

Conference Workbook



**25th Session
of the Dakotas Conference
of The United Methodist Church
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
June 7-9, 2018**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
Section 1: Legislation	<u>4-11</u>
1.1 Organizational Resolutions	<u>4</u>
1.2 Proposed 2019 Budget	<u>5</u>
Section 2: Consent Calendar	<u>12-15</u>
2.1 Cabinet Resolutions	<u>12</u>
2.2 Equitable Compensation	<u>12</u>
2.3 Housing Allowance for Clergy, Staff and District Superintendents	<u>13</u>
2.4 Rental Housing Allowances	<u>14</u>
2.5 Resolution to affirm reports	<u>15</u>
Section 3: Elected Leaders	<u>16-36</u>
3.1 Election of Delegates to the 2019 General Conference	<u>16</u>
3.2 Nominations Committee Report	<u>19</u>
Section 4: Conference Reports	<u>37-57</u>
4.1 Common Table	<u>37</u>
4.2 Conference Commission on Archives and History	<u>37</u>
4.3 Executive Director of Ministries Report	<u>38</u>
4.4 Communications	<u>39</u>
4.5 Sessions	<u>39</u>
4.6 Developing Missional Leaders Link	<u>40</u>
4.6.1 Board of Ordained Ministry	<u>42</u>
4.6.2 Camp and Retreat Ministry	<u>41</u>
4.6.3 Conference Council on Youth Ministries	<u>42</u>
4.6.4 Lay Leader	<u>43</u>
4.6.5 United Methodist Women	<u>43</u>
4.6.6 Young Adult and Campus Ministry	<u>44</u>
4.7 Equipping Missional Congregations Link	<u>45</u>
4.7.1 New Church Development	<u>45</u>
4.8 Extending Missional Impact Link	<u>46</u>
4.8.1 Bakken Oil Rush Ministry—Out in Faith	<u>46</u>
4.8.2 Bakken Oil Rush Ministry—Watford City	<u>47</u>
4.8.3 Disaster Response	<u>48</u>
4.8.4 HOPE Center	<u>48</u>
4.8.5 Open Door Community Center	<u>48</u>
4.8.6 Solar Oven Partners	<u>48</u>
4.8.7 Southeast Pierre Community Center and Church	<u>49</u>
4.8.8 Spirit Lake	<u>49</u>
4.8.9 Tree of Life Ministry	<u>50</u>
4.9 Generating Missional Resources Link	<u>51-56</u>

4.9.1	Builders Club	51
4.9.2	Conference Council on Finance and Administration	52
4.9.3	Dakotas UM Foundation	52
4.9.4	Human Resources Committee	53
4.9.5	Board of Pensions	53
4.9.6	Board of Trustees	56
4.10	Commission on A Way Forward	57
Section 5:	University and Seminary Reports	58-61
5.1	Dakota Wesleyan University	58
5.2	Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary	58
5.3	Saint Paul School of Theology	60
5.4	Sioux Falls Seminary	61
5.5	United Theological Seminary	63
Section 6:	Agency Reports	64-65
6.1	Africa University General Board of Higher Education and Ministry	64
6.2	General Board of Higher Education and Ministry	65

Section 1: Legislation

1.1 Organizational Resolutions for Dakotas Annual Conference 25th Session

1. The online agenda is the official agenda. Adjustments are made throughout the session as necessary. All requests for additional items to be placed on the agenda shall be given to the agenda coordinator, Duane Coates.
2. There will be seating assigned on the conference floor for clergy and members of Annual Conference. There is also a designated area for guests and visitors.
3. The boundaries of the Annual Conference shall be the round tables marked for clergy and lay members. Voting members only are to be seated in this area. During Plenary Sessions all non-voting persons, including spouses of clergy and lay members, are to be seated in the area designated for visitors. Exceptions shall be made for lay representatives from non-chartered new church starts, Elisha and Samuel Project interns (who are not lay members), new clergy who will be beginning their appointment on or before July 1, 2018 and special guests of the Bishop. These persons shall not have voice or vote.
4. The District Superintendents shall receive and relay to the presiding officer all requests of members to be excused from the Annual Conference Session. Those names will be printed in the journal.
5. Requests for personal points of privilege shall be submitted to the agenda coordinator.
6. The following persons shall be given the privilege of voice and vote on the Conference floor:
 - a. Clergy persons related to other annual conferences or denominations but who serve United Methodist churches or who are affiliate members of the Dakotas Conference. Such clergy shall be granted the same rights and privileges as associate members of the annual conference.
 - b. Laypersons who are members of United Methodist churches or who are affiliate members of the Dakotas Conference.
 - c. Associate Members of the annual conference.
7. Retired clergy persons who have served churches of the Dakotas Conference but who are members of other annual conferences shall have privilege of the floor without vote.
8. Announcements shall be written legibly and submitted to the registration desk.
9. All reports from conference and other related agencies are published in the conference workbook. Advance permission must be secured from the agenda coordinator before any other printed materials may be distributed.
10. The consent calendar shall be those items listed on the consent calendar Section 2 of the conference workbook. Requests to lift an item from the consent calendar must be submitted, in writing and have the signatures of 15 voting members, to the conference secretary by noon on Friday. A petition form to remove an item from the consent calendar is available at the registration desk.
11. Lay and clergy members shall confirm directory information for journal records. Any changes in directory information for laity, clergy or church can be made at the registration desk.
12. If there are proposed changes in any form to the legislation, such as amendments, they must be submitted in writing to the conference secretary, using the strikethrough feature for removing information from the legislation and underlining new items that are being placed in proposed legislation.
13. To be recognized during plenary, you must move to a microphone. Select a card hanging from the microphone that represents your position on the item being considered—green card is an affirmative position, red card is a negative position, white card is a question.
14. When you are speaking, please state your name, church or organization and relationship to the body—
"Sally Jones, Sioux Falls First UMC, lay member." You will have three minutes to speak.

1.2 Proposed 2019 Budget

	2018 Apportioned Budget	2019 Budget			2019 Total Budget
		Apportioned	Foundation	Donations /Other	
Developing Missional Leaders	631,663	551,000	138,500	1,340,000	2,029,500
Equipping Missional Congregations	320,500	275,000	0	424,000	699,000
Extending Missional Impact	1,351,155	1,236,759	14,500	910,000	2,161,259
Generating Missional Resources	84,250	75,000	0	0	75,000
Support Services	1,268,810	1,289,227	64,000	74,500	1,427,727
Cabinet	762,396	720,000	0	0	720,000
Savings Fund	0	100,000	0	0	100,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>4,418,773</i>	<i>4,246,986</i>	<i>217,000</i>	<i>2,748,500</i>	<i>7,212,486</i>
Pension & Insurance	56,000	0	11,000	614,700	625,700
Direct Bills to Churches	2,831,728	2,739,851	0	190,581	2,930,432
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>2,887,728</i>	<i>2,739,851</i>	<i>11,000</i>	<i>805,281</i>	<i>3,556,132</i>
Total	7,306,501	6,986,837	228,000	3,553,781	10,768,618

Note: **Foundation** includes funds the Conference expects to receive as endowment distributions or withdrawal of accumulated investment earnings. **Donations/Other** is primarily made up of donations from individuals or churches but also includes grants, registration fees, and reimbursements.

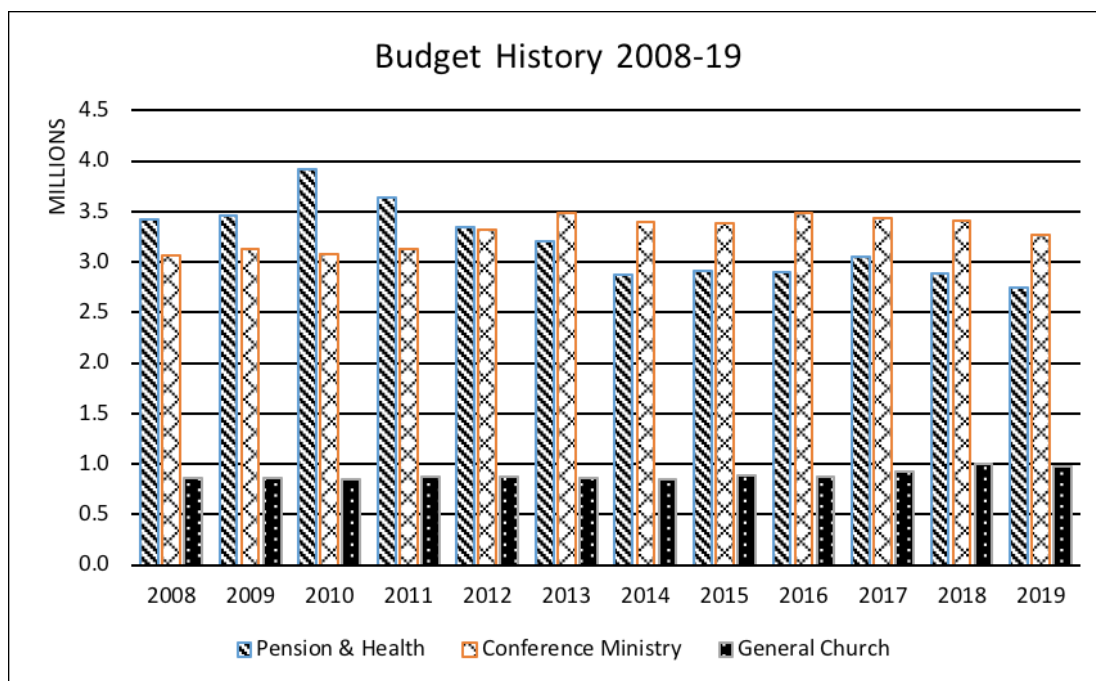
Treasurer's Discussion and Analysis

Overview—The proposed budget is a decrease of 4.4% or \$319,664. There is a 3.9% decrease in the apportioned budget and a 5.1% decrease in the cost to the churches for pension and insurance. The 2019 budget proposal is an intentional effort to provide an affordable and aligned budget.

Why the large decrease? There are a couple of reasons for the decrease. The primary one is that the budget is underspent each year. The 2019 budget proposal is more realistic to match with actual spending. When reviewing the specific budget areas, there are some substantial decreases from 2018. No programs are being cut. The amounts reflect spending in 2017.

The second reason for the budget reduction is to allow for a future decrease in apportionment from 16% to 15%. The proposed modification is possible for several reasons. Camping is on target for becoming apportionment neutral. Bakken Oil Rush in Watford City is continuing to work toward the same goal and other mission ministries are working to identify additional streams of revenue to support their mission. Numerous other smaller adjustments are being made to allow for a future reduction of the apportionment percentage.

The goal is to eventually move to have a 10% apportionment. This percentage seems like a comfortable amount. I'm also hoping that our churches will prosper and multiply so that even as that percentage drops, income will not fall as quickly. I am hopeful that the General Church will adopt a 10% apportionment for conferences. General Church apportionments support our worldwide ministry. Below is a chart showing our efforts over the years to produce an affordable budget.



New churches are making progress—One of the challenges in establishing new congregations is finding the right leader. Very few churches survive without the right leader. Even with the right leader, starting a new congregation is very difficult. In 2017, getting the right leaders in place was difficult therefore, the expenditures were less than the amount budgeted for new church starts. In 2018 and 2019, we should see spending pick up in this area. Efforts to find the right leaders are starting to pay off. We will see two new congregations in Bismarck, the second campus of Bismarck Legacy and recovery congregation of Bismarck McCabe. A new congregation will launch in Fargo. In Box Elder The Bridge UMC has begun weekly worship. Kenmare ReNew has acquired worship space and no longer receives conference support. Salem Unite has

decided that they are strong enough to end conference support a year early. Fargo First African continues to receive conference support and mentoring from Fargo Calvary.

Establishing an operational reserve—Currently the Dakotas Conference has healthy reserves for the Board of Pensions and the Board of Trustees. We also have investment accounts that adequately fund new churches, campus ministry, archives and history, and ministerial student aid. Operational reserves are very low. We would like to establish an investment account with the Dakotas United Methodist Foundation in 2019 to act as our operational reserve. Our goal is to build this reserve to 25% of our budget, approximately \$1 million. The 2019 proposed budget has \$100,000 for this purpose. Monthly deposits would occur. The operational reserve would help us through any economic downturn and position us to take advantage of any opportunities that come our way.

Pension and Insurance—The Board of Pensions has determined that we will join the HealthFlex Exchange in 2019. The Exchange will give our pastors and conference lay employees the choice of six HealthFlex plans plus dental insurance and expanded vision coverage. HealthFlex provides a web tool to help individuals make the best decision based on their circumstances. Leana Stunes, benefits officer, will be available to assist as well. The cost to the churches will be similar to the previous amount under the current HealthFlex plans.

This will be the first time in history the Dakotas Conference Board of Pensions will request zero apportionment dollars, because of the tremendous investment gains in 2017.

Closing sentiment—I have now completed ten years of service as your conference treasurer. I am very proud to have served throughout my tenure with so many great churches, pastors and staff. Over the past decade, much has been accomplished. I am hopeful that it is just the beginning.

Jeff Pospisil, treasurer

Apportioned Budget Detail

Pathway/Program	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	2022 Budget
DEVELOPING MISSIONAL LEADERS						
MISSIONAL LEADER LINK	476	2,800	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	24,131	20,650	20,500	20,700	20,900	21,100
BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY	98,898	74,150	78,650	79,150	91,650	92,150
MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND	36,992	45,363	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000
LAY SERVANT MINISTRY	5,049	19,350	7,750	8,250	8,750	9,250
LAY LEADER	3,090	3,500	3,000	3,500	3,750	4,250
CAMPING & YOUTH OFFICE	21,844	18,550	18,550	19,550	20,550	20,550
CAMPING & RETREAT MINISTRIES	250,178	225,000	200,250	170,500	146,750	147,000
YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	26,723	23,500	21,500	22,000	22,500	23,000
COUNCIL ON YOUTH MINISTRIES	27,360	58,400	37,550	38,050	38,550	39,050
YOUNG ADULT & HIGHER ED	127,472	132,500	119,250	119,250	119,250	119,250
SAFE & SACRED PLACES	1,206	5,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900
NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE	622	2,000	600	600	600	600
DEVELOPING MISSIONAL LEADERS	624,041	631,663	551,000	524,950	516,650	519,600
EQUIPPING MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS						
MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS LINK	308	2,300	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
DIRECTOR OF MINISTRIES OFFICE	11,081	18,400	12,800	12,800	12,800	12,800
NEW CHURCHES	37,671	190,000	186,750	238,500	238,500	238,500
MCCI	34,557	54,500	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
JOURNEY RENEWAL	10,428	30,000	15,650	15,650	15,650	15,650
TOOLS/TRAINING FOR CHURCHES	22,535	25,300	18,800	18,800	18,800	18,800
EQUIPPING MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS	116,580	320,500	275,000	326,750	326,750	326,750
EXTENDING MISSIONAL IMPACT						
MISSIONAL IMPACT LINK	382	1,000	800	800	800	800
GENERAL APPORTIONMENTS	851,844	1,006,575	973,209	973,209	973,209	973,209
CONNECTIONAL MISSIONS	43,402	110,180	56,250	48,750	43,750	38,750
CONFERENCE MISSIONARIES	218,791	233,400	206,500	171,250	161,000	150,750
EXTENDING MISSIONAL IMPACT	1,114,419	1,351,155	1,236,759	1,194,009	1,178,759	1,163,509
GENERATING MISSIONAL RESOURCES						
COUNCIL ON FINANCE & ADMIN	723	3,500	1,700	3,750	2,000	2,000
FINANCE OFFICE	22,637	24,750	24,300	26,400	25,700	26,200
EQUITABLE COMPENSATION	40,300	50,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000
D&O; WORKER'S COMP COVERAGE	4,376	6,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
GENERATING MISSIONAL RESOURCES	68,036	84,250	75,000	79,150	76,700	77,200

Pathway/Program	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	2022 Budget
<i>DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENCY</i>						
SHARED EXPENSES	8,095	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500
SOUTHEAST	131,106	143,474	143,987	145,887	147,820	149,787
NORTHEAST	134,085	144,674	145,187	147,087	149,020	150,987
NORTHWEST	132,187	144,874	145,387	147,287	149,220	151,187
SOUTHWEST	139,817	144,674	115,239	147,087	149,020	150,987
PRESIDING ELDERS	507	0	0	0	0	0
CONTINGENCY FUNDS	6,920	29,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS	6,706	8,200	8,400	8,600	8,800	8,800
MOVING FUND	104,494	130,000	125,000	126,000	127,000	128,000
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENCY COMM	158	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
DISTRICT BUILDING & LOCATION	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
RESPONSE TEAM	0	3,000	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
<i>DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENCY</i>	<i>664,075</i>	<i>762,396</i>	<i>720,000</i>	<i>758,749</i>	<i>767,681</i>	<i>776,548</i>
<i>SUPPORT SERVICES</i>						
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE	58,556	48,200	44,200	44,200	44,200	44,200
UMCONNECT	46,853	60,000	58,000	52,000	52,000	52,000
CONF SECRETARY/JOURNAL	9,993	9,000	4,125	4,125	4,125	4,125
TRUSTEES	157,863	140,000	140,500	143,050	144,300	145,050
CHANCELLORS	5,087	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION	65,274	58,800	67,800	67,800	67,800	67,800
COMMON TABLE	8,563	15,000	16,800	25,000	11,200	11,400
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE	846	1,750	1,250	2,500	1,250	1,250
EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE	3,858	5,000	4,000	6,200	4,400	4,600
ARCHIVES & HISTORY	39,559	44,400	44,400	44,400	45,150	45,625
CONFERENCE CENTER OPERATIONS	888,858	866,660	893,152	921,323	949,837	967,701
AREA OFFICE SUPPORT	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
<i>SUPPORT SERVICES</i>	<i>1,290,308</i>	<i>1,268,810</i>	<i>1,289,227</i>	<i>1,330,598</i>	<i>1,344,262</i>	<i>1,363,751</i>
<i>SAVINGS FUND WITH FOUNDATION</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100,000</i>	<i>100,000</i>	<i>100,000</i>	<i>100,000</i>
<i>TOTAL EXPENSES</i>	<i>3,877,458</i>	<i>4,418,773</i>	<i>4,246,986</i>	<i>4,314,205</i>	<i>4,310,802</i>	<i>4,327,358</i>
<i>OTHER UNRESTRICTED INCOME</i>	<i>89,140</i>					
<i>APPORTIONED INCOME</i>	<i>3,825,224</i>	<i>4,418,773</i>	<i>4,246,986</i>	<i>4,314,205</i>	<i>4,310,802</i>	<i>4,327,358</i>

