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Common Table

David Lux, Chairperson

This has been a year of transition for the Common Table, as it has been for every other segment of the Annual Conference, as we prepare to join with Kansas United Methodists in becoming the Great Plains Annual Conference. The majority of our meeting time has been used to hear from the Transition Team and give feedback on the Plan for Organization of the new Conference. From our feedback and the feedback of many others in Kansas and Nebraska, there have been many revisions to the Plan of Organizations. At our last meeting in March, though there were still a few things to work out at that time, we affirmed the Plan and the direction it was going.

The Transition Team has done outstanding work in dealing with a number of important issues, and putting together a plan that moves us forward for the common good. It's exciting to see how the strengths and best practices of the three Conferences were able to be lifted up and used in the forming of a new Conference. We think we have a good plan going forward.

In the five years of the work of the Common Table, we have continued to be a Covenant Community, holding each other accountable, making worship and prayer an integral part of our gatherings, learning together through reading and discussing relevant books and resources, and looking at the bigger vision of how the Conference can help local churches "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." And we have continued to oversee the good work of our three teams: Leadership Development, Congregational Transformation, and Risk-taking Mission and Justice.

We have worked with a reduced Funding Plan, in order to be realistic about the resources available to us and to allow more resources for carrying out vital ministries in the local church, and seeking to carry out those ministries that the Conference can do best. We were very intentional about making ministry and funding priorities that would do the most good in keeping to our mission.

I am thankful for my co-convener Galen Wray, for Conference staff leaders Carol Roettmer Brewer and Carol Windrum, and team leaders Tom Watson, Andrea Paret, and Keith Johnson, and for everyone at the Table, they have done a great job.

Leadership Development Team

Tom Watson, Chairperson

A brief overview of the work of the Leadership Development Team during this past year.

Laity Link

Laity Link is a representative group that meets approximately once each quarter. It includes all of the District Lay Leaders and all of the District Directors of Lay Servant

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Ministries as well as the Conference Director and others, such as the Dean or other representative of the Schools of Christian Mission. Laity Link is both a learning opportunity, scheduled and learning from each other. It is providing an opportunity to bring or forward questions, concerns and ideas to the Leadership Development Team.

Lay Servant Ministries

Both Basic and Advanced classes have been provided around the Conference this past year and that will continue through 2013. An effort has been and is being made to educate lay persons about Lay Servant Ministries, and to dispel the idea that it is just about preaching or "pulpit supply." The Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries has been working with his counterparts in Kansas to organize the ministry in the Great Plains Conference.

Youth Ministries

Training events were held this past year for those persons around the conference who work in the area of youth ministries. It is our belief that if those persons who conduct youth ministries or who work with youth ministries are well trained, they are the best source for providing a solid basis for ministry with and to our youth across the conference.

A Senior High Retreat was held in 2012 as well as a Middle School Retreat and a Statewide Youth Mission Trip in the fall.

Campus Ministries

Campus ministry at Lincoln campuses continued under a contractual arrangement. Campus ministry at UNK continued under the direction of Laura Stubblefield and ministries at Wayne State College were conducted primarily through the Wayne United Methodist Church.

Congregational Transformation

Dr. Keith Johnson, Chairperson

We have emphasized transformational leadership as we continue to shepherd four areas of ministry: New Faith Communities and new congregations including new mission starts; local church transformation; Hispanic faith communities and Native American faith communities.

This year we have been pleased to see the beginning of a new area church transformation process "Vital Congregations: Next Steps." This is a Great Plains area ministry that involves over 60 churches who participated in five live-stream presentations by outstanding presenters on topics from spiritual leadership to connecting with the community. Now they are implementing what they have learned in their local communities with the encouragement of ministry coaches.

The ABIDE revitalization process for small membership churches is also continuing through the training of local church teams who are working in their congregations or charges.

We are thankful for the ongoing ministries and celebrate the ministries of Living Hope in Omaha, Water's Edge in Omaha, Prairie View in Lincoln, and Urban Abbey in Omaha who have all been funded through our Mission Shares.

In addition to these on-going ministries we have a new ministry with African Nationals in Omaha. Saint Paul UMC/Omaha received a grant that has helped with the establishment of an African National group that is worshipping at Saint Paul. Twenty-two from this group have become members of the church.

Hispanic/Latino ministry continues in several communities. We look forward to training more Hispanic/Latino leaders to be leaders in local settings and our new area partnership in the Great Plains Annual Conference. The ministries in Lexington, Hastings and Omaha continue, and we are thankful.

The Native American congregation of Sacred Winds has done some reflection about its presence in the New Visions Community and its future as a worshipping congregation. Its ministries and outreach continue.

Among our changes this year has been saying thank you to Rev. Nita Hinds-Park for her leadership with our team. We are grateful for all who have participated in growth and development on our team and in our churches.

Risk-taking Mission and Justice Team

Andrea Paret, Chairperson
Carol Windrum, Staff

You are the salt of the earth." Matthew 5:13

Risk-Taking Mission and Justice Ministries has been the "salt of the earth" in a variety of ways since our last Annual Conference.

Affirming, listening to and resourcing local congregations

Ongoing conversations with selected pastors in all six districts continued in 2012/2013 with the purpose of affirming their mission and justice efforts, asking them for input on how better the conference can serve them and offering ideas and resources to strengthen their mission and justice witness. RTMJ intern, Katie Lamb, manages this project with over 70 churches from Harvard to Hemingford, Broken Bow to Benkelman, Lincoln New Visions to Lyons Memorial, and Plattsmouth to Phillips.

Accountability and Nurture: RTMJ-related Ministries

The RTMJ team continued to monitor the work of the ministries receiving mission shares through our team. These reports were submitted on a quarterly basis and feed-back was provided to each ministry by the team. Most ministries regularly shared

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about their work in UMConnect to help church members understand the important work their mission shares were making possible.

Young adult leadership development through the Micah Corps

Six young adults participated in the Micah Corps internship during the summer of 2012, deepening their walk with God by exploring different prayer practices, sharpening their leadership skills, learning about different issues and visiting local churches. The team included Tori Osler from Elsie, Jonathan Poarch from St. James in Bellevue, Adam Neely from Christ UMC in Lincoln, Elizabeth Swearngin from Craig Parish, Katie Lamb from Havelock UMC in Lincoln and Elena Rojas from Lydia Patterson Institute. Over the summer, they gave presentations as far west as Harrison and Wauneta, central at Kearney Faith and FUMC and east at Auburn and Hanscom Park in Omaha. They presented to YAC/MAC and CAC in June, helped with an environmental camp at Camp Fontanelle, participated in an intergenerational seminar at the GBSCS in Washington, D.C. and attended the School of Christian Mission where two interns taught the children's class. To learn more about their summer, go to micah-corps.blogspot.com.

Empowering local churches through Social Justice Seed Money

Five projects were approved for 2013. They included Know Your Rights seminars for immigrants in Omaha through the St. Paul UMC/Benson (Missouri District); Child Advocacy and Back Pack Program through the Columbus First UMC (Prairie Rivers District); Financial Peace University for Spanish speaking people through the Great West District; Video storytelling of immigrants to inspire deeper understanding and advocacy from Juan Carlos Veloso with the Hispanic Ministry at St. James UMC in Bellevue (Missouri River District); and education and advocacy around the Farm Bill from United Methodist Ministries (Missouri River District).

Empowering disciples to speak out for a transformed world, starting in Nebraska

UMNAction is an email alert network, organized by Assistant Peace with Justice Coordinator Zach Anderson, for Nebraska United Methodists to speak out on issues in the state legislature. Grounded in our UM Social Principles, over 100 participants use their voices on issues such as prenatal care, repealing the death penalty and child welfare.

Leadership Development through the General Board of Church & Society

• Seminar on poverty

Zach Anderson organized a trip to Washington D.C. with an intergenerational group from Nebraska, July 17-19. The focus was on homelessness and poverty.

Note: The funds for this experience came from the Peace with Justice Special Offering.

• Rapid Response Team Training on Immigration Reform

Sandy Sypherd, a RTMJ member, participated in a training for grassroots organizing. She collaborated with Sergio Tristan from Kansas West and Javier Ríos from Kansas

East. Sandy returned to Nebraska and helped organize a group to broaden the Nebraska UMC base for just and humane immigration reform.

• **Young clergy forum**

RTMJ member, Chad Boling, participated and networked with other young clergy across the country.

Mission and Justice DREAM Team

Jamie Snyder (RTMJ team member), Carol Windrum (RTMJ staff person), and Emiliano Lerda (JFON) were selected by Bishop Jones to represent the Nebraska Conference on this team. The DREAM team composed and submitted a theologically grounded proposal for future mission and justice witness in the Great Plains conference.

Imagine No Malaria Campaign

RTMJ assisted with funds so Alisa Parde from McCook could participate in the trip to Zimbabwe in December, 2012, with Bishop Jones and several people from the Kansas East and West Conferences. Upon returning to Nebraska, Alisa helped educate and motivate Nebraska UMs to advocate for the Global Health Fund as well as raise funds to purchase nets and support Malaria prevention efforts.

Justice For Our Neighbors of Nebraska

Emiliano Lerda, Esq.

Justice For Our Neighbors of Nebraska (JFON-NE) is a faith driven ministry, welcoming immigrants into our churches and communities by providing free, high quality immigration legal services, education, and advocacy. JFON-NE was started by and is affiliated with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). In 2012, JFON-NE served more than 800 families with their immigration legal problems. Our clients are often victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, or other crimes. We also have clients that are seeking help to reunite their families. Additionally, in 2012 we were able to reach out to thousands of people through various educational outreach projects and presentations throughout the State of Nebraska.

JFON-NE is under the auspices of the Nebraska Annual Conference Risk-Taking Mission and Justice Ministries Team, and is supported through Mission Share dollars. Without this support we would not be able to fulfill our biblical mission as directed by Matthew 25:35 in the following passage "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

JFON-NE continues to hold monthly immigration legal clinics at Grace United Methodist Church of Omaha and at the First United Methodist Church of Columbus. In April of 2013, JFON-NE will be starting a new monthly clinic at First United Methodist Church of Lexington, NE. Our monthly clinics are an opportunity for our volunteers

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to come together with our clients. Our program gives volunteers an opportunity to learn more about the immigration legal system and get to know and welcome the wonderful people who are our new neighbors.

