock County, in particular, has provided support for the individuals and families. Work in the local food bank and partnerships with other agencies has reach people in the immediate mission field. Over the course of the year, we would estimated that we reach 150- 200 per month in the various partnerships associated with Gulfside.

One of the value statements of Gulfside relates to addressing human dignity and justice for all people. This reflects positively in relationship to the mission statement of the Mississippi Annual Conference. The achievement for Gulfside has been limited, yet consistent in coordinating and working to represent

the love and justice of God in the surrounding communities. The annual college tour continues to support high school seniors in selecting and experiencing colleges hands on. The recent building of the Bishop Leontine Kelly chapel will draw people from all faith experiences to explore the wonder of Gulfside through its presence on the site of the Gulfside property at Beach Avenue. Collaborative efforts are being made to work closely with members of the board of Directors to resource and participate in the work of Gulfside.

Scholarships were given for the college tour. This is the only program that received additional support for persons unable to pay for the travel and meals. 34 scholarships were given. The scholarships were partial scholarships.

A Word of Witness

My first college tour was a great experience. Not only did I learn about college life, it also helped me with my communication skills. I was able to open up and talk to different people from different areas. My favorite part was the activities, especially the basketball tournament. It gave me the opportunity to meet people in a fun way. I also enjoyed chapel. I was able to relate because they broke it down and made it relatable for my age group. I can't wait until next year! I am happy about the support Gulfside has gotten to survive, from the Mississippi, Texas, and general church sources.

Millsaps College

1701 N. State St., Jackson, MS 39210 | 601-974-1000 | www.millsaps.edu

Millsaps College is dedicated to academic excellence, open inquiry and free expression, the exploration of faith to inform vocation, and the innovative shaping of the social, economic, and cultural progress of our region.

Building on its motto, *Ad Excellentiam*, its strong heritage of social justice, freedom of thought and reflection on life's most important questions, and its central location in the capital city of Mississippi, Millsaps engages students in a transformative learning and leadership experience that results in personal and intellectual growth, commitment to good citizenship in our global society, and a desire to succeed and make a positive difference in every community they touch.

The Millsaps Charter was granted in 1890 to the Mississippi and Northern Mississippi Methodist Conferences establishing Millsaps College with a commitment to "the poorer classes in the state." Religious diversity is a foundational principle, with students of all denominations attending the College since its founding – living out the generosity among people of faith that John Wesley imagined when he said, "If thy heart is as my heart, then give me thy hand."

Millsaps serves a community of 910 undergraduate students and 75 graduate students. Our students come to Millsaps from all over the world, representing 26 states outside of Mississippi and 23 countries outside of the United States. Currently 10 percent of incoming Millsaps freshmen self-identify as United Methodist.

Additionally, the Center for Ministry, a partnership between Millsaps College and the Mississippi United Methodist Conference, serves approximately 557 clergy and laity from eight annual conferences and 14 states. The College also serves as host for numerous religious and secular lectures, concerts, and educational enrichment programs that are open to the general public in the Jackson metropolitan area and beyond.

Our goal for 2016 was to award 8-12 scholarships. We have awarded 7 scholarships this year.

Millsaps encourages students to consider how their post-college lives and work can express their deepest values, gifts, and experiences of meaning and identity while connecting to the needs of the larger community. This is achieved through both on and off campus collaborative and interdisciplinary learning experiences that include seminars, courses, internships, and service-learning. The academic and real world programs create a comprehensive approach to the challenge of cultivating a new generation of civic, community, and religious leaders for today's complex world.

Many students who choose Millsaps for other reasons discover a new passion for community engagement, leadership, and service and they graduate with an understanding that their careers should include community awareness and a commitment to making a difference in the world. Often, while at Millsaps, their career goals shift as they explore faith to inform vocation and life's most important questions.

A Word of Witness

As an incoming student to Millsaps almost four years ago, my reception of the John Wesley Scholarship was one of, if not the greatest factors in my final decision to attend this college. The scholarship has greatly benefitted me and my family financially in ways that can't be expressed. The scholarship has also spurred me on to stay active with the Methodist Church and to continue to pursue Christ's kingdom through starting bible studies and acting as the Chaplain of my fraternity for one year. (...) it has been reassuring to know that I was backed by men and women of the Methodist Church in the form of the scholarship which gave me the opportunity to be a light for Christ on this campus. Every time I pass by the John Wesley statue overlooking the Bowl, I am reminded of my true goal on this campus and in this life.

Mississippi Choctaw United Methodist Mission

10971 Rd. 2606, Choctaw, MS, 39350 | 601-527-3734 | choctawummission@gmail.com

In 1827, the Methodist Missionary began a ministry among the Choctaw people. Today, we continue the mission to be a caring ministry devoted to serving Christ and improving the condition of life for all persons. Throughout recent history with the Choctaw people, the mission remains to be a haven to minister to the needs and concerns of the communities, nurture spiritual growth and develop leaders through Christ-centered programs that enhance educational opportunities to be culturally empowered. We aspire to meet the people at their chosen point of intersection by listening, acting on their interest, respecting and appreciating the Tribal culture. Through spiritual led programs, we seek to empower young people, enrich and inspire families, and welcome relationships with the Choctaw communities.

As we continue to explore how to be a viable service, we will make the best of the resources we have by promoting both individual growth and a collective effort for the people to live meaningful fruitful lives. We envision a healthy Choctaw-based center with aggressive prophetic leaders as they build together to carry the Choctaw Mission to the next level.

The Choctaw Mission serves the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians living mainly in three of the eight communities that make up the reservation. We predominately provide programs and outreach to Bogue Chitto and Pearl River Communities, Neshoba County and Red Water Community, Leake County. Within recent months, we are seeing Choctaw families from other communities taking advantage of the programs and services we offer.

The main site of the Choctaw Mission is in the Pearl River community, the largest populated community on the reservation and headquarters of the Tribal Administration.

The population of the Choctaw people is over 10,000, mostly young people under the age of 25. The large number of young people is attributed to a high and early (50 and less in age) death rate. The causes of most of the deaths are related to the complications of alcoholism, suicide, and a high percentage of diabetes.

Even though, there have been noticeable improvements in the economic development due to good Tribal government leadership and accomplishments, social and cultural concerns are prevalent. Many households continue to be managed by grandparents with several generations living together. High rates of domestic violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, low-income, homelessness, and low self-esteem are concerns that continue to plague the Choctaw people.

Community Outreach, Spiritual Growth Enrichment and Leadership Development Initiatives are highlighted areas the Choctaw Mission is developing to retain and expand programs and services to the Choctaw people. To help with the programs and services, we welcome and extend hospitality to Mission Teams to fill gaps we don't have resources or the staff. Church groups, United Methodist Women organizations and individuals volunteer in the clothes closet and food pantry, and visit to learn about our work.

The following are highlights for the year:

Community Outreach

- **Clothes Closet:** The Community Clothes Closet expanded its hours to be open on Thursdays, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Clothes are given to an average of 118 families monthly.

- **Food Pantry:** The Food Pantry provides food bags with canned and non-perishable items on Saturdays. We provided food for 21 families in January, with a steady increase, in June we provided food for a 102 families, and our most recent data show we provided 92 families with food.

- **Saturday Morning Fellowship:** Lite Breakfast food and beverages on Saturdays to an average of 70 adults and children

- **Elderly Ministry:** Partner with the Elderly Center in the Pearl River Community to provide devotions, socials, and other activities

We are starting a devotion and fellowship for the Elderly. The program is designed to bring the Elderly in the communities together for a time of spiritual sharing and to be sociable as well as share a lite breakfast on Saturday morning once a month.

- **Seasonal and Holiday Festivities:** Seasonal and holiday events bring children and families together to share activities, fun and food. We average 110 to these events. In December a Holiday Meal was added to the celebrative festivities, a 180 people attended. A Christmas Gift Bag of goodies was given to all that attended.

Spiritual Growth Enrichment

- **Advent, Lent and Bible Studies:** Bible study in Bogue Chitto and Pearl River communities for an average of 18 adults

- **Vacation Bible School:** Provided Vacation Bible School for 256 children in Bogue Chitto, Pearl River and Red Water communities

Leadership Development Initiative

- **Life Skill Management Modules:** We are developing a Transitional Opportunity Program (T.O.P.) – Eagles Nest –The Transitional Opportunity Program is for young people – age 18 to 25. The program reflects the mission of spirituality through innovative life management skills. The program comprise eight (8) modules with an overall expected outcome for the young adults to learn and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare for a successful productive self-sufficient life and be fruitful effective citizens of society with an awareness of spiritual and self-understanding.

- **Children and Youth Club:** The Bogue Chitto Community – Dreamcatchers, a Christ-centered children and youth club for ages 5 to 17, meet Wednesdays with an average of 45 young people. The program goal is to reach young people to grow their faith, foster hope and love for self and others. 12 Dreamcatchers attended Nexus Youth at Annual Conference. They also attended the Native American Cultural Workshop, “The Moccasins Rock”, at Lake Benson Retreat Center, Bon Aqua, Tennessee. The Dreamcatchers, “Chata Alla Taloa” rendered music at the Meridian District United Methodist Women. They all attended Vacation Bible School this summer, provided community service and participated in other events in the Choctaw Community.

- **Leadership and Ministry Building Blocks:** The program help individuals gain knowledge and understanding of the purpose of the church and the church’s ministries from a spiritual perspective. The expected outcome is to learn and acquire an understanding and knowledge of the church’s purpose, the responsibilities to be disciples to help grow the church through evangelism and nurturing ministries.

- **Seminars, Workshop, Events and Other Training Opportunities:** We provided housing and a staging center for the Longest Walk 5 runners and walkers to provide workshops and events for the Choctaw Community. They are Native Americans of the American Indian Movement, Declaring War on Drugs, seeking cultural and spiritual solutions to end drug abuse and domestic violence. They began their 3,600 mile, 5 month long journey in California to walk or run across the country, stopping in Native American communities to provide education opportunities about substance abuse and domestic violence. Their

journey ended July 15th at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC.

Hospitality is a core value of the Choctaw Mission grounded in our Christian belief that all are welcomed. The members in the communities and members of the Board of Directors provide fellowship meals, worship and cultural enrichment for the mission teams and other groups to show our generosity.

Our mission statement, a caring ministry devoted to serving Christ and improving the condition of life for all persons and the vision statement, to develop prophetic leaders through enrichment of spiritual life skills by enhancing educational opportunities to be culturally empowered, speaks to connecting more people to transform the world for Jesus Christ.

The splendor of the grounds during the seasons of the year shows how God's love is a driving force to bring the Choctaw people together on "holy grounds" to give thanks to God and praise His awesome wonder. Not only the splendor of the grounds, but each Saturday morning in the Clothes Closet when families come not only for clothes and food, but for a time to fellowship and to express their thanks with joy filled smile, we see the face of God's love.

Each time we receive a donation of food items for the Food Pantry, clothes for the Clothes Closet, monetary contributions, and visits from Mission Teams, church groups, individuals and United Methodist Women organizations we know and understand the meaning of a generous spirit. The work the Mission Teams do in the communities to repair homes for the elderly, their visits to the Choctaw Elderly Center, nursing home and home bound elderly is a blessing of kindness. We are appreciative to the Mission Teams for the cross-cultural experience and to fill gaps that we are unable to do, such as repairs to the facilities at the main site and Vacation Bible School for the children and youth. The Choctaw people show their gratitude to the Mission Teams by providing community fellowship, cultural meals and cultural storytelling.

A large number of children come from homes with little resources to provide for their needs. Many households are managed by grandparents with several generations living together. High rates of domestic violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, low-income challenge many families in the Choctaw communities. Low-income is a fundamental concern, many Choctaw families have become accustomed to this way of life. We provide meals midweek for children and youth, food to families, lite breakfast snacks on Saturdays, clothes to families and other resources when we are financially able. We not only want to give a handout, but improve the Choctaw people livelihoods through educational opportunities and connecting people to resources that help them become aware of and hopefully become able to improve their conditions.

The Dreamcatchers program is giving children and youth an opportunity to express how to be leaders and to improve life skills. Within the last two years, we have recognized a marked improvement in the leadership of the Board of Directors. To improve the purpose and vision of the Choctaw Mission, the members are beginning to understand their leadership roles and responsibilities. Plans are underway to intentionally structure training events for the Choctaw people to develop leadership skills both in their communities and in the churches.

Moore Community House

P.O. Box 204, Biloxi, MS, 39533 | 228-436-6601 | www.moorecommunityhouse.org

Moore Community House, Inc. (MCH) is a local mission agency of the United Methodist Church related to United Methodist Women committed to the development of its neighborhood. MCH operates on the belief that a neighborhood organized around its own interest can do much to enhance personal dignity of the individual and promote self-sufficiency. MCH's programs are designed and planned to provide for community development, community solutions to neighborhood problems, and opportunities for growth and development of all persons. Founded in 1924, MCH serves poor and low income families in east Biloxi, a neighborhood with rich cultural diversity and extreme wealth inequity. As a UMW mission agency, MCH works to build economic security for low-income women and young children in east Biloxi.

The needs of east Biloxi are multiple and primarily economic. As an organization with a mission to respond to the needs of low-income women and young children, Moore Community House has created

two programs that research shows make the most strategic and positive difference in moving low-income families closer to self-sufficiency: quality, affordable early childhood education and job training that leads to higher paying employment. These services are critical for our community as represented by the significant waiting lists for our services. Our Early Head Start program enrolls 104 children and has a waiting list of 130. The Women in Construction program offers 8 week classes for 20 women at a time and has a waiting list of over 100 women.

Moore Community House gives witness to our love for God and our neighbors by providing services that build the economic security of families. MCH bears witness to the United Methodist Church by implementing best practice, utilizing strategies proven to make the most difference, and supporting our staff to obtain training and expertise to support family success. Through our mission work in the east Biloxi community we promote reconciliation, develop Christian leaders, and share opportunities for volunteerism, advocacy, and interpreters of our mission work throughout the connectional church.

Quality, affordable early childhood education has a two-fold positive impact for low-income families. First, it provides immediate economic improvement in that it makes it affordable and, therefore, possible for a low-wage earning parent to go to work and remain employed. Child care is expensive, often costing more than community college tuition. And low-wage work rarely provides benefits such as maternity leave or sick leave. So providing reliable and affordable services makes it possible for low wage earning parents to work. Secondly, it improves long-term outcomes for children. While quality early childhood education improves outcomes for all children, it has proven to make the biggest positive difference for low income children. These outcomes include higher educational attainment, reductions in risky behaviors thus preventing the need for expensive interventions, delayed parenthood, and higher earning power. MCH provides these services for 104 children ages birth to three, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., year-round.

Job training for higher paying jobs has a positive impact in that it allows individuals to earn more money to better meet the economic needs of their families. When this pathway is opened to women it has an immediate and positive economic impact on single-mother headed families, and it has a positive impact on the larger economic and social environment by making it less discriminatory. MCH provides eight-week classes for 20 women students all throughout the year. MCH provides job referrals and a support network for women who become employed to help support their employment success.

In the Early Head Start program MCH was fully enrolled with 104 children, and had another 128 children on the waiting list. Results demonstrate that 100% of our children are meeting developmental targets, 100% of our parents are meeting educational and/or employment goals, 100% of our children are immunized and have ESPDT screenings.

Women in Construction classes were fully enrolled with 80 women, and had another 110 students on the waiting list. The Women in Construction graduate rate was 73% and job placement rate was maintained at 70% as a result of partnerships with local employers.

Moore Community House was recently awarded a Department of Labor grant to significantly expand the number of women participants in our job training program across Harrison and Jackson Counties. The expansion will begin implementation in January 2017 and continue through December 2019.

Rust College

150 Rust Ave., Holly Springs, MS 38635 | 662-252-8000 | www.rustcollege.edu

Our mission is to promote an engaging diverse community of faith, supporting the entire Rust College family with a well-rounded program dedicated to teaching cultural, moral, and spiritual values in both theory and practice.

The vision of the Office of Religious Education is to support the overall vision of the college by servicing the spiritual needs of students, faculty, staff and administration regardless of race, religion, non-religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, national origin or ethnic background.

We serve 1,004 students and 200 employees. While Rust College serves primarily African-American students, faculty and staff, we also serve people from various national and international ethnicities. Additionally, we serve a predominantly Christian body, but we also serve people of other faith traditions and non-faith traditions on our campus. We serve 50 Mississippi counties and 97 Mississippi cities as well as students from 22 states and 6 foreign countries.

As always, the apportioned mission share is used to provide scholarship support for United Methodist Ministers, their dependents and current operations.

We embrace diversity within our Rust College family:

- We Bear Good Fruit - Matthew 7:20 “wherefore by their fruits ye shall know Them.” Through our scholarship, service and integrity shall we be known.

- We Bear One Another’s Burdens - Galatians 6:2 Bear one another’s burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” We love one another, help one another, and we show compassion and understanding towards one another.

- We Bear Witness - Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

The Office of Religious Education mirrors the core values of Rust College:

- Faith, grounded in the Wesleyan tradition of the United Methodist Church.
- Tradition, a blend of American and African-American Christian heritage.
- Accountability, where teaching is our primary mission.
- Learning, a constant quest of excellence.
- Nurturing, training tomorrow’s leaders who are students today.
- Service, so that “By Their Fruits, Ye Shall Know Them.”

The primary goal of Rust College Religious Education is to provide safe space where the entire campus can have fun while receiving, developing and maintain a relationship with God. The activities are designed to encourage critical thought and positive social action thus affirming God’s grace and celebrating freedom, justice, community, diversity and integrity within all creation.

A Word of Witness

First and foremost, I want to take this time to thank the United Methodist Church for supporting me in my financial crisis to be able to continue my education. Rust College is an amazing place to receive a degree of higher learning. It was a great idea to attend an institution founded by the United Methodist Church. The staff and all teachers in the school are very nice and responsible. The way the teachers teach is the best way to make students interested and feel fully engaged in class. Rust College not only provided me all the academic knowledge, but also taught me living skills. I want to thank all the teachers who not only helped me with my studies, but also gave me lifelong learning advice.

Seashore United Methodist Assembly

1410 Leggett Dr., Biloxi, Mississippi, 39530 | 228-436-6767 | www.seashoreassembly.org

The ministry of Seashore United Methodist Assembly (SUMA) is designed to create an atmosphere and programs that foster spiritual growth and empowerment cross-generationally which will lead to spiritual wholeness through seminars and/or retreats. Our mission is to provide a Christian Center for learning, growth, and renewal.

The vision of SUMA is for individuals, families, and groups who, because they have been touched by the redeeming love of Christ, are at peace with God, themselves, others, and all of God’s creation, and thus empowered to live in God’s will. The ministry shall emphasis education, spiritual development and renewal, emotional rehabilitation, and recreation for individuals, clergy/spouse, single parents and/or families. Programming implemented at SUMA shall be in keeping with the Core Values of the Mississippi United Methodist Conference stressing the power of WE: Love, Generosity, Justice, and Apprenticeship.

SUMA houses, feeds, provides meeting spaces, and helps with programming and set-up, as needed, for incoming groups and individuals. The SUMA service is broad, as we meet the needs of groups from all over the state of MS, and various other states, including LA, AL, AR, TN, KY, MA, TX, MD, IL, CO, CA, and PA. We continue to have working relationships with Seashore Mission, Harrison County Sheriff's Department, Habitat for Humanity, Back Bay Mission, the Institute for Mammal and Marine Studies, and the University of Southern Mississippi Sea Camp. During the year 2016, SUMA has hosted over 70 groups with a total number of guests being over 2,600. We also had over 140 individual guest reservations, and at least 3 family reunions.

SUMA provides a place on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast where people of all backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs can come to learn, grow, and renew their lives in an environment conducive to drawing nearer to Christ. This holy ground has served and continues to serve as a location where lives can be transformed, becoming closer to Jesus Christ.

In 2016 SUMA has hosted about 77 groups with a total of approximately 2673 persons in the various groups. Of those groups, 23 were MS United Methodist, 3 were United Methodist groups from other states, 2 Baptist Church groups, 1 Seventh-Day Adventists group, 1 Catholic group, and 11 other or non-denominational church groups. We also hosted 15 college groups, 3 high school groups, and 5 elementary school groups. There were 12 mission groups, 32 retreats, 3 family reunions, 13 training classes, 5 field trips, and 12 other types of groups. SUMA had approximately 138 additional individual stays. Over 26,000 meals have been served in the B M Stevens Cafeteria this year.

A Word of Witness

Thank you so much for all that you did to make sure that our orientation weekend was a success. Everything was perfect – the meeting room, the bedrooms, the bonfire. The Fellows had a great time. Thank you for taking such good care of us. - *Sofia, Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, New Orleans, LA*

St. Andrew's Mission

P.O. Box 1407, McComb, MS, 39649 | 601-684-4678 | www.standrewsmision.org

St. Andrew's Mission is a 501(c)(3) United Methodist Mission of McComb, MS; working to improve our community one individual at a time.

Vision Statement: St. Andrew's Mission ministers to a diverse community. We understand that each individual has his/her very own needs. We will continue to address this diversity in order to accommodate the needs of those who need our assistance.

St. Andrew's Mission has ten programs including a Free Medical Clinic, Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, Men's Shelter, Activity Center, and most recently added the Business Mill, a small business incubator. We serve all age groups, domination's, and races in Pike County and the surrounding area. This includes the counties of Amite, Walthall, Lincoln, Franklin, Adams, Marion, and some parishes in Louisiana. St. Andrew's Mission is considered the largest organization in Southwest Mississippi providing needed services to over 1,500 individuals each month.

St. Andrew's Mission achieves their mission and vision by working with one individual at a time to find out what their needs are and which one of our programs would help them the most. Here is a list of our programs with a brief description on how we serve the community every day.

- SAM's Diner - soup kitchen; free hot meals twice a week to the homeless, low income families, and shut-ins.
- Food Pantry - Free groceries for disabled and seniors over the age of 65 in Pike and Amite Counties.
- The Business Mill - Provides start-up business management coaching, help in preparing effective business plans, administrative services, technical support, business networking, advice on intellectual property, and help in finding sources of financing.
- F.I.G. Tree (Filling in the Gaps) Ministry - helps low income families by subsidizing their basic necessities such as electricity, gas, water, and medicine.

- Parenting Classes - provides free education and counseling in parenting skills for low income families and single parents (usually court ordered)
- Anger Management and Counseling Classes - provides free education on managing anger, anxiety, and depression for youth and individuals of low income families (usually court ordered).
- Medical Clinic - provides free medical assistance to those individuals without insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid.
- Parish Nurse - this person serves as a source of referrals for services available and holds health fairs throughout the community.
- Activity Center - This center is a focal point in our community where persons over 45 can take part in activities that support independence and encourage continued involvement within the community.
- Men's Shelter - We provide a safe place to stay and a hot meal for those individuals that otherwise would still be on the streets. We also give them training in our thrift stores to help prepare them for applying for a job.
- Additional programs - CPR and First Aid Classes, Health Fairs/Screenings.

Thrift Stores locations are Brookhaven and McComb, Mississippi; Vidalia, Louisiana; and we are partnered with Edwards Street Fellowship Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

In 2016, we have reached out to around 20,000 clients through the Medical Clinic, Food Pantry, Activity Center, Men's Shelter and Parish Nurse.

In 2016, St. Andrew's Mission served 25,000 meals through our Soup Kitchen, Food Pantry, Men's Shelter, and Activity Center.

In 2016, St. Andrew's Mission had over 120 volunteers through the Medical Clinic, Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, Thrift Stores, and the Activity Center.

In 2016, St. Andrew's Mission opened the Business Mill and has assisted with the start up of 9 small businesses.

A Word of Witness

My name is Henrine and I am a member and a volunteer at St. Andrew's Senior Activity Center in McComb, Mississippi. I enjoy the activities provided at the center. Those activities I enjoy include line dancing, arts and crafts, socials, and occasional lecture series on health and wellness, computer skills, and money management. I particularly enjoy the Wednesday lunches provided free for members. Not only is the food very good but it also provides a pleasant social atmosphere for fellowship with old and new friends. As a volunteer, I enjoy the opportunity to come to the center four days a week to answer caller's questions that can help them, greet members, and be a part of the center's staff.

The United Methodist Hour, Inc.

P.O. Box 1393 , Clinton, MS, 39154 | 601-467-2038 | www.thehour.org

The mission of the United Methodist Hour is to, through media and technology, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to resource the local church to live faithfully and boldly in the world.

The Hour is primarily a broadcast ministry which serves approximately 20,000 weekly viewers across the state of Mississippi and beyond. We air on 16 stations, including Frazier in Alabama, Memphis, Philadelphia (PA) and all across Mississippi. Our ratings in the major in-state markets (Jackson, Hattiesburg, the Coast, Columbus) show approx. 12,000 verified households tuning in each week. We estimate an additional 9,000 (conservatively) to view the program in the other markets combined. To put this into context, Joel Osteen preaches each week to his enormous arena... which seats approx 16,000 people. The Hour has more viewers each week than are present inside that arena in Texas (the largest church gathering in the country). Our viewers, many of whom are homebound, are connected to the Mississippi Annual Conference through our efforts.

Our weekly broadcast is the culmination of our efforts to deliver a message of hope and encouragement. We strive to resource the local church through providing quality lessons from Keith Tonkel, LaToya

Redd Thompson, and Steve Casteel. Our teachings and encouraging messages help spiritual growth in our viewers. Communities (like Sunday School classes) watch and support us together. The program is also a very positive advertisement for the Methodist church all across the state and throughout our viewing markets. Many viewers are from other backgrounds and denominations. The Hour provides a glimpse into the Wesleyan tradition and the Methodist way. It is a great reflection on the good being done in our conference.

Our viewership numbers from stations that have been able to provide such data (in weekly households watching):

Tupelo (WTVA) - 3000, Greenwood/Greenville (WABG) - 2,248, Jackson (WLOO) - 2,056, Jackson (WDBD) - 2,469, Hattiesburg (WDAM) - 1,000, Biloxi/Gulfport (WLOX CBS) - 702 we are gathering additional data and can provide at a later time. (Some of these numbers do NOT represent satellite and Uverse viewers).

A Word of Witness

Dear Friends, I felt compelled to write to you because I want you to know what a blessing your program is to me. Bro. Casteel, when I hear your voice, it just makes me know that I've found a good place to be. I had seen Bro. Keith on TV in times past and then you have that precious LaToya whom I just want to hug. My husband has gone home to his reward in heaven, and now it's just me and Sugar, my bulldog. She takes care of me. Keep up the good work and give my best to all the people who make your broadcast possible.

United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network

P.O. Box 1594, Marion, VA, 24354 | 276-685-6031 | www.umamn.org

The vision of the United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network is a society where all people in Appalachia are valued, where all are offered discipleship for Jesus Christ, and where all have the opportunity to realize God-created spiritual, social, and economic potential.

The mission of the United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network is to partner with annual conferences, districts, local churches, and general agencies to develop and support leaders within the United Methodist Church in Appalachia.

UMAMN was designated by the General Conference to work with local, district, conference, and general church leadership to collaborate and coordinate ministries that seek justice for all God's people in Appalachia. All conferences with districts in Appalachia may have representatives on the UMAMN board.

UMAMN oversees two primary projects. The Appalachia Hunger and Poverty grant program, which provides start-up funds and emergency funds for churches and ministries to address and alleviate hunger and poverty issues in Appalachia. And the Appalachian Ministry Network, which provides opportunities for local church leaders and ministries in areas of skill development, community asset identification, and advocacy awareness.

The service area of UMAMN stretches from southern New York to northeastern Mississippi and includes all United Methodist districts within 20 annual conferences that are designated as Appalachian. There are 420 counties in Appalachia and a population of over 25 million.

Through our leadership/training assemblies UMAMN connects churches, districts and conferences throughout Appalachia with a network of highly effective existing programs and church leaders. UMAMN is focusing on sharpening leadership skills of laity and clergy and the spiritual formation of church leaders in the region, as well as strengthening the ministries, both new and on-going, that are working to overcome hunger and poverty in Appalachia.

UMAMN only held one training/leadership events in 2016, and UMAMN awarded 8 Hunger and Poverty grants in 2016 for a total of \$16,800. Grants were awarded to backpack ministries, feeding programs for urban homeless, and other impactful ministries.

A Word of Witness

Advocacy for families suffering from hunger or food insecurity is always a welcome focus as well. Anything that UMAMN does to publicize and advocate for the pressing problem of hunger in Appalachia (and the country as a whole) is much appreciated. Many people are still unaware of the impact of poverty and hunger in their own communities, and the effect of hunger on developing children. The existence of UMAMN is itself a help to us, and all the work the organization does to raise awareness is something we benefit from in Beacon of Hope.

Wesley House Community Center, Inc.

P.O. Box 1207, Meridian, MS, 39302 | 601-485-4736 | www.wesleyhousemeridian.org

The mission of Wesley House Community Center, Inc. is to provide a holistic approach in providing resources to those in need by being the hands and feet of Christ on earth. A “hand up” is offered rather than a “hand out” so that people are able to regain their independence. Wesley House is a National Missions Institute of the United Methodist Women. Services are provided through four different agencies within the Center. These are the Christian Relief Agency, Education Agency, Victims Services Agency, and Connectional Agency. Through these agencies, Wesley House helps people from all walks of life who find themselves in need of support. This support comes through Christian relief, counseling, educational programs, child abuse prevention, sexual assault crisis intervention, community welfare and social services. Our services, other than the preschool, are free of charge to everyone. These services are available to everyone regardless of race, creed, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Wesley House has four agencies that regularly serve the following counties in Mississippi: Lauderdale, Newton, Neshoba, Scott, Leake, Jasper, Wayne, Clarke, Kemper, Noxubee, and Attala and three counties in west Alabama. Other counties are served on an as-needed basis.

- **Christian Relief Agency:** More than 60,000 people were assisted in 2015 through the Christian Relief Agency. Clients who need assistance with rent/mortgage payments, utility bills, or prescription drugs can apply in person every weekday from 9 AM until 5 PM. Documentation is required to demonstrate need. Once assistance has been provided, a person or family may be referred to life skills classes or counseling, but additional assistance is not provided for a minimum of 9 months. Exceptions to this policy are considered on a case by case basis.