Pension and Insurance Detail

	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Request
1 HealthFlex Premiums - Actives	1,799,816	1,769,281	1,912,848	1,403,880
Retiree HRA Contributions	520,624	532,012	631,082	651,371
Extend Health Admin Expenses	8,812	10,446	10,000	11,000
Medicare Part B	55,281	55,838	55,000	57,000
Allowance for Uncollected (0.5%)			7,000	7,000
HealthFlex Expenses	2,384,533	2,367,577	2,615,930	2,130,251
Apportionments	(81,864)	(59,053)	(46,000)	-
Pre-82 Transfer	-	-	-	(72,500)
Direct Bill Churches	(1,329,125)	(1,231,672)	(1,327,636)	(1,282,880)
Direct Bill Participants	(454,813)	(449,862)	(478,212)	-
CPP Redirect	-	-	(107,000)	(121,000)
Retiree Health Fund Transfer	(520,624)	(532,012)	(631,082)	(651,371)
Investment Earnings - Deposit Acct	(2,591)	(2,453)	(1,000)	(2,500)
HealthFlex Offsets	(2,389,017)	(2,275,052)	(2,590,930)	(2,130,251)
Expenses Less Offsets	(4,484)	92,525	25,000	-
2 Pension Program Premiums				
CPP	225,924	249,113	-	-
CRSP-DC	242,158	241,830	254,190	256,012
CRSP-DB	781,935	809,321	805,533	765,941
UMPIP - Parish Contribution	238,335	226,231	235,879	226,928
Allowance for Uncollected (0.5%)			7,000	7,000
Pension Expenses	1,488,352	1,526,495	1,302,602	1,255,881
Apportionments	(494)	-	-	
Direct Bill Churches	(1,382,564)	(1,419,993)	(1,504,092)	(1,456,971)
Transfers from Pension Reserve	(19,200)	-	-	-
Conference Budgets	(46,135)	(50,671)	(47,648)	(50,581)
Endowment / Investment Earnings	(10,502)	(11,026)	(11,000)	(12,000)
Pension Offsets	(1,458,895)	(1,481,689)	(1,562,740)	(1,519,552)
Expenses Less Offsets	29,457	44,806	(260,138)	(263,671)

3	Benefit Grants	26,924	22,326	50,000	50,000
	Program, Seminars, Stipends, Etc	4,515	5,032	10,000	10,000
	Benefits Office	83,889	82,249	100,000	100,000
	Administration Expenses	115,328	109,607	160,000	160,000
	Transfer from Endowment	(115,328)	(109,607)	(160,000)	(160,000)

Expenses Less Offsets	-	-	-	-
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4	Retiree Health	54,578	53,983	57,385	
	Active Participant Contribution - 3%	(54,578)	(53,983)	(57,385)	

Expenses Less Offsets	-	-	-	-
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5	Board Expenses	3,631	5,508	10,000	10,000
	Pre-82 Transfer	-	-	-	(10,000)
	Apportionments	(8,784)	(8,684)	(10,000)	-

Expenses Less Offsets	(5,153)	(3,176)	-	-
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Total Pension & Insurance Expenses	4,046,422	4,063,170	4,145,917	3,556,132
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Total Offsets	(4,026,602)	(3,929,016)	(4,381,055)	(3,819,803)
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Balance	19,820	134,154	(235,138)	(263,671)
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Apportionments	91,142	67,737	56,000	-
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Direct Bill to Churches	2,711,689	2,651,665	2,831,728	2,739,851
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Total to Churches	2,802,831	2,719,665	2,887,728	2,739,851
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HealthFlex Participant's Share	509,391	503,845	535,597	-
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Section 2: Consent Calendar

2.1 Cabinet Resolutions

1. WHEREAS the following congregations have voted to recommend dissolution as a United Methodist congregation;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that these congregations be recognized with thanks to God for their faithful service, and that they be officially discontinued under the provisions of The Book of Discipline, paragraph 2549 by the Dakotas Annual Conference:
Northeast: none
Northwest: Robinson
Southwest: none
Southeast: none
2. THAT July 1, 2018, be designated as the beginning of all new appointments for 2018-2019, unless prior arrangements have been made. The moving pastor's current charge shall pay the compensation, health, pension and other benefits through June 30, 2018.
3. THAT the moving schedule be flexible enough to consider the need of the pastors and the families, and that the parish would have sufficient time to prepare the parsonage for the arrival of the incoming pastor. Moves shall be scheduled to occur between June 15 and July 15. If a move is scheduled to happen prior to the last Sunday in June, compensation shall still be paid by the current charge through the end of the month.
4. THAT both congregations and pastors be sensitive and respectful as to the transition of pastoral leadership in a charge. Negotiations between the Staff-Parish Relations chair, and the incoming and outgoing pastor as to first Sunday and care for priestly functions shall be done on a case-by-case basis. July 1 shall be the start date for all incoming pastors unless other arrangements have been made.
5. THAT consideration be given by the congregation to the incoming pastor to have his/her first Sunday serve as a welcoming Sunday, and that formal preaching and worship leadership responsibilities begin the following Sunday.

2.2 Equitable Compensation

The purpose of Equitable Compensation is to work with the district superintendents in the effort to support congregations as they strive to become viable (Rule 1.4). This is done by A)providing salary support grants to churches/charges served by a full-time United Methodist pastor and B)making an annual recommendation of the minimum compensation needed by pastors to allow them to focus their efforts on the ministry instead of seeking secondary employment.

Annual Recommendation of Minimum Compensation

- 1) The base cash salary for each year: *65% of the conference average compensation for full connection clergy; 62% of the conference average compensation for less than full connection clergy*
- 2) The base cash salary for both clergy groups listed in paragraph #1 shall include any personal tax deferred annuities, personal IRA's paid by the local church, or personal pension plan in addition to the recommended contribution to the Pension program (UMPIP) in No. 3.
- 3) The pastor shall receive the following in addition to minimum compensation: A) pension program contribution (UMPIP) equal to 3% of the denominational average compensation; B)continuing education allowance (minimum of \$150); C)travel allowance by voucher at the current IRS rate; D)utilities paid in full (minimum of heat, electricity, local phone service, water, garbage service, and internet); Accountable Reimbursement Plan (minimum of \$500).

Salary Support Grants

- 1) The following requests will be considered by the Commission:
 - a. Strategic Appointment Grant – Available when a new appointment results in significantly increased costs to the church/charge. These increased costs will be so burdensome that it is unlikely that the church/charge will have adequate resources available to take the necessary steps to becoming viable without outside assistance. The purpose of this grant is to assist the church/charge in its transition to being able to fully support the newly appointed pastor. The church/

charge shall provide monthly written status reports to the district superintendent and conference treasurer. Status reports shall at a minimum report progress towards benchmarks.

- b. Discernment Grant – Available when a church/charge has declined in its ability to support a full-time United Methodist pastor to the point where it is unlikely to be able to provide the recommended minimum compensation. The purpose of this grant is to provide time for the church/charge and district superintendent to evaluate the viability of the congregation and decide upon a ministry plan that is appropriate for the church/charge. The district superintendent shall provide a report on the viability and the ministry plan at the next Equitable Compensation meeting. Depending on the ministry plan adopted by the district superintendent and the church/charge, it may be appropriate for the church/charge to provide monthly written status reports to the district superintendent and conference treasurer.
 - c. Emergency Grant – Available when a church/charge provides evidence that they will not be able to provide their full-time United Methodist pastor with the recommended minimum compensation. The purpose of this grant is to ensure that the pastor is properly cared for.
- 2) Churches/charges shall pay their apportionments in full during the years they receive salary support grant payments. Churches/charges that do not comply with this shall not be considered for a Salary Support Grant the following year with the exception of Emergency Grants.
 - 3) The maximum amount to be paid for Strategic Appointment Grants and Discernment Grants shall be \$5,400 annually. Grant payments to churches/charges shall be made monthly. A church/charge shall not receive Salary Support Grant payments for more than 36 consecutive months.
 - 4) Salary Support Grant requests shall be submitted in writing to the district superintendent and the conference treasurer. In order for Salary Support Grant payments to continue into a new calendar year, the written request must be updated and resubmitted.
 - 5) The churches/charges receiving support will be listed in the conference journal.

Equitable Compensation Calculation: *The Commission calculates the Equitable Compensation amount based on the conference average compensation. See calculations below:*

Year	Full Connection Clergy	Less than Full Connection Clergy
2019	$66,035 \times 65\% = 42,923$	$66,035 \times 62\% = 40,942$
2018	$63,616 \times 65\% = 41,350$	$63,616 \times 62\% = 39,442$
2017	$62,799 \times 65\% = 40,819$	$62,799 \times 62\% = 38,935$
2016	$61,169 \times 65\% = 39,760$	$61,169 \times 62\% = 37,925$
2015	$59,970 \times 65\% = 38,981$	$59,970 \times 62\% = 37,181$

The charges which received Equitable Compensation support in 2017 were: Bottineau, Burke/Herrick, Jamestown Regional Parish, Kindred/Walcott, Lisbon/Enderlin, Mohall/Bowbells/Sherwood, Montrose, Murdo/Draper, Prairie View, Presho/Kennebec/Reliance, and Williston.

2.3 Housing Allowance for Clergy, Staff and District Superintendents

WHEREAS, section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code permits a minister of the gospel to exclude from gross income the rental value of a parsonage furnished to the minister;

WHEREAS, a minister is also allowed to exclude from gross income the amount paid to him/her as a properly designated parsonage allowance to the extent used for actual expenses incurred in maintaining a parsonage;

WHEREAS, a minister is also allowed to exclude from gross income the amount paid to him/her in lieu of a parsonage when properly designated as a housing allowance to the extent used for actual housing expenses not to exceed the fair rental value of the home (including furnishing and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities);

WHEREAS the Dakotas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is the qualified organization for the designation of housing and parsonage allowances for all ordained or licensed persons who serve as district superintendents, as paid officers of the conference or as members of the conference staff;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that of the cash salary paid to the following persons the following housing exclusions are hereby designated for the calendar year 2019 and for all future years unless otherwise provided:

- Box Elder The Bridge Pastor - \$27,600
- Executive Director of Ministries - \$25,000
- Dakotas-Minnesota Area Director of New Church Development - \$33,500
- Northeast District Superintendent - 30,000
- Northwest District Superintendent - \$8,800
- Southeast District Superintendent - \$30,000
- Southwest District Superintendent - \$30,000
- Spirit Lake Ministry Director - \$7,000
- Wesley Acres Camp Site Director - \$7,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in addition to cash salary, the following person(s) will be paid the following amount instead of being furnished a parsonage in which to live, and this additional amount is hereby designated as a housing allowance for the calendar year 2019 and all future years unless otherwise provided:

- Box Elder The Bridge Pastor - \$18,000
- Executive Director of Ministries - \$19,940
- Northeast District Superintendent - \$19,940
- Southeast District Superintendent - \$19,940
- Southwest District Superintendent - \$19,940

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, during the interim between meetings, the Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church authorizes the Conference Human Resources Committee to designate housing and parsonage allowances in accordance with section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. Such designations are to be recorded in the official minutes of that Committee.

2.4 Resolution relating to rental / housing allowances for active, retired, disabled, or former clergy persons of the Dakotas Conference

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

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

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

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, 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 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 Wespeth Benefits & Investments ("WBI") (formerly the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits), during the calendar year 2019 by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled Clergy person 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 Clergy person; 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 Wespeth (WBI) and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespeth (WBI) plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a Clergy person rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, a terminated, or a disabled Clergy person 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 Clergy person 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 Clergy person'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 Clergy person'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 Clergy person'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 Clergy person 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 clergy person or former clergy person is urged to consult with his or her own tax advisor to determine what deferred compensation is eligible to be claimed as a housing allowance exclusion.

2.5 Affirmation of reports of the agencies, boards and committees for 2017-2018

WHEREAS the Conference Secretary has called for each agency, board and committee of the Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church that performed duties throughout 2017-2018 as requested by the membership of the conference and 24th session:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the reports submitted by such agencies, boards and committees are affirmed as listed in pages 19-57.

Section 3: Elected Leaders

3.1 Election of 2019 General Conference Delegates

The Council of Bishops (COB) has called a Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church (UMC) to be held February 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. The Dakotas Conference rules state:

6.7.11. In the case of a special session of the General Conference being called, the next regular session of the Annual Conference shall hold a new election for lay and clergy delegates and alternates, as permitted in ¶14 of the Constitution. However, if no regular session of the Annual Conference will be held prior to the special session of the General Conference, the delegates and alternates elected to the preceding General Conference, or their lawful successors, shall serve at the special session; unless the Bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents calls a special session of the Annual Conference for the purpose of a new election in accordance with ¶603.5 of The Discipline.

Therefore at the 25th session of the Dakotas Annual Conference, to be held June 7-9, 2018, in Sioux Falls South Dakota, an election for one clergy and one lay delegate will be held. There will also be an election of one clergy reserve delegate and one lay reserve delegate.

Lay Delegate Nominations for General Conference 2019:

Matt Bader

Matt Bader, has been a lifelong United Methodist. He is a member of Pierre First UMC where he serves as the high school youth leader and is on the worship team. He was the alternate lay delegate to the 2016 General Conference, and a delegate to the 2016 North Central Jurisdiction Conference. Matt attended the United Methodist Global Youth Peoples Convocation and Legislative Assembly in the Philippines in 2014. He was a 2012 North Central Jurisdictional Conference delegate.



Matt states: Growing up in the United Methodist Church, I have always been involved with and excited about the United Methodist Church. I have been a camper and employee of Dakotas Conference Camping, chair of the Dakotas Conference Council on Youth Ministries, an Elisha Intern at Rapid City Canyon Lake, and served as a lay delegate to previous General and Jurisdictional Conferences. In July 2017, I was a member of the United Methodist Global Young Peoples Convocation & Legislative Assembly. While legislation was being debated there, people became very upset and contentious, and I went to bed that night ashamed of being a United Methodist young person, and wondering how I could move forward as a part of the United Methodist Church. It took nearly a year with many conversations, prayer, study, and mission work before I was okay with what occurred there, and proud to be a United Methodist Young person again. Recently, I graduated from Dakota Wesleyan University in May 2017 and have been working in Pierre as a middle school teacher.

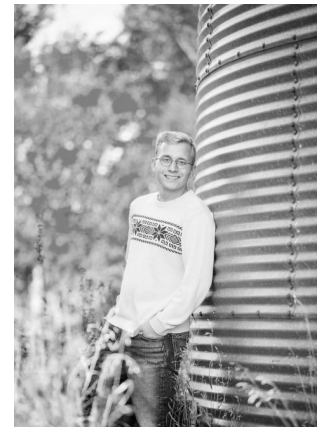
Being a worldwide church is very exiting, yet it can also be difficult. Being a worldwide church means that we share a connection with people across the globe, and while we speak different languages, have different cultural understandings, and may view things very differently, we are united in our common call to mission. There can be many challenges that come with being a worldwide church, but the benefits are so much greater than our divisions. The Dakotas Conference is in an exciting time, and being a part of the global United Methodist Church connects us to people around the world where we can share our mission and ministry together.

Tanner Carlson

Tanner Carlson is from Baldwin, North Dakota and is a member of Bismarck Legacy UMC. He attends college in Oklahoma. Tanner is involved both in his home church and in a United Methodist congregation near campus. He plays in the bell choir and is one of the liturgists at the church he attends in Oklahoma. At Bismarck Legacy, he plays saxophone in the worship band and volunteers with the kids ministry. Tanner served as a member of the Conference Council of Youth Ministry.

Tanner states: I am a full-time college student from Bismarck, ND, majoring in Religious Studies at the University of Oklahoma. My hope in life is to be useful to God and our church as a steward of the connection, so I have begun the first stages of the candidacy process to pursue ordination as an Elder.

Being a worldwide church is something that sets us apart as United Methodists from other American Protestants. One could say it is a distinguishing feature of Methodism in general since other Methodist churches with American roots (e.g. the AME, Wesleyans, Nazarenes) are also global denominations. This worldwide organization is a great benefit to us because it increases the opportunities to notice our cultural blinders when it comes to theology and practice. Even more important, it glorifies God for us to set aside our national identities in favor of our identity in Christ. A challenge that arises from our worldwide reach is a tendency to equate the UMC with Methodism in general; therefore, it is important that in our internal debates we must be in dialogue with the other members of the World Methodist Council and our full communion partners.



It is critical that people recognize there is not a model of vitality that fits all congregations equally well. In my opinion, a vital congregation has a clear sense of identity and adheres closely to their mission statement while routinely reevaluating it. Ideally, this sense of identity and mission is going to point to the global UMC. Vital congregations participate in conference activities and ministries and are eager to share ideas about ministry best practices with other congregations. Furthermore, a vital congregation is going to live out its United Methodist identity by forsaking neither discipleship and sharing of the Gospel nor social advocacy and mission work, fully living into our mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Beata Ferris

Beata is a lifelong United Methodist and a member of Pierre First UMC since 2005. At Pierre First, she serves on the leadership board member as co-secretary, teaches confirmation, serves as the adult volunteer for the youth mission trip, performs with the praise team, is a member of Anchored Bible study and a Vacation Bible School teacher. Beata is the lay member of Dakotas Annual Conference since 2015. She serves as a co-leader for the Developing Missional Leaders Link for the Dakotas Conference. This summer she will co-dean the Next Normal camp at Storm Mountain Center.

Beata states: I am very passionate about the United Methodist Church and all the ways we can be in ministry through the structure of the church. I have been committed to the UMC through leadership from my days on youth council in high school to exploring a call to ministry in college to my current involvement in local church and Dakota's Conference ministries. I try to lead by example through my involvement and service to church committees, groups, and activities. I hope that my love of God and of my neighbors is evident to others in the way I lead and invite others to be involved.



God loves all. All people in all places. To be the worldwide church means we must first believe that God loves all of creation. God's love will be interpreted and put on display in a multitude of ways, in as many different ways as there are different people in different places. No one way to show God's love will reach and speak to all of God's people. As the worldwide church we are challenged to show God's love in real and meaningful ways to the great diversity of God's creation. We are called to rise to the challenge of showing who God is to all without building barriers and walls to divide us. As a worldwide church we are blessed to experience God in all the ways and in all the places God connects to us. What a joy it is to celebrate God who loves us all in our own ways!

The Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church is a unique part of the Body of Christ. We are growing and providing ministry that other conferences have difficulty living into. We are not without our challenges, but we have innovative and passionate leaders and servant ministers who are willing to address the challenges head on. We can use this vitality to continue to take the love of God to our neighbors in the Dakotas and through all the world. We can be a model for others in the denomination as to how to be in ministry and work together to live into the mission of creating disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Clergy delegate election eligibility to vote and be elected

Judicial Council Decision 1181 clarifies who is eligible to vote for clergy members of General Conference and who is eligible to be elected as clergy delegates. Here is an excerpt from that case, effective Feb. 12, 2011:

“The persons who are eligible to be elected as clergy delegates to the General Conference, the jurisdictional conference, or the central conference by the annual conference or the provisional annual conference are the full clergy members of the annual or provisional conference. Eligibility to be elected is conferred by full conference membership without regard to ordination or to years of service. The persons who are eligible to cast ballots as electors in choosing the clergy delegates to the General Conference, the jurisdictional conference, or the central conference, are (a) the persons who are eligible for election, (b) the associate members, (c) the provisional members who have been judged by the annual conference to have completed the educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership, and (d) the local pastors who have met two criteria: they have, by either of two options as determined by the annual conference, completed the constitutionally specified level of education; and they have been appointed by the bishop and served for two consecutive years, immediately preceding the election, during which time no withdrawal of the appointed status has occurred. Any enabling legislation in [the] *2008 Discipline* that does not conform to ¶ 35 is unconstitutional.”

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry supplied this guidance as late as 2015 with updated paragraph numbers to reflect their placement in the *2016 Book of Discipline*.

ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS CLERGY DELEGATES

- Deacons and elders: In full connection, active or retired: (those elected to full connection during or before the 2018 Clergy Session are eligible to vote and to serve as delegates, even if they have not yet been ordained.)
- Leave categories eligible for election: Sabbatical Leave (¶351), Voluntary Leave of Absence (Personal, Family, Transitional) (¶353), Maternity or Paternity Leave (¶355), Medical Leave (¶356)

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS CLERGY DELEGATES—Those on leave in the following categories:

- Involuntary Leave of Absence (¶354.7), Honorable Location (¶358.2), Administrative Location (¶359.3)
- Provisional members
- Associate members
- Local Pastors

ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR CLERGY DELEGATES

- Deacons or elders in full connection (active or retired)
- Leave categories eligible to vote: Voluntary Leaves of Absence (personal, family, transitional) (¶353), Sabbatical Leave (¶351), Maternity or Paternity Leave (¶355), Medical Leave (¶356)
- Provisional members who have completed all their educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership
- Deacons and elders who have been elected to provisional membership but not yet commissioned are eligible to vote.
- Judicial Council Decision 1181 says, in part, “As a practical matter, an annual conference may delay its first ballot for selecting clergy delegates until after answering the question: ‘Who have “completed all of their educational requirements” for provisional membership?’”
- Associate members (active and retired)
- Local Pastors who have completed Course of Study or a M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding election.

NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR CLERGY DELEGATES

- Leave categories not eligible to vote: Clergy on Honorable Location (¶358), Clergy on Administrative Location (¶359.3), Clergy on Involuntary Leave of Absence (¶354.7)
- Local Pastors who do not meet the criteria listed above [completed Course of Study or a M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding election.]

3.2 Nominations Committee Report

Committee/ Agency	First Name	Last Name	Role	Address	Phone	Email
CONFERENCE						
THE COMMON TABLE (CT)	<i>Sheila</i>	<i>Dailie</i>	Chair	47533 152nd St Millbank, SD 57252	605-949-0660	skdailie@gmail.com
	<i>Cody</i>	<i>Warns</i>	Laity at large	6050 Dakota Ave Madison, SD 57042	605-480-0369	cwarns@hotmail.com
(3 Lay, 3 Clergy)	Steve	Behrens	Clergy at large	PO Box 115 Hitchcock, SD 57348	605-266-2135	steve.behrens50@gmail.com
	Joel	Higgins	Clergy at large	500 Pasque Flower Trail Brandon, SD 57005	605-582-7995	joelhiggins@hotmail.com
	DeAnn	Eidem	Clergy at large	3500 Canyon Lake Dr Rapid City, SD 57702	605-348-1080	deann@rushmore.com
	<i>Jessica</i>	<i>Ford</i>	Laity at large	1423 1st Ave. W Williston, ND 58801	701-566-1512	jessica.ford@live.com
Ex officio Members (with vote)	Bob	Ruedebusch	Conference Council on Finance & Administration	401 S Spring Ave Sioux Falls, SD 57104	605-336-3652	pastorbob@sfumc.org
	<i>Myrna</i>	<i>Hill</i>	Conference Co-Lay Leader	2408 Fox Rd Sturgis, SD 57785	605-490-0109	myrnajhill@yahoo.com
	Kermit	Culver	District Superintendent	1223 Eagles View Ln Bismarck, ND 58503	701-391-2340	kermit.culver@dakotasumc.org
Ex officio Members (without vote)	Bruce	Ough	Bishop	122 W Franklin Ave Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55504	612-230-3334	bishop.ough@dkm-nareaumc.org
	Rebecca	Trefz	Executive Director of Ministries/ Cabinet Representative	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-996-6552	rebecca.trefz@dakotasumc.org
CONFERENCE CHANCELLORS	<i>Tim</i>	<i>Ottmar</i>	North Dakota	PO Box 1397 Jamestown, SD 58402	701-252-7229	tottmar@ottmarlaw.com
	<i>Nancy</i>	<i>Oviatt</i>	South Dakota	PO Box 1600 Watertown, SD 57201	605-886-5812	nancy@grolawfirm.com
THE EXTENDED CABINET	Bruce	Ough	Bishop	122 W Franklin Ave Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55504	612-230-3334	bishop.ough@dkm-nareaumc.org
	Rebecca	Trefz	Executive Director of Ministries	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-996-6552	rebecca.trefz@dakotasumc.org
	Randy	Cross	DS Northeast	2636 Meadow Creek Circle S Fargo, ND 58104	701-639-0317	randy.cross@dakotasumc.org
	Roger	Spahr	DS Southeast	232 N Lake Dr Watertown, SD 57201	605-880-0011	roger.spahr@dakotasumc.org
	Kevin	Kloster	DS Southwest	5552 Limelight Ln Rapid City, SD 57702	605-580-5049	kevin.kloster@dakotasumc.org
	Kermit	Culver	DS Northwest	1223 Eagles View Ln Bismarck, ND 58503	701-391-2340	kermit.culver@dakotasumc.org
	Ben	Ingebretson	Area Director of New Church Development	122 W Franklin Avenue, #400 Minneapolis, MN 55404	612-230-6124	ben.ingebretson@minnesotaumc.org
	<i>Deb</i>	<i>Kjerstad</i>	Director of Leadership Development	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-990-7796	deb.kjerstad@dakotasumc.org
	<i>Keith</i>	<i>Shew</i>	Area Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries	122 W Franklin Ave, Ste 400 Minneapolis, MN 55404	612-230-6130	keith.shew@dkm-nareaumc.org
	<i>Sheri</i>	<i>Meister</i>	Executive Director of Dakotas UM Foundation	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-996-6552	sheri.meister@dakotasumf.org
	<i>Jeff</i>	<i>Pospisil</i>	Executive Director of Finance & Administration	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-996-6552	jeff.pospisil@dakotasumc.org
	<i>Doreen</i>	<i>Gosmire</i>	Director of Communications	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-996-6552	doreen.gosmire@dakotasumc.org

	Jane	Hincks	Conference Co-Lay Leader	3408 Crocus Ave Bismarck, ND 58501	701-202-5456	janehincks@hotmail.com
	Myrna	Hill	Conference Co-Lay Leader	2408 Fox Rd Sturgis, SD 57785	605-490-0109	myrnajhill@yahoo.com
DEVELOPING MISSIONAL LEADERS						
MISSIONAL LEADERS LINK	Beata	Ferris	Chair	2540 Kingsway Rd Pierre, SD 57501	605-222-8284	bkferris05@msn.com
	Shelby	Stotz		4273 Rosemary Lane Rapid City, SD 57702	605-343-2548	shelbystotz@gmail.com
(12 including standing committees)	Steve	Schlasner		1019 19th Ave SE East Grand Forks, MN 56721	218-399-0209	EasternSunriseDLL@midco.net
	Eric	Van Meter		1200 McGovern Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	870-219-6255	ervanmet@dwu.edu
	Melissa	Gall	Young Adult and Campus Ministries	201 S 5th St Milbank, SD 57252	605-432-4766	melissa.gall@hotmail.com
	Corey	Enfield		PO Box 1095 Yankton, SD 57078	605-665-2991	cenfield52@gmail.com
	Becky	Holzmann		16001 Ellinson Rd Hettinger, ND 58639	605-564-2605	bholzmann@ndsupernet.com
	Charlie	Moore		7712 W Leah St Sioux Falls, SD 57106	605-270-3945	pastorcharlie@sunnycrest.org
Standing Committees (Membership with vote)	Kris	Larson	Board of Ordained Ministry	19768 431st Ave De Smet, SD 57231	605-546-2424	krislarson1@msn.com
	Jeff	Lathrop	Coordinator for CCYM	1600 4th Ave N Grand Forks, ND 58201	701-772-1869	pastorjefflathrop@gmail.com
	Clay	Lundberg	Camping Representative	PO Box 196 Burke, SD 57523	605-775-2752	pastorclayumc@hotmail.com
Ex officio Members (with vote)	Jane	Hincks	Conference Co-Lay Leader	3408 Crocus Ave Bismarck, ND 58501	701-202-5456	janehincks@hotmail.com
	Dave	Severtson	Chair of Nominations	2500 W 37th St Sioux Falls, SD 57101	605-940-7581	pastordave@sio.midco.net
Ex officio Members (without vote)	Rebecca	Trefz	Executive Director of Ministries	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-996-6552	rebecca.trefz@dakota-sumc.org
	Deb	Kjerstad	Director of Leadership Development	1331 W University Ave Mitchell, SD 57301	605-990-7796	deb.kjerstad@dakota-sumc.org
	Keith	Shew	Area Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries	122 W Franklin Ave, Ste 400 Minneapolis, MN 55404	612-230-6130	keith.shew@dkm-nareaumc.org
	Michael	McMenamy	Co-Director of Lay Servant Ministries	1205 W Ralph Rogers Rd Sioux Falls, SD 57108	605-376-3606	michaelmcmenamy@gmail.com
	Betty	Janke	Co-Director of Lay Servant Ministries	42670 281st Street Olivet, SD 57052	703-629-6709	BettyJ131@hotmail.com
Standing Committees under the Missional Leaders Link						
BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY (BOM)	Val	Reinhiller	Chair & Dean of Licensing & Lay Ministry School	325 E 9th St Williston, ND 58801	701-426-5456	vreinhill@msn.com
	Kelly	Drake	Vice Chair	1509 Parkview Brandon, SD 57005	605-582-8200	kdrake@alliancecom.net
(Nominated by the Bishop)	Katie	Ricke	Secretary	47104 298th St Beresford, SD 57004	605-763-2861	pastorkricke@gmail.com
			Registrar			
	Sharla	McCaskell	Local Licensed Pastor Registrar	5017 Stoney Creek Dr Rapid City, SD 57702	605-391-5560	knollwoodpastor@gmail.com

	Gary	Ball-Kilbourne	Conference Relations Chair	1909 18th St South Fargo, ND 58103	701-500-0985	gbk@prairiescribbler.com
	Lori	Broschat	Continuing Education	1502 5th Ave NE Devils Lake, ND 58301	701-230-8065	lbroschat@gmail.com
	Howard	Grinager	Retired Liaison	470 E 3rd Parker, SD 57053	605-297-1060	grinagerh@gmail.com
	Michelle	Brennan	Deacon Liaison	802 5th St Se Jamestown, ND 58401	701-952-3718	michellebrennan@hotmail.com
	Bruce	Forbes	Extension Ministries Liaison	1501 Morningside Ave Sioux City, IA 57706	612-708-3419	forbes@morningside.edu
	Ray	Baker	Northeast Committee Chair	2007 10th St N Fargo, ND 58102	701-220-4803	ray@fargofaithumc.org
	Jan	Gross	Southeast Committee Chair	PO Box 453 Hartford, SD 57033	605-528-3822	revjan1956@aol.com
	Mark	Phillips	Southwest Committee Chair	406 2nd St Murdo, SD 57559	605-669-2501	raok_7@hotmail.com
	Joel	Winckler	Northwest Committee Chair	1023 6th Ave NE Jamestown, ND 58401	701-269-9960	nodakjoel@gmail.com
	Dean	Trapp	Clergy	1640 Simmons Ave SE Huron, SD 57350	605-352-6227	pastordean@santel.net
	Chang	Yi	Clergy	2588 S 19th St Grand Forks, ND 58201	701-772-1893	pastorchangyi@gmail.com
	Brandon	Vetter	Clergy	212 Estevan Dr Bismarck, ND 58503	701-223-4401	brandon@legacyumc.org
	Kris	Larson	Clergy	19768 431st Ave De Smet, SD 57231	605-546-2424	krislarson1@msn.com
	Marilyn	Spurrell	Clergy	2000 Kemp Pl E #201 Watertown, SD 57201	605-270-3185	revdocmarilyn@gmail.com
	Sara	McManus	Clergy	709 17th St W Fargo, ND 57104	701-282-5765	pastorsara@flameof-faithumc.org
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Auxiliary/Invited (without vote)	Sean	Binder	Site Director Storm Mountain	23740 Storm Mountain Rd Rapid City, SD 57702	605-343-4391	sean.binder@dakcamps.org
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	Cyndee	Mattke	Southeast			
	Leah	Marshall	Southeast			
	Andrea	Hult	Southeast			
	Alexander	Palecek	Southeast			
	Bailey	Wiesler	Southeast			
	Davis	Anderson	Southwest			
	Abbie	Ferris	Southwest			
	Samuel	Kenoyer	Southwest - At Large			
	Hanna	Antrim	Southeast - At Large			
	Claire	Hilton	Southwest			
	Elizabeth	Holzmann	Northwest - At Large			
	Dalton	Sougstad	Northwest			
	Marin	Ehrmantraut	Northwest			
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Section 4: Conference Reports

4.1 Common Table (CT)

In the Fall of 2017, the Common Table once again hosted a Fall Leadership Event for elected conference leaders as well as other clergy and laity from the conference. This year's event was entitled "Lead Expectantly." Rather than have one keynote speaker for the event, the CT chose to have a "TED Talk-like" format with five individuals sharing ideas around key concepts of leadership. We also chose to have speakers from outside the United Methodist system as well as outside the church as well. Speakers and topics included: Holly Brown, executive pastor from Embrace, speaking about the importance of kind and clear communication; Gina Mueller, regional trainer from 3D Movements, speaking about the importance of both invitation and challenge in leadership and discipleship; Ben Ingebretson, DK-MN Area Director of New Church Development, speaking about the concepts of multiplication in ministry; Terry Nebelsick, superintendent of schools in Huron, SD, speaking about adapting to and welcoming community transformation; and Justin Zajic, principal of Mitchell Middle School, speaking about adaptive leadership and innovation. The event was tremendously well received as participants were challenged to think outside the box in the areas of leadership, mission and ministry.

The Common Table continues to be a part of key strategic conversations in partnership with the Extended Cabinet. The priorities of creating a culture of call and a culture of multiplication were identified. In the ongoing business of the Common Table these decisions were made: (1) The annual conference 2018 Miracle Offering Called: One Word, Many Ways, will collect names of person called to spiritual leadership and dollars for Culture of Call grants. (2) The fall event focus will be REACH! These events support culture of call and multiplication. The CT also identified children's ministry as an area in which churches could use additional equipment and would support a comprehensive culture of call.

In the area of budget and forecasting, CT worked with Conference Council on Finance and Administration leadership to request that the Conference Board of Pensions consider a one-time gift to help the conference establish a reserve fund. This fund would be restricted to use if there is economic turmoil as a result of decisions on the denominational level.

Submitted by: Sheila Daile, chair

4.2 Commission on Archives and History (CAH)

In his April 1968 sermon to the uniting conference forming our denomination, Wesleyan theologian Albert Outler remembered how the New Testament church was formed at Pentecost when the apostle Peter reminded those assembled that the prophet Joel had prophesied visions and dreams.

At the birth of our new denomination, 50 years ago, Outler painted his visions for our church by reminding delegates of the importance of history.

Outler's vision for our church, shared by many at that uniting conference in Dallas, was that The United Methodist Church would be truly catholic, truly evangelical and truly reformed. He said that each of those had been fighting points in the past when various groups wanted the church as a whole to adopt them as either/or propositions. But he urged the new church to see them as both/and. He strongly encouraged the church to be open to changes in structures, functions and folkways. Noting that Methodism in America was already in decline at that point, he even invited the church to be open to God's judgment that even successful ventures can become idols and every heyday wanes at some point.

He also said that history can guide us as we move forward into the future. He even suggested that the way God seems to have preferred to move us forward in the past was by inspiring humans to act as links between the past and the present. So, at this historic annual conference in which we elect delegates to a special General Conference called by the Council of Bishops to determine a way forward for this whole denomination, 12 million strong, it appears the study of history is of utmost importance.

When we study history, we analyze the ingredients of our cultural DNA. We re-examine the vision, hope and promise that brought us together and determine how close we are to its fulfillment. We ask ourselves these questions: How have our people overcome obstacles in the past and what is the historical record of our achievements? What are the obstacles we have yet to overcome? What has caused us to stumble in the past or kept us from fulfilling our vision, hope or promise? With this in mind, what actions can we take in the present that will hasten the fulfillment in the future?

Even 50 years ago, Outler made clear that our past will not suffice for the future. Therefore, rehearsing arguments from the past will not help us on a way forward toward our goal of unity. But studying the past may help us to know something about how to behave as we make choices about our future. That is why we study history. But for us to study history, history must be recorded, preserved, organized and made available. That's what your Commission on Archives and History does; and that's why our work is indispensable in support of our common mission and vision. Therefore, even if General Conference did not require every annual conference in the Connection to have an Archives and History Commission, it would be a good idea.

In support of that idea, we collect and archive the records of closed churches in a high-quality archival space within the George and Eleanor McGovern Library on the campus of Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, S.D. To appropriately archive those materials and assist researchers in accessing them, your conference apportionments fund half the cost of employing the archivist we

share with DWU, Dr. Laurie Langland. These two items, the highest of our priorities, consumed 93.5% of our 2017 apportionment expenditures and represent 83% of our 2019 apportionment request. In June of 2017, we extended our 10-year agreement with DWU allowing us to continue this arrangement at the same payment rates we've had for the past 10 years.

Another important, but unfortunately under utilized, priority is equipping local churches with grants. If you approve our budget recommendation, we will make available \$2,500 in 2019 for matching grants to local churches. Churches willing to invest in preserving the DNA necessary for reproduction of their organizations will find the commission a willing partner in that effort with up to \$500 per project.

As many churches around the Dakotas devise new life cycles through church-growth initiatives, they are rediscovering their DNA. Your CAH stands ready to assist. There is still \$2,500 available to be awarded in the 2018 calendar year. To apply for those grants, go to <https://www.dakotasumc.org/media/library/fluid-mod-page/137/documents/Kuhler-Grant-Application-2017-081916.pdf>

Furthermore, our archivist stands ready to assist local churches as they develop their own history committees or conduct the ministry of memory at the local level. Additionally, those looking for guidelines on which artifacts, records and/or documents to preserve and for how long, may go to the conference website at <https://www.dakotasumc.org/media/files/old/00/Conference/Finance/Legal/RecordRetention.pdf> for a summary related to some of the more common records. For a more extensive listing, see http://s3.amazonaws.com/gcah.org/Resources/Guidelines_Publications/Local-ChurchSched-2017.pdf

The CAH participates in the conference mission of “providing a connection beyond the local church” through our involvement in both the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church and the North Central Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History (NCJCAH). The NCJCAH comprises members of the GCAH from this jurisdiction as well as three additional voting delegates from each of the jurisdiction's 11 annual conferences. It meets annually to promote historical projects within the jurisdiction, provide a forum for the exchange of historical information, consider nominations for historic sites or heritage landmarks within the jurisdiction and set collection policies for the jurisdictional archives. The site of the annual meeting rotates throughout the jurisdiction's episcopal areas. At each meeting, each conference commission reports on how their mission is fulfilled there. General Commission staff also make live reports. The Dakotas hosted this event in Bismarck, N.D., July 10-13, 2017.

Your CAH, comprising eight voting and one non-voting member, met three times in the past year (twice in person and once by conference call) in pursuit of our 12 mandated Disciplinary provisions. (¶641) At each meeting, CAH takes a tithe of its scheduled meeting time to pray and stay in love with God.

Your CAH is responsible for recognizing jubilee clergy. We collect short essays from recipients describing their lives and ministries since retirement.

With funds allocated years ago, your CAH supplies the Cabinet with clergy grave markers presented to the families at each clergy's individual memorial service or funeral.

Project historian Rev. Stephen Perry is in his 15th year of researching and writing an update to our annual conference history. He brings to your CAH annual updates of his progress.

Trying to be frugal, CAH is not seeking an increase in apportionment funding for 2019, for the second year in a row. We thank you for equipping this ministry of memory, which is so important to our future.