In addition, in 2012 we partnered up with the Saint Paul United Methodist Church of Omaha to conduct numerous educational presentations to hundreds of people in the Omaha area. We also want to thank our friends from First United Methodist Church of Omaha and the Urban Abbey for partnering with JFON-NE and for helping our ministry with a wonderful educational and fundraising opportunity in 2012. We look forward to continuing to grow our program in 2013 to welcome more neighbors to our churches and communities.

United Methodist Ministries - Missouri River

Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede, Executive Director

United Methodist Ministries was founded by the United Methodist Church in Nebraska in 1966 and is dedicated to cultivating creative partnerships to eradicate hunger, poverty and racism. We offer a variety of programs and volunteer opportunities that utilize hands-on service and experiential learning to explore the relationship between mercy and justice in the world around us.

2012 followed our pattern of increased productivity, with new ministry sites, volunteers and activities.

VIM participants hosted	589
Additional volunteers	1457
Blue Flamingo visitors	6,000 approx.
Big Garden sites	70
Direct service provided to	over 14,000 people

UMW - We were pleased to be selected as a UMW National Mission Institution this year and look forward to our more formalized relationship with United Methodist Women both in the Great Plains Conference and as part of a global community. This credentialing adds to our existing UMC relationships, listed below.

Volunteers in Mission – United Methodist Ministries hosts nearly 600 volunteers annually through the VIM program. Participants include visiting mission teams, single-day mission immersion groups, and participants in our annual Days of Service. VIM teams come from across our Conference, as well as from out of state. We have been especially pleased to see an increase in visits from teams from Kansas East and West Annual Conferences.

The Advance – the Big Garden is listed as an Advance Special with the United Methodist Church. Our fundraising goal through the Advance for 2013 is \$15,000. Our Advance number is #676 and we welcome participation by our friends in the Great Plains Episcopal Area.

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Missionary staff – UMMinistries is fortunate to now have two Church and Community Workers on our staff, Lisa Maupin and Deb Keeney. In addition, Rev. Ahlschwede was recently invited to serve on the National Advisory Committee for the Church and Community Worker program, further strengthening our relationship with the General Board of Global Ministries.

We are grateful for the financial and spiritual support of the Nebraska Annual Conference, which founded UMMinistries in 1966; we have accomplished much together in these 46 years. We look forward to our future in service together with the Great Plains Annual Conference.

Peace with Justice Ministries (PJM) 1983-2013 celebrating 30 years

Carol Windrum, Director of Peace with Justice Ministries

And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, love kindness and walk with humbly with God. Micah 6:8

In 1983, the initial focus for PJM was on Christians' witness during the nuclear arms race and the growing violence internationally. In 1985, *Voices to the Capitol* began. Dozens of Nebraska UMs committed to speak on behalf of peace to national leaders throughout the year. Some of the issues for advocacy were support for ratifying a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, acting on the Council of Bishops' resolution about the war in Iraq, encouraging a framework for the U.S. to help prevent genocide and mass atrocities, and support of the United Nations. After focusing on peace for several years, hunger was added to the advocacy efforts and contacts were made to promote global development, good governance and the reduction of poverty and hunger including transparency in foreign assistance programs, and advocacy for strong child nutrition in the U.S. Today over 325 Nebraska United Methodists are part of *Voices to the Capitol* network and are from communities including Blair and Burwell, Gretna and Geneva, Omaha and Oakland, Chadron and Columbus, McCook and Mullen and Westerville and Waverly. Appreciation goes to Louise Neimann, Lydia Young and Sue Rood for their leadership on *Voices to the Capitol*.

PJM expanded to learning from Christians in the two-thirds world, especially those in Central America. The Director of PJM traveled to Nicaragua, listened to Christians speak about U.S. policies that were impacting their lives in a negative way and returned to show video from the experience and speak in churches across the conference. Local congregations in the northeast part of Nebraska gathered medicines for the Director to take because of the U.S. embargo's negative consequences on people's health.

The Nebraska Conference has a network of 300 Peace Advocates, the largest network across the denomination. A Peace Advocate is one who commits to praying, studying and acting for God's shalom in their communities and the world. PJM provides The Mustard Seed, ten times each year to help local Peace Advocates with ideas for

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prayer, study and action. A recent example of a Peace Advocate's witness was the organizing of a 12 hour prayer vigil for peace on Good Friday at the Gretna UMC. A few ideas shared over the years included supporting the DREAM Act, organizing youth Sunday around Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday observance; prayer focus on Mary's radical Magnificat during Advent; learning about the Occupy Wall Street movement and its parallels with Christian values; peacemaking resources during election years; and promoting UMN Action for advocacy within the Unicameral. Peace Advocates come from every corner of the conference including Adams and Bennington, Clatonia and Bassett, Omaha and Lexington, Alliance and North Platte, Scottsbluff and Hooper. Appreciation goes to Jane Johnson from Fremont FUMC, for helping with The Mustard Seed and supporting Peace Advocates through the years.

The Nebraska Conference commissioned the Director and her spouse for two *Justice Journey* long-term mission tours around the United States. Representing Nebraska, the team worked and learned in dozens of annual conferences from New England to Texas to California and the Alaska Missionary Conference and brought back ideas and resources from other United Methodists around the country.

PJM formed the **Sowing the Seeds** group for several years to link faith with rural justice concerns. Working with the Center for Rural Affairs, a curriculum was developed to help Christians talk and act constructively about long-term empowerment for rural communities.

PJM started **Elder Witness**, a group of retired clergy with this mission statement: *We are retired United Methodist clergy of the Nebraska Conference who are encouraging and challenging the church to strengthen the prophetic expressions of our Christian faith.* One of their projects was the production of a packet to assist new pastors in strengthening their prophetic roles within their congregations.

PJM worked collaboratively with many conference groups over the years including Children & Poverty Committee, Rural Response, United Methodist Women (promotion of Equal Exchange fair trade products), Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership, Council on Youth Ministries, and the Hunger Committee. Out of the Hunger Committee came a bread cookbook of recipes submitted from all over the conference with children's art work and information about domestic and world hunger through *Bread for the World*.

Before the Micah Corps intern program was established through the Risk-Taking Mission and Justice Ministries Team, PJM began mentoring young adult interns starting in 2000. The intent of the internship was to help young Christian leaders go deeper in biblical foundations of justice, learn about social issues facing the church and world and practice leadership skills. Summer PJM interns included Kim Lehmann, Scott Martin, Brian Smith, Victoria Hatterman, Jeff Richards, Sabrina Miller, MacKenzie Shreve, Alan Gager, Kasey Farwell and Wendy Zook. The Director also supervised interns at Chadron State College, University of Nebraska at Lincoln and the University of Nebraska at Omaha through Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska.

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As the Director of Peace with Justice Ministries for three decades, I want to express my gratitude for the support of five Bishops and many clergy and laity across the conference for making PJM a faithful expression of Micah 6:8; "And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God."

Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership

Dottie Halvorsen

The Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership was created in 1999 in response to the Bishop's Initiative, Hope for the Children of Africa. The partnership between the Nigeria and Nebraska Churches has resulted in the building of an orphanage in Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria. In 2012 the Partnership continued to develop in the following ways:

The highlight of the year was the expansion of the orphanage with an addition of 50 children who have lost both of their parents. There were also infants who had been abandoned and were cared for by the orphanage until either claimed by family or placed into adoptive homes.

Currently twenty-three children attend boarding schools that are junior and senior high school levels. The elementary students attend school at the orphanage. A building was remodeled into a skills training center where students are schooled in practical trades such as sewing, knitting and gardening. Tuition students have been accepted from the community to fill out the classes at the elementary level.

Throughout the year, the partnership committee members visited church services, United Methodist Women's meetings, and School of Christian Mission to promote the Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership.

We were fortunate to have Simon Benjamin, the orphanage director, visit during Annual Conference. He shared with a report to the conference membership and visits to both the children and youth. A new Nebraska Advance was created with the gifts to Bishop Ann Brookshire Sherer-Simpson's retirement. This begins a fund to scholarship orphans who will be continuing to higher education.

The Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership would like to thank the United Methodists of Nebraska for their gifts, prayers and concerns for the people of Nigeria. Through your caring efforts the Nebraska Conference was able to send \$84,000 toward the expense of running the orphanage in 2012. It is our hope and prayer that this partnership can continue for many years to come.

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Nebraska Conference Secretary Of Global Ministries

Pastor Alan Gager,

Conference Secretary of Global Ministries and Jurisdictional CSGM on The Advance Committee

After attending trainings for two years with Rev. Lyle Schoen, Pastor Alan Gager became our Conference Secretary of Global Ministries (CSGM) during the 2012 Annual Conference session.

Some highlights for 2012 include:

In 2012, \$360,967.24 was donated to the projects of The Advance by individuals and groups/churches in our conference. The Advance is an official program of The United Methodist Church for voluntary, designated, second-mile giving. Through The Advance, United Methodist annual conferences, districts, local churches, and organizations, as well as individuals and families, may choose to support mission programs or mission personnel with their financial gifts. Each Advance project has been vetted and approved by Global Ministries and Advance staff. *One hundred percent of all Advance giving goes to the chosen mission project or ministry.* The Advance strives to be the leading conduit for United Methodist designated giving. The Advance works with church leaders around the world to ensure that approved projects are aligned with the goals of The United Methodist Church in the local area, help develop partnerships that are mutually advantageous, tell the story of projects and missionaries, and report how giving is making an impact.

Advance missionaries serving in our conference include:

Kevin Huff who is a missionary through the US-2 young adult program. He was assigned to work with neighborhood ministries at Calvary United Methodist Church in Lincoln. Debbie Keeney who is a Church and Community Worker, serving as director of the thrift, vintage, and fair-trade shop of United Methodist Ministries in Omaha. Randy Hildebrant who is a Church and Community Worker at the Rural Revitalization Project of the Elkhorn Valley District of the Nebraska Annual Conference. Lisa Maupin who is a Church and Community Worker assigned to United Methodist Ministries—Missouri River District.

This year we celebrate the 16th year of collecting United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) items during Annual Conference. Records indicate that Jean Mohring was the first organizer. There has been a semi-truck at Annual Conference every year since 1996 (except for the year the AC Mission Project was to help build a Habitat for Humanity house). Thanks for all the donated items and money and to all the loyal volunteers who have helped fill the trucks!

Pastor Gager was nominated (by the other CSGMs in our jurisdiction) and appointed by GBGM to be the Jurisdictional CSGM representative on The Advance Committee. His first meeting was April 10-11, 2013 in New York City.