The Community Clothing Closet accepts donations of new or gently used items that are given away daily to those in need. There are no requirements for a person to receive clothing. During the fall and winter months, Wesley House partners with WTOK, a local ABC television station, in collecting and distributing coats for children.

Through the Wesley House Food Pantry, individuals and families receive non-perishable food items to either supplement or supply basic food needs. Food is distributed on a daily basis to those demonstrating need based on the same information required for monetary assistance. During Thanksgiving and Christmas, special holiday food bags with appropriate canned items and a frozen hen or turkey are provided for qualified individuals and families. The distribution of these food bags is accomplished by local church youth groups, school groups, Bible study groups, civic organizations, and fellow Christians in the community.

The food pantry is supplied by donations from churches, Sunday school classes, UMW groups, community agencies, food drives, and individuals.

- **Education Agency:** There are a number of programs within the Education Agency. Wesley Wonders Preschool is a low-cost, all day preschool for 3 and 4 year olds. Currently there are 30 children attending the preschool and more are on the waiting list. Wesley Wonders provides working parents with affordable Christian care in a loving atmosphere. GED classes are held twice a week at Wesley House in conjunction with Meridian Community College. The proximity of Wesley House to a public housing apartment complex makes it the perfect location for these classes. Life skills classes and parenting classes are offered and scheduled as needed. Life skills classes focus on basic skills such as financial planning, interview tech-

niques, resume writing and healthy relationships. Parenting classes assist parents with developmentally appropriate discipline techniques, age-appropriate expectations and coping skills in stressful situations. Teacher in-service programs that cover topics such as human trafficking, child abuse awareness and prevention, and general child abuse education are offered. As a part of the Education Agency, Wesley House offers meeting space for organizations such as the National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI) and others.

■ **Victim Services Agency:** The Victim Services Agency consists of two centers—East Mississippi Child Advocacy Center (EMCAC) and the East Mississippi Sexual Assault Crisis Center (EMSACC). The EMCAC works with a team of professionals in the area of child abuse. EMCAC provides multiple services such as forensic interviews, family and victim advocacy, counseling and referrals for specialized forensic medical examinations to children and non-offending care givers involved in investigations of child abuse. The center provides forensic interviews to children ages 3 to 17 and vulnerable adults who are involved in investigations of sexual abuse, felony physical abuse or as needed if they have witnessed a violent crime. EMCAC accepts referrals from law enforcement and Child Protective Services as part of the multidisciplinary team process that allows multiple agencies to work together on child abuse investigations. The EMCAC is responsible for facilitating, documenting and tracking the multidisciplinary teams' monthly case reviews in the counties served.

The EMSACC provides counseling services and advocacy services to sexual assault victims and their families. EMSACC's crisis line gives victims 24/7 access to resource and referral information as well as in-person support when requested at local emergency rooms. Therapists travel to five different counties in order to provide counseling services to clients who may not be able to come to Wesley House.

Advocacy services for both the child advocacy center and the sexual assault crisis center include courtroom preparation and accompaniment, assistance in identifying and accessing resources which will aid the entire family, and completion of the Victim's Compensation forms.

■ **Connectional Agency:** Fishes and Loaves is a community partnership that gives Wesley House and local churches the opportunity to coordinate services to area residents. Participating churches donate a portion of their benevolent funds to Wesley House. In return, the churches send people requesting assistance to Wesley House. The applicants are carefully vetted and funds from the referring church's account are dispersed accordingly.

The Christmas Clearing House coordinates Christmas for over 1,000 children in Lauderdale County and the surrounding counties. Wesley House works with the Department of Child Protective Services (CPS) to provide Christmas for children who are in foster care. CPS workers provide Wesley House with each child's wish list which includes toys and clothes. In turn, Wesley House reaches out to the community for sponsorship of these children. Churches, community organizations, Sunday school classes, and individuals choose a child or children and purchase new toys and clothing for them. The gifts are returned to Wesley House and then passed on to the CPS workers who distribute them to the children.

The Christmas Clearing House also assists with Christmas for children from qualifying families in the local area. Toy donations come from many sources including a local television station's annual "toy-a-thon," a Christian bikers group that holds an annual "Toy Run," local businesses and organizations such as Alliance Health Center and Meridian Community College Work Force Development Center to name just a few.

Volunteers from throughout the area help collect, organize and distribute the Christmas gift bags. It would not be possible to pull off this Christmas miracle without the help of so many volunteers.

Community volunteers work throughout the year to help keep the Community Clothing Closet and the Food Pantry organized and stocked. These volunteers include people who are required to perform community service as part of their TANF, SNAP, or HUD assistance benefits.

In accordance with the mission of the Mississippi Annual Conference, Wesley House provides a holistic approach to empower individuals and families. The Center meets an individual's immediate needs through prayer, active listening, counseling, and empathy. The needs are assessed and individuals, with the help of the staff at Wesley House are able to set goals for long-term success.

A Word of Witness

I have to start off by saying that they are some of the nicest people I have ever met. I love the Wesley Wonders preschool! My daughters have learned so much. They wake up every morning excited about going and wanting to learn so much more. It is also very affordable for single parents or for anyone who has to work but can't afford \$100-\$200 a week for child care. It's not like a school really. They are more like family! I LOVE Wesley Wonders.

We have helped this young mother with Thanksgiving and Christmas for her children. We continue to provide emotional support for her and have worked closely with her during a difficult time with one of her daughters.

Wesley Pines Conference, Camping and Retreat Center

P.O. Box 307, Gallman, MS, 39077 | 601-892-2341 | www.wesleypines.com

The original intent for Wesley Pines 56 years ago was to be a camp whose mission was to invest in the lives of youth and children. As stated on the investment bonds of this new Methodist 55-acre camp at Gallman, MS, was that by God's grace and through this camp "... eternal dividends are to be paid in good fellowship, personal satisfaction, and genuine Christian growth" and that it would be celebrated by every person that would come to this new camp.

Today, our vision and mission has not changed, it simply has expanded. Our official name, Wesley Pines Conference, Retreat and Camping Center, reflects our broadening of vision and mission...we do so much more than camping with youth and children in a summer time frame only. Although our purpose has not changed, our vision and mission is always being refined and expanded. In those early summer camps at Wesley Pines, 350 children in a summer would have been celebrated. This past spring and summer, we celebrated over 1000 persons enjoying the Wesley Pines experience. During the summer camping program, over 375 of our youth/children made a profession of faith and/or a rededication of their life to Christ. In an attempt to grow disciples for Jesus, we host 17 Emmasus, Chrysalis, Presbyterian Cursillo, MS Methodist Cursillo, and Karios outside events each year. We host retreats for Sunday School classes, Admin. Boards, Youth groups. We reach out to not only United Methodists, but have had many new contacts and retreats for Baptists, Catholics, etc. In 2016, we are approaching 10,000 persons to come and discover this special place called Wesley Pines (and we will have fed these guests to Wesley Pines over 38,000 meals)

We continue to share our mission and vision with churches. With either our director and/or a staff person, we have made presentations on behalf of the camp in 45 churches or UMM or UMW or youth groups in 2016. We have joined with 8 churches or groups with work teams in making needed improvements around the camp. We have celebrated the ground breaking and beginning of new ministries through the Ministry Center in 2016 located at Wesley Pines. This is a place to train and deploy mission workers for home and foreign mission work. Through home mission work, we completed 6 projects of ramps and porches for the needy....we intend to double that number this year as we use more volunteers and youth. We have already partnered with several churches, local businesses, and Christian friends, to make these ministries stand on their own...no funds for these projects have nor or there plans to need finances for these future mission endeavors by mission shares.

We believe that part of our mission and vision is turning Wesley Pines outward. We want to become a training facility for volunteers who have a heart for hands on ministry. We desire to have specific camps and dates for adults to join us in Copiah County... Brookhaven District...and beyond! We desire to go out and demonstrate the love of Christ not only by what we say but by what we do.

We also believe that part of our mission and vision in this special place of peace and tranquility, is to grow disciples for Jesus Christ. At Wesley Pines, there are many opportunities for quiet reflection, spiritual growth, and meaningful worship. We will continue work on our prayer trail and add scripture markers along the way. We will continue to up-grade one of the finest ropes courses around with the spiritual application of each event being posted near it. And, we continue to promote and encourage our children

and youth's attendance in summer camping, confirmation retreats, and spiritual renewal events planned for them.

Our desire is to be attuned to God's leading us in all ways of programming and opportunities that will give rise to disciples coming to Wesley Pines and not only being blessed themselves but enriched so that they may be a blessing to others. We host many spiritual renewal weekends. We offer scholarships to youth and children so they may attend camps/events. We have partnered with Hazlehurst UMC in a ministry grant to extend scholarships for 20 minority youth/children to attend summer camp. (We are partnering with local businesses to extend scholarships for 20 additional minority youth/children from our area to attend summer camp. We are keeping our fees as low as possible to encourage adults, youth and children to come and experience Jesus at and through Wesley Pines. We are always inviting persons to Christ at Wesley Pines by offering good fellowship, personal satisfaction, and genuine Christian growth opportunities.

We continue to reach out and touch lives through our unique setting to churched and non-churched persons by offering so many opportunities of growth. And, when people come, they discover that Wesley Pines is not only a special place but a place to discover and experience God.

Although we have had persons from every district come and be with us in 2016, our main area of ministry would be the following six districts of the United Methodist Church: East and West Jackson; Brookhaven; Meridian; Hattiesburg; and Seashore (our board of trustees also are taken from these six districts). Our numbers exceeded 1000 persons in our summer activities and approximately 10,000 persons for the year came and spent time at Wesley Pines.

Wesley Pines made a decision many years ago, to attempt to retain clergy as their executive director. The board wanted to encourage and never lose sight that even though there is a lot of fun, and swimming, and canoeing, and games that go on at Wesley Pines, our main motive is to make disciples for Christ, to grow Christians in their faith journey, and have a hand in encouraging all Christians in transforming the world for Christ.

It is a tremendous blessing to see persons who are connected with Wesley Pines influencing the growth of others on their faith journey. I have seen counselors and staff on a regular basis leading others to Christ. Christ has directed many persons through Wesley Pines to become pastors and leaders in this conference. By God's Grace and through generous giving by individuals and churches, Wesley Pines is a place that is conducive to leading persons to Christ in a natural outdoor setting...a place (in our stillness, serenity) where persons can hear clearly God's call and direction upon their life for the transformation of the world.

Some of our celebrations for 2016 include:

- Gave out 350 Bible to first time attenders for children coming to camp
- Provided over \$20,000 for scholarships for children and counselors (by far the most in our history)
- Had 290 persons to come to our Free Church Day so they may experience a taste of summer camping
- Increased the number of speaking engagements by 9 from previous year
- Repaired 2 roofs with lumber that we cut from WP....no leaking roofs...replaced all the outside doors at Durr-Wise Center; replaced 2 air conditioner units; one septic tank replaced
- In 2016 -the usage of Wesley Pines was up to near 10,000 persons. We have fed over 38,000 meals.

A Word of Witness

There is simply no possible way I will be able to summarize what Camp Wesley Pines means to me in a short narrative. I have been privileged enough to attend camp there, serve as a counselor there, serve as an elementary summer camp director there, and now send my own child there.

My memories of camp, and "Getting Outdoors/Getting Into Christ," have transformed and grown over many years. I have witnessed the love of Christ in a plethora of ways on the grounds of Camp Wesley Pines. I have seen lives changed and the Holy Spirit work in mighty ways during summer camps, youth retreats, and adult outings. This specific camping ministry, of the United Methodist Church, has truly furthered the kingdom of Christ in Gallman, Mississippi.

I have seen, firsthand, children devote their lives to Christ after a day of canoeing and campfires. I have seen counselors reshape their personal walks with Christ through teaching of the word on the ropes course and sharing in nightly cabin devotions. I have answered pressing questions and witnessed heartfelt prayers, through tears, while directing others to Jesus. I have watched children become the hands of feet in mission work by building for the needy. I have witnessed the rededication of lives from adults over altar rails lit by candle light. I have heard rounds of laughter though dizzy bat, canoe battleship, “dive-in” movies, tabernacle games, color runs, archery, arts/crafts, & octoball.

This place, this “holy ground,” has offered the opportunity for so many to share their faith, their lack of their faith, their various walks of lives, their brokenness, their healing, and their growing in a setting where Christ is ever-present. I thank God for the CWP connections and life-long-lasting friendships created with Christ at the center. This place, this camp, this outdoor ministry is a vital part of the Christian community of the Methodist church.

SECTION III

ADMINISTRY

SECTION III

ADMINISTRY

A. Council on Finance & Administration

Report #1

1. Organization and Responsibilities and Recommendations

As defined in Section 611 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*, the purpose of the Council on Finance & Administration shall be to develop and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference. The Mississippi Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall have an executive committee comprised of the following six individuals: council chair, council vice-chair, chairs of the sub committees on benevolence, clergy support, and administration, and the conference treasurer.

The Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) has examined the financial and administrative policies and procedures of the annual conference, including the whole process of agency and institutional funding and apportioned mission share allocations for local churches. Herein are our recommendations of procedures and policies to be followed by the Mississippi Annual Conference.

2. Annual Conference Member Responsibility (2016 Discipline paragraph 247.14 & 251.2)

Lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference have the disciplinary responsibility of interpreting the conference mission and ministry plan and budget adopted at Annual Conference to their congregations. This includes telling the story of our shared ministries across Mississippi and around the world and funding at 100% the apportioned mission share for each congregation.

Before Annual Conference

- Pray for your work as a member to Annual Conference.
- Learn about the items that will be presented at Annual Conference by studying this *Pre-Conference Journal*.
- Share this information with the leaders of your church so that you will be able to wisely engage as a member of Annual Conference.
- Lead your local church governing body in studying the proposed Conference budget. Come to Conference prepared to ask questions, propose any changes that the governing body suggest, and be prepared to vote on the budget. After budget approval, be prepared to support the decision of the Annual Conference body.

At Annual Conference

- Attend the sessions of Annual Conference and learn all you can about the scope of our shared ministry through the United Methodist Church.
- Be engaged in approving a budget that will fund our denominational shared ministries.

After Annual Conference

- Report to your local church council on actions of the Annual Conference as soon as possible, but no later than three months after the close of conference (Par. 251.2).
- Interpret to your church and charge conference "...the importance of the apportioned mission shares, explaining the causes supported by each of them and their place in the total program of the church. The World Service Fund is basic in the financial program of The United Methodist

Church. World Service apportioned mission shares represent the minimum needs for mission and ministry of the worldwide United Methodist Church.” Conference benevolences represent the minimum monetary needs for mission and ministry in the Mississippi Annual Conference (Par.247.14).

- Support and encourage payment of your apportioned mission share at 100%. Payment in full of these apportioned mission shares is the first benevolent responsibility of each congregation (Paragraph 247.14).
- Continue educating your congregation throughout the year about the ministries supported by the apportioned mission shares.

Resources

The following resources are available to help you interpret the apportioned mission shares to your church:

- Annual budget tabloid prepared by the conference treasurer
- Mississippi United Methodist web site www.mississippi-umc.org
- Sharing God's Gifts web site www.umciving.org

3. Conference Expenditures

Internal control and accounting policies adequate to properly safeguard the assets of the conference have been examined by the CFA. The controls and polices are on file in the treasurer's office and are available for review during normal business hours. CFA believes the controls and policies are currently adequate but the council pledges to review them annually and update them as the necessity is determined.

A. ANNUAL CONFERENCE PER DIEM

Each pastoral charge shall provide for the lodging and meal expenses of their pastor(s), lay members(s), deacon(s) in full connection, and diaconal minister(s) attending Annual Conference. The clergy and diaconal ministers in special appointments shall have their expenses paid by the agency served. The Conference Board of Pension shall pay the per diem for the Surviving Spouses attending annual conference.

Per diem paid by the conference will begin with the opening session of Annual Conference and end with the closing session. Per diem paid by the annual conference shall be at the following rate: sixty dollars (\$60.00) per night for lodging when staying in a motel/hotel and ten dollars (\$10.00) per meal. There will be no reimbursement from the annual conference for travel.

As members of the Annual Conference who are not appointed to a local church, the following persons attending Annual Conference shall receive per diem paid by the conference.

- a. Retired Clergy – Not appointed to a local church
- b. Clergy receiving Disability Income from the General Board of Pension and on medical leave but not appointed to a local church
- c. Retired Diaconal Ministers – Not appointed to a local church
- d. Diaconal Ministers receiving Disability Income from Wespath and on medical leave but not appointed to a local church
- e. The Annual Conference Secretary in consultation with the Bishop and Extended Cabinet determines the required number of equalizing members. The equalizing members as named by the Annual Conference Secretary will be paid per diem by the conference.
- f. Seminary students who are candidates for ministry and approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, except those students who serve churches within the bounds of the conference.
- g. Special cases approved by the cabinet.

B. CONFERENCE COMPENSATION

The pay period of clergy appointed at annual conference shall begin on July 1. Compensation is to be paid as earned. In no instance shall compensation be paid in advance by the conference or any entity amenable to the annual conference.

Salaries of District Superintendents and conference personnel, clergy and lay, shall be given priority and paid in equal monthly installments. Travel expenses in the work of the conference shall be paid on voucher at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for business miles. Required documentation for conference business shall be the following: purpose of travel, mileage, copies of hotel bills, documentation for meals, receipts for car rental and fuel, parking, and tolls. In situations where travel is outside the conference bounds, rental cars should be requested only when their use will be more economical than public transportation or when a special situation applies, e.g., excessive material to carry, out-of-the-way location, extensive local travel.

The conference treasurer is hereby authorized to withhold funds from the salaries of annual conference personnel for the purpose of investing said funds in tax deferred programs and for payment of salary reduction reimbursement plans in keeping with Internal Revenue Service policies when such request is made by conference personnel.

C. COMPENSATION FOR DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS, DIRECTORS AND SENIOR STAFF

The Mississippi Conference shall provide equal compensation packages for the district superintendents. Compensation shall be defined as cash salary and housing. The cash salary amount is determined annually by the CFA. The district shall provide funding for the housing and utilities of the superintendent if no parsonage is provided. In the event there is no parsonage provided, the housing allowance shall be 25% of the superintendent's cash salary. The 2018 utility allowance provided by the district to all superintendents shall be \$6,000.

The district shall also maintain, equip, and fund the operation of a district office, including all elements of compensation for an administrative assistant or other lay/clergy employees.

The Conference Personnel Committee shall recommend the compensation of their Directors/Senior Staff to the Council on Finance and Administration. None of these compensation packages shall exceed the District Superintendent's compensation package.

CFA will determine the compensation of the Treasurer/Director of Finance and Administration.

The salary shall be remitted semi-monthly from the conference treasurer's office. Non-exempt employee's compensation shall be determined on a weekly basis as provide by the DOL and paid on a bi-weekly basis. Travel, continuing education, and reimbursable expenses shall be paid after vouchers have been submitted with appropriate documentation. There is an accountable reimbursement policy applicable to all conference employees.

Salary budgets are approved by Annual Conference. The appropriate personnel committees and directors are hereby authorized to review and fix annual compensation by November 30 within the Annual Conference authorized budget in accordance with the Employee Handbook.

D. MOVING EXPENSE

The church receiving a new pastor shall consult with the incoming pastor to negotiate the moving expenses of the pastor. The moving expenses of incoming conference personnel shall be paid from the conference funds. The moving expenses of an incoming district superintendent shall be paid by the district from district funds.

Moving expenses for a retiring minister or a minister going on disability, shall be paid by the conference treasurer in an amount to cover his/her approved expenses as defined below in an amount not to exceed \$1,800. The move of a minister's surviving spouse and immediate family following the death of a minister serving an appointment, shall be paid by the conference from the conference fund in an amount not to exceed \$1,800. The conference payment will be limited to actual documented cost. A maximum of \$1,800 will be available toward the prorated cost of moves outside the bounds of the conference. The allowable reimbursement will be based on mileage inside the conference bounds divided by the total mileage of the move. The approved costs as described above multiplied by the percentage will determine the reimbursable amount. Moving expenses can be paid within one year of retirement, disability, or death of ministers.

The moving expenses for student pastors returning to the conference for an appointment shall be paid from their place of residence at the seminary to the annual conference line in an amount not to exceed \$1,800. The local church receiving such pastor shall pay the moving expenses from the conference line to said local church parsonage. The conference payment shall be paid from the conference fund and shall cover the actual documented costs.

The moving expenses of an effective member of another annual conference initiated by the bishop and the cabinet transferring into this conference shall be paid from the conference fund from his/her place of residence to the annual conference line up to a maximum of \$1,800. The local church receiving such transfer minister shall pay the expense from the conference line to said local church parsonage. If the minister initiates the move, he/she shall pay the expense to the conference line and the local church receiving such transferred minister shall pay the expense from the conference line to said local church parsonage.

E. TASK FORCE EXPENSES

The expenses of persons called by the bishop for meetings shall be referred to the CFA for funding at the usual rate for conference committee meetings unless otherwise provided.

F. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT—CONFERENCE COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

Conference agencies, boards, and committees receiving church funds have both a fiduciary and stewardship responsibility to determine that all expenditures are reasonable, necessary, appropriate, and directly related to their mission.

In compliance with IRS regulations the conference shall pay travel to volunteers at the rate established by the IRS for charitable travel on a per-mile basis by the most direct route. No mileage is to be allowed for persons attending meetings who are otherwise allowed travel expenses in connection with their positions in the church. No mileage is to be allowed for persons attending meetings in the town of their residence. No mileage is to be allowed for persons attending conference committee meetings at Annual Conference who are members of the annual conference. It is strongly recommended that travel to meetings be by carpool. Travel shall be paid for conference meetings only if the meeting is within the bounds of the annual conference.

Travel to meetings out of the conference bounds should be approved by the chairperson of the sponsoring conference committee, agency, or board. The following documentation shall accompany the request for reimbursement: purpose of travel, copies of hotel bills, documentation for meals, receipts for car rental, parking and tolls. Rental cars should be requested only when their use will be more economical than public transportation or when a special situation applies, e.g., excessive material to carry, out-of-the-way location, or extensive local travel.

No reimbursement will be made for lost time that is incurred by a person attending conference meetings.

All in-travel meal subsidies shall be paid at the maximum of \$10 for breakfast, \$10 for lunch and \$10 for dinner. To receive a meal subsidy during travel, the duration of the trip must be more than 24 hours. This does not apply to meals arranged by a board or agency during a meeting of the group. A group meeting all day or longer may arrange for a meal to be served at a higher cost if necessary. Any request for meal reimbursement, other than the allowances stated, must be accompanied by actual receipts.

Cash advances shall be kept to a minimum. If an advance is needed, the request shall be made on the Conference Voucher, and approved by the chairperson of the sponsoring conference committee, agency, or board. Advances should be for specific trips or events and shall be settled by the person within one week of the termination of a trip or event.

A form acceptable to the Internal Revenue Service to verify meeting travel expenses for income tax credit as a donation is available in the conference treasurer's office. This can be used to document travel dates. The volunteer should contact their tax advisor for properly handling those unreimbursed expenses.

G. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

As a matter of policy, the CFA will not include proposed capital building expenditures as a part of the regular budgetary process of the annual conference. Capital needs should be serviced through special appeals and/or capital campaigns.

4. Conference Operating Reserve/Authority To Borrow

The Executive Committee of the CFA is authorized to use the conference reserves for emergency situations as determined by the committee. Additionally, the Executive Committee of CFA is authorized to borrow up to \$500,000 for emergency needs and shall be reported to the full CFA at its next meeting.

5. Formula for Establishing Apportioned Mission Shares

The statistical information provided by each local church pastor at the end of the year shall be used to provide the base for each church's share of the conference mission share budget. The last two years of available statistical data will be used in computing a resulting fraction that will become the local church's index, and represents its proportionate share of the budget. (Divide the average amount spent by the local church on the statistical line items 48 through 57 over the last two years by the amount spent by all churches in the conference on those items to compute the church's index.)

Appeals for changes in Apportioned Mission Shares made because amounts were incorrectly reported shall be made to Council on Finance and Administration through the Conference Treasurer provided the church paid 100% of their 2016 mission shares. This appeal shall be made before January 1, 2018.

The CFA will continue to study the Apportioned Mission Share formula to determine a fair and equitable allocation based on receipts rather than expenditures. This supports the Stewardship emphasis of the Conference.

- A. The base years for the 2018 Budget Apportionment shall be 2015 and 2016 and shall be the following line items.
 - Line 48: Pastor's Base Compensation
 - Line 49: Appointed Associate(s) Base Compensation
 - Line 50: Housing & Related Allowances Paid Appointed Pastor and Associate(s)
 - Line 51: Payments to Appointed Pastor and Associate(s) for reimbursable plans
 - Line 52: Amount of Non Accountable Plan Paid Appointed Pastor and Associate(s)
 - Line 53: Deacon(s) Compensation and Benefits
 - Line 54: Diaconal Minister(s) Compensation and Benefits
 - Line 55: Other Staff Compensation and Benefits
 - Line 56: Current Expenses for Local Church Program
 - Line 57: Local Church Operating Expenses
- B. New Church starts are asked to tithe their offerings raised above conference support during their period of development. New Churches shall be apportioned for the first time beginning in the year after their consecration as a new congregation.
- C. The CFA recommends the continuation of the Merit Award program. The categories to be recognized are: (1) churches paying 100% of every Apportioned Mission Share line item and 100% of Clergy Benefit Invoices by the close out date of January 8, 2018 and (2) churches that increased their giving percentage in 2017 over the 2016 percentage paid to apportioned missions shares. A generosity certificate signed by the bishop will be given by the district superintendent to each church qualifying for the Merit Award.
- D. Churches who did not pay any portion of their mission shares in the previous year are asked to tithe their offerings.
- E. Churches who did not pay their mission shares in full are asked to determine a method by which they increase their percentage over the previous year.

6. Church and Campus Ministry Grants

All annual conference boards, committees, commissions, agencies, churches or individuals related thereto, making application for General Church funds and/ or other grants administered by any conference or jurisdiction, or general agency of The United Methodist Church or any other United Methodist entity, shall first furnish copies of such applications to those conference officers/Staff charged with the role of consultation in paragraph 719 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. An accounting of actual use of grant funds must be presented to the granting agent and a copy to the conference treasurer's office within 90 days of the final distribution of funds by the local church or Campus Ministry.

7. Investment Policy

All investment funds of the annual conference, under the control of the conference treasurer and CFA, shall be invested under the direction of the Council on Finance and Administration with priority given to the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation and Wespath.

8. Depository

In accordance with Section 616 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, the CFA has designated Trustmark National Bank as the depository for all checking accounts of the conference, pension and medical benefits funds.

9. Local Church Bonding

Local churches are reminded that all church treasurers, financial secretaries and others handling church funds are now bonded under the conference-wide insurance program, provided the church has acquired their insurance through the conference-wide plan. Any church that is not in the conference wide program shall provide at its own cost the bonding as required by the *2016 Discipline* paragraph 258 (4) b. Churches not on the conference plan shall submit annual proof of bonding by January 31 of each year to the Conference Treasurer.

10. Mailing Lists

Mailing lists will be made available to United Methodist agencies and institutions from the Office of Communication and Connection as it is practical.

11. Special Appeals

CFA urges institutions to work to encourage local churches to pay the Apportioned Mission Share before they request any special funding. Permission for conference wide solicitation must be obtained at least 180 days in advance of the mailings, etc. from the Council on Finance and Administration. The CFA executive committee may issue this approval. Agencies and institutions that are not United Methodist must have approval from CFA to solicit funds from the churches within the conference.

12. Golden Cross Offering

CFA recommends that Golden Cross Sunday be expanded to include the Clergy/Diaconal Fund in the following manner. Golden Cross Funds are in support of the health and welfare ministries within the annual conference. This offering shall provide financial support to care for sick persons, older persons, children and youth, and people with disabilities. Special emphasis shall be given to aiding those ministries that provide direct financial assistance to persons in need. Assistance for lay people shall be accessed through the Conference Communication and Connection office. Funds available for clergy families shall be administered in the Clergy/Diaconal Fund under the guidelines as established by the Mississippi Conference District Superintendents. This special Sunday offering shall be shared leaving half in the local church receiving the offering and the other half remitted to the conference treasurer's office. The Conference Treasurer shall place 75% for lay assistance and 25% for clergy assistance through the Clergy/Diaconal Fund.

13. 2017 and 2018 Special Day Offerings

2017	2018	Special Day Offering
January 15	January 14	*Human Relations Day
January 29	January 28	Golden Cross Sunday
March 12	February 18	Methodist Rehabilitation Center
March 26	March 11	*One Great Hour of Sharing
April 30	April 15	*Native American Sunday
May 14	May 13	Mississippi Methodist Senior Services
June 11	May 27	*Peace with Justice Sunday
July 30	July 19	Conference Emergency Preparedness Sunday
September 24	September 23	The Baddour Center
October 1	October 7	*World Communion Sunday
November 26	November 25	*United Methodist Student Day
December 10	December 9	The Methodist Children's Home

**Denotes General Church Offering*

14. Accountability of Agency/Institution Receiving Apportioned Mission Shares

CFA follows a funding process that requires accountability, responsibility, and communication. During an annual review of agencies and institutions by the appropriate conference committee to which they relate, each agency and institution shall consider as part of their board responsibilities other funding options beyond conference Apportioned Mission Shares.

The Council on Finance and Administration requires that each institution requesting funds of the next annual conference present a budget request as designed by the benevolence sub-committee for 2019, duly signed by the chairperson and secretary of the board of directors or trustees indicating that said budget has been approved by the governing body. The budget request is due by November 1, 2017. Boards, agencies, committees, or institutions of the conference not presenting a formal request properly signed by November 1, 2017 will not be considered for funding by CFA for the 2019 budget.

The amount made available for the conference programmatic operation shall be determined by the percentage of Apportioned Mission Shares received during the preceding year. Annual conference committees, boards and conference administrative and programmatic budgets shall not be spent in excess of the approved budget adjusted downward to the percentage achieved by line item in the previous year. When the actual receipts exceed that amount, the limitations shall increase as the percentage increases. Excluded from this are the 100% required items and other contractual items.

Boards, committees, institutions, and agencies who receive turnaround funds may request an advance on their budgeted funds but it shall be considered and ruled on by the executive committee of CFA and shall not exceed 90% of the percentage paid into the conference for their cause in the preceding year.