Submitted by: R Duane Coates, chair

4.3 Executive Director of Ministries

We continue to utilize the three missional imperatives (Grow in Love of God and Neighbor, Reach New People, and Heal a Broken World) as well as our Strategic Pathways (Developing Missional Leaders, Equipping Missional Congregations, Extending Missional Impact, and Generating Missional Resources) to fulfill our mission to Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.

In order to bring continued focus and clarity as we prioritize our work, our Extended Cabinet identified a need to focus the concept of multiplication—multiplying leaders through a Culture of Call and multiplying congregations/worshipping communities through strategies that teach multiplication principles. A strategy team was formed consisting of our Executive Team (Bishop, Director of Ministries, Director of Finance and Admin., Director of the UM Foundation, Dean of the Cabinet) plus our Directors of Leadership Development and New Church Development to guide our work and implementation goals. A few of those examples of this work are:

Culture of Call: Equipping lay executive team to lead discernment workshops in churches around the conference; taking seven young adults discerning ministry to Exploration; CALLED retreats; training for camp leadership in helping campers expect and process Kairos moments; a miracle offering focused on challenging all churches to be looking for who God is calling into spiritual leadership and seeking ways to come alongside the discernment and action process.

Culture of Multiplication: Planning for our first REACH! conference, an area-wide event focused on equipping churches and leaders to reach new people; each district superintendent working with a team of clergy to teach multiplication principles based on a curriculum developed by our Area Director of New Church Development, Ben Ingebretson; Multiply Worship curriculum that is helping pastors/leaders start new worship services; expansion of Embrace Network, partnering with smaller churches to equip them with preaching/worship resources, the partnership allows them to multiply their reach; multiplying our resources through strategic partnership with the Dakotas Foundation including dollars for technology grants that help churches expand their reach; multiplying the efforts of our congregations by seeding ministries designed to reach beyond the walls through our Breakthrough Ministry and School Partnership grants.

Although we wrestle with the reality of the struggles in our denomination, we are intent on remaining focused on the mission that God has called us to in this time and place. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead such a faithful, committed and talented conference staff team and to work in partnership with followers of Jesus who call ourselves United Methodists in the Dakotas.

Submitted by: Rebecca Trefz, executive director of ministries

4.4 Communications

Communications continue to tell the story of the ministries of the Dakotas Conference in a variety of ways. This year the website was redesigned, social media presence increased, the number of subscribers to e-news grew, and video storytelling continued.

The conference website, www.dakotasumc.org, was redesigned in partnership with camping—www.dakcamps.org, foundation—www.dakotasumf.org, and youth—dakyouth.org. Most visitors view the site on a mobile device, like a smartphone or tablet. The new website is very mobile friendly. The result is increased traffic of 35%.

The social media presence of the Dakotas Conference continues to grow. Daily posts and tweets continue through HootSuite. Engagement has increased by 25% through shares on Facebook and retweets on Twitter. Facebook is the most popular channel with an average view of 500 daily.

Video contributes to telling the ministry story. This past year, the communications team produced more than 25 hours of video for the Dakotas-Minnesota area with more than 30,000 shares and views.

Mondays @ Dakotas remains popular for sharing the ministry and telling the story of the Dakotas Conference. Mondays @ Dakotas continues to reach an average of 1,000 viewers per week.

A new weekly video e-message launched in January 2018 called This Week @ Dakotas. The video news announcements reach people through e-mail, the website, Facebook, and Twitter. There are an estimated 1,800 views each week. Sign up for Mondays @ Dakotas and This Week @ Dakotas at the bottom of the conference website home page.

UMConnect continues to be a resource and tool for Conference ministries and churches. Enhanced features include the ability to join from any computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Video conferencing is used an average of 6 hours each week with over 40 users per week.

The United Methodist Association of Communicators recognized the Dakotas Conference communications team with seven awards including first place video in four categories, first place in publicity and advertising for the 2017 camping campaign, third place in photography and first place in visual design motion graphics.

The communication team is thankful to tell the story of United Methodists across the Dakotas who are passionate about making disciples.

Submitted by: Doreen Gosmire, director of communication

4.5 Sessions

Planning is underway for the upcoming Annual Conferences: June 5-8, 2019 in Bismarck, ND, and June 11-13, 2020, in Sioux Falls, SD, as designated by the 2016 Annual Conference. The locations for these conferences will be the Bismarck Event Center and the Sioux Falls Convention Center.

The themes are set by the Sessions Committee in partnership with the Minnesota Conference Sessions Committee based on our Missional imperatives. They are: 2019 (Reach): Dare to Disciple: Live Boldly! and 2020 (Heal): Be the Light: Live Hope!

The Sessions Committee updated the policy regarding our display space at Annual Conference. It is as follows:

The purpose of the Annual Conference display area is to provide an avenue for Dakotas United Methodist Conference related agencies, boards, ministries, and missions as well as United Methodist Church agencies and institutions to share their message with the intent of helping to equip and inspire clergy and lay leadership of the local church. Selling of items or solicitations of donations is not permitted at Annual Conference including in the display area, except by Cokesbury, the retail arm of the United Methodist Publishing House.

Lunch and Learns were well attended in 2017 and are being continued as a learning opportunity in 2018.

The sessions committee also discussed and affirmed the idea to plan the 2020, Annual Conference (scheduled for June 11-13, 2020 in Sioux Falls) in a way that the schedule of events would overlap with the Minnesota Annual Conference. The Minnesota Conference will also be voting meeting in Sioux Falls. This would allow for a celebration of our joint ministry. It would also be a time to recognize and give thanks to Bishop Ough for his leadership of our two conferences as he prepares to retire.

Submitted by: Kay Braun, chair

4.6 DEVELOPING MISSIONAL LEADERS LINK

The Developing Missional Leaders Link lives into the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 22: 37-40 by loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind through all the ministries within our link. Through these ministries we are able to love our neighbors and to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our work in the various branches of this link connects us to many of the ways the Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church is reaching out to others and growing in love of God and our neighbors. We hope our work brings joy to others and brings many into a deep loving relationship with God. Some of the highlights of our work this year are shared in this report.

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) continues the hard and diligent work of developing a culture of call within the conference as well as cultivating highly effective clergy leaders who enter ministry at various stages through the implementation of the Clergy Leadership Academy. The work of the BOM is faithful work that should encourage all of us to live deeply through our love relationship with God and each other producing joy-filled disciples of Jesus Christ who strive to transform the world.

Camping and Retreat ministries under the direction of Keith Shew is thriving and growing. Storm Mountain Center (SMC) has had a successful transition in celebrating the faithful years of Scott Jensen's ministry as director of SMC and ushering in a new season at the camp under the capable and youthful leadership of Sean Binder. Lake Poinsett continues to make strides in meeting the needs of their guests through the offerings of a myriad of camping experiences and the recent addition of the new Voas Cabin that also serves as a tornado shelter for lake residents and state park guests. Laura Eiesland is working in the conference office as Marketing and Outreach Project Manager for the camping program and has been a welcome addition to the team. Wesley Acres continues to offer joy filled camping experiences for every age of camper and would love to host you this summer especially if you are a first-time guest!

Youth Ministries in the Dakotas continues to prove to be a pivotal breeding ground for the cultivation of the culture of call mentality. Leadership Training Camp, DakYouth, and Winter Connection are youth led events that empower our youth to discover how God may be calling them and enable them to discern how they might actively live out their calling both now and into the future.

Young Adult/Campus Ministries under the new leadership of Melissa Gall continues to be vital in keeping connections alive on college campuses and encouraging young adult involvement within the life of our conference and the church as a whole. Each year this subdivision of the Developing Missional Leaders Link awards grant money to congregations who desire to be those connecting points for creative and intuitive ministry opportunities to campuses and young adults around the Dakotas. This year 7 grant applications were received and awarded. If you have not considered applying, maybe 2018 is your year!

Lay Servant Ministries is blessed in the Dakotas to have so many amazing leaders eager to help others explore how God might want to empower them to lead locally, at the conference level, and even globally. In order to be more accommodating and reach people where they are, local church retreats are now being set up based on need and request of local congregations willing to host. Certified Lay Ministry training is also becoming more accessible as online modules are being offered through the Ohio Conference.

It truly has been an honor and privilege to serve as the Dakotas Annual Conference chair of the Developing Missional Leaders Link. God never ceases to surprise me at the ways in which God is at work and moving amongst us. It is also a blessing to pass the torch to Beata Ferris as the new chair of this link. She will do amazing things and continue to move the link forward embracing the vision of joy-filled leaders who live deeply growing in love of God and neighbor.

Submitted by: Kori Lehrkamp and Beata Ferris, co-chairs

4.6.1 Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM)

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) considers it a joy to work with many as they answer the call God placed on their lives. The call may come at a young age or at an older age. Regardless of the timing, we all need to say, "yes" to God's call. Some work their way through seminary, some through Licensing School and Course of Study. The paths may differ, but the one thing remains: we serve God and minister among the people God places in our paths.

The Board of Ordained ministry continues to work with clergy in all phases of life. We encourage those looking at ministry through the Elisha and Samuel projects as well as Exploration. God is prompting people as they are exposed to ministry first hand.

The Elisha Project, now in its fifth year, aligns with the conference's desire to create a culture of call that actively encourages young adults to explore how God is calling them to build the kingdom. Each intern spends ten weeks at his or her host church and gains experience in a wide variety of ministerial contexts. All interns will have the opportunity to: preach and/or lead a Bible study or devotional, plan worship, be involved in a social justice or outreach ministry, observe leadership governance at a host site and provide pastoral care

College students apply to participate in the Elisha Project. A team of clergy and laity select interns and host churches from the pool of applicants. Interns receive a \$4,000 stipend from the Dakotas Conference. The Elisha Project is made possible for funding from the 2016 Miracle Offering and the Thrive capital campaign.

2017 Interns and host churches were: Bryce Blank and Lillian Jones at Mitchell Fusion and DWU Campus Ministry with Rev. Eric Van Meter. Dylan Deflethsen at Rapid City First UMC with mentor Rev. Greg Kroger. Lillian Jones at Mitchell Fusion and DWU Campus Ministry. Tiffany Ortman at West Fargo Flame of Faith under the mentorship of Rev. Sara McManus. Kara Togel interned at Box Elder The Bridge with mentor Rev. Kori Lehrkamp. Cody Warns was at Spearfish UMC with Rev. Scott McKirdy.

The Dakotas Conference launched a pilot of the Samuel Project last summer with an intern at Watertown Cornerstone Church. The purpose is to provide the opportunity for a high school student in their junior or senior year of high school, who has already discerned a call into ministry, to have an opportunity to shadow their home church pastor for ten weeks. The internship allows the opportunity for individuals to experience behind the scenes business, gain an understanding of the work of the church and delve into what church leadership means. The Board of Ordained Ministry Elisha task force approves the Samuel Intern through an application process. The hope is to have one Samuel Intern each summer. The project is a way for the BOM to continue to grow and support young leaders desiring to be in pastoral leadership. This is separate from the Elisha internship which supports college-age students that have completed one year of college and are beginning to discern a calling into ministry.

Members of the Board take very seriously the task to nurture people through the candidacy and ordination process. We work with the candidates, providing opportunities for personal and professional development. We were fortunate to have additional support from Diane Owen and the Lilly Initiative in strengthening the financial health and competency of clergy through training at Clergy Leadership Academy as well as Seed and Save grants. The Board considers the effectiveness of clergy members and honors those who have served and are at transitional points in life.

On January 26, 2018, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Sioux Falls Seminary received approval from the University Senate of The United Methodist Church to engage a pilot cohort of United Methodist students in the Kairos Project, which offers a competency-based master of divinity program, at Sioux Falls Seminary. Garrett-Evangelical will provide a portion of the Kairos Project curriculum including courses required for ordination in The United Methodist Church, as mandated in The Book of Discipline.

We are asking all clergy and congregations to prayerfully consider God's leading. Is there a person in your congregation whom God is calling to ministry? Are they called to ordained ministry? Please be aware and share the possibility of a call to ordained ministry. We are all commanded in Matthew 28 to respond to God's call and make disciples.

Submitted by: Val Reinhillier, chair

4.6.2 Camp and Retreat Ministry

The camp and retreat ministry is a function of the Dakotas-Minnesota Area. The shared mission, core values for the Dakotas-Minnesota Area Camp and Retreat Ministry are: Mission — helping campers and guests to experience Christ, creation, and community. Core values — providing sacred places apart, nurturing Christian faith and discipleship, teaching creation care and appreciation, partnering with United Methodist churches and agencies, extending Christian hospitality and community, developing principled spiritual leaders, and inspiring and equipping lives for love and justice. Outcomes — Disciples and leaders who hear and respond to God's call to share their faith, love and accept everyone, serve others, and trust God.

There were several staffing transitions and celebrations. Sean Binder was welcomed as the new director at Storm Mountain Center as Scott Jensen retired. Laura Eiesland was selected as project coordinator for marketing and outreach. Linda Bowers came on board to serve as the camping office assistant. A fond farewell to Mary Wright who retired as camping coordinator. Stacey Edwards stepped in as the camping coordinator.

For the third year in a row in Minnesota, and for the second year in a row in the Dakotas, your camp and retreat program ended financially in the black. Success is attributed to unified financial system, newly established financial controls and review process, staff management, review of and establishment of rates based on actual costs, and real-time access to accurate data and information.

In March of 2017, camping registration support and customer service shifted to a centralized focus. This decision came after the resignation in the Dakotas Conference. Camping and conference leaders assessed staffing and ministry needs and hired a new area camping staff person focused on marketing and outreach based out of the Dakotas conference office in Mitchell. In October of 2017, the area camping ministry hired Laura Eiesland in a new role as Area Marketing and Outreach Coordinator. Laura works in collaboration with camping central office staff, campsite directors, and the director, to lead and implement enhanced outreach. The goals of the outreach plan is to identify and strengthen relationships with local church representatives — camp ambassadors. Camp ambassadors encourage their churches and communities to attend an area United Methodist Camp.

Lake Poinsett Camp (LPC) celebrated the Voas Cabin completion with a dedication on Saturday, October 6, 2017. Cabins two, three and five were removed at Lake Poinsett. Cabin four will be removed in 2018. The new Voas cabin includes sleeping space for 80 in eight bedrooms. Each bedroom has its own bathroom. The cabin features two large meeting rooms, a deck and a large patio with fireplace. Lake Poinsett was named as the primary beneficiary of the James “Jim” Larson Estate. Jim was a longtime volunteer and supporter of camping ministry and Lake Poinsett Camp. This gift will be used to establish a maintenance endowment and to further Lake Poinsett’s site as identified in the strategic plan.

Storm Mountain Center added a memory pavilion this past year. Site improvements at Wesley Acres this year were an updated chapel and a new labyrinth, a refreshed, improved zip-line.

Dakotas and Minnesota camps utilize Campwise, a widely-used camp and retreat software program, for camper and guest registrations, data management, and reporting. 2017 included refined, improved reporting for volunteer leaders, staff, user day report for hosted conference ministries, and automation.

Campsites continue to develop and strengthen their site advisory teams. These teams encourage volunteers with the opportunity to participate in the camping ministry in the areas they love most, provide direct feedback to our site directors and staff, and extend the reach of each site. People interested in serving on a site team should contact the director of the site.

All Dakotas-Minnesota staff, including site directors and central office staff, continue to meet and plan consistently together. Since 2016, the Dakotas and Minnesota conferences’ camp and retreat ministries have combined their strengths and leadership and have come together to form a joint governance council. This arrangement expands the camping-related offerings for United Methodists in each conference as well as sharing of best practices to create the strongest possible area camp and retreat ministry. The Camp and Retreat Council is made up of equal representation from each conference and meets quarterly.

Dakotas Camps are committed to becoming apportionment neutral in the funding of the camping operations by 2021. Camps will continue to receive apportionment support in the areas of capital development and maintenance, central office staff support, property taxes, and insurance. The camp and retreat ministry has partnered with the Dakotas United Methodist Foundation to develop an annual fund campaign for financial support and long-range sustainability. The goal is to increase giving as apportioned funds are reduced.

A comprehensive review of all fees and rates for camps and retreats was completed in 2016. A phased, multi-year plan to adjust rates was implemented in 2017.

Each site develops a monthly spending plan based on prior year’s actuals. Monthly conversation and review of any variances on established spending plans helps ensure real-time management and course correction as needed with a goal of no new deficits.

Dakotas and Minnesota staff regularly review every facet of camp programs and operations to ensure a safe and quality camp experience for all participants. In 2017, Lake Poinsett Camp and Wesley Acres Camp joined Koronis, Northern Pines, and Kowakan, to become fully accredited by the American Camp Association, the national accrediting body for camping programs. Storm Mountain Center will seek accreditation in 2018. To earn accreditation, camps must comply with hundreds of health, safety, and program quality standards. Only one in five camps nationwide achieves this distinction.

All Dakotas-Minnesota camps will use “Inside-Out” summer camp curriculum, a popular, ecumenical series, used in many camp and retreat settings throughout the country.

Thank you for your continued support of your camp and retreat ministries in the Dakotas and Minnesota. Thank you for making sure that the children, youth, families, and adults in your church and community know about camping opportunities! Your support and encouragement helps ensure that Lake Poinsett, Koronis, Northern Pines, Storm Mountain Center, Wesley Acres and many off-site programs and events can continue to be places where God meets with people. An experience at one of your Dakotas and Minnesota United Methodist Camps will change the lives of generations of our annual conferences’ leadership. Thank you, you are appreciated!

Submitted by: Keith Shew, area director

4.6.3 Conference Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM)

"The Only Thing That Is Constant Is Change."- Heraclitus

The Dakotas Conference Council on Youth Ministry continues to refine and make changes to the youth ministry program.

God continues to move in our Conference! DakYouth 2017 was hosted at a new site, the Aberdeen Recreational and Cultural Center. We had a little less than 300 participants, but our hope is that this year's event might yield better results regarding participant numbers and engagement throughout the Conference. That the lives of the youth who come might leave empowered and energized to engage the world around them — whether in their youth groups, schools, or homes.

Training, supporting, and equipping the paid and volunteer youth workers across our conference is a recognized and valuable part of our ministry.

Youthworker Academy — Our annual training event for pastors and youth workers was held this year, April 27-29, at Storm Mountain Center. Our guest presenter was Mark Oestreicher, co-founder of the Youth Cartel, the former President of Youth Specialties, co-leader with Zondervan, and author and contributor to more than 60 books on youth ministry — including "Youth Ministry 3.0".

Our CCYM election process continues to be tweaked as our CCYM schedule changes. Applications were made available online back in January with a deadline of May 3rd. Current CCYM leadership selected participants based on their gifts and potential to serve within the Conference.

Leadership Training Camp continues to be a place and opportunity in which the youth leaders elected to the CCYM practice leadership. Staffed by CCYM adults and other conference leaders, the youth in attendance select classes to attend daily, learn about, plan, and lead worship, enjoy fun and fellowship, and build lasting friendships and study biblical themes each day in large and small groups. This year's theme was Superheroes of the Bible and our guest was Andrew Zirschky from the Center on Youth Ministry.

We continue to promote our events through Mondays @ Dakotas, Facebook, text messages, and paper mailings. We continually make revisions and additions to our website: www.dakoyouth.org

The CCYM continues to be an important area in which young leaders discern a call to the ordained ministry. As leaders, we take this responsibility seriously, as well as the responsibility to educate and nurture leaders for the future of the church. As we continue to work more closely with the Board of Ordained Ministry, we hope to strengthen their process of encouraging and connecting with those discerning a call into ministry, both as laypersons and as clergy.