Pastor Gager and Jonathan Poarch attended the Conference Secretaries of Global Ministries training May 1-3, 2013 in New York City.

Pastor Gager attended MissionFest 2012, an initiative of the Kansas West Global Ministries Commission, held November 11, 2012 in Newton, Kansas. Keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Thomas Kemper, General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries. Dr. Kemper related success stories illustrating how mission work has changed from serving others, to serving with others, to serving along-side one's own native population. Staff in the New York GBGM office represents 27 nations and 24 US states. The staff can speak 38 various languages and traveled to more than 63 countries in 2012. Bishop Jones presented a session on Immigration and in his closing sermon reminded everyone that "It's not shall we be in mission, but where shall we be in mission."

Imagine NO Malaria

Ashley Gish

In this time that we are celebrating the history of this conference and looking forward to what God has in store for the Great Plains, I hope you'll indulge me as we explore the brief but - I would argue - miraculous history of Imagine NO Malaria.

When we began this effort less than 4 years ago, you here in Nebraska, like so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the United Methodist Church, heard the call to get involved. Many of you, and your friends and family and church family have already made an incredible choice - the choice to look at that fast food lunch or that bag of gourmet coffee or that shirt on the clearance rack at Target - you've looked and you've said, for the cost of something that means so little to me, I can do something that means so much for, and with, someone else. You may never know who that someone else is, perhaps a pregnant mother-to-be, a 5 year-old girl eager to start school, a young man working to support his family.

But together, we have found a way, as individuals and congregations and districts and conferences and as a denomination to make an incredible and indelible mark on the world, one life at a time. Back in February Bishop Jones took this challenge very seriously, he committed to attempt 1000 free throws in a single day. People from all over the Great Plains Episcopal Area were invited to make a guess with the donation of the cost of a net, some guessed very optimistically that he would make 999; some, like his wife Mary Lou, guessed he would make less than 250. But no one in this conference guessed closer than Jenelle Erb, so we honor Jenelle today for her fantastic estimation skills! We also look to honor Dan Flanagan and John Ferguson, who tied in raising the most funds through the Bishop's Free Throw Challenge.

When we started this initiative in the Great Plains, Bishop Jones asked the congregations of Nebraska to do just that, not to do everything, but to do something. Congregations all over the conference have begun already to do that something.

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What will your congregation do? Will you be the ones to reach up for the ceiling or even to throw your doors open wide to invite the whole community to reach with you? Wood River United Methodist Church sponsored "Free Throws for Malaria" at the local high school. People from throughout the community gathered to shoot hoops and cheer others on who were shooting hoops to raise money to stop the spread of Malaria. Children from kindergarten through high school and adults competed in the "Free Throws for Malaria" contest. Each contestant shot 25 free throws and asked donors to pledge. A total of \$2,350 was collected in pledges and individual donations. Now that's open doors.

What we've come to realize is that this effort isn't simply an effort to change things over there, 8000 miles away. This is just as much an effort that is changing us. A friend of mine, Alisa Parde from McCook Memorial who was a part of the Great Plains delegation that visited Zimbabwe in December put it this way: "I think that our participation in Imagine NO Malaria has brought knowledge, and a realization that by our working together, as we connect all the way from Nebraska, Kansas and everywhere around the world, we can make a difference, and that we can save lives, right here where we live. Our children at McCook Memorial raise funds every Sunday in their Penny March and our community has been part of many fundraisers, meaning we get to take ownership of our discipleship and join hands with our brothers and sisters in Africa. The connectional ministry that is happening is touching lives. The United Methodist Church is showing its roots, and this is what it is like to be a United Methodist!"

So in the past 4 years, as congregations all over the US have begun to get involved with our other partners around the world, what impact have we seen? We've seen over 1.2 million mosquito bednets delivered, over 5800 local health care workers trained. We've seen the death rate fall from one life every 30 seconds to one life every 60 seconds. We've cut Malaria's impact in half. God is good! But as Ephesians 3:20-21 teaches us: "His power at work in us can do far more, immeasurable more, than we dare ask or imagine."

Good United Methodists of Nebraska, you have begun to imagine. We know that a gift as small as \$10 can provide a life saving net, two full rounds of treatments, or contribute to a community health worker training. In this conference alone, you have saved 5,954 lives and counting, I see new numbers come across my desk every couple of weeks and excitement and participation has been building! As Kansas East, West and Nebraska move toward unification, I will take this one last opportunity to put before you a little friendly competition. For nearly this entire initiative, the three conferences have tracked closely in terms of lives saved. However, in the past couple of months things have shifted: the Kansas East conference has come together to save over 4532 lives but Kansas West has saved over 9000 lives. But I've spent enough time in this part of the world to know that Nebraska has the market cornered on fourth quarter comebacks. So here's your chance to do what you do best, Nebraska!

So here is where we are called back to our scripture from Ephesians. Ten years from now, what will the global health landscape look like? Will we say "Well, we did

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what we could” and dust our hands off? Or will we say that we stood together as United Methodists and as children and instruments of God, with daring imaginations taking bold action to see every child treated, every family educated, and every death prevented. Can you imagine? Can God?

Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska

Marilyn P. Mecham, IMN Executive

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

John 13:35

The *Life and Work of Ecumenism* was lifted up within Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska throughout 2012 via the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline, Ministry to Returning Military, Faith Community Response to Domestic Violence, Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day, Health Ministry, Angel Connection, Ecumenical Disaster Response, Environmental Stewardship, Ecumenical Lending Library, Peace with Justice Joint Strategy and Action Team, and Grants to American Indians in Nebraska.

These ministries served more than 1,000,000 people in Nebraska, neighboring states, and through technology and resource-sharing, worldwide. People of all ages received direct services, resources, education, training, and advocacy. The message of “love for one another” resonated throughout each ministry in real and profound ways.

The strength of ecumenical partnership was highlighted in 2012 in events like the passing of LB 599, a bill providing prenatal care for all; in the first Abrahamic Traditions Dinner; in the invitation from the First Lady of Nevada inviting the IMN Executive to come to her state to share the good news of ecumenical ministries in Nebraska that advocate for the health and well-being of children; in the partnership with Husker Sports Network and others to create a campaign to create awareness on mental illness (www.dontbesidelined.com); in personal messages of gratitude from those served by the Rural Response Hotline and the Outreach to Returning Military; and in partnerships identifying ways to serve those in prison.

Resources were developed to help individuals and congregations minister to others. A 3-unit study guide, *“How Does our Christian Faith Inform our Views on the Economy?”* provides information on poverty in Nebraska and the US. *“Ask a Question, Save a Life”* is a 30-minute video developed by Interchurch Ministries and collaborative partners addressing suicide prevention. *“Bullying: A Faith Community’s Response”* is a power point presentation and study guide for congregations and youth groups that addresses a serious issue in today’s society. A power point focusing on the history and ministries of IMN was shared with councils of churches and faith communities nationwide by IMN Executive, Marilyn Mecham, as she served as President of the National Association of Ecumenical and Interreligious Staff. There was a great deal of interest and appreciation for the way that denominations within Nebraska witness their unity in Christ by working together through powerful ministries. This presentation is available for all NE congregations.

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People who inspired others in their faith development and who set the model for how to live a life of faith were honored by being named to the *People of Faith Wall of Honor* at IMN. Those nominated in 2012 were Ann Brookshire Sherer-Simpson, Helen Traudt, Silas Kessler, Kenneth Moore, David deFreese, Paul Olson, and Robert Hall. To name someone to the Wall of Honor, contact the IMN office.

IMN ministries and the impact they have on the lives of Nebraskans of all ages are because of the commitment, leadership, and financial support of the member denominations and partners in our ministries. Special appreciation to all within the Nebraska Conference who have served on the Board, on committees, JSATs, and task forces. Thank you!

IMN Partners

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska
Church of the Brethren, Western Plains District
Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska
Evangelical Covenant Church, Midwest Conf.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, NE Synod
Mennonite Conference, Central Plains
Presbytery of Central Nebraska
Homestead Presbytery
Presbytery of Missouri River Valley
United Church of Christ, Nebraska Conference
United Methodist Church, Nebraska Conference

In 2012 we again learned that by being One at God's Table, by meeting face-to-face and working hand-in-hand, we are able to address the challenges of our time. Thanks be to God!

For more information about these ministries and resources or to schedule a presentation in your church, go to our website www.interchurchministries.org, follow us on Facebook, or contact IMN.

Commission on Archives and History

Lona Dearthmont, Chairperson

We met twice in 2012, with eleven members attending the April meeting and nine members attending the October meeting. We got to know Karie Dvorak, director/curator of the Historical Center/Archives, who completed her first year on the job in December 2012. Commission members Barbara Schmidt and Bob Craig devoted many hours to organizing historical records and cataloging items in the collection, for which we are very grateful.

Commission members assisted Karrie Dvorak in staffing the Annual Conference booth and were able to make valuable contacts with lay members and clergy who had questions and/or information for Archives and History.

We decided to give away some items in storage that did not meet the collection policy. The appropriate parties were contacted prior to disposal. We approved policies that established three forms for use in the Historical Center/Archives: (1) Registration Form for Archives Users; (2) Research, Duplication, and Use Fees; and (3) Reproduction Request and Application to Publish Images under Copyright. The Historical Center fulfills research requests for church members free of charge. The fee policy applies to unaffiliated individuals and institutions.

We said goodbye to outgoing UMW Historian Dixie Allbery and we welcomed new UMW Historian Rogene Silletto. All other membership on the Commission remains the same for 2013.

The Nebraska Commission made contact with the Kansas Area Commission on Archives and History to begin planning for meetings in 2013 to discuss the merger of the conferences and its ramifications for the commissions and archives.

Finally, we take the opportunity to remind people that the Commission is charged with the job of overseeing the collection of historically significant records. The preservation effort begins with the records retention policies and procedures followed in all offices, from local church to conference level. "Archives" refers to those collections held in the Historical Center/Archives located in the lower level of Cochrane-Woods Library at Nebraska Wesleyan University. For more information on hours, research policies, and records retention, please see the Archives & History link at www.umcneb.org.

Nebraska United Methodist Historical Center/Archives

Karrie Dvorak, Director/Curator

In 2012, Nebraska United Methodist Historical Center/Archives ("NUMHC") staff and volunteers worked diligently to: respond to research requests; update church and clergy files, and pastoral appointment notebooks; process conference and closed-church records; clean out an off-site collection storage facility at NWU; process newspaper clippings regarding churches and ministries in the Nebraska Annual Conference; and, catalog an additional sixty-two volumes of books and upload that information to the on-line card catalog located on the web at: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/neumc/>. Volunteers and staff made significant progress in processing approximately twenty boxes of records obtained from Camp Fontanelle in January and several boxes of closed-church records received throughout the year, including those from Seward-Salem and Sutton-Salem UMCs. Collectively, NUMHC volunteers worked approximately 363 hours at the Archives this past year.