All United Methodist agencies, community centers, camps, and affiliated institutions are strongly encouraged to develop donor support outside the Mississippi Conference budget. They are also encouraged to keep administrative costs at a minimum percentage of the organization's budget (as close to 20 percent as possible).

15. Agency/Institution Audits

The CFA acknowledges the differences in audit, review, and compilation reports issued by certified public accountants. The following descriptions continue to be approved by CFA:

- A. Audit - A financial audit is a systematic examination of financial statements, records and related operations to determine adherence to generally accepted accounting principles, management policies, or stated requirements. The examination of the records includes analytical procedures

and verification of pertinent source documents to substantiate the financial statements. An audit provides the highest level of assurance that financial statements are fairly stated.

- B. Review - A review involves inquiry and analytical procedures that provide the accountant with a reasonable basis for expressing limited assurance that there are no material modifications that should be made to the statements for them to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. There is no requirement for the accountant to gather any evidence to corroborate the inquiries and analytical procedures, unless he becomes aware that the information is incorrect, incomplete or otherwise unsatisfactory. A review provides a limited level of assurance that the financial statements are fairly stated.
- C. Compilation - A compilation involves presenting in the form of financial statement information that is the representation of management without undertaking to express any assurance on the statements. To compile financial statements, the accountant should understand the industry and nature of the business in which the client is engaged, including the form of its accounting records, the qualifications of its accounting personnel, the basis on which the financial statements are to be presented, and the form and content of the financial statements. The accountant is not required to make inquiries or to perform any procedures to validate the information provided to them. A compilation provides a minimum level of assurance that the financial statements are fairly stated.

Comparative financial statements, and the accompanying opinion of a certified public accountant, shall be presented by each agency/institution to the Council on Finance and Administration by July 15 for calendar year entities and within 195 days of the close of the fiscal year for entities with a year ending other than December 31. These statements must be prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. A copy of the accounting firm's management letter must be provided if one was issued. Disbursement of approved funding shall be contingent upon receipt of the previous years' financial statements. Any discrepancies or irregularities noted by the auditor or the CFA audit committee must be corrected in order for funding to be released to the agency/institution.

Audited statements will be required when annual Apportioned Mission Share revenue requested is \$200,000 or greater. For entities with annual Apportioned Mission Share revenues requested of less than \$200,000, the Audit Committee may accept an alternative engagement with a CPA. The alternative engagement will consist of reviewed or compiled financial statements (as defined above). The CFA Audit Committee may request additional agreed-upon procedures after review of the alternative engagement.

If a recipient of conference funds past calendar/fiscal year's report is not available by July 15, a copy of an internally prepared report, along with an engagement letter from the CPA engaged to do the report shall be submitted. The internally prepared report shall at minimum be a Statement of Activities and Balance Sheet. This report must be presented by July 15.

Regardless of budget, any agency required by federal or state law to have an audit will be asked to submit their audited statements to the conference. Only reviews or audits performed by an independent licensed CPA or CPA firm enrolled in a quality peer review program that received an unqualified opinion in its most recent peer review report will be accepted. No internal audits will be accepted. Failure to submit required financial statements by July 15 shall be referred to the full CFA Council and could result in the holding of all funds for the current year due the entity, beginning August 1, until such reports have been submitted and reviewed by the Audit Committee of the CFA.

All United Methodist institutions affiliated with the Mississippi Annual Conference are required to submit financial statements to the CFA, even though funds are not received from the conference.

The following are exempted from submitting the above-mentioned financial statements although a compilation statement from the reviewing body must be presented:

- Campus ministry units shall report under section 6 above unless they are receiving conference capital campaign funds which require audited financial statements
- Clergy Spouses

Report #2

2018 & 2017 Apportioned Mission Shares Budget

	2017 BUDGET	2018 BUDGET
<u>1. UM NUMBER 1 AVENUE OF GIVING</u>		
1 World Service	\$ 1,549,536	\$ 1,592,784
<u>2. MS UM EXTENDED MINISTRY</u>		
2 Community Centers	\$ 252,780	\$ 277,080
3 Children's Home	\$ 50,000	0
4 Choctaw Mission	\$ 40,000	\$ 45,000
5 United Methodist Hour	\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000
2. MS UM EXTENDED MINISTRY SUBTOTAL	\$ 394,780	\$ 374,080
<u>3. MS UM CONFERENCE CLERGY SUPPORT</u>		
7 Board of Medical Benefits Active Plan	\$ 925,000	0
31 Board of Medical Benefits Retiree Support	\$ 1,350,000	\$ 1,168,560
32 Board of Pensions	\$ 565,000	\$ 545,000
8 District Superintendents Fund	\$ 1,643,960	\$ 1,643,960
9 Spiritual Leadership Formation	\$ 460,000	\$ 555,000
10 Equitable Compensation	\$ 270,000	\$ 270,000
3. MS UM CONFERENCE CLERGY SUPPORT SUBTOTAL	\$ 5,213,960	\$ 4,182,520
<u>4. MS UM ANNUAL CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP WORK AREAS</u>		
11 Annual Conference Administration	\$ 2,351,971	\$ 2,351,971
12 Faith Community Formation	\$ 650,000	\$ 650,000
13 Connectional Ministries/Communications	\$ 314,000	\$ 314,700
4. MS UM ANNUAL CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP WORK AREAS SUBTOTAL	\$ 3,315,971	\$ 3,316,671
<u>5. UM HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT</u>		
14 Campus Ministries (MS)	\$ 850,000	\$ 850,000
15 Ministerial Education Funds (General Church)	\$ 523,362	\$ 537,969
16 Millsaps College (MS)	\$ 300,000	\$ 290,000
17 Back College Fund (General Church)	\$ 208,764	\$ 214,591
18 Rust College (MS)	\$ 150,000	\$ 145,000
19 Africa University (General Church)	\$ 46,721	\$ 48,025
5. UM HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT SUBTOTAL	\$ 2,078,847	\$ 2,085,585
<u>6. MS UM CAMPING AND RETREAT CENTERS</u>		
20 Camp Lake Stephens	\$ 130,000	\$ 130,000
21 Camp Wesley Pines	\$ 128,000	\$ 120,000
22 Seashore Assembly	\$ 75,000	\$ 80,000
23 Gulfside Assembly	\$ 30,000	\$ 35,000
6. MS UM CAMPING AND RETREAT CENTERS SUBTOTAL	\$ 363,000	\$ 365,000
<u>7. UM GENERAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION</u>		
24 Episcopal Fund	\$ 458,881	\$ 471,688
25 Administration (General Church)	\$ 183,995	\$ 189,130
26 Southeast Jurisdiction Programming	\$ 8,630	\$ 14,000
27 Interdenominational Cooperative Fund	\$ 40,931	\$ 42,073
7. UM GENERAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION SUBTOTAL	\$ 692,437	\$ 716,891
Budget Grand Total	\$ 13,608,531	\$ 12,633,531

Report #3

Funding Report of the Clergy Benefits

Paragraph 1507 (2) of the 2016 *Discipline* states “the Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall report to the Annual Conference the amounts computed by the board that are required to meet the needs of the pension, benefit, and relief programs of the conference.” In accordance with that requirement, the following financial needs for the clergy pension and health benefits program are presented to the CFA. For direct invoice purposes, clergy shall mean active, retired, supply or lay ministers.

1. Pre-82 Pension Program

- The past service rate for 2018 shall be increased to \$546 per service year. The 2012 General Conference required that any increase in the PSR will require immediate funding. To increase the PSR to \$546 in 2018 requires an additional payment of approximately \$222,499 on 12-31-2017. The exact amount will be determined by Wespeth (formerly The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits) in September 2017.
- The Pre-82 payment for 12-31-2018 is \$1,601,870. The funding of this payment shall come from the (1) direct invoicing of churches served by retired and supply clergy and (2) apportioned mission shares. The balance will come from current Pre-82 reserves.
- The direct invoice rate and computation base for non-active pension plan clergy will be the same as charged to clergy in the active plans as described below.
- This funding plan does call for a decrease in the apportioned mission shares from \$565,000 to \$545,000.

2. MPP Program

- There are no additional payments for 2018.

3. Funding for 2018 for Pension Programs that became effective 1-1-2014

- Full Time Clergy: The conference will cover all full-time clergy as defined by the 2016 *Discipline* and the General Board of Pension plan under the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP). This plan provides a defined benefit and a defined contribution. The cost of this plan will be 15.50% billed to the salary paying entities. Below is the breakdown of the 15.50% billing rate.
 - a. The defined benefit will be funded by billing the churches 9.25%.
 - b. The CRSP defined contribution plan provides a 2% of plan compensation for each clergy. The clergy are given the opportunity to receive up to an additional 1% if they will contribute up to 1% of their plan compensation to their UMPIP account. The billing rate to fund this defined contribution will be 3% and any amount of the 1% not matched by a clergy will remain in the fund for reserves.
 - c. The .25% shall continue to be billed to fund the reserve for the unpaid balances.
 - d. Eligible clergy as defined by the Plan will be covered for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) welfare benefits of death and disability. The billing rate for this plan shall be 3%.
 - e. The base on which the billing will be due shall be the total package of the clergy adjusted by a 25% increase of those clergy living in a United Methodist provided parsonage.
- Less Than Full Time Clergy: Defined Contribution for those serving $\frac{3}{4}$ time shall be 9% and those serving $\frac{1}{2}$ time or less shall be rate 6%
 - a. The conference shall provide a 5.75% defined contribution to the UMPIP account of each active clergy serving less than full-time as defined above.
 - b. There shall be an additional .25% billed to each church to provide funding for the unpaid balances of this conference plan.
 - c. For clergy serving $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) death and disability benefits are now available to them. The cost to the local church will be 3%. The definition of $\frac{3}{4}$ time is the same as for the health benefit coverage as defined below in the Health

- Benefits Program in item 2 below which states total compensation is 75% of the minimum salary for a Local Pastor as defined by the Equitable Compensation Commission
- d. Prior to 2018 there was an additional billing of 2% to all churches served by clergy serving less than full-time to provide for future market declines in their CRSP plan for the period 1-1-2007 to 12-31-2013. The Board believes there are adequate funds in reserve to cover any required payments. The Board will review this percentage annually.
 - e. The base for the compensation shall be the same as in 3 (e) above. This shall be funded by direct invoicing the amount to the local church served by the pastor.
4. Health Benefits Program
 - a. The 2015 Annual Conference session approved moving over a 3 year period beginning in 2016 to a direct invoice method for the employer share of health benefits.
 - b. For 2018 the full required amount will be direct invoiced to all churches whose total compensation is 75% of the minimum salary for a Local Pastor as defined by the Equitable Compensation Commission.
 - c. The rate will be 11.0%. The base on which the billing will be the same base used for the pension benefit billing.
 5. Aggregate Billing Rates

The Clergy Benefits will be invoiced in one statement and the aggregate rates are as follows:

 - a. Full Time Clergy-Active, Retired and Supply 26.5%
 - b. ¾ Time Clergy-Active, Retired and Supply 20%
 - c. ½ Time Clergy-Active, Retired and Supply 6%

B. 2018 Budget Requests

Detailed Budgets for Line Items as Referenced

SECTION 1: NUMBER 1 AVENUE OF GIVING

Fund 1: World Service

When United Methodist congregations pay their apportioned mission shares they participate in God's work around the world and right in their own parish. The World Service Fund is the heart of our local churches' ministry together.

World Service is God's people reaching out in love and compassion in the name of Christ. It represents a call and a challenge to each United Methodist. As The Book of Discipline 2016 states, the full payment of the World Service Fund is each congregation's "first benevolent responsibility" (Paragraph 812).

For 2017-2020, the four program areas' primary focus are:

1. Calling and Shaping Principled Christian Leaders: Our 2020 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church **creating a culture of call** in every faith community, equipping leaders as they help shape disciples' faith for the transformation of the world.

2. Creating and Sustaining New Places for New People: Our 2020 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church with **1,000,000 new disciples** who profess their faith through renewed and new faith communities around the world.

3. Ministry with Poor People and Communities: Our 2020 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church with **400 vibrant, flourishing, and transforming communities addressing issues of poverty and ministry with the poor**, particularly with children.

4. Abundant Health for All: Our 2020 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church that can **reach 1 million children with life-saving interventions**.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$1,592,784.

SECTION 2: ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXTENDED MINISTRY

Fund 2: Community Centers

This apportioned mission share line item funds six community centers around the conference that provide vital ministry and service to children, youth, and adults. The centers serve the poor and disadvantaged by offering affordable childcare, and after-school care and other children's programs, training and educational opportunities, abuse prevention and intervention, summer enrichment, older adult services and other ministries.

The Leadership Team through its Association of Mission Institutions and the Benevolence Sub Committee has oversight responsibility for this budget request. For 2018, the Missions Committee is requesting \$23,080 for awarding emerging ministries grants.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$277,080.

■ Bethlehem Center, Jackson	\$ 36,000
■ Edwards Street Community Center, Hattiesburg	32,000
■ Good Shepherd Center, Vicksburg	60,000
■ Moore Community House, Biloxi	40,000
■ Saint Andrews Mission, McComb	36,000
■ Wesley House, Meridian	50,000
■ Emerging Ministries	23,080

Fund 4: Choctaw Mission

The Choctaw Mission is an historic attempt to help meet the needs of the members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Since the Methodist presence among the Choctaw people in 1827, the Choctaw Mission has had spurts of progress and countless challenges over the years. With the three churches no longer under the umbrella of the Choctaw Mission, the purpose is to be a place for prophetic leadership, spiritual enrichment, educational and cultural preservation. Just as these grounds have been a haven for mind, body and spirit throughout its history, the Choctaw Mission will continue to minister to the needs of the communities, nurture spiritual growth, and provide training and leadership development to the communities. The Choctaw-based center is a sacred space honoring Choctaw culture, encouraging partnerships and providing Christ-centered programs to empower young people and inspire families by promoting both individual growth and collective enrichment for the people to live viable fruitful lives.

In this new era, it is envisioned that the Choctaw Mission through its improved governance will create policies that will provide a healthy agency with progressive leadership. Operationally, we aspire to attain financial sustainability to support the efforts of the Choctaw Mission and make changes to the physical plant to provide new programs and enhance the existing programs.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$45,000.

Fund 5: United Methodist Hour

The mission of the United Methodist Hour is to, through media and technology, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to resource the local church to live faithfully and boldly in the world.

Core Values:

1. We believe in the Bible as the living breathing Word of God in action.
2. We believe that faith in Christ is sufficient for transforming lives, both present and eternal.
3. We believe in the promise and potential of the Local Church as the "hope for the world".
4. We believe in the medium of technology as a means for reaching the unchurched, dischurched, and under-resourced with hope and a future.
5. We believe in the "servant life" as the hands and feet of Christ.
6. We believe in the unconditional love and forgiveness of God and in our responsibility to express that to the world.

We propose supporting this ministry through our apportioned mission shares totaling \$52,000.

SECTION 3: MS CLERGY SUPPORT

Fund 31: Fully Insured Medicare Supplement

Access to a fully insured Medicare supplement plan has been established for the retired clergy who meet the qualifications of Medicare. The apportioned mission share dollars provide for a retiree credit based (1.) On years of service in Mississippi (2.) Participant in the active plan five years prior to retirement from the conference. Retiree credit for surviving spouses who were on the plan with their clergy spouse and whose clergy spouse died before 1-1-08 is also funded by the apportioned mission shares. The apportioned mission share funding for the retiree part of the plan is \$1,168,560 and is paid by all churches.

Fund 32: Pre-82 Pension Plan Funding

The Board of Pension reminds us of the continued need to care for the unfunded status of the Pre-82 liability that has the responsibility of providing the funding for the pensions of those who served in years prior to 1982. The "O For A Thousand" program has produced funds from gracious givers, but not in an adequate level to fund this liability over the next seven years. The 2018 Pre-82 funding requirements causes the Conference Board of Pension to ask for \$545,000 in mission shares.

Fund 8: District Superintendent Fund

The District Superintendent Fund provides salary for superintendents and reimbursable business expenses for in district and cabinet work for the 11 conference approved districts. The 2017 salary level is \$93,925 which was increased 3% over the 2016 salary.

The 2018 budget holds the 2017 salary level flat. Thus, there is no change in the funding request for Fund 8.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$1,643,960.

	2018
■ Salary for 11 District Superintendents	\$ 1,055,164
■ Reimbursable Expenses	216,353
■ Pension and Health Insurance	322,443
■ Supervisory Fund	50,000

Fund 9: Spiritual Leadership and Related Items

This primary task is for the enlistment and recruitment of ordained clergy and to credential such persons for ministry in the local church and beyond. The board cares for the needs of certified persons, diaconal ministers, local pastors, deacons, and elders. It shall, with the assistance of the local church committee on pastor-parish relations, conference agencies, and every ordained minister of the conference, enlist women and men of all races and ethnic origins and guide those persons in the process of education, training, and ordination, recommending colleges and schools of theology listed by the University Senate. A complete detailing of the board's responsibilities is found in the *2016 Book of Discipline*, ¶635.

Another function of this area is for lay leadership and the laity ministry. We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$555,000.

a. Board Expenses	\$ 34,000
b. Conference Relations	46,700
c. Health & Wellness	77,000
d. Interviews	13,500
e. Pastoral Growth & Development	103,500
f. Resourcing the Connection	33,000
g. Vocational Call & Nurture	192,000
h. Moving Supplemental	14,300
i. Laity Ministry	39,000
j. Clergy Spouse - Turnaround Amount	2,000

Fund 10: Equitable Compensation

This commission provides support for full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference by: (a) recommending standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; and (c) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations. The commission in consultation with the Council on Finance and Administration recommends to the conference its estimate of the amount required to support the schedule of minimum base compensation and supplements for the pastors.

These dollars represent support to many small churches with potential for growth and in missional areas. We purpose supporting this ministry through our mission shares of \$270,000.

a. Salary Supplements	\$ 49,500
b. Ethnic Congregational/Mission Development	43,500
c. Unique Ministries Grants	102,500
d. Clergy Pension Benefit billing	63,500
e. Contingency	11,000

SECTION 4: MS CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY WORK AREAS

Fund 11: Annual Conference Ministry of Administration

The Annual Conference is given the responsibility to resource the local churches. The annual conference administration is responsible for the operation of the Conference Center, trustee matters, conference secretary, conference statistician, the Council on Finance and Administration, and funding the annual conference session.

We propose supporting this Administration work through our mission shares totaling \$2,351,971 which is no increase over 2017.

	2018 Budget
STAFF COMPENSATION	
Conf Personnel Committee Salaries & Benefits	\$ 1,143,687
CPC Expected Salary Reimbursements	(171,539)
Conference Personnel Salary	972,148
Staff Reimbursable Expenses	85,000
Total Conference Personnel	<u>\$ 1,057,148</u>
CFA Personnel Committee Salaries & Benefits	\$ 449,358
CFA Expected Salary Reimbursements	(181,865)
CFA Personnel Salary	267,493
Staff Reimbursable Expenses	35,000
Total CFA Personnel	<u>\$ 302,493</u>
Total Compensation	<u>\$ 1,359,641</u>
CONFERENCE OFFICE EXPENSE	
Postage	\$ 11,000
Telephone	6,000
Office & Printing Supplies	44,620
Equipment Lease	45,000
Bank Service Charges	12,000
Dues	1,500
Audit Expense	55,000
FSA Administrative Fees	1,000
Software Maintenance & Upgrades	50,000
Equipment Replacement	15,000
Conference Office Expense Total	<u>\$ 241,120</u>

CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE

Legal Expenses	\$ 10,000
Memorials	1,200
CFA Expense	4,500
Annual Conference Session	175,000
General & Jurisdictional Conference	14,000
Contingency	340,000
Conference Administration Expense Total	\$ 544,700

CONFERENCE SECRETARY

Secretary Honorarium	\$ 3,250
<i>Journal</i> Editor Honorarium	1,500
Recording Secretary	600
Operational Expense	400
Annual Conference Expense	400
Conference Secretary Total	\$ 6,150

CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

Conference Statistician Honorarium	\$ 2,000
District Statisticians	1,600
Travel	980
Conference Statistician Total	\$ 4,580

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES & HISTORY

SEJ Archives And History Dues	\$ 200
SEJ Historical Society	100
Registration Fees	100
Tobias Gibson Award	100
Clipping Service	1,000
Archives Supplies	1,200
Committee Travel	500
J.B. Cain Archives	22,550
Digitizing Journals & <i>Advocate</i>	9,200
Commission on Archives & History Total	\$ 34,950

CONFERENCE PROPERTY & TRUSTEES

Parking Lot Usage/Vacant Building Rent	(3,120)
Janitorial Service	\$ 10,000
Insurance	40,000
Utilities	32,000
Maintenance	20,000
Conference Property Trustees Meetings	2,500
Abandoned Property Expense	10,000
Repairs & Renovations	15,000
Conference Property & Trustees Total	\$ 126,380

EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE

GCFR Reimbursements	\$ (20,000)
Insurance Expense	2,000
Repairs & Maintenance	17,000
Utilities	6,000
Furnishings/Replacements	5,000
Episcopal Residence Total	\$ 10,000

ADVOCACY & ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AREA

Episcopacy Committee	\$ 1,000
Bishop Discretionary Fund	10,000
Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns	1,000
Commission On Disabilities	100
Church & Society	3,200
Religion & Race	4,150
Status & Role of Women	4,000
Conference Administrative Review Committee	\$ 1,000
Advocacy & Administrative Review Area Total	\$ 24,450
Total Admistry	<u>\$2,351,971</u>

Fund 12: Faith Community Formation**New Faith Communities**

The Faith Community Formation Ministry Team (FCF) exists to transform the Mississippi Annual Conference to a culture of vitality by forming new faith communities and by revitalizing existing congregations. Statistics confirm that the best way “to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” is to start new faith communities for new people. Therefore, the FCFMT has set a goal of starting twenty new faith communities by 2020. This 20-20 vision is believed to be the best way to (1) counteract Mississippi Methodists’ decline and (2) reach the sixty-four percent of the Mississippi population that has no significant involvement in a faith community. Therefore, the FCF is tasked to identify, assess, vet and equip qualified church planters who can start and grow new faith communities.

Revitalization

As disciples of Jesus Christ, Jesus extends the Great Commission to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:19-20a). The Great Commission requires disciples of Jesus Christ to go, to make, to baptize, and to teach others about the transformative love of Jesus Christ. In other words, disciples of Jesus are called to make disciples. Dr. Donald R. House, Chair of the Economic Advisory Committee for the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church, commissioned a study that finds that United Methodists are waning in their ability to fulfill the Great Commission.

Dr. House’s study reveals that for the previous ten years, worship attendance in the United Methodist Church has decreased on average by 52,383 persons each year. Professions of faith have decreased by over 31 percent. By 2030, the United Methodist denomination in the United States will likely have declined to a point in which a turnaround is not possible. North American Methodists have been in decline since 1974, and by 2050 Dr. House projects that the Methodist connection will have collapsed if something does not change.

Therefore, another emphasis of the FCF is to strengthen existing churches by helping them become vital congregations that make disciples for Jesus Christ. Of the 1,033 Methodist churches in Mississippi, 63% have not had a baptism in a given year. Thirty-two percent of Mississippi congregations have not had a baptism in five years. Along those lines, 63% of churches have not had a profession of faith in a given year, and 27% have not had a convert for Christ in the last five years. After Jesus extends clear instructions to go, to make, to baptize and to teach, he also extends a promise, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt. 28:19b). God is still at work in Mississippi. The task of the FCF is to partner with the movement of God’s Spirit in existing congregations and help them reclaim the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

We propose supporting this Forming Faith Communities work through our mission shares totaling \$650,000.

Fund 13: Communications and Connectional Ministries

The Office of Connectional Ministries focuses and guides the mission and ministry of The Mississippi Conference. This group is led by the Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications. Committees include: Mississippi Partnerships, (Millsaps College; Rust College; Wesley Pines Conference, Camping, and Retreat Center; Camp Lake Stephens; Seashore United Methodist Assembly; Gulfside Association, Inc.; Methodist Children's Homes of Mississippi; Choctaw Mission; Good Shepherd Community Center, Inc.; Edwards Street Fellowship Center; Moore Community House; Wesley House Community Center, Inc.; Bethlehem Center, Inc.; St. Andrew's Mission; United Methodist Hour), United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Church and Society, Board of Global Ministries (Missions, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, and Health and Welfare), Council on Youth Ministries and Commission on Communication. Other areas of care include: Congregations for Children, Personnel Committee, *Journal*, Resolutions and Petitions and Standing Rules.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$314,700.

SECTION 5: UM METHODIST MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Fund 14: Mississippi Campus Ministries

The task of the Committee on Higher Education and Campus Ministry is to relate to the two United Methodist institutions of higher education in the Conference – Millsaps College and Rust College– and supervise and resource the program of Campus Ministry with students on the campuses of state-related universities and community colleges throughout Mississippi. Our committee's role is to steward the vision and the resources of the Annual Conference, evaluate the effectiveness of our units and ministers, and make recommendations to the Bishop and Cabinet regarding deployment of personnel.

The mission shares provide funding to supplement and enhance the Wesley Foundation Board's fund raising efforts on as many of our college campuses as we can. At present, our ministry serves 24 public college and university campuses in the state of Mississippi as well as our two historic United Methodist institutions Rust and Millsaps Colleges. We provide financial resources, accountability, and training for campus ministers and local Wesley Foundation boards of directors. College is a time when persons are making significant life decisions in regard to their vocation, life goals, and guiding philosophy. It is essential that the church be involved in this process as well.

We heartily affirm The 2016 *Book of Discipline* when it states that local churches and extension ministries provide the primary arena for disciple making. We realize that for many reasons persons in college feel disconnected from their church. Our Wesley Foundations serve as one of the extensions of the church's ministry in an attempt to reach college students on their own terms during this crucial time in their life.

We propose supporting this ministry with our mission shares totaling \$850,000

a. Wesley Foundation Grants	\$ 743,000
b. Campus Ministry Consultant	40,000
c. Property Insurance	26,000
d. Training & Resources	20,000
e. Accounting Review of Wesley Units	1,000
f. Statewide Wesley Retreat	20,000

Fund 15: Ministerial Education Fund

The Ministerial Education Fund was established by action of the 1968 General Conference as a means of engaging the total membership of the church in an effort to equip annual conference, theological schools, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to meet the need for increased resources for the recruitment and education of persons for ordained ministry. Since 1976, programs

related to both diaconal and ordained ministry have been eligible for funding. And, since 1996, programs related to recruitment and education of both deacons and elders have received support.

Support is provided for the 13 United Methodist seminaries in the United States and global initiatives through GBHEM, as well as local pastor courses of study, continuing education, and other programs that strengthen the ministry of every local church. The 25% retained by each annual conference directly supports ministerial education in that conference.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$537,969

Fund 16: Millsaps College

Millsaps College is dedicated to academic excellence, open inquiry and free expression, the exploration of faith to inform vocation, and the innovative shaping of the social, economic, and cultural progress of our region.

Building on its motto, *Ad Excellentiam*, its strong heritage of social justice, freedom of thought and reflection on life's most important questions, and its central location in the capital city of Mississippi, Millsaps engages students in a transformative learning and leadership experience that results in personal and intellectual growth, commitment to good citizenship in our global society, and a desire to succeed and make a positive difference in every community they touch.

The Millsaps Charter was granted in 1890 to the Mississippi and Northern Mississippi Methodist Conferences establishing Millsaps College with a commitment to "the poorer classes in the state." Religious diversity is a foundational principle, with students of all denominations attending the College since its founding – living out the generosity among people of faith that John Wesley imagined when he said, "If thy heart is as my heart, then give me thy hand."

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$290,000.

Fund 17: Black College Fund

The 1972 General Conference established the Black College Fund as one of the apportioned general church funds. The objective of the fund is to provide financial support for institutions of higher education that historically served the educational needs of black students. More than \$285 million has been raised since the fund was established to assist the programs and ministries of these schools. Our own Rust College is one of the recipients of these funds.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$214,591.

Fund 18: Rust College

The primary mission of the Office of Religious Education is to be a dynamic diverse community of faith, supporting the entire Rust College family with a well-rounded program dedicated to teaching cultural, moral, and spiritual values in both theory and practice. Our primary vision is to be a historically Black senior liberal arts college, related to the United Methodist Church, serving students, faculty, staff, and administration regardless of race, religion, gender, socio-economic status, national origin, or ethnic background.

Therefore, our primary goal is to provide sacred space where the entire Rust College family can be fellow travelers on a journey of faith that leads to transformation of the individual and the world. Founded in 1866 by the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, "Rust was the first to give some learning unto those who were set free." With the same passionate commitment of our founding ancestors, Rust today strives for excellence as we prepare "Tomorrow's leaders who are students today" so that "By their fruits ye shall now them." Consequently, in the Wesleyan tradition we use scripture, tradition, reason, and experience to constantly operate in a philosophy of relevance, change, and adaptation. With consistency we embrace the idea from Revelation, "See, I am making all things new." We are blessed to be used by the Lord to help people press on toward the higher calling that leads to transformation of the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$145,000.

Fund 19: Africa University Fund

The 1988 General Conference approved a report of GBHEM providing for the establishment of a United Methodist university on the continent of Africa. By the time the 1992 General Conference convened, Africa University was a reality following the granting of a charter by the government of Zimbabwe. On March 23, 1992 the College of Theology and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources opened on a site near Old Mutare to 40 students from Burundi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Congo, and Zimbabwe.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$48,025.

SECTION 6: MS CAMPING AND RETREAT CENTERS

Fund 20: Camp Lake Stephens

Camp Lake Stephens, a United Methodist Camp and Retreat Center, is committed to being a place where children, youth, and adults can encounter God and respond in faith to God's call to transform the world. When many people think about camp, they think about camp being a great place where children and youth can have fun. Camp is definitely a place for children and youth to have fun, but it is so much more. Camp Lake Stephens is a sacred place! A place where you can have fun, meet new people, learn about yourself, and a place you can encounter God. The apportioned mission shares provide about 8% of the total budget supporting operating expenses of the camp ministry and will primarily be used to support the salary expenses for the full time employees.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$130,000.