My hope is that the CCYM will continue to be a blessing to the Dakotas Conference as we seek to empower, equip, and encourage our young people for the transformation of the world!

Submitted by: Jeff Lathrop, Conference Youth Coordinator

4.6.4 Lay Leader

We are pleased to report that the Spirit has been doing new things in and through our Dakotas' laity over the last year. We are creating new opportunities for laity to discover their calling and follow Jesus. Here is a brief overview:

We are comprised of two conference co-lay leaders and two district co-lay leaders for each district. This allows us to be the two hands and feet of Jesus in our districts. Many of us attended the charge conferences, where the district superintendents graciously allowed us time to promote opportunities available at the conference level like Lay Discernment classes, camping, Mondays @ Dakotas, Walk to Emmaus, Breakthrough Prayer, Dakotas Annual Conference, and CCYM.

We changed when and how we offer classes for laity this year. Instead of publishing dates, we opened it to ask laity to coordinate dates and times that worked for them. We go to the locations that make a request and deliver the training. This led to fewer class cancellations and larger class sizes. We also experimented with offering the class for about an hour once a week for a period of six weeks. There was a great response to this with an approximate average of 22 participants at host sites.

The future looks bright for our Dakotas' laity and we ask for your continued prayers and support as we reach out to help those who are discerning their call. Our primary focus is to create opportunities for laity to step up to what God is calling them to do by providing training, support, and guidance to get more involved. We pray for them to take the opportunity to deepen their spiritual walks and see the value of learning and growing in their faith as they work to reach more people for Christ.

There were two Breakthrough Prayer training events in North Dakota with about 25 participants from four churches. The participants and churches are expectantly looking forward to where God will break through in the lives of those congregations and communities. There is continued follow-up with support and encouragement.

We are looking to create a prison ministry training. The planning for the lay speaking retreat at Storm Mountain is well underway.

Michael McMemany attended the Association of Conference Directors of Lay Servant Ministries convocation. He gained insight to additional training modules accessible online and creating a process for Certified Lay Ministers (CLM) that would be more streamlined.

We are continually listening and gaining insight into what churches and laity need to become more fruitful and will adapt and change as needed to support the needs of our communities as we reach beyond our four walls to connect and bring more people to Christ.

Submitted by: Myrna Hill and Jane Hincks, conference co-lay leaders

4.6.5 United Methodist Women (UMW)

United Methodist Women is the official women's organization of the United Methodist Church. Membership is voluntary and open to all women committed to and engaged in mission. We collaborate with organizations worldwide that address the condition of women, children and youth around the globe.

This year's theme "We are Community" explored the teachings and people in community in both the Old and New Testaments. Programs taught that God's love serves as a model for us and Christ's incarnation serves as a reminder that He crossed boundaries to be in community with others. These programs challenged us to faith-filled living and stirred each other toward good works.

Dakotas Conference Mission Team met three times during 2017. A planning meeting was held in Selby, SD in January. The second meeting was a conference phone call in late July. The final meeting was held the weekend of the Annual Celebration in October.

Each of the four districts held focus day events in April. These one-day meetings are planned and presented by the conference and district officers. They provide an opportunity to worship, to learn about mission studies, to hear about social action concerns, and to share ideas with area church women.

The UMW social priority issues this year include: Climate Justice; Maternal and Child Health; Criminalization of Communities of Color; and Economic Inequality. The UMW Committee on Racial Justice presented a program at the UMW breakfast during annual conference in June.

Mission u was held in July at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD (southern site), and at the University of Jamestown in Jamestown, ND (northern site). These schools give all participants the chance to fellowship, worship, and study current issues. The 2017 studies were Living as a Covenant Community; Missionary Conferences of UMC in the USA; and Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action. Missions for Me Children's and Faithful Servants Youth Camps at the southern site encourage education and participation of those age groups.

The Dakotas is represented beyond our boundaries by two energetic UMW members. Dawn Armstrong serves on the UMW National Program Advisory Group. She has been appointed to the Legacy Fund Steering Committee. Bobbi Larson serves as the Committee on Nominations Chairperson of the North Central Jurisdiction Leadership Team. Both women have logged many miles in their positions.

All four Districts held Annual Meetings/Retreats in September. The women of the district met for business, programs, worship and fellowship. Local organizations were recognized at that time for their Mission Today, Five Star Giving, and Reading Program participation.

The Conference Annual Celebration was held at Aberdeen First UMC, Aberdeen, SD, on October 6-7. Rev. Rebecca Trefz shared her expertise in word and song during the Friday retreat on Community. Saturday morning, we heard about three mission ministries in the Dakotas: Out in Faith Bakken Oil Rush, Solar Oven Partners, and Tree of Life. The afternoon included a panel discussion on "How do we involve younger women in UMW?" Love Ribbon grants were awarded to nine projects totaling \$2,340. The New Opportunities Grant was awarded to Gloria Larsen of Edgeley, ND.

Six officers attended Leadership Development Days in Tempe, AZ in November. The weekend included worship, learning, friends, fellowship, and refreshment. Three of those also took part in training for Conversations on A Way Forward.

2018 will be filled with many activities. Almost thirty women from the Dakotas are planning to attend Assembly in Columbus, Ohio May 18-20. The theme is The Power of Bold. The 2018 Dakotas Conference UMW Annual Meeting/Celebration is scheduled for October 12-13, at Legacy UMC in Bismarck, ND, with the theme Sacred Spaces. United Methodist Women of the Dakotas continue to tell their stories as they approach the 150th Anniversary of United Methodist Women in 2019. The Legacy Fund was established to ensure that UMW will continue its missions for women, children, and youth well into the future. United Methodist Women are faith, hope, and love in action.

Submitted by: Marsha Timm, president

4.6.6 Young Adult and Campus Ministries

Young Adult and Campus Ministries has continued to support the ministries in churches and on campuses that help to create and nurture younger adult missional leaders and disciples of Christ. We desire to continue inspiring new ministry and connection. For 2018, the Developing Missional Leaders Link accepted six grant applications from the following churches for ministries involving young adults and/or college students:

Fargo First African UMC (FAUMC) — FAUMC has a plan for “Gospel Outreach on Wheels.” Their goal is to provide outreach to college students at Moorhead State University by using a trailer provided by Fargo Calvary UMC. The outreach offered is boundless — by giving coffee, sandwiches, or other products out of the trailer that they can move around campus, the church will have the opportunity to share Christ’s love with the students.

Brookings First UMC — Brookings First UMC hopes to offer weekly Bible study in which students are challenged to practice discipleship through the giving of their time and leadership. Another goal of this ministry is to surround the four group leaders in prayer.

Madison UMC — Madison UMC has a goal of continuing and growing their on-campus presence at Dakota State University. The grant funds help to provide time each week for a pastor to be in-office on campus, fall and spring Bible studies, and CRU leadership.

Rapid City Canyon Lake UMC — Canyon Lake UMC will continue their “Emerge” ministry, a young adult ministry that meets people where they are with weekly gatherings to study and explore contemporary moral and theological issues. They continue to reach those who have not had a church home previously. The ministry has also drawn several Emerge participants in to begin attending Rapid City Canyon Lake UMC as a result of their experience in Emerge. Their hope is to continue growing the group beyond the 10-15 young adults who currently meet weekly.

West Fargo Flame of Faith UMC — Flame of Faith launched a new worship service in 2017 designed to reach out to young adults in the West Fargo area. The worship service utilizes new technology and continues to seek leaders for small groups. The goal for 2018 for this group is to further grow the attendance of this service, as well as growing small group opportunities.

Winner UMC — Winner UMC will offer Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University in their community. The goal of this ministry is to help individuals and couples live more stable and balanced lives with faith-based focus on planning and using resources wisely.

The Missional Leaders Link and the Young Adult and Campus Ministries Team are working to ensure that grant funds continue to be used in fruitful and powerful ways through annual reports, site visits, and open communication with the churches involved. The Young Adult and Campus Ministries Team works with the Board of Ordained Ministry to help connect the young adult lay members to Annual Conference, as well as those who are candidates for ministry.

Submitted by: Melissa Gall, chair

4.7 EQUIPPING MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS LINK

The Equipping Missional Congregations Link has implemented the following strategies this past year: Journey Renewal Partnership (JRP), Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI), Multiply compass groups, new church starts, REACH! event.

Journey Renewal Partnership (JRP) and Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI): In the Journey Renewal Partnership cohort one, four of the six charges accepted the prescription report and moved toward implementation, with Wahpeton Evergreen and Mandan choosing not to move forward with the partnership process following consultation. In June 2017 JRP cohort two began with: Plankinton-White Lake, Howard Beach, Rapid City Open Heart (South Maple), Lead Trinity, Bismarck Calvary, and Langdon. Pastor Quaya Ackerman is also a part of cohort since being appointed to Arthur UMC. Consultation visits and implementation have begun. The Journey Renewal Partnership has also acted as a learning lab for identifying multiple ways to help smaller congregations rediscover their identity and claim the mission God is calling them to in this season.

The fourth MCCI cohort (Harrisburg, Mitchell First, Rapid Valley, Dickinson, Jamestown St. Paul’s, Fargo Calvary) has begun pastor trainings with Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey and will begin consultation visits in fall of 2018. In cohort three consultation weekends, Bismarck McCabe was delayed in receiving prescriptions in order to allow more congregational preparation time. Fargo Faith UMC stepped out of the process. The remaining four churches accepted their prescription reports and have moved onto implementation.

Multiply compass groups: During the past year, each District Superintendent has led a cohort based on the Multiplying Leader curriculum developed by Ben Ingebretson, DK-MN Area Director of New Church Development. Multiplication project ideas emerge from these groups. This has been part of the larger strategy of moving to a 3% reproduction rate in the annual conference.

New church starts: Sioux Falls Embrace Sertoma campus, Salem Unite and Kenmare Renew have moved past the funding and supervision stage. Fargo First African is on its way to sustainability, continuing to receive some support and guidance. Box Elder

The Bridge is in the early stages of post-launch development. Projects with identified leaders are emerging in Bismarck—a second site of Bismarck Legacy and a second worshipping community with Bismarck McCabe. Prayer, assessment and interviews continue in search for a planter for an Embrace campus, a new church start in Fargo, ND. Conversations and plans for possible Embrace Network partnerships are underway in White, Aurora, Dell Rapids, and North Sioux City.

REACH! event: Plans are underway for the first Dakotas-Minnesota Area REACH! event. REACH! is an area-wide, inspirational and equipping event exclusively devoted to helping churches reach new people. REACH! is set for October 5-6, 2018, and will be held at Sioux Falls Embrace Church at the 57th St. campus. The event will feature plenary speakers and breakout sessions. Change happens best when congregations have more than a one-day, “one and done” experience. Equipping tracks are offered for congregations to follow a “tasting experience” at REACH! The tracks will be an in-depth, long term follow-up. Equipping tracks are led by specialists who plan three to five follow-up webinar or live sessions. The tracks are intended to support, equip, reinforce and hold attendees accountable for progress. All tracks support the overall objective of REACH! to help churches reach new people.

Submitted by: Scott McKirdy, chair

4.7.1 New Church Development

The Dakotas Conference is committed to develop new places for new people to know and follow Jesus. We are pleased to report that the Spirit has been doing new things in and through our connection over the last year. Here is a brief overview of the new church plants that are underway.

Sprouting: Churches just beginning that have potential for demonstrating ministry and a promising forum for United Methodist work and witness. New faith communities include Fargo new church start, Bismarck Legacy South campus and Bismarck McCabe Recovery.

Embrace Church is investigating a new start in Fargo. In January 2018, a prayer and leadership search movement launched. The prayer meeting in Fargo included area pastors and the Dakotas Conference cabinet led by Bishop Ough. The search for a Fargo planter is underway!

Legacy South is developing in south Bismarck, ND, as a new site of Bismarck Legacy UMC. Andy Early is the developer and has been on the ground with pre-launch activities beginning in earnest January of 2018. Launch at this point is projected late 2018.

Bismarck Recovery is developing in partnership with Bismarck McCabe UMC. Chris Chase is the developer and has been working since January of 2018 in pre-launch activities. Chris has years of experience in recovery work and is projecting a launch in 2018.

Germinating: Churches in years 2-5 demonstrating potential for ministry and a promising forum for United Methodist work and witness. New faith communities include Box Elder The Bridge, Fargo First African, West Fargo Flame of Faith new worship service, and Spirit Lake new worshipping community.

Box Elder The Bridge is reaching into the Rapid City area under the leadership of Kori Lehrkamp and launched public worship in February 2018. They are meeting in the Valley View elementary school and are serving the growing eastern edge of Rapid City.

Fargo First African Church of Fargo is developing significantly in their new nest at Calvary UMC Fargo. Abednego Thomas is celebrating significant growth as they see their worship top 100 and they adjust to larger space at Calvary.

Spirit Lake Ministry began having Sunday worship services in the spring 2016, when Arthur Hall was remodeled. They continue worship and have J.A.M — Jesus and Me children's ministry.

West Fargo Flame of Faith launched a new service to reach new people late fall. Sara McManus continues to develop the reach of that congregation.

Growing: Churches that have demonstrated signs of self-sufficiency; ministry model is capable of long-term, independent functioning beyond grant cycle. We are delighted to see recent starts move forward as sustainable growing local ministries. These would include Salem Unite Church (partnering with Embrace Church Network), Sioux Falls Embrace Sertoma campus and Watertown Cornerstone Encounter campus.

Submitted by: Ben Ingebretson, director of new church development

4.8 EXTENDING MISSIONAL IMPACT LINK

It's been another good year for the Extending Missional Impact Link. We continued our partnership with the Dakotas Annual Conference Foundation which enabled us to reach out in new and different ways to help fulfill the mission of the United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. For 2017, we were able to award \$24,300 in Break-

through Ministry Grants that enabled a wide variety of ministries, from after school programs to backpack programs and weekend meal programs, and from contemporary worship to children's outreach ministries that reach the unchurched in our communities. Please go to <https://www.dakotasumc.org/resources/forms/11> to apply. These grants are available to help us share the love of Christ in our communities!

One of the new and exciting developments last year was the offering of monies for "church-school partnerships." In 2017, \$2,000 was awarded to two recipients. There is great potential here for much more ministry. The 2017 "Kids Count Miracle Offering" took in more than \$38,000 and was designated for this kind of partnership. It will be great to be able to award more funds for these critically important partnerships in the years to come! It is important that our churches are aware of the different types of funding that is available. We have grants earmarked for technology, for hunger, in addition to our Breakthrough Ministry Grant. Let us continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world through these grant monies!

Submitted by: Ron Olson, chair

4.8.1 Bakken Oil Rush Ministry – Out In Faith

Out in Faith Bakken Oil Rush Ministry is a joint ministry of Faith United Methodist and the Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church. This partnership is reaching the Bakken Oil Fields centering on Williams, McKenzie, and Divide Counties of North Dakota, and Sheridan, Roosevelt, and Richland Counties of Montana.

The Bakken Oil Rush is actively expanding. We are adding hundreds of jobs each month. The difference in the upturn is the number of families we see moving into the community. As such, our outreach changes. The need for children's coats and infant items are increasing. We give out more women's coats and hygiene items in increasing numbers.

The great joy of the year is the number of people who are seeking Christ to make a difference in their lives. Out in Faith Bakken Oil Rush Ministry feeds, clothes, and comforts people in need in order to share the saving grace of Jesus Christ with them. The past year we have seen three persons from our Saturday night worship join the church. We have an active children's education program averaging between nine and fifteen children every Saturday night!

In 2017, we fed 3,251 people, averaging between 60 and 75 every Saturday night. We gave away over 120 coats and 150 sweat-shirts/hoodies. More than 200 blankets were given out this year. On top of these major items, Out in Faith provides hats, gloves, socks, and underwear. Out in Faith provides over \$500 a month in phone cards and transportation assistance.

None of the work accomplished by Out in Faith would be possible without your support! Your prayers and gifts allow us to be the hands and feet and voice of God in the Bakken Oil Field.

Submitted by: Ross Reinhiller, Williston Faith UMC

4.8.2 Bakken Oil Rush Ministry – Watford City

It's hard to believe we've been up here in Watford City for over 4 1/2 years! Lots of great things have happened during the ups and downs of what we call "The Bakken."

The Bakken Thrift Center had its first year of "minimal pricing" sales. This is getting people to invest in what they need. They feel better about themselves when they do. There were 3,257 families/individuals who were helped during 2017.

We held our first Christmas in July. To collect presents, we hosted a "picnic in the park" with games for kids. At the picnic 165 presents and \$750 were donated to make the Christmas event possible.

In July we held a late summer clothing giveaway where we combined a two-day Vacation Bible School for kids. We had 22 kids attend and served lunch while the parents shopped. Most of these kids were unchurched.

In October, we held our fall coat giveaway and distributed around 160 coats that afternoon and hundreds more before the end of the year.

Late in October, we held our 2nd Comedy Café fund raising event. We raised \$42,000 to help fund the ministry. We had around 300 people attend this event.

The Gathering Place events are growing in number. We had 65 for our Thanksgiving meal with our "Thankful message and discussion." We also had a pre-Christmas Eve service with 48-50 in attendance. Many of those who attended have no church affiliation and were traveling over the holiday season.

We held our annual Christmas event and Toy Mall event December 2nd. We gave gifts to 107 kids! 85 adults were in attendance as well. We read the Christmas story from Grandpa Jim's chair, had a ventriloquist share a story about presents and "Presence"; sang

carols, ate goodies, and released 60 balloons at the end for kids to hit around and take home while we played a lively Christmas tune to end this marvelous evening! We had over 30 volunteers help with this event from a number of churches.

TERRIFIC NEWS! The last week of December, we were finally able to purchase the property that we have been renting. It is a 40 x 60 foot shop which is our Thrift Center and a 50 x 90 Quonset which we currently use for storage and furniture and will be used as our sorting center. This will allow us to expand our store space inside the Thrift Center. The property sits on 1.33 chain-link fenced acres. It is two buildings north of the new Post Office, a very desirable location. This property has great potential for expansion or even an expanded or additional building in the future.

We had a very busy November and December at the Thrift Center. We had a special "gift section," which were new items that had been donated that were suitable for giving as gifts at a very reasonable price. It was a tremendous success!

God has been good to us and has given us great favor in the community and with the local churches. We are looking forward to a great year, expanding our influence with people and the community, as well as making our property neat and having "great curb-side appeal."

This summer, we plan to paint the building, add several windows, replace entry doors, upgrade the lighting and build a sorting room in the Quonset building. There is also potential to use the quonset and host "Garage Church" once a month throughout the summer. We are required by the city to put in ten hard surface parking spots which will be in front of the Thrift Center building. We have lots to do and will use as many volunteers as we can muster to help with the upgrade projects.

Thank you to all of the individuals and churches that have supported us with clothing and household donations as well as financial support. Also, special thanks to the groups that came to help us with special events and encourage us in our mission. God is so very good and faithful, and we are humbled to serve the Dakotas Conference in Watford City. We also take great joy in helping the folks that come to us weekly for help which can include clothing, household, a listening ear, or prayer, and a hug!

Submitted by: Jim and Kathie Konsor, co-directors

4.8.3 Disaster Response

During 2017, volunteers from the Dakotas Annual Conference participated in an Emergency Response Training event held in October. Several volunteers also responded to hurricane cleanup activities in Texas and in other areas.