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Throughout 2012, part-time archivist, Karrie Dvorak: (1) responded to approximately ninety telephone/e-mail and fourteen walk-in requests for information from researchers both inside and outside the denomination and Nebraska Annual Conference (genealogical, local church history, former clergy, NE UM camp history, a 2012 proposed General Conference resolution, etc.); (2) supervised three regular volunteers on their processing, cataloging, clippings, and file management projects; (3) continued acquiring and accessioning new collection items, including closed-church records from Bayard, Hoskins, Hull, North Star-Fullerton, Sutton-Salem, Seward-Salem, Star Valley, and Wilsonville UMCs, as well as records from Clatonia and Norfolk First UMCs, and a volume of early German-Methodist Episcopal records for Lancaster Co.; (4) prepared reports and presentations for the bi-annual NE Commission on Archives & History meetings and Annual Conference; (5) provided records management advice to several local church historians, pastors, and district superintendents in the Nebraska Conference; and, (6) assisted approximately ten congregations throughout the Conference with relevant historical information regarding their church anniversary celebrations and planned histories.

The Historical Center/Archives continues its mission to offer research support for all persons interested in the rich heritage of the Nebraska UM Annual Conference. Truly that work could not be completed without the significant effort and dedicated commitment of NUMHC volunteers: Bernice Boilesen, Bob Craig, Lona Dearthmont, Gail Devore, and Barbara Schmidt, as well as the members of the Nebraska Commission on Archives & History.

Historical Moment Presentation: A Brief History of Grand Island First UMC

By Karrie L. Dvorak
Director/Curator, NEUMHC/Archives

Did you know that First UMC in Grand Island was the first United Methodist congregation chartered in the entire U.S. after the denomination was formed in 1968? In 1999, the General Commission on Archives and History designated Grand Island First UMC as an official United Methodist historic site, the first in the state. Maureen Vetter, then-Curator of Archives and History, told how it came about. "Upon hearing that Nebraska had no United Methodist historic sites...her husband, Jay, helped her remember Grand Island First UMC's unique history....'I thought it would be really great that our first historic site could be a young and growing congregation,' she said."

In January 1968, anticipating the unification of their two denominations, two Grand Island pastors, Dr. James Chubb of Trinity Methodist and the Rev. Melvin Koelling of Salem EUB, began planning Grand Island First, to be located in the growing Capital Heights subdivision. In April, the Rev. Henry Murray, a native Kansan and staff member of the Methodist Board of Missions, began organizing the congregation. The first worship service was held May 5th in the Engleman

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School. According to Rev. Murray, the date “was more coincidental than planned. But the fact that it did coincide with the ending of the uniting conference made it even more special.” Thirty years later, charter members, Betty Becker and Donna Schwartz, remembered that first Sunday—“how everyone had to set up their own chairs and take them down after church in preparation for school the next day.” Donna recalled, “There [also] was no baptismal font to baptize the first baby. [I]... had a beautiful silver bowl that [my] dachshund, Major, had won at a dog show. That became [our] baptismal font.”

In June 1968, the Rev. Doyle Hays, an Alma native and active member of the EUB Conference, came from Hastings Grace to take the reins at Grand Island First. On Sept. 15th, the congregation was formally organized with 105 charter members. Almost exactly a year later, they broke ground on seven acres at the northeast corner of W. Capital and Independence. Then, on March 1, 1970, the first service was finally held in the new building. The interior was a large room that could be divided with folding doors, and instead of pews, it had folding chairs to allow space for fellowship and special meetings.

Almost immediately, however, the building was too small. Pastor Jay Vetter noted, “[w]e are a church just large enough to have a full time pastor and pay the bills[,]... and our lack of space makes growth difficult.” Consequently, in 1982 under the leadership of Vetter and Rex Bevins, who chaired the Nebraska Conference Board of Global Ministries at the time, six classrooms, a fellowship room, new offices, and an enlarged sanctuary were added for \$160,000. After the ‘82 addition was completed, Grand Island First grew about 30 percent by decade’s end. At the 1999 dedication service for the historical marker, Mel Luetchens, then-Director of Connectional Ministries, aptly stated, “We have a building and we have a plaque, but the church is the people....When this day and this event is sort of a dim memory, the church will still be the people and will continue to go on forever and ever.”

Since Pastor Hays, seven pastors have served Grand Island First: James Hansen, Albert Winsman, Jr., Jay Vetter, Dale Howard, Julie Bringelson, Bev Lanzendorf, and its current pastor, Chad Boling.

As we celebrate our Nebraska United Methodist heritage over the next few days while looking to the future of our new conference, let us do so in a spirit reminiscent of the cooperation that forged Grand Island First.

Laity Address

Tom Watson, Conference Lay Leader

Luke 24:13-14

On that same day a bunch of them were going to St. Mark’s, about eight miles from downtown Lincoln, and talking with each other about all of these things that had happened to their conference and what will it be like in the future.

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This week, as we are looking back to celebrate our history, we are also looking forward with anticipation and some anxiety. Some have grief, some excitement, some have come to a funeral, others to a wedding. Let me speak briefly about three things, as I see it. What will be the same, what will be different, and what needs to be different.

I have heard Bishop Jones say that what we do with organizing and how we position people and other assets can help us, but that is not what will accomplish the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The difference is made by what the leaders in the church, you and me, do with the abilities, opportunities and assets we are given.

So, what are some things that will be the same. Well, you will still be a part of the same worshiping community. You will have a pastor that is provided to you after thoughtful consideration by your cabinet and Bishop. You will have a Bishop, and for now the same bishop that you have right now. You will still have a District Superintendent who will be an agent of connection for you and your congregation.

For many of you and particularly we lay persons, we may not notice much change at all and any change that we do see, we may not ascribe to the dramatic change of becoming one, new conference.

What are some things that will be different. First I would note a new and fresh emphasis on the conference focusing on equipping local congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ and in connecting congregations for ministries beyond the local church. I really hope that it becomes apparent that the local church does not exist to equip the conference, but it is exactly the other way around.

Next, you will see a focus on - and priority given to these areas:

1. excellence in youth ministries;
2. excellence in preaching and worship;
3. An emphasis on equipping and encouraging your local church to be vitally engaged in ministry with and to your communities; and
4. Connecting congregations to the needs of the world and offering strategies and opportunities to address both immediate needs and systemic problems.

You may say we have been doing those things or we should be doing those things already. Well, you are correct, at least partially. But in each of these areas I have heard, from time to time, voices raised about the way we are doing or not doing each of these things. Now here is something that might be difficult to accept. There are other things that are important, but not everything can be a priority. So, I am suggesting that these areas that I think will be different, will be different if we agree that they are the areas we are giving priority to. That means when something else comes up that would compete for time or resources, priority items come first.

Now, here is what I think needs to be different, US. You and me. I am speaking in large part to we as lay men and women. Near the end of Matthew's gospel, Jesus is gathered with the eleven and he is quoted as saying:

"All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

It seems like we have read this passage to mean that since Jesus is talking to his apostles, this command only applies to those who have been anointed that is ordained. So, pastors are supposed to make disciples of all nations, after all they're trained. I believe the command is to all of us, each one who has come to be a follower of Jesus. Our pastors provide leadership, but they are not the only ones responsible for making disciples of Jesus.

I trust that our Bishop, the Cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry will recruit, train, equip and provide each of our congregations with excellent clergy leadership but we are expected to share in the work of making disciples.

We often lament that there are no young people in our churches that we have no children in our churches and sometimes it is because they have all left our smaller communities for the big city. Now I am probably going to offend, but there is an element of that which seems like an excuse. I imagine if all of us look at our local property tax bill, we are supporting a school. If we are supporting a school, there must be children around somewhere they're just not in our church.

Also, at your local Casey's or its equivalent on Sundays, I am guessing that young adults are coming and going all morning.

My point is that we aren't really into making disciples of people who don't come looking for us. A week ago the text my pastor used was from the Book of Revelation, the beginning of the letter to the church in Laodicea. "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot." Rev. 3: 15(a). I don't want to get too deep into that, but it made me think about us, as United Methodists in Nebraska - and Kansas, for that matter. In some ways it seems we may have become lukewarm toward our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. So I am saying that what needs to change is our hearts. Yours and mine, and by the way I am not excluding you folks who are clergy. I suspect there may also be a little inclination on your part to minister to those who come through the doors. I am urging us to get before God and ask for a change of heart. There is a praise song, not really contemporary now, that says "change my heart, O God, make it ever true, change my heart O God, may I be like you". I think that needs to be our prayer, individually and collectively.

Now if I sounded like I am scolding, I apologize. I am foremost among sinners. But I believe with all my heart that if we change in this way, we will see fruit and perhaps what might be referred to on these great plains as an amazing harvest. Amen.

We've come here to celebrate
This Conference and its past
Some things now will disappear
But other things will last

Some of us won't see a thing
There's nothing that looks new
It's my prayer as time goes by
Those folks will be but few

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Some come with trepidation
 Anxiety and fear
 And others are excited
 To greet this next new year

For some of us this week's a wake
 It's tears that we'll be shedding
 And others here are full of hope
 We're headed for a wedding

Now some things they will stay the same
 And other things will change
 But surely that's not news to you
 There's nothing there that's strange

You'll still be worshipping with folk
 Just like you have before
 The Bishop's going to see to it
 You'll still have a Past-OR

You still going to have your Bishop
 And a DS to connect
 They'll give counsel and direction
 And at times they may correct

We talk about the structure
 Whether staff is two or one
 You know that these are not the things
 That get the mission done

So now I'm here to tell you
 There's something has to change
 It's true both in the city, or
 If your home on the range

Now Jesus gave an order folks
 Th' Disciple Making thing?
 He wasn't speaking right to me!
 Have a familiar ring?