Fund 21: Camp Wesley Pines

The original intent for Wesley Pines 56 years ago was to be a camp whose mission was to invest in the lives of youth and children. As stated on the investment bonds of this new Methodist 55 acre camp at Gallman, MS, was that by God's grace and through this camp "...eternal dividends are to be paid in good fellowship, personal satisfaction, and genuine Christian growth" and that it would be celebrated by every person that would come to this new camp.

Today, the vision and mission has not changed, it simply has expanded. The official name, Wesley Pines Conference, Camping and Retreat Center, reflects the broadening of vision and mission. Although the purpose has not changed, the vision and mission is always being refined and expanded. This past spring and summer, we celebrated over 1000 persons enjoying the Wesley Pines experience. During the summer camping program, over 450 of our youth/children made a profession of faith and/or a rededication of their life to Christ.

The Board believes that part of our mission and vision in this special place of peace and tranquility, is to grow disciples for Jesus Christ. At Wesley Pines, there are many opportunities for quiet reflection, spiritual growth, and meaningful worship. We will continue work on our prayer trail and add scripture markers along the way. We will continue to up-grade one of the finest ropes courses around with the spiritual application of each event being posted near it. And, we continue to promote and encourage our children and youth's attendance in summer camping, confirmation retreats, and spiritual renewal events planned for them.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$120,000

Fund 22: Seashore Assembly

The ministry of Seashore United Methodist Assembly (SUMA) is designed to create an atmosphere and program that fosters spiritual growth and empowerment cross-generationally which will lead to spiritual wholeness through seminars and/or retreats. Our mission is to provide a Christian Center for learning, growth, and renewal.

The vision of SUMA is for individuals, families, and groups who, because they have been touched by the redeeming love of Christ, are at peace with God, themselves, others, and all of God's creation, and thus empowered to live in God's will. The ministry shall emphasize education, spiritual development,

and renewal, emotional rehabilitation and recreation for individuals, clergy/spouse, single parents and/or families. Programming implemented at SUMA shall be in keeping the Mississippi United Methodist Conference's Core Values of Love, Generosity, Justice, and Apprenticeship. We will Live Out the Power of WE.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$80,000.

Fund 23: Gulfside Association, Inc.

Gulfside Association, INC is located in Waveland, Mississippi. The Gulfside ministry is unique because since 1923 Gulfside Association, INC has been and still is an institution designed for and committed to the commemoration of the contribution and heritage of Blacks in the historical Wesleyan tradition. Gulfside advocates for diversity and cultural development of all God's people across the church.

Gulfside values their heritage and legacy. They value and practice Christian principles, spiritual development, renewal, and re-creation. They value human dignity and justice for all God's people. Their vision is a caring community where all God's people are transformed by the love of Christ. Gulfside provides facilities and programs that further the development of ministries to the whole person through education, spiritual nurture, and family support for all ages.

We propose supporting this ministry through our mission shares totaling \$35,000.

SECTION 7: MINISTRY BEYOND THE LOCAL CONFERENCE GENERAL/JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES

Fund 24: Episcopal Fund

The Episcopal Fund, raised in accordance with paragraph 817.3 shall provide for the salary and expenses of bishops from the date of their consecration and for the support of retired bishops and surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops. This support includes moving cost, health insurance, pensions and residences. The Episcopal Fund provides funding to all conferences for the operation of the Episcopal Area offices and partial funding for the Episcopal Residence.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$471,688.

Fund 25: General Administration Fund

The General Administration Fund (paragraph 813) finances those general church agencies that are specifically administrative as contrasted with programmatic, missional, or ecumenical. The General Fund provides interpretation resources and the quadrennial general conference. Funding for General Council on Finance and Administration, General Commission on Archives and History, and Judicial Council is provided by these funds.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$189,130.

Fund 26: Southeastern Jurisdiction Programming

The Mississippi Conference and 14 other conferences make up the Southeastern Jurisdiction. At the 2016 conference, the 2017-2020 budget was again cut in more than half of the 2012-2016 budget because the agencies of the jurisdiction have become self-supporting programmatically. The 2016 SEJ Conference passed a budget of \$1,774,000. The quadrennial share for Mississippi is \$97,396.

We will be supporting this ministry through our Jurisdiction mission shares totaling \$14,000.

Fund 27: Interdenominational Cooperation Fund

The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund provides basic support for ecumenical agencies through which the United Methodist Church participates in God's mission in cooperation with other Christian communions.

We will be supporting this ministry through our General Church mission shares totaling \$42,073.

C. Board of Trustees

A. Conference-Owned Property

The Conference Trustees are entrusted with the care of all property that is in the service of the annual conference as a whole. These properties in Jackson consist of the Conference Center on Briarwood Drive and the Episcopal Residence in Jackson.

There are two permanent buildings constructed by the recovery efforts. They are owned by the conference and were built on land contractually leased for 35 years from Vancleave UMC and Nugent UMC. Now that the Katrina recovery efforts are complete, the buildings are being used by those local churches where the property was constructed. In the event of a future recovery need, the property by contractual lease will revert to those recovery efforts.

B. Conference Center

The Conference Center move to the Briarwood UMC location has proven to be a very good decision. Adequate space for meetings and parking has facilitated committee meetings. The building is in good repair and cost of operation has not significantly increased given the additional footage and lawn acreage.

C. Episcopal Residence

The Episcopal Residence is in good repair. A new roof was installed in 2013 and all windows were replaced in the spring of 2015. The Trustees are working very closely with the Episcopacy Committee to maintain the residence in good repair and comfortable for the Episcopal family.

D. Insurance

All properties of the conference insured under the conference-wide insurance program are properly insured. The Conference Trustees are making extensive efforts to insure the adequacy of the conference-wide insurance program so that the local church trustees are able to meet their fiduciary and Disciplinary responsibilities regarding the local church's coverage. The Trustees believe the conference as a whole is better protected as a result of the minimum coverage standards adopted in 2004 and the conference-wide program adopted in 2005. A. J. Gallagher Risk Management located in Ridgeland, MS continues to provide the program administration and risk management services for the conference-wide program. The conference-wide program is financially stable and continues to insure 836 entities with a total insured value of \$794,404,207.

The churches that are not insured by the conference-wide insurance program shall be required to submit by January 31 of each year a copy of their current policy proving that they are in compliance with the minimum coverage standards described in E. below. To provide protection for the conference and all of the churches of the conference, churches not in the conference wide program shall list the Mississippi Conference United Methodist Church as an additional insured on their policy. It shall be the responsibility of the treasurer's office to receive and track all of this information.

E. Minimum Coverage Standards

The required levels of insurance approved at the 2004 Annual Conference are as follows:

1. Pastoral Professional Liability	
Limit Each Claim / Annual Aggregate	\$1,000,000 / \$3,000,000
2. Directors and Officers Liability – Claims Made Coverage	
Limit Each Claim / Annual Aggregate	\$1,000,000 / \$1,000,000
3. Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability (limit per accident)	
Leased Vehicles / Hired and Non-Owned Vehicles	\$1,000,000
4. Physical or Sexual Abuse Liability (Sexual acts liability)	\$1,000,000
5. Commercial Automobile Liability	
Church Owned Vehicles	\$1,000,000
6. Volunteer Liability	
Church Members With Respect to Duties As Such	\$1,000,000
7. General Liability	\$1,000,000 / \$3,000,000

F. Records and Legal Documents

The legal documents and records are held in the treasurer's office. Deeds to all churches are being collected during charge conference by the District Superintendents and are placed in the permanent file in the treasurer's office.

G. Debt on Conference Property

There is no debt on any of the conference owned property.

H. Relationship Statement

In compliance with paragraph 2517 of the 2016 *Discipline*, the Annual Conference Trustees are to enter into covenant through a relationship statement for those organizations who use the official United Methodist insignia or the term "United Methodist" in its name, mission statement, publications, or promotional or marketing material. The trustees will renew the Relationship Statement in the 2017-2018 conference year. The current statements are on file in the Conference Treasurer's Office.

I. Cumulative Listing of Preaching Stations and Limited Service Chapels

The Conference Trustees have received the appropriate paperwork on the following list of approved Preaching Stations and Limited Service Chapels as of February 28, 2017. Others approved after this date through June 30, 2017 will be published in the 2017 *Volume 1 Journal*.

Preaching Stations

1061 Pleasant Ridge Copiah County	5550 Porterville
1140 Bayliss Chapel	6250 Plesant Hill - Iuka
1250 Gallman	6370 Glenfield
1260 Georgetown	6510 Tishomingo First
1261 Providence	7510 Merrill Chapel Poplarville
1460 Mt Carmel Wilkinson County	7600 Tanners Chapel
1500 New Fork UMC	8041 Fountainhead
1580 Roxie UMC	8160 Eudora
2220 Forest Grove	9241 New Light
3111 Wesley Mound Bayou	9331 Chapel Hill UMC (McCool)
3182 Spring Grove	10131 Evergreen
3220 Trinity Greenville	10491 Grady Chapel
3321 Spring Hill	11141 Pickens
3371 Isola	11161 Bentonia
3470 Drew Beasley UMC	11171 Pleasant Hill Yazoo City
4011 Ovet UMC	11292 Wesley Chapel Benton
4411 Leaf	11421 Goodman Memorial-Cary
5141 Union	11530 St John's UMC Yazoo City
5223 Pleasant Valley	

Limited Service Chapels

3283 Gore Springs	9592 Chapel Hill
7131 Wesley Chapel – Poplarville	11512 Lynch Chapel – Vicksburg

Reverend Rickey Haynes, Chair
David Stotts, CPA Conference Treasurer/Director of Finance & Administration

D. Board of Pensions

Report #1

Funding

Paragraph 1507 (2) of the 2016 *Discipline* states “the Council on Finance and Administration shall report to the annual conference the amounts computed by the board that are required to meet the needs of the pension, benefit and relief programs of the conference.” This report is found in Report #3 in the Council on Finance and Administration report.

Pension Benefits and Liaison Offices

The work of the Board of Pensions is carried out through David Stotts, the Conference Benefits Officer, who is also the Conference Treasurer. Working in the Conference Benefits Office is the Benefits Administrator, Sheila P. Owens; Benefits Liaison Officer, Andy Ray; Benefits Liaison Officer Emeritus, Byrd Hillman and Medical Leave Liaison Officer, Jodie Cothen. The Conference Benefits Office interfaces with Wespeth (formerly the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits) and assists the Bishop and Cabinet in pension matters. The office is also available to assist participants with questions that relate to pensions and health benefits.

The benefits officer can be contacted through the conference treasurer's office at 601-354-0515, or 866-647-7486 or at 320-A Briarwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39206.

Unfunded Liability

Virtually all of the United Methodist clergy appointed by the Mississippi Annual Conference prior to 1982 are covered by Supplement One to the Ministerial Pension Plan. All assets of the plan are available to pay all benefits of the plan regardless of the annual conference from which contributions came or under which the benefits accrued. However, because each annual conference controls certain benefit provisions of the plan, funding requirements are determined separately for each conference.

Each year the Actuarial Department of Wespeth values the benefits provided under the plan and review our conference funding plan. The opinion of Wespeth on the conference funding plan may be read in its entirety in the 2017 Journal under the conference Board of Pension report # 4.

Our liability increases when we increase the past service rate, and we reduce our liability when we make annual payments in accordance with our funding plan.

Actuarial experience and investment performance are factors in this computation. Investment performance during the past year has challenged money managers to review long-term strategies. Your Board of Pension is studying various plans to maximize return on invested funds. The revised plans will acknowledge reduced rates of returns for the short-term.

The Board is recommending the PSR for 2018 to be \$546. Payment for that increase must be paid on December 31, 2017. The Report #3 of the Council on Finance and Administration shows where the funding will come from to provide for the increase. The Board will continue to review the level of the PSR determining future funding needs for any proposed increases and report these needs to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

Funding for Pension Plan Must Be Paid in Full

Each pastor and each church must understand the necessity of paying the Clergy Pension Benefit billing in full each year. The text of *The 2016 Discipline* paragraph 639 (4) a and b states.

4. *Proportional Payment-* The board shall compare the records of the amounts paid by each pastoral charge for the support of pastors and for pension and benefit programs, computing the proportional distribution thereof and keeping a permanent record of defaults of the churches of the conference that have failed to observe the following provisions pertaining to proportional payment, and shall render annually to each church that is in default a statement of the amounts in default for that and preceding years.

a) *When the apportionment to the pastoral charge for the pension and benefits program of the annual conference has been determined, payments made thereon by each pastoral charge shall be exactly proportionate to payments made on the salary or salaries of the ordained minister or clergy serving it.*

b) *The treasurer of the pastoral charge shall be primarily responsible for the application of proportional payment; but in the event of the treasurer's failure to apply it, the pastor shall adjust cash salary and payment according to the proper ratio, as provided above, before the pastor enters the respective amounts in the statistical report to the annual conference.*

The annual conference must fund the retirement payments to clergy. Surviving spouses and dependent children of deceased clergy may also be a recipient of benefits.

The Conference Board of Pensions in their January 2017 meeting received a report of arrearages in 2010 through 2016 Clergy Benefit invoicing. This information was forwarded to each district and may be seen in the following Report #5. Unpaid balances carry forward each year. It is the plan of the Conference Board of Pensions to keep careful records of non-payment and to contact district superintendents where this has occurred. An aggressive plan for collection has been provided to the Conference Benefits Office and the plan shall be followed.

Arrearage information will be available for review in the Conference Benefits Office at the end of any month

Conference Action Requested for Past Due Direct Invoices

The Board believes strongly that the benefits cost must be paid in accordance with *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. It is the recommendation of the Board that no raise be offered to or accepted by a pastor who is serving a church with a past due balance in the direct invoice plan. The Board asks the 2017 Annual Conference to go on record concurring with this recommendation.

The Board requests that the 2017 Annual Conference go on record recommending that the funds received from a church that is merging or closing be first applied to the unpaid direct invoices of the church.

Investments

The money of the Conference Board of Pension is invested with the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation, Hancock Bank, and General Board of Pension. All of our investments are made with the consent of the conference board. The operating account is at Trustmark National Bank.

At year-end, we had general funds of \$101,048 at Trustmark National Bank, \$784,082 invested with Wespath, Superannuate funds of \$1,064,053 invested at Wespath, \$3,679,129 CRSP and Pre-82 Funds invested at the Mississippi UM Foundation, and \$717,576 invested in the Leo Seal Fund at the Hancock Bank.

Minister's Personal Contributions

Each minister is given the opportunity to participate in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UM PIP) of Wespath. Ministers can decide how much they want to invest each month. It can be tax paid or tax deferred. The minister may choose one of two ways to contribute the money: (1) salary reduction – The check must be sent by the church treasurer in order to qualify, and it should be so stated to Wespath. The amount is to be deducted from the W-2 form, and Social Security is not paid on this amount; the amount is not subject to income tax until withdrawn. (2) tax paid – Under this plan, the minister must pay income tax on the amount contributed but will not pay tax on interest received until it is withdrawn. A Roth IRA option is also available.

If a minister moves he/she must make a new contract with the new church for his/her UM PIP and report it to Wespath.

The Conference Board highly encourages every full-time participant to participate in the up to 1% matching portion of the CRSP defined contribution.

Retired Ministers

Rental/housing allowances. A resolution in regard to a rental/housing allowance has been prepared for action at this session of annual conference. Each retired minister is requested to study this resolution carefully. Let it also be emphasized that adequate records must be kept in order to justify expenses claimed.

Should a retired minister die during the year, exclusion for rental/housing allowance is available with respect to the income of the minister during the time he or she was alive. However, the exclusion is not available to the surviving spouse.

Moving Expense

The Board has recommended to the Council on Finance and Administration that the moving expense for retirees moving to their retirement home be paid based on the guidelines that have been recommended by CFA.

Conference Authorization

It is the policy of the Conference Board of Pension, through its treasurer, to place with Wespath or the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation such funds as it receives from time to time. Such funds are to be invested in Wespath or the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation for the use and benefit of said conference Board of Pension, to transfer among accounts an amount required for the monthly and annual payments to Wespath for the cost of our pension program.

Education Programs on Pensions

We encourage districts to initiate programs for education on the pension plans. The conference Board of Pension will be glad to arrange programming and education events to district ministers and their spouses, and to any called meeting of ministers and laypersons. Adequate time for full presentation and questions should be allowed. Contact the Conference Benefits Office to arrange one of these meetings.

On August 14-15, 2017 we plan to offer the 3 “L” Academy again. This education event was started in 2009. The event will be highlighting (1) structuring the salary compensation package, (2) explanation of the available retirement plans, (3) workshops for those contemplating retirement within the next 5 - 7 years, (4) a lifetime planning seminar for interested pastors and their spouses and (5) various other information on connectional giving, stewardship, and wellness. This event will be in Jackson with speakers coming from Wespath, various general church agencies and other local resources. Our keynote speaker will be General Secretary Susan Henry Crowe of the General Board Church and Society.

The conference benefits officer will continue to offer a one day meeting to offer assistance to those retiring in the current year with their forms. Information regarding health insurance opportunities and other assistance will also be discussed. This is a very helpful forum and will also be offered in April of 2018.

Wespath will again provide an educational session, revitup, in the fall for the young clergy. The Conference board will offer scholarships for our clergy under 40.

Gifts and Wills

In 2009, the Board was notified of the inclusion of the pension program in the Leo Seal Trust. Since 2009, \$527,970 has been received and is in the Hancock Bank. The original purpose of the gift was for building and equipment. The board has received approval from the court system and trustee for the interest on the endowment fund to be transferred annually to the conference board of pension in an effort to begin to reduce the amount of the funding requirements. The conference Board of Pension has designated these funds including the earnings to be for the unfunded Pre-82 liability.

Social Security for Ministers

Social Security is a vital part of a minister’s financial plan. This gives protection for retirement, disability, and survivor benefits, as well as Medicare. If a minister has any questions related to his/her relationship to social security, please contact your local social security office.

“O For A Thousand” Program

At the 2010 Annual Conference, the “O For A Thousand” program was announced. The purpose of this program and fund was to provide funding for the unfunded liability of the Pre-82 program. The Board hopes that all churches either as a church or as groups in the church will fund “O For A Thousand.”

*John Brian Jones, Chairperson
David Stotts, CPA Conference Benefits Officer*

Report #2
Conference Board Of Pension Budget

	2017 Budget	2018 Budget
Receipts:		
Clergy Benefit Invoices For Pension	\$ 4,590,752	\$ 4,590,751
Less ACH Credits	\$ (50,760)	\$ (50,760)
CPP Grant	\$ -	\$ 945,000
Pre 82 Mission Share Funding	\$ 565,000	\$ 545,000
Direct Invoices For Pre 82	\$ 297,849	\$ 248,449
Direct Invoices For Less Than Full Time	\$ 281,213	\$ 209,503
Leo Seal Trust Disbursements	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Other Interest	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Interest On Superannuate Endowment	\$ 70,000	\$ 70,000
Interest On Pre 82 Funds	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000
Hancock Bank (Gain/(Loss))	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Gain On DIF And MAS Accts Including Interest	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
RTW Grant From Gbop	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Gifts To Pre 82 Liability - O For A Thousand	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Interest Gifts From Various Trusts	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Gifts To Endowment Fund	\$ -	\$ 1,000
Chartered Fund Distribution	\$ 350	\$ 350
Total Receipts	\$6,045,404	\$6,850,293
Cost Of Pension Benefits		
CRSP-DB	\$ 2,467,035	\$ 2,361,428
Pre 82 Payment	\$ 652,069	\$ 1,601,870
CPP	\$ 960,000	\$ 945,000
CRSP - DC	\$ 640,000	\$ 630,000
CRSP - DC - 1% Match	\$ 320,000	\$ 315,000
DC For Less Than Full Time	\$ 202,122	\$ 206,164
Pre 82 PSR Increase Advanced Payment	\$ 222,499	\$ 22,407
Subtotal Cost of Pension Benefits	\$5,463,725	\$6,081,869
Operating Expenses		
Salaries And Benefits	\$ 82,000	\$ 83,640
3 "L" Academy	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Liasion Contractual Arrangements	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
RevItUp Young Clergy Event	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
Professional Fees	\$ 11,500	\$ 11,500
Office Expense	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Annual Conf. Retirees Luncheon	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Travel Meals Meetings	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Bank Charges	\$ 5,100	\$ 5,100
Special Grants & GBOP Payments	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Grave Markers	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
Per Diem Annual Conf - Surviving Spouses	\$ 1,750	\$ 1,750
Payment To Dependent Children	\$ 530	\$ 530
Dues	\$ 125	\$ 125
Subtotal Operating Expenses	\$ 178,505	\$ 180,145
Net Receipts Over (Disbursements)	\$ 403,174	\$ 588,279

Report #3 Board of Pensions

Item No. 1

Following are the conference claimants for the death benefits for the 2015-2016 year updated as of March 8, 2017. A full report for the conference year will be presented in the *Conference Journal*:

MINISTER OF CONFERENCE	DATE OF DEATH
Shelton S. Hodge, Sr.	June 29, 2016
James Raymond Cox	July 23, 2016
Franklin Wilson Ray	August 23, 2016
Garry E Ruff	October 3, 2016
Howard Newton Carroll	November 10, 2016
Arthur Kinstley	November 25, 2016
Claudell D. Miller	December 3, 2016
Charles Elmer Paseur	December 6, 2016
Benjamin Franklin Lee	January 24, 2017
Charles W Nicholson	February 1, 2017
James Milner	March 6, 2017
Dennie Keith Tonkel	March 8, 2017

DECEASED SPOUSES	MINISTER OF CONFERENCE	DATE OF DEATH
Maxine Henry	James E. Henry	August 3, 2016
Betty Lou Felts	George Eugene Felts	October 24, 2016
Marlene I. Minty	William R. Minty	November 5, 2016
Sara F. Hillman	Adam Byrd Hillman	December 28, 2016
Janice Hill Felder	Charles Bertram Felder	January 19, 2017

Item No. 2

Disability income and renewal of disability income are granted only if disability benefits are approved from the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) by the General Board of Pensions. Medical leave and disability income was granted to the following:

Larry Darnell Bolton	Randy James	Carlos Perez-Bonilla
Joseph Cothen	Jimmy Jones	Jeffrey G. Pruett
Fredrick Leon Gerber	William G. Joyner	Thomas Lionel Samson
Dale F. Glenn	Carol Lynette Little	Ronald Schwake
Grover Glenn	Oscar McGough	Richard Ray Sebren, Jr.
Phillip Heidelberg	Deborah Mingo Palmer	John Howard Staggs
Diana Deaton High	Donald L. Patterson	John Willard Sudduth, Jr.

Item No. 3

The Board of Pensions recommends that the following dependent adult children of deceased ministers be granted a child's benefit based upon the pension credit of the minister:

CHILD	MINISTER	YEARS
Beulah Irving	William R. Irving	4.75
Virginia Presley (Deceased 2-9-2017)	Earl Presley	37.5

Item No. 4

The following ministers serving in Extension Ministries in 2016-2017 served with pension responsibility on the conference:

Jimmy Lloyd Barnes	Mattie Gipson	Billy Owen
Stephen Cook	Heather K. Hensarling	Connie M. Shelton
Cynthia A. Cross	Larry Hilliard	Timothy Charles Thompson, II
Jim Fisher	Embra Knox Jackson, II	Victoria L. White
James Genesse	Stephen Keen	

Item No. 5

The following ministers serving in Extension Ministries in 2016-2017 served with pension responsibility on the institution or agency served:

Terri K. Armstrong	Hubert Dale Hathorn	Joseph T. Ranager
Loye B. Ashton	Richard Michael Hicks	Joseph T. Reiff
Michael Ray Baker	Warren Patrick Hutto	Chris Brooking Richardson
Dorothy Claire Biedenharn	Sherry Bryant Johnson	James W. Richardson
Diane L. Braman	Theon Johnson	David Cary Sellers
Alice Carol Burnett	Kevin Kosh	Casey Marion Smith, Jr.
Johnny Crosby	Michael Lobasso	Annie Louise Travis
Charlene Cheney	Walter N. Leverette	Stephen L. Vinson
A W Crump, Jr.	Gerald Liu	David White
Dorothy Dickson-Rishel	Toby Eugene Lofton	Kristen Williams
Roger A. Flowers	Gerald Douglas Lord	Earl Wilson III
Stephanie Camille Foretich	Earl McAnally	William Edward Willis
John Foster	Thomas Emory Miller	Jacob Dale Wilson
Walter L. Frazier	Dale Y. Owen	Susan Lee Woodard
Elisabeth Ann Garvin	Nathan Joseph Payne	J. Daniel Young
Hugh Milton Griffith, Jr.	John Douglas Pepper	
John Robert Hall	Paige Swaim Presley	

Item No. 6

The policy of the Board of Pension in determining pension responsibility for Extension Ministries is the pension responsibility lies with the salary-paying institution or agency. If the appointment's salary support is paid by the conference, then the pension responsibility belongs to the conference. If the appointment's salary support is paid by the institution or agency, then the pension responsibility belongs to the salary-paying unit. Note that ministers who are serving in an Extension Ministry must assume responsibility to see that their pension is being cared for. The Board of Pension has entered into agreements with those extensions ministries who desire to cover their clergy by CRSP. The cost shall be paid by the extension ministry.

Item No. 7

Annuity payments related to pre-1982 service in the Mississippi Annual Conference have been reviewed and have been found to be accurate. A copy of the detailed report has been filed with the Conference Benefits Officer, David Stotts, and is available for review upon request.

John Brian Jones, Chairperson
David Stotts, CPA Conference Benefits Officer

Report #4
2017 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan Summary
(Full report will be on file in the conference benefits office)

Report #5
Following are the past due Clergy Pension invoices as of 12-31-2015
(Churches that have entered in to Grant/Payment Plan)*

<u>DISTRICT CHURCH # AND NAME</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>	<u>DISTRICT CHURCH # AND NAME</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
1031 Salem (Closed 04/10/2016)	\$534.00	4421 Moody's Chapel	\$1,312.54
1070 Little Rock	\$1,232.00	4430 McLaurin	\$13,044.10
1072 St James (Bridgeville)	\$120.00	4440 Montrose	\$3,013.20
1291 Gallatin	\$291.60	4441 Garlandville	\$2,804.40
1292 St Morris	\$12,108.38	4540 Philadelphia (Jasper)	\$314.11
1305 Hopewell (Wilkinson)	\$199.98	4680 Mount Carmel	\$9,055.82
1341 Cane Ridge	\$340.00	4681 Mount Zion (Waynesbo)	\$5,188.34
1500 New Fork (Pr. Sta. 06/30/2015)	\$523.70	4682 Pleasant Ridge	\$5,409.20
1502 Thirkield	\$2,626.25	4701 Lone Star	\$165.00
1580 Roxie (Closed 05/23/2015)	\$80.00	5020 Bethel (Meridian)	\$104.01
1610 St Paul (Franklin Co)	\$5,639.96	5151 Crandall (Closed 05/24/2016)	\$683.65
2121 Greenwood Chapel	\$3,890.72	5180 Elizabeth	\$2,162.40
2202 Mars Hill	\$759.91	5230 Lake Central	\$1,532.26
2280 Holly Bush	\$517.56	5232 Union Chapel	\$1,008.78
2595 St James	\$1,988.30	5330 Meridian: Haven Chap	\$686.70
3040 Evans Chapel	\$25,287.09	5370 Cornerstone Umc (Closed 2016 Annual Conference)	\$13,807.27
3070 Binford Chapel	\$10,224.00	5380 Pilgrim Hill	\$8,577.96
3121 Midway	\$5,093.61	5442 John Memorial	\$240.00
3170 Galilee Treadwell	\$957.68	5452 Stallo	\$229.58
3182 Spring Grove (Pr. Sta.)	\$4.00	5550 Porterville (Pr. Sta. 03/20/2014)	\$1,507.44
3220 Greenville: Trinity (Pr. Sta. 06/29/2014)	\$1,598.35	5590 Mount Zion (Newton)	\$1,027.00
3280 Grenada: Grace	\$19,480.03	5642 Spring Hill (Shubuta)	\$2,300.19
3283 Gore Springs (Ltd. Svc.)	\$563.20	5643 Sweet Pilgrim	\$1,875.30
3290 Grenada: Vincent	\$21,781.48	5730 Wesley Chapel (Merid)	\$1,621.63
3321 Spring Hill (Pr. Sta.)	\$2,050.00	6120 Corinth: Box Chapel	\$15,590.86
3360 Indianola: Rasberry (Pmt Plan)	\$21,035.20	6130 Corinth: Christ	\$15,451.04
3470 Drew Beasley (Pr. Sta. 12/16/2015)	\$5,340.30	6160 Corinth: Mt Moriah	\$4,186.40
4011 Ovet (Pr. Sta. 09/2016)	\$155.24	6170 Crossroads	\$1,715.28
4040 Bethlehem	\$1,203.12	6181 Mt Nebo	\$33.52
4042 Spring Hill (Montros)	\$6,221.64	6182 Siloam	\$369.06
4043 Warren Hill	\$2,308.93	6210 Hickory Flat	\$11,963.36
4052 Holders	\$3,027.32	6250 Pleasant Hill (Iuka) (Pr. Sta. 01/28/2015)	\$4,276.53
4080 Chapel Hill	\$60.00	6421 Abbeville	\$3,221.88
4115 Dudley Chapel	\$2,132.67	6451 Bethel (Rienzi)	\$288.00
4151 St John	\$7,384.96	6500 Ripley: Christ	\$1,016.16
4171 Hattiesburg: Grandvi	\$2,036.64	7415 Fayard Chapel (Closed 12/06/2016)	\$280.00
4380 Lumberton	\$18,067.80	7615 Waveland	\$80.00
4381 Maxie	\$336.50	8030 Batesville: St Paul	\$1,636.30

DISTRICT CHURCH # AND NAME	BALANCE	DISTRICT CHURCH # AND NAME	BALANCE
8131 Mt Vernon	\$93.34	10241 Mt Olive (Houston)	\$1,065.60
8211 Horn Lake	\$1,280.74	10265 New Chapel (Planters) (Pmt Plan)	
8300 Lyon	\$2,208.24		\$1,380.71
8370 Olive Branch: Maples	\$2,643.96	10266 Big Hill	\$3,512.00
8478 Strickland	\$2,014.04	10290 Ozark	\$1,078.88
8501 Red Banks	\$1,437.04	10352 Mt Nebo	\$2,092.50
9040 Baldwin	\$677.04	10353 Pleasant Grove (Pontotoc)	\$1,515.04
9042 Wesley (Brooksville)	\$628.92	10360 Prairie Mount	\$1,368.82
9110 Brownlee	\$4,375.20	10491 Grady's Chapel (Pr. Sta. 12/29/2013)	
9180 Eupora: First	\$2,335.70		\$1,750.02
9241 New Light (Pr. Sta. 02/17/2014)	\$261.20	11041 United Methodist Ch Midway	\$360.54
9310 Macon: St Paul	\$4,738.87	11151 Bethany	\$4,971.06
9313 New Salem (Macon)	\$1,653.36	11171 Pleasant Hill (Yazoo) (Pr. Sta. 12/08/2013)	
9331 Chapel Hill (McCool) (Pr. Sta. 12/02/2015)			\$642.50
	\$378.17	11292 Wesley Chapel (Bento)	
9371 St Michael	\$3,788.92	(Pr. Sta. 12/31/2014)	\$521.75
9420 Shuqualak: Asbury	\$920.88	11300 Jackson: Leavell Woods	\$8,524.01
9492 Pleasant Hill (Stark)	\$212.94	11512 Lynch Chapel (Yazoo)	
10061 Amory: St Matthews	\$1,159.80	(Ltd. Svc. 11/30/2014)	\$354.09
10072 Spruell Chapel	\$110.41		
			<u>\$385,037.68</u>

E. Board of Medical Benefits

Report #1

Active Insurance Program

The Board of Medical Benefits is seeking to continue to provide a financially sound and diverse benefit plan for the PPO and HDHP plan while remaining in compliance with the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Utilizing Northwestern Mutual as our plan consultants, Blue Cross Blue Shield as our plan administrators, Amazing Pace's program of wellness and disease management, and the dental and vision ancillary products, the plan is a well-rounded program for managing health care and promoting wellness. Karleen Green of Phelps Dunbar continues to provide the legal guidance to the board. The Board is recommending the continuation of the plan with no changes in plan design or eligibility.