Submitted by: Richard Craig, Disaster Response Coordinator

4.8.4 HOPE Center

The HOPE Center offers basic day services to individuals living in poverty and without homes in the Rapid City area. Those services include a telephone/message center, a mailing center, and a storage center. The center also provides advocacy services and referrals to partner agencies. The primary objective is to establish relationships with our guests so that we become a trusted source of support for them. It is through these relationships that we present lifestyle alternatives and a way out of poverty.

The HOPE Center was established in 2010 as an outreach project of Rapid City First United Methodist Church in downtown Rapid City, South Dakota.

In 2017, the HOPE Center served 40,496 guests with an average of 162 guests per day. 2017 was a year full of blessings, disappointments, laughter, sadness, and so much learning. The numbers for the year are only part of the story. The center offers life changing support to serve so many in the Rapid City area who are living in poverty or without homes. Many guests got jobs, found housing, improved their relationships, worked on addictions or mental health concerns, and advanced their educations. But best of all, so many found HOPE!

Submitted by: Anna Quinn, director

4.8.5 Open Door Community Center

The Open Door Community Center was established in 1976 to serve families living in the Jeanette Myhre Elementary School area of Bismarck, with special focus on assisting families in economic need. Over the years, the Open Door has provided a variety of services that address the changing needs of the community. The Open Door Community Center is a Dakotas Conference mission project of the United Methodist Church.

The Open Door is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit. The Open Door is governed by a volunteer board of directors representing McCabe, Legacy, and Calvary United Methodist Churches of Bismarck; Mandan United Methodist Church of Mandan; members at large; parent representatives; and a representative of Dakotas Conference.

In 2017, the Open Door Community Center provided preschool program, a before and after school day care, and summer day camp. The center acquired a 15-passenger bus to transport the children to various activities. The Open Door Little Free Library, installed in 2017, has proven to be very popular. Many books have been accessed from the library and books have been placed there by staff, volunteers, and neighbors. The unique aspect of the Little Free Library is that at least one Bible is on the shelves at all times.

Submitted by: Jolene Stading Puhalla, director

4.8.6 Solar Oven Partners (SOP)

Solar Oven Partners (SOP) is a multi-faceted ministry whose most obvious and immediately observable activity is to distribute solar ovens in poor communities, especially those at risk of or experiencing deforestation due to the pursuit of cooking fuel. The volunteer opportunities through SOP provide fellowship, faith development, vocational exploration, and opportunity to be the hands, heart and feet of Jesus. Our distributions provide the opportunity for the local church to reach out to the unchurched in their community and offer God's love.

Developments in our ministry since last year's report are several. Our central manufacturing has been moved to Raymond, SD, located 45 miles west of Watertown, 12 miles west of Clark, or 30 miles east of Redfield. Our reflectors continue to be manufactured in Zeeland, ND, just east of highway 83 and north of the South Dakota border.

At this time last year, we had a newly established relationship with the Evangelical Church of the Dominican Republic, and explorations to establish a relationship with the Sierra Leone Annual Conference, and with the ecumenical organization FaithWorks to reach the Navajo Nation in northern Arizona. Since then, we have been formally invited to be in a ministry partnership in both Sierra Leone and the Navajo Nation. Sierra Leone teams will visit three communities in which the conference is establishing distribution centers: the capital of Freetown, and the cities of Makeni and Bo. Distributions on the Navajo reservation will be smaller as we work to establish trust in the community both for our SOP ministry and the new leadership of our partner, FaithWorks.

The Evangelical Church of the Dominican Republic has honed in on the western quarter of the country as the most apt for solar oven ministry. They have arrived at this focus based on consultations with the denomination's sociologist who has taken into account the greater financial need in the western part of the country, the higher deforestation pressures in that region and the dryer climate, which make it most conducive to solar cooking. Volunteer in Mission teams went to distribute ovens in July and December of 2017, and in March of 2018. Rev. Erasme Figaro, the Solar Oven Partners Director in the Dominican Republic, is diligent in making follow-up visits several weeks after each distribution and works with a local team, which includes Global Ministries Missionaries from the Dakotas, Gordon and Ardell Graner, to carry out distributions when we are not there.

The addition of hand-sewn pot holders to our oven kits has meant so much more than protection of hands from burns. What seems to mean the most to the recipients is the prayers with which they are sent and the sign of God's love that they symbolize.

Moving forward, it is my hope to continue to bring more college students and other young adults and people from low-income communities to serve as Volunteers in Mission to experience the spiritual, emotional, and vocational benefits of service.

Submitted by: Marjorie Evans-de-Carpio, director

4.8.7 Southeast Pierre UMC and Community Center

Southeast Pierre UMC and Community Center celebrated 30 years of serving a community banquet this past November. Our weekly meal serves between 100 and 250 people every Thursday. In addition to food, we also fill the need of coats and blankets during the winter months and fellowship for those living alone.

On Wednesday nights, we open our community center up for elementary aged children. The focus of this ministry is to provide a safe and warm place for children to come and play as well as learn a Bible lesson. We also serve a free evening meal.

During the summer season, we pack up over 100 sack lunches daily and deliver them to children in the Pierre area. This provides a meal for young children that may otherwise go hungry during the day.

Our Sunday worship is open for anyone who would like to further their relationship with Jesus Christ. There is often fellowship after worship and once a month we have a potluck.

One of our dreams is to update our audio and visual equipment in hopes of creating a more welcoming culture for worship and other ministries and programs.

We also hope to launch a youth group of middle and high school students on Wednesday evenings to reach even more young people within the community.

One of our struggles is connecting those who worship on Sundays with those who come on Thursdays for the banquet.

Submitted by: Valerie Hummel LaBounty, pastor and director

4.8.8 Spirit Lake Ministry Center

The Spirit Lake Ministry Center food pantry operates year-round for emergency needs. The food pantry meets the needs of more than 300 people per month on and around the Spirit Lake Nation. The food pantry depends on the funds from the Spirit Lake Ministry Center, donations from churches and individuals, and food drive items. Recipients of the food pantry receive more than just physical sustenance. They are given the opportunity for prayer and fellowship. This helps grow the faith community of The United Methodist Church on the reservation. We depend on The Tribal Council, Tribal Social Services, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Dakota Prairie Community Action Organization, and local churches for referrals of persons in need.

The Spirit Lake Ministry provided Shoebox Christmas gifts for 6,346 children in poverty and need in 2017. The Shoebox gifts were distributed to eight reservations in the Dakotas Conference and the Red Lake Reservation in MN. The gifts provide the children with the story of Jesus' birth, warm hats, scarves, mittens/gloves and fun toys. The gifts share the love of Jesus Christ and plant seeds of faith with the children who receive them. Shoebox Christmas gifts are donated by churches from around the country and within the Dakotas Conference.

The Community Children's Fund provided emergency clothing and temporary housing for 42 children affected by life-changing events. The Community Children's Fund is used to purchase winter coats, hats, gloves, blankets, clothing, toys, and other items lost in fires or any other major event that occurs in the child's life. We take items from the food pantry/clothing closet when available, but on occasion must purchase these types of items. The program depends on funds from the Spirit Lake Ministry Center, churches, and individuals to help defray the cost of these items. Last year we spent in excess of \$3,200.

Sidewalk Sunday School provided \$500.00 grants to ten Dakotas Conference churches. The churches used the funds to purchase material and snacks for their community children's outreach Vacation Bible School program.

The Sidewalk Sunday School program also provides the children of the Spirit Lake Reservation the opportunity to participate in a fast-paced Vacation Bible School program. This year we hosted a faith-based summer long day camp. The day camp begins with a hot meal for the children and continues with a Vacation Bible School Experience with stories, songs, crafts and skits and supervised play. We are able to begin and reinforce basic spiritual learning to children on the reservation. Day camp averaged 50 children each day.

This year the Ministry hosted 445 Volunteers in Mission from across the country. Volunteers built wheelchair ramps and decks, roofed houses, painted house, painted or stained wheelchair ramps, rehabbed the POW WOW grounds, and provided spiritual fellowship to untold numbers of local residents. The focus of our teams is to build relationships that are meant to last a lifetime.

We are building a faith community that allows the local residents to regain trust in the church and to bridge the gap of cultural differences. We focus not on the differences, but on the similarities of our cultures, those being our faith and trust in God. The ministry provides a place for children and adults alike to come and feel comfortable. We sponsored and hosted the annual Culture Camp, the Equine Diversion Program, health fairs, and the Wellness Ride. A group of Native American youth from eight reservations around the country met again this fall at Spirit Lake Ministry Center. These five programs brought more than 500 children and adults to the ministry. We host a back-to-school bash for the children on the reservation. This free carnival had 25 youth and adult sponsors with over 300 local children and their parents attending. It was a great success.

We continued our children's and youth night out with an average of 26 children and youth attending events including movie nights, pizza parties, game nights, and spiritual conversations. Family night continues to be a success with an average of 40 persons attending this monthly activity.

Worship services at Spirit Lake Ministry began in Arthur Hall Easter Sunday 2016, with worship and a meal. Worship at Spirit Lake Ministry begins at 5pm. The worship services, without a meal, began with an average attendance of eight and in just one year, our average attendance has grown to 40 worshippers on a regular Sunday and over 50 during our monthly meal. Worship has seen three professions of faith, three adult baptisms, four infant baptisms, one child baptism and two weddings. Our congregation has a heart for mission in its local community and around our state. For Thanksgiving, we baked over 30 dozen cookies and delivered them, along with 46 blankets, to the elderly centers on the reservation and in the city of Devils Lake. Christmas found us again at the elderly centers for Christmas caroling and another round of blankets for the residents. The Jesus and Me (JAM) children's program meets at the back of Arthur Hall during worship with an average of 22 children in attendance. The JAM session begins with a children's teaching moment and crafts that follow the outline of the weekly worship message. Our Lenten series, "Peter: A Fragile Stone" was a huge success. We expected six attendees, so we purchased ten books. After the second week, we averaged 25 at our weekly studies. We began our study with a light meal of soup and sandwiches and then got into the study. This fall, we plan another study and already have 30 people signed up! This has been a year of firsts with our new worship services, bible studies, children's JAM session, and congregational mission outreach. God is truly moving on the Spirit Lake Nation and within the Spirit Lake Ministry. This worshipping congregation is a catalyst for sharing the love of Jesus Christ with the peoples of the reservation.

Submitted by: Mike and Libby Flowers, co-directors

4.8.9 Tree of Life Ministry

The Dakotas Conference had a vision and a heart to serve the Sicangu Lakota Nation. Hence, the Tree of Life Ministry was born, as part of the working hands and feet of God to the Lakota Nation residing on the Rosebud Reservation serving body, mind, and soul. We feed, clothe, shelter and love. We demonstrate Jesus' love, power, and grace to a broken, hurting society.

Dakotas Conference has supported Tree of Life financially as needed and mentored us to maturity. We are still under the watchful covering of Dakotas Conference. However, we are excited to announce we have completed our first year without direct monthly ministry financial support from Dakotas Conference. Woohoo!!!

Directed by a strong board and a sound budget and we have increased food distribution, community supports. Also, we extended our reach of the ministry through the Thrift Store, Volunteers in Mission (VIM) and construction projects.

The Soup Kitchen has served 27,138 breakfast and lunch meals, 2,760 elder boxes, and given over 38,420 boxes of food to help supplement the evening or weekend meal. We served 400 Thanksgiving dinners and gave out 195 frozen Thanksgiving turkeys, we served 600 Christmas meals and gave out 269 Easter hams. Partnering with Feeding South Dakota, we have established a food pantry. We collaborate with faith-based and community events that promote education, health and wellness through food.

Botanical Garden phase one is growing beautifully including: black and gold currants, buffalo berries, chokecherries, prairie red plum shrubs and Rose Hansen hedges. Phase two we planted; ten apple trees, two pear trees, two peach trees and had a beautiful flower garden and put in five water hydrants for a drip irrigation system. Phase three this year, our focus is adding grapes, strawberries, and blueberries, vegetable garden and building a green house.

Thrift Store had 16,260 patrons this year. We get donations from men and women of God from all over the Dakotas and beyond. With the help of nonprofit organizations, we have provided household goods, furniture, and appliances. We provided gently used and new clothing for babies, children, teens, men, and women. The Thrift gives a family an opportunity to buy at a very low cost and have the pride in knowing they have provided for themselves — a hand up, not a hand out. We serve an impoverished community with high unemployment and few resources to meet their very real needs. We are expanding one more time to provide twice the inventory. We continue to go out twice a month to one of the 20 communities.

Construction projects continue on homes that need repair, related to health and wellness issues. This year we completed 13 home projects and 31 self-help projects. Each family did the work; we provided the supplies and materials. We have invested in our ministry by updating heating/cooling units, floors, and bathrooms in the Kola Tipi, major renovation of the construction building, placed the thrift store and soup kitchen under one roof. We moved the pavilion into botanical garden area. Construction projects have allowed the disabled to return home, grandparents to keep grandchildren, and the elderly to be safe.

Volunteers in Mission included 12 South Dakota groups and 37 out of state groups. Together we are making a difference, toward the Kingdom of God project by project. Our VIM dorms provide beauty, comfort and safety. We provide cross-cultural experiences second to none. We added new and exciting activities and adventures. We would like to see more men and women of God visit us, so they can experience the magnificent culture of the Sicangu Lakota Nation, be a part of and witness the redeeming power of God to a nation.

Every donation is vital to this ministry, thank you for your prayers and support.

Submitted by: Linda Garriott, executive director

4.9 GENERATING MISSIONAL RESOURCES LINK

4.9.1 Builders Club

The Builders Club provides financial support to four churches each year as they undergo building, remodel, or expansion projects. By granting funds to these churches, it not only allows them to have new and updated spaces, but also lets them grow current or build new ministries to reach people in their communities for Jesus Christ.

In 2017, almost 600 individuals, organizations, and churches partnered together to provide over \$44,000 to help fund churches in their building projects. The following churches have benefited from the generosity of our members:

Huron Riverview UMC in Huron, SD, was able to provide more signage around the Huron community and church property, so people are able to easily locate their church and join them for worship. This increased visibility will invite people to Riverview UMC and help them continue to fulfill their mission to seek and minister to everyone.

Murdo/Draper United Methodist Churches in Murdo and Draper, SD, were able to repair and update their parsonage after it suffered significant water damage from a burst pipe. With the support of the Builders Club, they were able to get the updates done quickly, so that they could warmly welcome their new pastor. With the updates completed, their pastor was

able to focus time and energy on revitalizing the Murdo and Draper churches as they reached out into the local community.

Center UMC in Center, ND, was able to update their kitchen, air conditioner, heater, provide more seating in their sanctuary, and make their church more accessible so they could keep up with their growing numbers. God is continuing to send people to Center UMC as they reach out into their community and share God's love.

Dickinson UMC in Dickinson, ND, is currently building a new church to accommodate the unprecedented growth they have experienced in the midst of the oil boom. This new church building will help Dickinson UMC reach their goal of making Christ the center of every heart, every home, and every family in the Dickinson community.

If you would like to join Builders Club or would like to apply for a Builders Club grant, please visit our website: www.dakotasumf.org or contact our office at 605-990-7790.

Submitted by: Sheri Meister, President and CEO, Dakotas United Methodist Foundation

4.9.2 Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA)

The mission of The United Methodist Church and the Dakotas Annual Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As a Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA), we take seriously our responsibility in making this mission happen through our apportionment dollars and other assets. Over the past 6 years we have continued to create a budget that has continued to live into our Journey Toward Vitality. We have focused on Developing Missional Leaders, Equipping Missional Congregations, Extending Missional Impact (which includes our financial commitment to the General Church), and Generating Missional Resources.

The role of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA) is the oversight of the finances of the Dakotas Annual Conference. This includes recommending an annual budget to the Dakotas Annual Conference and setting policies and procedures on the use of the funds raised through apportionments and other assets.

We continue to examine our apportionment formula of using 16% of offerings received by each local church. **As always, we must stress that this formula works well if each congregation remits their amount each month instead of waiting until the end of the year.** Upon review of our tithing model, it is difficult for us to drop the percentage amount because we still see a shortfall of full congregational participation in the apportionments that help us in our Journey Towards Vitality. We invite annual conference members to help us in achieving our missional goals by encouraging your pastor and finance committee to create a plan to meet your apportionment goal for your church in full each year. Over the past five years we have averaged a shortfall of receiving apportionment dollars of approximately \$400,000 per year. Not receiving this amount makes it more difficult to continue to advance our vision and mission for God's kingdom here in the Dakotas.

Presently, our Dakotas Annual Conference CCFA doesn't have any financial reserves to utilize in difficult times. So, this year we are adding a line item to create and continue building \$500,000 reserve fund over the next five years, \$100,000 per year. The CCFA is making this a priority and it will be the first item we will fund each month into an account with the Foundation.

CCFA and the Foundation continue to offer workshops in each of the districts on finance areas of growing generous givers, financial policies and procedures, legacy giving and current ways to use electronic giving. These workshops have been well attended and we encourage you to come to one in your area next year.

We are recommending a 2019 budget of \$4,229,868 for apportionments and then the total budget of \$6,969,719. We are able to reduce this budget request by some fine tuning in our budgeting process as well as using dedicated funds from the Thrive campaign and other fees and assets. This is a decrease from the 2018 budget for apportionments. The 2019 budget proposal calls for a decrease in apportionments from 16% to 15%.

The audit report is available in the Dakotas Conference Finance office.

Finally, we want to thank the staff: Jeff Pospisil, treasurer, JoAnn Schlimgen, assistant treasurer, and Dana Bassett, accounting clerk. We are grateful for the hard work and leadership of this team.

Submitted by: Bob Ruedebusch, chair

4.9.3 Dakotas United Methodist Foundation

We have spent our past and current year focusing on living out our new mission: "The Dakotas United Methodist Foundation cultivates and secures resources for churches and ministries of the Dakotas Annual Conference by developing relationships with a community of donors who embrace the value of changing lives and seeking the love of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Last year, we reached a new milestone — we hit \$25 million invested with the Foundation and that number has only continued to grow. These funds are then used to support various ministries within the Dakotas United Methodist Conference and your local church.

Seminary Scholarships — We believe in investing in the missional development of our new leaders by financially supporting them on their journey towards serving the churches in the Dakotas United Methodist Conference. Nine students were awarded a total of \$66,000 in 2017: Natalie Buck, Thomas Carlson, Dave DeVries, Sarah Green, Donna Kuper, Jordan Louks, Michele Slott, Jeanne Sortland, and Travis Waltner. Because of our partnership in the Lilly Initiative, we are also looking forward to assisting clergy through Educational Debt Reduction Grants in the coming year.

Breakthrough Ministry Grants are being awarded to churches who are finding new and innovative ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in their local communities. These grants are intended to be seed money for churches who are launching new or expanding current ministries. In 2017, over \$26,000 was awarded to 19 different churches who introduced 22 new ministries in the Dakotas. For churches who entered into a church-school partnership for their ministry, funds were allocated from the Kids Count Miracle Offering received from the 2017 Annual Conference. If you have a new ministry that you are starting or expanding, apply for a grant at www.dakotasumf.org. Application deadlines are January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31.

Thrive: Strength for Today, Hope for Tomorrow, is a seven-year plan with three parts: start new churches, revitalize existing congregations, and develop leaders. Churches and individuals pledged \$3.6 million for the plan. The Foundation manages the funds with \$1.6 million collected and invested. In 2017, funds were distributed for new church starts, Journey Renewal, Missional Consultation Church Initiative, Elisha Project, Samuel Project, Clergy Leadership Academy, and the Multiplying Compass Group.