I think we've all become lukewarm
 That's not our bit of service
 And that, I think should be enough
 To make us all quite nervous

Some things they will be changing
 Now doesn't that seem sound
 Con'frence is to serve your church
 Not th' other way around

You'll see some new priorities
 But nothing that insults
 A focus on youth ministries
 And reaching young adults

By the message from the pulpit
 We're both challenged and we're blest
 your Bishop wants the preaching here
 To be the very best

You're going to be encouraged
 Maybe challenged is the word
 Engage with your community
 In ways you've never heard

Some things cry out for justice
 And others are a mess
 We hope that as Christ's Body
 These issues we'll address

If Jesus walked in here right now
 He's tell us 'O Contraire"
 When I said that I meant that task
 For everyone to share

Might take a change of heart and mind
 A motivating speech
 But there are folks around you
 It's expected that you'll reach

We seem to have the attitude
 We'll welcome those who come
 But don't expect me to reach out
 Cause that's just really dumb

Now here's a concept I suggest
 It really isn't odd
 It's time to have a change of heart
 To get aligned with God.

We act as tho the words he spoke
Were only to ordained
Cause they're the only one who are
Disciple-making trained

Equitable Compensation Report

Rev Bev Lanzendorf, Chairperson

I would like to thank the cabinet for working diligently and closely with the churches involved in this process. Budgets are always being stretched but currently each church is doing its best to maintain a pastor and a working budget.

Despite the difficult economic times people still are being faithful to God and the church. We are happy to report most of the business at hand was taken care of by teleconference phone meetings as needed. From July 1, 2012 through December 31 2012 there were no awards given, and from January 1 through June 30, 2013 an award of \$2,559 was awarded to the Tecumseh UMC and \$5,000 to the Chadron UMC.

I wish to thank all of the United Methodist churches in Nebraska for supporting Conference mission shares and ask you to continue supporting this ministry with your financial stewardship. I also wish to thank the committee members for their diligent and conscientious work this past year.

Nebraska Conference Council on Finance & Administration

Patrick Duncan, Chairperson

My name is Pat Duncan. I am the chair of the Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CCFA). I am completing what I believe to be my ninth year of service as a member of CCFA.

I never cease to be in awe of the dedication and work ethic of those with whom I have served. I would especially like to express my appreciation to Robin Kilgore, our conference treasurer, for her outstanding dedication, hard work, and contributions to CCFA. We would have been lost without her.

CCFA works with the Common Table and transition team to make responsible decisions to see that conference resources are utilized wisely. Sometimes these decisions are difficult, but we have always made every effort to act for the good of the conference and the people we serve.

This year has also been a year in which we have met with the CCFA's of the Kansas West and Kansas East conference in an effort to coordinate the creation of the Great Plains Conference.

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If there is to be a Great Plains Conference, it is important to have uniformity throughout the conference in the way we manage things. At the same time, there are certain matters which are unique to each of the conferences as they now exist. Those items must be respected and preserved in some instances. As a result of these meetings, a new mission share formula has been approved by CCFA and will be presented to you. The new mission share formula is proposed to phase in over a period of three years. The purpose of this would be to allow certain ministries and missions the opportunity to seek other sources of funding. The new formula should ultimately result in lower mission shares for most local churches. Hopefully, these lower mission shares will provide financial relief for some struggling churches and new opportunities for local churches to fund missions of their choosing.

It has been a year of transition from old to new. CCFA, the Common Table, the Transition Team, and Bishop Jones have all participated in making difficult and what may be historical decisions.

It is with some sadness that we look to the sunset of the Nebraska Conference of the United Methodist Church. When our predecessors founded the conference 156 years ago, they created something in a place where there had been nothing. By doing so, they created a trust, and the future generations of Methodists were to be the trustees. We are now the trustees of a 156 year-old tradition. Our trust is to bring the word of God to the people.

It is with great hope that our ancestors created something in a place where there was nothing. We now look forward to the transition into a large, new conference, made from three parts. It is with great hope that we must seek to make the new whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Board of Trustees Report

Rev. Steven Flader, Chairperson

The Nebraska Conference Board of Trustees has had another busy and exciting year since our last Annual Conference session.

Maintaining the six district parsonages is one task given to the board according to the Book of Discipline. Major updates to district parsonages this year include a new refrigerator, dishwasher, and kitchen floor at the Blue River parsonage, bedroom ceiling fans, privacy fencing for outside patio, new water softener and shelving at the Prairie Rivers District parsonage. A new air conditioning unit was purchased for the Missouri River District parsonage, as well as repair to the siding, repainting the exterior walls and concrete repair to the steps. Drapes and carpets were cleaned and a new dishwasher was purchased for the Missouri River District parsonage. Front walks and steps have been redone, sprinkler system fixed, dining room, bedroom and home office painted and handrails were installed

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in bathrooms at the Great West District parsonage. The Gateway parsonage received new draperies in the living room as well as a new furnace and air conditioner. A driveway repair project was completed at the Elkhorn Valley District parsonage. A great deal of remodeling has also been done to the site director's home at Camp Comeca.

The Conference Board of Trustees has primary responsibility for the property of our three camps. These are Conference camps and we should support all three of our camps. We need to spread the word that we have three unique camps serving our Conference. We are working closely with Nebraska United Methodist Camps Inc. as we create an exciting variety of camping experiences for the people of Nebraska.

This past year we were reminded of the power of nature in the wildfires that swept into Camp Norwesca in September. Seven of ten cabins were destroyed. The main lodge, chapel, and director's cabin were saved thanks to the heroic efforts of volunteer fire fighters from Chadron. A quarter of a million dollars of damage was sustained. To date, \$153,872 has been received from insurance. With this money more than 900 trees have been planted and the Director's cabin has been repaired as the Director is moving back in. The damage could have been worse. Thank God no lives were lost. Our great thanks go to Valerie Rahrs, the site director, for rescuing the camp computer and other camp records in the middle of the night over and above saving some of her own belongings. The Bar-B-Q was still held that same month and clean up continues. The Nebraska Forest Service is providing tree removal and a camp season will be held this summer. Our thanks also go to the Norwesca Camp Board and Kathryn Witte the staff liaison of Nebraska United Methodist Camping, Inc.

For the second time in three years, the Board of Trustees showed a profit. Our Mission Share giving for operations was greater than any year since 2007, and our Interest/Dividend income was the greatest ever for the second year in a row. For all other activities in caring for properties and insurance coverage, we used the resources available to us as wisely as possible.

The cost of maintaining district parsonages, the Conference office and the camps is an ever growing concern of the Trustees. The need for mission share dollars will increase as there is a need to care for these properties. One of the unfortunate realities is that the number of church closings continues. Since the last time we met, four churches have closed. These include Union, Sterling, Greenwood, and Mascot Bethel. The following church buildings have been sold or disposed of within this past year: Westerville Cotesfield, Pilger, Dawson Bethel church building, Bayard parsonage, Episcopal residence, Union parsonage and church, the Sterling church building, and the Greenwood church building. For all these properties, we are responsible for insurance and legal fees following their closing. In some cases, the expenses exceed the proceeds from the sale of the property. An offer has been received for the 10.85 acres of land in Kearney, originally

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purchased as part of the Vision Unlimited program for new church starts. This has been a great investment for the Annual Conference. Any proceeds from the sale of this land will go to starting new churches. The Board of Trustees will keep the Annual Conference informed of future developments.

As we look forward to our new relationship with the Kansas Annual Conferences, your Board of Trustees will continue to work on transition steps. These recommendations will seek to strengthen the United Methodist presence on the Great Plains.

Because Bishop Jones will reside at least for the foreseeable future in Wichita, the Board of Trustees is renting an apartment here in Lincoln for his use when he is in Nebraska. This will be reevaluated on an annual basis by the Episcopacy Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The Conference Board of Trustees has been blessed by the support and hard work of Bishop Jones, the Cabinet, and our Assistant to the Bishop/Director of Connectional Ministries, the Rev. Dr. Carol Roettmer Brewer. A special thank you to the Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, Robin Kilgore for all her work as our staff liaison in handling a ton of detail work connected to financial and property issues for the Conference. I would also like to thank those who have served this past year on your Conference Board of Trustees. They have been a great team to work with.

Board of Pensions and Health Benefits

Reverends Nancy Lambert and Ron Harris

The Nebraska Board of Pensions and Health Benefits has continued to care for the health and retirement of our active clergy and lay employees of the Conference, as well as providing support for our retirees.

Joint Distribution Team

The Joint Distribution Team, composed of members of each of the three Annual Conferences, has made necessary decisions related to Pensions and Health Benefits for the formation of the Great Plains Conference on January 1, 2014. All recommendations are included in the Plan of Organization and will be voted on at the Uniting Conference in August.

Pension Plans:

The pension plan is determined by the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits and the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) will continue to be the Pension plan for active clergy, with some changes that take effect in 2014. All pension plans of all three conferences are well funded, which means that as a new conference, the Great Plains' pension resources are financially solid.

The Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP) includes a defined benefit and a defined contribution portion. The Defined Benefit (or DB) is paid for life, regardless of how long an individual lives after retirement. The Defined Benefit ends at the death of the clergy person and surviving spouse, with no benefit paid to the estate. The defined contribution (DC) provides an account balance that the retiree may access as needed, and ends when the balance runs out. If there is a balance remaining in the Defined Contribution account after the death of the clergy person and surviving spouse, that balance is paid to the estate.

Revisions to Clergy Retirement Security Program for 2014 will mean a reduction in the amount billed to churches for the Defined Benefit, and a matching contribution for the Defined Contribution. Both of these changes mean that clergy need to be involved from the beginning of their career in planning for retirement. Clergy, please note that if you are not already contributing to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, or UMPIP, it is to your advantage to begin to do so in order to receive the full amount of matching contribution from the church into your pension account. Greater detail of these changes is found in the Plan of Organization.

The Joint Distribution Team is recommending that all clergy appointed $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, or full time be required to participate in Clergy Retirement Security Program, continuing the practice all ready in place, and churches will be billed accordingly. The recommendation of the Joint Distribution Team is that churches with $\frac{1}{4}$ time clergy appointments will be required to contribute 12% of Plan compensation in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan account for the clergyperson as these clergy are ineligible for CRSP.

Pre-82 pension

The past service rate recommended for 2014 is \$715 per service year for all retired clergy of the three Conferences. This represents an increase of \$111 over the 2013 rate for the Nebraska retirees with Pre-82 pension. Those who are receiving pension payments at the level of the Past Service Rate will see an increase. However, some retirees already receive pension at a higher rate and so those retirees will not see an increase. Surviving spouses of retired Nebraska clergy will continue to receive a benefit of 75% of the clergyperson.

Other benefits provided by the General Board

*Financial consultations with Ernst and Young are free of charge and can help clergy plan for things such as retirement income or how to purchase a home.