The rates for the self-insured plan for 2018 will increase 4% and are as follows.

For Clergy appointed to local church

Basic Plan Premium Category	2018 Rate Paid by Check	2018 Rate Paid by Draft
Employee Rate	\$ 138	\$ 135
Spouse under 65 Includes Employee	\$ 632	\$ 618
Dependents Includes Employee	\$ 549	\$ 536
Full Family Includes Employee	\$ 838	\$ 819
High Deductible Plan		
Single Rate	\$ 90	\$ 88
Spouse under 65 Includes Employee	\$ 518	\$ 508
Dependents Includes Employee	\$ 444	\$ 433
Full Family Includes Employee	\$ 689	\$ 673

For eligible Clergy and laypersons employed by other non-mission share apportioned salary paying entities or clergy on leave status

Basic Plan Premium Category	2018 Rate Paid by Check	2018 Rate Paid by Draft
Employee Rate	\$ 847	\$ 844
Spouse under 65 Includes Employee	\$ 1,341	\$ 1,327
Dependents Includes Employee	\$ 1,258	\$ 1,245
Full Family Includes Employee	\$ 1,547	\$ 1,528
High Deductible Plan		
Single Rate	\$ 799	\$ 797
Spouse under 65 Includes Employee	\$ 1,228	\$ 1,217
Dependents Includes Employee	\$ 1,153	\$ 1,152
Full Family Includes Employee	\$ 1,398	\$ 1,383

Ancillary Plans

We do not expect to have a rate increase in the ancillary plans.

(Must be enrolled in Conference health plan to be eligible for dental and vision coverage)

Dental Rates	2018 Rate Paid by Check	2018 Rate Paid by Draft
Employee	\$ 35	\$ 34
Employee + 1	\$ 77	\$ 75
Family	\$ 109	\$ 106
Vision Rates	2018 Rate Paid by Check	2018 Rate Paid by Draft
Employee	\$ 8	\$ 7
Employee/Spouse	\$ 13	\$ 12
Employee/Child	\$ 14	\$ 13
Family	\$ 20	\$ 19

NOTE APPLIES TO ALL PLANS:

- 5% Late charge if not paid by 25th of the month
- At the death of the clergy, surviving spouses who are on the plan may continue at the lower of the 2 rates prior to the clergy death.

Retiree Insurance Program

The Conference Board of Medical Benefits provides access to retiree insurance as required by the 2016 Discipline. The Board has negotiated a fully insured program entitled Retiree Benefit Choice through our current provider, AmWINS. Open enrollment will be in the fall of each year with a plan beginning the following January 1.

This plan provides the following 3 options:

1. **Enhanced Plan:** This is the plan that provides the Part F type program and a drug card.
2. **Basic Plan:** This is a plan similar to the enhanced plan but offering lower premiums by allowing the participant to take some additional financial risk.

3. **Individual Plan:** This plan allows a participant to go into the insurance market with the help of the AmWINS support group and design a plan that best suits their personal needs and level of premium most affordable to them.

Effective July 1, 2015, the retired eligible clergy and dependents who are 65 and over, Medicare eligible, and not eligible for the conference self-insured active plan will have access to this plan. Clergy who are eligible for the retiree program but who are appointed full time as defined by ACA to serve a local church or ministry and further qualify for the self-insured plan shall be included in the self-insured plan. Those who are on the AmWINS plan as of June 30, 2015 may remain on the plan unless they have a change in appointment qualifying for conference provided insurance.

Retiree Benefits Choice will continue to provide the billing services for these plans. The retiree credit will first reduce the billing premium for the Enhanced and Basic Plans. The Individual Plan will be funded with a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) earned by the retiree based on the rules adopted by the Annual Conference. Participants are encouraged to use the expanded ACH plan which will allow selection of draft dates (1st, 8th, 15th of the month).

The open enrollment dates will be announced and opportunities to enroll in AmWINS Retiree Benefit Choice will be held in various locations around the conference. Continuing in the current plan or selecting on of the plans above can be accomplished by mail.

Board of Medical Benefits Study of the Retiree Credit

The Conference Board of Medical Benefits is beginning a study of the Post-Retirement Health Benefit (PRHB) cost to the annual conference. Currently the clergy and lay employees (lay employees must have a total of 10 years of coverage in the conference plan with the last 5 being in the conference office) who are on the conference medical plan for at least 5 years immediately preceding their retirement earn a benefit of \$7 per month per service year up to a maximum of 35 years against their Medicare Supplement if it is purchased through the conference provided plan. The maximum annual credit is \$2,940.

The PRBH has a funding liability of \$12,076,443. There is cash funding on hand of \$5,987,349 leaving an unfunded liability of \$6,089,094. The funding for this plan comes from two sources. First are the mission shares that are apportioned in 2017 at \$1,350,000. That line item collected at 83.63% in 2016. Second the Board of Medical Benefits budgets and funds the liability with \$500,000 annually. This could conceivably save the local churches \$1,350,000 and plan participants \$500,000 annually.

The Board will be holding listening sessions in the late summer to determine if this benefit should be terminated going forward and under what terms. The Board believes that those receiving the benefit when the termination date arrives must continue to receive the benefit as promised. Those who are not in retirement status on termination date will not receive the benefit.

Following are other concepts that will be studied.

1. If the benefit is terminated, what future date should this occur? By setting a date in the future, participants who are nearing retirement and have planned on this credit being a part of their retirement package can make necessary decisions.
2. How many additional funds will have to be collected so that the decreasing credit going forward can be funded out of the reserves on hand, if any?
3. How can we help the participants who actually lose the benefit make provisions for the loss of this amount in their future retirement?

After the listening sessions in the fall of 2017, the Board will take all comments under advisement and prepare a plan to bring to the 2018 Annual Conference for action. The details of the plan to be proposed to the 2018 conference session will be released by January 31, 2018. We encourage all active participants in the medical benefits plan as well as all conference members who will have to vote on the plan in the 2018 session to attend the meeting.

*Dr. Grady Marlow, Chairperson
David Stotts, CPA, Conference Benefits Officer*

Report #2
Conference Board Of Medical Benefits Budget

	2017 Active Budget	2017 Supplement Budget	2018 Active Budget	2018 Supplement Budget
<u>SELF INSURED PLAN</u>				
Self Insured Plan Receipts				
Direct Invoice Employer Share	\$ 2,365,000		\$ 3,696,000	
Participant Payments	\$ 2,100,000		\$ 2,184,000	
Ancillary Dental/Vision	\$ 225,000		\$ 225,000	
RX Drug Rebate	\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000	
Active Mission Shares	\$ 925,000			
<i>Total Self Insured Plan Receipts</i>	\$ 5,715,000	\$ -	\$ 6,205,000	-
Self Insured Plan Cost				
Provider Claims	\$ 2,630,409		\$ 2,814,537	
Active Rx Claims	\$ 1,834,224		\$ 2,045,160	
Ancillary Dental/Vision Cost	\$ 225,000		\$ 225,000	
FSA Administration	\$ 6,500		\$ 6,500	
<i>Total Self Insured Plan Cost</i>	\$ 4,696,133	\$ -	\$ 5,091,197	\$ -
Net Self Insured Plan Receipts (Disbursements)	\$ 1,018,867	\$ -	\$ 1,113,803	\$ -
<u>MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT PLAN</u>				
Medicare Supplement Plan Receipts				
Mission Shares For Retiree Credit/ Surviving Spouses		\$ 1,350,000		\$ 1,168,560
<i>Total Medicare Supplement Plan Receipts</i>	\$ -	\$ 1,350,000	\$ -	\$ 1,168,560
Medicare Supplement Fully Insured Plan Cost				
Retiree Supplement Grant	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000		\$ 962,369
<i>Total Medicare Supplement Fully Insured Plan Cost</i>	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ 962,369
Net Medicare Supplement Plan Plan Receipts (Disbursements)	\$ -	\$ 350,000	\$ -	\$ 206,191
<u>OTHER INCOME</u>				
Gain (Loss) Long Term MS UM Foundation	\$ 200,000		\$ 150,000	
Interest Income	\$ 60,000		\$ 60,000	
FSA Administrative Fees	\$ 6,500		\$ 6,500	
Late Fees	\$ 1,400		\$ 1,400	
Total Receipts	\$ 1,086,767	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,181,703	\$ 206,191

CONFERENCE BOARD OF MEDICAL BENEFITS BUDGET, CONTINUED:

	2017 Active Budget	2017 Supplement Budget	2018 Active Budget	2018 Supplement Budget
DISBURSEMENTS:				
Post Retirement Health				
Benefits Funding	\$ 500,000		\$ 500,000	
Administration -Third Party Admin.	\$ 225,000		\$ 230,000	
Reinsurance Aggregate & Specific	\$ 190,000		\$ 190,000	
Clerical Salaries And Benefits	\$ 62,500	\$ 21,000	\$ 64,500	\$ 21,600
Wellness Benefit-Amazing Pace	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000
NW Administrator Fees	\$ 35,000		\$ 35,000	
Audit	\$ 22,000		\$ 22,000	
Legal Fees	\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000	
Wellness Rewards	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
Actuary	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000	
Office Supplies	\$ 8,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 1,000
1095 B Compliance Forms	\$ 5,820		\$ 5,820	
Bonding Fees	\$ 4,830		\$ 4,830	
Liaison Officer	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Bank Charges	\$ 3,000		\$ 3,000	
Meeting Expense	\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500	
Affordable Care Act Taxes	\$ 25,000		\$ -	
Total Disbursements	\$ 1,166,650	\$ 75,000	\$ 1,148,650	\$ 75,600
Net Receipts Over (Disbursements)	\$ (79,883)	\$ 275,000	\$ 33,053	\$ 130,591

*Dr. Grady Marlow, Chairperson
David Stotts, CPA, Conference Benefits Officer*

F. Report of Commission on Archives and History Mississippi United Methodist Historical Society Report

Two of the three United Methodist Heritage Landmarks designated by the General Conference of 2016 are within the bounds of the Mississippi Conference. Pearl River Methodist Church in Madison County and Gulfside in Waveland are now recognized as structures or locations specifically related to significant events, developments, or personalities in the overall history of The United Methodist Church or its antecedents. Heritage Landmarks, so designated by the General Commission on Archives and History, have distinctive historic interest and value for the denomination as a whole, as contrasted with local or regional historic significance. Only those buildings, locations, or structures previously registered as United Methodist Historic Sites are eligible for consideration as Heritage Landmarks.

Pearl River Methodist Church, established in 1833, is the home church of the Lambuth missionary family which advanced the gospel globally for four generations. From Pearl River to the corners of the Earth, the Lambuths established Methodist churches, schools, and hospitals in Japan, China, Africa, South America and Europe. This heritage has been celebrated annually at the church on Lambuth Day since 1927. The formal recognition as UMC Heritage Landmark was made by General Secretary Alfred Day, Jr., at the Oct. 6, 2016, Lambuth Day service.

Gulfside Assembly, founded in 1923 by Bishop Robert E. Jones, the first African American bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is a significant, historical part of the United Methodist Church and has served thousands since its creation. Located on the scenic Mississippi Gulf Coast, it served in many capacities as a training center and gathering place with overnight lodging for African American Methodists during the years of racial segregation. Although the buildings were demolished by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the location remains part of the Gulfside Association and a new open-air prayer pavilion commemorates its history.”

John G. Jones’ *A Complete History of Methodism as Connected to the Mississippi Conference*, Volumes III and IV (1846-1869), is now published. This marks an important milestone for the Commission on Archives and History and the Mississippi United Methodist Historical Society. For more than 100 years the Mississippi Conference tried to find the manuscript for publication. This completes the first-hand accounts of our history up to 1940. To purchase a copy of the book, contact Laura Rollins in the Treasurer’s office at 769-243-7024 or by email at lrollins@mississippi-umc.org.

In addition to bringing J.G. Jones manuscripts to publication, the Conference archivist is responsible for providing preservation and access to materials that tell the story of Mississippi Methodism. The conference historical materials are housed at J. B. Cain Archives at Millsaps College, which was established in 1898 when Bishop Galloway and others formed the first Mississippi Methodist Historical Society.

The digitization of historical records of the Mississippi Conference, including early Annual Conference Journals and Mississippi Methodist Advocates, has now begun. This is a multi-year project and a high priority of the Commission.

Currently designated Historic Sites in Mississippi are:

1. Pearl River Church, Madison County 1977
2. Washington Church, Washington 1977
3. Sharon Church and Community, Madison 1977
4. Kingston Church, Adams County 1979
5. Gulfside Assembly, Waveland 1980
6. Elizabeth Female Academy 1976
7. Seashore Assembly 1982
8. Columbus First Church 1998
9. Woodville Church, Woodville 1998
10. John Ford home at Sandy Hook, Marion County 1998

The 2016 Discipline in paragraph 1712 provides that an Annual Conference may designate as an Historic Site any buildings and locations within its bounds which have been related to significant events and important personalities that contributed to the origin and development of the United Methodist Church or its antecedents.

The Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History hereby recommends that such designation be given to Felder Methodist Campground and Church. The Felder Campground was one of the first Methodist campgrounds in the conference bounds and it will be celebrating its 175th year of camp meetings in 2018.

Following are the guidelines for becoming an historic site:

Mississippi Annual Conference Commission On Archives And History Guidelines for Official Mississippi Conference United Methodist Church Historic Sites

Historic Sites are buildings, locations, or structures which are specifically related to a significant event, development, or personality in the history of the Mississippi Annual Conference (or its antecedents). Historic Sites are designated by formal action of the Mississippi Annual Conference within whose regions the site is located. Such designation shall first be considered and reviewed by the Mississippi United Methodist Conference Commission on Archives and History. After action by the Annual

Conference to designate a building, structure, or location as a Historic Site, the chairperson of the Commission on Archives and History shall advise the representative of the local church (or site) who prepared the application of the action taken and provide such documentation as may be required. The Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History shall provide an official Historic Site marker, keep a register of all Historic Sites, and maintain an ongoing file of pertinent information concerning the designated sites.

A Mississippi United Methodist Historic Site is a site or structure associated with an event, development, or personality deemed of **strong and documented historical significance**. Such a site must be within the territory of the Mississippi Annual Conference. The decision to designate a Mississippi United Methodist Historic Site is made by the Mississippi Annual Conference, upon recommendation of the Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History.

The effort to designate a Historic Site is not a casual one. The case for historicity, maintenance, and use must be well established. The designation shall be bestowed sparingly, and then only after careful and validating investigation by persons trained in methods of historical research. Inquiry should be made into such pertinent factors as present ownership, maintenance, and accessibility for those who may wish to visit the site. A diligent effort must be made to collect and preserve all substantive documentation of the site's history, such as books, pamphlets, maps, pastoral and church records, journals, letters, periodicals, photographs, and personal memorabilia. These materials must be deposited with the Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History, J. B. Cain Archives of Mississippi Methodism, Millsaps-Wilson Library, Millsaps College.

The approved procedure for groups or individual Mississippi United Methodists seeking the establishment of a registered Mississippi United Methodist Historic Site is as follows:

Preparation: Request an application form for registering a Mississippi United Methodist Historic Site from the Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History. This form illustrates the purpose and methods of historical research used in establishing and marking sites of historic interest.

Research: Study each proposed site objectively, using the techniques of professional research scholars. This includes not only gathering data and material, but clearly articulating the site's significance to The Mississippi United Methodist Conference and information relating to its preservation, interpretation, and use.

Application: Submit in duplicate a completed application form, supported by available evidence, to the Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History. The Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History shall be responsible for reviewing and evaluating the application.

Referral, Action, and Registration: The Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History, upon its careful review, approval, and acceptance (including the receipt of the registration fee of \$75.00 with the application) may recommend to the Mississippi Annual Conference that the Site be approved as a Historic Site. Upon Conference approval the Historic Site will be assigned a number and the official Mississippi Conference United Methodist Historic Site marker will be sent. The duplicate application form, annotated with the fact of registration and date, will be retained by the Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History.

Dedication: After formal registration of the Historic Site with the General Commission on Archives and History, there should be appropriate ceremonies, with representatives from the Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History and local historical societies as well as church groups, to mark the designation and public presentation of the historic site marker.

For the Files: The Mississippi Conference Commission on Archives and History requests continuing cooperation in the building of its files with additional descriptive materials pertaining to the dedication of the site and later events—programs, clippings, photographs, historical information, and other memorabilia.

For more information or an official application, contact:

Mississippi Annual Commission On Archives And History
J. B. Cain Archives Of Mississippi Methodism
Millsaps-Wilson Library, Millsaps College
1701 North State Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39210
Telephone: 601 974-1077

Rev. Rob Webb, Chair
Mrs. Debra McIntosh, Archivist
David Stotts, CPA Staff Representative

G. Parsonage Task Force

Parsonage Task Force Report to The Mississippi Conference June 2017

Introduction

In the early days of Methodism, circuit riders traveled the countryside preaching the Gospel message, moving rapidly from place to place. As communities were formed, and towns and cities grew, construction of church buildings increased and circuit riders began to stay for longer periods. Church parsonages were soon added near the church buildings to help facilitate itinerant, appointive ministry.

Even in a time when some churches in the Mississippi Conference offer a housing allowance, most of our churches still provide a parsonage. Either system is a tremendous blessing from God, and allows clergy to serve and lead in the church and community. Parsonage standards are needed to provide a uniformity so that clergy and churches know what is expected of each other. Standards help to clear the way for appointments to be made based upon gifts and abilities for ministry rather than upon size and needs of families.

Background

In response to action taken at the 2014 Mississippi Annual Conference, a Parsonage Task Force comprised of both clergy and laity was called together by Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr. The original intent was to consider matters of parsonage furnishings, but it was quickly realized that broader aspects of clergy housing must be included, as the current set of Parsonage Guidelines were originally adopted in 1990 and needed to be updated.

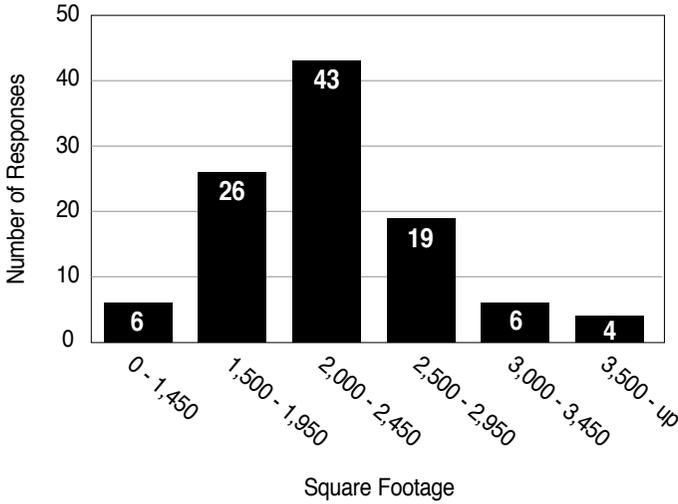
The Parsonage Task Force began by brainstorming needs and ways to gather information across our conference and beyond. Members researched parsonage standards maintained by other Annual Conferences and explored data on Mississippi Conference parsonages. Letters were received from clergy sharing their concerns and experiences of parsonage life. Meetings were held with various groups to hear concerns and suggestions. Input from both clergy and laity was sought via a questionnaire conducted during the 2016 Annual Conference meeting.

In preparing this new set of parsonage standards, this Task Force acknowledges and give thanks for the work of other annual conferences (particularly Texas, Louisiana, and other SEJ Annual Conferences), and for the *Clergy Housing Handbook*, prepared and published by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of the United Methodist Church. In drawing from their work, we celebrate once again being part of a connectional church.

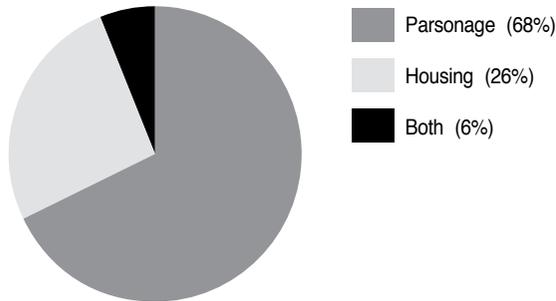
Results From 2016 Questionnaires

The Parsonage Task Force received a total of 121 questionnaires at Annual Conference. These were tabulated in a spreadsheet and analyzed based on the information received. Based on the results the major trends are as follows.

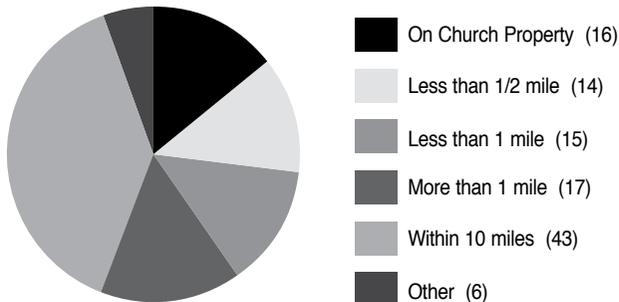
- 1. Size of Pastors Residence (Square Footage) – These values were received in an enormous range of values that could not be easily compared, thus we took the averages and broke them up into groups. The data is as follows:



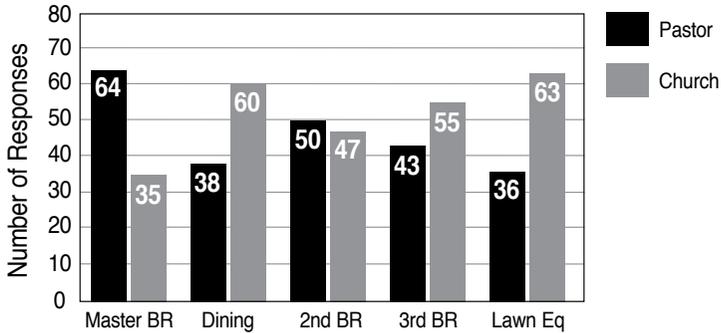
- 2. Parsonage vs. Housing Allowance
Overall, 68% selected parsonage, 26% selected a housing allowance, and 6% selected both.



- 3. Distance from Pastor's Residence to the church.



4. Ownership of Furniture.



5. Number of Bedrooms and Number of Bathrooms



Following are the Parsonage Standards as recommended by the parsonage task force for adoption by the 2017 Annual Conference.

Parsonage Standards

I. Parsonage Standards—Overview

According to the current *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, it is the responsibility of each charge to provide adequate housing for the clergy family. It is understood that parsonages already owned by churches/charges at present may only meet minimal standards. It is expected that safety of the occupants be a matter of highest priority and that parsonages are inspected annually in accordance with the current *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

1. General Requirements:

- (1) House shall meet all local building, health, and safety codes.
- (2) Equipment shall be good quality, dependable, and, when needed, replaced with energy efficient models.
- (3) Electrical wiring shall meet International Electrical code. All installations and upgrades will be performed by licensed electrician.
- (4) Railing shall be installed on all indoor and outdoor stairways, and around any porch more than 30 inches from the ground.
- (5) Entry door shall have a window or device by which a caller may be observed before door is opened.
- (6) Locks shall be installed on all exterior doors and windows to reasonably secure the home.
- (7) There shall be at least one egress window in any basement area used as a living space.
- (8) If possible, post copies of an emergency escape plan in appropriate places, and on each level of a multi-level house for the benefit of the residing family as well as any guests in the home.

2. Room sizes/Number of rooms

Suggested rooms include:

- (1) Living room or great room
- (2) Dining room or eating area large enough for 8 or more people
- (3) Three bedrooms, each with a closet
- (4) Kitchen
- (5) Two bathrooms, with available storage in or nearby for linens/supplies
- (6) Indoor laundry area
- (7) Shelter for 2 vehicles
- (8) Secure, dry storage area
- (9) In a multilevel home, there shall be at least one bedroom with a full bath on the main level to accommodate persons with disabilities living in the home now or in the future

Suggested Room Sizes:

[To be considered if building or buying a new parsonage]

Room	Minimum sq feet	Good	Excellent
Living Room	240	280	320
Bedrooms	120	150	210
Dining room	120	150	210
Family room/den	224	255	320
Kitchen	90	140	180
Office/study	80	96	120
Bathrooms	35	50	60

3. Equipment:

- (1) Climate control: heating and air conditioning
- (2) Stove/oven
- (3) Sink and counter space
- (4) Microwave
- (5) Exhaust fan in each bathroom, per building code
- (6) Refrigerator with freezer compartment
- (7) Automatic washing machine and dryer
- (8) Hot water heater, 40 gallons or more
- (9) Combination storm windows and screens
- (10) Whole house fan, window fans, and /or power fan, if needed
- (11) Fire escape ladder or other provision for upstairs bedrooms
- (12) Wired for TV antenna, basic cable, or satellite service access
- (13) Maintained smoke alarms throughout house
- (14) Maintained carbon monoxide alarm
- (15) Current fire extinguishers for kitchen and other required areas (these should be tested annually and replaced as necessary)
- (16) Water conditioner, if needed
- (17) Dehumidifier in basement and/or other high humidity areas, as needed
- (18) Annual inspection needed to ensure waterproofing integrity tightness
- (19) Telephone service with private line.
- (20) Outdoor lighting, preferably with motion sensor
- (21) At least one, preferably two, outdoor water spigots, one in front, one in the rear of the house
- (22) Doorbell at the main entrance

4. Maintenance

Recommendation: The church should authorize and conduct a baseline evaluation of property, house and grounds. It is further recommended that this be done by a licensed, professional outside inspector, and updated with a complete audit at least once every ten years.

A Parsonage Record Book should be established and maintained by the Board of Trustees to record results, reports, and dates of inspections and corrections. Inspections should be made for the following:

- (1) Radon gas
- (2) Condition of any exposed asbestos insulation and siding
- (3) Formaldehyde foam insulation and paneling
- (4) Condition of exposed, un-encapsulated lead-based paint
- (5) Fungus, mildew, molds
- (6) Water purification system, whether whole house or individual faucets provided as deemed necessary by church and clergy
- (7) Environmental setting, especially if parsonage is near an old industrial complex, any disposal area, or chemical plant. The local health department should be contacted to obtain educational information, and the results of the baseline and periodic setting inspections by a certified environmental inspector/service provider be kept in the Parsonage Record Book
- (8) Periodic pest control inspection and treatment to ensure the foundation walls, attic eaves, and soffit areas shall be secure to keep out rats, mice, bats, birds, and squirrels.
- (9) Periodic inspection and treatment for termites and other insects.
- (10) Inspection of duct work, cleaning as needed
- (11) Landscaping should be representative of the neighborhood and included in the annual parsonage inspection
- (12) Church is responsible for any large, permanent plantings such as trees and shrubs, including major pruning and/or replacement
- (13) Regular schedule for inside painting, outside painting/tuck-pointing
- (14) Annual hardscape inspection and repairs as needed
- (15) Annual carpet cleaning
- (16) Annual fireplace and chimney inspection and cleaning
- (17) Annual air conditioner (including outside units), furnace, and wiring inspection by licensed contractor

Recommendation: Like many standard rental procedures and agreements between landlords and renters in communities across the United States, churches may wish to require proof of such renter's insurance to cover the pastor's personal property, including library collection, or a signed waiver of responsibility in case of damage or loss to personal property.

Recommendation: Consideration should be given to the budget amount set aside for routine parsonage maintenance and for large, predictable expenses for replacement of mechanicals and roofing. A starting point for consideration may be to annually set aside 2 to 2½ percent of the replacement value of the parsonage in an accruing, interest-bearing account.

5. Pets

Pets are acknowledged as “part of the family”. The parsonage family is responsible for any damage done to the parsonage by their pets.

6. In-home Business

In the event a parsonage family wants to have a business in a church-owned parsonage, there shall be a contract among the following parties: the District Superintendent, the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the Trustees, and the parsonage family (statement approved at Annual Conference 2016).

7. Modification of property

Changes to the existing parsonage structure and property, such as playgrounds, decks, sheds, wheelchair ramp, or a permanent or temporary nature designed to enhance the livability for the

parsonage family including children, pets, and persons with disabilities or unique situations shall be negotiated between the pastor, Parsonage Committee, Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and Trustees.

8. Disability Accommodations

When purchasing/building a parsonage, consideration should be given to fulfilling the needs of those with disabilities who may live in the parsonage now or in the future. ADA has produced a set of guidelines that may be useful in the purchase/building.

II. Parsonage Furnishings

Appliances are the responsibility of the church (see section I.3.)

To help clergy families feel more at home in church-owned housing, to help transition in appointments from a housing allowance to a parsonage, and to ease financial impact of retirement, we propose a shift from church-provided furnishings to all clergy providing their own furniture, except major appliances and window and floor coverings.

The clergy person shall be responsible to provide furnishings for the master bedroom and the family room by July 2019. In July 2021, the clergy family will be responsible for furnishing the 2nd and 3rd bedrooms. By July 2022, the clergy family will be responsible for furnishing the entire parsonage except for major appliances and window and floor coverings.

Used furniture and equipment donated to the church shall not be placed in the parsonage except by request of the clergy family. In that case, it shall remain the property of the church.

III. Parsonage Maintenance

1. Yard:

(1) Landscaping and fertilization shall be the responsibility of the church.

(2) Cutting of the lawn and trimming of shrubs is usually handled most cost-effectively by the church. If not handled by church, a lawn mower, suitable in size for the lawn, shall be provided by the church.

(3) Outside storage for yard care equipment and other necessary items should be provided.

2. Parsonage maintenance provided by church:

(1) Should be kept well painted.

(2) Check exterior cornice moldings for rot and paint peeling. Repair and replace when needed.

(3) Check outside windows and door seals.

(4) Replace any broken windows immediately.

(5) Check and maintain roof. Check for loose shingles in case of high winds associated with storms. Repair any damage immediately. This will prevent further damage to the outside as well as prevent leaks.

(6) In the event the parsonage has a septic tank, the tank should be pumped as needed.

(7) Check and clean gutters as needed.

IV. Forms & Check Lists to be provided by Annual Conference Trustees

1. **Parsonage Agreement**

The parsonage agreement is a written form letter stating the basic entitlement of the pastor and family to reside in the church owned parsonage. This agreement letter is to be signed within 5 (five) days of the pastor's arrival. It is signed by: the pastor, the P/SPRC chairperson, the chair of Trustees, and the chair of the Parsonage Committee (if applicable). A signed copy is then mailed to the District Superintendent to be placed in the pastor's permanent file.

2. **Annual Parsonage Review**

This form is to be completed when the new pastor arrives and at the beginning of each new conference year thereafter. This shall be an onsite inspection of the parsonage as directed by conference action and the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. This review form will be included in the Mississippi Conference Charge Conference forms and will be due at the annual charge conference.

3. 10-Year Inspection Form

Beginning in 2018, all United Methodist Church parsonages shall have a 10-year inspection form completed by the church board of Trustees. The completed form will then be presented to the church and the District Superintendent at its 2018 annual charge conference. This form will be included in the Mississippi Conference Charge Conference forms in every 10th year, in calendar years that end in “8” (ex.: 2018, 2028, 2038, etc.) Included in the inspection form will be:

- a. Pictures of the outside of the house and yard of the parsonage
- b. Pictures of all interior rooms of the house
- c. A current floor plan

4. Vacating Parsonage

Each clergy person living in a church-owned parsonage will complete, with a member of the board of Trustees, Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and/or Parsonage Committee, a vacating parsonage checklist. This form will be given to the Trustees representative (or appropriate party) when the parsonage and church keys are returned before the pastor's departure. These forms are to be distributed at the annual Transitions Seminar for pastors who are relocating. This checklist will be for the local church Trustees and a copy will be forwarded to the District Superintendent.

5. Pastor's Move-In Form

The pastor and at least one member of the board of Trustees, P/SPRC and/or Parsonage Committee will make this inspection prior to the pastor unloading at the new parsonage. This form will be made available at the annual Transitions Seminar for pastors.

SECTION IV

FORMING
SPIRITUAL LEADERS

SECTION IV

FORMING SPIRITUAL LEADERS

A. Conference Lay Leader Report

It was a great privilege and honor to be selected as the Conference Lay Leader of the Mississippi Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church last year. I have heard about, and in some cases personally experienced, great dedication in this conference to our churches, our districts and our annual conference, and I continue to be inspired by the passion and sacrifice of the richly talented people who serve with diligence and great compassion across our annual conference.

Such commitment was demonstrated by our district lay leaders as they took a day off from their jobs and lives and came from various locations across the state to gather with me for a day of training and team-building in September 2016. During this day we engaged in loving, learning and leading together. We loved – sharing and listening to glory sightings, which are simply ways that we see God's glory present in our lives. We learned by reviewing and discussing the job descriptions of the Conference Lay Leader, District Lay Leaders and Local Church Lay Leaders. We learned by hearing from and asking questions of the various aspects of our conference office -- from the Faith Community Formation Office, Connectional Ministries, Spiritual Leadership, and our illustrious episcopal leader, Bishop Swanson, who talked to us about our roles in ministry in the Mississippi Conference. And, finally, we led. We discerned, having listened to the work of the various aspects of our conference and the expectations that our Bishop has for us, and we started working on a map, a ministry action plan. We crafted a statement of who we are and how we want to work together: We are Christ-centered, humble leaders who are committed to respectfully equipping others for spiritual growth. I hope that you will see us live this declaration throughout the quadrennium.

Loving, learning and leading, as some of you have heard the Bishop mention, is how we now consistently attempt to do business, whether it is annual conference business, district business or local church business. I coordinated the day together with the District Lay Leaders so that we might be a wealth of information, capable of directing every person in every district of our conference to the resources necessary to move forward.

I was able to model that expectation and share information I learned from monthly meetings with the Bishop's Operational Team and the extended cabinet with leaders in our local churches. I was invited to participate in most of the district trainings and was able to engage in wonderful discussions across our conference about the important contributions of a local church lay leader, what it means to be a disciple, how we can make disciples, and why collaboration among clergy and lay and teamwork generally are so critical to our work of making disciples. I had the opportunity to look at and talk about the fruitfulness of our churches and how having a disciple making system, along the lines of the Great Commission, is key.

I look forward to our future together as the Board of Laity. I am learning and visioning in my work with the Vital Congregations Committee as we review and facilitate charge conference reports and with the Spiritual Leadership Team as we plan the annual Collaborative Leadership Conference. I expect this work to allow me to make a greater contribution to the direction of our annual conference and serve more meaningfully as a resource of information for you.

I pray that we forge strong relationships that facilitate a deeply connected and unified annual conference. Pray with me for united hearts and minds in our conference, united around one issue, the most important issue, our missional focus of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and how God would have us all to do that together.

B. Commission on Equitable Compensation

The purpose of the Commission on Equitable Compensation is to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of our Annual Conference by recommending conference standards for pastoral support; administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; and providing counsel and advisory materials on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations. *2016 Book of Discipline* Par. 625.2

The Commission meets regularly to evaluate the implementation of the Commission guidelines. The Commission thanks the Rev. Dr. Larry Hilliard and Mr. David Stotts for their assistance.

I appreciate all who serve on this commission.

Rev. Mike Hicks

Chair of Commission on Equitable Compensation

Compensation Ranges and Guidelines

Classifications of Clergy Compensation

For 2017 base compensation shall be:

■ Full Connection	\$35,041
■ Provisional (education requirements for elder completed)	32,221
■ Provisional (education requirements for elder not completed)	29,643
■ Associate Member	29,643
■ Full-Time Local Pastor	27,270

Effective July 1, 2018 the value of church provided housing shall be used by the Commission in establishing Salary Supplement Grants. The intent is to provide an equitable level of compensation for clergy serving charges without a parsonage.

The policy of this Commission is to supplement no more than 25% of total compensation for salary supplements; therefore the local charge is required to pay an amount at least equal to the following in each category:

Note: See Charge Qualifications, 1b.

■ Full Connection	\$26,281
■ Provisional (educational requirements for elder completed)	24,166
■ Provisional (educational requirements for elder not completed)	22,232
■ Associate Member	22,232
■ Full-Time Local Pastor	20,453

Local churches without a parsonage are encouraged to consider providing a housing allowance in addition to the required minimum compensation.

Qualifications for Receiving Supplementary Compensation Support

The qualifications listed below shall apply to all churches requesting Equitable Compensation support:

- Average weekly worship attendance for the charge shall be equal to or greater than average worship attendance (previous calendar year) of churches across the Conference.
- Percentage of mission shares paid by the charge shall be equal to or greater than the average percentage of mission shares paid (previous calendar year) by the churches across the Conference.
- A pastor must live within the bounds of the charge to which he/she is appointed. Pastors serving charges without a parsonage or one member of a clergy couple may be exempt from this requirement by Executive Committee action in consultation with the Cabinet.
- A pastor must devote full-time to his/her charge.
- Pastors (local pastors, associate members and elders) who have completed educational requirements must meet the continuing education requirements set by the conference Board of

Ordained Ministry. Local Pastors must meet educational requirements as established by *The Book of Discipline* and Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

- Pastors must hold a valid local pastor's license.
- Those serving a church or charge of less than three churches employing more than one person on its professional staff, including the pastor, will not be eligible for a compensation supplement.
- Clergy and charges receiving Equitable Compensation Funds must attend an Equitable Compensation Review and Generosity Training Event every other year, if the charge has not met all minimum standards in attendance and mission share payments.

Arrearage Policy on Equitable Compensation

- The annual conference shall protect the local church full-time pastor and annual conference from any potential impending arrearage whereby the full-time local pastor is unable, due to financial constraints, to receive his/her regular payroll or housing allowance. Once the local church treasurer is aware of any such situation, notification shall be given to the pastor, lay leader and appropriate chairs of local church committees. It shall be the responsibility of the chair of the staff parish relations committee to investigate the financial situation and seek remedies. No remedy shall include a reduction of the pastor's compensation for the current conference year.
- If it is determined that the local church is facing a potential long-term financial crisis, then the chair of the staff parish relations committee shall notify the local pastor and district superintendent of a need for a subsidy grant on equitable compensation or change in pastoral compensation/appointment for the following conference year.
- Should the situation arise that a pastor's compensation has been delinquent for more than thirty (30) days, it shall be responsibility of the district superintendent to notify the Commission on Equitable Compensation, with power given to that committee, to seek resolution of the issue. This may or may not include the fact that the local church is already receiving a subsidy grant from the committee on equitable compensation and such factor shall be taken into account.
- Other measures may be taken if the local church is delinquent in compensation for more than thirty (30) days, especially in light of the pastor's direct invoiced pension and benefits. The conference treasurer may begin a process whereby a written payment plan with the local church shall be developed, so that the conference receives full payment of pension and benefits by the end of the conference year.
- All discretionary spending (any expense not requiring payment under contractual or conference obligations) shall be suspended until the district superintendent, treasurer, the staff parish relations committee agree on a remedial plan.
- Under no circumstances will the local church's real property be mortgaged to pay for current or budgeted expenses, including arrearages, nor may the sale of any such property be used for arrearage (§2543 *The Book of Discipline*).
- It is the responsibility of the local church to provide minimum compensation for its appointed clergy, but it is equally the responsibility of the full-time pastor to provide evidence of an arrearage by proper documentation as required by the treasurer. A one-year statute of limitations will be enforced for any such claims.

Categories of Equitable Compensation and Qualifications

The following are the four categories of Equitable Compensation Grants and the qualifications of each. These qualifications are in addition to those listed above which apply to all categories of Equitable Compensation.

1. Salary Supplement:
 - a. Charges must pay at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the equitable compensation scale for the current pastor serving the charge.

- b. No charge will participate in the fund if it reduces the compensation level below the previous year, unless such a reduction is deemed justifiable by the Commission after recommendation by the District Superintendent in writing.
 - c. The church or charge must have at least 150 members and/or three churches on the charge.
 - d. Charges with pastors receiving supplementary support will have a service of worship every Sunday, with due consideration for adequate services for each church.
 - e. The charge whose minister receives supplementary support will provide a minimum of two(2) weeks paid vacation, including two (2) Sundays annually for the minister; and will provide expenses for a guest minister or lay speaker in the minister's absence.
 - f. Salary Supplement grants are limited to five successive years.
2. Cooperative Ministries:
 - a. The "director" or "coordinator" must be a full conference member who has other clergy persons under his/her supervision. The clergyperson serving as 'director' or coordinator' must live within the bounds of the parish.
 - b. The maximum amount that the Equitable Compensation Commission may provide per year for this support is \$1,200 over the maximum Equitable Compensation support. If the director is not receiving regular Equitable Compensation supplements, a maximum of \$3,600 annually may be available.
 - c. Before funding will be granted for successive years, the director shall submit an annual evaluation of the progress of the ministry made the previous year.
 - d. In no case will Equitable Compensation funds be used to support a minister beyond 150 percent of the applicable Equitable Compensation scale.
 - e. There is no limit to the number of years a cooperative ministry may receive support.
 3. Ethnic Congregational Development:
 - a. Church shall articulate special leadership needs in an ethnic congregation.
 - b. A maximum of \$10,000 per project may be allocated. For each additional year of the grant, the funding will be reduced by 25 percent from the beginning support figure. The local charge is expected to increase their share of the compensation by 25% each year.
 - c. The pastor must be a seminary graduate or have experience and proven ability to produce in the area of the particular need.
 - d. The Cabinet must approve the projects.
 - e. Ethnic Congregational Development grants are limited to four successive years.
 4. Unique Ministries:
 - a. This category is designed to give additional support for "special situations" by providing Equitable Compensation funding for a pastor assigned by the bishop to serve an unusual appointment in which the charge cannot pay an adequate compensation.
 - b. Requests for funding will be initiated and approved by the Bishop and Cabinet. The request will identify the uniqueness of the church and the specific qualifications of the pastor. In addition, the request will identify the specific goals for advancement in ministry, which the grant is anticipated to enable.
 - c. Funding for a Unique Ministry will be reviewed annually by the Commission on Equitable Compensation.
 - d. Unique Ministries grants are limited to four (4) successive years of funding for the approved project; for each additional year that approval is granted, the funding will be reduced by 25 percent of the beginning support figure.

Applications

Applications are made available through the Director of Spiritual Leadership. Annual applications for the approved years of a grant are not required, if there is no appointment change.

C. Higher Education & Campus Ministry

United Methodist Campus Ministry in Mississippi is dedicated to winning young people to Christ and aiding in them in their path of discipleship. We understand, as George Barna has estimated, approximately 8 million adults in their twenties have left the church in the past decade.

The mission of Wesley Foundation ministry stands to be a response to this crisis. Wesley Foundations provide a place for college students to experience the love of Christ, receive excellent Biblical teaching, find opportunities to grow as leaders in the Christian faith, and work side by side with other students and believers in serving God in the community.

Statistically, people are most open to the gospel during their college years. They have left home and journeyed to the next level of their education, ready to learn new ideas and expand their horizon. Wesley Foundation ministry reaches people at this perfect time in their life to connect them with what they need most – a relationship with Jesus. Students then began to see transformation in their lives, and the Wesley Foundation is right there to aid students as they are making significant decisions regarding their vocation, life goals, and guiding philosophy. Our Wesley Foundations serve as an extension of the church's ministry as they reach college students on their own terms at this critical time in their lives.

The Committee on Higher Education and Campus Ministry serves to steward the vision and resources of the Annual Conference, evaluate the effectiveness of our units and ministers, and make recommendations to the Bishop and Cabinet regarding deployment of personnel. The bulk of our mission shares are allocated towards funding salaries to provide campus ministers, of which some are lay, some clergy, some full time and many part time, on as many of our college campuses as are possible in the state of Mississippi.

Our committee has chosen not to measure and monitor growth within each Wesley Foundation based solely upon numerical goals. However, we do indeed monitor and encourage our units to grow as they reach out to their campuses in new ways. Our focus is on seeing evidence that students are growing spiritually, making sure units are providing quality programming, determining that each unit is fiscally sound, and ensuring that campus ministers are leading their students and board of directors in a healthy manner. We are able to determine these markers of success through the work of our Campus Ministry Consultant who does an excellent job in staying connected with each unit, providing distance and on-site support and training for them, as well as informing our committee of the information we need to determine the effectiveness of each unit. We additionally include a section for goals to be listed in our grant process. These goals are then reflected upon and measured to assess growth and improvement with the campus ministries each year. We have continued to follow our new funding model which is working well, and we have been diligent in achieving our goal of eliminating our deficit spending as of 2016. We have already seen spiritual as well as numerical growth among our units in the past year and expect this to continue as our units gain strength.

Our campus ministers do indeed communicate with local churches concerning mission shares. Through our Campus Ministry Training conducted by our Campus Ministry Consultant each unit was challenged and required to take the story of campus ministry into local churches. Campus Ministers, students, and board members have all been contacting local churches and setting up Sundays to come and participate in a worship service or Sunday school. When allowed by the pastor, the message of the needs of campus ministry and the opportunity of contributing to mission shares has been expressed. Campus Ministers have also begun putting information in District Newsletters, attending District Events, and volunteering in local churches in order to spread the good news about the beautiful work being done in campus ministry.

One of the things HECM has been intentional with has been meeting the challenge to live into what was received on our behalf during the previous conference year. Although \$800,000 was apportioned for HECM through mission shares for 2016, we are only making 83.42% available for our budget. Currently 18 Wesley Foundations across Mississippi receive funding at various levels

which represents the majority of our disbursements, with the remainder being used to pay our Campus Ministry Consultant, insurance, and resources for training.

It does not take long after walking into one of our campus ministries to truly feel the love of Christ. Students experience unconditional love from peers whom they have built a relationship with as well as those they just met. We learn in scripture that we love because he first loved us. This is the motto that flows through our Wesley Foundations. Love is the motivating factor that drives our campus ministers to continue on the path of reaching out to students, reserving judgement, and continuing to provide a place where students will be accepted. It is in the spirit of love that students are most able to receive the gospel as it is shared with them.

No doubt when you experience the situations where campus ministers give of themselves, you are convinced they are some of the most generous people you will meet. They invest hours talking to students about serious situations as well as conversations which build relationships. They change tires, find ways to pay for students groceries and tuition when their loans and grants fall through, set up shuttle services for students without a vehicle, use their Wesley's as a clothing and food pantry for students who are struggling, buy diapers for those who find themselves as single parents, connect students with local churches so they can experience a church community of faith, and the list goes on and on. Generosity also appears in through board members who give and serve faithfully as well as local churches which provide meals, finances, vans, Bible study teachers, and more.

These generous acts fall right into setting the example for students to live out justice on their campuses whether it is setting up a race to earn money for battered women, or developing a support group for those struggling with addictions, to tutoring kids in an afterschool program who do not have parents willing to invest in their education. Students follow the example of Jesus they see taught in their Wesley Foundation and gain great support from their Wesley Foundation friends and minister.

As students become more involved on a leadership level in their Wesley Foundation, they receive the opportunity to experience apprenticeship. Most units have a formal intern program where students work with the campus minister in leadership at the Wesley Foundation. All of our units have a leadership team where students are able to learn and grow as leadership is modeled by the campus minister as well as upperclassmen, and they are able to lead in ministry on their campus.

Our focus is on seeing evidence that students are growing spiritually, making sure units are providing quality programming, determining that each unit is fiscally sound, and ensuring that campus ministers are leading their students and board of directors in a healthy manner. One of the main results of this focus has been seeing an increased interest in starting Wesley Foundations on additional campuses in the near future. In the past few months we have had inquiries from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College - George County Campus, Millsaps College, Tougaloo College and Northwest Mississippi Community College. Feelers have also been sent to William Carey University in Hattiesburg. It goes without saying that campus ministry is strong across the Mississippi Annual Conference.

SECTION V

FAITH
COMMUNITIES
FORMATION

SECTION V

FAITH COMMUNITIES FORMATION

Faith Community Formation Committee Report

The Faith Community Formation Ministry Team (FCFMT) exists to transform the Mississippi Annual Conference to a culture of vitality by forming new faith communities and revitalizing existing congregations. Statistics confirm that the best way “to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” is to start new faith communities for new people. Therefore, the FCFMT has set a goal of starting twenty new faith communities by 2020. This 20-20 vision is believed to be the best way to counteract Mississippi Methodists’ decline, as well as reach the sixty-four percent of the Mississippi population that has no significant involvement in a faith community. Therefore, the FCFMT is tasked to identify, assess, vet and equip qualified church planters who can start and grow new faith communities.

Revitalization

As disciples of Jesus Christ, Jesus extends the Great Commission to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:19-20a). The Great Commission requires disciples of Jesus Christ to go, to make, to baptize, and to teach others about the transformative love of Jesus Christ. In other words, disciples of Jesus are called to make disciples. Dr. Donald R. House, Chair of the Economic Advisory Committee for the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church, commissioned a study that finds that United Methodists are waning in their ability to fulfill that Great Commission.

Dr. House’s study reveals that for the previous ten years, worship attendance in the United Methodist Church has decreased on average by 52,383 persons each year and professions of faith have decreased by over 31 percent. By 2030, the United Methodist denomination in the United States will likely have declined to a point in which a turnaround is not possible. North American Methodists have been in decline since 1974, and by 2050 Dr. House projects that the Methodist connection will have collapsed if something does not change.

Another emphasis of the FCFMT is to strengthen existing churches by helping them become vital congregations that make disciples for Jesus Christ. Of the 990 Methodist churches in Mississippi, 61% have not had a baptism in a given year. Thirty-two percent of Mississippi congregations have not had a baptism in five years. Along those lines, 61% of churches have not had a profession of faith in a given year, and 23% have not had a convert for Christ in the last five years. After Jesus extends clear instructions to go, to make, to baptize and to teach, he also extends a promise, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt. 28:19b). God is still at work in Mississippi. The task of the FCFMT is to partner with the movement of God’s Spirit in existing congregations and help them reclaim the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

The parent map identifies as a key strategy the formation of new faith communities in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This goal is integral to the mission of the Mississippi Annual Conference as we seek to “form faith communities.” Our effectiveness as is outlined in the parent map is to: identify churches who have the potential for taking the next step; get better at starting new faith communities; and identify churches that can move up to the next level and work with them to develop leadership for that next level.

- A. Identify Churches who have the potential for taking the next step: SLI provides invaluable data that allows the FCFMT to identify high potential churches for revitalization. We have also committed in 2017-2019 to assess potential churches using Readiness 360. Readiness 360 is an assessment tool that assesses four critical capacities for multiplying thriving ministries:

Spiritual Intensity; Missional Alignment; Cultural Openness; and Dynamics Relationships. Based upon each church's assessment, the FCF team will have raw data that will give the team pertinent information on where to invest resources in churches more apt and ready to revitalize and to engage in new mission and ministry to reach people for Christ. Readiness 360 will allow us to be wise stewards to the funds entrusted to our care as we make decisions based upon informed data. Assessment costs for Readiness 360 include a fee of \$12,000 per year for three years. There is also a fifteen month commitment that churches will make as they work with a coach whom will guide them in their revitalization efforts.

Based upon our Day of Discovery and our Day of Revitalization, eight high potential candidates have expressed an interest in revitalization. We also have ten moderate potential candidates for revitalization. Each of these candidates will undergo further assessment to determine where their gifts and graces lie. This information, in conjunction with a follow-up interview, will allow the FCF team to make informed recommendations to Missional Strategists about possible candidates, both clergy and churches, who are uniquely positioned for revitalization.

B. Get better at starting new faith communities: The FCFMT was constituted in March of 2015. In that short period of time, it has been determined that in order to get better at starting new faith communities, we must become better at ascertaining qualified leadership. Therefore, we have created a process to identify, assess, vet and equip qualified church planters to start new faith communities.

- Identify (Day of Discernment/ Day of Exploration): Held in August at Eagle's Ridge where 70 people attended to learn about church planting and revitalization. Thirteen lay and clergy expressed an interest in church planting.
- Assess: Those thirteen individuals have taken a pre-assessment provided by Path1 that identifies key affinities and aptitudes for effective church planters. Therefore, one of our goals for next year is to identify, assess, vet, and train five new potential planters that will start new faith communities in 2018.
- Vet: We currently have three planters that in 2015 were identified, assessed, and vetted, and therefore have been determined as having aptitude to be an effective planter. All three are currently working on establishing new faith communities. (Update and specifics about each plant are found below).
- Equip: Once effective candidates have been identified, assessed and vetted, they are paired with a Path 1 coach. The Path1 planting coach enters into an eighteen-month contract with the planter to help equip and strategize how to most effectively meet the daily challenges of church planting. The I.A.V.E. process costs on estimate, \$8,665 per planter candidate. (Path1 coaches on average charge \$400/month.)

Further equipping occurs through three major events.

1. NEW: First 12 - First 12 is a two-day training event designed to help planters and revitalizers gather and grow the first twelve committed core people to invest in bringing the vision to fruition. Combined with a year of practical coaching follow-up, the candidates will learn the skills, habits, and lifestyle practices that will give the new vision the best chance of launching with success.
2. Exponential - Exponential is a church planting conference of a growing community of leaders committed to accelerating the multiplication of healthy, reproducing faith communities. Exponential champions church multiplication and equips church to help them move the needle on multiplication from less than 1% of churches actively reproducing to greater than 10%!
3. Launchpad - Launchpad is a training event that the planter attends with the key leaders that they have begun to assemble and shepherd in their communities. These people should be consistent with those that attended First 12 and should have participated in several months of coaching.

The planter is responsible for raising funds to pay for the expenses for themselves and their team going to Launchpad. This serves as another opportunity to assess the planters ability to raise funds, assemble a team, and execute leadership.

- C. Identify churches that can move up to the next level and work with them to develop leadership for the next level: The Revitalization Grant application helps identify churches that effectively meet the mission and vision of the MAC to “make disciples for Jesus Christ.” (See Part A above for new efforts in revitalization.)

In our effort to fulfill our 20:20 vision, we had three planters establish new faith communities.

Planter 1: Rev. Corey Truett, “The Well at Lewisburg” (Senatobia District)

Lewisburg was chosen as an appropriate site for a new faith community given that it is a quickly growing school-centered community in southeastern DeSoto County. After a two-year search, Rev. Corey Truett was identified as having the gifts, skills and graces for establishing a new faith community. The Rev. Corey Truett was appointed to Maples Memorial as a new church start-up in June of 2015.

The mission: To reach and transform the people of Lewisburg, MS into Kingdom-minded disciples of Christ by being Jesus for the community.

The vision: To create a missional church in Lewisburg and be a multiplying congregation.

The name: In the Middle East, the well was where community took place. That’s where everyone spent their social time. In Lewisburg, MS the well is where the farmers drew their water. Corey felt that this was a beautiful representation of both cultures by calling it the Well @ Lewisburg. They did this for several reasons:

First, they want to be clearly identified with a location and group of people. With Lewisburg closing down (see below), they wanted to honor the long history of Lewisburg Methodist and to have name of the township in the title. Second, they decided that if they were to take over the location of the building, they felt that it was important to keep a form of their name in the new church. Third, the Well wanted to make it easy to multiply. With the version of the name, it can now be updated to match the context of a new church plant (i.e. The Well @ Senatobia, The Well @ Southaven, The Well @ Olive Branch, etc...)

1. To build a café/coffee shop church in Lewisburg for the purpose of creating community, or a “third place” (first being home, second being work, and third being a place where you spend your time in community with others.)

Lewisburg UMC: Corey preached at Lewisburg UMC in June of 2016 sharing the mission and vision of the Well @ Lewisburg. He learned that Lewisburg UMC desperately wanted to be part of a growing and thriving church. They expressed their desire to be a part of this new church and that they would even sell the land and building to help make this new endeavor successful if that would help. Corey asked them how radical they were willing to be, and suggested instead of selling their church, to remodel it into a coffee shop/café. Without hesitation they agreed! Lewisburg UMC voted unanimously to merge with Maples Memorial UMC of Olive Branch for the sole purpose to help start The Well @ Lewisburg. Lewisburg UMC had been struggling as a congregation. They saw The Well as an opportunity to breathe new life into their existing church family. This is a wonderful illustration of how church revitalization and church planting coexist, one with the other, to build the Kingdom of God.

2. The Well will become a multiplying church that will develop leaders from within the congregation, as well as train other church planters from the MS UMC, to use their model, adjusting it to the cultural context of the location in which they are called to plant. The goal is to plant a new church every 1-2 years after the establishment of The Well.

Outreach: Corey spent this past year cultivating credibility within the community of Lewisburg. He and his ministry team held neighborhood cookouts, making a concerted effort to get to know their neighbors. These cookouts reached over 160 people! They were held in Corey’s neighborhood, Olive Branch, and then at the new location of the church to honor the Lewisburg firemen, who are

also their next door neighbors. Corey also became a consistent presence within the local schools by providing coffee for teachers and staff. The Well also tailgated at each football game providing food and water to attendees. Other activities where The Well has made an impact include: Hydrated band camp, sponsored the Glow Run and fed the LHS band; The Well leadership team prayed over LHS football facilities; ran the scoreboard for 9th grade and JV football games; provided coffee for the staff and administrators; provided donuts for the staff of LMS; and participated in the Chamber of Commerce Business Expo.

Corey's family practiced what he refers to as "reverse visitation," where instead of doing house visits to get to know folks, Corey brings entire families over to their home to feed them and spend time with them. This was a transparent way for visitors to get to know Corey, his wife, and family in an intimate/relaxed setting. He has had tremendous success with this approach in reaching new people with the message of Christ. This has helped them expand their sphere of influence as they asked each family to introduce them to another five families.

The Well knows that having a discipleship structure is important to the spiritual and numerical growth of their church. They felt that it was the right time to launch different areas of age-level ministries to disciple their people.

- **Worship Attendance:** Currently, they are averaging 50-60 in worship attendance.
- **Community Wells:** These are small groups launched in August and meet every night of the week. They are structured as a Wesleyan Class Meeting and do not use curriculum as their focal point. Currently, The Well has over 40 people involved in six different adult groups around the different communities of Lewisburg, Olive Branch, and Memphis.
- **Children's Ministry:** This ministry was launched in early September and runs simultaneous to The Well worship on Sunday nights. There is an average of 10-12 children each week, plus three to four adult volunteer workers.
- **Youth Ministry:** This ministry began in early August with the start of the new school year. Currently, The Well has five students attending every Wednesday night. Though this seems small, statistically The Well is actually considered a "healthy" youth ministry (healthy = 10% of active worship attendance).

*The positive takeaway from these stats is that The Well has the vast majority of their active worship attendance involved in age-level ministries. Usually the ratio is 50% or lower. Currently, well over 75% of the church members are involved in the different groups. What is also not as visible is that they also have people connecting into the groups that are NOT coming to worship...yet!

Glory Sightings from The Well @ Lewisburg:

1. **Breakthrough Center for Women** - This is a ministry that houses women who are homeless, abused, and/or dealing with other life-controlling issues. One of The Well's leadership team members does a Bible study with the women and invited them to worship. They visited a few weeks and loved it! They committed to going each week and have been faithful in doing so. The Well is already providing the Living Water to those that are searching to drink deeply from the well that ultimately satisfies!

2. **Jarrett Plank - FIRST BAPTISM @ The Well.** Jarrett is a five year-old with Downs Syndrome. His family had disengaged from Maples and had been contemplating leaving the church when they found out about The Well. Corey had the parents assist him with the baptism to help them understand their responsibility in Jarrett's life. After telling Jarrett that he has been born of water and the Spirit Corey said, "Amen," to which Jarrett excitedly responded "AMEN!" Corey used this opportunity to challenge the congregation to grow the passion to see more baptisms in their church.

3. **"The Dream & Vision"**- Vision is important. As a church, The Well needs an understanding of where they are going and what God has called them to.

- **Centered on the Gospel Together (Discipleship):** The Gospel is the Greatest story in all of human history, one that we should know and live daily. Growing in relationship with Jesus and growing in grace each day should be high priorities in the lives of the congregation,

no matter the age of the person. This will be done in multiple ways: Adult Small Groups - "Community Wells", Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12, Ages 11-18), Children's Ministry/Family Ministry (Grades Pre-K5, Ages 4-11).

- Reaching Out Together (Evangelism): The Well wants their church to be knee deep in the community of Lewisburg, and even those areas surrounding Lewisburg. The Well wants to be known as the community church that has a heart for Jesus and lives it out generously and boldly every opportunity they get. This includes: Hospitality Ministry; Secret Greeters; Follow-Up Team; Large Community Events such as, Run to the Well (a 5K Event); Smaller Community Events such as, Coffee Shop Open, Neighborhood Cookouts, and Reverse Visitation.
- Worshipping Together (Worship): Elements include: Atmosphere, Structure, Band, Multi-sensory Worship
- Sharing Life Together (Fellowship- Body of Christ): Sharing life together is the result when a community is centered on the Gospel together, reaches out together, and worships together. You can't help but want to live together. The Well's faith is more than personal, it's communal. The Well wants to encourage people to not just share life together in a church context, but in everyday lives — spend time together, celebrate together, mourn together — as John Wesley states, "Watch over one another in love."
- Sending Out Together (Mission & Church Planting): Everywhere in Scripture we are created and commanded to multiply. We are to take that same model and reproduce disciples, and reproduce churches. We are to follow the command to "go and make disciples of all nations," and follow the examples of Barnabas and Paul by getting outside the walls of the church. This will be done in the Well in the following ways: Local Mission - Coffee Shop/Café; Domestic Missions - Short Term Mission Trips; and International Mission Trips.

Planter 2: Wayne Hill - Crossroads (Senatobia District)

Hunter's Chapel is a vital congregation that found itself in great decline in West Tate County. After pastoral leadership encouraged them along the lines of relocation for six years, the present church was willing to relocate under the leadership of Wayne Hill. Truslow and Crenshaw UMC were invited to merge and form a new church, but decided not to participate. Hunter's Chapel relocated and renamed itself Crossroads. They are located off Highway 4.

In 16 months time they have faithfully lived out their Mission to live by faith, be known by love, and reach to reach those far from God. This has been evident by the numbers: 36 professions of faith and 39 adult baptisms. This achievement was recognized at the 2016 Mississippi Session of the Annual Conference when they received the One Matters award.

This past Easter they saw their largest crowd to that point, 145 attendees. Four weeks ago they had 146 in worship and on Sunday, October 30 had a family of four become members, increasing their new membership total to 147. It is amazing how God works. At a recent Sunday at Hunter's Chapel UMC, they had a worship attendance of 132.

Glory Sightings for Crossroads

1. Crossroads Church is in the process of purchasing land and hopes to start building a new church sometime in 2017. They have also had money and five (5) acres of land donated for the start of a new campus in a town 30 minutes away. The new service in the new location is set to start in January 2017.

2. Dustin attended a church in a different denomination and after talking to the pastor about following Christ and being baptized, Dustin was told by the pastor that he would not baptize him because Dustin was not good enough to be baptized. God allowed a friend to tell Dustin about a new church that wanted to be different and Dustin and his family joined Crossroads and were baptized.

3. In the first fourteen weeks that Crossroads had been opened, a man, his wife and their eighteen-year-old daughter have all made professions of faith! Praise God!

4. A man joined Crossroads when only two months ago he was homeless and selling drugs. Now

he is back on his feet, has reaffirmed his faith in Christ, and has allowed the Lord to completely change his life!

5. On Christmas Eve, Crossroads had 115 people attend their first Christmas Eve service ever. On the first Sunday of the New Year, Crossroads had a record attendance of 125 people.

Planter 3: Rev. Leanne Burris, The Bridge at Seashore (Seashore District)

The Mission: The Bridge is a community of people who share life together as we seek to provide a place of hospitality for local and global neighbors to harbor, to provide safe passage for those who are ready to tell a new story about their life through recovery, and to provide headwinds for those ready to chart new waters on mission for the Kingdom of God.

The Bridge officially LAUNCHED on September 11, 2016 at 3179 Mallet Road in D'Iberville. The Bridge chose to Launch with three (3) worship services (including Facebook Live) - 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., culminating in 152 worshippers. The early service (10 a.m.) has been the highest attended service. Over the following three Sundays, attendance was: 127, 117, and 139 respectively! These are souls being reached with the message of Jesus Christ! Throughout the month of October the attendance has leveled out to around 100. Over the past couple of months, finances have also leveled out and allowing The Bridge to have a better idea of what to budget for in 2017.

Connect Groups: 11 Small Groups have been started and are being led by core team members. There are over 80 people involved in the small group/discipleship ministry. The Bridge is currently meeting in four cities. The diversity of the settings help The Bridge complete their mission to be present in their neighborhoods and help the group members understand that what they learn about being disciples actually happens where they hang out, as opposed to just at church...the goal is to be INCARNATIONAL!

Glory Sightings from The Bridge:

1. In Connect Group #6 they have welcomed a new family to the area. The husband is a recently new Christian, and his wife and children are still unbelievers. This new Christian father/husband has found deep connection in his new neighborhood through The Bridge and especially the small group.

2. Perhaps the most powerful display of God's grace was seen in recent weeks when The Bridge worshipped with the Seashore Mission. The mission hosted The Bridge during their normal hour of worship. As one member put it, "I pray for the homeless all the time, but to worship next to a homeless person and hold hands as we pray for her...it will forever change how I pray for the homeless population." The Apostles' Creed was then recited and the Church was truly experienced, as any perceived demographic demarcations fell and they singularly declared "I believe in God, the Father Almighty...I believe in the communion of saints..." Leanne then stood to begin preaching, and as she explained that they were a church without a building, and began thanking the mission for their hospitality, one of the homeless worshippers said, "So you're homeless too? Well you can worship with us any time." "How many of our churches are designed (whether intentionally or not) to protect the sanctuary from "outsiders". And The Bridge was certainly outsiders. Yet a person who probably doesn't have one thing except a shared sense of ownership of the sanctuary, just offered his space like I pass the salt."- Leanne Burris

Glory to God in the Highest!

3. Nomadic Worship: The Bridge held Preview Services throughout the community. March: Preview #1, Palm Sunday- 170 people attended; April; #2- 100 people; May; #3, Memorial Day Picnic- 63 families; June; #4, Father's Day- 68 people; July; #5, with Seashore Mission- 128 total with 73 from The Bridge; August: #6- 74 people; August: #7- 78 (plus 12 who joined live via Facebook Live).

4. Future Membership Goals: The Bridge cannot receive members in the classic sense until The Bridge is officially chartered. Because chartering implies financial solvency, that time should be driven by a threshold number based upon average giving in their community and what level of giving will

create solvency. To that end, “I would like to set a benchmark of 150 adults ready to ‘join’ at the level of a commitment to discipleship which includes completing a membership class and regular financial giving.” - Leanne Burris

Timeline - estimate 3 years. These will be known as: “bridge builders.”

5. Answered Prayer: “In one month’s time, we had three (3) of our members told that they have or might have cancer, one member underwent serious back surgery, another member underwent gall-bladder surgery, another cataracts, another struggled with an undiagnosed skin ailment, and another member lost his father. They brought all the connect groups together one night, anointed the sick with oil and prayed for the hour they normally used for discipleship study. They also gifted prayer blankets (fleece with prayer knots tied in the ends) for those facing long hospital stays. Of course, tears were shed, and those who were afflicted shared their testimonies of discovery and where they were in the process of treatment or recovery...some for the first time. Not every prayer was answered with instant power, but a month later, Leanne could say with awe, that God had answered every one of these prayers. All three women are cancer free! One woman even went all the way to MD Anderson prepared to have her pelvis broken open so they could remove a softball sized tumor, fill the space with cement and finish radiation to treat cancer in three places. She arrived, they began surgery and called to report that she had a minor outpatient surgery because the tumor had shrunk so dramatically and she was officially cancer free otherwise!” Praise God!

Revitalization

Since the FCF’s conception, there has been a commitment to not fund brick and mortar- capital needs. Instead, there is a concerted effort to fund mission and ministry. How are people intentionally making disciples for Jesus Christ? If churches seeking revitalization can answer this question, then the FCF wholeheartedly supports their efforts for growing the Kingdom.

Amory First United Methodist Church - Unstuck Group

Amory First has been in relationship with the Unstuck Consulting Group since March 2015. They discovered that there are core foundational practices that healthy churches do to create a culture and structure for growth towards 500 people. Growth is not simply about numbers; both internal growth (heart/discipleship) and external growth (reaching the lost) matter in healthy churches.

Amory adopted four strategic action initiatives to help revitalize their existing church.

1. Clear Discipleship Path: The key discipleship path will be foundational for the strategy of the church. It will be key to have this “path” defined so each of the core teams can align their areas to that plan. The path should be simple, clear, and the entire leadership team should “get it.” How do all programming and planning align with the overall “path” leading people to become more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ? There are four segments on the spiritual growth continuum: Exploring Christianity, Growing in Christ, Close to Christ, Christ-Centered.

2. Evangelism and Outreach: Mission to reach the unchurched, 20-40 year old families with kids. Development of New Family Ministry on Wednesday nights: Family Night Suppers, Impact Kids, Youth Small Group, and Adult Small Groups have been started.

3. Communications Strategy: Involves branding, web presence, social media, updated signage, team training and development. The present reality was a very intimidating and confusing campus with little intentionality on creating a “wow” experience for guests. Several new strategies were employed: welcome center, greeter recruitments and signage.

4. Restructuring: Work to develop a two-team structure driving “Administry” and “Mission/Ministry.” This will consolidate the twenty different committees under the current structure, thus consolidating meetings.

2016 Update: The Mission Revitalization Team implemented several new initiatives. First, they overhauled the website and social media platforms, changed the bulletin to become more visitor-friendly, and established a Welcome Center in order to reach new people who show up on Sunday mornings and to communicate the ministries effectively. The signage has also been redone around the

entire campus to make it easier to navigate for new people.

Second, the missions team held two community outreach events that brought lots of new people on campus. In July, Amory First hosted a street party to celebrate the 4th of July with music, hotdogs, and a recognition of veterans. 150 people attended the event. In October they hosted the largest fall carnival crowd ever with over 300 in attendance. From these events, the church has connected with a solid five to six new families that have been back to the church.

Next, last fall Amory launched a new night of children's activities and adult small groups on Wednesday evenings. These Family Nights average about 75 people in attendance. A meal is served at 5:15 p.m., followed by children's activities and small groups at 6 p.m. There are about 25 children and youth attending and about 50 adults attending the four small groups. Through this effort, Amory First has been able to connect with six brand new families!

SECTION VI

OTHER REPORTS

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OTHER REPORTS

Africa University Report

Africa University ended 2016 poised to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and eager to embrace new opportunities for transformative ministry over the next 25 years.

It is a joy to recognize and thank the Mississippi Conference for strengthening its investment in the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment, to 79.56 percent of its asking in 2016.

Overall, the tremendous commitment and participation of local churches across all five jurisdictions enabled 34 of the 56 United Methodist annual conferences in the United States — up from 32 in 2015 — to invest 100 percent or more of their asking to the AUF.

The university community acknowledges, with heartfelt appreciation, the many ways in which the Mississippi Conference has been active, faithful, and generous in helping Africa University to realize its mission.

In addition to its support for the AUF, the Mississippi Conference completed a \$1.6 million scholarship endowment campaign for Africa University in record time. We are grateful for the leadership of Bishop James Swanson, Sr., and the many friends of Africa University in the Mississippi Conference. Thank you for this contribution to the first, church-wide Campaign for Africa University. Thank you also for the presence and participation of a 34-person delegation in the 25th anniversary celebrations program on the campus at Old Mutare, Zimbabwe in March.

Through Africa University, the Mississippi Conference helps young people to discover and sharpen their gifts for leadership. The disciple-making mission of the global United Methodist Church is alive in the contributions of the university's 7,000+ graduates. More than 90 percent of these graduates are still in Africa, serving communities in 32 countries. Currently, more than two dozen Africa University graduates are missionaries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, under the auspices of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. People who would otherwise be on the margins are helping others to experience God's grace, peace and abundance in their lives.

Great things are on the horizon for Africa University. Your Africa University is continuing to evolve and serve by:

- Restructuring its academic units in order to remain relevant and provide a broader-based education to meet new demands in the African workforce.
- Providing leadership formation experiences and learning for more than 1,400 students from 26 African countries. (Contrary to the norm for African higher education institutions, women represented more than half of the student body.)
- Generating new knowledge and capacity to support peacebuilding and to improve food security, human rights, and leadership for the African continent.

The ongoing support of the Mississippi Conference is of vital importance to Africa University. We invite the individual members, congregations and districts of the Mississippi Conference to continue taking time out in 2017 to celebrate their journey with Africa University. Engage in a season of daily prayer for Africa University. Join its honorary alumni association. Consider hosting a special "AU@25" event or Africa University Sunday in your local church or area. Use your event to increase awareness of Africa University's ministry and invite attendees to each give at least \$25 each in honor of the 25th anniversary.

Thank you for your unwavering response to the call to active faith, hope, and transformation in the world. We pray that blessings continue to abound for all who serve in the Mississippi Conference.

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

Boston University School of Theology

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) travels with you in the vital journey of seeking God, building knowledge, and equipping leaders for the church and society. We celebrate our students, alums, and church partners, who join hands in serving God and building toward transformed communities.

Breaking News:

- **Congregations:** We welcomed Jonathan Calvillo as a new faculty member in sociology of religion, leading us toward better understanding of congregations and faith identity. See also our website of congregational resources: <http://www.bu.edu/cpt/current-projects-2/congregational-research-and-development/>.

- **Doctor of Ministry:** The DMin program in Transformational Leadership is soaring with deeply committed student cohorts who are widely ecumenical, culturally diverse, and increasingly global. The blended model includes intensives, online courses, and close work with faculty mentors.

- **Scholarships:** We multiplied funding for student scholarships and housing, including the Vincent Machozi Scholarship for African students who seek to cultivate ministries of compassion, justice, & peace in their homelands.

- **Religion and Arts Initiative:** The Initiative sponsored a hymn-writing contest this year, complementing the photography contest last year and STH's rotating art exhibits. The current exhibit focuses on ecological healing: "Sense of Place" by women print-makers from Ecuador and Maine.

Partnering for Ministry and Transformation: *Preparing students for ministry means meaningful partnerships with the local spiritual community.*

- **Congregational Courses:** Courses in congregations with church leaders and students learning together.

- **Religion and Conflict Transformation Clinic:** Internships, workshops, and projects that foster justice and reconciliation.

- **Travel seminars:** Courses engaging local communities on Arizona-Mexican border and in Cuba, Germany, and Indonesia.

- **Ecumenical Partnerships:** Continuing close work with UMC, AME and other Wesleyan denominations, while building strong programs with the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ.

- **Partnership with Hebrew College:** Joint courses and public events, plus co-sponsoring *The Journal of Interreligious Studies*. The focus is on enriching theological education and developing religious leaders who are faithful and wise.

Taking Action Globally And Locally:

- **Campus action:** Work with Boston University to improve accessibility and sustainability: to provide full access for all persons (a work in progress) and to live sustainably with the planet.

- **Internships in global service and peacemaking:** Student-initiated internships for service with communities across the world, and for just peacemaking projects with international organizations.

Renewed Commitment To Justice: *Celebrating differences while joining together for action.*

- Standing with Standing Rock: Several BUSTH students and alums joined indigenous peoples at the Oceti Sakowin Camp in North Dakota to protest the pipeline on sacred Sioux land.

- Deep conversations: Faculty, students and administrators have led deep conversations on issues that divide, but with respectful listening that builds community life and communal action.

Other Notable Headlines:

- Our own Associate Dean Pamela Lightsey was featured in Boston University's 2016 Annual Report for her pursuit of justice, empowerment, and change.

- Our graduating senior, Rev. Mariama White-Hammond (AME) led the Boston Women's March, and some 75 STH faculty and students marched, calling for social and ecological justice as we build new futures in the United States.

■ Students of all theological and social orientations are asking and then acting: “What can I do to make this world better?” “How can I witness to my Christian faith?”

As BUSTH looks back on 2016, it celebrates transformational leaders who have loved God and cared mightily for God’s world. Their living legacy gives us hope and courage for the future.

Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean, Boston University School of Theology

Candler School of Theology

For more than 100 years, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has prepared *real* people to make a *real* difference in the *real* world. Since our founding in 1914, over 10,000 students have graduated from Candler, where they have been shaped as thoughtful, principled, and courageous Christian leaders dedicated transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

One of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is also one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, a top-tier research institution offering extensive resources and a rich context for study. Our location in Atlanta provides a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of the 21st century. Simply put, there is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

In order to keep pace with the needs of the church and the world, Candler offers 17 degrees: seven single degrees and ten dual degrees pairing theology with bioethics, business, international development, law, public health, or social work. One of our newest degrees is a Doctor of Ministry that is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry as they study and apply what they learn in real time. We’ve also partnered with the University of Georgia’s School of Social Work to create an MDiv/MSW where students learn to maximize their effectiveness by combining pastoral skills such as spiritual counseling with social work practices such as family therapy and community assessment.

Our student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. 475 students are enrolled, with 51 percent women, 34 percent people of color (U.S.), and a median age of 30. Students represent 39 denominations, with half coming from the Methodist family. 83 percent of students are seeking a degree to prepare them as ministry professionals.

Candler has a deep commitment to alleviating student debt and employs a multi-pronged approach to tackle this issue. In 2016-2017, we awarded nearly \$5.75 million in Candler scholarships, with 95 percent of MDiv students receiving aid and the average scholarship covering 73 percent of tuition. Plus, our comprehensive “Faith & Finance” program teaches money management skills that serve our students now and will continue to serve them—and the churches they lead—well into the future.

In fall of 2016, Candler welcomed to the faculty Larry Goodpaster as Bishop-in-Residence, and Kendall Soulen as Professor of Systematic Theology. Also this fall, three Candler alumni began their terms as newly elected bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction: David Graves 90T in Alabama-West Florida, R. Lawson Bryan 75T 85T in South Georgia, and Sue Hupert-Johnson 95T in North Georgia.

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

Jan Love
Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics
Candler School of Theology

Duke Divinity School

In the academic year 2016–2017, we have been delighted to welcome our new dean of Duke Divinity School, Elaine A. Heath. Dean Heath also serves as professor of missional and pastoral theology, and her research interests focus on evangelism and spirituality, evangelism and gender, new monasticism, and emergence in church and theological education. Prior to coming to Duke, she was the McCreless Professor of Evangelism at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas. Dean Heath is the co-founder of the Missional Wisdom Foundation, which provides opportunities for clergy and laity to learn how to live in intentional, missional communities in diverse social contexts, and she is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. She has published books for scholars, churches, and laypeople; her most recent book is *God Unbound: Wisdom from Galatians for the Anxious Church* (Upper Room). She is widely in demand as a speaker and teacher for Annual Conferences, retreats, and leadership training.

Since arriving at Duke in July, Dean Heath has begun work on a new strategic plan for the Divinity School. By the end of 2016, the initial listening and feedback phase had been completed and a task force convened to help guide the process of strategic goal-setting. With Dean Heath's leadership, Duke Divinity School remains mindful of our mission to train, prepare, and form men and women committed to God and enthusiastic about ministry. We endeavor to prepare leaders for a changing church and world who will have the spiritual formation, theological foundation, and institutional flexibility to serve God in established churches, intentional communities, or missional organizations, as the Holy Spirit guides them.

This year we welcomed students from a range of backgrounds who are called to serve God and the church. In 2016, our total enrollment was 641 students: 418 are enrolled in the M.Div. degree program; 52 in the M.T.S.; 8 in the Th.M.; 45 in the Th.D.; 71 in the D.Min.; 16 in the M.A.C.P.; 23 in the M.A.C.S.; and 8 who are special students. Thirty-seven percent of our students are United Methodist, with an additional 4 percent from other Wesleyan traditions, and 48 percent of our M.Div. students are United Methodist. Eleven percent of all students are Baptist, 8 percent are Anglican or Episcopalian, 3 percent are Roman Catholic, 11 percent are Presbyterian or Reformed, with the rest from 24 other denominations or nondenominational churches.

On April 9, the Divinity School hosted the first annual Hispanic Preaching Festival to celebrate and explore Hispanic homiletics. The event drew 54 participants from 14 different Hispanic congregations across the region. Attendees included pastors, laypeople, and students. The festival featured sermons from local pastors, including Alma Ruiz M.Div.'13 and associate pastor of Fiesta Cristiana, which is affiliated with Apex UMC in Apex, N.C., and Raúl Colón, pastor of Centro Cristiano de Vida in Wake Forest, N.C. The festival was part of the Hispanic-Latino/a Preaching Initiative, a Spanish-language program that provides opportunities for Hispanic and Latino/a (H/L) pastors to receive homiletical training in a peer group format. Each year, 10 applicants serving as pastors in the H/L community are chosen to participate as preaching fellows. The peer group begins with a retreat and then meets monthly for 15 months to engage with homiletical, theological, and exegetical resources led by the program coordinator and other invited teachers.

The Clergy Health Initiative published a new report that illuminates how the demographics of elders and local pastors actively serving United Methodist congregations in North Carolina are shifting. In an effort to better understand and describe the multiple demands and rewards of clergy life, the Duke Clergy Health Initiative has conducted a longitudinal survey of North Carolina's United Methodist clergy every two years since 2008. For the report on appointments, the Clergy Health Initiative paired survey findings with publicly available data from the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences. The findings illuminate shifts in the demographics of elders and local pastors actively serving congregations.

Our initiatives, centers, and programs are a vital resource for us in connecting the work of Duke Divinity School with other disciplines and constituents. The Center for Reconciliation celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, continuing its work of fostering reconciliation through the Summer Institute, the CFR Justice Fellows, and the Great Lakes Initiative in East Africa. The Office of Black Church Studies, in partnership with the Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts, Duke Performances, Duke

Dance, and the Duke Department of African and African-American Studies, presented a symposium on African-American Theology and the Arts, featuring the renowned dance company Ailey II. The Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative hosted the event “Practice & Presence: Gathering for Christians in Healthcare,” for healthcare professionals who want to deepen or reimagine the relationship of faith in vocation in community with likeminded practitioners. Faith & Leadership, the online magazine published by LEADD, continues to reach over 300,000 readers and provide a resource for theological reflection and “traditioned innovation” for all in ministry. Their continued excellent work was recognized again this year with awards from the Associated Church Press “Best of the Christian Press” contest.

In partnership with the Western North Carolina and North Carolina Conferences, the Thriving Rural Communities initiative sponsored the 2016 Convocation on the Rural Church, “Apprenticeship with Jesus,” to discuss issues important for transforming rural churches and communities. The Divinity School held a two-day conference titled “Tamar’s Ashes: Pastoral Ministry Amidst Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence” for the school’s students as part of the Mentoring for Ministry program. Duke Divinity School remains committed to supporting local churches and local pastors, particularly in under-resourced communities, and providing pastoral training for our students to allow them to minister to people and in places that are often marginalized or forgotten.

We are delighted to announce the hiring of a new assistant professor of homiletics, Jerusha Neal. She is currently serving as a missionary and lecturer in practical theology at the Davuilevu Theological College of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma in the South Pacific. Her particular interests are formational theological education, teaching preaching in cross-cultural settings, and affirming women in their pastoral call. A native of the U.S. Midwest, Neal has served as co-pastor of the Santee United Methodist Church in Santee, Calif., and been the director of Christian education at the First Presbyterian Church of Fullerton, Calif.

We remain deeply grateful for the relationships among the United Methodist Church, this Annual Conference, and Duke Divinity School. We look forward to working with you in the task of preparing men and women for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

Office of Dean Elaine A. Heath

Memphis Theological Seminary

Memphis Theological Seminary is pleased to report that theological education for United Methodist students continues to remain vibrant and forward looking. Beginning in the Fall Semester of 2016, **Dr. Michael Turner** began his appointment as Associate Professor of Wesleyan Studies. Dr. Turner holds the Ph.D. degree from Vanderbilt University in Church History with a focus upon nineteenth century American Methodism. He teaches all the required UMC courses for ordination (Elder and Deacon) in Methodist History, Doctrine, and Polity in addition to a variety of electives in the field of Wesleyan Studies. He has already made a significant contribution to the Seminary and to United Methodist students in particular, teaching and advising UMC students and extending the reach of the Seminary and of Methodism into area churches, districts, and Annual Conferences through short-term courses and seminars.

The **Methodist House of Studies** at MTS is giving new focus to Wesleyan studies at the Seminary and within the surrounding Annual Conferences that we serve. Six graduating students in 2016 earned the *Certificate in Wesleyan Studies*, which requires a minimum of five courses focused upon Wesleyan related history, theology, and practice. The Methodist House provides support for all of our UMC students at MTS by regular gatherings for fellowship and mutual learning. Additionally, the Methodist House has sponsored training for clergy covenant group leaders in the Tennessee and Memphis Annual Conferences during the past year. Currently we are developing a Continuing Education Certificate in Wesleyan Studies in partnership with the Mississippi Annual Conference. Dr. Lee Ramsey (Memphis Annual Conference), Dr. Michael Turner (Western North Carolina Annual Conference), and Rev. Billy Vaughan (Memphis Annual Conference) serve as the Directors and Associate Directors of the Methodist House of Studies.

We are pleased that one of the pastoral leaders from the Arkansas Annual Conference, Rev. Aubrietta Jones, is serving on the Advisory Board of the Methodist House.

Enrollment among United Methodist students at MTS has levelled out and is beginning to increase since 2008. Currently, there are 60 United Methodist Students enrolled at MTS with the majority of those students concentrated in our Masters of Divinity Degree and our Masters of Arts in Youth Ministry. An additional 14 students are enrolled at MTS from the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, with whom we maintain close, supportive relations through the Methodist House of Studies.

We are **grateful for the support of the Mississippi Annual Conference** and for the many fine students who have attended MTS from Arkansas over the years. We appreciate the confidence that the Conference places in MTS for preparation of United Methodist women and men for Christian ministry, and we welcome your ongoing involvement and prayers for Wesleyan studies at Memphis Theological Seminary. For ongoing information about the Methodist House of Studies, we invite you to visit us at www.MethodistHouse.org.

Dr. G. Lee Ramsey, Jr.
Methodist House of Studies, Director
Foster Professor of Pastoral Theology and Homiletics

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare

At Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, our mission is this: in partnership with our medical staffs, to collaborate with patients and their families to be the leader in providing high quality, cost-effective patient-and-family-centered care. Services will be provided in a manner which supports the health ministries and Social Principles of the United Methodist Church to benefit the communities we serve.

With 1,650 licensed beds and 63,655 inpatient discharges in 2016, we provided care for 386,217 emergency department visits. MLH is the second largest private employer in our community, employing nearly 14,000 associates, including 3,500 nurses. Our clinical areas of focus include cardiology, oncology, neurosciences, women's services, pediatrics, and transplant services. Our work is grounded in our mission. As a faith-based institution, the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church challenge us to establish an environment where the community provides potential for nurturing human beings into the fullness of their humanity and faith. We believe we have a responsibility to innovate, sponsor and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals.

Leading MLH in this mission is our President and Chief Executive Officer, Michael Ugwueke, who assumed his current role in January 2017. Michael takes over for Gary Shorb, who retired from MLH in December 2016. Michael assumed the role of president and chief operating officer of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in May 2014. For the year prior, he served as COO of Methodist. As COO, he provided strategic and operational leadership for the system's five adult inpatient hospitals and affiliated companies. Ugwueke previously served as senior vice president for Methodist North and South Hospitals. Michael's leadership of two hospitals allowed a more rapid transfer of best practices and an increase in system-wide standardization. Prior to assuming this role, he served as administrator/CEO of Methodist South Hospital.

MLH celebrates many recent accomplishments, including recognition by *Fortune* magazine as one of the 100 best companies to work for in the nation. MLH was again recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as a "Best Regional Hospital", while Le Bonheur Children's Hospital was named a "Best Children's Hospital." Also, Le Bonheur Children's has officially been designated as a Magnet hospital by the American Nursing Credentialing Center. The Magnet designation is a distinction that only 7% of hospitals in the country have earned, and this achievement is a testament to the exceptional care that distinguishes Le Bonheur and Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare.

Our Faith & Health Division continues to provide significant and innovative service and programming. Our Congregational Health Network works with nearly 700 congregations in a covenant relation-

ship to educate, serve, and minister to congregants and their communities, promoting better health outcomes. Our Faith and Health team is addressing disparities of care in many areas. In collaboration with partners like West Cancer Center, Church Health, and others, we are serving the underserved and offering healing and hope to those who need it most. We have made particular strides in the fight against cancer and in addressing the health and community needs of citizens who live in the 38109 zip code. We continue our work with the Emory Center for Ethics Consortium as we pay attention to the vital role of ethics in healthcare decision-making. Also, providing skilled and compassionate spiritual care is still central to our mission. Throughout MLH, our team of chaplains cares for patients, families, and associates, and we also operate a fully accredited Clinical Pastoral Education Center. We continue to provide counseling and care through our Employee Assistance Program, and we connect with students and professionals at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center through the work of the Faith Health Collaborative.