There are many different ways to support Dakotas Conference ministries through the Foundation. Whether it be an endowment, investment, charitable gift annuity, legacy giving, or direct giving, there is a way for everyone to partner with the Foundation. Recently, two individuals found the best way for them to invest in the Foundation and the future of ministries in the Dakotas was through charitable remainder trusts. Nearly \$1.7 million was earned through the sale of these two gifts of land. The earnings from these gifts will benefit missions, seminary and camp scholarships, camps, and the local church.

Every year, we send out a year-end appeal with funds supporting various projects. Over \$7,000 was raised with this last appeal and will provide technology grants for churches around the Dakotas. Many churches have limited or outdated technology that is hindering them from sharing their message of faith in their community. In today's very mobile and connected society, it is vital for our churches to have updated technology to connect to those both inside and outside their walls. These grants will be awarded throughout this year, so we can help our churches share their story and the love of Jesus Christ with their neighbors.

2017 by the numbers:

- 5 new endowments totaling \$1,521,200
- 9 new investments totaling \$524,474
- \$831,350 distributed to local churches, ministries, and missions
- Current investment earning rates Growth – 17.5%
- Fixed – 5.5%
- Balanced – 13.7%

We are excited to see what this year brings as we continue to build relationships with those who are passionate about caring for the future of the Dakotas United Methodist Conference.

Submitted by: Sheri Meister, president and CEO

4.9.4 Human Resources (HR)

The focus of the HR committee is to ensure that our employees are given the opportunity and the resources to thrive in their current positions. This past year has been a time of re-evaluating the US Department of Labor guidelines concerning non-exempt and exempt employees status. Jeff Pospisil and Rebecca Trefz have done an exemplary job of helping us to align all positions to be in compliance and to also allow our staff to function effectively in their role. Several positions within the conference staff have been realigned to meet changing needs. In consultation with Cathy Druckrey a consultant from the Rapid City area, our camping program has realigned all staff to the exempt status according to US Department of Labor guidelines. The committee has approved the equitable compensation request submitted by district superintendents.

Submitted by: Barry Whipkey, chair

4.9.5 Board of Pensions (BOP)

The Dakotas Conference Board of Pensions (Board or BOP) administers the pension, health care, and other benefit programs available to clergy and lay employees of United Methodist institutions (local churches, annual conference, and other UM related entities). The purpose of the Board of Pensions of the Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is to provide

pension and health care benefits for its clergy, lay employees and their families so that they can more freely equip the local church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. (See Para. 639.1 in the *2016 Book of Discipline*).

A summary of our work over the last year includes: 1) Effective, January 1, 2018, the Dakotas became plan sponsor for UMPIP for all clergy and set the automatic enrollment at 3%. Clergy may opt out of the automatic enrollment and contribute a different amount of their choosing by completing the Contribution Election form. 2) Change in health plans to Wespath HealthFlex Exchange for 2019. 3) \$1 million in Pension and HealthFlex rebates to churches and individuals. 4) Increased incentive rebates to individuals in HealthFlex. 5) Gift to Central Conference Pensions and Insurance and Alaska Missionary Conference in the amount of \$367,752. 6) Reduced apportionment request to zero. 7) Continuation of Medicare Part B premium grants for surviving spouses as those rates continue to increase each year. 8) Dakota Wholeness developed a core pilot group which meets once a month. An additional \$24,898 was put towards this effort.

Updates On The HealthFlex Program:

HealthFlex is offered to annual conferences through Wespath (formerly General Board of Pension and Health Benefits). This plan is specifically designed for active and younger than age 65 retired United Methodist clergy and lay employees. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois is the health insurance carrier which administers the plan and processes claims. The HealthFlex insurance plan has strict guidelines regarding payment of premiums.

Beginning in 2019, we will move to Wespath HealthFlex Exchange giving active participants more coverage options. There will be six plans to choose from along with dental and expanded vision coverage. The default plan will change for 2019 to be the Consumer-Driven Health Plan (CDHP) C3000 (silver plan). The participant’s share calculations will no longer be based on participant’s total compensation. There will be a Defined Contribution (DC) set for each type of coverage.

For the conference to have some perspective on the actual health insurance bill for our participants, the following numbers are the actual cost for each category of participant enrolled in Wespath’s HealthFlex Exchange for 2019:

ACTIVES:	Single	2-Party	Family
Bronze H3000 Plan	\$ 7,764	\$14,724	\$18,636
Silver HDHP H2000 Plan	\$ 8,904	\$16,908	\$21,384
Gold HDHP H1500 Plan	\$ 9,732	\$18,444	\$23,328
Silver CDHP C3000 Plan	\$ 8,484	\$16,092	\$20,364
Gold CDHP C2000 Plan	\$ 9,816	\$18,624	\$23,556
Gold PPO B1000 Plan	\$10,464	\$19,860	\$25,128

New default plan – Silver CDHP C3000 Plan*

The conference will provide a Defined Contribution (DC) of the following:

- Single Coverage \$ 7,368*
- 2 Party Coverage \$13,968
- Family Coverage \$17,664

Updates On VIA Benefits One Exchange For Retirees:

The average Health Reimbursement Account (HRA)to a participant for 2017 was \$2,843. Seventy-one (71%) of all our retiree HRA accounts had funds roll over from 2017. Of those accounts, 53% rolled over a minimum of \$1,000. Effective 3/1/18 One Exchange will be known as VIA Benefits.

UPDATE ON THE RETIREE HEALTH LIABILITY FUNDING PLAN AND NEW INFORMATION ON A RETIREE HEALTH FUNDING PLAN/HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS

To fund the Health Reimbursement Account contributions, the Board will use funds from three sources. It is the hope of Board of Pensions that we will be able to increase the funding amount each year for our retirees:

1. Funds that had been accumulated for the Retiree Health Liability. As of December 31, 2017, the amount of these funds was \$1,699,698
2. Earnings from the Frank Lynch Trust and Georgia Lynch Trust. In 2017, the trusts distributed a combined total of \$466,584. As of December 31, 2017, the balance of these trusts was \$14,014,450

3. On January 1, 2018, 3% was calculated and added to the active participants' share in the "salary ratio". The amount generated by the additional 3% will be directed to funding retiree health.

Pensions and Health Actions of the 2018 Annual Conference

1. The Budget: The Board recommends that the 2019 Board of Pensions Budget be adopted as proposed (detail outlined in the budget section of the JOURNAL) with the total apportionment request of \$0.
2. Clergy Medical Leave: Clergy members, Glen Sayler and Michael Ward are approved to continue on medical leave and to receive CPP Disability Benefits for the conference year of July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019. Clergy member, Howard Baird was approved to begin medical leave and receive CPP Disability Benefits for the conference year of July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019.
3. The Pre-82 (Past Service) Annuity Rate: The Board recommends that the 2018 Past Service Annuity Rate (effective 1/1/2019) be set at \$718 for each year of pre-82 service in the Dakotas Conference. This is a 2.6% increase over 2018.
4. HealthFlex Issues: Beginning January 1, 2019, we will move to Wespath HealthFlex Exchange giving participants more coverage options. The participant's share calculations will be based solely on coverage chosen by the participant without factoring in the participant's total compensation. Details will be shared throughout 2018. Participants will be provided a Defined Contribution of the following:
 - a. Single Coverage \$7,368
 - b. 2 Party Coverage \$13,968
 - c. Family Coverage \$17,664Eligibility to participate will be as specified in the HealthFlex Plan documents and conference policy. Premiums will be paid in accordance with conference policies regarding such payments (see policy section of the 2017 Journal, p. 173). For 2019, the annual Direct Bill to churches will be 75% of the total active 2018 C2000 gold HealthFlex premium.
5. Administration of all plans and work of the Board: The Board recommends that the following be authorized to sign necessary documents relative to the Dakotas Board of Pensions for 2018-2019: The board chair, the Conference Benefits Officer and the treasurer of the board.
6. Regarding Corpus Amounts:
 - a. Endowment and Trust Fund: The corpus was established at \$1,000,000 for the merged Dakotas Conference as of 1/1/1994. Additions since merger total \$84,646.59. The Corpus of the Endowment is \$1,084,646.59, as of 12/31/17. The Corpus is not viewed as a "target balance". It is the "foundation" of all Dakotas Pension and Health Plans and cannot be expended for any reason.
 - b. The Board of Pensions has adopted a strategy of reserve savings with accompanying policies endorsed by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration which will enable the Dakotas Conference to "weather" large increases in health insurance premiums; secure the Ministerial Pension Plan and the Pre-82 Plan; and provide funding for Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) liabilities. Reports of the amount of this reserve savings and its use will be reported to the Annual Conference upon request.
7. Resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for retired and disabled clergypersons see Resolution 2.4.

Rental/housing allowance for retired and disabled clergy—see 2.4, p.14.

Dakotas Annual Conference 2018 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan Summary and Opinion may be found on the Dakotas Conference website.

Submitted by: Leana Stunes, Conference Benefits Officer

4.9.6 Conference Board of Trustees

The three-fold ministry of the conference trustees is: to care for the property of the conference, making it available for the agencies of the conference, maintain the parsonages owned by the conference, keeping in mind the needs of the families that live in the homes, and investing funds so that the proceeds can be used to fund several committee ministries.

Below is a report of the properties of the Dakotas Conference:

Property	Date Acquired	Cost	Insured Value	Responsible for Upkeep	2017 Maintenance*
Storm Mountain Center (1)	1957		4,501,000	Camp and Retreat Ministry Council	115,000
Lake Poinsett Camp (1)	1946		5,736,000		
Wesley Acres Camp (1)			2,672,000		
Northwest District Parsonage (2)	2/27/2009	289,032	218,700	Board of Trustees	3,070
Conference Center (3)	2/23/1970	127,639	843,000		13,256
Spirit Lake Ministry Center	4/14/2006	311,409	1,255,000	Spirit Lake Ministry Center	0

*Includes only the amount provided by Trustee Funds or Apportionments for maintenance.

1) \$28,750 is transferred to each camp. The Camp and Retreat Ministry holds \$28,750 in reserve for large and unexpected maintenance that require immediate attention. 2) \$3,070 was spent on the Northwest District parsonage. 3) Most of the repairs are from 2016 storm damage at the Conference Center in Mitchell. The glass doors were replaced for \$8,253. The new doors have an electronic locking system and are much more energy efficient. A drinking fountain was replaced for \$1,967. To replace worn out flooring, \$3,036 was expended.

In addition to our work in caring for conference property, we also worked on advising and inspecting the construction of the Voas Cabin at Lake Poinsett Camp, managing rental farmland lease agreements, and reviewing insurance proposals. We have also been studying the trust clause and how it applies to our churches and the conference.

Submitted by: Ron McLean, chair

4.10 Commission on A Way Forward

What is the Commission on a Way Forward?

The Commission on a Way Forward was proposed by the Council of Bishops and approved by the 2016 General Conference to do a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph of the *Book of Discipline* concerning human sexuality and explore options that help to maintain and strengthen the unity of the church.

A word from Bishop Ough:

"I believe, as perhaps many in the Commission do, that a way forward that (1) maintains unity, (2) honors our distinctive Wesleyan connectional values and (3) has the property of being continuously adaptive, must have a rock-solid Christ-centered core of theological principles, formational practices and missional imperatives. If the core is not solid and affirmed, then we will continue the failed pattern of trying to maintain unity through non-adaptive, rigid structures and rules that do not have the power or Holy imagination needed to canoe the mountains.

There is currently no larger or intractable barrier to the mission, unity and vitality of The United Methodist Church than the matter of homosexuality. The specific issues of same-gender marriage, the ordination of LGBTQ persons, and the underlying issues of scriptural authority and biblical obedience are our denomination's Rocky Mountains, and it is clear there is no way forward unless we are willing to re-think and re-design what a global United Methodist Church looks like. We are clearly in uncharted territory."

About the work of the Commission

The Council of Bishops invited 32 voting members, three bishop moderators and a few consultants to serve on the commission. The group is balanced by geography, ethnicity and gender. There are seven of the 32 members from Africa, two from the Philippines and two from Europe.

Since January 2017, the commission has met almost monthly and received periodic feedback from the Council of Bishops. At present, the denomination's official stances on homosexuality declare the practice of homosexuality "incompatible with Christian teaching," prohibit clergy from officiating at same-gender unions and preclude the ordination of "self-avowed, practicing" gay clergy.

Based on feedback from the bishops, the commission has focused on two models that would change the status quo. The one-church model would remove current restrictions and leave questions of ordination and marriage closer to the conference and local-church levels. The multi-branch model would allow conferences to choose among three connectional conferences for affiliation. The connectional conferences would align based on theology or perspective on LGBTQ ministry — be it traditionalist, progressive or allowing for a variety of approaches. This plan would require multiple amendments to the denomination's constitution. The third possibility would maintain the denomination's restrictions and put greater emphasis on enforcement.

Timeline for 2019 Special Session of General Conference

March 19-22, 2018: Commission on a Way Forward, meeting #8 . Purpose: Based on the Council of Bishops feedback, the Commission will create a final draft report to send to the Council of Bishops.

April 29 – May 4, 2018: Council of Bishops meeting. Purpose: Receive the final draft report from Commission on a Way Forward. Consider, amend, and vote on final report to go to the 2019 Special Session of General Conference. Additionally, the Council of Bishops will draft talking points for Bishops to use at Annual Conferences as well as a press release to release to the church.

May 14-17, 2018: Commission on a Way Forward, meeting #9. Purpose: Receive final report from the Council of Bishops and plan for the Commission to support Bishops and provide presentations to Delegations as needed.

May 18, 2018 (no later than): Final report completed. Final report is sent to publisher and translators to translate and put into full electronic release format (total time needed to translate and paginate will be based on size of report)

May 23-25, 2018: Judicial Council Meeting

July 8, 2018 (no later than): Final report released. Final report in full release format is officially sent to the Secretary of the General Conference and released electronically by the Council of Bishops to the whole church.

Summer and Fall of 2018: Preparation. Delegations meet to read report and prepare.

February 23-26, 2019: Special Session of the General Conference, St. Louis, Missouri. Laity and clergy delegates will prayerfully consider and act upon a way forward.

Section 5: University and Seminary Reports

5.1 Dakota Wesleyan University

At Dakota Wesleyan University learning, leadership, faith, and service are more than just words to frame our mission and implement our values. Those four words are a continued reminder that our students experience a difference at DWU. We empower our young adults to mature into great leaders of faith by offering a welcoming platform to explore their personal beliefs and values.

This year, DWU graduates will start careers in education, business, communications, criminal justice, healthcare, ministry and non-profit administration anchored with a strong conviction to serve. As we've seen in the past, many will go on to graduate school, law school, medical school, and seminary. All while grounded with a deeper understanding of faith and preparedness for success. In addition to Dakotas Annual Conference funding of \$85,500, Dakota Wesleyan's financial commitment to United Methodist higher education is significant.

- \$196,500 in scholarships were exclusively dedicated to supporting United Methodist student leaders.
- \$93,000 supports a full-time United Methodist faculty member in religion. This individual introduces all students to John Wesley through the general education program.
- \$148,000 supports campus ministry. This commitment includes one full-time and one part-time campus pastor, as well as programming. Programming includes bringing national speakers to campus, supporting internship opportunities for students in ministry, and providing supplies for our justice ministries, bible studies, small groups, and mission trips.
- \$20,000 of in-kind support for the Fusion United Methodist Church.
- \$3,000 funded two interns for the Elisha Project. They served as key leaders in student ministry and also had some involvement in Fusion UMC and Mitchell FUMC to learn about vocational ministry.

Campus Ministry at DWU continues to thrive. Approximately 175 students are regularly involved with ministries, such as chapel, life groups, service projects, and Freshmen Ministry. New this year is Age to Age, which connects college students with residents at Avera-Brady Assisted Living Center for a monthly activity, and Christian Corps, a small-group study geared toward the university's large population of student-athletes.

This year, 40 students received Christian Leadership Awards (CLA) to help make college more affordable. These students commit to being involved in chapel, small groups, and at least one service project per year. Many of them also take part in Freshmen Ministry, which develops mentoring relationships between upperclassmen and new students that help in adjusting to adult life in college. More than half of our CLA award recipients also applied to be part of Student Ministry Council (SMC), the upper-classmen team that meets weekly for discipleship training and ministry planning.

Twenty-eight students committed to SMC leadership in 2017-18, each one charged to lead with responsibility, integrity, and compassion. Many of these leaders have a wide range of influence in other clubs and organizations, including residence life, choir, athletic teams, band, McGovern Engagement Group, and numerous other activities.

Campus ministry continues to emphasize the importance of Christian leadership not just in specifically church-related activities, but in every aspect of life.

This academic year, the DWU campus ministry welcomed two interns through the Dakotas United Methodist Church's Elisha Project. Bryce Blank, junior, Rapid City, SD, and Lily Jones, senior, Omaha, NE, met weekly with DWU Campus Pastor Eric Van Meter and Fusion Pastor Taryn Ragels to discuss various aspects of ministry and leadership. Designed as part book study and part practicum, the internship grants the present-and-future church leaders the opportunity to think about ministry in an intentional way, then apply what they learned to their context as SMC leaders.

"The campus ministry at DWU has allowed me to grow in many ways towards my call to ministry," stated Bryce Blank, Christian Leadership and Nonprofit Administration major. "As a musician, I've experienced leading chapel and Worship Under the Stars. I've also been able to enjoy interacting with the freshmen on campus as part of the freshman ministries team."

Regardless of the area of study chosen by our students, DWU graduates are prepared for meaningful careers that reflect a transformative experience grounded by intellectual growth and intentional faith exploration. DWU is proud to offer this rewarding opportunity to our student-body that continues to advance our devotion to United Methodist higher education.

Submitted by: Jan Larson, director of marketing and communications

5.2 Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

In 2017-2018, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary focused on the following priorities:

- **Responsive and Relevant Theological Education:** Respond to the educational and professional development needs of prospective students, alums, clergy, and laity by providing relevant theological education in a variety of formats and investing in our competent and diverse faculty.
- **Inclusivity in Our Relationships:** Ensure we are equitable, just, and inclusive in our relationships with the variety of diversity we encounter (e.g., racial, cultural, sexual orientation) within both our seminary and local communities.

- Ensuring a Vibrant Future: Establish a vibrant future by investing in employees, instituting new policies and procedures, caring for the earth, and generating gifts to sustain the seminary for generations to come.

RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Scholarships Available for Fall 2018

Continuing the seminary's commitment to reducing student debt and addressing the financial needs of students seeking a theological education, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has an additional 25 full-tuition scholarships available for individuals applying for admission as a full-time student in Fall 2018. For more information, please visit www.garrett.edu/news.

Two New Master of Arts Degrees

Master of Arts in Public Ministry — In Fall 2018, Garrett-Evangelical will accept students into the newly formed Master of Arts in Public Ministry program. Students in this program aspire to fulfill their Christian vocations to love God and serve neighbor through public ministries of advocacy, organizing, and justice-making in collaboration with other communities of faith and conscience. In particular, this program equips laity serving in community, social, or justice-oriented organizations who seek to enhance their public work by engaging with theological education and formation. Concentration tracks are available in Ecological Regeneration, Racial Justice, or Child Advocacy.