*Pastoral Consultation hotline which gives clergy the opportunity to talk with a ministry professional regarding such things as counseling situations, conflict resolution, or other ministry concerns.

*Legal assistance for any reason it might be needed

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Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) – The comprehensive Protection Plan is a death and disability plan. Eligibility for coverage under Comprehensive Protection Plan and the changes to long-term disability benefits are noted in the Plan of Organization. The long-term disability benefit changes were approved at 2012 General Conference and will become effective 1/1/2014. It is being recommended that the Great Plains Conference also have a short term disability policy, effective 1/1/14, to assist churches with interim clergy expenses if a pastor is disabled for 30 to 180 days.

Health Insurance

Cigna was selected as the Health Insurance provider beginning January 1, 2014. For the remainder of 2013, we will continue on our current Health-Flex plan. Federal law changes effective January 1, 2014 will require that those appointed $\frac{3}{4}$ time must be covered in the Health Insurance plan which will affect the budgets of some churches in Nebraska.

Those eligible for health insurance will be able to choose a standard plan, or a high deductible plan. Details of these plans will be made available this fall ahead of the open enrollment period. Clergy will need to be responsible for paying attention to the communication they receive and adhering to the open enrollment guidelines.

The Uniform Premium billed to the churches has not yet been determined. It is anticipated that this will be determined in early August.

Clergy will continue to pay a portion of the health insurance cost. Clergy share of the health insurance premium for 2014 will be 3.5% of base salary before any deductions. All clergy who are on the active plan will pay this clergy share. This is a change from the current Nebraska practice of clergy paying a percentage of the premium.

In 2014, clergy couples will be billed the clergy share of 3.5% of the higher salary of the two, and 1.75% of the lower salary for the clergy contribution to the Health Insurance Premium. This is a change for Nebraska clergy couples who have been paying only one clergy share.

Wellness benefit:

Because we believe a regular medical exam is an important part of healthy living, there will be a Wellness Benefit in 2014. If an eligible participant completes an annual health exam, the participant premium of the health insurance will be waived for one month. Details will be communicated later.

Vision and dental Coverage

Vision and Dental coverage will both be offered in 2014 as separate, optional coverage. If a participant chooses either plan, the cost will be paid by the participant. Both plans require a minimum number of participants in order to be offered.

Virgin Health Miles

For 2014, Virgin Health Miles, a walking and exercise program through the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, will be offered to active clergy, retired clergy, and lay employees of the Conference. This is an optional program for participants and will be offered at no additional cost to the participant.

Retiree health care

The recommendation of the JOINT DISTRIBUTION TEAM is that the Great Plains Conference partner with Extend Health for Retiree Health Insurance. Extend Health is an exchange that will help each retiree select the private Medicare plan that best meets their medical needs and budget. A Benefit Advisor will work directly with a retiree to make the plan selection. There will be several educational opportunities across the state beginning later this summer for retirees as well as information on the web, so please pay attention to the mailings you will be receiving from the Conference Office.

Nebraska Retiree health care subsidy

Because we recognize the need to move toward uniform policies as we become the Great Plains Conference, it is the recommendation of the Nebraska Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits that clergy eligibility for the Retiree Health Care Subsidy be phased out through 2019. This would create a closed pool of retirees, and thereby significantly reduce the liability of the churches of Nebraska to fund this retirement benefit, and would mean the eventual end of this benefit.

For more than 45 years, the Annual Conference budget has included funding for a Retiree Health Care benefit. The Nebraska board recommendation for the funding of this subsidy is found in the Plan of Organization.

The Nebraska Board of Pensions is recommending that the asking for 2014 be 1.25% of Column 67 of the statistical tables in the 2013 Nebraska Conference Journal. Line 67 is the total income of all Nebraska churches for church budget spending. This asking would be \$564,709 for 2014. On Saturday, there is time in the schedule for you to vote to approve this asking for 2014.

There will be a sub-committee of the Great Plains Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, composed of five persons who reside in Nebraska as follows: 3 lay persons, one active clergy, and one retired clergy. Of the five, one will be a member (lay or clergy) of the Great Plains Board of Pensions, and one (lay or clergy) will be a member of the Great Plains CFA. This committee will review the subsidy and its funding annually and will revise it as needed based on the support of local churches and the change in the value of the assets for Retiree Health.

Further, the Board recommends that the asking continue to be computed on line 67 of Nebraska churches through 2023 with a scheduled reduction in percentage

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asking. After 2023, there would be no further asking from the Nebraska churches to fund retiree health insurance. Each year at Annual Conference, there will time set aside for the Nebraska lay delegates and clergy to vote on the funding of the subsidy for the following year.

The Board believes that there will be adequate reserves for the future to fund a health insurance subsidy for the remaining retirees and surviving spouses for the remainder of their lifespan following the end of the church asking in 2023. This belief is based on these assumptions and information:

- 4% annual earnings on the Board of Pension's Funds for retiree health
- an increase in Column 67 of the statistical tables in the Conference Journal for Nebraska churches. This is the total income for the budget of the churches.
- 100% payment of the church asking each year.
- Mortality figures provided by Towers Watson for the closed group of retirees, using information from the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.

Central Conference Pension Initiative

The Nebraska Conference has been faithful in supporting the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI), helping to meet their initial goal of \$25 million. Pastors, UMW groups, local churches, Annual Conference offerings, the Conference Board of Pensions, ARMS (Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses) have all been participants in the drive to provide pensions for retired clergy who have served outside the United States. Over \$272,000 has been contributed by Nebraska United Methodists toward this effort. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

CCPI pension support has improved life in the central conferences. Pensioners are grateful to have served the Church, and thankful for the generous gifts of CCPI donors. Many are now using their payments to buy food and medicine for themselves and their families, as well as save for other needs, such as home improvements and tuition support for their children or grandchildren. Church leaders in the central conferences continue to express great appreciation to individuals and churches across the denomination for their gifts. Donor generosity is providing worldwide pension support where it never existed before. Continued support of this initiative will allow for more retirees to receive a pension and help lead to self-sustainability.

Conference Treasurer Report

Robin Kilgore, Treasurer

I wish to express my thanks to all of you for your faithful stewardship in 2012 and I am grateful that you have experienced God's grace and blessings through your financial support of the United Methodist Church in Nebraska. The Administrative Service department of the Nebraska Annual Conference has primary responsibility to collect, track, protect, and forward your financial gifts for mission and ministry.

I am happy to report that Nebraska United Methodist Churches are very generous when it comes to giving to others. Nebraska Mission share receipts during 2012 totaled \$6,419,205 representing 86.73% of the approved funding plan. Please note that all mission shares received are used for various types of mission and ministry. In 2011, the percentage was 85.38% and in 2010 it was 86.78% showing consistency over the last 3 years.

There were 293 churches which reached the 100% Mission Share goal in 2012 and posters produced by the United Methodist Communications and the General Council on Finance & Administration will be available for you to take home this week. District Superintendents will distribute these at this week's district breakfasts.

In addition to Mission Share support, Nebraska United Methodist Churches contributed over \$660,000 toward other mission outreach opportunities through General Advances, Conference Advances, Special Sunday Offerings, and other askings during the 2012 year. In this pie chart, the breakdown of how our collective resources are used within our Annual Conference is shown. The slides will be available on-line on the Administration page of the Conference website. Because this will likely be the last Nebraska Annual Conference, I would like to take a few moments to recognize the churches who have met the 100% goal of paying Mission Shares/Appportionments each of the last 36 years. Please note that records available start in 1977 and go forward. So, from this point forward, there are 28 congregations and I'd like all persons who have ever been associated with these churches as clergy or laity to stand and remain standing until I have completed the listing. Blue River District: Daykin UMC, Denton UMC, DeWitt First UMC, Hopewell UMC, and Lincoln St. Paul UMC. Elkhorn Valley District: Alder Grove UMC, Amelia UMC, Crawford Valley UMC, Johnstown UMC, Loretto UMC, and Oakdale UMC. Gateway District: Franklin First UMC, Haven's Chapel UMC, Hollinger UMC, Minden UMC, and Wilcox UMC. Great West District: Haigler UMC, Kilgore UMC, and Lewellen UMC. Missouri River District: Brownville UMC, Nemaha UMC, and Omaha St. Andrew's UMC. Prairie River District: Beaver Crossing UMC, Ebenezer UMC, Geneva UMC, Hastings Grace UMC, Monroe UMC, and Waco UMC. This is a grand accomplishment and shows our connectional ministry at work, so let's offer a final round of applause! There were other churches which completed 34, 33, 32, and 31 respectively and I know you'll agree with me that this is also an honorable accomplishment as well.

I also wish to express my thanks to the administrative staff persons who diligently care for your financial contributions so that ministries are funded according to your wishes. Please take some time in the next few days to thank Lorie Lindenmuth, Tina Watteyne, Carole Otto, Marci Logsdon, and Barb Grenemeier. Likewise, there are many individuals with leadership gifts of those serving on many of our Conference boards, committees, and task forces and I wish to thank those individuals as well.

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Lastly, thank you for allowing me to serve you in our shared ministry work. This will be my last Treasurer report for the Nebraska Annual Conference as well as my final treasurer report with all of you. May God bless you and inspire you to give with grateful hearts.

Personnel Committee Report

Charlene C. Adden, Chairperson

The Personnel Committee met several times during the year to consider and take action on the business related to the Conference staff. The Personnel Committee worked together with Bishop Jones, the Senior Staff and the two Personnel Committees from the Kansas Conferences to ensure that the best personnel practices were used in addressing issues that arose related to the transition.

A temporary part-time Accounting Clerk has been hired to assist the finance area during the transition.

Effective July 1 Nancy Lambert will assume the position of Director of Clergy Excellence. Carol Rottmer Brewer will serve as Associate Director of Clergy Excellence for one year during transition.

Rev. Karen Jeffcoat will assume the position of Great Plains Registrar of Ordained Ministries. This position will be located in the Lincoln Conference Office. An Administrative Assistant to the Registrar will start on June 24.

Carol Windrum who is retiring effective June 30, 2013 has been hired on a contractual basis to work with the Micah Corps for 2013 and 2014.

Introduction of Staff

I will now introduce the members of the Conference staff. The Conference is blessed with a group of committed employees who are skilled in their positions and dedicated to supporting the mission and vision of the local church. They are the best!

It is my privilege to introduce these talented and dedicated individuals.

Leslie Ann Browning, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, offices in Wichita
Roxie Delisi, Data Services Coordinator

Diane Dunkerson, Director of Resource Center for Church and Receptionist
Karrie L. Dvorak, Director of the Nebraska UM Historical Center and Archivist
Trish Johnson, transitioning to a new career as full-time mother
Lorie Lindenmuth, Comptroller

Marci Logsdon, Interim, part-time Accounting Clerk

Rachel Moser, Communications Coordinator

Carole Otto, Assistant Benefits Officer

Dana Reinhardt, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Clergy Excellence

Tina Watteyne, Senior Accounting Clerk

District Staff includes the following Administrative Assistants:

Christy Baltzell, Great West District
Sue Jensen, Elkhorn Valley District
Joyce Leif, Blue River District
Catherine McGowan, Missouri River District
Peg McCollough, Gateway District
Linda Neville, Prairie River District

The directors are members of the extended Cabinet and will be introduced with Cabinet.

Bishop, I present these persons to be affirmed in these positions.

In closing I want to thank the Committee members for their efforts and time commitment in completing the task required.

Nominating and Equipping Committee Report

Jim Wallasky, Chairperson

Great Plains Short-term Nominating Committee

Clergy: Galen Wray
Lay Man: Tom Watson
Lay Woman: Marilyn Zehring
Clergy: Cesar Duran
Clergy: Carol Roettmer Brewer

Conference Peace with Justice Coordinator (volunteer)

Andrea Paret

Board of Ordained Ministry

Marvin Neubauer (MR)
Barbara Jo Burns (G)
Eldon Davis (EV)
Jane Florence (MR)
Rebecca Hjelle (MR)
Deanna Holland (BR)
Kelly Karges (PR)
Jim Keyser (BR)
Gary Main (G)
Loren Mullins (MR)
Charles Murithi (MR)
Robert Perry (G)
Chuck Rager (GW)
Linda Redfern (GW)

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Warren Schoming (BR)
Cynthia Stewart (EV)
Bette Trumble (MR)

The currently elected boards and committees will continue their work throughout 2013. They will confer and/or meet to complete their responsibilities.

Board of Pensions and Health Chair elected by its members

Through 2013, Ron Harris (PR) (replacing Nancy Lambert)

Nebraska Conference United Methodist Women

Esther Hay, Conference President

We come from the land of tall pines in northwest Nebraska
We come from the land of Chimney Rock and Scottsbluff
We come from the land of the rolling hills of sand & the Great Platte River Road
We come from the land of the Niobrara, Elkhorn, Republican, Loup & Blue Rivers
We come from the land of Standing Bear
We come from the land of John Brown's cave and the underground railroad
We come from the land of the first homesteaders
We come from the bluffs along the muddy Mo
We come from farms, ranches, acreages, small towns and cities all across this state

We are diverse and yet we are one. We represent Nebraska's past, present and future.
We are Nebraska United Methodist Women! Over 9,500 women strong we come!

We are proud of our heritage, passionate about mission and we are women of action!

We put faith hope and love in action as we give our pledge to mission, collect box tops and labels, donate gardening tools, develop women's leadership skills, participate in hands on mission and advocate for justice. We are concerned about human trafficking, domestic violence, immigration, climate change and many other issues.

We pray, we study, we send postcards to senators, we participate in rallies, hold seminars and retreats. We knit prayer shawls, make baby quilts and put together UMCOR kits and so much more. Yes, we serve funeral dinners and make casseroles - casseroles that are much more than just a pan of something good to eat, they represent love offered to a friend or stranger, a hug in time of need, food for the hungry, reaching out to make God's love real.

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We are passionate about our two National Mission Institutions Epworth Village at York and our newest United Methodist Ministries in Omaha.

The total program of United Methodist Women is mission...it's why we exist. We are called to live the heart of God...to be the hands and feet that make God's love real. We are called to help make the world a better place for everyone including the most vulnerable - women, children and youth.

We inherit the dream of six Boston women who met over 140 years ago, pledging two cents a week and prayers in order to send the first women missionaries to India. We are committed to keeping that dream alive.

Nebraska United Methodist Women and their predecessors have faithfully supported mission since 1871. During those 45 years we have contributed a total of \$18, 239, 233. 75 in mission giving. By the end of this year we will have contributed at least another \$175,000.

On October 12, 2013 in Kearney, after months of preparation and many meetings of the steering committee, we will unite with our Kansas sisters to become the Great Plains Conference United Methodist Women with a sisterhood of grace of over twenty-seven thousand members. We are looking forward to many new opportunities as together we continue to expand our concepts of mission.

We are proud! We are passionate! We get things done! We are Nebraska United Methodist Women! Our over 9500 members will continue to put faith hope and love in action!

As I conclude my report, I invite members of United Methodist Women to please stand as you are able. Clergy, that includes you too! ... Thank you. You may be seated

United Methodist Men Activities for 2012

by Mike Wilson, Secretary

for Craig Nordaker- President, and the Nebraska UMMen Executive Committee

1. **District Reports:** Missouri River District holds quarterly board meetings, has a website www.ummenmoriver.com, is currently visiting as many of the local congregations as possible and also does work projects at Camp Fontanelle. Prairie Rivers is chartered with GCUMM and held an annual meeting in March. Current district presidents are: Blue River-vacant, Elkhorn Valley-vacant, Gateway-vacant, Great West-Stacy Swinney, Missouri River-Willy Lucht, Prairie Rivers-Ed Dexter.
2. **An annual fund-raising bike ride / walk** sponsored by the Nebraska UMMen was held at Norfolk going west on the Cowboy Trail and back (or whatever distance the biker/walker desired). Near thirty riders, walkers, and helpers raised just over \$9,000 for support of mission work on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Rocky Plettner of Norfolk was the event organizer.

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3. **The Bike/Walk proceeds**, together with other donations totaling over \$18,000, were disbursed by the Nebraska UMMen throughout 2012. Recipients included the Nigeria-Nebraska Partnership, Society of St Andrew, Nebraska disaster response, Heifer International, camping, 100 Club and Barnabas-funded scholarships to seminarians and youth, Hispanic ministry, emergency relief, rural response, prison ministry, scouting, Hope of Hearing-Haiti, Strength for Service military devotionals, Epworth Village for kids, Upper Room Prayer Line, Barnabas Scholarships and other Nebraska UMMen ministries.
4. **Nebraska UMMen have an important mission called the 100 Club.** It is described best at its website of www.umcneb.org/pages/detail/106, but essentially it endows scholarships for men and women to enter full-time Christian ministry. This project has served over twenty-three years and, along with the Fleming Endowment funds, awarded \$9,500 across 13 scholarships in 2012. Much of the Endowment money is raised at the Auction/Banquet during Annual Conference, with additional donations received throughout the year. Randy Fleming of Springfield and the 100 Club Board of Directors organize this event. Fleming and Cody Vance of Crete served as co-auctioneers.
5. **Nebraska UMMen hosted conference-wide rallies** in February at Camp Norwesca near Chadron and Camp Comeca near Cozad. Both rallies were very inspirational with attendance in the 20's at each. Many thanks to the Cozad and Chadron men for doing the bulk of the organization of the rallies. A remote Upper Room prayer line was scheduled into each of the Nebraska UMMen rallies.
6. **Nebraska UMMen leadership** have met with the Kansas East and Kansas West UMMen leadership teams on several occasions over the months to plan how to transition to a newly merged Great Plains Conference structure that combines the three current conferences. The goal is to maximize each regions best-practices across the new Great Plains Conference with a renewed focus on deepening men's relationship with Christ.
7. **Important information** is kept up to date on the Nebraska UMMen website at www.umcneb.org/ummen, including stories of recent mission efforts, pictures, upcoming events and leadership contact information.
8. **Current conference officers are:** President- Craig Nordaker of Bellevue, Vice President- vacant, Secretary- Mike Wilson of Bellevue, and Treasurer- Curt Copple of Scottsbluff. Appointed positions include: Gary Spivey of Bellevue-Prayer Advocate, our Scouting/Youth Coordinator position is vacant, Craig Nordaker of Bellevue- Website Coordinator, Doug Kallesen of Columbus-Communicator and Jack Sorensen of Grand Island-historian. Randy Fleming of Springfield serves as Executive Director of the 100 Club Scholarship ministry and is on the Board of Directors for the National Association of UM Scouters.

Reports Africa University

James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

In 2012, twenty-seven annual conferences invested in Africa University at the level of 100% of their general church asking for the Africa University Fund (AUF). Other annual conferences increased their support and the generosity of local churches across the connection resulted in a new record for overall giving to the AUF of 93.35%.

Africa University relies on the church's ongoing investment in the AUF to provide for the day-to-day and operational expenses of the institution. The university is profoundly grateful to the Nebraska Conference for investing 97% of its asking to the AUF. The conference fell short of a 100% investment in the AUF by only \$618.

This year, please encourage your local congregation to give generously. The university is counting on the Nebraska Conference for a 100% investment in the AUF in 2013. Demand for an Africa University education is growing. More than 1,200 qualified applicants sought admission in August 2012. The university had space for only about 400 freshmen. Currently, women account for 52% of the total enrollment, which stands at 1,386 students. In addition, 25 African nations are represented in the student body.

Scholarships and financial aid grants are vital to access. More than 90% of the students at Africa University need assistance—scholarships, financial aid grants and work study—in order to pay their tuition and other fees. For the vast majority, a direct or endowed scholarship award made possible by your generosity is their only means of attending university.

Throughout 2012, the 20th anniversary celebrations highlighted the crucial role that Africa University is already playing in the life of our global church. The Rev. Dr. Laishi Bwalya, for example, is superintendent of the Zambia Provisional Conference and a member of the Connectional Table of The United Methodist Church for 2013-2016. Across Africa, more than 4,700 graduates are helping to eradicate hunger, poverty, disease, conflict and hopelessness.

For its third decade of ministry, Africa University is focusing on accessibility and impact. Increasing the availability of scholarships for students and developing online distance learning programs are the university's highest priorities as it seeks to equip more Africans to change lives and transform communities.

The contributions of the Nebraska Conference help to ensure that Africa University has dedicated faculty to inspire, train and nurture a generation of new leaders. Your gifts provide scholarships for needy students, vital teaching tools and a great learning environment.