We are deeply appreciative of the support of the Church and the three annual conferences who birthed us and continue to be vital partners. The healing ministry of Christ continues to be at our center.

Michael Ugwueke
President and Chief Executive Officer

SECTION VII

STANDING RULES

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Standing Rules

The Mississippi Annual Conference

PREFACE

“The Annual Conference, for its own government, may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the *Discipline of The United Methodist Church*,” (Par. 604, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2008, hereinafter referred to as *The Book of Discipline*.) The Annual Conference is incorporated under the laws of the State of Mississippi as The Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Incorporated, a non-profit corporation. All references to “Conference” or “Annual Conference” shall mean The Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Incorporated.

PURPOSE AND CORE VALUES

In addition to the Mission, as defined by the *Book of Discipline*, the Mississippi Annual Conference – empowered by love, generosity, justice and apprenticeship – forms spiritual leaders, faith communities and connections so more disciples of Jesus Christ transform the world.

Rule 1: Rules of Procedure and Voting

- A. The Annual Conference shall be ordered by *The Book of Discipline* and *Wesley's Rules*. In addition, the Standing Rules of the Annual Conference, the Rules of Order of the preceding General Conference and the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, shall provide guidance. For the purpose of transacting business, the quorum shall be those present and eligible to vote.
- B. The official roll call of the Annual Conference shall be those who have registered and received voting badges. The record of attendance shall be made from this roll.
- C. Lay members of boards, councils, commissions and committees; lay members of the Conference Staff, and lay persons who are heads of Conference Institutions supported by the Annual Conference, who are not members of the Annual Conference, shall have the privilege of the floor without vote.
- D. A copy of any motion made on the floor of the Annual Conference must be submitted in writing to the Conference Secretary as soon as the person making the motion returns to his or her seat.
- E. Any report of a board, council, commission or committee duly presented to the Annual Conference for its action shall be deemed properly before the Conference without the necessity of a motion to adopt and a second thereto.
- F. At any session of the Annual Conference there shall be Tellers which shall conduct voting as the Annual Conference directs. The Tellers shall include (1) clergy and (1) lay person from each district, nominated by the District Superintendent. The Tellers shall be organized under the direction of the Conference Secretary.
- G. Voting shall be by voice or by show of hands or otherwise as ordered by the Bishop as chair of the Conference. A standing, balloted, or electronic vote may be ordered on call of the presiding Bishop when necessary. Voting for the election of Lay and Clergy Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be organized by the Conference Secretary according to the appropriate guidelines as set forth by the Annual Conference.
- H. The Annual Conference, at the request of the Conference Secretary, shall fix the voting area, also known as the bar of the Conference, at the opening business session and all voting must take place within this designated area. Voting shall be by official badge only. Only those members with the proper badges who are within the bar of the Conference shall vote on Annual Conference matters.
- I. There shall be a Consent Calendar for the session of the Annual Conference composed of items to be “moved to the record without reading” and such other items which do not necessarily require

deliberation by the Conference in open session. The Committee on the Annual Conference, under the direction of the Bishop and Conference Secretary shall determine items to be placed on the Consent Calendar and shall distribute a list of those items in the pre-conference materials. Items placed on the Consent Calendar shall be limited to items requiring a simple majority vote for adoption. The Consent Calendar shall be presented to the floor of the Annual Conference during the opening business session by the Conference Secretary for consideration and adoption. Prior to adoption, a request may be made to the Conference Secretary to remove any item from the consent agenda. This request must have the support of 10 members of the Annual Conference. This request being in order, the item shall be removed and considered at an appropriate time as determined by the Conference Secretary and presiding Bishop.

Annual Conference Membership & Expenses

Rule 2: Conference membership shall consist of the following:

- A. Clergy Membership shall include those identified in *The Book of Discipline*
- B. Lay membership shall include those identified in *The Book of Discipline*.
- C. Equalizing lay and clergy membership:

When necessary, additional at-large members, as certified by the conference secretary, shall be named by the district superintendent in consultation with the district lay leader, to assure an equal number of lay and clergy members as set forth in *The Book of Discipline*. If not voting members in their own right, all Directors and Senior Conference Staff, including the Executive Director of the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation, shall serve as equalizing members. Additional equalizing members may include; Chairpersons of all Conference Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions (if laypersons), District Presidents of the United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Youth; and District Directors of Lay Servants. Priority shall be given to consideration and election of additional young adult and youth members. When the number to be elected is unequal to the number of districts, the district(s) with the larger memberships shall elect an additional member in order of size. The Annual Conference shall provide their per diem expenses.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall provide funding for the expenses of the Annual Conference.

Rule 3: Committee on the Annual Conference

The Bishop shall gather and convene this committee to develop the Annual Conference agenda, program, worship, and local arrangements.

Annual Conference Order

Rule 4: Annual Conference Order

- A. The basic Conference Order shall be established in compliance with *The Book of Discipline*.
- B. The Vital Congregations Committee is a discernment body that ensures the ongoing effectiveness and Oneness of Annual Conference churches, ministries and committees. The committee will recommend future directions and/or improvements as determined in part by feedback from charge conferences and goal achievements from the three groups (spiritual leader formation, faith community formation and connecting ministries). The committee also seeks to keep the Annual Conference focused on long-term, big picture items like living into the Purpose (including the Core Values). This body seeks to represent the needs and interests of the local church in a wide diversity of ministry contexts rather than conference roles. The Extended Cabinet will nominate membership. Membership is comprised of nine churches (each represented by a pastor plus a lay member). Selection is informed by Vital Signs metrics and a demonstrated presence of the Core Values. There will be an intentional effort to ensure diversity of church size, race/ethnicity and area (north, central, south), gender and age. The Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications convenes this committee and the Bishop and Conference Lay Leader resource as non-voting members.

- C. The following Operational Groups will serve to conduct the ongoing administration and mission of the Annual Conference in compliance with the current discipline and as further detailed in Appendices A and B and current Conference Structure.
1. **Spiritual Leadership Group:** (Director of Spiritual Leadership Formation, Rule #18) Staff, boards and committees work together to continually call, equip, assess and deploy excellent clergy and laity into all areas of vital ministry. The committees associated with this area include :
 - Board of Ordained Ministry
 - Board Committee on Equitable Compensation
 - Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry
 - Board of Laity, including Lay Servant Ministries, United Methodist Men representatives, United Methodist Women representatives and representatives from the Conference Council on Youth Ministries
 - Conference Council on Youth Ministries
 - Collaborative Spiritual Leadership Team made up of an equal representation of Clergy and Lay appointed by the Director of Spiritual Leadership. They will be tasked with assessing, developing and evaluating spiritual leadership formation experiences for lay and clergy and other Board of Discipleship responsibilities as appropriate.
 2. **Faith Community Formation Group:** (Director of Faith Community Formation, Rule #19) Staff, District Superintendents and committees work together to lead and assist in the development of vital communities of faith by creating new faith communities and encouraging vitality in existing communities of faith. The committees associated with this area include:
 - Faith Community Formation Team
 - Committee on New Church Starts and Revitalization (which includes functions of the Board of Discipleship, the Commission on Small Membership Church, the Committee on Parish and Community Development)
 3. **Connecting Ministries Group:** (Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications, Rule # 20) Staff, boards, agencies and committees work together to uphold and promote the shared Mississippi Partnerships and ministries of the Annual Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, and General Conference as each local church embodies our Core Values. The committees and groups associated with this area include:
 - United Methodist Women
 - United Methodist Men
 - Commission on Communication
 - Board of Global Ministries (which includes functions of Missions, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, and Health and Welfare, Board of Discipleship and Camping Ministries)
 - Congregations for Children
 - Personnel Committee
 - Journal Committee
 - Committee on Resolutions and Petitions
 - Conference Committee on Standing Rules
 - Conference Committee on Standing Rules
 4. **Adminstry Group:** (Director of Finance and Administration/Conference Benefits Officer) Staff, and committees work together to support and resource the ministries of the Annual Conference. The committees associated with this area include:
 - Conference Council on Finance and Administration
 - Conference Board of Pensions
 - Board of Trustees
 - Board of Medical Benefits
 - Commission on Archives and History
 - Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave

5. Episcopal Office Group: (Resident Bishop and Assistant to the Bishop) Staff and committees work together to perform the traditional work of the Episcopal Office, as well as the work of Advocacy throughout the Annual Conference. The committees associated with this area include:
- Conference Administrative Review Committee
 - Conference Committee on Episcopacy
 - Episcopal Residence Committee
 - Conference Advocacy Groups including Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Conference Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns, Commission on Religion and Race, Commission on the Status and Role of Women and Multicultural and Racial/Ethnic Ministry (which includes functions of Hispanic/Latino Ministry and Native American Ministry), Church and Society and Committee on Disability Concerns.

Annual Conference Reports

Rule 5: Reports

- A. The pastors shall file the annual statistical report for each church served, as directed by the conference statistician.
- B. Reports originating in Annual Conference agencies and groups that are to be presented to the Annual Conference for action or information shall be submitted electronically to the Conference Secretary or his/her designee by the date set for *Pre-Conference Journal* production.

Rule 6: Conference Committee on Standing Rules

The committee shall review the Standing Rules annually and make recommendations regarding Standing Rules to the Annual Conference. The recommendations shall lie on the table to be considered and acted upon the next day. The committee shall be authorized to make non-substantive, editorial changes as needed.

Rule 7: Resolutions and Petitions

- A. Procedures: Resolutions and Petitions initiated by the Cabinet or in one of the duly constituted conference councils, boards, commissions, committees, or agencies are properly before the Annual Conference without the necessity of referral. All resolutions and petitions presented to the Annual Conference which do not originate in the cabinet or in one of the duly constituted conference councils, boards, commissions, committees, or agencies shall be submitted electronically to the Conference Secretary and to the conference office by March 31 for printing in the *Pre-Conference Journal*. These resolutions or petitions shall be referred to the Conference Committee on Resolutions and Petitions for concurrence, non-concurrence, amendment, or appropriate referral; and the committee shall report back to the Annual Conference.
- B. All individual or groups presenting Resolutions or Petitions following the March 31 deadline will be responsible for print copies for all members of the Annual Conference and for submitting a copy to the Conference Secretary prior to the opening business session of Annual Conference. Any submissions following the opening session will be referred to the Committee on Resolutions and Petitions for consideration at the following Annual Conference.
- C. Conference Action: Resolutions and petitions shall lie on the table for at least 24 hours after being presented prior to being considered by the Annual Conference. As each resolution or petition comes up for consideration, the Conference Committee on Resolutions and Petitions shall present its position and the underlying rationale. If present, the first and last floor speaker shall be the designated representative for the person or organization that submitted the proposal, irrespective of any other limit placed by the Annual Conference on debate of the proposal. The conference committee shall make a statement after all floor speakers but prior to the final vote by the Annual Conference.

Rule 8: Budget Changes at Annual Conference

The Proposed Budget, as presented to the Annual Conference by the Committee on Finance and Administration, will be required to lie on the table for 24 hours before final adoption. When any proposal is brought to the floor of Annual Conference to change the budget that is lying on the table and is approved, the amendment to the budget must be referred to CFA for a funding recommendation before the final vote on the budget is taken.

Elections

As mandated and defined by the Book of Discipline, paragraphs 140 and 502A, the Mississippi Annual Conference will endeavor to ensure that all elected representation will be a fair and inclusive depiction of the Conference.

Rule 9: Election of Clergy Delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences

The following system of nomination and election shall be followed in the election of clergy delegates:

- A. Clergy delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected from the ordained ministerial members in full connection, pursuant to the provisions of the *Book of Discipline*, with the exception of clergy on Involuntary Leave of Absence.
- B. All eligible clergy members shall be listed on the ballot prepared by the Conference Secretary. Those wishing not to be considered for election have the right to decline.
- C. All clergy who accept their election express their willingness to be a nominee, to attend and participate in the conferences as elected, and to attend all meetings and trainings of the delegation.
- D. Delegates elected to serve for the General Conference shall automatically serve on the delegation for Jurisdictional Conference. The remaining delegates to Jurisdictional Conference shall serve as alternates, in order of election, to General Conference

Rule 10: Election of Lay Delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences

The following system of nomination and election shall be followed in the election of lay delegates:

- A. Lay delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected from the voting membership of the Annual Conference.
- B. Each lay member who wishes to be considered for election must electronically submit a completed nomination form to the Conference Secretary on or before March 1 of the election year to allow proper time for verification of election qualifications. District Equalizing delegates appointed after the March 1st deadline may apply for an extension in writing to the Conference Secretary. All nominees shall be required to have an endorsement by a District Board of Laity, District Council, Conference Organization, or an Administrative Board/Council of a local church.
- C. Nominations forms shall include biographical information including age, race, gender, prior years elected to General and/or Jurisdictional Conferences, participation on boards, councils, commissions or committees of the Annual Conference, and a written summary of qualifications of up to fifty (50) words in length by the nominee.
- D. All nominees express their willingness to be a nominee, to attend and participate in the conferences as elected, and to attend all meetings and trainings of the delegation.
- E. Delegates elected to serve for the General Conference shall automatically serve on the delegation for Jurisdictional Conference. The remaining delegates to Jurisdictional Conference shall serve as alternates, in order of election, to General Conference

Rule 11: Official Journal and Yearbook

The *Journal* Editor, under the direction of the Conference Secretary, shall be responsible for editing and publishing the *Annual Conference Journal* each year and shall work in cooperation with the Office of Connectional Ministries and Communications to contract and draw funds from the Conference Administration Fund for the cost of preparing and distributing the *Journal*.

The Secretary shall recommend to the Annual Conference the material to be included in both the *Pre-Conference* and *Official Journals*. In addition, the Conference Secretary, in cooperation with the Office of Connectional Ministries and Communications, will release a schedule for the submission of information for the production of both the *Pre-Conference* and *Official Journals*. Electronic copies will be provided to

the clergy and laity members of the Annual Conference. Access to hard copies will be provided to retired ministers.

Rule 12: Memoirs

Memoirs shall be published in the conference Journal for deceased ordained clergy, diaconal ministers, and local pastors, their spouses, and their dependent children. A bronze plaque is to be presented by the Conference Board of Pensions to the families of deceased clergy.

Conference Leadership Groups and Nominations

Rule 13: Conference Committee on Nominations

- A. There shall be a Conference Committee on Nominations of twenty-two (22) members composed of two representatives (one clergy and one laity) from each district. They will be nominated by the District Superintendents and elected by the Annual Conference, with an emphasis on adequate and fair representation. Additional members shall include: the resident Bishop, the Conference Lay Leader, the Conference President of United Methodist Women, the Conference President of United Methodist Men and the President of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries. The Resident Bishop of the Mississippi Annual Conference shall serve as the Chairperson for the Committee on Nominations. Any further officers shall be elected by the Committee at their first meeting.
- B. The following shall be ex-officio members and resource the work of the committee: The Director of Spiritual Leadership, the Director of Faith Community Formation, the Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications, the Director of Finance and Administration, the chairperson of the Commission of the Status and Role of Women, the chairperson of the Commission on Religion and Race, the Chairperson of the Committee on Disability Concerns and the Dean of the Cabinet.
- C. The committee shall make the following nominations for the Annual Conference: a secretary, a statistician, trustees of property, a lay leader, members of all quadrennial councils, boards, commissions, and committees as specified by *The Book of Discipline* and Annual Conference Standing Rules. When the *Book of Discipline* or Standing Rules require nominations be made by other agencies of the Annual Conference, those nominations shall be reported to the Committee for publication in *Pre-Conference* and *Official Journals*.
- D. Nominations of chairpersons of all quadrennial boards, councils, commissions, and committees, whose election is not prescribed by the *Book of Discipline* or other sections of these Standing Rules shall be a nominated member of that board, council, commission or committee and shall be submitted by the Committee on Nominations to the Annual Conference for election. Additional officers shall be elected by the board, council, commission or committee at the first regular meeting.
- E. Current members of the Committee on Nominations shall not be nominated for membership on any board, council, commission or committee whose membership arises from the nominations of this committee. Ex-officio members of the Committee on Nominations are excluded from this rule.
- F. The committee, in making nominations, shall develop a process that ensures inclusive representation on all councils, boards, and commissions; and may choose to add up to three additional persons on any board, commission, or committee to ensure inclusiveness or expertise.
- G. The committee shall prepare and submit its quadrennial report to the Conference Secretary by March 31 for publication in the *Pre-Conference Journal*.
- H. Within 90 days, after the adjournment of Annual Conference all conference boards, committees, commissions, and councils shall meet and elect officers. The bishop shall appoint a convener and a nominating committee for those boards, committees, or commissions that are designated by the *Book of Discipline* to elect their own officers.
- I. Nominations from the floor: The privilege of nominating from the floor shall be reserved for members of the Annual Conference and shall be referred to the Committee on Nominations to ensure that all requirements, guidelines and equality mandates are met.

Rule 14: Conference Committee on Personnel

There shall be a committee on personnel policy and practices which shall consist of a chairperson nominated by the committee on nominations, the Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications, the Conference Treasurer, the Director of Faith Community Formation, the Director of Spiritual Leadership, the Assistant to the Bishop, two lay persons with specific expertise in the field of human relations, personnel, and compensation, and a member designated by each of the following: the Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Pensions, the Board of Medical Benefits, the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Committee on Religion and Race the Conference Board of Laity, and the Cabinet. At least one of the clergy must be serving in a multi-staff appointment. The duties of the Conference Committee on Personnel shall be to establish uniform and equitable policies and practices in the employment and compensation of personnel, in consultation and cooperation with the aforementioned bodies. These policies and practices shall be in accordance with the Social Principles (§¶ 162 A, E, F, G, H and I). The committee shall receive and review the rationale for any new position and be satisfied that existing funding to finance the position is available or appropriate plans to acquire the same are being followed. No member of the committee shall participate in discussions, deliberations or vote on any issue which directly affects any aspect of that member's or that member's immediate family's compensated employment. (§¶ 613.13 as interpreted by Judicial Council Decision 952).

Rule 15: Expectations of Conference Leadership Groups

- A. **Tenure:** Unless *The Book of Discipline* or institutional charters direct otherwise, no clergy or layperson shall serve more than eight consecutive years on any quadrennial council, board, commission, committee, or board of directors or trustees; further, each member shall not be renominated until four years has lapsed.
- B. **Limitation of Membership:** No clergy or layperson shall serve on more than one quadrennial body, provided that this rule does not apply to those committees which function only during sessions of the Annual Conference or to ex-officio members.
- C. **Conflict of Interest:** It is provided that members of committees are to avoid any conflict of interest in their service and therefore, any member who serves on a committee, commission, board or council who has a personal interest in, or is a recipient of a grant, loan or other monetary award to either that member, or to the church she/he serves, which is paid from that committee's disbursements, shall not vote on considerations affecting his or her position and shall abstain from participating in the discussion regarding the same.
- D. **Attendance at Meetings:** Elected members of a council, board, commission, or committee shall forfeit membership when they are absent from two consecutive regular meetings of which they have been duly notified, unless they have notified the chairperson of valid reasons for nonattendance.
- E. **Unless otherwise provided in *The Book of Discipline*,** a vacancy in the membership of a board, council, commission, or committee may be filled, ad-interim, by the board, council, commission or committee, with the approval of the Extended Cabinet for the remainder of the Conference year in which the vacancy occurs. At its next session, the Annual Conference shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term. The respective board, council, commission or committee shall inform the Committee on Nominations of the vacancy and action by the Extended Cabinet.
- F. **Open Meetings:** Unless otherwise provided in *The Book of Discipline*, the meetings of councils, boards, commissions, committees, and boards of directors or trustees shall be open to all members of The United Methodist Church within the conference. This rule does not apply to cabinet meetings. Those planning to attend a stated meeting shall give the chairperson at least a week's notice, so that adequate space can be provided. Persons attending such meetings shall have the right to speak only with the permission of the body but shall not have the right to vote. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall hold executive sessions for the purpose of examining candidates for conference membership or other relationships under its jurisdiction. Boards of trustees or directors may vote to hold executive sessions when it is deemed necessary.

Annual Conference Staff

Rule 16: Extended Cabinet

As defined by the resident Bishop, the Extended Cabinet may include, but is not limited to: the District Superintendents, the Assistant to the Bishop, the Conference Lay Leader, the Director of Forming Spiritual Leaders, Director of Faith Community Formation, Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications, the Executive Director of the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation and the Director of Finance and Administration and Conference Benefits Officer.

Rule 17: Assistant to the Bishop

The resident bishop may appoint a clergy member in full connection to serve as Administrative Assistant to the Bishop. The Bishop's assistant shall be a member of the Cabinet and have the same limit on term of service as District Superintendents. The Administrative Assistant to the Bishop shall serve to fulfill such administrative functions as the bishop shall assign. This position may include working with the Advocacy groups, the Administrative Review Committee, the Conference Committee on Episcopacy and the Episcopal Residence Committee. The position shall be accountable to the bishop and the Conference Personnel Committee.

Rule 18: Director of Spiritual Leadership

The resident bishop may appoint a clergy member in full connection to serve as the Director of Spiritual Leadership. This office is charged with the intentional equipping of the saints for the work of discipleship through the ongoing theological and spiritual formation of clergy and laity in the Conference. Additionally, this office helps sow the Core Value of apprenticeship deep in the soil of the Conference. The Director of Spiritual Leadership is supported by Ministerial Administrative Services and by an Associate Director of Spiritual Leadership, who shall be a lay person. The position shall be accountable to the bishop and the Conference Personnel Committee.

Rule 19: Director of Faith Community Formation

The resident bishop may appoint a clergy member in full connection to serve as the Director of Faith Community Formation. This office will be tasked with the leading and resourcing the creation of vital faith communities. This includes:

- a.) Assisting congregations in measuring their effectiveness and spiritual development in living into the Core Values so churches can be resourced in the areas needed to become perfected in fulfilling God's calling and
- b.) Determining where the fields are ripe for the harvest of disciples so that new congregations can be planted.

The Director will be assisted by an administrative assistant and up to three Associate Directors of Faith Community Formation accountable to the Director. The director shall be accountable to the bishop and the Personnel Committee

Rule 20: Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications

The resident bishop may appoint a clergy member in full connection to serve as Director of Connectional Ministries and Communications. The director shall be accountable to the bishop and the Personnel Committee. The director shall exercise oversight and coordination to the conference Connectional Ministries staff, representatives of the Mississippi Partnerships, and work with the conference Vital Congregations Committee, the district staff, and local churches to promote relationships of ministry, service, and mission between and among local congregations for the fulfillment of the primary task of local churches, which is the making of disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, as embodied in the Core Values.

Conference Finances & Property

Rule 21: Fiscal and Administrative Policies

The fiscal and administrative year of The Mississippi Annual Conference shall be from January 1 to December 31. The conference Council on Finance and Administration shall develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the Annual Conference as set forth in Par. 611.1, *The Book of Discipline*.

Rule 22: Capital Funds Campaigns

There shall be only one Annual Conference capital funds campaign during two consecutive quadrennia. The campaign may begin and end at any time during the eight-year period. No pay period may begin sooner than three years from the end of the previously designated pay period.

Rule 23: Advanced Notice of Proposed Action

When the board of trustees or directors of any institution belonging to, related to, or governed by The Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, whether in whole or in part, or any persons or group of persons desiring the approval of authority of The Mississippi Annual Conference on any matter or proposed action concerning the properties or funds of the Annual Conference or institution, the trustees, directors, or persons shall:

- A. File a written petition and resolution stating concisely the action that is desired and the reasons therefore, no less than sixty (60) days prior to the opening session of the Annual Conference. Copies shall be filed with the following:
 1. The presiding bishop,
 2. Conference secretary,
 3. Chairperson of the Council on Finance and Administration; and
 4. Chairperson of the related board or committee which has a responsibility and interest in the proposed action.
- B. A true copy of the proposal and resolution shall be submitted to the Conference Secretary by March 31 to be printed in the *Pre-Conference Journal* and distributed to the members of the Annual Conference.
- C. No conference action shall be taken on any proposal concerning properties or funds of the Annual Conference or any of its institutions unless advance notice is given.

Rule 24: Sale of Conference Property

When Annual Conference abandoned or closed property is sold, the mineral rights shall be reserved for the Conference with any net proceeds received to be used by the Forming Faith Communities Group.

The Book of Discipline Par. 2548.3 indicates that the conference trustees are ultimately responsible for the disposition of any abandoned local church property within the bounds of the Annual Conference.

Rule 25: Trustees/Directors of Conference Institutions

All trustees or directors of institutions related to or belonging to The Mississippi Annual Conference shall be elected by the Annual Conference upon nominations made in accordance with the pertinent paragraphs of *The Book of Discipline*. When the election is otherwise provided for in the charter of an institution, this rule shall not apply; in which case, however, the names of the trustees shall be submitted to The Mississippi Annual Conference for ratification. The Camping Ministries Committee, in consultation with the trustees/directors of conference camping facilities, shall serve in an advisory capacity to the conference nominating process for selecting trustees/directors of those institutions.

District Matters

Rule 26: Number of Districts

There shall be eleven (11) districts in The Mississippi Annual Conference. The districts shall organize themselves according to the current *Book of Discipline*.

Amendments

Rule 27: Standing Rules may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at the Annual Conference. During a session of the Annual Conference, all proposed changes to the Standing Rules must be submitted in writing to the Conference Secretary for referral to the Committee on Standing Rules for a response following a period of at least twelve (12) hours for committee deliberation. The Committee on Standing Rules will then present any proposed amendments to the Annual Conference with or without concurrence.

SECTION VIII

CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENTS

SECTION VIII

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

2016 General Conference The United Methodist Church

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – I

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 746 Yes, 56 No (Calendar Item 121, DCA p. 2106). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the *2012 Book of Discipline*, Division One, add a new paragraph between current ¶¶ 5 and 6: “As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The United Methodist Church recognizes it is contrary to Scripture and to logic to say that God is male or female, as maleness and femaleness are characteristics of human bodies and cultures, not characteristics of the divine. The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women’s and girl’s equality and well-being.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, this would become the new ¶6, and the current ¶¶ 6-61 would be renumbered as ¶¶ 7-62.

Rationale: (New ¶ 6) The Constitution contains a paragraph on racial justice but not one on gender justice. The language of this petition is parallel to the language of Article 5 on racial justice already in our Constitution. It is an affirmation that, as part of our core foundational beliefs, this church will forever stand against any actions, organizations or individuals that discriminate or dehumanize women and girls anywhere on this planet.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – II

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 509 Yes, 242 No (Calendar Item 429, DCA p. 2212). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the *2012 Book of Discipline*, Division One, ¶4, Article IV, amend by deletion and addition as follows:

After “all persons” delete “without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition.” After “because of race, color, national origin,” delete “status,” and add “ability.” At the end of the paragraph, add “nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 4 would read:

The United Methodist Church is part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, ability, or economic condition, nor shall any member

be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.

Rationale: (¶ 4) Adding “gender” (meaning male and female) to the Constitution affirms and protects The United Methodist Church’s commitment to gender equity throughout our worldwide connection. “Gender” is the disciplinary term for fair treatment of women and men (e.g., ¶16). The addition of the proposed final clause allows gender-specific groups like United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – III

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 767 Yes, 22 No (Calendar Item 111, DCA pp. 2105). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the *2012 Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, Article III, (*2016 Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, Article III) amend by addition as follows:

After the first sentence, add, “Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 34 would read:

The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its jurisdictional or central conference in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional or central conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the jurisdictional or central conference. The additional delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conferences may act as reserve delegates to the General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference.

Rationale: (¶ 34) The provision in ¶ 13, Article I, 2, “Delegates shall be elected in a fair and open process by the annual conferences,” is unduly vague. The addition of this one sentence to paragraph 34 of *The Book of Discipline* helps clarify that General Conference delegates shall be elected by the body of annual conference instead of simply being appointed by the bishop. Bishops appointing delegates without delegates being properly elected has been a practice in some central conferences.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – IV

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 621 Yes, 15 No (Calendar Item 468, DCA p. 2217). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the *2012 Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 46, Article I, amend by addition, as follows:

To the end of the paragraph, add “provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 46 would read:

The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

Rationale: (§ 46) As is the case for the jurisdictions, episcopal elections in the central conferences should be held in the regular sessions of those conferences, except when unexpected vacancies occur because of the death or early retirement of one or more bishops.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – V

On May 17, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 715 Yes, 79 No (Calendar Item 446, DCA p. 2214). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, § 50, Article VI, amend by addition, as follows:

After the last paragraph, add “These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, § 50 would read:

The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined.⁹⁴

The jurisdictional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference.

These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.

Rationale: (§ 50) Judicial Decision 475 ruled unconstitutional the Council of Bishops holding its individual members accountable for their work, referencing § 50 of the Constitution. This legislation follows Judicial Decision 1275 requirement of a legislative resolution from General Conference so the Council of Bishops may provide oversight of its members.

2017 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference Constitutional Amendment Ballot

(Please Mark Yes OR No)

The Book of Discipline stipulates that only LAY MEMBERS and CLERGY IN FULL CONNECTION (Elders and Deacons) can vote on Constitutional Amendments. These Constitutional Amendments to the *Discipline* were voted on at General Conference last May 2016, and this year will be voted on by the members of the annual conferences across the denomination. **They cannot be amended.** We will vote and our vote tallies will be forwarded to the General Church and put together with all the other vote tallies to determine whether the amendments pass or fail.

Proposed Amendment I: (New ¶ 6) Gender Justice

YES, I approve this amendment. NO, I do not approve this amendment.

Proposed Amendment II: (¶ 4) Gender Equality

YES, I approve this amendment. NO, I do not approve this amendment.

Proposed Amendment III: (¶ 34) General Conference Delegation Election

YES, I approve this amendment. NO, I do not approve this amendment.

Proposed Amendment IV: (¶ 46) Episcopal Elections In Central Conferences

YES, I approve this amendment. NO, I do not approve this amendment.

Proposed Amendment V: (¶ 50) Episcopal Oversight And Accountability

YES, I approve this amendment. NO, I do not approve this amendment.

NAME _____ STATUS: (Please Circle) LAY FE or FD