Master of Arts in Spiritual Formation and Direction — Through rigorous academics paired with profound spiritual formation, the Master of Arts in Spiritual Formation and Direction is designed to provide you with advanced training in the spiritual and devotional practices that lead to both personal and communal growth. Graduates of this program aspire to fulfill their Christian vocation to love and serve God and neighbor through the task of spiritual direction and companionship. Most of the courses in the Spiritual Direction concentration include a spiritual direction module, which — when successfully completed — leads to a certificate in spiritual direction. Those skills may be used in a direction setting, but they may also inform and enhance your approach to leadership, preaching, teaching, and pastoral counseling.

Connectional Learning — Connectional Learning is the name for Garrett-Evangelical's new take on continuing education. We seek to create education and training suited to your unique professional, vocational, and spiritual needs. Our new suite of offerings enables you to choose the programming that fits best for your physical location, ability to travel, learning preferences, time, and budget. We saw tremendous growth in this area with an increase in the number and type of programs we offered online, on campus, and regionally. We are actively preparing our Fall 2018 offerings to announce them at our Annual Conference visits.

Upcoming programs that may be of interest to you are a community organizing workshop held in Chicago on June 18-22, 2018. In Fall 2018, we will launch our online "Financial Management for Churches and Nonprofits" course for clergy to attend with a lay leader. Registration opens in late spring/early summer. This course was designed as part of our Lilly Endowment grant, "Leading Vibrant Congregations: A Collaboration of Faith and Finance." To learn more about our offerings and stay up to date on future programs, please visit: www.garrett.edu/connectional-learning.

Faculty Scholarship—Our faculty has been busy. In 2017, faculty members wrote 12 books and numerous chapters in book, articles, and blog posts. Here are four faculty publications that may be of interest to you:

- Brooks, Jennifer Benjamin. *Bible Sisters: A Year of Devotions with the Women of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017.
- Papandrea, James L. *From Star Wars to Superman: Christ Figures in Science Fiction and Superhero Films*. Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 2017.
- Teasdale, Mark R. *Go!: How to Become a Great Commission Church*. Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundry Books, 2017.
- Tran, Mai-Anh Le. *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017.

Inclusivity In Our Relationships — Since the launch of our strategic plan in 2015, we have been working to pay greater attention to race, diversity, and inclusivity in our community. This work began with a Racial Equity and Diversity Inclusion Audit. We have been working through the results of the audit to inform changes we need to make in our community. One of our major initiatives this year is to create a community statement that names, celebrates, and affirms the variety of persons we encounter as well as challenges the seminary with specific goals to fulfill its commitment to grow and serve all persons equally and justly. We plan to have this statement vetted by our faculty, staff, students, and trustees this spring and will publish it on our website following the Board of Trustees approval in May. As we develop this statement, we are continuing to offer training opportunities and encourage lectures and discussions on race, diversity, and inclusion.

Ensuring A Vibrant Future — Hope for Creation and Green Seminary Certification Program

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to addressing the urgent environmental crises facing the world's peoples today and to promoting the just and wise care of God's creation for the flourishing of all. This commitment is rooted in an affirmation of God's love for the world, an embrace of our human vocation to be faithful stewards of the good earth, and an active hope in God's promise to establish justice and righteousness throughout the land.

We are in the midst of integrating sustainable practices and ecological awareness as a participant in the Green Seminary Initiative (GSI) for the Seminary Environmental Certification Program. A three-year program, this certification will assist Garrett-Evangelical as it integrates care for creation into areas of education and spiritual formation; liturgy, ritual, and worship; building and grounds management; community life; and public leadership.

Thank you for your continued interest in our work. We are grateful to serve The United Methodist Church and the church at large. For more information about Garrett-Evangelical, I encourage you to visit our website, www.garrett.edu, or visit us on campus.

Cordially, Lallene J. Rector, president

5.3 Saint Paul School of Theology

Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary of the United Methodist Church committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry. We are one institution with two campuses, in Kansas and Oklahoma.

This past 2017-2018 academic year, Saint Paul enrolled 117 students in the master and doctoral degree programs. The Saint Paul Course of Study School educated 261 students in Kansas City, KS; Hays, KS; Oklahoma City, OK; and Springfield, MO. Saint Paul School of Theology announced a new FLEX schedule for theological education starting Fall 2018. Seminarians will receive a more Flexible Learning Experience that combines convenience and community opportunities with intentional academic scheduling. Students can take a mixture of online, on-campus, and hybrid (blended online and on-campus) courses to complete the required curriculum.

One FOCUS week will be scheduled each semester for hybrid and on-campus students. They will come together with faculty and skilled practitioners to participate in spiritual formation retreats, practicums that teach ministry skills (i.e. funeral planning, technology in worship, financial reporting), and community activities. The Board of Trustees and president set into motion a new scholarship initiative. Every entering, full-time, master's degree student at Saint Paul will receive a \$5,000 scholarship for the 2018 seminary year. This broad opportunity is the most recent effort to reduce student indebtedness.

Seminary partner, United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, will offer a three-year, full-ride scholarship beginning 2018-2019 academic year. The Resurrection Fellow will have a hands-on, paid internship with a ministry mentor to learn ministry skills in evangelism, worship, pastoral care, and discipleship.

Dr. Amy Oden, Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality at Saint Paul at Oklahoma City University, received the 2017 GBHEM Exemplary Teacher Award. Her book entitled, *Right Here, Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness* examines how Christian mindfulness practices begin with the teachings of Jesus and continue throughout Christian history. Oden includes step-by-step instructions for practicing Christian mindfulness today.

Dr. Mike Graves, William K. McElvaney Professor of Preaching and Worship, published a book in October entitled *Table Talk: Rethinking Communion and Community*. *Table Talk* explores communion practices and a new way of doing church that is catching on around the world. Dr. Graves writes about the dinner church movement and ways that it is carried out.

Seminary partner, Oklahoma City University, dedicated a classroom in the W. Angie Smith Chapel building to honor retired Oklahoma UM Bishop Robert Hayes, Jr. A plaque on the classroom door recognizes Hayes for his many years of service to both the seminary and university. He returned to Saint Paul at Oklahoma City University this year to teach, preach, and serve as Bishop-in-Residence.

The Saint Paul trustees, faculty, staff, and students thank you for your interest, prayers and support.

Submitted by: St. Paul's Seminary



PROGRAMS

GRADUATE AND CERTIFICATE

Graduate Programs

- Doctor of Ministry
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts in Christian Leadership
- Master of Arts in Counseling
- Master of Arts (Bible & Theology)
- Grad Certificate in Theological Studies

Certificates

- Training in Spiritual Direction Certificate of Completion
- Certificate in Christian Ministry

STATISTICS



2016-2017 ENROLLMENT

Total Headcount	306
Average Age	42
students in all programs	
Students in Programs	256
Denominations	
Baptist	38%
Lutheran	15%
Reformed	14%
Wesleyan/United Methodist	11%
Non-Denominational	9%
All Others	13%



THE AMAZING IMPACT OF THE KAIROS PROJECT

A Message from Greg Henson, President of Sioux Falls Seminary

We thank God for the opportunity to participate in the work he is doing in and through the Kairos Project. Each fall and spring more than 100 students from different states, countries, and continents pack into our chapel for worship as we began our Kairos Project intensive week.

Through the power and grace of God, our enrollment continues to rise, and Sioux Falls Seminary is developing a reputation for being an innovative seminary that is seeking to bring together theological education and local ministry contexts.

Over the past several months, I have been advising some of our students, helping prepare them for the journey of theological education. Their stories are diverse, yet similar. Each feels called to serve in a ministry context but has also felt as though the traditional model of theological education would not serve them well.

Many desire a system that involves a holistic journey, one that more fully develops them for their unique callings. The Kairos Project at Sioux Falls Seminary is that journey. Diana, one such student, recently described her experience:

“I am completely a different person because of [Kairos]. I have always had a heart for ministry but never saw attending seminary as an opportunity because school never worked for me...I am now flourishing the way God intended me because of the mentor team approach and the academic structure of Kairos. I never thought I would be able to make a difference in this world, but the faculty and my mentors have circled around me and are helping me fulfill my calling.”

We are continually amazed by stories of how God uses Sioux Falls Seminary to change the lives of students and the individuals they serve. We thank God for making it possible for students, like Diana, to fulfill his call on their lives. Whether telling others about the impact of Kairos, supporting us, or referring students, you are vital to our mission! Thank you for joining us.

**JOIN US
IN MISSION**

video: sfseminary.edu/joinus

WAYS TO JOIN US

- Encourage the individuals that God has gifted for service in his kingdom to consider theological education.
- Support Sioux Falls Seminary as we develop servants for their participation in the kingdom mission.
- Pray for the exciting work that God is doing in and through Sioux Falls Seminary as we create systems of theological education and integrated counseling that are affordable, accessible, relevant, and faithful.
- Attend an event, consider taking a class, or enroll in a program.
- Join our mailing list to receive monthly updates on God's work at Sioux Falls Seminary. Sign up at sfseminary.edu/signup.



THE FUTURE OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, RELEVANT, AND FAITHFUL // FOR YOU, IN CONTEXT

What is the Kairos Project?

Sioux Falls Seminary is on the move. It is now recognized as one of the most innovative seminaries, helping to change theological education and how it is done both in North America and around the world.

We are embracing the fact that the Kairos Project, which began as just a "project" in 2014, is now also the educational philosophy that drives our work. The mantra that goes with this philosophy—affordable, accessible, relevant, and faithful—is so much more than a set of words. It is integral to everything we do.

A Journey of Discipleship

The Kairos Project is, first and foremost, a journey of discipleship. While enrolled at Sioux Falls Seminary,

students walk alongside a mentor team and in community with fellow students. Kairos develops students in the places where God has placed them. Simply stated, the journey of theological education is integrated into the various aspects of a student's life (home, work, church, etc.). Learning is facilitated through contextually-integrated educational moments and adaptable assignments.

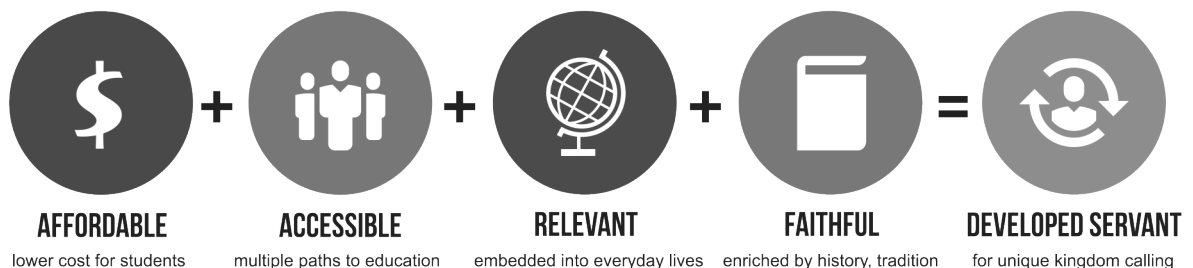
The Kairos Project is designed for individuals who are actively engaged in ministry and/or desire to integrate their faith and work. Kairos students move toward outcome-based Christian maturity under the supervision of a mentor team, by the direction of faculty, and through participation in a cohort-based community of learning. With the exception of intensives on

the main campus each October and April, coursework is typically completed in context. All of the seminary's learning resources, however, are available for students to supplement or enhance their in-context work.

In addition to being accessible and relevant, the Kairos Project is also affordable. At only \$300 per month, tuition for the Master of Divinity program is about one fourth the cost of the national average. Kairos tracks are available within the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Christian Leadership, Master of Arts (Bible and Theology), and Doctor of Ministry programs.

Visit sfseminary.edu/kairos or call 800.440.6227 to learn more.

THE KAIROS PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION



5.5 United Theological Seminary

"NOW TO HIM WHO BY THE POWER OF GOD AT WORK WITHIN US IS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ABUNDANTLY FAR MORE THAN ALL WE CAN ASK OR IMAGINE..."
— Ephesians 3:20

United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, celebrated a 77% increase in new students for the fall of 2017. While 71 new students enrolled in September 2016, 126 new students enrolled in September 2017. This was made possible by increasing student aid opportunities and empowering faculty members, trustees and administrators to personally recommend candidates for a \$5,000 grant toward tuition. United experienced God's provision, trusting what God said through St. Paul: "[God] is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

Many of the seminary's new students are current pastors who want to become more effective leaders for the Church through a Doctor of Ministry degree. United's Doctor of Ministry program has 170 students enrolled this year from 29 states, 2 non-US countries and 27 Christian denominations. The average number of doctoral students in all Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is 60 students, making United one of the largest Doctor of Ministry programs among ATS member schools.

The Doctor of Ministry program provides academic rigor, peer group support, spiritual growth and practical application. Pastors identify a need within their community and, with the support of a peer group, mentor and United faculty, they develop a model of ministry that will resolve the challenge in their congregations or communities.

Rev. Rudy Rasmus, pastor of the 9,000-member St. John's United Methodist Church in downtown Houston is a current doctoral student, who says he has been both challenged and supported in the DMin program.

"The program is rigorous," Rev. Rasmus says. "It is contextual, it is intentional and the professors and staff are at the top of the form."

United also has 212 students enrolled in the Master of Divinity degree program who usually seek to serve as pastors in local congregations. 88% of entering students are ordained or seeking ordination to serve a local congregation compared to 56% in other ATS member schools.

United also provides a two-year Master of Arts in Christian Ministries degree, which many persons serving as Directors of Christian Education or other local church positions pursue.

United provides flexible course options: 90% of students take at least one course online, and courses are also available as traditional on-campus courses, week-long on-campus intensive classes, and virtual courses that meet simultaneously on campus and in the cloud via webcast.

If you are interested in pursuing further seminary education, contact United's Office of Admissions at admissions@united.edu or call 800-322-5817.

Grace and Peace, Dr. Kent Millard, president

Section 6: Agency Reports

6.1 Africa University

Africa University is deeply thankful to the members of the Dakotas Conference for strengthening their support and investing in the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment at 90 percent in 2017. Thank you for being generous and faithful to this ministry. Your generosity helped the North Central Jurisdiction to achieve its best-ever level of support for the AUF apportionment—99.83 percent.

Institutional Update:

- Currently, Africa University hosts a stable, focused and vibrant campus community of 1,400 students and faculty and staff from 31 African nations.
- Amidst a transition in the governance of Zimbabwe, lectures, research, and outreach activities at Africa University have continued uninterrupted.
- A new academic structure and the realignment of programs is encouraging innovation and enhancing Africa University's relevance to The United Methodist Church and to sub-Saharan Africa. This includes the launch of the Institute of Theology and Religious Studies which brings together multidisciplinary training and leadership formation opportunities for both clergy and laity.
- Africa University-based researchers are providing critical data on mosquitos and regional malaria control programs to aid Africa's efforts to eradicate malaria and other insect-borne diseases.
- The university is also making trailblazing, regional contributions in migrant and refugee protection, child rights, and harnessing intellectual property for development.
- The first 25 years of AU's ministry have produced more than 8,000 graduates who lead in efforts to make disciples, minister to the poor, improve global health, and better the quality of life in communities.

These ministry accomplishments are made possible by the steadfast support of United Methodist congregations. Beyond dollars and cents, the Dakotas Conference's engagement with Africa University represents hope and transformation for young women and men who are seeking to live lives of meaningful discipleship.

The four-year, \$50 million Campaign for Africa University is ongoing, with 77.4 percent of the goal or \$38.7 million in cash and pledges already committed. The campaign prioritizes scholarships, expert faculty, research, infrastructure, and technology. Africa University humbly invites churches and individual members of the conference to consider making a second-mile gift in support of the campaign.

It is the university's prayer that the members of the Dakotas Conference will continue to work diligently to grow their annual support and re-establish the conference tradition of investing in the AUF at 100 percent.

Thank you, Dakotas Conference, for your foundational role in the Africa University story. Please remember the students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and alumni of Africa University in your prayers. Thank you for being a part of an incredible year of blessings. Thank you for affirming the power of faithfully sowing, standing, and working together as you journey in ministry with Africa University. May God bless and keep you always in an abundance of grace and mercy.

Submitted on March 29, 2018 by:

James H. Salley

Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

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6.2 General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

GBHEM launched a new mission and vision in August 2017. The updated mission and vision simplify GBHEM's role as the primary leadership development agency for The United Methodist Church.

Mission: Build capacity for United Methodist lay and clergy leaders to discover, claim and flourish in Christ's calling in their lives, by creating connections and providing resources to aid in recruitment, education, professional development, and spiritual formation.
Vision: Generations of thriving, diverse and compassionate Christian leaders for The United Methodist Church and the world.

OUR WORK THROUGHOUT 2017 AND 2018

The Office of Discernment and Enlistment at GBHEM hosted Exploration, a biennial event for young adults ages 18-26 to hear, discern, and respond to God's call to ordained ministry as a United Methodist deacon or elder. More than 350 attended the event in Portland, Oregon, in November 2017.

The Young Clergy Initiative (YCI) funded 34 innovative projects across the church in 2017 to attract young people to ordained ministry. Since its inception, more than 100 projects have been funded through YCI.

GBHEM works with the Commission on Central Conference Theological Education (CCTE) to distribute grants for the theological education of pastoral leaders in the Central Conferences. In 2017, the CCTE awarded 67 grants totaling more than \$1 million to the seven Central Conferences of The United Methodist Church.

The Publishing Ministry, established to engage, nurture, and advocate for the intellectual life of The United Methodist Church, released 13 books in 2017, reaching more than 10,000 people.

In 2017, GBHEM's Office of Loans and Scholarships awarded 2,000+ students with \$4.1 million in scholarships and 350 students with \$1.4 million in low-interest loans. More than \$1.6 million was awarded to 200 recipients of the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship, which helps United Methodist clergy avoid excessive educational loan debt, minimize financial stress, and build financial acumen.

To aid pastors in their ministry journey, GBHEM's Candidacy Office introduced EM360. A formation guide to help pastors and congregations meet mission and ministry goals, EM360 is a tool to help clergy leaders identify and gauge pastoral effectiveness. In 2017, 1,438 candidates enrolled in UMCARES to seek certified candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry. A total of 589 candidates were certified.

The Black College Fund distributed more than \$9.68 million in 2017 to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities related to The United Methodist Church for faculty development, infrastructure maintenance, academic programs, and scholarships.

Clergy Lifelong Learning led African-American United Methodist pastors who lead predominantly white churches in cross-cultural diversity training in South Korea in 2017. Continuing education and coaching opportunities are available through the innovative, multilingual platform, UMC Cyber Campus.

In 2017, Schools, Colleges, and Universities established the Siri S. Gadbois Fund in partnership with the National Association of Schools & Colleges of The United Methodist Church (NASCUMC) for mentoring among institution leaders (kickoff in 2018). The Cutting-Edge Curriculum Award was created to recognize 10 exceptional faculty members who are building effective and innovative academic courses (winners announced at the end of 2018 spring semester).

In partnership with Discipleship Ministries, GBHEM provides e-readers to theological schools in remote areas of Africa and Asia, offering access to the latest textbooks and references books. The E-Reader Project distributed 667 e-readers in 2017 and nearly 2,500 devices to 22 theological seminaries since the program inception in 2013.

In 2017, GBHEM and the Association of United Methodist Theological Schools (AUMTS) hosted two academic theological colloquies. Initiated in service to the intellectual life of the church, the colloquies are intended to be a resource for the church. The first colloquy (March 2017) focused on human sexuality and church unity, the second (November 2017) reflected on the practice of *Missio Dei*. Both events produced a study guide and book.

Submitted by: The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry