



Following Loving Sharing

ARKANSAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JUNE 18-20, 2025
HOT SPRINGS, AR

Acts 2:43-47



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2025 Annual Conference

*June 18 - 20, 2025
Hot Springs, Arkansas*

Pre-Conference Journal

Presiding Bishop
Bishop Laura Merrill



LAURA MERRILL
RESIDENT BISHOP

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
THE ARKANSAS CONFERENCE

March 24, 2025

Friends in Christ:

Preparations are underway for the 2025 Arkansas Annual Conference! Our conference session will be held June 18-20 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. Registration tables will open the day before we begin, Tuesday, June 17, from 4:00-8:00pm. Rather than meeting in the Arena, this year we will gather in Horner Hall, on the other end of the convention center (nearer downtown and the Hot Springs Hotel). Work will begin at 9:00 Wednesday morning with the Clergy Session in Room 209. The Laity Session will start at 10:00am in Horner Hall. We are scheduled to adjourn on Friday afternoon.

This year's theme, #FollowingLovingSharing, reflects the new Arkansas Conference mission and vision, stating that Arkansas United Methodists are working together to build vital faith communities by following Jesus, loving people, and sharing grace. Our reporting and celebrations will expand on this statement, reflecting our theme scripture, Acts 2:43-47.

One of the high points of annual conference is always worship. The first day of this year's conference will feature the Service of Ordination and Commissioning in Horner Hall at 5:30pm. We will hold a special Juneteenth Celebration on Thursday morning and a Retiree Recognition service to honor our retiring brothers and sisters in ministry. Worship on Friday will include our Service of Remembrance, with Rev. Jaimie Alexander preaching, where we will also celebrate Holy Communion together. Finally, we will conclude our time with the fixing of pastoral appointments for the coming year.

A summary schedule for the annual conference session can be found on the Arkansas Conference website, along with important forms and information regarding special events and hotel options.

I look forward to our time together and give thanks to God for your faithfulness and your service to the church!

Grace and peace,

Laura Merrill
Bishop

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General Information

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE:

Lodging

See page 6 for a complete listing of hotels near the Hot Springs Convention Center.

Multimedia Presentations

If you intend to use electronic media in your report or presentation to the Annual Conference, contact the ARUMC Communications team at 501-324-8000 or communications@arumc.org to discuss your needs. **All files and documents MUST be received by June 10 to allow adequate time for all materials to be tested before Annual Conference begins.**

DURING YOUR STAY:

Convention Center Phone Numbers

Manager on Duty & After Hours Contact: Pauline Howard, 501-520-9811

Evening or Emergency Contacts

- Emergency (Fire, Police or Medical) 911
- National Park Medical Center (501) 321-1000 (closest)
- CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs Hospital (501) 552-3000
- Melissa Sanders, Registrar (501) 993-3503 mobile
- Ulysses Washington, Host DS (479) 719-1588

Called Meeting Space

A meeting room is available for called meetings of Conference Boards and Committees. The room is located off the main hallway in the Convention Center.

Concessions

Concessions will be open during these hours:

- Wednesday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Thursday & Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Announcement Requests

All announcement requests for June 18-20 should be sent to the following email address: announcements@arumc.org

We are not able to accept paper or verbal announcements. Please understand that not all announcements can be accommodated due to time constraints. However, we will prioritize sharing imperative information to the best of our ability.

Photocopy Service

While conference staff members are unable to provide copy services, you might be able to make a small number of copies in your hotel's business center.

The Conference Digest

Daily recaps will be provided on the conference website (arumc.org/news). This information may be useful as you prepare your report for your local congregation.

Nursing Mothers Space

We will have space available for any nursing mothers to have some private time with their babies. There will be signs & a map to guide you.

WHEN YOU RETURN HOME:

Evaluation

If you have provided an email address, you will receive an evaluation form to be completed online. If you do not have email, call (501) 324-8035 and an evaluation form will be mailed to you to complete and return.

Hotel Information

Courtyard by Marriott

200 Marriott Court
Hot Springs, AR 71913
501-651-4366

Complimentary on-site parking, Free High Speed Internet, Fitness Center, Pool, Microwave Oven, Mini Fridge
King or 2 Queen: \$132 + tax

Double Tree by Hilton

4813 Central Avenue
Hot Springs, AR 71913
501-525-1391

Mini Refrigerator, Microwave, Iron & Ironing Board, Hair Dryer, Safe, Free Parking, Free WiFi

Tuesday - Thursday
King Standard: \$159.00 + tax
Double Queen Standard \$139.00 + tax
Friday
King Standard: \$279.00 + tax
Double Queen Standard: \$259.00 + tax

Embassy Suites Hotel & Spa

400 Convention Blvd.
Hot Springs, AR 71901
501-624-9200

Amenities: Suites, Complimentary Breakfast, Manager's Reception, Spa, Indoor Pool, Fitness Center, Free Parking

Code: UMC
Single: \$161 + tax
Double: \$171 + tax
Triple: \$181 + tax
Quad: \$191 + tax

Hotel Hot Springs

305 Malvern Ave.
Hot Springs, AR 71907
877-623-6697

Amenities: Renovated and Remodeled Guest Rooms, Refrigerator & Microwave in all Rooms, Complimentary Breakfast available 6:30 am to 9:30 am, The Inside Track and Lounge, Shuttle Service to Popular attractions within City Limits, Complimentary Wi-Fi.

Single Occupancy: \$129 + tax
Double Occupancy: \$139 + tax
Triple Occupancy: \$149 + tax
Quad Occupancy: \$159 + tax

LaQuinta Inn & Suites

4253 Central Avenue
Hot Springs, AR 71913
(501) 624-5551

Complimentary Breakfast, Parking & WiFi, Fitness Center, Indoor Pool, Business Center, Sundries, Laundry Facilities

Single: \$99 + tax
Double: \$99 + tax

TownePlace Suites by Marriott

120 Desai Patel Ct.
Hot Springs, AR 71913

Complimentary WIFI & Parking Hot Breakfast Buffet, Refrigerator/freezer, Stove top, Microwave, Utensils & Dishes Included

King Suite: \$139 + tax
Double Queen: \$149 + tax

Voting Rights

Who Can Vote When

Your name tag indicates your voting status at Plenary Sessions. Please wear your name tag in a visible location during these sessions. All lay and clergy members of Annual Conference have the right to speak on all matters before the conference.

Voting Privileges are as follows:

	Recommendations & Conference Business	Election for Clergy Delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conference	Elections for Lay Delegates to the Jurisdictional and General Conferences	Constitutional Amendments	Matters of Ordination, Character and Conference Relations of Clergy
Clergy Members in full connection (§602.1a)	●	●		●	●
Provisional Clergy Members who have completed all educational requirements (§602.1b)	●	●			
Associate Clergy Members (§602.1 c errata)	●	●			*
Affiliate Clergy Members (§602.1 c errata)	●				
Full and Part-time Local Pastors under appointment to a pastoral charge who have not completed Course of Study or an M.Div. degree (§602.1 d)*	●				*
Local Pastors who have complete Course of Study or an M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election (§602.1 d errata)	●	●			*
Lay Members: Elected Members representing congregations, Members by Virtue of Office, At-large Members as elected by districts (§32), Youth Members (§602.4)	●		●	●	»
Alternate Lay Members: When seated in place of Lay Member (§602.7)**	●		●	●	
Ordained Clergy or Provisional Members from other Annual Conference and other Methodist Denominations (§346.1)***	○				
Elders or Ordained Clergy from Other Denominations serving under appointment within the Annual Conference (§346.2)	○				
Retired Local Pastors (§320.5)	○				
Missionaries regularly assigned by the GBGM in nations other than the US & Certified Lay Missionaries from nations other than the US serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference (§602.9)	○				
Conference Chancellor if not otherwise a voting member (§602.10)	○				
Visitors , with majority approval of Annual Conference Members	○				

● Voting Privilege

○ Voice without vote

*If also a member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they may vote at Clergy Session

»If also a lay member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and/or Committee on Investigation (§602.6)

*No local pastor shall be eligible as a lay member or alternate (§251.2)

**Please remember that only alternate members elected by their charge conference may be seated at annual conference (§251.2)

***They may be accorded the right to vote if certified by the BOM that their credentials are at least equal to United Methodists elders (§346.2)



Revised May 2024

Parliamentary Procedure for Annual Conference

The following motions are listed in order of their rank. You may introduce a motion listed ABOVE the motion being considered. To be recognized, stand at a microphone and say, “Bishop, please.”

TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	Interrupt Speaker?	Second Needed?	Motion Debatable?	Can Amend?	Vote Needed?
Recess	“I move we recess until”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Complain – noise, etc.	“Point of privilege”	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules

Subsidiary Motions Modify or Dispose of Main Motion

Suspend debate without calling for vote	“I move we table”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	“I move the previous question”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3 Majority
Limit debate	“I move the debate be limited to”	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3 Majority
Ask for vote by actual count	“I call for division of the house”	No	No	No	No	None
Postpone to specific time	“I move we postpone this matter until”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Have a matter studied further	“I move we refer this matter to committee”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	“I move to amend by adding” or “I move to strike ___ and add”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Substitute a motion	“I move to substitute”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Incidental Motions Grow Out of Business the Group Is Considering

Correct error in parliamentary procedure	“Point of order”	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
Object to ruling of chair	“I appeal the chair’s decision”	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Obtain advice on parliamentary procedure	“I raise a parliamentary inquiry”	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
Request information	“Point of information”	Yes	No	No	No	None
Withdraw motion	“I withdraw the motion”	No	No	No	No	Majority

Main Motions are Tools Used to Introduce New Business

Introduce business	“I move that”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Take up matter previously tabled	“I move that we take from the table”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider matter previously voted	“I move we reconsider”	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Strike motion previously passed	“I move we rescind the motion calling for”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Annual Conference Agenda

June 18 - 20, 2025

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

4:00 p.m. Registration Opens

5:30 p.m. Ordination Rehearsal in
Horner Hall

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

7:30 a.m. Registration Opens

9:00 a.m. Clergy Session in
Rooms 207 -209

10:00 a.m. Laity Session in Horner Hall

11:15 a.m. Break

11:30 a.m. Opening Business Session

12:00 p.m. Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. Business Session

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Episcopal Address

3:30 p.m. Business Session

4:00 p.m. Break

5:30 p.m. Ordination in Horner Hall

Thursday, June 19, 2025

8:00 a.m. Juneteenth Celebration
and Worship

9:00 a.m. Laity and Youth Addresses

9:30 a.m. Business Session

10:15 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. Learning Session #1
with Dr. Ron Bell

11:15 a.m. Business Session

11:30 a.m. BOM Report

12:00 p.m. Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. Retirement Recognition

2:00 p.m. Constitutional Amendments

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Learning Session #2
with Dr. Ron Bell

3:45 p.m. Break

4:00 p.m. Business Session

Friday, June 20, 2025

8:00 a.m. Worship

8:15 a.m. Business Session

9:45 a.m. Break

10:00 a.m. Business Session

12:00 p.m. Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. Celebration of Life Service

2:30 p.m. Break

2:45 p.m. Business Session

3:30 p.m. Break

3:45 p.m. Setting of Appointments and
Sending Forth

*Agenda is subject to change.

2025 Annual Conference Special Events

Tuesday, June 17

5:00-7:00 p.m. Hendrix College Alumni and Friends Reception Free
 501 Prime, 215 E. Grand Avenue, Hot Springs
 Contact: J.J. Whitney @ 501-450-1358

Wednesday, June 18

12:00 p.m. United Women in Faith \$20.00
 First UMC, 1100 Central Ave., Hot Springs, AR
 Contact: Betty Cook (870) 942-6461, jbcCook@windstream.net
 Transportation from the Convention Center will be provided

Thursday, June 19

7:00 a.m. SMU Perkins School of Theology Alumni, Students & Friends Self-pay
 Salon Room, Embassy Suites, 400 Convention Center Blvd., Hot Springs
 <https://perkins-oep-smu.nbsstore.net/arkansas-alumni-friends-breakfast-2025>

12:00 p.m. Retiree Luncheon free for RC/SS
 Rooms 207-209, Hot Springs Convention Center \$20 for all others
 Contact: Wendy Brunson Daniels (501) 324-8029

12:00 p.m. Arkansas Conference Clergy Women's Luncheon \$30.00
 Grand Avenue UMC, 841 Quapaw Avenue, Hot Springs
 Contact: Natasha Murray, natasha.murray@arumc.org

6:30 p.m. AR Black Methodists for Church Renewal Dr. Negail Riley Dinner \$50.00
 Rooms 207-209, Hot Springs Convention Center
 Contact: Maxine Allen, mallen@arumc.org

8:00 p.m. Young Adult Gathering for Clergy and Laity Free
 Join us for a dessert bar and fellowship while learning about
 Ministry opportunities for young adults!
 First UMC, 1100 Central Ave., Hot Springs, AR
 Contact: Miranda Hornsby, miranda.hornsby@arumc.org

Friday, June 20

7:00 a.m. Church & Society Breakfast and Panel \$15.00
 Grand Avenue UMC, 841 Quapaw Avenue, Hot Springs
 Contact: Betsy Singleton Snyder, betsy.snyder@arumc.org

2025 Proposed Arkansas Annual Conference Session Rules

Opening Motions

The following will be adopted at the opening Business Session of the 2025 Annual Conference by majority vote of members present and voting:

1. Arkansas Annual Conference Session Rules
2. The Bar of the Conference
3. The Annual Conference Session Agenda
4. The Consent Calendar, as printed in the pre-conference journal

Participation of Annual Conference Members in the 2025 Annual Conference

1. Members of the Annual Conference, with the right to vote, will include all:
 - a. clergy members in full connection;
 - b. provisional, associate and affiliate clergy members;
 - c. full and part-time local pastors under appointment;
 - d. elders or ordained clergy from other denominations serving under appointment within the Arkansas Conference;
 - e. laity who are members of Annual Conference by charge conference vote, by virtue of Discipline or Conference Standing Rules, youth members and those elected at District Conferences to serve as lay-clergy equalization at-large members;
 - f. alternate lay members by charge conference vote when seated in place of the lay member.
2. The bar of the 2024 Annual Conference shall be set by the conference secretary.

Consideration of Conference Matters

1. Roberts Rules of Order 12th Edition shall be the procedural authority for the business sessions of the Annual Conference when not in conflict with Arkansas Conference Session Rules or The 2020-2024 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church.
2. Rules of Order for Motions, Legislation and Reports
 - a. Debate shall be limited to four two-minute speeches for the motion, legislation or report and four two-minute speeches against. This excludes persons inquiring about points of order or asking questions of clarification. A timer shall be used to measure debate at the discretion of the Chair.
 - b. The presenter of the motion, legislation, or report may offer a one minute concluding remark at the end of debate, before the matter is put to a vote.
 - c. The presentation of the motion, legislation or report by a Conference Agency shall not be considered a speech in favor.
3. Rules of Order for Petitions and Resolutions
 - a. Debate on each resolution or petition shall be limited to four two-minute speeches for the motion or resolution and four two-minute speeches against. This excludes persons inquiring about points of order or asking questions of clarification. A timer shall be used to measure debate at the discretion of the Chair.
 - b. The presentation of the petition or resolution may last four minutes and shall be
 - c. considered a speech in favor.
 - d. The presenter of the petition or resolution may offer a one minute concluding remark at the end of debate, before the matter is put to a vote.
 - e. Amendments and substitutions to petitions and resolutions will not be considered by the Annual Conference.
 - f. During debate of petitions and resolutions, other incidental and subsidiary motions will not be considered, with the exceptions of motions to suspend the rules, inquiries about points of order, and questions for clarification.
4. All motions made on the floor of Annual Conference shall be legibly written on forms supplied by

the Conference Secretary and shall be in the hands of the Conference Secretary and Presiding Officer before any action or vote can be taken by the Conference.

5. Points of Order may be raised by any member of the annual conference, who must first cite the Standing or Session Rule involved and then state the point as briefly and concisely as possible.

Motions Involving Expenditures

Any proposal submitted to the Annual Conference which involves the expenditure of funds not included in the Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) report shall be referred for advice and recommendation to the Council on Finance and Administration. The CF&A will study the proposal and report back to the Annual Conference regarding the source of funding, the impact on the Conference budget, and CF&A's concurrence or non-concurrence. No new request for unbudgeted expenditures shall be considered on the last day of the conference.

Voting

Votes will be taken in the manner prescribed by the presiding bishop and shall be valid only if cast in the prescribed manner designated by the presiding bishop.

Tellers

Tellers shall be selected in a manner to be determined by the Conference Secretary.

Action Reports and Budgets

Council on Finance and Administration

Tithe Revenues

The Arkansas Annual Conference prepares its spending plan based on projected revenues of a 10% tithe of the aggregate income of our local congregations as reported on lines 52 and 54 of Table III. This enables local churches to use 90% of their collections for their local church ministries.

52. Total Income for annual spending plan (as of 12/31/2024) \$70,400,170.00

54. Total Income from connectional/institutional sources outside the local church \$776,044.00

Total Revenue \$71,176,214.00

10.0% Spending Plan Maximum \$7,117,621.00

Spending Plan Overview

The budget, or spending plan, cap for the fiscal year 2025-2026 is \$7,117,621 based on 2024 revenue figures. The Arkansas Annual Conference's total spending plan for the 2025-2026 year is \$xxx? which is xx.x% of the maximum spending plan.

The following priorities have guided the Cabinet and Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) in making strategic stewardship decisions in order to shape the 2025-2026 Arkansas Conference Spending Plan:

1. We will continue to ensure the financial stability of the Arkansas Conference by strictly adhering to the principles and promises of the Arkansas Tithe Initiative.
2. We will craft a conference spending plan that can be adapted to a rapidly changing landscape.
3. We will support districts, district superintendents, district administrators and district strategy teams as the primary means for connection and missional strategy development and implementation.
4. We will empower local congregations through resources, training and programs that enable new and existing congregations to become more vital in making disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped and sent to transform lives, communities and the world (e.g., Transition Seminar; cohorts; consultation; workshops; etc.).
5. We will offer ministries that connect congregations to transform lives, communities and the world (e.g., 200,000 Reasons; disaster response; campus ministry; children and youth, etc.).
6. We will provide services and carry out tasks for which the annual conference is uniquely responsible (e.g., district superintendents and district offices; communication; Culture of Call; Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Trustees; Board of Pensions; administrative services; Annual Conference Session, etc.).
7. We will make building healthy relationships a priority.

1 I. Spending Plan

2
3 A. In Accordance with ¶615.4 of the 2016 Book of Discipline

General Apportionment	Amount	Percentage of Total
World Service	\$ 850,494.00	45.64%
Ministerial Education	\$ 220,637.00	11.84%
Ministerial Scholarships	\$ 73,546.00	3.95%
Black College	\$ 117,347.00	6.30%
Africa University Fund	\$ 26,262.00	1.41%
Episcopal Fund	\$ 419,222.00	22.50%
General Administration	\$ 143,739.00	7.71%
Interdenominational Cooperation	\$ 12,174.00	0.65%
Subtotal General Apportionments	1,863,421.00	100.00%

15
16
17 General apportionments are paid as a percentage of the tithes received by the Arkansas Annual
18 Conference. Funds received in excess of the anticipated collection rate will be distributed to GCFA
19 on the existing pro rata basis.

20 B. Approved Solicitations –

- 21 1. Board of Trustees of Mount Eagle Christian Center
- 22 2. Board of Trustees of Camp Tanako, Inc.
- 23 3. Camp Aldersgate, Inc.
- 24 4. The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
- 25 5. The Wesley Foundations to raise additional funds through the “Friends of Wesley” program
26 (under the guidelines already approved by the Conference Board of Higher Education)
- 27 6. Methodist Family Health – Additionally, the second and third Sundays in December be
28 designated for the receiving the Methodist Family Health Annual Christmas Offering
- 29 7. Hendrix College
- 30 8. Philander Smith College
- 31 9. U.M. Historical Society
- 32 10. Volunteers in Mission
- 33 11. Shoal Creek and Bear Creek camps be allowed to raise funds in any district in which the
34 district has given its permission
- 35 12. Methodist Village Nursing Home of Arkansas
- 36 13. Lydia Patterson Institute
- 37 14. 200,000 Reasons
- 38 15. Project Transformation Arkansas

39 C. Advance Specials - We recommend General and Conference Advance Specials to local
40 churches for firsthand relationships with mission projects and involvement in mission.

41 D. Special Days (with offerings)

- 42 1. Peace with Justice – Second Sunday after Pentecost
- 43 2. Native American Ministries Sunday – Second Sunday after Easter
- 44 3. Human Relations Day – During Epiphany on the Sunday before the observance of Martin
45 Luther King’s birthday
- 46 4. UMCOR Sunday – Fourth Sunday in Lent
- 47 5. World Communion Sunday – First Sunday in October
- 48 6. United Methodist Student Day – Sunday after Thanksgiving

49
50

II. Conference and District Tithe	1
All churches shall report the following information to the Center for Administrative Services by the	2
10th of the month for the prior month either online or by mail.	3
A. Total gross income for previous month including designated giving \$_____	4
B. Less income for capital campaigns	5
C. Less income for memorials and endowments	6
D. Less income from sale of church-owned real estate	7
E. Less income from tuition-based services	8
F. Less direct costs of fund-raising	9
G. Less income designated for pass-through/outreach ministries	10
H. Less Paycheck Protection Program loans	11
I. Adjusted gross income = Line A minus B,C,D,E,F,G,H	12
J. Conference Monthly ministry tithe = Line I X 10% = \$_____	13
	14
III. Tithe Instructions	15
Line A —Total gross income for previous month (including designated giving and all other funds)	16
Enter the total amount of ALL revenue for the previous month. Total income includes ALL income	17
received by the church (offerings, pledged giving, unpledged giving, donations, building use fees,	18
income from fundraisers, designated giving, interest from investments, capital campaign income,	19
preschool income, bequests, memorials, etc.)	20
Line B —Exclude income for capital campaigns (this does not include income for lines of credit	21
(LOC) or mortgage payments)	22
Capital campaign income is money received from campaigns that are defined as significant, short-	23
term fundraising efforts for a stated project, such as a building, debt retirement, or special project.	24
The campaign usually lasts for a short time, generally less than a year; however, the donations	25
to the campaign may span several years. Stated capital campaigns should not be confused with	26
trustee account donations, building maintenance donations or other donations or capital needs.	27
Income for regular monthly LOC or mortgage payment is not capital campaign income.	28
Line C —Exclude income for memorials and endowments	29
Gifts received to fund memorials and endowments should be excluded here. Income from	30
endowment earnings should not be excluded.	31
Line D —Exclude income from sale of church-owned real estate (not used for operating expenses)	32
Income from the sale of church owned property (such as a parsonage) to be used for future capital	33
expenses should be excluded here.	34
Line E —Exclude income from tuition-based services (preschool, daycare, etc.)	35
Tuition-based services income is any payment made to the church for services provided at the	36
church such as preschool, childcare, elder care, or other similar services. Normally such services	37
are budgeted separately, often by a non-profit organization affiliated with the church.	38
Line F —Exclude direct costs of fund-raising	39
Direct costs of fund-raising are those costs paid to raise funds for the church, but not the income	40
raised. Typical examples include: 1) the discounted purchase price of gift cards for future resale,	41
2) the cost of food and supplies for a fund-raising dinner and 3) a consulting fee to direct a fund-	42
raising activity.	43
Line G —Exclude income for pass-through/outreach ministries	44
Pass-through funds are monies received for projects or events outside the local church. From time	45
to time churches will act as a collection agent for special events, such as disaster relief, community	46
homeless shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens or mission trips. Monies are sometimes given for	47
field missionary support or mission focused activities including materials and supplies for mission	48
trips and mission outposts. Any donations given for outreach ministries or causes should be	49
excluded.	50

- 1 **Line H**—Exclude funds received from the Paycheck Protection Program loan
- 2
- 3 IV. District Superintendents
- 4 A. Salary will be no more than \$118,452 (annually).
- 5 B. This figure shall include salary, utilities and appurtenances, and other professional
- 6 reimbursable expenses.
- 7 1. We recommend that business travel by the District Superintendents (DS) shall be
- 8 reimbursed at the maximum IRS allowable rate. This will be funded by the DS vouchered
- 9 travel expense fund of \$60,000 for room, board, and travel expense.
- 10
- 11 V. Pastor's Moving Expense - Pastor's Moving Expense (intended to pay for housing relocation) -
- 12 conditions of eligibility are as follows:
- 13 A. The following persons shall be eligible
- 14 1. Full Time Pastors
- 15 2. Student local pastors after first appointment
- 16 3. District Superintendents
- 17 4. Persons in Conference connectional positions
- 18 5. Retiring pastors
- 19 6. Persons on disability leave
- 20 7. Seminarian from place of residence to parsonage at first appointment
- 21 8. Any other person recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry or Appointive
- 22 Cabinet
- 23 9. Only one moving expense paid per pastor per year
- 24 B. The following amounts shall be paid:
- 25 1. **Up to \$4,000.00 of actual expense reimbursed (maximum 2 stops)**
- 26 2. **Clergy couples living in the same residence are eligible for an additional \$2,000 and**
- 27 **1 additional stop.**
- 28 3. **Monies shall be paid by the Conference Treasurer upon presentation of a voucher**
- 29 **signed by the sending DS.**
- 30 4. The sending DS shall not submit a voucher for moving expenses unless the parsonage is
- 31 left clean and meets the approval of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Chairperson.
- 32 Should the DS and the chairperson of the S/PRC determine that the parsonage will
- 33 require cleaning and/or repair due to abuse and/or negligence on the part of the
- 34 departing pastoral family the DS may direct that the pastor's moving reimbursement be
- 35 reduced by the amount required for such cleaning/repair and that this amount be paid
- 36 to the church. In no case shall the amount paid to the church be greater than the total to
- 37 which the pastor would otherwise be entitled for moving expense reimbursement.
- 38 5. On recommendation from the Cabinet, the CFA may disburse funds for pastors
- 39 transitioning out of the ministry.
- 40 6. **Special circumstances may be considered by the CFA Executive Committee upon**
- 41 **recommendation by the Appointive Cabinet.**
- 42
- 43 VI. Other Recommendations
- 44 A. No honorariums for the Annual Conference will be paid to persons living within the bounds
- 45 of the Arkansas Annual Conference.
- 46 B. Travel expenses will be reimbursed based on the Arkansas Annual Conference
- 47 reimbursement policy.
- 48 C. When any Conference staff personnel travels at the request of a Conference agency for
- 49 other than normal representative or liaising purposes, the expenses of such travel shall be
- 50 borne by the requesting agency.

D. Reimbursement for Conference Travel shall be:	1
1. 100% of the IRS Standard Mileage Rate for all volunteers	2
2. 100% of the IRS Standard Mileage Rate for all Conference employees	3
E. Retired and disabled ministers may be paid \$80 per diem for days they attend Annual Conference with a maximum of \$240.00 per household.	4
F. The Conference may direct the Conference Treasurer to withhold dispersal of funds to any agency, institution, or organization until the CFA has received the most recent audit of a Public Accountant or Certified Public Accountant from the agency or institution or organization and that audit has been found satisfactory by the Audit Committee of the CFA.	6
G. The undesignated net assets are not a budgeted item. This is used to maintain operating cash flow for the conference.	10
H. If the undesignated net assets exceed 10% of the Arkansas Annual Conference Spending Plan excluding Pension & Benefits, then the CFA's Executive Committee shall have the authority to disburse those funds with first priority given to paying the Conference's General and Jurisdictional Apportionments.	12
I. All interest earnings on Conference monies shall be credited to the undesignated net assets.	16
J. The Conference acknowledges the need for maintaining monies to be used as needed for the stabilization of the accounts of New Church Development Fund, General & Jurisdictional Conference Delegate Expense Fund, DS Funds, and the Equitable Compensation Support Fund.	18
K. Balances remaining at the end of the budget year shall be transferred to the undesignated net assets.	22
L. The Conference provides fidelity bonding insurance in compliance with ¶ 618 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.	24
M. The following is to be adopted as the guide for the care and investment of all Conference Funds: (¶1613.5 the 2016 Book of Discipline).	26
1. The Conference Treasurer is charged with the responsibility for managing all Conference Funds. It is the purpose of this investment policy to establish parameters within which the monies of the Conference will be managed.	28
2. The objective of the investment of Conference monies is to provide:	31
a. Preservation of capital.	32
b. Liquidity – to meet anticipated and unanticipated future needs.	33
c. Maximization of income – while simultaneously ensuring preservation of capital and liquidity.	34
d. Compliance with the Social Principles and the Discipline of the UMC.	36
3. To accomplish this objective:	37
a. Funds should be deposited in AR institutions in good standing.	38
b. Securities:	39
1. Direct obligation of United States Government Treasury Bills and Notes	40
2. FDIC insured Certificate of Deposits, Time Deposits, interest-bearing accounts	41
4. Funds should be deposited on a short-term basis, up to one-year when all objectives can be satisfied.	42
5. This policy is intended to be flexible in its application in order to meet changing economic conditions. Investments made for longer than 90 days may be made after the approval of the Executive Committee of the CFA. While income desirable, the primary emphasis is to be on the maintenance of adequate funds and the avoidance of speculative investments	44
6. This policy may be amended to meet changing conditions and to fulfill the needs of the Arkansas Annual Conference	49

- 1 N. The Conference gives the CFA the authority to fund extraordinary needs relating to the
2 life and ministry of the Arkansas Conference. These needs shall be funded from available
3 unrestricted funds. This authority shall not be used to replace or circumvent normal funding
4 procedures of the Arkansas Conference.
5 O. When the Arkansas Annual Conference adopts a program or ministry that is not within
6 the existing Conference structure, the Conference shall specify lines of amenability and
7 accountability so as to provide for budgeting, evaluation and audit.
8

9 VII. Administrative Concerns:

- 10 A. All funding requests shall be presented to the appropriate board or agency of the
11 Conference for recommendation before presentation to the CFA. All persons authorized to
12 vouch for funds shall be identified by agencies and approved by the Cabinet prior to the
13 dispensing of funds.
14 B. The final time for receiving Conference tithe shall be close of business on June 30th.
15 C. Each charge shall declare all ministerial support. The report shall include remuneration
16 for compensation for travel, utility expense, insurance, Social Security, and all additional
17 compensation paid to the pastor or on behalf of the pastor.
18 D. When any agency's total budgeted funds have been expended; no further expenditures will
19 be authorized without CFA approval.
20 E. All benevolent, connectional, and pension funds shall be sent to the Center for
21 Administrative Services, P.O. Box 2456, Batesville, AR 72503, except for the following,
22 which shall be sent as designated:
23 1. UM Children's Home Christmas offering and special gifts to the UM Children's Home,
24 P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock, AR 72215.
25

26 Rev. Ken Pearson – President
27 Dr. Sandy Smith – Vice-President
28 Mr. – Secretary
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Supplemental Budget Reports

Administrative Committees and Boards	2023-2024 Budget	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Budget
Annual Conference	80,000.00	37,577.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
Conference Legal Resource Fund	5,000.00		5,000.00	
Conference Secretary	1,000.00	1,154.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Conference Trustees	10,000.00	13,317.00	10,000.00	15,000.00
Council Finance & Administration	1,500.00	1,217.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Financial Audit	20,500.00	24,600.00	20,500.00	25,000.00
Property and Liability Insurance	50,000.00	76,843.00	60,000.00	60,000.00
Safe Gatherings Background Screening	30,000.00	30,499.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
Total Administrative Committees and Boards	198,000.00	185,207.00	178,000.00	182,500.00

Center for Administrative Services	2024-2025 Budget	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2025-2026 Budget
Conference Benefits Income	225,000.00		235,000.00
Salaries, payroll taxes and benefits	474,277.00	309,936.00	477,195.00
Director of Administrative Services	118,452.00	78,968.00	120,276.00
Assistant Treasurer	84,872.00	54,933.00	84,872.00
Financial Controller	84,872.00	54,933.00	84,872.00
Benefits Officer	65,000.00	43,310.00	75,000.00
Administrative Assistant	61,800.00	40,000.00	61,800.00
IT Manager			
Employer Payroll Taxes	31,232.00	20,029.00	32,652.00
Employer 403b Costs	28,049.00	17,763.00	17,723.00
Travel	10,000.00	8,298.00	10,000.00
Office administrative expense	50,000.00	32,136.00	50,000.00
Computer software and hardware	35,000.00	33,170.00	35,000.00
Continuing education	2,000.00	1,400.00	2,000.00
Mission Connect	17,000.00	23,102.00	23,000.00
Other	-	369.00	-
Rent	78,038.00	60,718.00	78,819.00
Total Expenses	666,315.00	469,129.00	676,014.00
Total Center for Administrative Services	441,315.00	469,129.00	441,014.00

Center for Communications	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Budget
Advertising and Subscriptions Income			
Administrative			
Salaries and benefits	139,301.00	208,495.00	209,738.00
Director	78,968.00	118,452.00	120,276.00
Communications Assistant	43,333.00	65,000.00	66,950.00
Social Media Specialist			
Videographer			
Employer Taxes	9,324.00	14,035.00	14,323.00
Employer 403b	7,676.00	11,008.00	8,189.00
Contract Work	580.00	6,948.00	6,948.00
Travel	5,614.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
Mass Media		5,000.00	5,000.00
Office administrative expense	17,348.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
Continuing education and dues	3,312.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Furniture and equipment	2,846.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Total Administrative	169,001.00	270,443.00	271,686.00
Programming			
Advertising		15,000.00	15,000.00
Digital AUM and other communications	1,816.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Conference website and software	8,335.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
CouRSe, net of funds from Foundation		-	-
Total Programming	10,151.00	26,000.00	26,000.00
Total Expenses	179,152.00	296,443.00	297,686.00
Total Center for Communications	179,152.00	296,443.00	297,686.00

Conference Ministries Office	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Proposed Budget
Salaries, payroll taxes and benefits	204,687.00	421,937.00	427,991.00
Director	68,974.00	118,452.00	120,276.00
Director's Housing	23,332.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
Director of Discipleship & Leadership Dev.			
Director Age Level Discipleship (part-time)	39,336.00	59,000.00	59,000.00
Office Assistant	20,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
200K More Reasons Project Coordinator	16,668.00	25,000.00	25,750.00
VIM & Disaster Response	11,666.00	35,000.00	36,050.00
Faith Community Development		41,000.00	42,230.00
Special Assistant for Ethnic Concerns		40,000.00	41,200.00
Employer Taxes	7,599.00	18,360.00	18,360.00
Employer Benefits Costs	17,112.00	35,125.00	35,125.00
Professional Expenses	55.00		
Travel	1,233.00	10,000.00	7,500.00
Office administrative expense	7,701.00	12,000.00	8,000.00
Conflict resolution training	155.00	-	
Continuing education	6,400.00	4,000.00	6,500.00
Equipment/Furnishings	2,617.00		2,000.00
Total Conference Ministries Office	222,848.00	447,937.00	449,991.00

Connectional Ministries	2024-2025 Budget	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2025-2026 Budget
Administrative			
Travel	3,000.00	365.00	2,500.00
Administrative expenses	750.00	-	750.00
Total Administrative	3,750.00	365.00	3,250.00
Programming			
Committees	5,000.00	2,674.00	5,000.00
Disaster Preparedness & Response	5,000.00	2,050.00	5,000.00
Volunteers in Mission	2,000.00	3,653.00	3,000.00
200,000 More Reasons (Delta Project)	50,000.00	26,913.00	50,000.00
Culture of Call	15,000.00	6,074.00	-
Commission on Archives and History			
Archives	15,000.00	8,165.00	15,000.00
Historical Society	1,000.00	-	1,000.00
Commission on Archives and History	1,000.00	-	1,000.00
United Methodist Museum	-	-	-
Total Commission on Archives and History	17,000.00	8,165.00	17,000.00
Age Level Ministries			
Council on children's ministries	14,000.00	1,112.00	14,000.00
Council on youth ministries	45,000.00	34,983.00	45,000.00
Council on young adult ministries	1,500.00	919.00	3,200.00
Youth worker network	10,000.00	6,018.00	10,000.00
Age Level Discipleship			10,000.00
Total Age Level Ministries	70,500.00	43,032.00	82,200.00
Ethnic Ministries			
Ethnic and Language Concerns Committee	40,000.00	17,850.00	40,000.00
Developer of Ethnic Ministries	25,000.00	8,248.00	25,000.00
Ethnic Initiatives	35,000.00	4,611.00	35,000.00
District Parish YA Ministry	9,213.00	9,213.00	9,213.00
Total Ethnic Ministries	109,213.00	39,922.00	109,213.00
Global Ministries			
SE Coordinator - 200,000 More Reasons	15,000.00	-	15,000.00
YA Coordinator	15,000.00	6,000.00	15,000.00
Covenant Relationship	5,000.00	-	
Canvas Community ministry	15,000.00	10,000.00	15,000.00
Committee on volunteers in mission	3,000.00	-	-
Mission U	14,500.00	14,500.00	15,600.00
Mission Personnel Initiative & Itineration	2,000.00	-	7,000.00
General	2,000.00	-	900.00
Total Global Ministries	71,500.00	30,500.00	68,500.00
Higher Education & Campus Ministries			
Campus ministry - Philander Smith University	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Campus ministry - Hendrix College	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - ASU	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - ATU	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - HSU/OBU	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - SAU	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - U of A	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00

Connectional Ministries	2024-2025 Budget	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2025-2026 Budget
Wesley foundation - UALR	-	-	-
Wesley foundation - UAM	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - UAPB	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation - UCA	68,800.00	51,600.00	68,800.00
Wesley foundation directors pension	22,000.00	27,942.00	22,000.00
Board of higher ed operations	5,000.00	-	5,000.00
Total Higher Education & Campus Ministries	715,000.00	543,942.00	715,000.00
Board of Laity			
Association of annual conference lay leaders	2,000.00	200.00	2,000.00
Board of Laity	1,000.00	832.00	1,000.00
Lay servant ministries	2,500.00	403.00	2,500.00
Total Board of Laity	5,500.00	1,435.00	5,500.00
Outdoor Ministries			
Mount Eagle	-	-	-
Camp Tanako	-	-	-
Programming grants	15,000.00	13,230.00	19,000.00
Confirmation camp	4,000.00	4,000.00	
Programming and marketing for camping and retreat			
Total Outdoor Ministries	19,000.00	17,230.00	19,000.00
Committee on Status and Role of Women	-	-	-
United Methodist Men	500.00	200.00	500.00
Ecumenical Relations	2,000.00	-	4,000.00
Total Connectional Ministries	1,090,963.00	726,155.00	1,087,163.00

District Budgets	CE	NE	NW	S	Total
Administrative Expenses					
Office expense/equipment	8,471.00	11,500.00	11,000.00	8,918.00	39,889.00
Rent		-		7,200.00	7,200.00
Utilities & phone	3,500.00	7,000.00	11,320.00	6,600.00	28,420.00
Travel	5,450.00	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	15,450.00
Insurance		-			-
Total Administrative Expenses	17,421.00	23,500.00	24,820.00	25,218.00	90,959.00
Total Staff Expenses	134,619.00	70,236.00	92,455.00	64,383.00	361,693.00
Housing/Parsonage Expenses	20,000.00	5,000.00	20,000.00	5,000.00	50,000.00
Investment Income to Offset Housing	(10,000.00)	(5,000.00)	(15,000.00)	(5,000.00)	(35,000.00)
Program Expenses					
Strategic gatherings, Youth, Children, Lay Servant,	8,500.00	10,500.00	7,500.00	5,000.00	31,500.00
At large annual conference members	5,000.00	11,000.00	8,600.00	8,000.00	32,600.00
Hospitality for District Superintendent	1,800.00	-	1,200.00	3,000.00	6,000.00
Pastoral care chaplain expenses	-	-	-	-	-
Continuing education	500.00	5,000.00	2,000.00	3,000.00	10,500.00
Contingency, discretionary	-	300.00	300.00	-	600.00
Total Program Expenses	15,800.00	26,800.00	19,600.00	19,000.00	81,200.00
Total Expenses Budgeted	177,840.00	120,536.00	141,875.00	108,601.00	548,852.00

	7/1/24-2/28/25 Actuals	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Budget	Pass Thru	% of Total	% Change
Fund #1 Clergy and Retiree Benefits (Pension and Health Benefits Committee)						
Pension & Benefits						
Administration	890.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	N	0.50%	0.00%
Conference Staff Pension (move to centers)				N	0.00%	
Disability Health Care	36,236.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	N	0.58%	0.00%
Methodist Health EAP	5,427.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	N	0.42%	0.00%
Retiree Health Care	428,007.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 750,000.00	N	12.50%	0.00%
Virgin Pulse	85,082.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	N	2.92%	0.00%
Funding From Reserves		(950,000.00)	(950,000.00)			
Subtotal Clergy and Retiree Benefits	555,642.00	65,000.00	65,000.00		1.08%	0.00%
Fund #2 General Apportionments (Determined by General Conference)						
World Service	378,266.00	\$ 850,494.00	\$ 810,100.00	Y	14.17%	-4.75%
Ministerial Education	117,069.00	\$ 220,637.00	\$ 210,158.00	Y	3.68%	-4.75%
Ministerial Scholarships	45,240.00	\$ 76,122.00	\$ 70,053.00	Y	1.27%	-7.97%
Black College	66,589.00	\$ 117,347.00	\$ 111,774.00	Y	1.96%	-4.75%
Africa University Fund	14,929.00	\$ 26,262.00	\$ 25,014.00	Y	0.44%	-4.75%
Episcopal Fund	37,627.00	\$ 419,222.00	\$ 399,311.00	Y	6.99%	-4.75%
General Administration	69,741.00	\$ 143,739.00	\$ 136,912.00	Y	2.40%	-4.75%
Interdenominational Cooperation	4,527.00	\$ 12,174.00	\$ 11,596.00	Y	0.20%	-4.75%
Disaffiliation reduction		(81,092.00)			-1.35%	
Subtotal General Apportionments	733,988.00	1,784,905.00	1,774,918.00		29.74%	-0.56%
Fund #3 Jurisdictional Apportionments (Determined by Jurisdictional Conference)						
Jurisdictional Administration	13,943.00	\$ 28,157.00	\$ 32,094.00	Y	0.47%	13.98%
Lydia Patterson Institute	26,566.00	\$ 53,650.00	\$ 46,656.00	Y	0.89%	-13.04%
Reserves	2,427.00	\$ 4,902.00		Y	0.08%	
Disaffiliation reduction		(22,000.00)			-0.37%	
Subtotal Jurisdictional Apportionments	42,936.00	64,709.00	78,750.00		1.08%	-9.18%
Fund #4 Districts (CFA)						
District Superintendents	339,298.00	\$ 473,808.00	\$ 481,104.00	N	7.90%	1.54%
DS Travel	31,283.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	N	1.00%	0.00%
DS Pension	40,217.00	\$ 78,879.00	\$ 81,374.00	N	1.31%	3.16%
New Places for New People	131,790.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	N	1.67%	0.00%
District Offices	371,646.00	\$ 528,764.00	\$ 548,852.00	N	8.81%	3.80%
Subtotal District Apportionments	914,234.00	1,241,451.00	1,271,330.00		20.69%	2.41%
Fund #5 Conference Administration (CFA)						
Administrative Committees and Boards*	185,207.00	\$ 178,000.00	\$ 182,500.00	N	2.97%	2.53%
Board of Ordained Ministry Administration	72,800.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 95,000.00	N	1.58%	0.00%
Center for Administrative Services*	469,129.00	\$ 441,315.00	\$ 441,014.00	N	7.35%	-0.07%
Episcopal Discretionary	2,725.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	N	0.17%	0.00%
Episcopal Housing	6,197.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	N	0.33%	0.00%
Episcopal Office	22,833.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	N	0.42%	0.00%
Pastors Moving Expense	50,634.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	N	1.33%	0.00%
Stabilization	47,382.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	N	0.83%	0.00%
Subtotal Conference Administration	856,907.00	899,315.00	903,514.00		14.99%	0.47%
Fund #6 Resourcing Local Congregations (Cabinet)						
Center for Communications*	179,152.00	\$ 296,443.00	\$ 297,686.00	N	4.94%	0.42%
Conference Ministries Office*	222,848.00	\$ 447,937.00	\$ 449,991.00	N	7.46%	0.46%
Connectional Ministries*	726,155.00	\$ 1,090,963.00	\$ 1,087,163.00	N	18.18%	-0.35%
Equitable Compensation	11,598.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	N	0.83%	0.00%
General & Juris. Conference Delegate Exp	1,628.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	N	0.17%	0.00%
Stabilization	-	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	N	0.83%	0.00%
Subtotal Resourcing Local Congregations	1,141,381.00	1,945,343.00	1,944,840.00		32.42%	-0.03%
Total Conference Budget	4,245,088.00	6,000,723.00	6,038,352.00			0.63%

* See detailed budget on following pages.

5 **SECTION I: BOARD OPERATION**

- 6 A. The Arkansas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry hereafter referred to as the Board
7 or the BOM, is governed by the current Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church
8 ¶635.
- 9 B. All communication to the BOM should be sent to BOM Office, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little
10 Rock, AR 72202 or bom@arumc.org
- 11 C. The Board will be organized in three classes with the assumption each person will serve 1
12 quadrennium but no more than 3 consecutive terms.
- 13 D. Board officers are Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Registrar,
14 and Assistant Executive Registrar. The Executive Committee consists of the Board Officers
15 and Chair of the Order of Elders, Chair of the Order of Deacons, Chair of the Fellowship
16 of Associate Members and Local Pastors, Chair of the Conference Relations Committee,
17 Chair of Ministerial Assessment, Chair of Vocation and Discernment, and a Cabinet
18 representative. The Chairperson shall appoint other officers and sub-committees as
19 needed.
- 20 E. The Board shall meet at least once in the fall and twice in the spring, and as convened by
21 the Chairperson.
- 22 F. The district committees on ordained ministry (dCOM) are amenable to the annual
23 conference through the BOM and follow ¶666. District administrative staff may serve as
24 administrators of the dCOM and may attend meetings of the dCOM in an administrative
25 capacity. The files of the dCOM shall be stored in the district office, separate from the
26 supervisory files. District administrative staff, as custodians of records, shall not serve as
27 members of dCOM or BOM.
- 28 G. The Board has the right to ask for a new Ministerial Assessment package at any time and
29 shall ask for a new assessment if more than six years has past and the candidate continues.
- 30 H. The BOM shall have guidelines for plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence in BOM/
31 dCOM assignments
- 32 I. The Board shall review its policy statement annually, revising it as needed and presenting it
33 to the Annual Conference for approval.
34

35 **SECTION II: CANDIDACY, ¶ 310**

- 36 A. The Inquiring Candidate first contacts the pastor of the local church or other authorized
37 ministry setting, to share the ministry call.
- 38 B. Candidates shall utilize the Candidacy Checklist which outlines the complete candidacy
39 process found at <https://arumc.org/our-resources/forms-and-documents/>
- 40 C. Candidates must attend Orientation to Ministry ¶ 312
- 41 D. Candidates are encouraged to pursue undergraduate education and to pursue seminary
42 education in one of the United Methodist seminaries.
43

44 **SECTION III. THE DECLARED CANDIDATE, ¶ 310.2**

- 45 A. When approved by the Charge conference, the candidate shall send \$50 for the Ministerial
46 assessment packet to District Superintendent's Office or pay online.
- 47 B. If the dCOM approves by three-fourths majority written ballot, the dCOM registrar submits
48 Form AR020 to the Board of Ordained Ministry Office and a copy to the candidate. The
49 certified candidate shall complete the District Committee on Ordained Ministry Approval
50 Report on UMCARES.

- C. Persons appointed as local pastors are clergy members of the Annual Conference (§ 315). They are no longer listed as certified candidates (§ 602.1), except the first year they are certified. See further the Local Pastor § 315-320 and below.

SECTION IV: THE LOCAL PASTOR § 315-320

- A. Upon completion of the candidacy process, and receiving dCOM approval as a certified candidate, the District Superintendent shall recommend the candidate for Local Pastor License School. Candidate shall register, attend, and successfully complete Local Pastor Licensing School or one-third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a University Senate-approved theological school in order to be eligible for an appointment (§315.2a).
- B. Once appointed, the Bishop shall issue a license. The candidate shall register the license at the county courthouse where appointed
- C. Local Pastors shall enroll in the Basic Five-Year Course of Study (COS) and successfully complete per § 318.
- D. A Local Pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study may be recognized as a retired Local Pastor. § 320.5.b
- E. Appointed Retired Local Pastors shall follow all the guidelines of a non-retired appointed Local Pastor, such as continue COS, meet annually with the dCOM, complete UM History, Polity and Doctrine, and be assigned a mentor as per § 348.
- F. Course of Study registrations shall be approved and signed by the Conference Local Pastor Registrar and must be postmarked no less than 14 days prior to the registration deadline printed on the registration form.
- G. The local pastor may enroll as a student in a seminary program to meet educational requirements. The local pastor will be expected to complete their seminary education within the timeframes defined in § 318. When enrolled in seminary, the local pastor is eligible to apply for financial aid from MEF funds. See Financial Aid Section.
- H. All Local Pastors who have not completed their educational requirements will be assigned to a mentoring group led by clergy mentors selected by the BOM. Groups are not organized by district but by affinity cohorts. First-year local pastors who have completed LPLS and are appointed shall meet as a cohort. These clergy mentors will submit annual reports (AR080) for those local pastors who have not completed COS.
- I. Local Pastor Mentoring group work and the dCOM interview is based on the 4-Year Local Pastor and OF Interview program, which cycles each year through a focus on Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service.
- J. Local pastors shall meet annually with the dCOM to evaluate educational progress and ministerial performance, and action is taken on renewal of the License for Pastoral Ministry. The local pastor shall submit annually a school transcript (from college, seminary, or COS), filed with the dCOM Registrar prior to the local pastor's annual dCOM interview.
- K. Upon completing the Five-Year Basic Course of Study, and beginning in 2011, completing courses in UM History, Polity and Doctrine, the local pastor may be eligible to apply for Associate Membership. See § 322.
- L. United Methodist History, Polity and Doctrine may be taken at any time during the educational process, but must be completed within 2 years of COS completion. Courses must be taken at an Advanced Course of Study School, University Senate approved seminary, or online at GBHEM. Taking UM Doctrine, Polity and History, can get credit for COS 224 and 422.
- M. The local pastor who chooses to continue in the local pastor relationship shall have completed courses in UM History, Polity and Doctrine within two years of COS completion. Local pastors not continuing to Advanced COS or seminary shall submit a plan for continuing education to the District Superintendent and dCOM annually.

- 1 N. Local Pastor Transfers from Another Conference to Arkansas Conference: Local Pastors in
2 good standing do not transfer from Conference to Conference but surrender the license
3 in their Conference and apply to the Arkansas Conference. Prior to interviewing with the
4 dCOM for licensing, the minister shall complete the Arkansas Cabinet Vetting Process and
5 requirements for dCOM interview. The minister shall continue Course of Study per ¶318 and
6 shall have completed UM History, Polity and Doctrine within two years of COS completion.
7 O. Only Local Pastors who have completed COS or made progress in completing COS shall be
8 designated Retired Local Pastors. ¶320.5

9
10 **SECTION V: ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP, ¶ 321-322**

- 11 A. Applicants shall meet the requirements outlined in ¶ 322.
12 B. The applicant for associate membership shall consult the District Superintendent, complete
13 and submit, Form AR105, Application for Clergy Relationship to the Annual Conference
14 <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/r13729he00iy22q/> to the District Superintendent and the
15 BOM Office by July 15.
16 C. The dCOM shall interview the applicant as a candidate for associate membership,
17 considering educational and documentary requirements, pastoral experience and
18 effectiveness, and form a recommendation to the Conference Board. The dCOM
19 shall send to the BOM Office by November 1, the applicant's Form AR105, the District
20 Superintendent's letter of recommendation, and the Action Report. These documents are
21 also filed with the District Registrar.
22 D. The Conference Registrar shall inform the applicant by December 1 about the written
23 assignments to be prepared in advance of the BOM interview, the deadline for those
24 assignments, and the date and time for appearing before the BOM (normally a BOM
25 Meeting in late February or early March).
26 E. The BOM shall interview the applicant. If favorably approved, the recommendation is
27 presented to the Clergy Session of the annual conference.
28 F. Associate members desiring to change relationship to an ordination track as a provisional
29 elder or deacon must first obtain approval from the BOM before taking other steps in the
30 application process.

31
32 **SECTION VI: PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP ¶ 324**

- 33 A. Applicants must complete all educational requirements prior to election to provisional
34 membership.
35 B. All seminary courses required by the Discipline and conference rules require a "C" or better
36 grade.
37 C. Candidates who begin their seminary studies after July 1, 2025 are required to complete a
38 course in preaching as part of their theological education (¶ 324.4).
39 ~~D. Beginning January 2011, no one entering a seminary degree program seeking ordination~~
40 ~~shall enroll in Distance Learning online courses except for hybrid programs offered by the 13~~
41 ~~United Methodist seminaries and Asbury Theological Seminary. Beginning in January 2011,~~
42 ~~no more than 2/3 of the degree requirements may be completed through distance learning~~
43 ~~for all UM seminaries and Asbury. Persons enrolled in other seminaries prior to January~~
44 ~~2011 may complete no more than 1/3 of the degree through Distance Learning courses.~~
45 E. Associate members and local pastors may apply for provisional membership outlined in ¶
46 324.6.
47 F. Applications for provisional membership require the completion of Form 105, Application for
48 Clergy Relationship, and the preliminary answers to Questions ¶ 324.9.a-p by the candidate
49 sent to both the District Superintendent by July 15.
50 G. Following a meeting with the dCOM, their recommendation, reported on Form AR020,

District Committee Action Report Form, is sent to the BOM Office. The original Action Report and the District Superintendent's letter of recommendation are placed in the candidate's file. The completed dCOM file is delivered by the District office to the BOM Office by November 1.

- H. The Conference Registrar corresponds with the candidate by December 1, regarding required written work, reference letters and assignments to be prepared and submitted by January 31 to the BOM Office.
- I. The BOM interviews the candidate. Out-of-state seminary students may receive up to 50% of actual cost of transportation when attending Board interviews. If approved, the recommendation for provisional membership is presented to the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference.
- J. Provisional members shall demonstrate effective ministry for a minimum of two consecutive conference years in the same appointment. All provisional residents shall participate in the conference Residency in Ministry (RIM) program. Their service will be evaluated by the BOM and the DS. Arrangements for supervision and residency will be made for provisional members serving outside the Arkansas conference. During the second year of the RIM program, the provisional member may apply for ordination and membership in full connection.
- K. To make application for Full Connection, the Provisional member shall complete and submit Form AR105, Application for Clergy Relationship, <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/r13729he00iy22q/>, and submit the form to the BOM Office by October 1. The Cabinet shall provide a recommendation letter concerning a provisional member's application for Full Connection to the BOM Office by November 1.

SECTION VII: APPOINTMENTS FROM OUTSIDE THE ARKANSAS CONFERENCE AND TRANSFERS ¶ 346-347

- A. ~~All ministers requesting Conference to Conference transfer (¶ 347.1) shall complete the Arkansas Conference Cabinet Vetting Process.~~ Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences of the UMC, or other Methodist denominations, seeking to serve in the ARUMC while retaining their home conference membership should contact a district superintendent, complete the Arkansas Conference Cabinet Vetting Process, and obtain the consent of the bishops involved (¶346.1.) If the ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences of the UMC, or other Methodist denominations, seek to transfer their clergy membership into the ARUMC, they shall first serve under appointment in the Arkansas Conference for a minimum of two years before applying for a transfer of conference membership into the ARUMC. A recommendation by the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and approval by the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer of the member to the ARUMC (¶347.1)
- B. All ministers requesting to serve while retaining other faith credentials (¶ 346.2 and 347.3) or requesting to serve a UM church and start the process of transferring as a UM pastor (¶ 347.3.b and (¶ 347.2) shall complete the Arkansas Conference Cabinet Vetting Process and the dCOM interview requirements.
- C. All ministers approved with other faith credentials shall complete the Arkansas License School before being appointed. Exceptions may be granted for other Methodist denominations with a written request to the Executive BOM from the DS.
- D. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to complete/continue Course of Study unless they have completed a MDiv from an Accredited Theological Seminary with coursework equivalent to COS.
- E. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to take UM History,

- 1 Polity and Doctrine within 2 years of the conference year of appointment unless those
2 classes were completed through their MDiv from an Accredited Theological Seminary.
- 3 F. Those appointed while retaining other faith credentials are required to meet annually with
4 the dCOM to evaluate educational progress and ministerial performance.
- 5 G. Those appointed while retaining faith credentials, are required to supply a letter of current
6 good standing in their denomination by January 31 of each year.
- 7 H. Ministers seeking transfer into United Methodist ministry from another denomination **must**
8 **retain a status of good standing in their home denomination until the transfer is complete**
9 **and, therefore, shall not join a local United Methodist church. (§1347.2). Ordained clergy**
10 **seeking admission or restoration into the ARUMC on credentials from another denomination**
11 **who have previously withdrawn from UMC conference membership shall follow the process**
12 **in §1347.4-5.**
- 13 I. Ministers whose credentials have been approved shall serve under appointment for a
14 minimum of two years before applying for transfer into provisional membership if eligible
- 15 J. Those appointed who still retain credentials with other Christian denominations, shall
16 declare to the dCOM their intentions to transfer credentials to the United Methodist Church
17 within two years of appointment. Failure to start the transferring process after 2 years could
18 result in not being reappointed.
- 19 (This does not apply to those who hold credentials in the ELCA, African Methodist
20 Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the African Union
21 Methodist Protestant Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Union
22 American Methodist Episcopal Church, with which the UMC shares full communion
23 rights.)
- 24 K. Ministers seeking transfer into provisional memberships shall apply to the dCOM using
25 SECTION VI: PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP § 324 and shall participate in the Residency in
26 Ministry program before becoming eligible to apply for full connection.

27 **SECTION VIII: FINANCIAL AID**

- 28
- 29 A. Local Pastor Licensing School: The cost to Arkansas students attending the Arkansas Local
30 Pastor License School (LPLS) is **\$750** ~~currently \$350~~. Some funds may be available for
31 students attending other schools outside of our conference boundaries. Approval for these
32 funds must come from the Dean of the Arkansas Conference Local Pastor License School
33 prior to class participation.
- 34 B. Course of Study: Financial Assistance, based on need and the availability of funds, will
35 be 50% of tuition, normal fees, room and board for full- or part-time students in the basic
36 Course of Study; 100% reimbursement of tuition for courses taken in the Arkansas Extension
37 Course of Study School available for part-time local pastors and 50% reimbursement of
38 tuition for those who successfully complete correspondence courses (not to exceed 4
39 courses). The Board does not pay for repeated courses.
- 40 C. Seminary Financial Aid: All certified candidates attending University Senate approved
41 seminaries are eligible for MEF funds Loans will not exceed 50% of tuition per semester
42 unless there is a surplus in the budget year. The seminarian registrar shall have the
43 discretion to disburse any surplus funds at an equal percentage for all semester applicants
44 not to exceed loan limits. Students attending United Methodist seminaries can receive
45 a maximum of \$10,000 per budget year in loans. Students at other University Senate
46 approved seminaries can receive a maximum of \$7,000 per budget year in loans.
- 47 D. Students will not receive funds to repeat a failed, dropped, or incomplete course.
- 48 E. Applicants will sign a promissory note. Loans will be forgiven for service at the rate of one
49 year of full time service for two semesters of aid. In other words, a student who borrows
50 from the fund for six semesters would complete the service obligation by three years of

- full time service under Episcopal appointment. Loans to candidates discontinued by dCom initiated action shall be forgiven.
- F. Application is at <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/x13mnp6818kiscx/>
- G. Applications and all supporting documentation must be received by August 10 for the fall semester, January 10 for the spring/winter (including January term) semester and June 10 for the summer semester. Applications are not complete without an official transcript from the student's seminary. Incomplete applications will not be processed. The Secretary of the BOM will process all applications.
- H. Reimbursement for UM History, Polity, and Doctrine courses will be paid at 50% of the tuition cost in the year the course was taken.
- I. Persons who have completed the basic course of study may wish to become provisional members by the alternate route (see ¶ 324.6). They must complete the 32 hours of graduate theological studies. Up to 50% of tuition will be provided per seminary financial aid.
- J. Deacon candidates on the professional certification route toward ordination (see ¶ 324.5) will also receive up to 50% of tuition per seminary financial aid.

SECTION IX: CONTINUING EDUCATION ¶ 350

- A. All clergy under full-time appointment must complete at least one (1) continuing education unit (ten hours of instruction) per year. These CEU's may be fulfilled by CEUs, CMEs, CCEs, or other approved programs. Persons in resident provisional status or those enrolled in Course of Study are exempt from this requirement.
- B. Clergy shall report CEUs to their District Superintendent at charge conference and to the BOM through the BOM Office.
- C. All clergy under full-time appointment with charge conference compensation, as reported in Box 13 of the Pastor's Compensation form, of less than \$58,920 may receive reimbursement from the BOM of up to \$200 annually as funds are available. This amount shall include only projected expenses for tuition, books, fees, room, and board. Travel cannot be included as a projected expense.
- D. Financial aid is not available for Minister's Week at any seminary.
- E. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Guidelines for granting Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from The Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM) shall be used by groups seeking to have events certified by the Conference Continuing Education Chairperson. (See GBHEM's website, <https://www.gbhem.org/clergy/clergy-lifelong-learning/guidelines-for-continuing-education/>)
- F. Professional Certification Studies: Applications may be made for up to \$200/year as funds are available to help pay for specialized certification courses. This amount shall include only projected expenses for tuition, books, fees, room, and board. Travel cannot be included as a projected expense.
- G. Applications for granting continuing education credit for an event or reimbursement for continuing education shall be sent to the Chair of Continuing Education, BOM Office.
- H. Sabbatical Leave: All Issues concerning Sabbatical leave will follow the guidelines of ¶ 351, with the addition of those requesting Sabbatical will include their plan with start and end dates.

SECTION X: CHANGES OF CONFERENCE RELATIONSHIP ¶ 353-362

- A. The Conference Relations Committee (CRC) shall consist of at least 3 persons to hear requests as listed in 635.1 (d)
- B. Request for change of relationship to Voluntary Leave of Absence – Personal/Family (¶ 353) must be made at least ninety (90) days prior to Annual Conference by completing Form

1 AR030 documenting specific reasons for the request. A copy of the Form shall be placed in
2 the person's file.

3 C. Maternity/Paternity leave requests follow ¶ 355.

4 D. All clergy on Leave of Absence for a total of five or more years are required to meet with
5 the CRC annually to review the circumstances that requires remaining on Leave of Absence.

6 E. While on Voluntary Leave of Absence - Personal/Family, the person shall report annually
7 her/his progress toward resolution/alleviation of the stated reasons for requesting Leave of
8 Absence-Personal/Family. When an end to Leave of Absence- Personal/Family is requested,
9 it shall be by written request at least six (6) months prior to Annual Conference. The CRC
10 shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of Leave of Absence – Personal/
11 Family for the purpose of determining whether those circumstances have been alleviated or
12 resolved.

13 F. Request for change of relationship to Medical Leave (¶ 356)

14 a. The Conference Benefits Officer will provide the person requesting a change in
15 Conference relationship to Medical Leave with the appropriate application packet.

16 b. The Conference Benefits Officer will notify the Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave
17 for a reasonable and appropriate investigation and recommendation to the Cabinet, the
18 Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the BOM.

19 G. Withdrawal (~~¶ 360.2~~ ¶361)

20 ~~All ordained persons withdrawing from annual conference relationship shall meet with~~
21 ~~the CRC. The CRC shall report to the BOM for a recommendation to the Clergy Executive~~
22 ~~Session at its next meeting.~~

23 ~~The BOM Secretary shall record in the BOM minutes the report of the CRC and the~~
24 ~~recommendation of the BOM. A copy of the written report, recommendation and~~
25 ~~documentation of the person's reasons for withdrawal shall be placed in the person's~~
26 ~~file. Additional statements shall be recorded from the Cabinet and the person who has~~
27 ~~withdrawn/exited.~~

28 1. ~~Withdrawal to unite with another denomination follows ¶361.1 and ¶361.4 .~~

29 2. ~~Withdrawal from the ordained ministerial office or associate membership follows ¶361.2~~
30 ~~and ¶361.4 .~~

31 3. ~~Withdrawal Under Complaints or Charges follows ¶361.3 and ¶361.4.~~

32 H. Readmission to Conference Relationship (¶ 364, 365, 366, 367 and 368)

33 1. All requests for readmission to Conference Membership with the Arkansas Annual
34 Conference shall be made in writing and presented to the BOM at least one hundred
35 twenty (120) days prior to the beginning of the session of the Annual Conference unless
36 stated otherwise by the Book of Discipline.

37 2. The BOM shall review all files and statements kept by the BOM Office and Registrars.

38 3. All persons requesting readmission to Conference Membership are required to
39 complete the "Assessment Packet" in Section III A. The cost of the evaluation shall be
40 borne by the person seeking readmission.

41 4. All persons requesting readmission to Conference Membership are required to meet
42 the requirements as outlined in the Book of Discipline appropriate to the reason for the
43 person's original withdrawal, location, leaving or discontinuance.

44 5. Associate Members or clergy members in full connection requesting readmission to
45 Conference Membership (¶ 366-368) shall serve under appointment as a Local Pastor –
46 demonstrating effective ministry for a minimum of two consecutive Conference years in
47 the same appointment.

48 6. Former Deacons requesting readmission to Conference Membership shall serve under
49 appointment in an appropriate ministry setting - demonstrating effective ministry for a
50 minimum of two consecutive Conference years in the same appointment.

7. During the second year of demonstrating effective ministry in the same appointment, if the applicant has met all Disciplinary and Conference requirements, the former Conference member may apply for Conference Membership and/or credentials previously held.

SECTION XI: CLERGY COVENANT FUND

- A. The Clergy Covenant Fund provides financial assistance to clergy persons and their families. Financial assistance of \$2500 is available to deceased clergy's family. Up to \$1250 is available to clergy family for financial needs which arise from personal or family crisis. The District Superintendent shall make a request for these funds to the Chair of the BOM; the BOM Executive Committee shall consider all requests for approval.
- B. Funds will be provided by means of an offering received during the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference. Clergy will also be given an opportunity each November to make a special Thanksgiving contribution to the Fund. Memorials and special gifts may be made to the Fund at any time. Gifts may be sent any time to: United Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, Clergy Covenant Fund, 601 Wellington Village Rd, Little Rock, AR 72211.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pamela Jean Estes, Chair
Nancy Meredith, Secretary

Board of Pension and Health Benefits

The Board:

¶638 The Conference Board of Pensions "the board" is charged with the interest and work of providing for and contributing to the support, relief, assistance, and pensioning of clergy, and their families, other church workers, and lay employees of the Conference Center, institutions, organizations, and agencies within the Annual Conference except otherwise provided by Wespath. The conference board also provides financial assistance to retired clergy, their spouses and surviving spouses who are now responsible for their own healthcare. The board works closely with Wespath Benefits and Investments, administrator of the largest denominational pension fund in the world. Wespath reflects the Wesleyan heritage, and the notion of being on the right path in all three areas of operation for participants, institutional investors and for the UMC. The board is made up of no less than 12 members and in accordance with ¶605.3 elected to a term of 8 years. The board elects its chairperson.

Conference Sponsored Well-Care Benefits:

The board approved using \$175,000 in healthcare reserves to fund the Personify Health Fitness Program for the 2025-2026 year. Participation will be reviewed annually. Conference Full-Time staff, active clergy appointed to a Full-Time church or conference responsible appointment and their spouses are eligible to participate. Beginning January 1, 2021 clergy retired from a full-time appointment and remaining in full connection with the Arkansas Annual Conference may be eligible to participate in the Personify Health Plan. You can still join the Personify Health program where getting active & fit means getting great stuff! And ours isn't your typical stuff. Ours is motivation, feedback, gadgets, tracking, challenges, prizes, more energy, feeling better, looking great... and rewards.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

- The Buzz tracker is free to newly enrolled participants. If a participant already has a preferred fitness tracking device, the program will sync with many available brands and models, including

- 1 Fitbit and Apple Watch.
- 2 • In addition to the benefits of healthier living, participants can earn up to \$275 per calendar
- 3 quarter, with increasing dollar amounts given as each of four levels of point accrual is
- 4 completed.
- 5 • Points toward reward levels can be earned through activity, and also by reporting healthy
- 6 habits on the mobile app or website.
- 7 • We'll keep you motivated all year long with challenges, contests, team competitions with your
- 8 fellow conference members & more!
- 9 • So what do you say, ready to join?
- 10 • Download the phone app or use this URL – enroll.personifyhealth.com
- 11 • Participants will have to select a plan sponsor. In this case, select Arkansas, for the phone App
- 12 select Wespeth.
- 13 • Questions should be directed to the Conference Center Benefits Office.
- 14 • *You must be 18 years of age.

16 **Employee Assistance Program:**

17 The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits partnered with The Board of Ordained

18 Ministry to bring clergy families the Methodist Healthcare Employee Assistance Program. Since

19 January 1, 2012, this program has provided free, confidential short-term counseling to all active,

20 retired clergy and clergy households. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits recommends

21 continuing the program with 10 visits for 2025-2026 fiscal year. The benefit is not guaranteed

22 and will be reviewed annually. The costs for the program will be paid with Insurance Reserves for

23 2025-2026. We are pleased to offer this service to our clergy and their households. EAP can help

24 with many of life's challenges such as family issues, marital concerns, alcohol and drug abuse,

25 anxiety, depression, major life events, grief, work concerns and managing the stress of everyday

26 life. The program offers 10 counseling sessions to you and members of your household, free

27 of charge. In most cases, short-term counseling is all the help you'll need. However, if a referral

28 outside the EAP is necessary, the EAP counselor will seek the best resources for your situation.

29 Counseling outside the EAP will require use of insurance or self-pay. Use of the EAP and issues

30 discussed in all sessions are held in strict confidence. Rest assured that your private health

31 information remains confidential and can only be released outside the EAP with your written

32 consent or when required by law such as in life threatening situations or child/elder abuse. All

33 Arkansas Conference staff members and clergy families; whether full time, part time, retired or

34 disabled as well as members of your household are eligible to participate. Surviving spouses are

35 also eligible for this benefit. For more information about the Methodist Healthcare EAP, please visit

36 their website at www.methodisteapcanhelp.org. To access the program, simply call their toll-free

37 number 1-800-880-5658 to schedule an appointment.

39 **Clergy Retirement Plans:**

40 The Pre-1982 Pension Plan was replaced by the Ministerial Pension Plan effective January 1, 1982.

41 Vested participants and their spouses receive lifetime benefits from the pre-82 plan. The 2025

42 monthly Past Service Rate (pre-1982) known as the PSR is \$577.00.

43 The 2004 General Conference voted to end the MPP as of December 31, 2006. The replacement

44 pension plan was the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) which began January 1, 2007.

45 Less than full-time clergy are ineligible effective 1/1/2013. The plan is made up of 2 components;

46 1. A Defined Benefit which provides monthly income at retirement based upon years of

47 credited service to the Church and a surviving spouse benefit payment of 75% for her/his

48 lifetime. Clergy may also designate a disabled child as a secondary contingent annuitant.

49 After the death of you and your spouse, your disabled child will receive a reduced benefit.

50 As with spousal coverage, your initial benefits will be reduced to pay for this extra benefit,

and

2. A Defined Contribution that provides a retirement account balance which was established and funded by the annual conference.

All eligible full-time clergy who are under Episcopal appointment in the conference shall enroll in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). Full-time clergy may make written requests to waive out of the pension program CRSP. Effective January 1, 2014 clergy serving less than full-time are not eligible to participate in CRSP. We encourage the churches they serve to provide a retirement benefit by making contributions to the United Methodist Personal Pension Plan (UMPIP) on their behalf. Pension Plan enrollment is the responsibility of the participant and must be done no later than 30 days from the eligibility date. Information for enrollment must be provided to the Conference Benefits Officer, Wendy Brunson Daniels, at the Conference Center for Administrative Services.

- Clergy pension is calculated on “Plan” compensation. Plan compensation as defined by Wespath includes a parsonage equivalent (25% of compensation) or housing allowance. The benefit multiplier for 2025 is 14% and is broken down in the following manner;
- The monthly CRSP- DB benefit is 8% of eligible Plan compensation.
- The CRSP-DC benefit is 2% non-matching employer contribution and 1% matching of employee eligible Plan compensation.
- The premium for the Comprehensive Protection Death and Disability Plan is 3% of eligible Plan compensation up to 200% of the Denominational average compensation “DAC” for clergy appointed full-time.
- Participants must contribute a minimum of 1% of eligible Plan compensation to their Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) in order to receive the full employer CRSP-DC contribution.

Compass is the new retirement plan available to bishops and full-time clergy who are currently eligible for the CRSP. Part-time clergy and deacons may be eligible based on their annual conference choices for eligibility. This plan is designed to increase plan sustainability, balance affordability with income adequacy, promote equity across different compensation levels, and provide flexibility. The current CRSP will continue through December 31, 2025 and Compass will become active January, 1, 2026.

The plan creates an account for eligible clergy that allows clergy and churches to make contributions to the plan. A church is allowed to make contributions of (a) a \$150 monthly flat dollar amount (to increase by 2% or \$5.00 yearly), (b) 3% of clergy’s pensionable pay, and (c) a dollar-for-dollar match on up to 4% of pensionable pay. Clergy are encouraged to contribute at least 4% of pensionable pay to receive the full matching contribution from the church. Pensionable pay is base pay plus either the housing allowance or the deemed value of a parsonage equal to 35% of base pay. After retirement clergy who have a Compass account will receive “LifeStage Retirement Income Payments.”

There are several key components to the Compass Plan. One feature is that the \$150 flat dollar church contribution provides a base level of retirement savings to more fairly distribute benefits which differs from a solely pay-based plan. Another key component is that Compass provides matching contributions on qualified student loan payments made by clergy. The student loan payments are essentially treated as clergy contributions to the plan for which the match still applies. (This repayment feature only applies to student loans of the clergy and not family members.) Note, also that the parsonage value is 35% of base pay. Finally, Compass will feature automatic enrollment and automatic contribution increases as may be set by the annual conference. While these features are automated, they are designed to make the plan simple to use.

1
2 Once an eligible clergy person retires, they will receive “LifeStage Retirement Income Payments.”
3 This is a required feature to manage the account balance the church has contributed to Compass.
4 It is designed to optimize monthly payments to help the account last throughout the clergy’s
5 lifetime (and spouse, if applicable). There is an online tool with various income scenarios to
6 demonstrate how this works. Two optional features are a “Social Security Bridge” which allows
7 deferring social security benefits until the clergy’s full retirement age or later and “Longevity
8 Income Protection” that allows purchase of a deferred annuity that guarantees payment for life
9 beginning at age 80.
10
11 As for clergy who have earned a pension in the defined benefit plans, those benefits are retained.
12 Also, the Denominational Average Compensation which is used to determine benefits under the
13 CRSP DB will continue to increase 2% annually through retirement.
14
15 **2025-2026 Retiree Healthcare Premium Stipend Allocation:**
16 The Arkansas Conference provides a monthly healthcare reimbursement benefit to eligible retired
17 clergy members of the Conference and disabled clergy who are Medicare eligible. The benefit
18 is not guaranteed and is reviewed annually. In order to be eligible for a conference healthcare
19 premium reimbursement Provisional Elders, Associate Members, Elders in Full Connection and
20 Full-time Local Pastors who remain members of the Arkansas Conference must have served full-
21 time in the denomination for a minimum of 10 years. Only full-time appointment years are eligible
22 and must have been served under Episcopal Appointment in the Arkansas Conference. Retirees
23 not currently receiving a conference healthcare premium stipend are not eligible to receive the
24 stipend. The stipend is a fixed dollar amount based on eligible years of active service and the
25 maximum healthcare premium stipend. Additional years of service above 40 have no effect on the
26 healthcare premium stipend.
27 • The maximum monthly healthcare stipend for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is \$207.06 for
28 clergy and \$155.30 for a spouse.
29 • Clergy who work or serve an appointment after retirement will not receive additional years
30 of service or an additional benefit of any kind. The base HRA benefit calculation guide •
31 • The first ten years of service will accrue at 2% of the maximum premium gift:
32 • Clergy: 2% of \$200 = \$4.00
33 • Spouse: 2% of \$150 = \$3.00
34 • The next 20 years of service will accrue at:
35 • Clergy: 3.5% of \$200 = \$7.00
36 • Spouse: 3.5% of \$150 = \$5.25
37 • The remaining ten years of service will accrue at:
38 • Clergy: 1% of \$200 = \$2.00
39 • Spouse: 1% of \$150 = \$1.50
40
41 Conference responsible appointment years of active service are defined as service in which the
42 Arkansas Conference or local church is responsible for contributions to clergy pension plans; Pre-
43 1982, MPP or CRSP. The minimum healthcare stipend benefit is \$51.77 per month. Clergy who are
44 married at the time of retirement will receive a supplemental spousal gift. The spouse at retirement
45 who outlives the clergy person will receive a stipend as a surviving spouse. If a retired clergy
46 couple divorces, the clergy will receive the clergy benefit and that spouse will receive the spouse
47 portion. Should the clergy remarry, the new spouse is not eligible for a stipend. A surviving spouse
48 who remarries will continue to receive a healthcare stipend benefit. When a clergy dies while
49 under an active conference responsible appointment leaving behind a spouse (who is not eligible
50 for Medicare) the conference will provide a healthcare premium stipend for \$1035.30 per month

for the first 5 years. After the earlier of year 5, or Medicare eligibility, the healthcare premium stipend will be based on clergy years of eligible service.	1
	2
	3
Clergy on Medical Leave receiving CPP Disability Benefits: Approved Medical Leave is an active Conference responsible appointment. Clergy appointed to Medical Leave who are not yet eligible for Medicare will receive a taxable Healthcare Premium Stipend in the amount of \$1035.30 per month. Those who are eligible for Medicare must enroll in Medicare B, purchase a Medicare Supplement and a Drug Plan. Having met these guidelines, you would be eligible to receive a Healthcare Premium Stipend using the years of service guidelines above through a non-taxable HRA.	4
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	11
Other Important Information:	12
1. Surviving spouses eligible for spousal pension benefits will receive benefits at 75% of the formula benefit rate for pre-1982 service.	13
	14
2. Allowance grants and local expenses of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits are paid by Wespeth or the Conference Treasurer must meet 2020/2024 Book of Discipline guidelines and are subject to the approval by the Arkansas Conference. There are no grants at this time.	15
	16
	17
	18
3. The institution, board or organization paying the salary of a minister on special appointment without annuity claim on the conference shall make provision for the pension of such person.	19
	20
	21
4. Attention is called to ¶1507.3 in the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline, regarding eligibility to participate in CRSP and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP). In order to provide adequately for the active pension program (current and past funding), death & disability benefits, retiree healthcare support and well care in 2025-2026 the conference has budgeted from the conference tithe \$585,065. That total is broken down as:	22
	23
	24
	25
	26
• Healthcare premium stipends for disabled clergy on approved medical leave shall be \$35,000.	27
	28
• Healthcare premium stipends for retirees & spouses shall be \$750,000.	29
	30
• Administration \$30,000.	30
5. We remind all pastors and local churches of ¶638.9 in the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline, which sets forth the requirement that payments on the pension and benefit program of the conference be in exact proportion to payments made on the salary or salaries, including housing of the ordained minister or clergy serving it. ¶638.9 requires the local church treasurer and/or pastor to adjust the cash salary and payment to be in the same proportion as the amount paid to the pension and benefit program of the conference. ¶638.9 adds that it shall not be permissible for a pastor to receive a bonus or other supplementary compensation tending to defeat proportional payment.	31
	32
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6. ¶638.4 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline requires the Conference Board to keep a permanent record of defaults by churches of the conference in paying clergy pension and benefits. The board is further required to render annually to each church that is in default a statement of the amounts in default for that and preceding years. The Conference default total was \$46,091.39. According to our Conference Treasurer, for 2023 the following churches were in default by greater than \$500 on the direct billed Clergy Retirement Security Program & the CPP premiums by the following amounts:	39
	40
	41
	42
	43
	44
	45
	46
Name of Church/Charge Arrearage as of 3/31/2025	47
	48
Total:	49
	50

- 1 7. Notice of claims request for pension credit shall be made in writing to the Conference Benefits
2 Officer, POB 3611 Little Rock, AR 72203-3611.
- 3 8. In determining years of service, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall carefully
4 examine and consider those years listed in the conference Journal prior to accepting them as
5 valid years; and any years in question shall be subject to validation by the applicant and by
6 approval of the Board of Pensions.
- 7 9. Copies of individual service records are held at Wespath, 1901 Chestnut Ave, Glenview, IL
8 60025-1604.
- 9 10. A Retired Minister's Day is recommended to be the Third Sunday of May each year. The
10 purpose of this day is to recognize the service of the retired servants and their families, and to
11 involve the local churches in the recognition of the needs, both present and future.
 - 12 a. If a retired minister does not reside within the bounds of a charge, but a member of a retired
13 minister's family does, they shall be invited to participate in the service (or observance);
14 otherwise, recognition of these servants, and their service, should be observed
15 appropriately. "Appropriately" should be determined by the Pastor/Parish Relations
16 Committee of each local church. This committee shall have the responsibility of locating
17 these people and relate the service of these persons to the local church and our Annual
18 Conference. The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits will be responsible for
19 providing promotional ideas and some materials (i.e., total years of service, percentage of
20 retired ministers serving churches while in their retired status, etc.) when requested.
- 21 11. Please notify the Conference Center Benefits Office when:
 - 22 a. You are eligible to enroll in pensions programs;
 - 23 b. Information relative to pension matters is needed;
 - 24 c. You have questions about participating in Social Security;
 - 25 d. You have questions about healthcare;
 - 26 e. A change in marital status, mailing address or income occurs;
 - 27 f. You have a question about past service or annuity credit or to request a change in service
28 records;
 - 29 g. There are health issues that may lead to disability;
 - 30 h. Death in the immediate family occurs;
 - 31 i. A change of beneficiary is desired;
 - 32 j. Request for retirement is made to the bishop, cabinet, and board of ordained ministry;
 - 33 k. You Separate or Withdraw to Unite with an Other Denomination.

35 **2025-2026 Housing Allowances for the Arkansas Conference**

36 The Arkansas Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/
37 housing allowances for active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

38
39 WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"),
40 of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through
41 ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are
42 duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church ("Clergypersons");

43
44 WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active
45 Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross
46 compensation;

47
48 WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled
49 Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired,
50 terminated, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as an appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension, severance, or disability payments received from plans authorized under The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (the “Discipline”), which includes all such payments from Wespath by each active, retired, terminated, or clergyperson receiving disability benefits who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

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

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

The 2026 Funding Plan is in process. When approved by Wespath it will be available on the ARUMC website.

Submitted by:
Roy P. Smith, Board of Pension & Health Benefits Chairperson
Todd Burris, Treasurer
Wendy Brunson Daniels, Conference Benefits Officer

Board of Trustees

The Arkansas Conference Board of Trustees has met monthly since September 2024, except December 2024. To onboard new members, we: a. reviewed the Re-Affiliation Policy adopted in the 2024 annual Conference; b. scheduled monthly meetings; and c. elected officers as per Discipline ¶ 2512.2.

Our 2025-2026 officers are:

- President - Rev. Maxine Allen, 2026 (clergy)
- Vice President - Stark Ligon, 2028 (lay)
- Treasurer - Todd Burris (ex-officio, Director of Admin Services/Treasurer)
- Secretary - Alison Huskey (ex-officio, Executive Assistant)

We have established the following priorities for this conference year:

- Increase transparency in reporting
- Develop a checklist of ¶ 2549 for use by the cabinet and the board of trustees in 2025
- Review the Standing Rules
- Develop sub-committees/task groups on:
 - Local Church Insurance
 - Real estate/property
 - Legacy/Redevelopment
 - Litigation

In October, the officers attended a joint meeting with the cabinets of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Mission Conferences. During this meeting, we discussed recent Judicial Conference decisions and shared best practices. Additionally, we discussed information sharing and partnerships.

In February, the President and Treasurer attended training sponsored by the General Board of Finance and Administration in Houston. Rev. Maxine Allen attended the Trustee Track, and Todd Burris attended for Annual Conference Treasurers. At that event, we learned several things we will apply in Arkansas.

Church Closings/Discontinuance (¶ 2549)

Central District

- Gardner, 413 Hammond Dr, Hot Springs, AR 71913 (8/15/2024)

Northeast District

- DeValls Bluff, 3598 Main St, DeValls Bluff, AR 72041 (2/16/2025)
- Ravenden, 210 First St, Ravenden, AR 72459 (12/31/2023)

Property For Sale For The Benefit of the Conference

Central District

- Aaron Cemetery, Pulaski County
- Gardner, 413 Hammond Dr, Hot Springs, AR 71913
- Vacant Lot, parcel 001-10639-000, Saline County

Northeast District

- Vacant Lot, parcel 030-00093-000, Randolph County
- Wiseman, CR 5, Wiseman, AR 72587

Northwest District

- Cherry Hill, 4014 Polk CR 70, Mena, AR 71953 (Par. 2549.3.b)
- Mount Pleasant, Hwy 248, Waldron AR 72958 (Par. 2549.3.b)
- Waltreak, Hwy 80 Box 25133, Waltreak, AR 72833 (Par. 2549.3.b)

South District

- Lydesdale, 2820 Columbia 61, Magnolia AR 71753
- Spring Hill, 601 Hwy 355 W, Hope, AR 71801 (Par. 2549.3.b)

Property Sold For The Benefit of the Conference
{income - expenses = net (net loss)}

Property	District	Sales Price	Expenses	Net
Emerson	SO	\$37,434	\$19,095	\$18,339
Judsonia	NE	\$117,000	\$30,453	\$86,547
Stephens	SO	\$16,232	\$41,681	-\$25,449

Exigent Circumstances (§ 2549.3(b))

Property	District
Cherry Hill	NW
Grady	SO
Hunter’s Chapel-Roe	SO
Jasper	NW
Keo	CE
Marion	NE
Marvell	NE
Mayflower	CE
Mount Pleasant-Waldron	NW
Pleasant Hill-Texarkana	SO
Rockport	SO
Waltreak	NW

Additional recommendations and action items may be presented during the 2025 Annual Conference but were not ready for distribution when this report was printed.

We want to thank outgoing trustees Rev. Bonda Moyer and Mr. Greg Spencer for their outstanding service and commitment to the Arkansas Conference Trustees. Their willingness to work and their wisdom in decision-making will certainly be missed.

Submitted by:

Rev. Maxine Allen, President
Stark Ligon, Vice President
Todd Burris, Treasurer
Alison Huskey, Secretary

The Arkansas Conference Standing Rules

As adopted by the 2024 Annual Conference

Updated March 1, 2025 with 2020/2024 Book of Discipline Paragraph References

Chapter One

GENERAL PROVISIONS

101. Mission

The Mission of the Arkansas Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ equipped to transform the world with excellence and passion.

102. Vision

The Vision of the Arkansas Conference is congregations and surrounding communities transformed by the Holy Spirit to demonstrate love of God and neighbor, holy living and justice.

103. Trajectory

The Trajectory of the Arkansas Conference is to create vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped and sent to transform lives, communities and the world.

104. Core Measures

1. We will be enriched by our Wesleyan heritage of scriptural holiness so that we are connected by our mission of making disciples instead of being connected by our apportionments, appointments and benefits.
2. We will establish the mission field as the primary focus of our attention and resources instead of directing the majority of our attention and resources to mere maintenance of congregations and clergy.
3. We will equip laity and clergy to transform individuals, communities and the world instead of trying to satisfy personal preferences of current members and ensure congregational preservation.
4. We will address the unique context of each mission field instead of depending on standardized programs and structures.

105. Establishment of Standing Rules

The Arkansas Annual Conference establishes the Standing Rules under the authority of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ¶ 610, which permits the Annual Conference to structure its own administrative procedures and ministries in order to accomplish its purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

106. Purpose of Standing Rules

The Standing Rules prescribe the administrative procedures the Annual Conference will utilize to carry out its mission, vision, core measures and trajectory.

107. Changes to or Suspension of Standing Rules

A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Annual Conference members present and voting shall be required to change or suspend the Standing Rules.

108. Procedural Authority

Roberts Rules of Order shall be the procedural authority for the Annual Conference when not in conflict with the current Book of Discipline, Arkansas Conference Standing Rules or Arkansas Annual Conference Session Rules.

109. Definitions

- 1. *The Discipline*: unless otherwise noted, refers to the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.
- 2. *Annual Conference or Conference*: unless otherwise noted, refers to the Arkansas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- 3. *Conference Agency*: any council, board, commission, committee, task force, or other structural grouping established by the Standing Rules of the Conference or mandated by The Discipline.
- 4. *Ex-officio member*: unless otherwise noted, all ex-officio members shall have vote.
- 5. **Majority Vote**: A majority vote is defined as more than half of the members present and voting.
- 6. *Resolution*: A non-legislative proposal for the Annual Conference to address or take action regarding a particular issue.
- 7. *Petition*: Proposed changes to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* or *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church* that are forwarded to the General Conference for action.

Annual Conference Session: Any regular or special session of the Annual Conference comprised of clergy and lay members as mandated by The Book of Discipline, Standing Rules or Structure.

110. Mandated Changes

The Committee on Review and Research shall work with the Conference Secretary, Journal Editor and Assistant to the Bishop to ensure that changes mandated by General Conference will be reflected in the Conference Standing Rules, Structure and Journal.

Chapter Two
ORGANIZATION OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

201. Conference Structure

The structure of the Annual Conference shall be flexible, responsive and inclusive of age, gender and diverse ethnicity.

202. Changes to Structure

A 60% supermajority of the Annual Conference members present and voting shall be required to change the Conference Structure.

203. Officers of the Conference

1 The Officers of the Conference shall be the following and are governed by the provisions of the
2 current Book of Discipline. In the 2016 Book of Discipline, they are:

- 3 1. Bishop ¶¶414-416
- 4 2. Conference Secretary ¶603.7
- 5 3. Conference Treasurer ¶619
- 6 4. Conference Statistician ¶603.7
- 7 5. Conference Chancellor ¶603.8
- 8 6. Conference Lay Leader ¶607
- 9 a. The Conference Lay Leader shall be nominated by the Conference Nominating
10 Committee upon consultation with the bishop and Board of Laity and elected by the
11 Annual Conference. Terms of office shall begin at the adjournment of the annual
12 conference at which they are elected and shall be for a period of four years with a
13 maximum of two consecutive four-year terms, with a minimum of four years before
14 reelection.

16 **204. Lay Members of the Annual Conference ¶¶602.4 – 602.10**

- 18 1. The lay membership of the Arkansas Annual Conference shall be governed by the
19 provisions of the current Book of Discipline. (In the 2016 Book of Discipline, the relevant
20 paragraphs are 32, 33, 602.1(e) and 602.4.)
- 21 2. In addition to the disciplinary provisions, there shall be added to the lay membership
22 an additional one youth between the ages of twelve and seventeen from each district
23 currently serving on the District or Conference Council on Youth Ministry and one young
24 adult between the ages of eighteen and thirty from each district to be selected by the
25 District Leadership Team or District Nominating Committee in consultation with the District
26 Superintendent.
- 27 3. When at any time a lay member is excused by the Annual Conference from further
28 attendance during the session, the duly elected alternate lay member, if present, shall be
29 seated. The lay member or the alternate shall be the lay member of the Annual Conference,
30 and it shall be the duty of the lay member to report to the local church on actions of the
31 Annual Conference. The lay member or alternate, whoever was last seated in the annual
32 conference, shall be seated in a special session of the annual conference when convened
33 (Par.602.5)

35 **205. Clergy Members of the Annual Conference ¶¶ 602.1 – 602.3**

36
37 The clergy membership of the Annual Conference shall consist of deacons and elders in full
38 connection (¶333), provisional members (¶327), associate members, affiliate members (¶344.4,
39 586.4), and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge (¶317).

- 40 1. Clergy members in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual
41 conference except in the election of lay delegates to the General and jurisdictional
42 conferences and shall have sole responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and
43 conference relations of clergy.
- 44 2. Provisional clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all
45 matters except constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General
46 and jurisdictional conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference
47 relations of clergy. Provisional clergy members who have completed all of their educational
48 requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences.
- 49 3. Associate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all
50

matters except constitutional amendments, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at the clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (§ 635.1). Affiliate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the

4. constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General and jurisdictional conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
5. Full-time and part-time local pastors shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to the General and jurisdictional conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When local pastors are members of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at the clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (§ 634.1). Local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences.

206. Equalizing Lay and Clergy Membership

If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the Annual Conference, the following formula will be used in the Arkansas Conference to nominate and elect persons for the purpose of lay equalization (Par.33, 602.1(b):

1. When additional lay members are required to equalize representation, the total number needed will be divided among the districts in proportion to the ratio of lay membership of each district.
2. Persons previously elected by the annual conference or district conference to the following positions shall be given vote and subtracted from the total lay members needed to elect within the district in which they reside:
 - a. Lay members of the Cabinet and lay officers of the conference.
 - b. Lay Delegates and Alternate Lay Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference during the quadrennium for which they are elected.
 - c. Lay chairpersons of conference boards, committees and agencies
 - d. Officers of the Conference Boards of Laity, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and Conference Council on Youth Ministries
 - e. Elected laypersons to General and Jurisdictional Conference boards and agencies
 - f. District presidents of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and District Councils on Youth Ministry
3. If additional lay members are still needed, The Conference Secretary will notify each District Superintendent of the number of at-large members their district nominations committee is to nominate. With attention given to racial, gender and theological diversity, as well as adequate representation of youth, young adults and small-membership congregations, district nominating committees will present a slate of at-large lay members for election at a District Conference. Nominations from the floor will be allowed.
4. Upon their election, the District Superintendent shall notify these persons in writing of their membership status.
5. The names and addresses of lay members of the Annual Conference elected by the Charge Conferences shall be compiled by the District Superintendents and sent to the Conference Secretary at least 60 days prior to the opening day of the Annual Conference session. Names and addresses of lay members elected at the District Conference shall be sent to the Conference Secretary within one week of election.

207. Pre-Conference Journal

There shall be a Pre-Conference Journal, which shall contain reports of all program agencies of the Conference, proposed legislation, resolutions and petitions, and information about the Annual Conference session. This Pre-Conference Journal shall be provided to each member of the Arkansas Conference at least 30 days before the annual session. The Conference Secretary shall be the editor of this publication. Pre-conference reports submitted for inclusion in the Pre-Conference Journal shall be submitted to the Conference Secretary by a deadline to be determined and widely publicized by the Conference Secretary. Any agency making a report not included in the Pre-Conference Journal that proposes changes in policy or has financial implications shall provide the Conference Treasurer and chair of CF&A with the report no later than 10 days prior to the opening Business Session of Annual Conference.

208. Resolutions and Petitions

1. Resolutions or petitions not offered by a Conference agency must be signed by at least ten lay and/or clergy members of the upcoming Arkansas Annual Conference Session. These signatures must be obtained before the proposed resolution or petition may be submitted to the Conference Secretary. Petitions and resolutions must be included in the Pre-Conference Journal to be considered by the Annual Conference Session.
2. *Footnotes.* Resolutions and petitions shall contain footnotes that clarify the source of any facts, quotes, or generalizations made within the proposed resolution or petition. These footnotes must be included with the proposed resolution or petition before it may be submitted to the Conference Secretary. These footnotes shall include enough information to allow the Conference some level of confidence that the content of the proposed resolution or petition is accurate and reliable. These footnotes shall also include enough information to allow the content of the proposed resolution or petition to be checked for accuracy.

209. Items for Distribution

All items for general distribution shall be prepared by the sponsoring person or agency at their own expense and must be in the hands of the Conference Secretary no later than 3:00 p.m. on the day before the opening Business Session.

210. Journal of the Annual Conference

1. There shall be a Journal, which contains a record of the Annual Conference proceedings.
2. All content for the Journal shall be provided to the Conference Secretary no later than the close of the Annual Conference session. All material to be published in the Journal that does not meet this deadline may be excluded unless specific permission for delay is granted by the Conference Secretary. The Conference Secretary, Dean of the Cabinet, and Conference Treasurer shall be authorized to edit all reports for printing in the Journal.
3. Addresses delivered to the Conference, except for the Episcopal Address, Laity Address and Youth Address, shall not be printed in the Conference Journal.
4. All reports not printed in the Pre-Conference Journal shall be in the hands of the Conference Secretary and Presiding Officer no later than 3:00 p.m. the day before the opening Business Session.
5. The Conference Standing Rules shall be reprinted each year in the Journal, incorporating any changes made during the preceding Annual Conference.

6. The Conference Secretary shall distribute an electronic copy of the Journal to active and retired clergy, seminarians, all probationary members, lay members of the Annual Conference, and chairpersons of Conference board, committees, and agencies. Printed copies may be obtained upon request.

211. Election of Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences

At the Annual Conference session preceding the year of delegate election, the Conference may adopt rules governing the election of delegates.

212. Conference Expense Fund

Registration fees and non-designated offerings taken at the Annual Conference shall be administered by the Conference Treasurer to defray expenses of the session.

213. Payment of Annual Conference Expenses

Expenses of the Annual Conference session shall be paid by funds received from:

1. Registration fees, which shall be set by the Conference Session Planning Committee;
2. Offerings, other than special designated offerings; and
3. If necessary, the Conference Administration Fund.

214. Retired Clergy, Spouses, and Surviving Spouses

No registration fee shall be required for retired clergy, their spouses or surviving spouses. The expense of retired clergy, spouses, and surviving spouses shall be paid in keeping with the guidelines of the Council on Finance and Administration when proper vouchers are presented.

215. Student Local Pastors and Seminary Students

No registration fee shall be required for student local pastors or seminary students.

216. Location of the Annual Conference Session

Location of Annual Conference sessions will be selected by the Annual Conference Planning Committee and reported to the Annual Conference on a schedule sufficient to secure adequate facilities for meetings and lodging.

217. Annual Conference Session Rules

The Annual Conference Session rules will be proposed by the Annual Conference Session Planning Committee and adopted at the opening Business Session of each Annual Conference by a majority vote. Session rules shall remain in effect during all sessions of the Arkansas Conference until superseded by action of the Annual Conference.

218. Virtual Meetings

1. When the Bishop, Director of Connectional Ministries, Conference Lay Leader, and a majority of District Superintendents are in agreement that circumstances call for a meeting of the Annual Conference to be held in whole or in part by virtual conferencing, the Bishop may call for such a meeting of the Annual Conference to be held as allowed by Arkansas

1 Act 253 of 2021. Virtual presence in such a duly called meeting shall be deemed equivalent
2 to presence in person.

- 3 2. The Director of Administrative Services shall recommend the method of remote balloting or
4 voting to be used, which shall be clearly specified in the call for the virtual or hybrid meeting
5 issued by the bishop.
- 6 3. Virtual and Hybrid Annual Conference meetings must be organized and conducted such
7 that all members have reasonable opportunity and ability to participate in the meeting, can
8 simultaneously hear discussion, and can, as recognized by the chair, speak and address all
9 those meeting as well as vote on matters submitted at the meeting.
- 10 4. This provision for remote voting includes all matters that may properly come before the
11 Annual Conference. Further, voting eligibility and voting margins designated in the Book of
12 Discipline or Session Rules of the Conference will be followed.
- 13 5. These provisions may also be used for District Conferences, Lay and Clergy Sessions, and
14 any Special Called Session of Annual Conference.

15 Chapter Three

16 NOMINATION AND ELECTION TO CONFERENCE AGENCIES AND OFFICES

17 301. Conference Nominating Committee

18 1. Purpose.

- 19 a. Except as otherwise indicated by The Book of Discipline or the Standing Rules of
20 the Arkansas Conference, the Conference Nominating Committee shall identify and
21 nominate all members and chairpersons of the Annual Conference boards, teams,
22 commissions and committees, the Conference Lay Leader, Associate Lay Leader, the
23 Conference Secretary, and the Conference Statistician.

24 2. Structure.

- 25 a. Composition Membership, elected by the Conference for terms of four years with a
26 maximum of two consecutive terms, shall include one clergy and one lay member from
27 each district and two cabinet representatives. In order to ensure racial, ethnic, and
28 gender diversity, there may be up to four at-large members. The following shall serve as
29 ex-officio members with vote: The Bishop (or representative), Conference Lay Leader,
30 Associate Lay Leader, President of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries and the
31 Chairperson (or representative) of the Committee on Ethnic and Language Concerns.
32 The Director of Connectional Ministries and Assistant to the Bishop shall serve as ex-
33 officio without vote. The Committee shall reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.
34 They shall be elected by the Conference for terms of four years with a maximum of two
35 consecutive terms.
- 36 b. Nominations for Committee Membership. Nominations shall be received from each
37 District Leadership Board. Nominations for membership on the Conference Nominating
38 Committee shall be received from the District Leadership Board and elected by the
39 Annual Conference. Additional nominations may come from the floor. Elected members
40 may serve a maximum of eight consecutive years as long as they continue to live within
41 the bounds of the district. If an elected district member moves out of the district mid-
42 year, they will continue serving on this committee until their successor is elected at the
43 next Conference session.
- 44 c. Filling Vacancies on the Committee. Any vacancy occurring between sessions of the
45 Annual Conference shall be filled for the remainder of the term at the succeeding
46

session of the Annual Conference in the same manner as described above. If a member representing a district is unable or unwilling to attend meetings, the District Superintendent may name a substitute to ensure that the district is represented.

- d. Officers. The committee shall organize, by electing from within its membership, a chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary, and such other officers as it may deem necessary.

3. Process.

- a. All nominees shall be consulted regarding their nomination. The right to nominate from the floor of the Annual Conference session shall not be abridged. "In the nomination and election of the membership of councils, boards, and agencies of the Annual Conference, special attention shall be given to the inclusion of clergywomen, youth, (§256.3), young adults, older adults, persons from churches with small memberships, persons with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons, in keeping with policies for general church agencies. It is further recommended that the membership of such agencies, except for the Board of Ordained Ministry, include one-third clergy, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen, who are professing members of local churches." (§610.5) Attention shall also be given to geographical representation.

302. Board, Agency and Committee Service

1. Elective membership on any specific board, agency, or committee of the Annual Conference may not exceed two consecutive terms of four years, excepting ex-officio membership, unless otherwise prescribed by The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. After eight consecutive years on any specific board, agency, or committee of the Annual Conference, no person may return to the same body until the passage of four years, excepting ex-officio membership. Membership begins upon election, with the date noted in the Conference Journal.
2. No person shall be elected by the Annual Conference to serve on more than two Council, Board, Committee, Commission, Agency, etc. at any one time. This does not affect ex-officio positions.
3. In the nomination and election of the membership of councils, boards, and agencies of the Annual Conference, special attention shall be given to the inclusion of clergywomen, youth (§256.3), young adults, older adults, persons from churches with small memberships, persons with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons, in keeping with policies for general church agencies. It is further recommended that the membership of such agencies, except for the Board of Ordained Ministry, include one-third clergy, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen, who are professing members of local churches." (§610.5) Special attention shall also be given to geographical representation.
4. Members of general agencies shall serve as ex-officio members of the corresponding Annual Conference agency or its equivalent structure. If this results in a person being a member of more than one Annual Conference agency in violation of either Annual Conference policy or another provision of The Book of Discipline, the person shall choose the Annual Conference agency on which to serve.
5. No member or employee of any Conference agency and no employee, trustee, or director of any agency or institution participating in the funds of any Conference budget shall be eligible for voting membership on the Council on Finance and Administration. (§611.2)
6. Agencies of the Annual Conference are to keep records of member attendance and participation and report to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee may recommend to the Annual Conference that new board/committee members be elected to

- replace those whose lack of participation inhibits the effectiveness of the board/committee.
7. Unless provided for elsewhere, a vacancy between sessions of the Annual Conference shall be filled by the Cabinet on nomination by the Nominating Committee.

303. Task Force Service

1. Boards, committees, commissions, and other agencies are encouraged to develop task force groups to address emerging missional opportunities. Each board, committee, commission, and other agencies will invite to these task forces persons who will bring passion, experience, and expertise to the work
2. Membership on Task Forces shall be inclusive of ethnic minorities and persons from small membership churches. A balance of laymen, laywomen, and clergy shall be the norm.
3. The norm for Task Force membership shall be a broad base of participation from throughout the Conference.
4. Persons are limited to membership on one Conference task force at a given time. It is recommended that persons will not immediately begin service on a new task force after completion of their service.

Chapter Four CONFERENCE AGENCIES AND OFFICES

The Arkansas Annual Conference establishes the following Structure under the authority of The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, which permits the Annual Conference to structure its own ministries and administrative procedures in order to accomplish its purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ. The Structure prescribes the ministries, organization and procedures the Annual Conference will use in carrying out its mission, vision, core measures and trajectory. ¶610

401. Required by The Book of Discipline ¶¶607.9-654

(The following includes required agencies and officers, any rules that impact the agency or officer and the name given by The Arkansas Annual Conference to that agency if it differs from the name listed in The Book of Discipline.)

1. Board of Discipleship ¶¶ 630, 645

2. Board of Laity ¶ 631

3. Conference Associate Lay Leader ¶ 607.9

- a. The Conference Associate Lay Leader shall assist the Conference Lay Leader in fostering awareness of the role of the laity in achieving the mission of the Church and for enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the Annual Conference, district, and local church.
- b. The Conference Associate Lay Leader shall be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee upon consultation with the bishop and Board of Laity and elected by the Annual Conference. Terms of office shall begin at the adjournment of the annual conference at which they are elected and shall be for a period of four years with a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms, with a minimum of four years before

reelection. The Conference Associate Lay Leader shall be a member of the Annual Conference, the Conference Nominating Committee, the Conference Committee on Episcopacy, and the Annual Conference Planning Committee; and may be designated by the Bishop to any Conference agency.

4. Board of Ordained Ministry ¶ 635

5. Committee on Episcopacy ¶ 637

6. Episcopal Residence Committee ¶ 638

7. Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry ¶ 634

- a. Membership of the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry shall include a chairperson and two representatives from each district nominated by the District Leadership Board and elected by the Annual Conference. In addition, there shall be one representative from each Wesley Foundation, one representative from the campus ministry at Hendrix College named by the President of Hendrix College, and one representative of the campus ministry at Philander Smith College named by the President of Philander Smith College. The campus minister from each campus and the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries shall be ex-officio members without vote. In addition, any member of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry from the Annual Conference shall be a member of the Conference Board.

8. Board of Global Ministries ¶¶ 633, 642

- a. The membership of the Conference Board of Global Ministries shall include a Chairperson, the Conference Secretary of Global Ministries and the District Secretaries of Global Ministries who shall be nominated by the District Leadership Board and elected by the Annual Conference, the Mission Coordinator of Education and Interpretation of the Conference United Methodist Women.
- b. The Board shall designate a coordinator (or coordinators) for Volunteer In Mission opportunities, a coordinator (or coordinators) of missionary personnel, a coordinator (or coordinators) for disaster response, a coordinator (or coordinators) for ecumenical and interreligious concerns, and a coordinator (or coordinators) of Parish and Community Development. In addition, any member of the General Board of Global Ministries from the Annual Conference shall be an ex-officio member of the Conference Board.

9. Conference Secretary of Global Ministries ¶ 633.3

- a. The Secretary of Global Ministries shall be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual Conference and will be a member of the Board of Global Ministries.

10. Conference Board of Church and Society ¶¶ 629, 653

- a. The membership of the Conference Board of Church and Society shall consist of a chairperson, one representative from each district, the United Methodist Women Mission Coordinator for Social Action, and one at-large member nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. The membership shall

1 include persons with disabilities. The board will be half clergy and half laity. The Board
2 shall elect a secretary from its members.

- 3
4 b. The members of the Board shall organize themselves into committees to work on the
5 various issues of concern to the Board as outlined in the Social Principles, including
6 local, state, national, and international issues. The Board shall include a coordinator
7 (or coordinators) of Peace with Justice Ministries. In addition, the Board shall include a
8 coordinator (or coordinators) of disability concerns.

9
10 **11. Conference Commission on Religion and Race ¶ 643**

- 11
12 a. Membership shall include a chairperson and one member from each district to be
13 represented by racial and ethnic minority persons. Selection of commission members
14 shall ensure adequate representation of women, youth, young adults, older adults, and
15 people with disabilities.
- 16
17 b. Members of the General Commission on Religion and Race residing in the Annual
18 Conference shall be ex-officio members of the Annual Conference Commission on
19 Religion and Race with vote. The commission chairperson and members shall be
20 nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual
21 Conference.

22 **12. Conference Committee on the Status and Role of Women ¶ 644**

- 23
24 a. Membership will include one representative from each district, and a chairperson, who
25 shall be a woman, to be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and
26 elected by the Annual Conference. In addition, there shall be a representative from the
27 United Methodist Women and the Board of Laity.

28
29 **13. Committee on Ethnic and Language Concerns ¶¶ 632, 654**

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31 a. The membership shall include:
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33 1. Chairperson to be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected
34 by the Annual Conference.
- 35
36 2. One representative from each district, appointed by the District Superintendent.
37 Race, gender, and age shall be taken into consideration, with special attention to
38 ensure that the committee represents the racial makeup of ethnic groups within the
39 Arkansas Conference (Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans,
40 Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans.) At no time shall ethnic persons make up
41 less than 51% of the persons represented on the committee.
- 42
43 3. Representatives without vote:
- 44
45 a. A representative of the Conference Staff;
- 46
47 b. One representative from the Conference Commission on Religion and Race
48 (chairperson or designee) to act as liaison; and
- 49
50 c. Liaison(s) to other bodies as needed to accomplish the Committee's work.

14. United Methodist Women ¶ 647	1
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15. United Methodist Men ¶ 648	4
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16. Conference Council on Youth Ministries ¶ 649	6
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17. Conference Council on Young Adult Ministries ¶ 650	8
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18. Conference Council on Adult, Singles, Family, and Older Adult Ministries ¶ 651	10
	11
19. Council on Finance and Administration ¶ 612	12
	13
a. The Council members will be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee	14
and elected by the Annual Conference. The Council shall be composed of twenty-	15
one (21) members. The Conference Coordinator of Stewardship shall be an ex-officio	16
member. There will be at least one more layperson than clergy included on the Council.	17
Members will be elected to four-year terms of office. Those whose terms have expired	18
will be eligible to be elected to one additional four-year term. Churches of fewer than	19
200 members shall be represented on the council. Ex-officio members of the Council	20
(without vote) shall be (1) the Conference Treasurer, (2) any member of the General	21
Council on Finance and Administration who resides in Arkansas, (3) the presiding Bishop	22
(4) a Cabinet representative and (5) the Director of Connectional Ministries. The Council	23
will elect from its voting membership a president, vice president, and secretary.	24
	25
20. Conference Treasurer ¶ 619	26
	27
21. Conference Statistician ¶ 603.7	28
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22. Conference Secretary ¶ 603.7	30
	31
23. Conference Chancellor ¶ 603.8	32
	33
24. Conference Board of Trustees ¶ 2512	34
	35
25. Board of Pension and Health Benefits ¶ 639	36
	37
26. Commission on Archives and History ¶ 641	38
	39
27. Commission on Communications ¶ 646	40
	41
28. Commission on Equitable Compensation ¶ 625	42
	43
29. Joint Committee on Incapacity ¶ 652	44
	45
30. Administrative Review Committee ¶ 636	46
	47
31. Committee on Investigation ¶ 2703.2a	48
	49
32. Committee on Investigation for Deacons ¶ 2703.2b	50

33. Cabinet ¶ 424

- a. The purpose of the Cabinet shall be to act as the central team that develops and implements ministry and mission strategies of the Arkansas Annual Conference. It also shall serve as the body to which all financial requests for ministry resources are submitted. The Director of Connectional Ministries will have primary responsibility to receive requests. It will be the responsibility of the Cabinet to present a budget to the Council on Finance and Administration with a listing of ministry priorities and rationale for budget requests.
- b. The membership of the Cabinet shall be determined by the presiding bishop to address the missional needs of the Annual Conference.

34. Committee on Disability Concerns ¶ 653

402. Additional agencies, committees, and offices ¶ 610.2

(The following includes additional agencies and officers, any rules that impact the agency or officer and the name given by The Arkansas Annual Conference.)

1. Leadership Table

- a. The Leadership Table shall resource and facilitate ministry networks to strengthen local church ministries.
- b. The Leadership Table shall be composed of the chairs or designated representatives of the Conference boards and agencies and the coordinators of ministries within those entities under the guidance of the Director of Connectional Ministries.

2. Conference Council on Children's Ministries

- a. The Conference Council on Children's Ministries is responsible for resourcing and providing ongoing training for local church children's ministry leaders, for offering district and conference level discipleship opportunities for children, and for promoting and advocating for children's ministries throughout the conference.
- b. The Conference Council on Children's Ministries shall be composed of the following position, with authority to add persons if required.
 - 1) Conference Coordinator
 - 2) Three representatives of each district, organized in 3-year classes (w vote)
 - 3) Safe Sanctuary Coordinator (w/o vote)
 - 4) Wonderfully Made Trainer (w/o vote)
 - 5) New Children's Minister Mentor (w/o vote)
 - 6) Child Care Ministry Advocate (w/o vote)

3. Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries

- a. The Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries is responsible for providing experiences in outdoor settings that enable persons of all ages to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to grow in their faith. The Conference Camp and Retreat Ministry Committee will be responsible for budget requests and funding allocations. The Committee will provide proper communication and alignment between Arkansas Conference entities and camps/retreat centers with relationship statements with the conference.

- b. The committee will consist of the following positions, with authority to add persons if required.
 1. Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries Coordinator
 2. Director of Connectional Ministries
 3. Conference Director of Children's Ministries or representative
 4. Conference Director of Youth Ministries or representative
 5. Conference Council on Youth Ministries President or designee
 6. Conference Young Adult Ministries Chair
 7. Conference Coordinator of Adult, Singles, Family and Older Adult Ministries
 8. Board of Higher Education Representative
 9. Camp Tanako Director
 10. Mount Eagle Retreat Center Director
 11. Bear Creek Camp Representative
 12. Shoal Creek Camp Representative

4. Bishop's Annual Conference Session Planning Task Group

- a. The Bishop's Annual Conference Session Planning Task Group shall:
 1. Advise the Bishop in developing the Annual Conference theme, agenda, and selection of conference preachers;
 2. Advise the Bishop on dates and locations for future Annual Conference sessions to present to the Annual Conference for approval.
 3. Advise and approve plans of the worship committee for the Annual Conference session;
 4. Maintain a checklist of local host responsibilities;
 5. Review and approve an evaluation process;
 6. Review evaluations of the previous session prior to planning the next session.
- b. Membership of the Bishop's Annual Conference Session Planning Task Group shall be:
 1. Bishop, who shall serve as chairperson;

2. Assistant to the Bishop, who shall serve as vice-chairperson;
3. Bishop's Executive Assistant who shall serve as secretary;
4. Annual Conference Session Administrator
5. Worship Coordinator selected by the bishop;
6. Director of Communications;
7. Conference Treasurer or designee;
8. Host District Superintendent or designee;
9. Annual Conference Session Technical Director
10. At-large members, selected by the Bishop, in order to ensure racial and gender diversity within the task group.
11. Other members selected as needed by the bishop.

5. Committee on Review and Research

- a. The Committee on Review and Research shall: 1) Ensure changes in the Conference Standing Rules and Structure that are mandated by the General Conference and are published in each subsequent edition of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*; 2) Review all resolutions presented to the Annual Conference that call for changes in the Standing Rules or Structure and report to the Conference; and 3) Propose changes in Standing Rules and Structure that will enable the Annual Conference to more faithfully carry out its mission, vision, core measures and trajectory.
- b. The Committee on Review and Research shall include a chairperson, one representative from each district, and three at-large members. The chairperson and members shall be nominated by the Conference Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual Conference.
- c. The Committee will work with the Conference Secretary, Journal Editor, and Assistant to the Bishop to ensure that changes mandated by the General Conference are reflected in the Conference Standing Rules and Structure, and are published in each subsequent edition of the Journal. The Committee will review all resolutions, petitions, and legislation presented to the Annual Conference that calls for changes in the Standing Rules or Structure and reports to the Conference.

403. Participation by Telephone Conference or Virtual Platform

At the discretion of the agency chair or president, conference agency meetings may be held by means of a telephone conference or virtual platform through which all persons participating in the meeting have reasonable opportunity and ability to participate in the meeting, can simultaneously hear discussion and can, as recognized by the chair, speak and address all those meeting as well as vote on matters submitted at the meeting.

Chapter Five

DISTRICTS

501. District Conference (§658-659)

1. The District Conference sets the district's annual budget, elects officers, and implements the Arkansas Conference trajectory within its geographic bounds through the members, clergy, congregations, ministries, and leaders of the district.
2. In addition to the Administrative Structure, the District includes mission and ministry committees, councils, and organizations, such as those for youth, Lay Servants, and UMW.

502. District Leadership Board §660.7, §661, §669, §2518

1. The DLB serves as the district conference's administrative executive committee, with the duties and responsibilities of the District Superintendency Committee and District Trustees as well as nominations and finances. The DLB will administer the district budget, assets and real property, and personnel support.
2. The DLB shall be composed of the following:
 - a. 6 elected members with representation (§669.1, §2518) by laywomen, laymen, and clergy who serve as the District Trustees (§2518) and fulfill the role of the District's legal Board of Directors, if the District is incorporated
 - b. 2 At-Large Members §669.1
 - c. 2 members appointed by the CMS/DS
 - d. District Lay Leader §660
 - e. Chief Mission Strategist/District Superintendent
 - f. Advisory members may be added as needed (§669.2), including the district treasurer or financial steward
 - g. The bishop of the area, or his or her authorized representative, shall be an ex officio member of said committee (§669.2) in its role as the Superintendency Committee

503. District Committee on Ordained Ministry (§666)

1. The DCOM is amenable to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. It is responsible for candidacy, the examination of candidates seeking ministerial office and the ongoing credentialing for licensed local pastors.
2. Members nominated annually by the CMS/DS in consultation with the BOM chair or executive committee and approved by the annual conference §666.1

504. District Board of Church Location and Building (§2519-2524)

1. The DBCLB is responsible for reviewing building projects and purchases, and it partners with the Chief Mission Strategist/ District Superintendent (CMS/DS) to implement a strategy with conference trajectory-aligned priorities for the mission fields of the district, including the to explore the repurposing, closing and realignment of churches.
2. Membership shall be composed of:
 - a. 6-9 members nominated and elected by the Annual Conference for three-year terms and divided into classes with one-third laywomen, one-third laymen, and one-third clergy ¶2519
 - b. Chief Mission Strategist/District Superintendent
 - c. District Lay Leader (optional, ex officio) ¶660.8

505. District Lay Leader (¶660.2)

The District Lay Leader, and one or more associate district lay leaders if so desired, will be nominated by the District Leadership Board and elected at the District Conference. Terms of office shall begin at the adjournment of the district conference at which they are elected and shall be for a period of four years with a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms, with a minimum of four years before reelection.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Approved by the 2020/2024 General Conference
To be canvassed for ratification by the Annual Conferences of The United Methodist Church

[The following proposed amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church were approved by the 2020/2024 General Conference and must now be voted upon by the members of the annual conferences. It is required that each one must pass with an aggregate 2/3 approval from all voting members as canvassed by the Council of Bishops. The proposed changes are indicated by strike-through for deletions and underscore for additions.]

This document is a DRAFT to be utilized as an initial informational and educational resource. The final document is subject to editing and verification.]

Ratification Ballot #1	Calendar Item 22	Approved 586-164	April 25, 2024
	Committee Item ST29	Approved 29-0	April 22, 2024
	Petition 21039		

[Editorial Note: Numbering of paragraphs will be subject to the final editing of The Book of Discipline 2020/2024. The proposed changes in this calendar item are included for internal reference. Due to the length and complexity of this calendar item, the text and formatting from the Daily Christian Advocate is being used for context.]

AMEND ¶¶ 9, (which shall be renumbered 10), 10 (which shall be renumbered 9), 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 46, 49, 50, 52, 56, 61 and add new 13 as follows:

~~10-9. Article III~~ Article II. - There shall be ~~central~~ regional conferences for the work of the worldwide Church outside the United States of America and, if necessary, provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no regional or jurisdictional conference based on any ground other than geographical division.

~~9 10. Article II~~ Article III. - There ~~shall~~ may be jurisdictional conferences for the work of the Church in the United States of America, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are

hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no jurisdictional ~~or central~~ conference based on any ground other than geographical and regional division.

(NEW - Renumber subsequent paragraphs) **13. Article VI.**— The General Conference, regional conferences, jurisdictional conferences, and annual conferences shall have autonomy of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution, provided that any legislation enacted within the respective powers of a conference but overlapping with the powers of another shall not be rendered invalid, unless its purpose and substance are beyond the authority of the enacting body.

15. Article III. – The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General, ~~jurisdictional~~, and ~~central~~ regional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference.

In a regional conference with jurisdictions, the regional conference shall fix the ratio of representation in its jurisdictional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the jurisdictional conference and

further provided that all general and regional conference delegates will be members of their respective jurisdictional conferences.

16. Article IV.- The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, subject to the limits fixed by the Constitution, and in the exercise thereof shall have authority as follows:

...

16.3. To define and fix the powers and duties of regional conferences, jurisdictional conferences, annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of central conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.

16.4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the worldwide Church outside the United States of America.

...

16.10. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected by ~~central~~ regional conferences without jurisdictions.

...

16.12. To change the number and the boundaries of regional conferences and to change the number and the boundaries of jurisdictional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each jurisdictional conference involved.

...

16.17. To legislate what is non-adaptable for regional conferences by a 60% majority vote, while respecting the powers given to regional conferences according to ¶31.5.

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6 **23. Article I.**-The jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of as many
7 representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined
8 by a uniform basis established by the ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where
9 jurisdictions exist, provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100
10 delegates. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose
11 of this article.
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16 **24. Article II.** - All jurisdictional conferences shall have the same status and the same
17 privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution. The ratio of representation of the
18 annual conferences and missionary conferences in the General Conference and the regional
19 conference where jurisdictions exist shall be the same for all jurisdictional conferences.
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23 **25. Article III.** - The ~~General Conferences~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist
24 shall fix the basis of representation in the jurisdictional conferences, provided that the
25 jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates to
26 be elected by the annual conferences, the missionary conferences and the provisional annual
27 conferences.
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32 **26. Article IV.** - Each jurisdictional conference shall meet at the time determined by the
33 ~~Council~~ College of Bishops of the regional conference where jurisdictions exist or its delegated
34 committee, each jurisdictional conference convening on the same date as the others and at a
35 place selected by the jurisdictional committee on entertainment, appointed by its respective
36 College of Bishops unless such a committee has been appointed by the preceding jurisdictional
37 conference.
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42 **27. Article V.** - The jurisdictional conferences shall have the following powers and
43 duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conferences:
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...

4. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences, provided that there shall be no annual conference with a membership of fewer than fifty clergy in full connection, except by the consent of the ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist.

5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the jurisdiction, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Conference and in the regional conferences.

6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a ~~traveling preacher~~ clergy or lay member of that jurisdiction from the decision of a trial committee.

Section V. ~~Central~~ Regional Conferences

28. *Article I.*— There shall be ~~central~~ regional conferences for the work of the worldwide Church ~~outside the United States of America~~ with such powers, duties, ~~powers~~, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, to be exercised equitably across the regional conferences, subject to limits fixed by the Constitution.

~~The number and boundaries of the central conferences shall be determined by the Uniting Conference. Subsequently the General Conference shall have authority to change the number and boundaries of central conferences. The central conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth.~~

1. Initially, the number and boundaries of the regional conferences shall be as follows:

a) There shall be a regional conference for the work of the Church in the United States of

America that includes all of the areas that comprise the jurisdictional conferences identified in Division Two, Section VII, 37.

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5 b) The central conferences or provisional central conferences which existed prior to
6 the
7
8 postponed 2020 General Conference shall become regional or provisional regional
9 conferences.
10

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12 2. The General Conference shall have the authority to change the number and boundaries
13 of regional conferences and provisional regional conferences.
14

15 **29. Article II.**– The ~~central~~ regional conferences shall be composed of as many
16 delegates as shall be determined by a basis established by the General Conference. The delegates
17 shall be clergy and lay in equal numbers.
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19
20 **30. Article III.**– The ~~central~~ regional conferences shall meet within the year succeeding
21 the meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by
22 the preceding respective ~~central~~ regional conferences or by commissions appointed by them or
23 by the General Conference. ~~The date and place of the first meeting succeeding the Uniting~~
24 ~~Conference shall be fixed by the bishops of the respective central conferences, or in such manner~~
25 ~~as shall be determined by the General Conference.~~
26
27

28
29 **31. Article IV.**– The ~~central~~ regional conferences shall have the following powers and
30 duties as the special conditions and the mission of the Church in the area require, subject to the
31 limits fixed by the Constitution, and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference:
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33

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35 1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern, and
36 benevolent interests and institutions of the Church within their own boundaries.
37

38
39 2. In regional conferences without jurisdictions, ~~To~~ elect the bishops for the respective
40 ~~central~~ regional conferences in number as may be determined from time to time, upon a basis
41 fixed by the General Conference; to fix the tenure of their bishops, the episcopal areas and
42 residences, and to assign the bishops who are to reside in the respective regional conference to
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their areas; and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops as may be determined by the General Conference.

3. To establish and constitute such ~~central~~ regional conference boards as may be required and to elect their administrative officers.

4. To determine the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences in accordance with 40 ~~within their respective areas~~.

5. To ~~make such~~ legislate and make rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including ~~such~~ changes and adaptations of the ~~General~~ *Discipline* as follows, ~~as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference while upholding the Constitution and the decisions of General Conference in accordance with~~ 16.17:

- a) To establish and publish a regional *Discipline* with legislation and provisions pertaining to the regional, annual, district, and charge conferences within its boundaries, including qualifications and educational requirements of clergy and specialized lay ministries, and forms of organization according to the laws of the country or countries.
- b) To set standards of character and other qualifications for admission of lay members.
- c) To acknowledge annual conferences as the basic bodies of the church (§ 33) voting on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and therefore considering the requirements set forth in a regional *Discipline* regarding specialized lay ministry and license, ordination, or conference membership, as minimum requirements.
- d) To establish and publish a regional hymnal and ritual of the Church, including ecclesial acts of marriage and burial, subject to the limitations of the first and second

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5 Restrictive Rules, but authorizing to interpret Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion so
6 as to recognize the governments of the country or countries.

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9 e) To allow the annual conferences to adopt structures adequate to their mission
10 while
11 upholding mandated structures.

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13 When adapting the investigative and trial process, each Regional Book of Discipline shall
14 guarantee confidentiality, protections of the accused, protection of the accusers along
15 with the ability to adapt the process based on the legal system of each country.
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20 6. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising from the
21 rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the ~~central~~ regional
22 ~~conference~~
23

24 *Discipline* enacted by the ~~central~~ regional conference.
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27 7. To adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy,
28 including bishops, and lay members of the Church and to provide the necessary means and
29 methods of implementing the said rules; provided, however, that the ordained ministers shall not
30 be deprived of the right of trial by a clergy committee, and lay members of the Church of the
31 right of trial by a duly constituted committee of lay members; and to make changes in the
32 chargeable offenses and their penalties.
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37 ~~To~~ A regional conference or a jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, shall
38 appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a ~~traveling preacher~~ clergy
39 or lay member of that ~~central~~ the respective conference from the decision of a committee on trial.
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43 **32. Article I.**– The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members.
44 The clergy membership shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection, provisional
45 members, associate members, and local pastors under appointment. The lay membership shall
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consist of professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses, and home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries, conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference. In the annual conferences of the ~~central~~ regional conferences outside the USA, the four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived by the annual conference for young persons under thirty (30) years of age. Such persons must be professing members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election. Each charge served by more than one clergy shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members. The lay members shall have been for the two years next preceding their election members of The United Methodist Church and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election.

If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference.

33. Article II.-The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy

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5 and lay delegates to the General Conference and their respective regional jurisdictional or central
6 conferences, as well as jurisdictional conference if its regional conference has jurisdictions, on
7 all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the
8 ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference
9 under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of
10 ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the
11 conference board of ordained ministry and the committee on investigation may vote on matters
12 of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay
13 members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the
14 district committee on ordained ministry with vote. It shall discharge such duties and exercise
15 such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine.
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25 **34. Article III.**-The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the
26 General Conference and to its ~~jurisdictional or central~~ respective regional conference, as well as
27 jurisdictional conference, if its regional conference has jurisdictions, in the manner provided in
28 this section, Articles IV and V. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by
29 the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the
30 ballots cast. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation
31 in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be
32 elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the ~~jurisdictional or~~
33 ~~central~~ regional conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in
34 the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference. The additional delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or~~
35 ~~central~~ regional conference shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the
36 General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to
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the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional 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.

In regional conferences with jurisdictions, all general and regional conference delegates shall be delegates to the jurisdictional conference. Whenever possible, reserve delegates to the regional conference shall also serve in order of election as delegates to the jurisdictional conference, with any reserve delegates who cannot be seated as jurisdictional delegates becoming reserve delegates to the jurisdictional conference. As needed, additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional conference. The annual conference may also elect additional reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional conference as it may deem desirable.

35. Article IV.-The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to their respective regional and jurisdictional or central conference as well as jurisdictional conference, if its regional conference has jurisdictions, shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree or its equivalent in regional conferences outside of the USA and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

36. Article V.-The lay delegates to the General Conference and to their respective regional conference, and jurisdictional or central conferences as well as jurisdictional conference if its

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5 regional conference has jurisdictions, shall be elected by the lay members of the annual
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7 conference or provisional annual conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall
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9 have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next
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11 preceding their election, and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church
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13 for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual
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15 conference electing them at the time of holding the General Conference and ~~jurisdictional or~~
16 ~~central~~ regional conferences as well as the jurisdictional conferences, if its regional conference
17
18 has jurisdictions.

19 [DELETE 38 and 39 and renumber all of the articles within its section and renumber
20
21 all subsequent paragraphs of the Constitution.]

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23 ~~—38. Article II.—~~ The work of the Church outside the United States of America may be
24
25 formed into ~~central regional~~ conferences, the number and boundaries of which shall be
26
27 determined by the Uniting Conference, the General Conference having authority subsequently to
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29 make changes in the number and boundaries.

30 ~~—39. Article III.—~~ Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the jurisdictional
31
32 conferences may be effected by the General Conference upon the consent of a majority of the
33
34 annual conferences of each of the jurisdictional conferences involved.

35 **40 Article IVII.—** The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and
36
37 episcopal areas shall be determined by the respective regional conferences or by the jurisdiction,
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39 if a regional conference has jurisdictions, ~~jurisdictional conferences in the United States of~~
40 ~~America and by the central conferences outside the United States of America according to the~~
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42 ~~provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective structures of the~~
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44 ~~jurisdictional and the central conferences~~. The authority of regional and jurisdictional and central

conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.

46. Article II.-The bishops shall be elected by the respective regional conferences or by the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, 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~~ regional conference for ~~those elected by such central conference,~~ provided that episcopal elections in ~~central~~ regional conferences without jurisdictions shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of ~~the central~~ such regional conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

48. Article IV.-The bishops of each ~~jurisdictional and central conference~~ regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories.

49. Article V.-The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in ~~the jurisdictional or central conferences~~ their respective regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a jurisdiction may receive a bishop from another jurisdiction and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless

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5 that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless
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7 the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the
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9 episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members
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11 present and voting of the jurisdictional committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions that are
12
13 involved. After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a
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15 member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by
16
17 that jurisdictional conference.

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19 A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other
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21 temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop, provided that the
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23 request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service.

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25 In the case of an emergency in any ~~jurisdiction or central~~ regional conference or
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27 jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, through the death or disability of a bishop
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29 or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another ~~jurisdiction or central~~
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31 regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, to the work of the
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33 said ~~jurisdiction or central~~ regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has
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35 jurisdictions, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that ~~jurisdiction or central~~ regional
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37 conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions.

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39 **50. Article VI. -** ~~The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United~~
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41 ~~Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be~~
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43 ~~bishops of The United Methodist Church.~~
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45 ~~The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The~~
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47 ~~Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and b) Bishops elected by the~~
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49 ~~jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each b) Bishops elected by a~~
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~~central~~ regional conference without jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the ~~central~~ regional conference electing ~~him~~ them shall have determined.

The regional conference or the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, ~~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~~ its respective regional conference or jurisdiction, ~~at conference if a region has jurisdictions,~~ 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~~ respective regional conference or the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions.

These provisions shall not preclude the 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.

52. Article VIII. - The bishops of the several regional ~~jurisdictional and central~~ conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences. If a regional conference has jurisdictions, the bishops shall also preside in the session of their respective jurisdictional conference.

56. Article II. - The Judicial Council shall have authority:

1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a regional or jurisdictional ~~or central~~ ~~central~~ conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that regional or jurisdictional ~~or central~~

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5 conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that regional or jurisdictional ~~or~~
6 ~~central~~ conference.
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10 4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General
11 Conference board, ~~or regional, or jurisdictional or central~~ conference board or body, upon appeal
12 by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of
13 the bishops of a regional or jurisdictional ~~or a central~~ conference.
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19 **61. Article III.** - A regional or jurisdictional ~~or central~~ conference may by a majority
20 vote propose changes in the Constitution of the Church, and such proposed changes shall be
21 submitted to the next General Conference. If the General Conference adopts the measure by a
22 two-thirds vote, it shall be submitted to the annual conferences according to the provision for
23 amendments.
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29 The ratification process by the annual conferences for the constitutional amendments in this
30 petition shall begin no later than 30 days after the adjournment of the postponed 2020 General
31 Conference.
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[If ratified, the paragraphs would read as follows:]

9. *Article II.* - There shall be regional conferences for the work of the worldwide Church and, if necessary, provisional regional conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no regional or jurisdictional conference based on any ground other than geographical division.

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5 **10. Article III.** - There may be jurisdictional conferences for the work of the Church,
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7 with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United
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9 Methodist Church there shall be no jurisdictional conference based on any ground other than
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11 geographical and regional division.

12 **13. Article VI.**— The General Conference, regional conferences, jurisdictional
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14 conferences, and annual conferences shall have autonomy of action within the limits fixed by the
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16 Constitution, provided that any legislation enacted within the respective powers of a conference
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18 but overlapping with the powers of another shall not be rendered invalid, unless its purpose and
19
20 substance are beyond the authority of the enacting body.

21 **15. Article III.** – The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the
22
23 General and regional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the
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25 provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy
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27 members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of
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29 professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference, provided that each
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31 annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to
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33 at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the regional
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35 conference.

36 In a regional conference with jurisdictions, the regional conference shall fix the ratio of
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38 representation in its jurisdictional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary
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40 conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the
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42 number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the
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44 number of professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference,
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46 provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference
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shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the jurisdictional conference and further provided that all general and regional conference delegates will be members of their respective jurisdictional conferences.

16. Article IV.- The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, subject to the limits fixed by the Constitution, and in the exercise thereof shall have authority as follows:

...

16.3. To define and fix the powers and duties of regional conferences, jurisdictional conferences, annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.

16.4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the worldwide Church.

...

16.10. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected by regional conferences without jurisdictions.

...

16.12. To change the number and the boundaries of regional conferences, and to change the number and the boundaries of jurisdictional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each jurisdictional conference involved.

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16.17. To legislate what is non-adaptable for regional conferences by a 60% majority vote, while respecting the powers given to regional conferences according to ¶31.5.

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6 **23. Article I.**-The jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of as many
7 representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined
8 by a uniform basis established by the regional conference where jurisdictions exist, provided that
9 no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates. The missionary conferences
10 shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.
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14 **24. Article II.** - All jurisdictional conferences shall have the same status and the same
15 privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution. The ratio of representation of the
16 annual conferences and missionary conferences in the General Conference and the regional
17 conference where jurisdictions exist shall be the same for all jurisdictional conferences.
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21 **25. Article III.** - The regional conference where jurisdictions exist shall fix the basis of
22 representation in the jurisdictional conferences, provided that the jurisdictional conferences shall
23 be composed of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates to be elected by the annual
24 conferences, the missionary conferences and the provisional annual conferences.
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28 **26. Article IV.** - Each jurisdictional conference shall meet at the time determined by the
29 College of Bishops of the regional conference where jurisdictions exist or its delegated
30 committee, each jurisdictional conference convening on the same date as the others and at a
31 place selected by the jurisdictional committee on entertainment, appointed by its respective
32 College of Bishops unless such a committee has been appointed by the preceding jurisdictional
33 conference.
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38 **27. Article V.** - The jurisdictional conferences shall have the following powers and
39 duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conferences:
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4. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences, provided that there shall be no annual conference with a membership of fewer than fifty clergy in full connection, except by the consent of the regional conference where jurisdictions exist.

5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the jurisdiction, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Conference and in the regional conferences.

6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a clergy or lay member of that jurisdiction from the decision of a trial committee.

Section V. Regional Conferences

28. Article I.— There shall be regional conferences for the work of the worldwide Church with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, to be exercised equitably across the regional conferences, subject to limits fixed by the Constitution.

1. Initially, the number and boundaries of the regional conferences shall be as follows:

a) There shall be a regional conference for the work of the Church in the United States of America that includes all of the areas that comprise the jurisdictional conferences identified in Division Two, Section VII, 37.

b) The central conferences or provisional central conferences which existed prior to the postponed 2020 General Conference shall become regional or provisional regional conferences.

2. The General Conference shall have the authority to change the number and boundaries of regional conferences and provisional regional conferences.

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6 **29. Article II.**– The regional conferences shall be composed of as many delegates as
7 shall be determined by a basis established by the General Conference. The delegates shall be
8 clergy and lay in equal numbers.
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11 **30. Article III.**– The regional conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the
12 meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by
13 the preceding respective regional conferences or by commissions appointed by them or by the
14 General Conference.
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17 **31. Article IV.**– The regional conferences shall have the following powers and duties as
18 the special conditions and the mission of the Church in the area require, subject to the limits
19 fixed by the Constitution, and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference:
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22 1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern, and
23 benevolent interests and institutions of the Church within their own boundaries.
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26 2. In regional conferences without jurisdictions, to elect the bishops for the
27 respective regional conferences in number as may be determined from time to time, upon a
28 basis fixed by
29 the General Conference; to fix the tenure of their bishops, the episcopal areas and residences, and
30 to assign the bishops who are to reside in the respective regional conference to their areas; and to
31 cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops as may be determined by the
32 General Conference.
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38 3. To establish and constitute such regional conference boards as may be required
39 and to elect their administrative officers.
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42 4. To determine the number, names, and boundaries of the annual
43 conferences in accordance with 40 .
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5. To legislate rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including changes and adaptations of the general *Discipline* as follows, while upholding the Constitution and the decisions of General Conference in accordance with 16.17:

- a) To establish and publish a regional *Discipline* with legislation and provisions pertaining to the regional, annual, district, and charge conferences within its boundaries, including qualifications and educational requirements of clergy and specialized lay ministries, and forms of organization according to the laws of the country or countries.
- b) To set standards of character and other qualifications for admission of lay members.
- c) To acknowledge annual conferences as the basic bodies of the church (§ 33) voting on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and therefore considering the requirements set forth in a regional *Discipline* regarding specialized lay ministry and license, ordination, or conference membership, as minimum requirements.
- d) To establish and publish a regional hymnal and ritual of the Church, including ecclesial acts of marriage and burial, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules, but authorizing to interpret Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion so as to recognize the governments of the country or countries.
- e) To allow the annual conferences to adopt structures adequate to their mission while upholding mandated structures.

When adapting the investigative and trial process, each Regional Book of Discipline shall guarantee confidentiality, protections of the accused, protection of the accusers

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5 along with the ability to adapt the process based on the legal system of each country.
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7 6. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising from the rules,
8 regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the regional *Discipline* enacted by the
9 regional conference.
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12 7. To adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy,
13 including bishops, and lay members of the Church and to provide the necessary means and
14 methods of implementing the said rules; provided, however, that the ordained ministers shall not
15 be deprived of the right of trial by a clergy committee, and lay members of the Church of the
16 right of trial by a duly constituted committee of lay members; and to make changes in the
17 chargeable offenses and their penalties.
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22 A regional conference or a jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, shall
23 appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a clergy or lay member
24 of the respective conference from the decision of a committee on trial.
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28 **32. Article I.**— The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members.
29 The clergy membership shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection, provisional
30 members, associate members, and local pastors under appointment. The lay membership shall
31 consist of professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active
32 deaconesses, and home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual
33 conference, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of
34 United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of
35 Lay Servant Ministries, conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), the president or
36 equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference
37 youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one
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young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference. In the annual conferences of the regional conferences outside the USA, the four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived by the annual conference for young persons under thirty (30) years of age. Such persons must be professing members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election. Each charge served by more than one clergy shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members. The lay members shall have been for the two years next preceding their election members of The United Methodist Church and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election.

If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference.

33. Article II.-The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and their respective regional conferences, as well as jurisdictional conference if its regional conference has jurisdictions, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry and the committee on investigation may vote on matters of ordination, character, and

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5 conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district
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7 committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on
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9 ordained ministry with vote. It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the
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11 General Conference under the Constitution may determine.

12 **34. Article III.**-The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the
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14 General Conference and to its respective regional conference as well as jurisdictional conference,
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16 if its regional conference has jurisdictions, in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and
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18 V. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and
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20 delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast. The persons
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22 first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General
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24 Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to
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26 complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the regional conference, who,
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28 together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the regional conference. The
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30 additional delegates to the regional conference shall in the order of their election be the
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32 reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve
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34 clergy and lay delegates to the regional conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve
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36 clergy and lay delegates to the regional conferences may act as reserve delegates to the
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38 General Conference
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40 when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference.

41 In regional conferences with jurisdictions, all general and regional conference delegates
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43 shall be delegates to the jurisdictional conference. Whenever possible, reserve delegates to the
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45 regional conference shall also serve in order of election as delegates to the jurisdictional
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47 conference, with any reserve delegates who cannot be seated as jurisdictional delegates
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49 becoming reserve delegates to the jurisdictional conference. As needed, additional delegates shall
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be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional conference. The annual conference may also elect additional reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional conference as it may deem desirable.

35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to their respective regional conference as well as jurisdictional conference, if its regional conference has jurisdictions, shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree or its equivalent in regional conferences outside of the USA and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

36. Article V.—The lay delegates to the General Conference and to their respective regional conference, as well as jurisdictional conference if its regional conference has jurisdictions, shall be elected by the lay members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next preceding their election, and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the General Conference and regional conferences as well as the jurisdictional conferences, if its regional conference has jurisdictions.

40 Article II.— The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas shall be determined by the respective regional conferences or by the jurisdiction,

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5 if a regional conference has jurisdictions. The authority of regional and jurisdictional conferences
6 provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of
7 Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.
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11 **46. Article II.**-The bishops shall be elected by the respective regional conferences or
12 by the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, and consecrated in the historic
13 manner at such time and place as may be fixed by each regional conference, provided that
14 episcopal
15 elections in regional conferences without jurisdictions shall be held at a regular, not an extra,
16 session of such regional conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be
17 filled.
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23 **48. Article IV.**-The bishops of each regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional
24 conference has jurisdictions, shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops
25 shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary
26 conferences, and missions within their respective territories.
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31 **49. Article V.**-The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in their
32 respective regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, in which
33 they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one
34 jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the
35 following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a
36 jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that
37 jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the
38 number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or
39 (b) a jurisdiction may
40 receive a bishop from another jurisdiction and not transfer out a member of its own College of
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Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented.
(3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium
in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall require
the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the jurisdictional
committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions that are involved. After the above procedures
have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of
Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that jurisdictional conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other
temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop, provided that the
request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional
conference has jurisdictions, through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the
Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another regional conference or jurisdiction, if a
regional conference has jurisdictions, to the work of the said regional conference or jurisdiction,
if a regional conference has jurisdictions, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that
regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions.

50. Article VI. - Bishops elected by the jurisdictions shall have life tenure. Bishops
elected by a regional conference without jurisdictions shall have such tenure as the regional
conference electing them shall have determined.

The regional conference or the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions,
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
its respective regional conference or jurisdiction, if a region has jurisdictions, its findings for

1 such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power.

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3 The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for
4 final action by the respective regional conference or the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has
5 jurisdictions.
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8 These provisions shall not preclude the adoption by the General Conference of provisions
9 for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as
10 general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.
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13 **52. Article VIII.** - The bishops of the several regional conferences shall preside in the
14 sessions of their respective conferences. If a regional conference has jurisdictions, the bishops
15 shall also preside in the session of their respective jurisdictional conference.
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18 **56. Article II.** - The Judicial Council shall have authority:
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20 1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an
21 appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General
22 Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a regional or jurisdictional
23 conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that regional or jurisdictional
24 conference or upon the
25 appeal of one-fifth of the members of that regional or jurisdictional conference.
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33 4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General
34 Conference board, regional, or jurisdictional conference board or body, upon appeal by one-third
35 of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of the bishops
36 of a regional or jurisdictional conference.
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61. Article III. - A regional or jurisdictional conference may by a majority vote propose changes in the Constitution of the Church, and such proposed changes shall be submitted to the next General Conference. If the General Conference adopts the measure by a two-thirds vote, it shall be submitted to the annual conferences according to the provision for amendments.

The ratification process by the annual conferences for the constitutional amendments in this petition shall begin no later than 30 days after the adjournment of the postponed 2020 General Conference.

4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church-The United Methodist Church is a 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 without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status,⁴ or economic condition, 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.⁵ 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, status or economic condition.⁶

4. Amended 1992.

5. Amended 2000.

6. See Judicial Council Decisions 242, 246, 340, 351, 362, 377, 398, 594, 601, and Decisions 4 and 5, Interim Judicial Council.

[If ratified, the paragraph would read as follows:]

4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church-The United Methodist Church is a 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 without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status,⁴ or economic condition, 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.⁵ 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, status or economic condition.⁶

4. Amended 1992.

5. Amended 2000.

6. See Judicial Council Decisions 242, 246, 340, 351, 362, 377, 398, 594, 601, and Decisions 4 and 5, Interim Judicial Council.

5. Article V. Racial Justice-The United Methodist Church proclaims ~~the value of each person that from God’s goodness and love, God created all persons as a God’s unique and beloved children. child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, 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 racial justice at all times and in all places. Racism opposes God’s law, goodness, and love and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy, and colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of The United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity, and undermine God’s work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.~~⁷

7. Amended 2000

[If ratified, the paragraph would read as follows:]

5. Article V. Racial Justice-The United Methodist Church proclaims that from God’s goodness and love, God created all persons as God’s unique and beloved children. Racism opposes God’s law, goodness, and love and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy, and colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of The United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity, and undermine God’s work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.⁷

7. Amended 2000

35. Article IV. The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from ⁷⁴ the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an ~~M.Div.~~ Master of Divinity degree ~~from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central conference~~ and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. ⁷⁵

74. Amended 1996

75. See Judicial Council Decision 1181. Amended 2008.

[If ratified, the paragraph would read as follows:]

35. Article IV. The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from ⁷⁴ the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or a Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central conference and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. ⁷⁵

74. Amended 1996

75. See Judicial Council Decision 1181. Amended 2008.

[Editorial note: The proposed change of language in this paragraph related to central conferences would be changed to reflect the necessary updates should the Proposed Constitutional Amendment related to Regionalization be ratified.]

Consent Calendar Reports

200,000 More Reasons to Fight Childhood Hunger

Mission: 100% of Arkansas United Methodist churches will participate in an initiative to significantly reduce childhood hunger through feeding ministries, public witness, and education for long-term stability.



As 200,000 More Reasons, we invite local congregations to do more for hungry children and families around strategies that provide stability and long-term solutions. We encourage ministries around access to food, childhood literacy and that promote a healthy, stable family life. Local church ministries provide access to food now; greater learning potential for the child in the future; and, opportunities for living without food insecurity for the next generation.

Grants totaling \$49,750 were shared in Spring and Fall of 2024 with forty-one churches around the state to support ministries related to each of our objectives: Nutrition, Literacy, and Stability at home. Grant cycles occur in the first and third quarter of each calendar year.

Nutrition: Arkansas ranks number one in the nation for food insecurity. Unfortunately the number of children living with food insecurity has increased from 139,000 in 2020 to approximately 168,430 in 2022, largely due to the end of COVID-19 pandemic hunger funding. Children make up approximately 30% of the total number of hungry Arkansans. 83%, or 372 local UMC congregations and organizations reported in 2024 offering or supporting a local ministry that feeds food insecure children and their families. These include blessing boxes, food pantries, mobile food distributions, backpacks of food, out-of-school meals, and congregational support of local and regional food distributions. Our goal is to have 100% of our churches doing something.

Approximately half of SNAP recipients in Arkansas are families with children. 200,000 More Reasons has partnered with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, and Board of Global Ministries to offer SNAP training programs to feeding ministries across the state.

200,000 More Reasons partnered with the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas to host panel discussions for feeding ministries around the state with a focus on diversifying funding sources and building community partnerships. As the cost of food rises, more feeding ministries are looking for funding to continue to provide meals for their community.

Literacy: Only 32% of Arkansas third graders read proficiently according to 2023 school year data from ACT Aspire assessment which is down from 37% in 2017. Research indicates that the transition from third to fourth grade marks a shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Almost all readers who were proficient in the third grade (96%) graduated from high school. This new data highlights the importance of the work our churches are doing.

Approximately 21% of children in Arkansas have access to a high quality summer reading program. Project Transformation has created an online guide so churches can implement a quality summer

1 reading program for elementary aged children. The 8-week curriculum focuses on literacy skills,
2 spiritual development, and relationship building and is an easy and flexible resource to implement.
3 The cost also includes consultation from professionals to help churches design their program to fit
4 the community needs.

5
6 Our goal is to have 50% of United Methodist Churches and organizations with ministries that
7 increase access to books, offer in-school reading tutors or out-of-school reading programs. This
8 year, 45% started, expanded, or continued their ministries of little free libraries, reading camps,
9 after-school programs, tutoring ministries or distributed books to children.

10
11 Stability at home: In 2021, 22% of Arkansas' children experienced two or more ACEs – Adverse
12 Childhood Experiences. These are traumatizing events such as divorce, living with someone who
13 misuses substances or has mental illness, witnessing violence, or having a parent in jail or to die.
14 Children in poverty are at higher risk for more ACEs.

15
16 For a state that ranks in the top 10 for most ACEs per person and low access to mental health,
17 the ARUMC can do more to help children in poverty and the adults who care for them. Offering
18 positive experiences through ministries and access to mental health will counterbalance the
19 adverse impact some food insecure children endure. 200K More Reasons encourages local
20 congregations to promote healthy, stable families by 1) increasing awareness of mental health
21 issues and the need for access to affordable and acceptable care; 2) opening church doors to
22 community-wide support, training and learning; and, 3) creating topic-driven small groups for
23 under-resourced families.

24
25 28% of ARUMC's reported in 2024 ministries that promote a stable family life, mostly around
26 addiction care and crisis support. Our goal is to have 35% offering these ministries to food
27 insecure families.

28
29 All of Arkansas' United Methodist Churches are vital to their community. 200,000 More Reasons
30 supports those churches and ministries that reach out beyond the pews to some of the most
31 vulnerable—children in food-insecure, under-resourced households. We celebrate what you are
32 doing as local congregations and as disciples of Christ. Contact us at 200Kmorereasons@arumc.org
33 if your church needs ideas or support in getting started in any of these ministry areas.

34 **Age-Level Ministries**

35
36 With significant changes on the horizon for Age-Level Ministries in the ARUMC with the impending
37 departure of Michelle Moore, Director of Age-Level Ministries, conference leadership is working to
38 evaluate and make necessary decisions about what is next for this position, its programming, and
39 resources.

40 The Conference Children's Ministry Council and the Youth Worker Network continue to be a
41 resilient group of those who value their work and relationships with children and teens. These
42 children's ministry and youth ministry workers continue to commit their support to the young
43 people with whom they work and to support one another in this vital work as well.

44
45 Respectfully Submitted,

46
47 Michelle Moore
48 Children, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator
49 ARUMC

50

Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM)

This past year, the Conference Council on Youth Ministries has continued to grow in membership and event attendance. Involvement has continued to recover since the 2020 pandemic; it continues to grow as this organization thrives.

We held our annual planning retreat at Hendrix, where we discussed expectations for the council and how we will continue to best serve the youth of the Arkansas Conference. During this retreat, we also reviewed the ACCYM constitution. During this time, members voted to remove the Choir Tour from the constitution. We believe this allows CCYM to better focus on our events with more attendance. Along with this, we also disintegrated the Media Task Force and allowed Task Forces to utilize their members for media purposes.

In November, we held Refuge at Shepherd of the Ozarks in Harriet. This event allowed around 375 6th - 9th graders to explore their faith and deepen their relationship with God. Throughout this weekend, attendees explored the theme "Seeking Sanctuary" with Worship led by Searcy FUMC's band and Reverend Chad Hornsby, games promoting the UMC Connection, and service projects. In late February, we held ACCYM's largest event, Veritas, at the Fort Smith Convention Center. During this weekend, youth explored their Ardor, or passion, for God. This weekend allowed students to attend a diversified worship led by three different worship leaders: the FUMC Ft. Smith Band, the Philander Smith Choir, and the UCA Wesley Band. We are happy to share that youth from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference were also in attendance, strengthening our connection outside of the Arkansas Conference. We also held breakout sessions in which students explored an abundance of topics led by people from across the UMC.

At these two events, the Youth Service Fund also sold merchandise in order to raise money for youth group grants. The YSF raised \$10,184 and gave out \$5,290 in grants to FUMC Ft. Smith, Vilonia FUMC, City Heights UMC, and Ozark Mission Project. Not only have they raised this money by selling merchandise, they have also hosted events like a Glow Party at Refuge and a Lunch at Veritas.

In July, ACCYM will host its 3rd event, Assembly. This weeklong event allows youth to grow closer with those from all across the state and connect on a deeper level through small groups, games, and worship. Assembly is to be on Hendrix campus July 14th - 18th.

The members of ACCYM are some of the most hard-working individuals who are truly servants of God. They continue to do God's work as we prepare for next year and the upcoming Assembly. The Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries is grateful for the support that the Arkansas Conference has provided and cannot wait for another year of serving God.

Evie Jones
High School Junior Beebe UMC
ACCYM Chair

Board of Church and Society

The Arkansas Board of Church and Society met via sessions on zoom and continued to work toward helping churches of the Arkansas Conference better understand the General Board of Church and Society's Five Priorities: Climate, Health, Migration, Peace, and Poverty.

The board continued to share educational information around these priorities and current justice issues through the General Board of Church and Society link on the arumc.org website, umcjustice.org, and through our Arkansas Board of Church and Society Facebook page. Justice events and emphases were shared from podcasts, webinars like the monthly UMC Justice Movement Cafe, book studies through Pages for Progress, toolkits, legislative updates, and we hosted a table at Annual Conference with Faith and Fact cards and other resources. The Arkansas Conference is also developing dedicated work groups on climate, the Black church, and LGBTQ+ concerns.

The board is encouraged and gratified to see educational opportunities about the Social Principles hosted by local churches such as Central UMC, Fayetteville, which held successful gatherings this year to inform its members about statements on contemporary social issues from a Wesleyan theological and biblical perspective, including immigration. Too many United Methodists are unaware of these important statements.

Last year, the Arkansas Board of Church and Society focused on developing more opportunities for conversations and action around climate justice by introducing a Green Team breakfast. During the conference breaks, a QR code was displayed on the screens in the hall, allowing us to gather names from around the state of those interested in climate work. In fall 2024, the board invited those persons who expressed interest in "greening the church" to join a book talk utilizing climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe's book "Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World." The goal was to equip United Methodists with climate facts and best ways to share this information given different perspectives, disinformation, and a vast array of unique contexts. The conference Young Adults also studied this book. Church and Society will host another Green Team breakfast on June 20, 2025 at Grand Avenue UMC, Hot Springs.

The board also recruited persons to serve on a conference level Creation Care Task Force to help local churches promote environmental stewardship and justice by encouraging practical ways to care for God's creation and address environmental issues in the various geographical areas of our state. The Annual Conference Creation Care Task Force will work to equip these local teams. At the direction of GC 2024, a "Caretaker of God's Creation Coordinator" will be selected to help oversee the task force and its work. Additionally, new "Earthkeepers" were trained and equipped by Global Ministries to lead creation care initiatives within local communities. Some churches are already initiating and modeling this work: First UMC Bentonville held its 2nd Annual Earth Day Fair in April, which was sponsored by the church's creation care team.

Finally, we recognize that our 2025 Annual Conference will be held again during Juneteenth. We remind all United Methodists to remember our church's commitment to civil and human rights and eradicating racism, including environmental racism.

Submitted by Rev. Betsy Singleton Snyder, Chair Church and Society

Board of Discipleship

This year, the Conference Board of Discipleship has placed a significant emphasis on enhancing the spiritual health and well-being of both laity and clergy across our Arkansas Conference. Recognizing the reality that many within our community are experiencing spiritual and emotional fatigue—making even basic practices like prayer challenging—we have proactively developed resources aimed at renewal and support.

In response to the expressed needs from clergy and laity, the Board has created a concise and practical video series highlighting diverse prayer practices that are already enriching the spiritual lives of people throughout our conference. These accessible videos demonstrate various methods and styles of prayer, enabling viewers to reconnect spiritually in ways that feel authentic and sustainable. The series can be viewed anytime on our ARUMC Board of Discipleship Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61567616487532> and our dedicated YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@ARUMCBoardofDiscipleship>.

Understanding that spiritual health is closely connected to physical well-being, the Board of Discipleship has also launched the ARUMC Virtual Walking Club. This innovative program invites members of our Arkansas Conference to walk daily in their local communities while simultaneously connecting with one another through shared podcasts and audiobooks. Each week, participants engage in meaningful conversations, sharing insights and reflections about the weekly listening selections within our interactive Facebook group, available at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/9757116571004455>.

We encourage every member of our conference to participate and to share these valuable resources with your congregations. Together, we strive towards revitalized spiritual and emotional health, fostering a vibrant and deeply connected community of faith across Arkansas.

Rev. Bill Sardin

Board of Global Ministries

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." - Matthew 25:35-36

The Board of Global Ministries continues to serve as the vital connection between the Arkansas Annual Conference and the global mission work of the United Methodist Church. Our focus remains firmly rooted in our four mission priorities: Missionaries and Evangelism & Church Revitalization, Global Health, Creation Care, and Humanitarian Relief and Recovery.

We celebrate the momentum of our 5-Star Church Award program, introduced in 2023 with First UMC Conway as our inaugural recipient. This initiative has sparked renewed interest in holistic mission engagement across the conference as congregations work toward achieving recognition by paying 100% of the Arkansas Tithe Initiative, contributing to UMCOR Sunday, and actively participating in all five mission categories. We look forward to recognizing additional churches at this year's Annual Conference.

Our ongoing collaboration with missionaries continues to bear fruit. Trisha Manns, our Church and Community Worker, has expanded her youth and young adult ministries primarily with historically-Black congregations in the Central District and beyond. Her work exemplifies how dedicated missionary personnel can revitalize local ministry. To strengthen this connection, we are

1 developing a structured missionary itineration program that will allow more congregations to hear
2 directly from missionaries about their work and build covenant relationships.

3
4 We celebrate David and Elizabeth McCormick's transition from missionaries to staff positions
5 with the General Board of Global Ministries. Their continued presence in our conference, now in
6 new roles, enriches our connection to global mission work. We look forward to their expanded
7 influence in these new capacities.

8
9 Mission U continues to be a cornerstone of our educational efforts, providing vital training for
10 mission engagement throughout our conference. We are pleased that both Trisha Manns and Sheri
11 Mathews will serve as study leaders for this year's sessions, with registration opening in April. This
12 collaboration with United Women in Faith offers essential opportunities for learning and growth in
13 mission awareness.

14
15 The Conference Creation Care Initiative, led by our EarthKeepers Rev. Angie Gage and Elizabeth
16 McCormick, is gaining momentum. Building on the successful Green Team Breakfast at last year's
17 Annual Conference, we continue partnering with the Board of Church and Society to encourage
18 congregations to become better stewards of God's creation.

19
20 Our Volunteer in Mission and Disaster Response Coordinators, Sheri Mathews and Roy Lee, have
21 expanded their impact through disaster response training and deployment. The team organized
22 a successful mission trip to the UMCOR Sager Brown Depot and is developing an Arkansas
23 Conference-specific case management training program. The 2024 Ingathering at The Hub in
24 Conway collected vital hygiene and cleaning kits along with monetary donations to support a
25 much-needed shower trailer for disaster response.

26
27 We maintain strong collaborative relationships with 200,000 More Reasons in addressing
28 childhood hunger, literacy, and family stability. Through this partnership, over \$150,000 has been
29 granted to support these vital ministries over the past three years. We are particularly encouraged
30 by innovative models like the one developed at Cavanaugh UMC in Fort Smith, where a small
31 congregation partnered with their local elementary school to establish an impactful after-school
32 book club.

33
34 As we prepare for changes within our denomination, including the regionalization amendments
35 adopted by the 2024 General Conference, we remain committed to our mission priorities.
36 We continue to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and
37 proclaim the good news of God's love for all people. The Board of Global Ministries invites each
38 congregation in the Arkansas Conference to join us in this sacred work, for truly, we have come for
39 such a time as this.

40
41 Rev. Dr. Hammett N. Evans Chairperson, Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries hammett.
42 evans@arumc.org

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Church and Community Worker (CCW)

Greetings ARUMC Family!

The Central District Youth and Young Adult Coordinator position was initially conceived in 2017 as a result of a collaboration between the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries and the Arkansas Caucus of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. This Church and Community Worker site was not funded until 2022 when a match of gifts and graces and community needs was found. Following an intensive interview with the Church and Community Worker and two training sessions with the Partner Churches, Trisha Manns was placed in Arkansas in December 2022. The Youth and Young Adult Coordinator was designed as a pilot program in the Central District which could be expanded over the six-year period of the ARUMC commitment to other districts and additional congregations.

We are so excited that our partnership has expanded to include St. James UMC in Pine Bluff and the Wesley Foundation at UAPB! This past year, the CCW partners have focused on strengthening programs, establishing new outreach ministries, applying for funding, and providing resources for their communities. We have applied for local church grants and have collectively received nearly \$30,000.00 in rewards. We have also had the pleasure to support three youth in completing their own local projects after receiving a micro grant from the Southern Black Girl and Women Consortium. We continue to partner with the Southern Black Girl and Women consortium through supporting two young women, from Hunter UMC and St Paul UMC in Maumelle, as their Youth Ambassadors, a program that is a dynamic leadership opportunity where young leaders meet monthly, engage in meaningful discussions, and leadership development. The CCW has also served as a Board Member for the Wesley Foundation at UALR as they rebuild; the Black Church Summit task group; and the UWF Central Arkansas Mission Study Leader.

As we consider the future of the CCW role and church partnerships, we are looking forward to partnering with new church communities, local programs, and outreach ministries. We are looking forward to the programs and events planned for our communities. We also hope to continue to work in supporting each other's communities in our visions of service with each other in our contexts. We appreciate your support as the CCW role continues as a part of the Arkansas Annual Conference.

Trisha Manns, Central District Parish Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

Commission on Communication

The Arkansas Conference Communication Commission will add new members at large to fulfill our mission to tell the stories of Arkansas United Methodist Churches. The ministry of this commission is shifting in a new way to serve as an editorial board that will work to provide content promoting the annual conference's mission statement of "Following Jesus, Loving People, and Sharing Grace."

As part of this ongoing ministry, we seek to celebrate the gifts of our local congregations throughout the ARUMC. We will continue publishing "Celebrate Connection" in the ARUMC newsletter and on social media. If you should have any stories to submit about your local church and ministry context, please share them with communications@arumc.org.

The Arkansas Communication Commission will be providing three online "Lunch & Learn" sessions this fall:

1 July 10: Safety & Legalities for Healthy Social Media, noon-1 pm
2 August 14: Intentional Storytelling for Healthy Social Media, noon -1 pm
3 September 11: Promoting Events on Social Media, noon-1 pm
4
5 Register for these learning sessions on the ARUMC website: www.arumc.org after June 1.
6
7 Submitted by Rev. Sara Bayles Charlton, commission chair
8

9 **Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships**

10
11 My name is Michael Bolin and I serve as chair of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious
12 Relationships. Within the scope of this work, we often use the phrase ecumenism. Ecumenism
13 is as much a part of our Wesleyan DNA as is our efforts to be a Church that is catholic, reformed,
14 and evangelical. One way that we see ecumenism, or ecumenical shared ministries, in practice is
15 through local churches that are federated churches, union churches, or yoked parishes.

16
17 Within our Conference, we see this ministry of unity and interreligious relationships established
18 through local churches made up of UMC and Southern Baptist, UMC and Cumberland Presbyterian
19 congregations. These local churches house two denominations serving as a visual witness to our
20 ecumenical commitment of Christian Unity through diversity of theology and polity while exercising
21 patience and forbearance with one another.

22
23 We also have seen ecumenism in practice through our relationships with the Presbyterian Church of
24 the United States of America (PCUSA) and The Episcopal Church. Several of our congregations that
25 have been impacted by disaffiliation have benefited through these relationships.

26
27 It is a reminder that as local United Methodist Churches, we should always be searching for ways
28 to partner with other local congregations. Through our collected efforts, we show a love of Christ
29 through our united efforts.

30
31 Ecumenism doesn't demand uniformity. It does invite the Church to be more united in mission than in
32 dogma. I want to encourage the congregations of the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist
33 Church to explore opportunities through ecumenism. Lives and communities are transformed when
34 the Body of Christ seeks to work together for the good of the people and the glory of God.

35
36 Your Arkansas Conference is actively engaged within the National Workshop on Christian Unity and
37 Christian Churches Together where the Body of Christ does the hard work of growing past what
38 divides us and works collectively together to foster loving relationships, theological learning, and
39 bear witness to the reconciling power of Christ. We use the phrase – seeking Unity through diversity.

40
41 Ecumenism is one way we live out Jesus' prayer in John 17 where He says, "20 "My prayer is not for
42 them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them
43 may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." May it be so for the Glory and Kingdom of
44 God.

45 Thank You,
46 Michael Bolin
47 (Preacher-Man)

48 "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will
49 never forget how you made them feel." - Maya Angelou
50

Committee on Disability Concerns

Congratulations to the 63 congregations that completed the Accessibility Audit as part of their Charge Conference: Bingen UMC, Camden FUMC, Lakeside UMC, Pine Bluff, Malvern FUMC, St. Luke UMC, Pine Bluff, Corning FUMC, Osceola FUMC, Kensett UMC, Helena FUMC, Paragould UMC, Pleasant Grove UMC, Vilonia UMC, Village UMC, Trinity UMC, NLR, St. James UM, LR, St. Andrew UMC, Pinnacle View UMC, Oaklawn UMC, North Pulaski UMC, Hunter UMC, England FUMC, Benton FUMC, Grand Ave UMC, Altus UMC, Bella Vista FUMC, Berryville UMC, Birdsvie UMC, Branch UMC, Brightwater UMC, Cavanaugh UMC, Central UMC, Fayetteville, Central UMC, Rogers, Charleston UMC, City Heights UMC, Clarksville UMC, Cleveland UMC, Clinton UMC, Fairfield Bay UMC, Faith UMC, Farmington UMC, Ft. Smith FUMC, Goddard UMC, Goshen UMC, Gravette UMC, Green Forest UMC, Hackett UMC, Harrison UMC, Hays Chapel UMC, Huntsville UMC, Lamar UMC, Leslie UMC, Mansfield UMC, Mission UMC, Morrilton FUMC, Mulberry UMC, Ozark UMC, Parks UMC, Pea Ridge UMC, Pottsville UMC, Prairie Grove UMC, Presley Chapel UMC, St. James UMC, Springdale FUMC.

Churches are encouraged to have a goal or goals for the year to improve their score and earn badges that can be displayed so people know the level of accessibility. Instructions for scoring your Accessibility Audit are found on page four. The score will indicate which badge, if any, has been earned and how to contact the national office to get stickers for the entrances of your church.

When you attend Annual Conference you will notice that there will be closed captioning of most speakers for the benefit of those who don't hear well, a request that was made by our committee. Other items we are working on include developing a way for churches to share in the use of specialized equipment such as a Braille printer or accessible van as well as whether other churches that have respite programs, Sunday school classes or other groups that could be replicated in other congregations. Also, increasing resources available at Annual Conference and other large meetings for those with visual impairments that would allow for their increased participation is important.

Please visit the Committee on Disability Concerns display for information and questionnaires regarding items for those with disabilities that your church may be willing to share.

Committee on Ethnic and Language Concerns

“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” — 1 Corinthians 3:9 (NIV)

To God be the glory!

The Ethnic and Language Concerns Committee (ELCC) of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church remains steadfast in its call to be “a church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors,” as we strive to reflect the inclusiveness of God’s Kingdom. In accordance with The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, we work to ensure “the full and equal participation of all persons in the life of the church” (§14, BOD).

ELCC continues to serve as a strategic partner in ministry, empowering ethnic and language based congregations across the Arkansas Conference. We support the church’s call to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world through the following denominational initiatives:

- National Hispanic/Latino Plan

- Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century
- National Korean Ministry Plan
- Native American Ministries (¶654, BOD)
- Other programs developed through the General Conference's commitment to ethnic and racial justice

ELCC provides vital support in the following areas to help local congregations flourish:

- A. Leadership Development – for both lay and clergy, equipping them for faithful service
- B. Mission Field Outreach – extending the reach of Christ-centered witness in diverse communities
- C. Internship Program – for undergraduate students discerning a call to ministry

We have also awarded grants to foster participation and leadership development at the following impactful events:

- Mission U (Conway, AR)
- Southern Black Girls and Women's Consortium (Atlanta, GA)
- Black Clergy Women of the UMC National Gathering (New Orleans, LA)
- Empowering the African American Male College Retreat (Wesley Chapel, Little Rock)
- National Summit on Mass Incarceration and Social Justice (St. James UMC, Kansas)
- Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute (Little Rock)
- Religious Emphasis Week & Living Legends Celebration (Philander Smith University Campus Ministry)
- Lead(Her) Conference (Kansas City, KS)

These grants embody our commitment to nurture spiritual growth, foster justice, and amplify the voices of underrepresented communities within the life of the church. In partnership with the Arkansas Conference Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), ELCC continues to support the Church and Community Worker assigned to the Central District, focusing on youth and young adult outreach.

As a committee, we embrace our role in planting seeds of hope, believing that through God's grace, our ethnic congregations can move from surviving to thriving. We answer the call to be agents of transformation, responding faithfully to the needs of our communities and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Humbly submitted,
Danita Waller Paige, Chair

Committee on Religion and Race

The work of CORR at the conference level is to emulate the work done on the General Conference level of GCORR. Members are: Rev. Larry Hadley, Rev. Mark Norman, Rev. Ulysses Washington, Rev. Dr. Kelvey Mathews, Bettye L. Johnson, Chelsea Hodge, Rev. Dr. Chester Jones (emeritus), Brenda Gullet.

This is the work of GCORR: The Work of GCORR is to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion; develop interculturally competent leaders; and facilitate authentic community.

GCORR promises to provide practical resources for and support to leaders throughout the Church to enable them to engage and embrace the cultural diversity present in our world, communities, and congregations.

The predominate work of this committee this year has been to forward the resources of GCORR to the AR Conference and local churches.

The work of CORR is unfathomable considering the recent assault on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the political climate of our nation.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Gullett, Chair CORR, ARUMC

Committee on Native American Ministry

The Arkansas Conference Committee on Native American Ministry (CONAM) seeks to bring awareness to Native American causes, celebrate Native American culture, and support Native American communities bringing them in connection with the United Methodist Church. This year we have continued to work toward these goals through our partnerships with the American Indian Center of Arkansas and the Oklahoma Indian Conference.

We led our Jurisdiction and the Annual Conference in the importance of land acknowledgments, bringing awareness to Native American causes as well as the original inhabitants of the land we find ourselves on.

CONAM continues to offer the Annual Conference resources around Native American Heritage Month and Thanksgiving. We also promote and offer resources for Native American Ministries Sunday.

Representatives from the Annual Conference and CONAM attended a fundraising gala in support of the American Indian Center of Arkansas and their work with Native Americans here in Arkansas. We are constantly looking for new ways to partner with them and their very important work.

This year marked a new opportunity for partnership between the Annual Conference and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary conference as we launched the first Arkansas specific cultural immersion trip to Oklahoma. Arkansas clergy and laity participated. The trip focused around Oklahoma City visiting the OIMC Conference office learning the history of United Methodism and Native Americans in Oklahoma. We visited the First Americans Museum known for the fact that it is the only museum fully curated by Native Americans telling their own stories. We partnered with local churches and congregations to help clean out and establish a food pantry. We also attended a Pow Wow with local tribes at Standing Bear and ended our four days with a joint worship service in Norman, Oklahoma. The Committee on Native American Ministry is thankful for contributions given on Native American Ministry Sunday as well as the generosity of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas for funding the trip.

CONAM will continue to provide opportunities to share Native Culture to small groups like Women in Faith gatherings as well as youth events like Veritas. We also look forward to another cultural engagement trip to Oklahoma.

Respectfully Submitted
Dan Read
Chair of the Committee on Native American Ministry.

Congregational Vitality

The Arkansas Conference Congregational Vitality team strives to live out the conference mission statement: "Working together to build vital faith communities by following Jesus, loving people, and sharing grace." This commitment is evident in our ongoing efforts to equip churches and congregational leaders to meet specific markers for a vital congregation aligned with their respective roles. These markers include:

1. Welcoming, Spirit-filled worship
2. Lay leadership identified and equipped for ministry in the church and the world
3. Disciples engaged in relationship and service with diverse neighbors
4. Small group and intergenerational ministries
5. Connectional work in partnership with others
6. Intentional work for healing and reconciliation

Since August 2024, the Congregational Vitality team—comprising Mary Lewis Dassinger, Samantha Menley, and myself—has focused on several key initiatives to further the mission of our conference. Below is a summary of our efforts and achievements:

Key Initiatives and Programs:

1. One More Question Initiative

The One More Question initiative, detailed in a separate report, has been a catalyst for deeper engagement and reflection among our congregational leaders and members. This initiative is not just a challenge, but an inspiration for churches to critically evaluate their community transformation roles and step beyond traditional church boundaries.

2. 200,000 More Reasons

The 200,000 More Reasons initiative, a consistent focus over the years, continues to drive outreach and growth across our churches. As the program evolves, we assure you of its ongoing adaptation and expansion to make a meaningful impact.

3. Equipping Opportunities for Local Churches:

We offered several key programs to strengthen leadership and community life within local churches:

- **Simplified Accountable Structure with Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford:** This program, designed to simplify governance structures, provided textbooks to support church leadership.
- **Simplified Accountable Structure for Small Churches:** Tailored to the unique needs of smaller congregations, this program also received textbooks for implementation.
- **The Cooperative Parish Models for Clergy** initiative, a collaborative effort with District Superintendents and clergy leading churches discerning parish relationships, has facilitated a greater sense of community and collaboration among our churches. This initiative, which offered books for clergy to study new parish models, is a testament to our shared mission and commitment.
- **Healthy Church Academy with Rev. Dr. Ron Bell:** In partnership with the Oklahoma Conference and Upper New York Conference, this program focused on laity in leadership and provided textbooks for participants.

- **Asset-based Community Development:** With input from District Superintendents, this program encouraged local churches to utilize their assets for community development and service.

4. Education and Leadership Development:

Much of our work has focused on providing educational resources and leadership development opportunities for pastors and laity alike. Key programs include:

- **Lay Servant Ministry Campaign:** Designed an education campaign to inform pastors about Lay Servant Ministry, especially in the South District. This campaign provided textbooks and resource materials in a mailer to pastors.
- **Task Force for Vital Church Markers:** Worked alongside the Bishop, Cabinet, and Leadership Table to define and shape the markers of vital churches within the Arkansas Conference. This task force is also working on data collection related to these markers at both the conference and district levels.
- **Small Church Pastors Grant:** We provided grants for small church pastors to attend the Rural Church Conference in 2024, offering them valuable insights and networking opportunities.
- **Resource Bank for Ministry:** With input from ARUMC clergy, United Methodist Discipleship Ministries, and Resource UMC, there has been a bank of resources made available to our clergy and laity, including sermon series, worship support, podcast channels, laity leadership roles in the church, and church renewal and growth. You may find these resources on the congregational vitality website: <https://arumc.org/our-ministries/congregational-vitality/>

Reading Clubs and Educational Resources:

We organized several reading clubs throughout 2024 and 2025 to encourage ongoing learning and spiritual growth. These initiatives are designed to provide congregational leaders with access to powerful resources for personal and ministry growth:

- **Summer Reading Club (2024):** Becoming Church by Luke Edwards
- **Fall Reading Club (2024):** Real Connection by Heidi Unruh and Joy F. Skjegstad, and The Art of Gathering by Priya Parker
- **Winter Reading Club (2024-2025):** Having Nothing, Possessing Everything by Rev. Mike Mather (Author present for discussion)
- **Spring Reading Club (2025):** Understanding Poverty by Ruby K. Payne

The Arkansas Conference has provided more than 600 books for learning over the past year for various clergy and laity.

Grant Secured for Clergy Leadership Coaching and Spiritual Direction:

In February 2025, we successfully secured a grant from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas to fund leadership coaching and spiritual direction for up to 20 clergy in the Arkansas Conference. These clergy, recommended by their District Superintendents, will benefit from coaching to support their work in discerning emerging partnerships within their ministry contexts.

Future Initiatives:

1 We are submitting another grant proposal to the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas to expand
2 the Healthy Church Academy offerings in Fall 2025. This proposal will aim to support both laity in
3 leadership and clergy, continuing our focus on equipping the church for healing and growth. You
4 may learn more about this ministry here: [https://arumc.org/our-ministries/congregational-vitality/
5 healthy-church-academy/](https://arumc.org/our-ministries/congregational-vitality/healthy-church-academy/).
6

7 We have also developed a task force made up of Rev. Zach Roberts (NE District Superintendent),
8 Becky Neighbors (NW District Administrator), Todd Burris (Director of ARUMC Administrative
9 Services and Conference Treasurer), Trisha Manns (Global Ministries Community Service Worker),
10 Rev. Jacob Lynn (senior pastor, Cabot UMC), Rev. Lindsey Russell (associate pastor, Central UMC,
11 Rogers and NWA Food Bank), Rev. Ron Hayes (senior pastor of Bella Vista UMC), Samantha
12 Menley (200,000 More Reasons Project coordinator). This task force is conducting ongoing
13 implementation of the conference mission and markers into all data collection within the Arkansas
14 Conference to encourage the use of the markers and to better emphasize and record the ministry
15 of the pastor beyond what is dictated by the General Commission on Finance and Administration.
16 Local churches should expect to see the conference mission statement and markers reflected in
17 the charge conference and end-of-year data forms in 2025-2026.
18

19 As the Congregational Vitality team continues to support the Arkansas Conference's mission of
20 building vital faith communities, we remain committed to equipping and empowering churches
21 to fulfill their God-given calling to transform the world through worship, service, and leadership
22 development. We look forward to the ongoing work in partnership with the conference, district
23 leaders, and local churches.
24

25 Submitted by
26 Amy Ezell, Director of Congregational Vitality & Communication
27

28 **Council on Young Adult Ministries**

29
30 This has been an exciting year for the Conference Council on Young Adult Ministries, which serves
31 laity and clergy in the Arkansas Annual Conference between the ages of 18 and 35. Our desire is
32 to help make connections between young adult clergy and laity in the ARUMC across districts so
33 that they might grow in their faith with God and in relationship with one another. We will have an
34 evening gathering this year during Annual Conference for all young adults to keep making these
35 connections. We will be meeting for a social with dessert provided and on Thursday, June 19 at
36 8 pm at Hot Springs First United Methodist Church in the Underground (the youth area) on Pratt
37 Street. All young(ish) adults, both clergy and laity, are invited to attend.
38

39 One of the trademarks of the Young Adult ministries in the Arkansas Conference over the last few
40 years have been our Zoom Monthly Book Clubs. So far, we have read five books together and met
41 for monthly discussion of these books. We have had ten to fifteen young adults sign up for each
42 book club gathering and have had clergy and laity from across the state, and even those beyond
43 our state who are in school and would like to stay connected to the UMC in Arkansas. In the last
44 year we have read and discussed, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a
45 Divided World* by Katharine Hayhoe and *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* by Makoto Fujimura.
46 Each time we begin a new book, the books are provided for free thanks to conference funding
47 and attendees have the choice of a paperback, e-book, or audiobook.
48

49 A new opportunity offered this past September was a Young Adult retreat hosted at Ferncliff
50 Camp's Retreat House. The theme of the retreat was Climate Justice and Creation Care. Our

planning team included Rev. JJ Whitney, Rev. Eva Englert-Jessen, Brooke Hobbs, and me. We had twenty young adults attend this retreat, both clergy and laity, representing ten churches and all four districts of the conference. We are grateful to the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas who awarded a grant for this retreat to take place and allowed for all participants to attend for free. And, we are thankful for Elizabeth McCormick, who was our keynote. She shared about how her experience as a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionary in Mozambique and her more recent experience being certified as an Earthkeeper through GBGM, as well, impacted her understanding of climate justice and creation care from a faith perspective. All of those in attendance were invited to think about ways they could take a small step at their church in regard to climate justice or creation care, and they were invited to participate in our Fall book club discussion on the creation care book, *Saving Us*. We look forward to hosting another retreat this Fall. Please be on the lookout for information about the Fall 2025 retreat.

If you are a young adult in the ARUMC, to connect with the Conference Young Adult ministries, please fill out this information form so that we can be in touch with you: <https://arumc.wufoo.com/forms/arumc-young-adult-information-form/>. If you are a pastor or campus minister, please share this link with young adults in your ministry context.

Respectfully Submitted,
Reverend Lauren DeLano
Chair, Conference Council on Young Adult Ministries

Equitable Compensation Commission

For 78 years, the Conference has provided financial support to churches allowing them to provide pastoral salaries suitable for their mission fields. The mission of the CEC is to enable charges/ churches to make disciples of Jesus Christ by providing appropriate compensation for effective pastoral leadership. The Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) of the Arkansas Annual Conference does this in four areas: recommending Minimum Compensation for all clergy under full-time appointment and providing Key Charge, Minimum Base Compensation, and emergency Salary Arrearage funding to churches identified by the Cabinet.

As of April 1, 2025, the Conference was supporting three charges through the Key Charge program. This will be their final year to receive this support.

1. St. Paul UMC - Maumelle
2. Hunter UMC
3. Trinity UMC - Fayetteville

At this time, we have no churches receiving Minimum Base Compensation Support.

I. Minimum Full-Time Compensation

2025–2026 Recommendation (Voluntary)

After much prayer and deliberation, the Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) strongly encourages local churches to consider a 2% increase in pastoral compensation for the 2025–2026 appointment year.

While not mandatory, this voluntary increase is a tangible gesture of appreciation for clergy who continue to serve with dedication and faithfulness in a time marked by rising costs and economic uncertainty. It has been six years since the last adjustment to minimum pastoral compensation.

1 This voluntary increase serves as an intermediate step as we all work together toward the planned
2 3% Cost of Living Adjustment in the following year.
3
4 Encouraging this step allows congregations the flexibility to begin adjusting their budgets and
5 expressing tangible care for their pastors—who carry the spiritual, emotional, and administrative
6 weight of church life with remarkable faithfulness.

7
8 **2026–2027 Recommendation (Required)**

9
10 Looking ahead, the CEC recommends a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to the current
11 Minimum Compensation Schedule, effective for the 2026–2027 appointment year. If approved,
12 this would represent the first formal increase in base pastoral compensation since 2020.
13
14 By setting this increase for a future date, we provide congregations time to prepare financially and
15 structurally. This adjustment is not only a matter of economic necessity but a clear expression of
16 our shared commitment to equitable, sustainable support for pastoral ministry.

17
18 **Why This Matters**

19
20 Clergy are at the heart of the Church’s mission. They preach, teach, counsel, comfort, and lead—
21 not only in sanctuaries, but also in hospitals, food banks, prisons, and the public square. A just
22 and sustainable compensation structure reflects the respect we hold for this sacred calling. It
23 also enables clergy to care for their families and live out their ministry with integrity and stability.
24 As we seek to embody equity and excellence in all aspects of our shared ministry, ensuring fair
25 compensation is both a spiritual and ethical imperative.

26
27 **Minimum Compensation Comparison Table**

Conference Relationship	Conference Year 2024-2025	Conference Year 2025-2026 (Optional)	Conference Year 2026-2027 (Required)
Full Connection	\$48,330	\$49,297	\$49,780
Provisional Associate Member	\$47,280	\$48,226	\$48,699
Local Pastor	\$46,230	\$47,155	\$47,617

35
36
37 **With Group Health Insurance Provided by the Charge**

Conference Relationship	Conference Year 2024-2025	Conference Year 2025-2026 (Optional)	Conference Year 2026-2027 (Required)
Full Connection	\$36,330	\$37,057	\$37,420
Provisional Associate Member	\$35,280	\$35,986	\$36,338
Local Pastor	\$34,230	\$34,915	\$35,257

45
46 ***A parsonage or housing allowance is still required in addition to these amounts.***

47
48 **II. Key Charge/Church Program for Base Compensation Support**

49 The Key Charge/Church program provides Base Compensation Support to pastors who are
50 appointed to charges/churches targeted for significant growth by the Conference or are in

transition and require short-term support for effective pastoral leadership for various other reasons. Key Charges/Churches are related to the CEC by a covenant agreement. The covenant is negotiated by the chair of the Commission, the appointive cabinet, and representatives of the charge/church. The persons or their successors, shall be the trustees of the covenant, having verified it with their signatures.

The covenant shall include:

1. The initial amount of the Base Compensation Support needed,
2. The duration of the covenant (normally five (5) years or less),
and
3. The signatures of the persons negotiating the covenant.

The nature of the covenant is such that the amount of compensation support given shall decrease proportionately each year, while the compensation paid by the charge/church increases by at least the same amount, thus keeping the compensation at least stable over the covenant period. After the covenant has expired, no further compensation support will be granted to the charge/church.

Under the Key Charge/Church arrangement, there shall be no required minimum or maximum levels of support by the charge/church. The only limitation will be the amount of funding budgeted for this program.

Each church receiving compensation shall report by April 15 to the Appointive Cabinet for review and the Commission on Equitable Compensation for continuing approval. The report form is available from the district superintendent and the Arkansas Annual Conference website at arumc.org.

III. Minimum Base Compensation Support

The Minimum Base Compensation program is intended to assist in providing compensation for capable, effective pastoral leadership to charges/churches which function in areas of extreme economic limitation and which are unable to provide a viable level of pastoral support. Where charges/churches are in need of additional compensation in order to meet the Minimum Compensation Base Support, this support is available to Elders in Full Connection, Provisional/ Associate Members (not to be confused with associate pastors), and Full-Time Local Pastors who are not retired. Upon recommendation by the Commission on Equitable Compensation, the minimum base compensation is set annually by the Annual Conference for Elders, Provisional/ Associate members and Full Time Local Pastors. (Minimum Full-Time Compensation has appeared previously in this report.)

Charges/churches receiving Minimum Compensation Support are related to the CEC by a covenant agreement negotiated by the chair of the Commission, the appointive cabinet, and representatives of the charge/church. The signors or their successors shall be the trustees of the covenant, having verified it with their signatures.

It is understood that:

1. A parsonage or housing allowance in lieu of the parsonage shall be provided in addition to the set compensation.
2. Associate pastors (not to be confused with Associate Members of the Annual Conference) are not eligible for Minimum Compensation aid.
3. Retired pastors are not eligible for Minimum Compensation aid. See Paragraph 358.6 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline.
4. Each charge/church receiving Minimum Compensation Support shall provide to the Commission the amount(s) received from the Arkansas Conference for the past five (5) years. We further require that each local church describe how they will reduce this support through

the local church's ministry plan.

5. Each church receiving compensation shall report by April 15 to the Appointive Cabinet for review and the Commission on Equitable Compensation for continuing approval. The report form is available from the district superintendent and the Arkansas Annual Conference website at arumc.org.

IV. Emergency Salary Arrearage Support

Every clergy under appointment shall receive the full compensation set at Charge Conference. (See Paragraph 625 of the 2020/2024 Discipline.) If a church is financially unable to provide the full compensation in a timely manner, the Annual Conference through the CEC may provide emergency funding to ensure the clergy is provided the compensation the church promised at the Charge Conference. The Arkansas Annual Conference Salary Arrearage Policy is found in Paragraph 1003 of the Policy & Guidelines section of this Journal.

V. Equitable Compensation Covenant

When Equitable Compensation support has been granted to a charge/church, an acknowledgement of the conditions and amount of that funding shall be executed by the appointive cabinet, pastor, and leaders of the charge/church before any payment of funds shall be made. This acknowledgement shall be made on a form provided by the commission. No funds shall be disbursed until the agreement is signed and returned to the district superintendent. These forms are available from the district superintendent and the conference website at arumc.org.

The charge/church receiving financial support shall submit an annual report. The report form is available from the district superintendent and the conference website at arumc.org. Included in this report is the explanation of how these funds have aided the local charge/church. Each church receiving compensation shall report by April 15 to the Appointive Cabinet for review and the Commission on Equitable Compensation for continuing approval.

VI. Additional Priorities

1. The Commission on Equitable Compensation shall maintain adequate reserves to fund needs which may emerge.

2. Each charge/church receiving equitable compensation in any of the above categories is expected to pay its conference tithe in full. If the charge/church is unable to accomplish this, they shall submit a written plan of action approved by their district superintendent, detailing the steps to be taken in order to achieve this goal. Notification of the plan will then be forwarded to the CEC.

3. All CEC funding is for pastoral support only. Using funds for any other purpose, such as program costs or other compensation violates the agreement.

4. Equitable Compensation funds are paid directly to the church/charge by the fifteenth of each month. The compensation shall be paid to the pastor as a supplement to funds budgeted by the charge/church. Typically, the calendar year of support is from July 1 through June 30, but the initial request and approval process may take place at any time during the year.

Submitted by Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, Chair

General Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry

Hope in Times of Change
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

“Lord, show us favor; we hope in you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in times of distress.” (Hebrews 33:2).

These words from Hebrews both ground and inspire the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) as we participate in the missio Dei, the mission of God. GBHEM stewards the intellectual life of the Church and supports the formation and calls of transformative leaders. We approach our changing work and world with hope and dedication to listen and collaborate closely with our partners worldwide, to create space and opportunity for growth in leadership and ministry.

GBHEM strengthens the educational mission of the Church by fostering environments of intellectual development alongside spiritual growth. Through GBHEM programs, such as Clinical Pastoral Education, the Course of Study, the Central Conference Theological Education Fund, the Black College Fund, and robust scholarship programs, GBHEM supports Methodist scholarship and leadership around the world.

Alleviating student debt through financial support remains a priority. GBHEM awarded over \$3.7 million in scholarships to 2,165 students in 2024, including students from 51 annual conferences in the United States and 28 annual conferences in the central conferences. In addition, GBHEM stewarded the distribution of roughly \$17.4 million in grants to United Methodist ministries. Because of your generous support, approximately \$6.4 million is apportioned annually for the 11 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) related to the Church through The Black College Fund. The funds enhance capital improvements, provide scholarships, and support the work of faculty and staff. There are approximately 13,534 students at BCF-supported HBCU’s; 70% receive Pell Grants.

GBHEM is also responsible for two initiatives approved by General Conference: The Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development (MGEFLD), which includes the Grants and Scholarships Program (GRASP); and the Central Conference Theological Education Fund (CCTEF). The CCTEF advances theological education in all central conferences by strengthening theological institutions, creating networks among these schools, and increasing access to theological education.

GBHEM has established 9 regional Leadership, Education and Development Hubs (LEAD Hubs) around the world. Each LEAD Hub is a part of the agency’s strategic plan to connect with The United Methodist Church worldwide through collaboration with Pan-Methodist and Ecumenical leaders in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, and Eurasia, Latin American and the Caribbean, and North America.

The agency’s ongoing alignment efforts with Global Ministries were further enriched when Roland Fernandes became general secretary of GBHEM on July 1, 2024, following the retirement of the Rev. Greg Bergquist. After several years of collaborative work, agency priorities focus on a unified presence and integrated structure. This holistic understanding of mission encompasses all the work of both agencies and improves our ability to serve and support partners in mission and

1 ministry around the world.
2 Global Ministries and GBHEM's board met jointly in Atlanta, prior to General Conference; that
3 meeting honored the many contributions of board members who had served during the last
4 quadrennium. Spirit-led worship accompanied the fall Board of Directors meeting, also held jointly,
5 in Nashville. This meeting welcomed new board members, who will serve during the 2025-2028
6 quadrennium.

7
8 As we partner in ministry, we will continue to look for ways to better serve the Church, cultivating
9 a call to mission in the hearts and minds of people across the connection. We celebrate our
10 partnership with your Annual Conference and thank you for nurturing and supporting United
11 Methodist lay and clergy leaders throughout the UMC world-wide connection.

12
13 Respectfully Submitted:
14 Roland Fernandes, General Secretary, GBHEM | GBGM | UMCOR

15 16 **Laity Report**

17 Loving God through service has certainly been at the forefront of the life of the Laity this year. For
18 the last 2 years in the Laity Session at Annual Conference, there has not been enough time for
19 the churches to share all that they have done to be Christ in the world. The exciting and different
20 ways of reaching out and helping others was wonderful to hear. So many ideas, so many people
21 helped and a passion for discovering new ways to be church brought a level of excitement to the
22 room. And the "One More Question" training implemented this year was really on target. Thanks
23 to Amy Ezelle and the Conference Office for bringing that program to us.

24
25 A large group from our Conference spent time at Sager Brown and the UMCOR Depot in Baldwin,
26 LA and saw first hand the work that goes into staying on top of any disaster that may happen
27 and being ready with the supplies needed. Just to have a hand in that wonderful ministry is a
28 real experience. Thank you to the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas for providing the funds for
29 so many to be able to go this year. Laity are the life of the Disaster Relief ministry and UMCOR
30 and the desire to be there for others in need speaks to the depth of faith and care for others that
31 permeates the core of the folks in the pew.

32
33 After the Jurisdictional Conference in July in Rogers, the South Central Jurisdiction Lay Leaders
34 have been meeting on a regular basis to share ideas, pray for each other and encourage each
35 other. I have found this new endeavor to be most helpful in my service as your Lay Leader and in
36 my personal life.

37
38 Education has been at the forefront of strengthening our Laity and the plans to offer more training
39 and connection in the coming months will only resource them deeper in knowledge and spiritually.
40 I am so proud of our Certified Lay Ministers, Certified Lay Speakers, Certified Lay Servants and Lay
41 Supply stepping up when needed. Their participation in the training offered shows how they want
42 the pulpits they fill to reflect not only the desire to serve but also the desire to bring the message
43 of a grace-filled, loving God to the church. Understanding the importance of every person's role
44 in the church reflects the Holy Scripture from 1st Corinthians on how everyone has gifts to be used
45 for the Kingdom. We must all work together to live the most excellent way and serve our Lord fully.

46
47 My hope is that we are constantly asking: who are we missing, who needs that message of love
48 and support, what are our dreams for reaching beyond ourselves and our church walls and to help
49 others experience their faith fully in fellowship with Jesus and each other? All of our gifts, skills
50 and passions are needed as God engages with each of us uniquely and sends us out into the

world.

At the Laity Session last year, I encouraged the Laity to keep before them 3 things:
Recognize, Remember and Respond. Recognize the needs out there and the resources you have
to fill those needs. Look with new eyes all around you. There is a need only you can fill. There is
a person only through you that Jesus can touch. Remember who you are and that God has gifted
us to witness to the world about the love of our Savior and that His grace and mercy abound for
everyone. Respond - Don't wait! The time is now. Try not to ever have to say "I wish I had . . ."
The Laity of the Arkansas Conference have willingly and fully lived up to the challenge given them.

I am blessed to serve our Lord as the Lay Leader of the Arkansas Conference.

Kathy Conley

Lay Servant Ministries

During the past 12 months, Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) has again been blessed with both
opportunities and responses in providing classes, training, and leadership throughout the Arkansas
Conference. One of the highlights of the year was the Clergy event hosted by NLR First UMC that
provided two dedicated sessions to share the "nuts and bolts" of the "how" of hosting LSM classes
and also explored the "why" by providing some detailed suggestions regarding the purpose and
attendance of laity. It was well attended (with over 40 clergy in two classes) and well received. It
also created the additional opportunity to identify potential instructors for some of our classes,
such as preaching and polity. As an extension of this opportunity, LSM then proceeded to host
multiple Zoom events for both clergy and laity to further spread the opportunities and to answer
any general questions regarding LSM programs. All the ZOOM events were well attended, with
more than 100 total participants.

One of the additional highlights of the year has been acknowledging our first Certified Lay Minister
(CLM) graduates and celebrating their approval by their local District Committee on Ministry
(DCOM). By the time this journal is printed, we expect to have six CLMs to present to the Annual
Conference for recognition and at least five more in process. We have also Certified 1 Lay Speaker
and close to 100 Lay Servants. In total, over 250 participants have attended classes throughout
the last twelve months. We would like to recognize some of the host sites that have provided
hospitality and opportunities throughout our Conference: Our sincere thanks to Cabot, Newark,
Searcy First, Sixteenth Section, Lakeside Pine Bluff, Smackover, Arkadelphia First, Russellville
First, Rogers, Farmington, Bentonville, Grand Avenue, Asbury and Highland Valley. LSM is grateful
for all our partnerships on both the local and district levels and looks forward to growing those
relationships.

One of the year's greatest blessings was the receipt of a grant of \$17,000 from the Methodist
Foundation for Arkansas to spearhead a revival of LSM in the South District. We are thankful
for the help of Bonnie Branson in writing the grant and for the support of the South District
Superintendent, Rev. DeeDee Autry. The grant allows us flexibility in providing travel
reimbursements for our instructors as well as helping to provide resources to both our students
and host sites. The grant will also help provide scholarship money as needed for classes such as
those required for CLM certification. We have already completed our first quarter of classes in the
South District and hope to have completed three more for the second quarter leading up to Annual
Conference. Again, we are blessed with the financial support of the Methodist Foundation for
Arkansas and for all the churches stepping up to host.

1 We remain your ARUMC LSM Team,
2 Teresa (Tee) Bolin Conference Director
3 Karen Anderson Asst. Conference Director

4 **Nominating Committee**

5
6 Thanks to the hard work of the Nominating Committee in 2024, a great number of quadrennial
7 committee and commission positions were nominated and filled. Fewer positions are open this
8 year, but the nominations process is ongoing. This year the Conference Nominating Committee is
9 focusing our early efforts on boosting accessibility and awareness of the self-nomination online
10 form. This form presents the complete list of committees and commissions that are disciplinary but
11 also those that are unique teams within the structure of the Arkansas Conference. There is truly a
12 place for all kinds of gifts and talents to be utilized by laity and clergy within the working groups of
13 our Conference.

14
15 The Nominating Committee is grateful for any and all efforts by laity and clergy to build interest
16 in and recruit others to serve in these various capacities. At the forefront of our work is ensuring
17 diversity and representation across all committees.

18
19 In the months leading up the Annual Conference, regular communication from the Nominating
20 Committee will include the nomination form link as well as an itemized list of current openings
21 needing to be filled. The Nominating Committee intends to complete the work of nominations
22 by early June and publish the report well in advance of the Annual Conference highlighting any
23 remaining openings.

24
25 We are shifting our mentality from a “season of nominations” to a year-round approach seeking to
26 connect willing servants with the areas of opportunity these committees and commissions provide
27 for disciples of Jesus Christ to support the ongoing work of the Arkansas Annual Conference.

28
29 In Christ,
30 Rev. Susan Ledbetter
31 Chair, Conference Nominating Committee

32 **One More Question**

33
34 One More Question (OMQ) is an initiative to support local churches in being better neighbors and
35 partners in their communities. The goal is to teach, train, and resource congregations who want to
36 design outreach ministries WITH their community. There is specific support for smaller churches
37 (those who worship fewer than 200) so that all ARUMC congregations can step out in faith to ask
38 One More Question.

39
40 ARUMC Staff and trained facilitators spent most of March through August learning from experts;
41 developing web page content; creating agendas and gathering materials for the OMQ regional
42 trainings; and, designing pathways to promote and invite churches to be better community
43 partners. Through our partnership with The Neighboring Movement, three clergy and three
44 ARUMC staff members have been trained and have facilitated 7 regional trainings related to the
45 Good Neighboring Experiment. A total of 200 lay and clergy from 71 churches in each district have
46 participated.

47
48 Much of the training offered through One More Question focuses on asking churches questions
49 about themselves, their neighborhood, neighbors, and their communities. As churches take action,
50 relationships with their neighbors and community will strengthen, ultimately creating ministries and

programs that make room for OTHERS to join with the congregation, and vice versa, in order to build stronger communities. In support of their efforts to reach out to their neighbors in new ways, \$6,000 in microgrants of up to \$750 was awarded to eight churches.

Caron Morris from Thurston UMC wrote,
Too often I consider conferences and workshops a waste of time. That certainly was not the case with the One More Question Workshop. It was well organized and well executed. Your activities and thought provoking questions definitely took us out of our comfort zone and redirected our thinking... Thank you so much for providing such a workshop.

Justin Meeks from Sardis shared,
Yesterday after our meeting, my wife and daughter wanted to “go explore” in nature. Well one of my “way opening” things from my list was disc golf. So we went and looked at some property our church has to see if it could be turned into a course! It’s actually pretty perfect for one, and I have friends that know how to get the grants for a course (or have in the past)...Then we decided to go to a park just down the road. A lady and her dog were there. The dog came running up to us and that broke the ice pretty easily. Long story short, she’s coming to our women’s Bible study Wednesday! My wife went from feeling defeated to being back on fire for God in minutes! Sometimes it truly is just one more question.”

Through a partnership with the Living Faith Academy, a part of the Rio Texas Annual Conference, Rev. Ray Altman has led a 5-week zoom cohort with 40 people representing nine churches

In addition, Rev. Todd Seelau from the New Mexico Conference, served as the keynote speaker at the Vital Church Summit for Clergy hosted at North Little Rock UMC. 75 clergy gathered to learn from other clergy and two certified lay ministers on subjects such as cooperative parishes, using AI, empowering lay leadership and youth, creating space in outreach ministries, worshipping outside the building and in the community, and more.

Other learning opportunities for clergy and lay have included monthly discussions on zoom on books related to gathering people together, community building, and connecting relationally with those we serve in our outreach. In January, Rev. Mike Mather, author of Having Nothing, Possessing Everything joined us for our discussion.

Thank you to the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas who has made all of this possible. We are looking forward to doing more. We will offer three additional OMQ regional trainings, a fall Neighboring Jump Start Cohort, and a rolling micro-grant application process. In addition, we are exploring a consulting partnership with Mike Mather and DeAmon Harges to deepen our training in Asset Based Community Development as well as a version of cohort experience for churches wanting to establish a culture of neighboring which includes a worship sermon series, small group studies, 3 monthly zoom learning meetings, and one-on-one coaching.

Safe Gatherings

Since the Safe Gatherings initiative began in the fall of 2022 we have had 3119 individuals who have started the process with 2145 of those applicants approved. The remaining are either pending, under review or denied approval. As we reach the 3 year mark from the start of this endeavor, the Safe Gatherings Committee wants to remind those approved at the beginning of this process will soon receive reminders to renew their application for approval. All users will receive a reminder 45 days before their approval expires followed by another reminder 21 days before expiration. Below are the stats for the top 10 participating churches by both percentage and number of approved.

Top 10 Organizations by Percentage Approved

1.Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff (AR)	37%
2.Vilonia United Methodist Church	35%
3.Little Rock Hunter United Methodist Church	30%
4.Farmington UMC (AR)	21%
5.First UMC De Queen (AR)	18%
6.Jacksonville First UMC	15%
7.First UMC Springdale (AR)	15%
8.St. Paul UMC - Fort Smith	15%
9.First UMC Forrest City (AR)	13%
10.First UMC Russellville (AR)	13%

Top 10 Organizations by Number Approved

1.First UMC Springdale (AR)	117
2.St James UMC Little Rock (AR)	112
3.Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock (AR)	90
4.Central UMC Fayetteville (AR)	79
5.First UMC Russellville (AR)	63
6.First UMC Bentonville (AR)	56
7.Central UMC Rogers (AR)	55
8.First UMC Conway (AR)	54
9.First UMC Paragould (AR)	45
10.Lakewood UMC North Little Rock (AR)	42

United Methodist Men

Very little going on at the state level that has been reported to me. Danny Rainwater is the UMM district president for the Northeast district. I still need district presidents for the Northwest, Central, and Southern districts.

At the national level, the quadrennial National Gathering of Men will be held July 31 thru August 3, 2025. It will be held at Epworth by the Sea, St Simon's island, Georgia. The theme for the meeting is "finding your why". Why do you do the things you do? Spouses and clergy are invited. Reserve that weekend. Additional information was included in the March newsletter.

At the national level, GCUMM also has a new phone app. It is called "United". For \$9.99 per year you get access to daily devotions, resources for group ministries, discipleship coaching resources, and Ministry stories.

United Methodist Museum of Arkansas

The UMMA is a beacon of cultural and historical preservation within the Arkansas United Methodist Community. The museum works to preserve and display donated artifacts representing our United Methodist History to teach future generations about the rich tradition of United Methodists in Arkansas. In 2024, the museum continued this work and envisioned a future for the ministry of the Museum.

As we have envisioned the museum's future, we have also continued preserving Arkansan Methodist history. We have added to the Oral History project in the past year, totaling 16 interviews. The Travelling Exhibit Project went to three different places across our connection.

In 2025, the Museum plans to move to a new location to make it more visible and accessible to visitors. We will also rework our membership plan and bolster our team managing artifacts and exhibits. This is an exciting time to be involved in the museum as we continue our work and expand upon what we have already accomplished.

Written and submitted by Chad Hornsby, Chair Historic Arkansas Methodist Museum.

United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith is celebrating a new beginning which gives us an opportunity to let go of the past, create and change the future and embrace new possibilities. Every day is a new beginning for us and we embrace each new day with a fresh and innovative spirit. Our new journey, Carrying our Faith Forward, is designed to address the different needs and life stages of our current members whose local churches chose to disaffiliate as well as women of other faith traditions who just may want to join the United Women in Faith. We have refreshed the way that we were telling our story, created new and innovative programs and expanded options for membership and engagement.



United
Women
in Faith

The District realignment brought about unsolicited changes for the Arkansas United Women in Faith. Although the Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church realigned on July 1, 2024, the timeline that we decided to realign was our calendar year which extends from January 1 through December 30. Reflecting on 2024 events, challenges and knowledge gained from our participation in these events, we are inspired to continue to put love in action to make a difference. We are learning how to grow stronger together. Growing together is powerful but the relationship between each of the United Women in Faith is far more important.

Our Arkansas Conference United Women in Faith Luncheon is June 18 at Hot Springs First United Methodist Church. Transportation will be provided from the Annual Conference to the Church. The Arkansas Conference Mission u will be held July 23-26 at Hendrix College in Conway. The study this year is "Practicing Hope." This curriculum will explore how we can hope differently than we have in the past. The 22nd Annual Meeting will be held November 1 at North Little Rock First United Methodist Church.

United Women in Faith celebrates our likeness as well as our differences to strengthen our relationships and to influence others to join us so that we may continue carrying our faith forward to impact our ongoing mission programs and work. We are committed.

Maybelline Strong, AR Conference United Women in Faith President

Institution Reports

Africa University

Greetings and thanks to you, the members of the Arkansas Annual Conference, for your love of Africa University! Your love, lived out in the local church, and across every level of The United Methodist Church worldwide, is a source of hope and of dreams brought to life. Africa University's students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni are deeply appreciative of the gracious investment of 82.48 percent of the asking to the Africa University Fund apportionment by the local churches of the Arkansas Annual Conference in 2024. Thank you for investing in equipping change leaders who share the gospel of Jesus Christ, reduce hunger, improve public health, instill hope, and build prosperous and peaceful communities. As the 2025-2028 quadrennium unfolds, Africa University is urging the members of the Arkansas Annual Conference to:



- **Encourage their congregations to maintain their support for the Africa University Fund at the 2016 budget level and strive for 100% investment of the asking each year.**
- **Help identify at least two (2) churches (keystone congregations) in the conference to provide second mile gifts of \$7,000 each (or \$14,000 in total each year) for annual scholarships for two undergraduate students.**

Through Africa University, the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church is nurturing servant leaders with ethics, empathy, and an audacious, can-do mindset. Having experienced God's grace through your love in action, students and graduates of Africa University are stepping forward to help churches and communities to thrive. Here are highlights of the impact of Africa University faculty, administrators, and students in 2024:

- Africa University start-up, Reagan Technologies, earned a semi-final finish in the Hult Prize Global Accelerator competition. Known as the 'Nobel prize contest for students,' the three-student AU team impressed the Hult Prize judges with an innovative concept for generating electricity from footsteps. The team's climate-smart pavement tiles stood out against the competition from more than 60 universities.
- Another AU trio is transforming education by bridging the digital divide in Africa. Three students majoring in computer science won the top prize at the UbuntuNet Alliance Women's Hackathon with FUNDISA. It's a chatbot that delivers instant, curriculum-aligned explanations to students who lack internet access, but have phones with SMS functionality. The chatbot enables students to simply send a text to a short code to receive educational support.
- Africa University is excited to share that its Doctor of Ministry program, a first for the continent of Africa, was accredited by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education. Future D.Min. candidates have options for specialization in Mission and Evangelism, Liturgical Theology, Church Administration, Church and Society, and Chaplaincy Ministry. A pioneer group of 10 senior officers in the military, prisons and policing from Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have completed the program, thanks to a collaboration between Africa University and Wesley Theological Seminary. Their doctoral research projects generated new knowledge that addresses deployment trauma, reducing drug abuse among officers, and the use of Psalms of lament for facilitating healing in families of inmates.

This is the global transformation story that Arkansas United Methodists are shaping as partners in

mission with Africa University. Thank you for showing up as the means through which promise, dreams, and a just future are being realized. Your leadership and generous contributions are as pivotal today as they were at Africa University’s inception, 33 years ago. Thank you for journeying alongside Africa University in ministry.

James H. Salley, President/CEO of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. and Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement, Africa University.

Boston Universtiy School of Theology

Your partnership, prayers, and support are a cherished gift as BUSTH seeks to serve the church and the world! In a year like 2024, BUSTH’s commitments to equip transformational leaders for peace and justice are more necessary and significant. We are hopeful and vigilant in our continued partnership with you.

NEWS:

Students: Our academic year 2024-25 entering class was among our most diverse, with 109 new students enrolling, 33% of whom are international students.

Faculty: In July, Shively T. J. Smith was promoted to Associate Professor of New Testament, and in September we welcomed new faculty member emilie m. townes, Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of Religion and Black Studies. In January we welcomed new Assistant Professor of Religion and Society Luther Young, Jr.

Expanding Online/Hybrid Programming: BUSTH’s first fully online master’s degree—the Master of Religion and Public Leadership (MARPL)—continues to expand since launching in fall 2022. MARPL seeks students who wish to be prepared for leadership roles that creatively engage challenges of public life: bu.edu/sth/marpl. An online Master of Divinity program is planned for Fall 2026.

Faculty Research: Associate Dean Cristian De La Rosa received a second Lilly Endowment Parenting Grant for \$1.25 million. Faculty published more than 130 books, scholarly articles, op-eds, presentations, and book reviews during 2024. Many were interviewed by media publications or featured on podcasts for their scholarship in topics such as social justice activism, historical Methodist leaders, responding to trauma, and the use of AI to predict religious extremism. Selected stories are found at bu.edu/sth/research/faculty-research/.

Scholarships: We continue to offer free tuition to UMC-registered candidates for ordained ministry and leadership fellowships that support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality studies. New funds include Rev. James M. Smith (’51) Fund for Latinx Lay Education and Rev. Tom Sears (’59) Chaplaincy Operating Fund. We have increased an endowed fund for students specializing in Hebrew Bible.

Accreditation and Curriculum: BUSTH concluded a thorough curriculum revision for the MDiv and MTS programs which launched in fall 2024.

Online Lifelong Learning: BUSTH offers online courses for professional and spiritual enrichment of religious leaders. Recent offerings include “A Womanist Ethic of Care.” To learn more, visit bu.edu/sth/oll.

Development: Recent accomplishments include endowing the Raíces Latinas Program in Theology, Leadership, & Research and meeting a \$250K match in support of the Religion & Conflict Transformation Program.

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE and COMPASSION:

BUSTH’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers webinars on timely inclusion efforts, such as “Spiritual Leadership in Divided Times: Trauma and Thurman,” and \$500 DEI scholarships are offered to students with financial need to participate in our travel seminars.

1 Our Fall 2024 Lowell Lecture premiered “Simulating Religious Violence,” which captured the
2 work of computer scientists and religious scholars to seek to address conflicts rooted in religious
3 violence.
4 Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing as written in our
5 2030 Strategic Plan. BUSTH is the first certified Green School at BU and is active in the Green
6 Seminary Initiative.

7
8 With faith and gratitude,
9 G. Sujin Pak, dean

11 Candler School of Theology

12 Since 1914, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has educated faithful and creative
13 leaders for the church’s ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United
14 Methodist Church, Candler holds true to the Wesleyan value of ecumenical openness, welcoming
15 students from more than 40 denominations. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of
16 the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 416 from 13 countries, 41 states, 32 annual conferences,
17 and 43% persons of color. We see this diversity as a blessing, enriching our life together and
18 providing the perfect context for training for relevant ministry in the 21st century—ministry that
19 cultivates community across difference, welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies
20 Christ’s love in and among us.

21
22 Candler offers six degrees (Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in
23 Religion and Leadership, Master of Religion and Public Life, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry),
24 most of which are available in hybrid or online formats. Response to our hybrid-format Master of
25 Divinity, blending online classes and in-person intensives, continues to be strong: 63% of 2024’s
26 MDiv entering class chose the hybrid model. Nearly a quarter of MDiv students participate in
27 Candler’s Teaching Parish program, earning contextual education credit by serving as student
28 pastors in local churches. And our proven DMin program—with a near 90% completion rate—is
29 90% online. These flexible options along with Candler’s recognized academic excellence and
30 hands-on learning opportunities are opening possibilities for more people to follow God’s call to
31 ministry.

32
33 Generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2024-2025, we are on track to award
34 nearly \$6.5 million in scholarship support across all degree programs. All MDiv students receive
35 scholarship support, and those who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC
36 receive full-tuition scholarships. Plus, a remarkable gift this year of \$20 million from the O. Wayne
37 Rollins Foundation promises to have a transformative impact on the school and future students
38 alike, fueling a considerable expansion of our scholarship program and reducing financial barriers
39 to high-quality theological education.

40
41 Several programs beyond our formal degrees make Candler a hub of Christian learning for an
42 expanding audience. Those who are not seeking a graduate degree can engage in learning
43 through The Candler Foundry, which offers in-person and online short courses, events, and
44 certificate programs; the United Methodist Course of Study for educating licensed local pastors;
45 the Candler Center for Christian Leadership for refining business skills of United Methodist leaders;
46 and La Mesa Academy, offering a graduate certificate in theological studies via a two-year hybrid
47 program with courses in Spanish, English, and Korean.

48
49 Candler continued to strengthen the already robust United Methodist presence among our faculty
50 with four key appointments this year: Geordan Hammond, associate professor of Methodist

and Wesleyan studies; Soren Hessler, assistant professor in the practice of leadership and administration; Jennifer Quigley, assistant professor of New Testament; and Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, who joined us as bishop-in-residence following the retirement of Bishop Larry Goodpaster. Jonathan Strom became dean of Candler in August 2024, when former dean Jan Love returned to the faculty. Strom has served on Candler’s faculty since 1997 as professor of church history, with nearly a decade as senior associate dean of faculty and academic affairs, and a number of years as director of international initiatives. He is committed to nurturing the school’s deep connection with The United Methodist Church.

Candler is strengthened by your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of the church. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu and follow us on social media to stay informed of all we offer throughout the year.

—Office of Communications
Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Camp Tanako

Camp Tanako is a camp and retreat ministry of the Arkansas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Tanako provides a sacred place, set apart from the world. Persons of all ages are welcome to come rest, play, and experience God in new and often profound ways. While campers are at Tanako, they get to practice the concepts that they have learned in their families and local congregations....things like love, forgiveness, prayer, worship, and thanksgiving.



Campers are guided by young adult leaders who serve as mentors and foster community among their campers. Tanako is a place where life-long relationships are made. In this diverse community, campers recognize themselves and others as uniquely created in the image of God through affirmations of gifts and experiences that help them grow into the places God is leading them. Our goal is for campers to go home wanting to make a difference by serving others and working to recreate the community they experienced at camp, and to go home empowered to be the love of Jesus Christ to their neighbors.

In 2024, Camp Tanako received over 1000 registrations for our overnight and day camp programs. Campers in both programs came together in community to practice living in Christian community while learning that God’s love and creation are Beyond Belief. Campers came from local churches across the ARUMC, non-UMC congregations, and many campers listed no church affiliation. Camp Tanako hosted approximately 1000 persons for retreat experiences for children, youth and adults during 2024.

Camp Tanako’s Board of Trustees would like to make the following recommendations for new board members, 4 year term beginning July 1, 2025: Michelle Ambrose, Donnie Betts, Stephanie Brown, Lori Canada, Peaches Smith, and Nathan Kilbourne.

Camp Tanako’s Board of Trustees and leadership want to thank the many churches and individuals that support this extension ministry of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church with their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Drew University Theological School

Drew University Theological School
Rev. Edwin David Aponte, PhD, ThD (honorary)
Dean and Professor of Religion & Culture
January 10, 2025

Drew University Theological School educates and mentors pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, thought leaders, and change agents for ministry and service in the church, society, and the wider world. Building upon its Wesleyan and Methodist foundations, Drew Theological School is diverse in theology, vocations, age, as well as racial, ethnic, national, and international identities of its faculty, students, and staff. Many Drew students are just beginning their ministry, while others come to graduate theological education with prior ministry experience. The latter reflects a growing trend among all theological schools in the United States and Canada. In providing theological education to the world, Drew holds in-person classes in Madison, New Jersey, classes that meet exclusively online, while others meet in hybrid fashion, i.e., partially online, partially in-person, as well as in-person Doctor of Ministry cohort in South Korea and a pilot in-person Master of Divinity cohort in Liberia. Regular chapel worship originates on campus in Seminary Hall, but also is live-streamed so that students, alumni, and friends around the world can participate. Drew Theological School is a global seminary with a global student population serving the worldwide church.

In Fall 2024 Drew Theological School welcomed 94 new students in all degree programs, with total student enrollment (by headcount) in Fall 2024 semester being 388. Enrollment of international students at Drew increased from 120 students in Fall 2021 to 157 students in Fall 2024. This number includes students who are studying full-time in the U.S.A. on a student Visa, students who are studying online from their home country, and students in the South Korean Cohort of the Doctor of Ministry program.

Drew's interdisciplinary degree programs provide real-world apprenticeships, promote adaptive leadership skills, and encourage innovation through team-taught core courses as well as a variety of electives that integrate theological disciplines and faith practices. The Drew faculty's shared values are infused across all aspects of the teaching, learning, and the formation of students: 1) a commitment to anti-racism; 2) gender and sexual-identity equality; 3) eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and 4) interfaith understanding and cooperation. Drew Theological School has an increase in United Methodist students, additionally, Drew has many United Methodist Global Fellows pursuing further education for ministry. UMC graduates are serving in conferences across the United States, and especially within nearby regional episcopal areas of The United Methodist Church in the annual conferences of Greater New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Susquehanna, Upper New York, New York, and New England.

Duke Divinity School

Through God's sustaining grace and faithfulness, Duke Divinity School continues to welcome students from across the nation and around the world to be trained for ministries ranging from rural church pastorates to hospital and prison chaplains to community service leaders to theological educators. In 2024, we were joined by 224 students from 41 U.S. states and



**DUKE
DIVINITY
SCHOOL**

the District of Columbia as well as new students who hold either primary or secondary citizenship in 11 other countries. The Master of Divinity program gained 108 new students, including 62 residential students (up from 54 the year before) and 46 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled eight new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 39 (up from 22 last year); Master of Theology, 10; Master of Theological Studies, 27; the Doctor of Theology welcomed five new students to campus. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed five residential students to campus and 21 to the hybrid program.

This has been a year of centennial celebrations for Duke University and The Duke Endowment. DDS was honored to participate in a Founders’ Weekend chapel service, held in Duke Chapel, in which both United Methodist Church bishops in North Carolina (Bishop Connie Shelton and Bishop Ken Carter) participated in leading the service, along with Dean Colón-Emeric. Divinity students and alumni contributed prayers and music, and of particular note were three women in our Master of Theology program who offered prayers in Mandarin, Hindi, and Korean.

Duke Divinity School continues to invest in ways to support Methodist leadership and pastoral formation. Our D.Min. program welcomed two new cohorts, one in Traditional Leadership and one in Missional Leadership, with support from the Parish Ministry Fund and The Duke Endowment. These 39 students are strengthening their capacity for leadership, establishing new faith communities, and meeting the challenges confronting churches and communities.

Master of Divinity students in the UMC had the opportunity in the spring 2024 semester to enroll in a course designed to prepare them to be observers at the UMC General Conference. Students met weekly with DDS faculty who are ordained elders in the UMC and nearly half a dozen bishops and denominational leaders. As one student said: “It is a time when we hold fast to our convictions and identify what is unique to the United Methodist Church. What is our role, currently and in the future? It’s amazing: our mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I am excited about my ministry journey and the future of the UMC.”

Duke Divinity continues to build on our connection to Methodist churches around the world through a formal partnership with Methodist Theological University in Seoul, South Korea. This agreement, signed on Sept. 21, 2024, supports the creation of pathways for the exchange of students, faculty, and academic programming.

Two scholars joined our faculty this year: Aaron Griffith, assistant professor of American church history, and Kevin Hart, Jo Rae Wright University Distinguished Professor, with a joint appointment in the Duke University department of English. William Turner Jr., James T. and Alice Mead Cleland Professor Emeritus of the Practice of Preaching, received the Duke University Medal for Distinguished Meritorious Service, the highest honor bestowed by the university.

Duke Divinity commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Women’s Center at the school with a guest preacher and celebration dinner. With a \$5 million gift from The Duke Endowment, we are strengthening our Office of Black Church Studies through recruiting a senior scholar and supporting academic, theological research. A \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., part of their Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer Initiative, will help launch a Duke Divinity program, “Let the Children Come,” to study how congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices.

Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church and partnership with this annual conference. We look forward to our ongoing work with

1 you as we join the leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing people for Christian ministry. To
2 learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

3
4 Respectfully submitted by Edgardo Colón-Emeric
5 Dean of Duke Divinity School
6

7 **Gammon Theological Seminary**

8 GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY is the only Historically Black
9 Theological Institution (HBTI) of The United Methodist Church.
10 Gammon's Mission is to help prepare for the practice of Christian
11 ministry and public leadership individuals who understand their
12 vocation as working in partnership with God in forming a just and
13 generative world for all.
14

15 GTS is currently an "extended unit" of the Interdenominational
16 Theological Center. As a constituent member of the ITC who is
17 accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and
18 Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), GTS has conferred
19 degrees in partnership with the ITC for Gammon Theological
20 Seminary graduates since 1959. Gammon Theological Seminary seeks separate accreditation
21 through SACSCOC and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada
22 (ATS).
23



24 We are excited to share Academic and Operational updates for 2024.

- 25 • In June 2024, we hired a world-renowned theologian and scholar, Dr. Renita J. Weems, as
26 our Chief Academic Officer.
- 27 • This Fall 2024, we launched state-of-the-art renovations to the Gammon building. The
28 renovations transformed the facility into a place for four in-person class sessions, upgrading
29 all meeting spaces with state-of-the-art technology and furnishings.
- 30 • In September 2024, the Board of Trustees of Gammon Theological Seminary approved
31 the submission of our application to begin the SACSCOC Accreditation process. This
32 historic decision included Gammon launching our Independent MDIV degree program in
33 September 2024.

34 Here are a few of this year's ministry and fund development highlights.

- 35 • In Spring 2024, Gammon hosted our 2nd Annual Student Scholarship Fundraiser Golf
36 Tournament, which received \$70,000 in donations toward the scholarship fund.
- 37 • The Rev. Walter H. McKelvey Endowed Scholarship The fund, which was launched by Dr.
38 Loretta F. McKelvey (wife of the late Rev. McKelvey) and Dr. Walter Kimbrough, continues
39 to grow with matching gifts in partnership with the South Carolina United Methodist
40 Foundation.
- 41 • In June 2024, the Florida Conference's Rev. Geraldine McClellan Endowed Scholarship
42 Fund, which is now fully endowed at the Florida United Methodist Foundation, continued
43 to grow with donations for 2024. Now, the fund balance exceeds \$130,000.00, and
44 Dr. Geraldine McClellan was honored at our 2024 Founder's Day/Pastors and Leaders
45 Conference Gala banquet with our Icon of Excellence Award.
- 46 • Gammon hosted the Ebony Exploration Event for 75 young adults under the age of 35. The
47 students explored their sense of call and vocational discernment.
- 48 • In December 2024, Gammon celebrated our 141st Founder's Day and Pastors and Leaders
49 Conference. We hosted over three hundred people attending workshops (in person and
50 virtual) and our Scholarship Gala Dinner at IMPACT Church in Atlanta, GA.

- Gammon received two \$10,000 donations for two new endowed funds from Dr. James H. Salley, in honor of his parents in the South Carolina Conference, and from Rev. Dr. Michael McQueen, District Superintendent for the North Georgia Central North District.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Candace M. Lewis
President - CEO

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary continues to live into its mission of Forming courageous leaders in the way of Jesus to cultivate communities of justice, compassion, and hope...for the thriving of the Church and the healing of the world. We do this work in partnership with the annual conferences of the United Methodist Church and other partners who share our values. Now in our 172nd year of ministry to the church, the academy, and the world, Garrett is a strong, growing, thriving community of faith and learning that represents the fullness of the global church's witness.



During this past academic year, Garrett welcomed its largest entering class in over a decade for a fifth straight year, with 135 new students, and a current enrollment of 324 students representing 38 states and 24 nations from across the globe. We continue to see growth in our student body from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, adding to an already richly diverse student body. While our denominational diversity also continues to grow, we also proudly welcomed growth in our United Methodist students who constitute more than half of our student body. Our faculty also reflect this regional and global diversity, with fully half originating from nations outside the United States.

Our growth in recent years continues to reflect patterns seen across theological education, mainly in distance and online learners. For the first time in our history, distance learners in the entering class outnumbered residential students. This has allowed for truly global learning spaces that have enriched our conversations and our overall learning environment. We're blessed to have the world represented in our classrooms, which also impacts how our faculty teach, what they research, and for whom.

Over the last year Garrett has also been blessed by multiple major grants to fund faculty research and institutional priorities. A major grant is funding the work of our Center for Ecological Regeneration, allowing the seminary to partner with local congregations in the Midwest to equip them to respond to climate change in their communities and the disproportionate impact it tends to have on the poor and local economies. Another major grant is funding work in our Centro Raíces Latinas to strengthen Hispanic-Latiné pastoral leaders and congregations, helping clergy and communities build institutional capacity and expand their ministries. Yet another grant is helping to expand the reach and impact of our Garrett Collective, our lifelong learning and resource platform that seeks to make theological education accessible and affordable to a significantly broader audience.

Garrett's world-class faculty continue developing curricular innovations that are responsive to the church's growing needs, while also contributing a significant body of scholarly work to their respective fields. They are also partnering with annual conferences and local churches

in delivering much needed programming for leadership development and faith formation, an expanding focus of our Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships division. Garrett is proud to be a United Methodist institution, and proud to continue to deepen its partnership and programming with annual conferences around the globe.

Hendrix College

"In religious and vocation programs combined with service learning, Hendrix continues to develop clergy and lay leaders for faithful service inside the church and beyond...helping students find meaningful vocations connected to who they are and how they want to serve in the world."



-Hendrix College Statement on Church

Relatedness, adopted by the faculty and board of trustees in spring 2017

Vocational discernment, engaged learning, and academic excellence are some of the hallmarks of Hendrix College that have their roots in the Methodist value of uniting faith and knowledge. The College is proud to continue the vision set out by its founders almost 150 years ago. Recognized widely as one of the best small colleges in the country, Hendrix expresses its appreciation to the Arkansas Conference for the support it gives to the programs and mission of this institution. As a United Methodist Church-related college, the College embraces the freedom of the academy where students and faculty explore the boundaries of knowledge while setting a context for that exploration in an ethos that values growth of both the mind and the spirit. In this way we fulfill our mission to cultivate whole persons and to inspire our students to live lives of accomplishment, integrity, service, and joy in their communities.

We are pleased to highlight some of the many ways that Hendrix College changes lives.

Religious Life and Vocational Exploration

Through the Office of the Chaplain and the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling, Hendrix College focuses on connecting students with opportunities and resources to deepen their faith, to grow in relationships and leadership, and to explore and discern vocational paths where their gifts may be well cultivated and shared for a life of meaning and purpose.

- Since 2004, 63 Hendrix graduates have enrolled in seminary with 75% of these students attending UM seminaries.
- Two recent Hendrix alumni are currently in seminary.
- Of the eight persons being commissioned or ordained this year in the Arkansas Annual Conference, five are Hendrix alumni.
- The UMYF Leadership Scholarship Program is completing its 30th year. Currently 15 students participate who will eventually join over 300 alumni from the program.
- These scholars form a core community on campus who share in and help lead weekly worship and communion, small groups for support and discipleship, retreats, and opportunities for fellowship and serving.
- Of the 15 UMYF Leadership Scholars, six students say "Yes," and three say "Maybe" to pursuing a call to ministry. Students who are discerning ministry are offered mentoring, opportunities to lead and serve on campus and beyond, and engagement with leaders in ministry in a variety of roles.
- Internships in local churches and non-profit ministry settings match exploring students with

seasoned ministry leaders and opportunities for mentoring and discovery. Many of these are funded through the Center for Calling and Christian Leadership (CCCL), a grant funded through the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA).

- In October the Chaplain's Office hosted a Seminary Fair at the campus with 16 seminaries represented from across three time zones, and representatives from two seminaries have requested and made visits to campus at other times. CCCL also provides leadership and support for seminary trips with groups of other Arkansas UM students, or funding assistance for individual seminary visits.
- The Miller Center Service Scholars form a core community on campus which cultivates a spirit of serving and vocational reflection.
- Service-learning is ongoing as a component of community life through the student-led Volunteer Action Committee and travel opportunities locally, regionally, and internationally.
- Since 2016, 94 high school students have attended the Hendrix Youth Institute (HYI), which is part of the Youth Theology Network of similar programs across the nation funded by the Lilly Endowment. The HYI format's current design is an intensive retreat for ministry exploration, followed by participation in a special "track" of Senior High Assembly. HYI is also supported by the Arkansas Conference and the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas.

Church Relations

- United Methodist groups that the College has hosted for no rental fee include the Arkansas United Methodist Conference Historical Society, Board of Ordained Ministry, Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries planning group, Arkansas Area Clergywomen, and various local and district meetings and retreats.
- In 2024, Hendrix will host the Jr. & Sr. High Assemblies for the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries, "Mission u" for the Conference United Women in Faith, and the national conference of Kappa Phi, a United Methodist-founded organization. More than 450 churches across the Arkansas Conference have had Hendrix students assist with worship services and/or serve as interns in the past 30 years.

Continuing Education

- In collaboration with The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas' Compelling Preaching Initiative, we will host Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber as the John and Marjem Gill Preaching Workshop leader on November 3-4, 2025. Rev. Bolz-Weber, an ordained Lutheran Pastor, founder of House for All Sinners & Saints in Denver, CO and the author of three NYT bestselling memoirs, will preach on Monday evening, Nov 3 at 7:00 p.m. in Staples Auditorium and lead a workshop on Tuesday, November 4 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Funding Received from Outside Sources for Religious Life and Ministry Support

- An endowed gift from the John Workman family for a summer internship in churches, non-profits, or journalism.
- An endowed gift from the Wilder family to establish an internship in churches and non-profit agencies.
- Grants from the Lilly Endowment (listed above) for United Methodist youth who are discerning a call to ministry.
- A gift from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas to create the Center for Calling and Christian Leadership (2018-present).
- An Innovation Grant from the Central District of the United Methodist Church.

Financial Aid/Enrollment

- Identified as a "Best Value College" by US News and World Report, Hendrix College

1 strives to offer students an affordable, high quality education grounded in the liberal arts.
2 The Tuition Advantage program continues through the coming school year. For students
3 beginning in 2026 and beyond, Hendrix will offer a comprehensive financial aid program
4 which will evaluate each student's situation and award merit scholarships and potentially
5 need-based aid, recognizing each student's achievements and the distinct circumstances of
6 each family.

- 7 • Annually, Hendrix College provides more than \$2.2 million in institutional aid to United
8 Methodist students.
- 9 • For the 2024 calendar year, the College received \$72,299.96 from the Arkansas
10 Conference of the United Methodist Church, with 100% of the church apportionment going
11 toward the Office of the Chaplain and programming through the Office of Religious Life.
- 12 • The sustainability of our commitment to financial access is uncertain in light of the
13 demographic and political pressures facing institutions like Hendrix College. As part of an
14 overall planning process, I anticipate changes to our financial model.

15
16 The relationship between Methodists and higher education is rooted in the historical teachings of
17 John and Charles Wesley. Hendrix College values its relationship with the Arkansas Conference
18 of The United Methodist Church and the opportunity to fulfill Wesley's vision to bring together
19 intellectual curiosity, spiritual formation, knowledge, and vital piety. Your gifts directly support the
20 work of the Chaplain to provide programming for our UMYF Leadership Scholars, service- learning
21 opportunities, ministry internships, and a wide range of religious life and discipleship opportunities.
22 We are grateful for the many ways in which the United Methodist Churches of Arkansas support
23 Hendrix.

24
25 Karen K. Petersen, Ph.D. President

26 27 **Lydia Patterson Institute**

28 Submitted by Dr. Carla Cardoza, President

29
30 Dear Bishop, District Superintendents, Conference Leaders, Pastors,
31 and Beloved Members of the Arkansas Annual Conference of the
32 United Methodist Church,

33 It is with a grateful heart and unwavering hope that I bring you this
34 report from the border—from a place where faith meets resilience,
35 where two nations touch, and where every morning, a sacred
36 journey begins.

37
38 At Lydia Patterson Institute (LPI) in El Paso, Texas, we serve some of
39 the most courageous students you'll ever meet. These are young
40 people who, every single day, cross the international bridge from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, into the
41 United States to pursue an education and a better life. This year, 99% of our student body crosses
42 that bridge daily—many of them U.S. citizens who live in Mexico due to economic hardship,
43 housing insecurity, or family displacement. What they find on the other side is more than a school.

44 They find a community. A calling. A bridge to their future.

45 46 **Our Mission is United Methodist at Its Core**

47 Founded in 1913, LPI is not just a school—it is a ministry of the United Methodist Church. Our
48 school offers an advanced ESL-based, college-preparatory curriculum, alongside career and
49 college readiness, and spiritual formation. Most students are first-generation college-bound, and
50 many are living in difficult and underserved circumstances. But when they walk through our doors,



they find more than a classroom.	1
	2
They find family. They find faith. They find a bridge to something more.	3
Most importantly, every one of our students receives a scholarship—thanks to the support of	4
churches, individuals, foundations, and partners like you. Your generosity makes our mission	5
possible.	6
	7
We believe our students are not defined by where they come from. They are defined by who they	8
are becoming.	9
	10
2024–2025: A Year of Vision, Growth, and Grace	11
Despite economic challenges and political uncertainty, LPI has seen extraordinary progress this	12
year—because God continues to make a way, and because you continue to say yes. Some of our	13
most meaningful milestones include:	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Graduation Rate (May 2024) Every senior graduated on time, and 98% were accepted into college, many with 	15
scholarships. For most, they are the first in their families to ever dream this big.	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the Bishop Nunn STEM Makerspace Once an unused library, this space now 	17
gives students hands-on access to robotics, coding, engineering, and technology.	18
It was made possible by Bishop Nunn’s retirement offering and the generosity of the	19
Woodworth Estate Foundation.	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our First-Ever Robotics Team For the first time in school history, LPI launched a 	21
competitive robotics team. What began as a dream quickly became a reality through the	22
Makerspace. These students—many of whom had never touched a robot before—are now	23
building, programming, and competing with confidence in regional events. It’s more than	24
science; its self-worth, teamwork, and the belief that they can lead in any field, including	25
STEM.	26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Leadership We reimagined our Student Lay Ministry Program, appointing a 	27
chaplain to help guide students in service, reflection, and ministry—rooted in the Wesleyan	28
tradition.	29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Recognition and Honors 	30
This year, students represented LPI at regional science fairs, creative writing contests, and	31
math competitions. Several were recognized for academic excellence and leadership.	32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Partnerships and Visibility 	33
We’ve strengthened relationships with local businesses, media, and institutions, raising	34
awareness about LPI’s unique ministry through newspaper articles, TV interviews, and	35
service projects.	36
	37
This is what we call LPI 2.0—a sacred reimagining of a legacy that continues to transform lives, one	38
student at a time.	39
	40
The Bridge as a Symbol of Vision and Faith	41
There is a painting by René Magritte titled Perspicacity. It shows an artist painting a bird in flight—	42
not by copying the egg in front of him, but by envisioning what it is destined to become. At LPI, we	43
live with that kind of vision.	44
	45
We don’t just see students as they are—we see them in motion. In flight. Becoming. We see	46
pastors, teachers, doctors, engineers, and leaders.	47
	48
And like the artist in the painting, we believe in their	49
promise—before the world sees it.	50
Every morning, our students walk across a real bridge. But they’re also crossing a spiritual one—	
from survival to strength, from poverty to possibility, from despair to hope. As one student shared	
so beautifully:	

1 *“Each morning, I wake up before the sun, lace up my shoes, and begin a journey most people*
2 *can’t imagine. I cross a bridge—not just between countries, but between who I was and who I’m*
3 *becoming. On one side is where I live... and on the other is where I believe my future lives. That*
4 *bridge carries my hope.”*

5 **But the Bridge Needs Repair: Our Facilities and Financial Needs**

6 Our mission is strong—but our campus is aging. Some of our most urgent needs are not exciting,
7 but they are essential:
8

9 **1. Intercom System Replacement**

10 Ours is from the 1950s. It no longer supports emergency communication or modern security
11 standards. A safe school needs a reliable voice system.

12 **2. Asbestos Abatement**

13 In a 110-year-old building, select areas still contain asbestos. We’ve planned phased remediation,
14 but we need support to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

15 **3. Transportation**

16 Our vans are outdated. Students are missing college visits, competitions, and internships. Safe,
17 reliable transportation is essential to equity and access.

18 **4. Infrastructure and Security Upgrades**

19 We need updates to fencing, lighting, technology, and campus entry systems to protect students
20 and ensure a secure, connected learning environment.

21 **A Vision for the Future: Building an Endowment**

22 We are laying the foundation for a scholarship endowment that will ensure every student has
23 the financial support they need—not just this year, but well into the future. This is more than a
24 financial goal; it is our commitment to secure the bridge of opportunity we’ve built, so it can carry
25 generations of students across with hope, dignity, and purpose.

26 Every morning, our students cross a literal border. But with your help, they also cross into a future
27 that once seemed impossible.

28
29 This endowment is how we strengthen that bridge—permanently. Your continued support is what
30 makes that future real—not just for today’s students, but for every student who will follow in their
31 footsteps.

32 It’s a courageous vision.
33

34 Then again, so was the idea of founding a school on the border in 1913.
35

36 And yet, here we are—still crossing, still rising, still believing.
37

38 **How You Can Walk With Us**

- 39 • We invite you—our church family—to walk this bridge with us:
- 40 • Sponsor a student or a class
- 41 • Host us at your church or district gathering
- 42 • Give through The Advance (#3020504)
- 43 • Pray for our students, staff, and families
- 44 • Visit us—walk the bridge, meet the students, and witness the miracle of this ministry
- 45 • Bring your mission groups to LPI

46 LPI is a border school, yes—but more importantly, it is the only bridge-building ministry secondary
47 school of the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church.

48
49 We do not just serve students.
50 We serve the gospel.

We serve justice.
We serve hope.

Thank you for believing in this mission. Thank you for believing in our students. And thank you for reminding them—every step of the way—that they are not walking alone.

With all my heart,
Dr. Carla Cardoza
President, Lydia Patterson Institute
www.lpi-elpaso.org | Advance #531523
Be the Bridge. Donate Now at www.lpi-elpaso.org
Text LPI to 915.292.2200

Memphis Theological Seminary

*Centered in scholarship, piety, and justice, Memphis Theological Seminary
cultivates faith leaders
in the way of Jesus within a hospitable and diverse community to serve the
church and the world.*



On behalf of President Jody Hill, I bring greetings from MTS, an ecumenical mission of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. For decades, MTS has been a leading institution in the Mid-South, preparing graduates for ordination as deacons or elders in The United Methodist Church.

Like many theological institutions, MTS has navigated the challenges of declining enrollment trends, which were already present before the COVID-19 pandemic and were further exacerbated by it. However, our dedicated admissions and recruiting staff have demonstrated remarkable resilience, reminding us that God's call remains steadfast in the hearts of those seeking ministry. This season has underscored the necessity for theological institutions to be adaptive and responsive, ensuring that individuals can explore their calling in the context of their daily lives.

MTS has embraced innovation in its approach to theological education while maintaining the academic rigor expected of master's and doctoral-level programs. Our 78-hour Master of Divinity (MDiv) program requires annual on-campus residencies, with courses offered in various modalities, including in-person, Hyflex, weekly intensive, immersion, monthly hybrid, and fully online formats. We no longer offer asynchronous courses; all modalities are live, synchronous, and interactive. We do not offer a fully only degree program. Depending on a student's needs, it can be mostly online. We are persuaded, however, that some continual engagement in person with students and faculty is essential to a well-rounded experience.

Institutional Developments: Merger, Acquisition, and Partnership (MAP) Evaluation

Under the leadership of President Hill and the MTS Board of Trustees, the seminary is currently undergoing a Merger, Acquisition, and Partnership (MAP) evaluation to explore strategic options for ensuring the long-term sustainability of our mission in Memphis. While there are no specific updates at this time, this initiative reflects our unwavering commitment to theological education and institutional vitality.

Strengthening the Methodist House of Studies

The Methodist House of Studies (MHoS) continues flourishing, providing a vital space for Methodist students. Internally, it nurtures students through coursework and community, offering a Certificate in Wesleyan Studies for those completing 12 credit hours while actively engaging in the

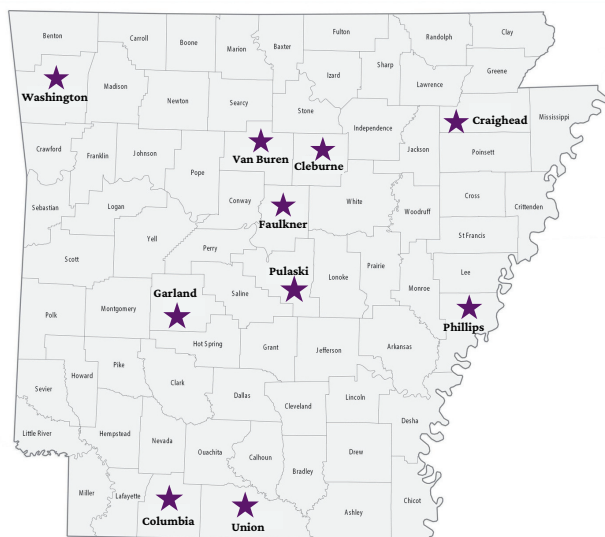
1 life of MHoS and the seminary. Externally, it extends MTS's mission into the broader Church.
2
3 Since the post-COVID relaunch of MHoS, we have intentionally clarified our inclusive use of the
4 term "Methodist," recognizing The United Methodist Church's historic full-communion partners: the
5 African Methodist Episcopal (AME), the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ), and the Christian
6 Methodist Episcopal (CME) denominations. Unless referring to specific denominational doctrine or
7 polity, "Methodist" in our context encompasses the full spectrum of this historic Methodist family.
8
9 Our outreach initiatives reflect this inclusivity:
10 • Gave lectures for the West Tennessee Region of the 1st Episcopal District of the CME
11 Church
12 • Welcomed AME and CME bishops to MTS
13 • Collaborated with the CME 1st Episcopal District Cabinet to develop a non-degree certificate
14 program for laity in the "Method" of Methodism
15
16 Based on insights from the pilot program, we plan to expand this certificate offering across
17 the Methodist tradition. Strengthening these historic Methodist connections is both right and
18 necessary, especially now.
19
20 MTS is privileged to have a strong faculty committed to Wesleyan and Methodist studies:
21 • Dr. Thomas Hermans-Webster teaches the required United Methodist courses
22 • Dr. Carmichael Crutchfield, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who also serves
23 as a General Secretary in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
24 • Dr. Jonathan L. Jeffords, Director of MHoS, teaches Wesleyan studies electives.
25
26 **The University Senate and Distance Learning for United Methodist Students**
27 MTS remains a listed institution of the University Senate of The United Methodist Church,
28 administered by the Commission on Theological Education. As a non-United Methodist institution,
29 our online learning policies differ from those of the 13 official United Methodist seminaries and
30 schools of theology, which are permitted to offer 100% online instruction.
31
32 For United Methodist students at MTS, the Basic Graduate Theological Studies (§324.4) courses
33 cannot exceed 50% online learning. We are committed to upholding these standards while also
34 advocating for parity in distance learning policies. MTS supports a change in the University
35 Senate's policy allowing listed non-UM institutions to educate United Methodist students under the
36 same online learning guidelines as the 13 UM institutions.
37
38 **Gratitude and Closing Remarks**
39 We sincerely appreciate the Arkansas Conference's trust in Memphis Theological Seminary to
40 prepare United Methodist women and men for Christian ministry. Your ongoing involvement,
41 support, and prayers remain invaluable to us as we continue our mission of theological education
42 and faithful leadership formation. We invite open and continual conversation to respond to the
43 question of how best to prepare ministry leaders for the work of ministry in the conference.
44
45 Grace to you and Peace.
46 Jonathan L. Jeffords,
47 Director, The Methodist House of Studies
48 Memphis Theological Seminary
49 Memphis, Tennessee
50

Methodist Family Health



Methodist
FAMILY HEALTH
FOUNDATION

Rebuilding the Lives of
Children and Families since 1899



**Methodist Family Health Foundation
provides the best possible care for
Arkansans who experience
abandonment, abuse & neglect or
struggle with psychiatric, behavioral
& emotional issues.**

Founded as an orphanage in 1899 & widely known as the Methodist Children's Home, Methodist Family Health (MFH) has evolved to meet ever-changing mental health needs in communities across our state. This map shows physical locations, but many programs serve a larger area and have clients from neighboring counties.

MFH serves 4,000+ Arkansans each year. Clients can enter our care through any of the following programs and move to another one to suit their individual treatment:

- Methodist Children's Behavioral Hospitals
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities
- Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (aka group homes)
- Therapeutic Day Treatment K-12 School
- School-Based & Outpatient Counseling Clinics
- Kaleidoscope Grief Center
- Arkansas CARES (Center for Addiction, Research, Education and Services)

Through the generosity of our supporters and campaigns like Get Up & Give and Share the Light, the Foundation equips those in our care with materials and programs that help them heal & build hope for the future.

Because many of the individuals and families we serve struggle to afford necessities, the Foundation supplies the essentials not covered by insurance and amenities that aid their therapeutic journeys with these programs:

- Inspirational Materials (devotionals & bibles)
- Donation Closet
- Summer Camp
- Transportation Assistance
- Scholarships
- Compassion Fund
- Camp Healing Hearts
- Art Therapy
- Birthday and Christmas Presents



1600 Aldersgate Rd Ste 100, Little Rock, AR 72205 | 501.906.4253 | mfhfoundation.org

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas



The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas

As the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA) moved into its sixth decade of ministry, it has built on its solid footing by providing more resources directly to local church and nonprofit ministries. In 2024, MFA distributed more than \$7 million to strengthen and expand Methodist ministries across Arkansas. The Foundation awarded a record \$1.8 million in grants — more than any other Methodist foundation in the U.S. — underscoring a growing focus on helping congregations reach their communities in ways that make a meaningful impact. Our Bishops' Club members help fund these grants: 100% of the \$1,000 annual gift goes directly to the Grants Program.

More churches continue to open new accounts with the Foundation, and MFA is grateful to existing partner churches that have added to their holdings. MFA closed out the 2024 calendar year managing more than \$225 million in assets. These financial investments point to a broader and greater truth: the faith and trust churches, institutions, and individuals put in the work we do.

MFA remains grateful to be a partner in ministry for so many Arkansas churches and church-related institutions, now numbering more than 170, with a combined total of more than 800 individual and organizational accounts. As we move forward from this benchmark, we seek to increase our investment in laity and their education and leadership. A number of you have experienced the fruits of this effort already in 2025, through programs such as a February service trip to the United Methodist Committee on Relief's Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin, Louisiana, the free Planning a Legacy workshops we present at local churches around the state (contact us to schedule yours!), and the full scholarships provided for laity to attend the Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning, which SMU's Perkins School of Theology graciously brought from Dallas to Little Rock in March.

MFA wrapped up its first-ever Strategic Plan in 2024, having met or exceeded the stated goals in each area. As I write this update, our Board of Directors is reviewing the final draft of a new Strategic Plan that will provide objectives for healthy, sustainable growth from 2025 through 2029. The Foundation aims to continue growing its grant-making capacity, providing leadership training and spiritual growth opportunities for laity and clergy, and helping individuals and churches define their legacies for generations to come.

Blessings,

Rev. J. Wayne Clark, President & CEO
The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
wclark@methodistfoundationAR.org
501-664-8632

The United Methodist Foundation for Arkansas: Assets

At the close of 2024, the Foundation's assets totaled \$225 million, reflecting positive investment performance and a significant number of new accounts. Based on total assets, The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas ranks seventh among the 47 Methodist foundations nationwide; in grant awards, MFA leads all Foundations in the country, granting more than \$1.8 million in 2024.

Approximately half of the Foundation's assets are owned by churches and institutions. The other

half were given in faith and trust to the Foundation over the last 60 years. A significant portion of the funds given to the Foundation have specific designations honored by the Foundation.

The Foundation’s managed accounts, established by Arkansas Methodist congregations or church members, generate money in perpetuity, returning earnings to church ministries year after year. These funds directly support a variety of needs, including children and youth ministries, scholarships, music programs, mission work, feeding ministries, and building maintenance.

The United Methodist Foundation for Arkansas: Grants and Services

The Grants Committee of the Foundation’s Board of Directors continued to dramatically impact the United Methodist Church in Arkansas during 2024, awarding 89 grants — more than any other United Methodist Foundation. MFA has been blessed over the years with unrestricted gifts, and our staff and Grants Committee work diligently to be good stewards of these funds. Grants are awarded in 11 priority areas: clergy and laity education, clergy self-care, community health, diversity, enabling education and employment, environmental and energy education, evangelism and discipleship, food insecurity, homelessness, poverty, and charitable.

MFA also provides services that educate and equip clergy and laity in a variety of ways. Below are a few examples of how MFA grants and services have benefited United Methodists in the past year:

Compelling Preaching Initiative Grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc.

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas is managing a grant of over \$1.2 million from Lilly Endowment Inc., focusing on serving local churches by providing resources and support for clergy leadership development. The program is funded through Lilly Endowment’s Compelling Preaching Initiative. It aims to foster and support preaching that inspires, encourages, and guides people to fully understand and love God and live out their Christian faith.

MFA’s Compelling Preaching Initiative grant is a statewide five-year program open to clergy members of the Arkansas United Methodist Conference. The Foundation is one of 81 organizations receiving grants through this competitive round of the Compelling Preaching Initiative. Applications for the third cohort are due November 1; clergy of all categorizations — from part-time local pastor to elder — are eligible to apply.

Planning a Legacy: How Faithful People Prepare

The Foundation makes frequent local church visits to offer its Planning a Legacy program, a holistic estate planning seminar covering basic information about wills, funeral and memorial services, end-of-life planning, and legacy gifts. It aims to inspire participants to take their next steps in estate planning and to see it as a part of their legacy.

The format is a 90-minute gathering with a meal, a presentation from the Foundation, and a Q&A with an attorney. Childcare and meal costs are covered by MFA. Participants receive a binder with helpful documents to reference and complete as they start or continue their legacy planning process. In 2024, 11 churches benefitted by having the program presented. We invite you to contact the Foundation at 501-664-8632 or info@methodistfoundationAR.org to schedule Planning a Legacy at your church.

Bringing Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning to Arkansas

In cooperation with MFA, SMU’s Perkins School of Theology graciously brought programming and presenters from Dallas to Little Rock to offer a variety of classes under the umbrella of Perkins

1 Summit for Faith and Learning. The Foundation sponsored 100% of tuition for Arkansas laity to
2 participate in these courses, and hopes to continue the partnership in the years to come.

3
4 **EV Charging Station Grants**

5 At the time of this writing, the Foundation is accepting grant applications for up to 14 two-port EV
6 charging stations to be awarded to account holders throughout Arkansas. MFA's top grantmaking
7 priorities include environmental awareness and energy education, and we are excited to have
8 partnered with an Arkansas-based company to provide the charging stations. The charging station
9 in MFA's parking lot helps us fulfill our goal of becoming friendlier neighbors and better stewards
10 of God's creation, and we are excited to help others pursue those same goals.

11
12 **Clergy International Trip: Journeys of Paul**

13 The Foundation's goal of offering an international educational travel experience each year
14 continued with this year's February journey that took clergy to Greece and Turkey to follow in
15 Paul's footsteps. Next year's laity-focused travel experience will take a group to England to trace
16 significant moments in John Wesley's life and ministry. Laity, please sign up for our enewsletter at
17 MethodistFoundationAR.org to ensure you receive signup information when it's ready!

18
19 **Growing the Hope Scholarship**

20 The Hope Scholarship for low-income undergraduate students is in its second academic year, out
21 of the four committed years. All reports from the partnering colleges, universities, and scholarship
22 programs have been positive. The anonymous donors and Grants Committee have committed to
23 funding this program at \$150,000 annually for four years, ending in 2027. A permanent endowed
24 fund has been established at the Foundation so that the Hope Scholarship will continue beyond
25 these four years. To maintain the \$150,000 level of funding, the permanent endowed fund will
26 need to have a balance over \$4 million. If you wish to become involved in funding the Hope
27 Scholarship, please let us know.

28
29 To learn more about the Foundation or to schedule any of MFA's programs or services, visit
30 MethodistFoundationAR.org.

31

32 **Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare**

33 Michael Ugwueke, President and Chief Executive Officer

34

35 At Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare (MLH), our mission is to enhance your health and well-
36 being through high-quality, innovative, and compassionate care. We are a faith-based institution,
37 proudly affiliated with the United Methodist Church since our founding more than 100 years ago,
38 and our vision is to be nationally recognized for excellence in clinical quality, patient safety, and
39 compassionate care to improve every life we touch.

40

41 Today, MLH has grown from one hospital into a comprehensive health system offering a full
42 continuum of care to every corner of our community, including five adult hospitals, nationally
43 ranked Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, a home health agency, ambulatory surgery centers,
44 outpatient facilities, hospice residence, and widespread physician practices serving residents
45 across the Mid-South. As Tennessee's largest provider of care to TennCare/Medicaid and
46 uninsured patients, we are committed to living out our culture of providing care and compassion to
47 all regardless of circumstances.

48

49 **Achieving Excellence**

50 Leading MLH is our President and Chief Executive Officer, Michael Ugwueke, MPA, DHA, FACHE.



**Improving lives
through compassionate,
expert care.**

We are grateful for our partners and friends in the United Methodist Church who help support our faith-based mission.



Methodist
Le Bonheur Healthcare

methodisthealth.org

Under Dr. Ugwueke's leadership, MLH has been widely recognized for providing the highest-quality of patient care and services, offering an array of care options including cancer care, emergency services, diabetes control and more for the whole family. MLH earned a coveted 4 star rating from The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in an annual evaluation of quality standards, readmission rates, and safety of care. Methodist Olive Branch Hospital earned a best-in-class 5 stars from CMS, the highest possible score, achieved by only 14 percent of U.S. hospitals. Our adult hospitals were awarded four A's and one B for patient safety by The Leapfrog Group, an independent nonprofit driving quality, safety, and transparency in the U.S. healthcare system. MLH is the only system in Memphis to earn an A rating for any hospital, and we earned four.

Faith-Based Mission at Work

The faith-based mission of MLH continues to be at the heart of all that

we do. Leading our Mission Integration Division is Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff Cato Johnson, who guides many of our faith-based and community engagement programs. Those programs include our clinical chaplaincy services, volunteer services, the Employee Assistance Program and Dennis H. Jones Living Well Network, Clinical Pastoral Education, the Center of Excellence in Faith and Health Equity, the Humanitarian Fund, United Methodist annual conference connections, the Office of Community Outreach, the Congregational Health Network and many other initiatives and projects. Mission Integration offers guidance and direction for the integration of MLH's mission, vision, values, and guiding behaviors, especially from the perspective of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. Additionally, Mission Integration ensures that the relationship with the United Methodist Church and relevant social, ethical, and pastoral teachings are understood and integrated appropriately and consistently across the entire system.

Responding to Community Need

In 2024, Mission Integration programs and associates continued their life-changing work in many different ways. Our chaplains offered spiritual care for patients, families, and associates and responded to the wider community through a spiritual care helpline. The My Sister's Keeper program continued its work to empower and highlight the voices of Black women in our community on healthcare, leadership, advocacy, and more. The Congregational Health Network organized hundreds of community events and resource distributions. We began a new educational initiative that offered evidence-based Chronic Disease Self Management classes to hundreds of community members across our area, in person and virtually, in English and in Spanish. The Office of Community Outreach continued running community clinics, home visitation programs,

1 and school-based interventions. Our Employee Assistance Program and Living Well Network
2 responded directly to districts and pastors who sought support and education for how pastoral
3 leaders could care for their people and themselves in the midst of trying times. We continued
4 working with students at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) through the
5 Serving The Underserved certificate course, a partnership with UTHSC and Church Health that
6 has been educating students for 15 years. MLH continued the Healthier 901 program to educate,
7 resource, and inspire our community to become healthier through exercise, nutrition, and wholistic
8 health practices. Mission Integration has been instrumental in the implementation of Healthier 901
9 as the program continues into 2025 and beyond. We are deeply appreciative of the support of the
10 three annual conferences who founded our system and continue to be vital partners. The healing
11 ministry of Christ continues to be at our center.

12 **Mount Eagle Retreat Center**

13
14 Mount Eagle has experienced its highest guest attendance in 2024 with 6633 total people nights.
15 It was a full year of people experiencing Mount Eagle and God's presence in new ways. From
16 youth hiking to Sun Rise Point in the early hours of the morning and being surprised by a bald
17 eagle soaring through the clouds, to individuals connecting with God's creation, Mount Eagle
18 reminded guests of God's ever-loving presence and faithfulness in their lives. This year families
19 gathered to enjoyed shared experiences and individuals took some much-needed solitude to
20 listen, explore, and connect to who God was calling them to be. Our faithful crafting groups
21 enjoyed their God-given talents as they created something new and glorified Him in their creative
22 and joyful artistic expressions. Mount Eagle's mission of providing Christian hospitality and
23 opportunities for holy listening is alive and well.

24
25 God's creation was on full display in 2024 with the solar eclipse, multiple nights with the Arora
26 Borealis dancing through the night sky, commit C3 shooting across the horizon, and so much
27 more. Guests came from all over to observe the eclipse and it did not disappoint. It was met with
28 cheers from across our open field as families and friends watched the moon eclipse the sun and
29 then sat in awe as we enjoyed a 360-degree view of the beautiful colors on the horizon. These big
30 events remind us all to look up and open our eyes to what God has created.

31
32 With the completion of the Noble House, thanks to the Ministry Impact Grant from United
33 Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministry (UMCRM), we were able to start our summer internship
34 program. We were blessed to have Ally Ross as Mount Eagle's very first intern. She jumped in
35 willingly and without hesitation. She spoke at a few different UMC churches to share about the
36 ministry of Mount Eagle, and she worked diligently with different groups that came- especially the
37 youth groups that also offered volunteer services during their stay. She also played a major role
38 in making sure the week that we hosted Ozark Mission Project (OMP) Camp was a success. This
39 internship program is one that we plan to continue to offer every summer as it is an invaluable
40 experience for young adults to be able to explore their calling, connect with God in new ways, and
41 to develop skills that will go with them into their future.

42
43 Mount Eagle had a very successful year, but we also experienced pains as our buildings are aging
44 and the increased use is only exposing their weaknesses. We have had to service and replace
45 several of our many HVAC units across camp, replace rotted out flooring in Beal's kitchen, re-
46 gravel the majority of our almost 3 miles of gravel road, among other additional repairs. These
47 repairs are costly and continue to be a major hurdle for the ministry of Mount Eagle.

48
49 Another major concern for Mount Eagle is our revenue model. We have been working on some
50 significant changes as we continue to adjust to the loss of some of our large revenue sources. The

main area this impacts is our operational budget. We have had a long history of subsidizing guests' rates as much as 55% and still be able to cover our operational expenses. This is no longer the case, and we have been making significant adjustments to our rates. We hope to be able to continue to subsidize guests' rates to some extent, but that means we must grow our donor base. Increasing the number of donors to Mount Eagle will ensure that guests can continue to have an affordable place to retreat while connecting with God and His creation as Mount Eagle works towards building a sustainable future.

Thank you for your continued engagement and use of this beautiful retreat center as an extension of your ministries. We cannot be the ministry we are without the people who have given so much of their time, prayers, and support. May we continue to serve one another with Christian hospitality and set aside time for holy listening in our lives and ministries.

Ozark Mission Project

169
NEIGHBORS
SERVED



342
PROJECTS
COMPLETED





631
COMMUNITY
BUILDERS



120
LEADERSHIP
VOLUNTEERS



19,431
VOLUNTEER HOURS

SUMMER TESTIMONY

"I'm blown away at the OMP experience. The love, care, and energy poured into the students and adults went above and beyond. It was amazing to see all of the volunteers who stepped up as well to help with dinners so we could relax and enjoy our time after the worksite."

As we celebrate the impact of our theme "Common Good" and look ahead to this coming year, we share nothing but gratitude for all those who make OMP possible. To our partners, donors, neighbors, volunteers, community builders, churches, and individuals that make this ministry thrive, thank you!

SUMMER 2025 DATES AND LOCATIONS

JUNE 8-13: JONESBORO, BENTONVILLE, LITTLE ROCK
JUNE 22-27: BENTON, MAUMELLE, FAYETTEVILLE, SILOAM
JULY 13-18: LITTLE ROCK, NORTH LITTLE ROCK

PO Box 26525, Little Rock, AR 72221 | www.ozarkmissionproject.org | 501-664-3232

arumc.org

Pre-Conference Journal • 2025

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Philander Smith University

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students at Philander Smith University (PSU), I extend my warmest greetings as you gather for the 2025 Arkansas Annual Conference. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation for your consistent support, which allows us to fulfill our vital mission.



Introduction

In its 146-year journey, Philander Smith University has continuously evolved, meeting each season with resilience and vision. Whether navigating times of growth or confronting challenges, our guiding force has always been faith and an unwavering commitment to our mission. Today, we find ourselves at another pivotal juncture: bridging past accomplishments with the promise of a brighter future while addressing the realities of the present.

Reflecting on my time as Interim President, I am deeply inspired by the dedication of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni who embody the spirit of Philander Smith. In this brief period, I have witnessed a community that rises to meet challenges head-on, fiercely committed to advancing the legacy of academic excellence that defines our institution. From remarkable student and faculty achievements to the tireless efforts of administrators and staff working on strategic initiatives, we aim to build on this momentum and navigate the waters of transition toward a more stable and fruitful future.

This report is a snapshot of our accomplishments and progress during the 2024-2025 school year and an indicator of the important work ahead. By celebrating our successes, we also recognize opportunities for deeper impact and transformation. At this juncture, our collective will unite us in ushering Philander Smith University into its next season of greatness.

I was reminded of this early in my tenure on Thursday, September 19, 2024, when, as Interim President and CEO, I participated in the University's Opening Convocation, which traditionally sets the tone for the academic year. Guest minister Reverend Dr. Charles E. Goodman, Jr. of the Historic Tabernacle Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia, delivered a thought-provoking sermon, "Too Much to Lose," that blessed students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters in attendance at the M.L. Harris Auditorium.

Dr. Goodman's exegesis could not have been more prophetic. Philander Smith University can't lose and won't lose. We will win—working together in unison to realize God's plans for us to prosper, not to experience harm, and with His plans for hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

Religious Life at Philander Smith University

PSU continues to serve within the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Under the capable leadership of Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, University Chaplain, members of our Religious Life Office provided music for last year's Annual Conference Juneteenth Celebration as well as the South Central Jurisdiction gathering in Rogers, Arkansas. Additionally, the Philander Smith University Choir provided music at Veritas. Religious Life continues to host weekly chapel services for the community, creating a sacred space for worship, reflection, and spiritual growth. Religious Emphasis Week at Philander Smith University was a true success, as our students engaged in spiritual empowerment throughout the week. Our theme for 2025 was 'Grace to Conquer,' inspiring students to embrace their faith with boldness and perseverance. We are extremely

thankful to all Methodists of the Arkansas Conference United Methodist Church for supporting the Living Legends Celebration, which benefits the campus ministry of Philander Smith. Four of the nine honorees were United Methodists: Rev. Betsy Singleton, Mrs. Donna Young, Mrs. Carolyn Galbreath, and Mr. Fred Galbreath.

One of the highlights of the year's chapel lineup is our Young Proclaimers Chapel, which provides students with an invaluable opportunity to actively participate in ministry and discern God's voice. At Young Proclaimers Chapel, college students who sense a calling to ministry are given the platform to preach, teach, and lead worship, fostering their spiritual formation and development as future faith leaders.

Last but not least, we are delighted to share that our Philander Forward Youth Theological Institute was held this past summer and hosted 27 high school students. This was an incredible time of word, worship, fun, fellowship, and discernment. This program, in its last year funded by the Lilly Endowment, is in its final year, and we are currently seeking ways to sustain it in the years to come.

Campus Updates

- **Financial Growth:** Secured an additional \$100,000 from UNCF and an additional \$200,000 in scholarships for the university.
- **Prison Education Program:** The Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) approved PSU's proposal for a Prison Education Program (PEP) within ADC's Tucker Unit and East Arkansas Regional Unit. This credential is essential as the Second Chance Pell Revised Experiment Program transitions to the Prison Education Program through the Department of Education.
- **Faculty and Staff Development:** PSU has partnered with UNCF through the UNCF/Gates Agreement to provide faculty and staff development centered on advising and digital learning.
- **Support for Students:** PSU is now an educational partner and an Arkansas Department of Human Services/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) authorized provider, providing financial support for tuition, fees, and supplies for eligible participants.
- **Technology Enhancements:**
 - Implementation of Cisco's Two-Factor Authentication solution (DUO) for security.
 - Development of a Self-Service portal for user password resets.
 - Evaluating a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution to improve student experiences and backend solutions.
 - Installation of upgraded Audio and Visual Equipment in major campus meeting areas.
 - Completion of 10 GB broadband installation, increasing internet speeds from 1 GB to 10 GB.
- **Institutional Advancement:**
 - Implementing Blackbaud Raiser's Edge to streamline fundraising and donor tracking.
 - Exploring a digital billboard campaign with Shorter College to promote transition pathways from two-year to four-year programs.
 - Coordinating a "Key Cities Tour" to enhance alumni and stakeholder engagement, beginning with Houston and Dallas, Texas.
- **Alumni Engagement:**
 - Hosted a Virtual Alumni Town Hall on September 24, 2024, introducing approximately 60 alumni members to me as Interim President.
 - Strengthened relationships with alumni by providing a transparent overview of budget-related enrollment challenges.

1 • **Corporate Partnerships and Student Opportunities:**

- 2 • PSU is a proud partner in Synchrony's Education as an Equalizer program, supporting
3 students through scholarships and sponsored events.
4 • Established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Stillman College and Morris
5 College to create a pipeline for PSU's Master of Business Administration program.
6 • Synchrony provided 35 scholarships totaling \$36,000 to students in business related
7 disciplines.

8 • **Academic and Student Success Initiatives:**

- 9 • New UNCF partnership with Complete College America (CCA) to create an institutional
10 student map supporting success and completion pathways.
11 • Submitted a grant proposal to reinstate funding for the TRiO Student Support Services
12 Program, seeking \$1.36 million in funding from 2025-2030 to enhance academic
13 development, retention, and graduation rates.
14

15 **Looking Ahead**

16 As we look forward, we recognize that every season plays a vital role in our institution's trajectory.
17 Strengthening Philander Smith University requires intention, strategy, and perseverance. This
18 period has been about laying the groundwork, ensuring that when opportunities arise, we are
19 prepared to seize them. Through collaboration, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to our
20 mission, we continue to position PSU for lasting impact.

21 Submitted by:

22 Maurice D. Gipson, JD, PhD

23 Interim President & CEO
24
25

26 **Project Transformation**

27 Project Transformation held its third summer of ministry in summer 2024. Project Transformation's
28 (PT's) mission is to transform communities by engaging children, college-age young adults, and
29 churches in purposeful relationships. PT does this in two ways. First, the program engages children
30 in holistic development, strengthening their literacy, social-emotional skills, and spiritual growth
31 through a summer day camp. At the same time, young adults are engaged in purposeful leadership
32 and ministry as they lead children's programming, live in an intentional Christian community, and
33 focus on vocational discernment. Ultimately, PT becomes a tool to connect churches with their
34 communities through hosting and supporting out-of-school-time programs.
35

36 **Children**

37 For 8 weeks, children at PT took part in arts and crafts, daily recreation, Bible studies, and 40
38 minutes of reading one-to-one with volunteers. During this time, the children build positive
39 relationships with college-aged interns who encouraged them.
40

41 In 2024,

- 42 • 54 children participated in summer programming
43 • Over 1000 books were read
44 • 95% of children in the program maintained or improved their reading levels
45 • 4,725 meals and snacks were served
46

47 **College-Age Young Adults**

48 PT Arkansas engaged 8 college-aged young adults from 4 different colleges. The young adult
49 leaders were from communities across Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. These young adults
50 invested their time and energy to support children in Pine Bluff, while also taking time to explore

where God is calling them. Young adults visited with area nonprofits and ministries: Methodist Family Health, ARUMC Disaster Response, Opportunity House of Pine Bluff, Center for Youth Minsitry Training, Global Missions Fellows, Memphis Teacher Residency, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, Native American Ministries, Sabbath Clay, and Neighbor to Neighbor of Jefferson County. They lived in intentional Christian community at the White Hall UMC eating meals and worshipping together.

- 100% of young adults built relationships with children, peers, and church leadership.

Churches

The success of Project Transformation would not be possible without the investment and support of our partner and host churches. Lakeside United Methodist Church opened their doors to families in the community. In partnership with their intern team, Lakeside UMC provided impactful programming in their neighborhood. They hosted a Family Fun Night to gather children and their families at their churches for games and a meal as well as an end of summer celebration for children, young adults, and volunteers.

Over a dozen partnering churches and organizations provided meals for interns and volunteers to read with children. Volunteers came from churches including Benton, Arkadelphia, Lakeside, Oak Forest, Pulaski Heights, St. James- Little Rock, St. James- Pine Bluff, Monticello, Western Hills, and the Conference Staff.

- 131 unique volunteers read with children and provided meals for young adults
- Over 641 volunteer hours served with the reading program

Project Transformation is always looking for new partners to serve as volunteers, provide meals, and learn about our programs. If your congregation or you as an individual would like to learn more about how you can support this ministry, visit: projecttransformation.org/arkansas, email smeadors@ptarkansas.org, or call 501-650-0565.

Rev. Sam Meadors
Executive Director, PT Arkansas

Saint Paul School of Theology

Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary serving a diverse community dedicated to forming leaders for innovative, creative ministry. Our integrated theological education, enriched by faith and social justice, combines real-world experience with academic rigor. Through our FLEX schedule offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning options, our Master's and Doctorate programs provide customized education guided by dedicated faculty, experienced pastors, and community leaders. Our graduates emerge equipped with the tools and first-hand experience to pursue diverse paths in ministry, service, and leadership locally and globally.



Saint Paul recently launched an innovative Doctor of Ministry program: Spirituality, Innovation, and Adaptive Leadership. This program focuses on developing contemplative spirituality practices that empower students to become change agents in church and society. Grounded in divine listening, students engage with innovative ministry practices while learning to manage and sustain them

through adaptive principles, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competence. The program prepares leaders to forge renewed paths for faithful leadership in a challenging world. Discover more about the Saint Paul DMin at spst.edu/doctor-of-ministry/.

In July 2024, the Pause/Play Center for Preachers welcomed its first cohort of 12 preachers from five denominations nationwide. These leaders sought to revitalize their preaching through Spiritual Direction, coaching, retreats, and specialized resources. The Center's inaugural public gathering drew 50 pastors nationwide for a two-day event featuring keynote speaker and Saint Paul alumna Dr. Marcia McFee. The Center accepts applications for the next pastor cohort open in March, with registration for the July 30-August 2, 2025 Kansas City gathering beginning in January.

Saint Paul School of Theology earned the distinction of hosting the Smithsonian traveling exhibit "Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean to Be Human?" through a national competition by the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) and American Library Association (ALA). Scientists and experts from the NMNH Human Origins Program will visit our Kansas Campus in Leawood to lead community events, including clergy programs, educator workshops, and community conversations. The exhibit, running February through May 2025, features interactive panels, kiosks, hands-on displays, and videos that explore humanity's evolutionary journey. This free public exhibition encourages meaningful dialogue about human origins while embracing diverse perspectives from both scientific and theological viewpoints.

The 2024-2025 academic year brought significant leadership changes to Saint Paul. The Board of Trustees appointed Mrs. Dana Aldridge as Board Chair and welcomed Tom Cochran as Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations. Cochran's extensive experience strengthens our donor relationships and alums network. We are actively reconnecting with alums across the Midwest and beyond through regional events, fostering collaboration and sharing recent achievements.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover more and answer the call. Your advocacy for the seminary and generous financial support have been vital in realizing our accomplishments. Many thanks for the innumerable ways you have helped Saint Paul. Your prayers and actions on behalf of the seminary are a blessing to all of us.

Jay K. Simmons, President

Southern Methodist University

Southern Methodist University (SMU) has served as a nonsectarian institution of higher learning since its founding in 1911 by the citizens of Dallas and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. SMU's mission is to expand knowledge through research and teaching and to serve as an igniter and facilitator of growth in Dallas and North Texas. With continued Methodist representation on the Board of Trustees and welcoming students of all faiths, SMU is reaching a higher level of accomplishment and global recognition. Consistent with the University's appreciation of our Wesleyan heritage, SMU voluntarily submits this report.



Students, faculty, and staff

SMU attracts academically excellent and diverse students. For the 2024–25 academic year, 7,285 undergraduates and 4,831 graduate students make up the total student population of over 12,000. Over 2,600 full-time faculty and staff support SMU's diverse student body. After graduation, they

will join 136,000 alumni worldwide. 1

2

3 **New SMU president**

4 Jay Hartzell was named SMU’s 11th president in January 2025 and will officially join the Hilltop

5 on June 1. A highly respected leader in higher education, he was named the president of the

6 University of Texas at Austin in 2020. Before that, he was dean of UT’s McCombs School of

7 Business and a longtime faculty member. We are excited to welcome him and his wife, Kara, to

8 campus and look forward to his contributions leading SMU into its next era.

9

10 **Perkins School of Theology**

11 Bryan P. Stone ’92, an innovative educator, researcher, and bridge builder, was named the

12 Leighton K. Farrell Dean of SMU’s Perkins School of Theology in February 2025. An SMU alumnus,

13 he previously served as associate dean for academic affairs and the E. Stanley Jones Professor of

14 Evangelism at Boston University School of Theology.

15

16 **Comprehensive campaign, research funding and athletics**

17 As of February 2025, donors have contributed over \$1.404 billion to the University’s

18 comprehensive campaign: SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow, putting the University on track

19 to surpass its \$1.5 billion goal by the end of the fiscal year on May 31, 2025. SMU Ignited has had

20 notable impact across the entire University – attracting and supporting outstanding students and

21 faculty, exploring new fields and cutting-edge technologies, and positively impacting Dallas and

22 the world beyond.

23

24 In early 2025, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education designated SMU as

25 one of the top 187 doctoral research universities in the United States, awarding it the prestigious

26 Research One (R1) status. This designation will help SMU accelerate its research efforts, and we

27 expect it to open doors for new collaborations and opportunities. SMU’s research expenditures

28 reached \$62.5 million in 2024, making it the third consecutive year of exceeding \$57 million. This

29 funding, which supports both domestic and global research, comes from agencies including the

30 National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Education, and

31 other federal and state partners.

32

33 Our success in the classroom and laboratory was matched on the playing field, as the University

34 experienced a remarkable first season as a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC).

35 Historically, SMU has won 10 national championships, over 200 conference titles, and produced

36 more than 150 Olympians. Since 2013, all 17 teams have reached the postseason, with 16 winning

37 conference championships.

38

39 **Rankings**

40 SMU continues to receive strong recognition and high rankings, including:

- 41 • Top 25% best national universities by U.S. News & World Report (2025), a Best Value

42 School, and among the Best Colleges for Veterans.

- 43 • Among the nation’s best institutions for undergraduate education in The Princeton Review’s

44 “Best 390 Colleges” and its “2025 Best Southwest Colleges.”

- 45 • Top 5% best nationwide colleges (73 out of 2,238) by College Factual (2025). Also, top 1% of

46 the U.S. best liberal arts/sciences and humanities schools for students pursuing a bachelor’s

47 degree and among the highest-paid graduates across a range of fields.

- 48 • Perkins Chapel at No. 10 on the list of the nation’s most beautiful college churches and

49 chapels by College Rank.

50

1 SMU remains grateful for the enduring work of our Perkins School of Theology in the instruction
2 and training of clergy for all Wesleyan traditions and other denominations. We request your
3 continued prayers and support.

4
5 Warm regards,

6
7 R. Gerald Turner,
8 President, Southern Methodist University

9
10 **Southern Methodist University - Perkins School of Theology**

11 Perkins celebrates our vital connections with
12 the Arkansas Annual Conference of The
13 United Methodist Church.



SMU | PERKINS SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

- 14 • Four (4) students affiliated with the
15 Arkansas Annual Conference are enrolled at Perkins, three Master of Divinity students and
16 one Maestría en Divinidad (M.Div. en Español) student.

17
18 **Enrollment Update**

19 Enrollment at Perkins for the 2024-2025 academic year totaled 277 students. This year, the
20 institution launched a Spanish M.Div. program, introduced a new hybrid-online modality, and
21 unveiled a redesigned curriculum. Of the 97 incoming students, 59 enrolled in the new hybrid-
22 online program, representing 14 different states.

23
24 **Institutional Highlights**

- 25 • Perkins appointed Dr. Bryan P. Stone as the new Leighton K. Farrell Dean, effective
26 June 1. An SMU Ph.D. graduate and former associate dean at Boston University, Stone
27 brings extensive experience in theological education, online learning innovation and
28 interdisciplinary research. His leadership will further Perkins' mission of preparing students
29 for impactful ministry and scholarship.
- 30 • In August 2024, Perkins welcomed Rev. Emily Nelms Chastain as Instructor in the History
31 of Christianity. An ordained deacon in The United Methodist Church and Ph.D. candidate
32 at Boston University, her research focused on American religious history, world Christianity
33 and Methodist studies. In 2024, Perkins announced key leadership updates to strengthen
34 its engagement and outreach efforts. Nakoya Loucks joined as Assistant Dean of
35 Marketing and Communications, bringing extensive experience in strategic marketing and
36 communications. Bart Patton was promoted to Assistant Dean of External Programs and
37 Church Relations, expanding his role in advancing partnerships and initiatives both locally
38 and beyond. Additionally, Tracy Anne Allred, now Assistant Dean of Students, Alums, and
39 Community Engagement took on expanded responsibilities in alumni relations, further
40 deepening connections with Perkins graduates.
- 41 • Dr. Dallas Gingles was appointed Director of the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) Program at
42 Perkins in Fall Semester 2024. Gingles comes to the director position following years of
43 involvement in the D.Min. program, including reading students' dissertations and teaching
44 D.Min. courses. Gingles is a Ph.D. graduate of Southern Methodist University and earned an
45 M.T.S. from Perkins. As Associate Professor of Practice in Systematic Theology and Christian
46 Ethics, his teaching specialties include Christian ethics, systematic theology, and bioethics.
- 47 • Dr. Michael "Mike" Greene was appointed director of the Black/Africana Church Studies
48 (BACS) Program at Perkins in September 2024. He is a 2004 graduate of SMU, with a
49 Ph.D. in Religious Ethics. Under his leadership, the program continues to explore Black
50 theology, preaching, worship, and social justice ministry within African American and African
Diasporic church traditions.

- Rev. Dr. Michael Beck, a trailblazer in the Fresh Expressions movement, was appointed as the inaugural director of its Fresh Expressions House of Studies, launched on June 1, 2025. This new program will offer innovative theological education that equips students to lead ministries in unconventional spaces. Rooted in the Wesleyan tradition, the initiative aims to provide a dynamic environment for reimagining ministry and leadership for a new generation, with a focus on real-world ministry practice and engagement in nontraditional settings.
- Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison, faculty member at Perkins, received the Wesleyan Theological Society's Lifetime Achievement Award in March 2025 for her contributions to Wesleyan-Holiness scholarship and leadership. Dr. Robin W. Lovin, former Dean of Perkins, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Christian Ethics in January 2025, recognizing his influential work in Christian ethics.
- In 2025, Perkins will celebrate the retirement of four faculty members whose contributions have left a lasting impact on the Perkins community. Dr. Ted A. Campbell, Albert C. Outler Professor of Wesley Studies, Dr. Ruben L. F. Habito, Professor of World Religions, Dr. Susanne Johnson, Associate Professor of Christian Education, and Dr. Mark W. Stamm, Professor of Christian Worship will retire after years of dedicated teaching, scholarship, and mentorship.
- Perkins secured multiple grants to support its efforts in various initiatives, including scholarships and upcoming capital projects. The Spanish Language Initiative received funding from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, as well as the Association of Theological Schools. Lilly Endowment Inc. provided SMU with a significant grant to

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SMU Perkins School of Theology

Take your ministry to the next level with a flexible, transformative theological education at Perkins. With programs designed for today's leaders, we offer hybrid and in-person learning options to fit your life and calling.

Learn more at smu.edu/perkins



improve exhibitions, accessibility, and academic programs related to religion and culture at Bridwell Library.

- Perkins School of Theology's 2024 Fall Convocation, Faith in a Digital Age, explored the intersection of faith, technology, and ethics in a rapidly evolving digital world. Held November 14-15, this event emphasized the need for faith leaders to engage with technological advancements thoughtfully.
- The Testimony HQ initiative at Perkins is transforming congregations by embedding testimony as a spiritual practice and community tool. In its third and final cohort, the program has helped 30 churches within a 350-mile radius of Dallas integrate testimony into their ministries, supported by a Lilly Endowment grant offering coaching, resources, and stipends to strengthen faith and connections.
- The 65th anniversary of the Sacred Music program at Perkins, held February 24–26, 2025, brought together alumni, faculty, and friends for fellowship, reflection, and celebration. Hosted on the SMU campus, the event honored the program's legacy while exploring the future of church music in a post-pandemic world. Dr. Marcell Silva Steuernagel highlighted the value of in-person connection, offering alumni a chance to reconnect and discuss the future of sacred music.

The highlights listed above are reflective of the vibrant engagement of Perkins faculty, staff and students. Our mission is to equip persons for faithful leadership and Christian ministry in a changing church and society; to educate those seeking a deeper understanding of the Christian faith; and to strengthen the church, academy and world through service, scholarship and advocacy. We thank our many colleagues, friends and alumni of The United Methodist Church for your generous support, including referrals of prospective students.

Grace and peace,

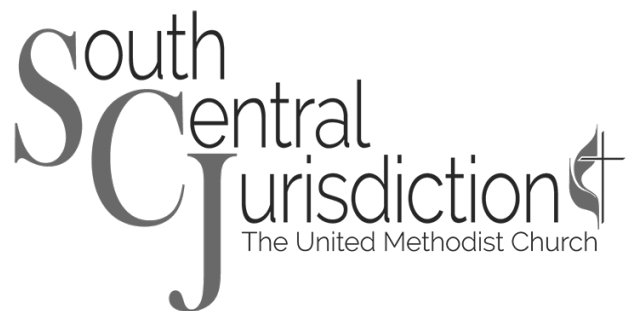
Hugo Magallanes, Ph.D.

Leighton K. Farrell Endowed Dean, ad interim

Perkins School of Theology

South Central Jurisdiction

The past year has been a transformative period for the South Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church. Our collective efforts have fostered a collaborative spirit, strengthened our mission, and deepened our connections. This report highlights the key developments and initiatives that have shaped our journey over the year.



Collaborative Spirit at the Jurisdictional Conference

In 2024, the Jurisdictional Conference held in Rogers, Arkansas, was marked by a remarkable spirit of collaboration. Delegates from across the jurisdiction came together to engage in meaningful dialogue, share insights, and envision a future filled with hope and purpose. The conference provided a platform for diverse voices, encouraging participation from lay leaders and clergy alike.

Highlights from the conference included:

- LED Talks - Focused on current challenges and opportunities within our communities, these sessions fostered innovative thinking and shared best practices.
- Worship Services: Uplifting moments of worship united participants in fellowship, reinforcing our common mission and commitment to service.

- Celebrating: The ministries and retirements of Bishops Jimmy Nunn and Robert Schnase, as well as many more through our jurisdiction.

Active Mission Council

Our Mission Council is actively identifying and addressing our Jurisdiction's current and future needs. Throughout the year, the council has prioritized outreach initiatives, focusing on areas such as:

- Community Development: Implementing programs that promote sustainable growth, new ideations of caring for our neighbors, and support marginalized populations.
- Mission Ministries: Coordinating responses through UMMVIM, Disaster Response, Climate Justice ministries, and many others. We also continue offering affordable and effective insurance for all these service opportunities.
- Youth and Family Ministries: Expanding resources and programs to nurture the current and future generation of church leaders.

The council's efforts have not only enhanced our mission-driven work but have also inspired the fostering of a spirit of generosity and commitment to our Connexion.

Lower Apportionments, Increased Connections

As we move forward, deepening our connections cannot be overstated. This year, we have focused on:

- Building Relationships: Conferences are sharing bishops, training, ideas, and resources. Even welcoming Bishop Carlo Rapanut from the Desert Southwest Conference and the Western Jurisdiction are just a few examples of exciting partnerships with one another, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.
- Digital Spaces: Utilizing technology to connect members across distances, collaborative training sessions for church leaders creating virtual spaces for prayer, discussion, and support.
- Lydia Patterson Institute: In a time when the border is often portrayed as a place of division, La Lydia is a place of hope, faith, and transformation. At LPI, we see a story of students overcoming obstacles to pursue education, we do not see immigrants as statistics but as people, as neighbors, as children of God. We continue to support LPI in apportionments, visiting, serving at the school, and sharing her incredible stories—not just to fund education but to invest in hope itself.

The past year in the South Central Jurisdiction has been marked by a spirit of collaboration, active engagement in mission, and a commitment to deepening connections. As we look to the future, we are energized by the possibilities that lie ahead and remain dedicated to our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Together, we will continue to grow, innovate, and uplift one another in our shared journey of faith.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eddie Erwin Rev. Dr. Derrek Belase
Executive Director Mission Council, Chairperson

United Theological Seminary



Since 1871, United Theological Seminary has prepared faithful and fruitful Christian leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ. United welcomes all who are following God's call on their lives, and many are answering God's call! In the 2023-2024 academic year, the seminary served 595 graduate students, making it the second largest of the thirteen United Methodist seminaries in the United States, according to the Association of Theological Schools.

A diverse community of many denominations, races and nationalities, United welcomed students from 35 states, 21 nations, and 48 denominations, with United Methodists representing the largest group at 30 percent of the student body.

Academics

In large part, enrollment growth is due to continued interest in United's Houses of Study programs, which offer master's and certificate tracks to equip students for the unique ministry needs of the communities, movements, and denominations in which they serve.

In summer 2024, United welcomed its inaugural cohort of Doctor of Theology students. The advanced research degree program is conducted primarily from a distance, requiring only four weeks of in-person intensives during the three-year program. During their program, students develop original research with a focus on church renewal.

United's Doctor of Ministry program continues to attract students looking for an advanced professional degree to expand their ministerial and leadership capabilities. In the 2023-2024 school year, 267 students participated in the mentor-led program.

Finances

United celebrated becoming debt free in May 2024, after making its last payment on a \$3.3 million debt to its endowment. In addition to eliminating the seminary's debt, United has been focused on reducing the educational debt of its students. The Fresh Wind campaign



Become a Bold, Spirit-filled Leader

Pathways to Ministry

From master's to doctoral programs, United's academic pathways empower you to lead with purpose and respond faithfully to God's call.

- Doctor of Ministry
- Doctor of Theology
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Ministry
- Master of Arts in Christian Ministries
- Master of Theological Studies
- Master of Arts

Spirit Led, Renewing the Church!

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to raise \$10 million for the endowment will expand scholarship opportunities for students for generations to come. With the increase in scholarship gifts from the Fresh Wind campaign and the reduction of United’s own debt, the seminary has significantly increased scholarship support for United students.

Innovation Center

The Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center celebrated the third anniversary since its launch as United’s “research and development” hub for ministry practitioners and thought leaders seeking to create and provide innovative resourcing for congregations. In 2024, the Innovation Center engaged over 2,200 participants through more than 30 live webinars, training events and courses.

In Romans 10:14, St. Paul writes: “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” United’s students and graduates are going out into the world to proclaim the Good News of God’s unconditional love. Thanks be to God!

Dr. Kent Millard, President

Wesley Theological Seminary

Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson, President

The mission of Wesley Theological Seminary (Wesley DC) is to equip persons for Christian ministry and leadership in the church and the world, to advance theological scholarship, and to model a prophetic voice in the public square.



Today, the world needs public servants. Wesley DC remains committed to nurturing future leaders in church and society with theological and spiritual growth and community engagement:

Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, Master of Theological Studies Degrees: Our diverse programming serves our diverse student population. We offer traditional, brick and mortar, in person study and flexible, online and hybrid models. Wesley DC is committed to curating space for diversity, community, and (re)imagining ministry. <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/study/>

Doctor of Ministry Degree: Wesley DC maintains one of the largest Doctor of Ministry programs, offering specialized tracks of study for scholars going into local parishes, global missions, or military chaplaincy. <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/program/>

The Hub for Collaboration and Imagination: Wesley DC envisions a dynamic, Spirit-inspired church that responds to God and neighbor. To that end, we catalyze faith communities and leaders to learn about innovation and spiritual entrepreneurship to enact transformative ministry. <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/>

Center for Public Theology: Wesley DC continues to provide sound theological training for future ministry leaders. We foster an entrepreneurial mindset and the practical skills needed to create ministry models which help the church to remain a vital institution that fosters flourishing. <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/>

Community Engagement Institute: Wesley DC offers ground-breaking foundational courses and

1 electives in community engagement, public theology, political theology, and social ethics. [https://](https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/about-us/overview-2/)
2 www.wesleyseminary.edu/ice/about-us/overview-2/

3
4 **The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion:** Wesley DC is thrilled to share two new
5 exhibits, Un/familiar Terrain{s}, a creative dialogue between UK-based artist, Michael Magruder,
6 and Artificial Intelligence; and Notebook, featuring works by Iranian-born artist, Mojdeh
7 Rezaeipour. We also welcomed Ama BE, a Ghanaian-American transdisciplinary artist exploring
8 African migration ecologies. <https://www.luceartsandreligion.org/>

9
10 **Lewis Center for Church Leadership:** The Lewis Center conducts leading edge research for the
11 local church. Wesley DC is pleased to report generous support from the Lilly Endowment; and
12 continued training for clergy and lay leaders. <https://www.churchleadership.com/>

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Is God Calling You for More?

Providing 50% off scholarships, **Saint Paul School of Theology** is a seminary serving a diverse community committed to the formation of leaders for innovative, creative ministry by offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning courses at a FLEXible schedule.



- Doctor of Ministry
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- Course of Study School

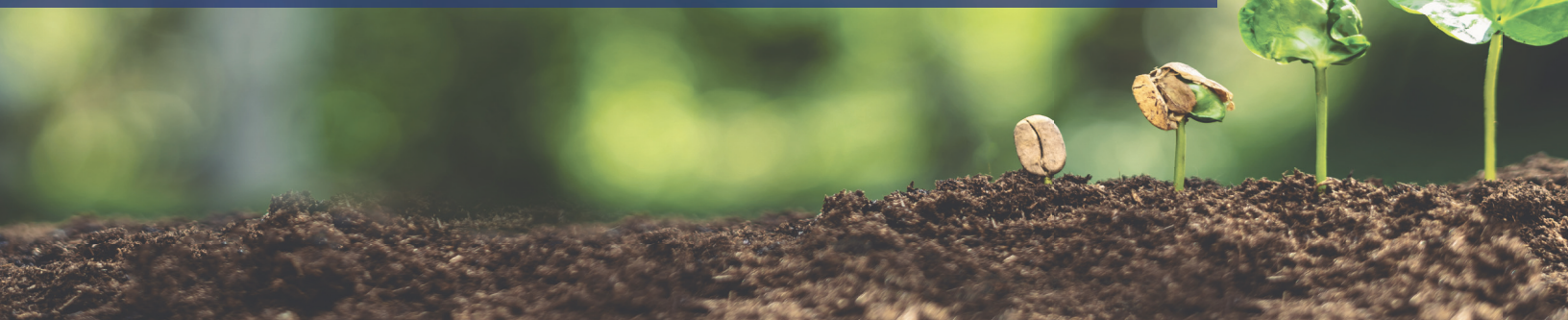
DISCOVER MORE

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Thank you to United Methodist churches and individuals statewide for trusting the **Methodist Foundation for Arkansas** with your investing, financial planning, and charitable giving.

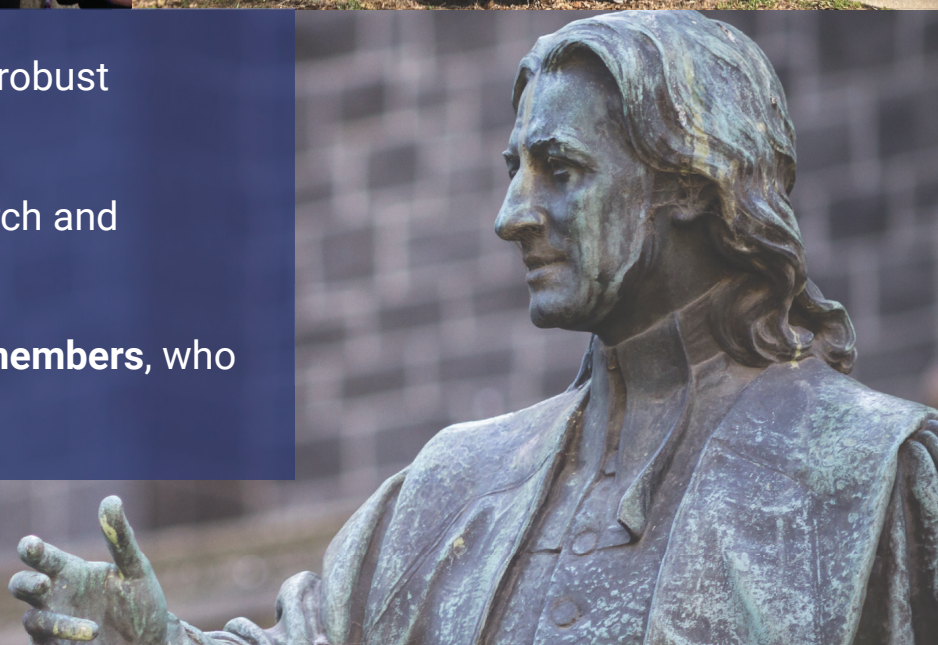


We appreciate the United Methodists of Arkansas for joining us in a variety of **learning and service opportunities** throughout the past year.



We are grateful to be able to offer a robust **Grants Program**, open to every United Methodist church and ministry in Arkansas, and thankful for our **Bishops' Club members**, who help sustain it.

methodistfoundationAR.org



Please visit our display table at Annual Conference for information and gifts of appreciation!



**The Methodist
Foundation
for Arkansas**