Thanks to your unwavering support, Africa University is a beacon of hope to many. Help us to continue serving in ways that give hope, uplift African communities and grow the church. **Thank you for your investment in the "School of Dreams" – Africa University: Changing Africa: Learning here. Living here. Leading here. Serving God. All the time. Everywhere.**

Institutions

Boston University School of Theology

Mary Elizabeth Moore

What a year! I am dazzled by the achievements of our faculty, students and staff here at Boston University School of Theology in 2012. This has been a year of deep reflection as we underwent the Boston University Academic Program Review and the United Methodist University Senate Review. Both reviews went very well and revealed vital strength in our faculty, students, and administrative staff. This has been a year for celebration – our largest ever incoming class, excellence in teaching and learning, and a vibrant community life.

Some highlights from the previous year were:

- * Reaching into the greater community through service days, “vocations vacation,” seminary singers tour to Florida, and contextual internships.
- * Building up intentional living communities for students: Theology House, Green House, and Mason Terrace.
- * Enhancing spiritual life through weekly worship, reading retreats, winter retreat, daily morning prayer, and small groups.
- * Creating a “greener” school with: 26 green offices, Carbon Rally Challenge, expanding programs for composting and recycling, and now a 2013 renovation to create a green community center.
- * Hosting Lowell Lecture Series on “Restoring Civil Discourse,” featuring Dr. Virginia Sapiro, Bishop Melvin Talbert, Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, and Chief Justice Barbara Smith (Chickasaw Nation).
- * Traveling with seminar groups to Ephesus (Turkey) and to Israel and Palestine.
- * Advancing communication through a new website, and launching of STH Connect, and production of webinars and video resources.

This has been a year for strengthening master’s education and reviewing doctoral programs. It has also been a year for deepening relations with communities, service agencies, and global research initiatives, as we seek to intensify STH’s contributions to our fragile world.

Thank you for being a friend of Boston University! We welcome your stories, suggestions, and support for us. STH is on a mission, and we especially covet your prayers for our people and our work. We are praying for you!

Candler School of Theology

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics

Candler School of Theology prepares *real* people to make a *real* difference in the *real* world. Our commitment to authentic discipleship and relevant ministry enables us to

develop uniquely well-rounded leaders who are challenged academically, encouraged spiritually, and immersed in Christian service from the first day they arrive on campus.

As one of the 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is grounded in the Christian faith and shaped by the Wesleyan tradition. As one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, Candler provides a rich context for learning and formation supported by the extensive resources of a top-tier research university. As a school located in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Candler offers a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of our 21st century world. There is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

Candler's student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. Our enrollment stands at 478, with 365 seeking the Master of Divinity, 50 the Master of Theological Studies, 30 the Master of Theology, 18 the Doctor of Theology, and 15 enrolled as Special, Non-Degree students. The student population is 32 percent U.S. ethnic minority, 10 percent international, and 50 percent women. Half of MDiv students are United Methodist, with forty-three denominations represented in all programs. The median age of our entering class of MDiv students is 27, with 58 percent under thirty.

Candler remains steadfastly committed to making theological education financially feasible, dedicating nearly \$5 million to financial aid. Eighty percent of eligible students received Candler-based financial aid, with the average award covering 66 percent of tuition.

Construction preparations for the second phase of the Candler's new building got underway at the end of 2012 thanks to an extraordinary gift of \$15 million from the O. Wayne Rollins Foundation. The new building, which will house Pitts Theology Library, community space, additional classrooms and offices, group study areas, and the Wesley Teaching Chapel, will be completed in late spring of 2014 in time for Candler's Centennial Celebration. Candler's phase one building was named in memory of Rita Anne Rollins, the first grandchild of the foundation's namesake, in honor of its generous financial gift.

Candler had an excellent presence at the 2012 General Conference in Tampa. In addition to my attendance, Associate Dean Anne Burkholder took a class of 20 students so they could learn firsthand about United Methodist governance. Assistant Dean Mathew Pinson and Dr. Alice Rogers attended as delegates, and the Candler Singers, directed by Barbara Day Miller, performed at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry reception and the plenary session.

We continue to emphasize preparing our students for leadership in an increasingly global context, and now offer 19 academic exchanges with theology schools across five continents and 15 countries, including many related to The United Methodist Church. In addition to our ongoing summer internship program with the Methodist Church in the Bahamas, this year's travel seminars included the Middle East and World Methodist Evangelism Institute evangelism seminars to Zimbabwe, Peru, and Israel.

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Our public events supported our commitment to strengthen the church by offering opportunities for clergy and lay people to hear fresh, new voices. Last fall we hosted Christian activist and bestselling author Shane Claiborne for two major addresses, "Jesus for President" and "Resurrecting Church," with nearly 1,000 in attendance. Our Spring Conference, "The Singing Church," gathered experts to lead an exploration of the best practices and emerging trends of congregational song.

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

Crowell Home/Crowell Health Services

Bill Williard, Executive Director

In 1905, Christopher Columbus and Polly Crowell donated their land and a beautiful mansion in Blair to the Nebraska Methodist Church. Their wishes were that it be used as a retirement home for retired Methodist ministers and their wives. What a wonderful legacy that has been for the Crowell family and all of those involved with Crowell Home for the past 108 years. Our ties to the Methodist Church have been strong for all of that time.

Over time, that retirement home has evolved into a Nursing Home, Assisted Living facility and a group of eight Independent Apartments. We also serve Home Delivered Meals to members of the community on a daily basis. At any one time, Crowell Home cares for well over 120 people.

Many physical changes have, of course, taken place over the years and we are currently in the process of continuing the update of the facility that we reported on in the last Conference Journal.

All hallways have fresh paint and attractive new carpet. After a major redecorating of the reception area with new paint, carpet, window coverings and a beautiful front desk/nurses' station, and the carpet, paint and new chairs in the main dining room. As residents enter the dining room, they will now be able to enjoy the newly installed showcase filled with charming memorabilia. It makes a beautiful addition to that section of the Home. Next, we are moving on to spruce-up the residents' rooms. Over the course of time, each resident room will be painted with one of a selection of three colors, including an accent wall. We all appreciate something new and updated, and all of these changes will add to our residents' enjoyment of their home – Crowell Home.

Medicare clients are an important part of our family at Crowell Home. We will be extensively remodeling a wing of the Home to be a dedicated Medicare Unit. The area will be carpeted, repainted and have new bathrooms. A rehab room will be placed in the Medicare Unit for the residents' convenience. In this pleasant setting, Physical, Occupational and Speech therapies will be offered by our rehab specialists, RehabVisions. Also included in this unit will be a spa-like bathing room with a new whirlpool tub. This unit will truly be a state-of-the-art space devoted to our residents and members of the community who will receive rehabilitation therapy for a broken hip, stroke, shoulder or knee operations or other injuries.

Of course, the main mission of Crowell Home is the loving care of our residents. We have a dedicated staff of compassionate caregivers, plus a creative activity staff and our kitchen serves delicious and nutritious meals to our residents. Our Chaplain kindly ministers to the spiritual well being of the residents. Everyone working at Crowell Home is committed to attending to the wants and needs of the most important people at Crowell Home – the Residents. Crowell has a history of providing care to all who request it, regardless of the ability to pay.

All of the above mentioned remodeling and refurbishing has been made possible because of a very generous bequest to the Crowell Home Foundation. We have been greatly blessed with God's bounty by the gifts we receive throughout the year. All of these donations are used to directly benefit the residents with the excellent care we provide, as well as enhancing their lives with some of the more pleasing amenities of life.

When we are all finished with the planned renovation, the building will have a much more pleasing appearance for those living here as well as visiting family and friends. With God's continued blessings, we will always look for ways to enhance the experience of living at Crowell Home.

Drew University Theological School

Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan , Dean

Drew Theological School, deeply rooted in its United Methodist heritage, is a place that empowers its students to conceive and implement dynamic ministries. Drew offers the MDiv, MA, MAM, STM, DMin, and PhD degrees, as well as certifications in Camp and Retreat Ministry, and Spiritual Formation. Academically rigorous and spiritually engaging, Drew develops religious leadership prepared for these ever-changing times. Drew welcomes people of all faiths, but we are particularly interested in building up the United Methodist ethos that is part of our historic Wesleyan heritage. Drew offers 100% tuition scholarships to all United Methodists who meet all admissions requirements and have a 3.2 undergraduate GPA or higher.

In June 2012, I was pleased to welcome to Drew's campus representatives from 8 of the 13 United Methodist seminaries, staff members from the General Board of

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Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, one Bishop, and representatives from three annual conferences. We hosted the first annual conference on Theological Education and Clergy Health co-sponsored by the Center for Clergy and Congregational Health and Wholeness at Drew and the Center for Health of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. This three-day conference addressed issues of the current poor state of clergy health in relationship to Theological Education in order to begin to understand the impact of seminaries on students' health.

It was also my pleasure to host the September 2012 Theological Conference at Drew entitled, *The Future of Christian Spirituality and Interreligious Interaction* in honor of Dr. Pyun, Sun Hwan. Over the course of the three days, an array of speakers from the U.S., Korea, and other countries engaged attendees and one another on topics such as "Interreligious Dialogue Versus Interreligious Theology," "The Future of Comparative Theology," and "Interreligious Theology, Liberation, and the Church."

It was also a great pleasure to welcome alumni/ae back to campus for the Tipple Vosburgh lectures in the fall. This year's topic was "Faith, Race, and Politics" which provided opportunities to hear the voices and visions of activists, scholars, and church leaders responding to this unique and timely dilemma.

Creative, cutting-edge, inclusive, multi-cultural, social justice ministry is part of the legacy of Drew, and I am proud to be associated with it! Below are just a few other ministries that make me proud to be associated with Drew.

Building up the United Methodist Connection

I have enjoyed meeting Bishops and many Boards of Ordained Ministry to convey our desire at Drew to be a resource to the entire denomination. I am particularly pleased that Drew is hosting a January Term class taught by UM Bishops. This past January, Bishop Peggy Johnson of the Eastern PA and Peninsula Delaware Conference, taught a class entitled, *Topics in Pastoral Care: Disabilities and the Church*. Her class led worship recently in chapel and shared just how important this course was in forming a compassionate, inclusive and prophetic vision for the church. In January of 2014, Bishop Jane Middleton will teach a class on Ministry and Health.

United Methodist Liaison at Drew

The Rev. Jeff Markay continues to work with our UM students by introducing them to the leaders and resources within our denomination. He helps them navigate the process toward commissioning and ordination as well as with issues of discernment. We have monthly UM Lunches to meet with bishops, and leaders of the general agencies, conferences and connection.

United Methodist Deacon Liaison at Drew

We are also grateful to have the Rev. Susan Worrell as the Deacon Liaison on campus who shares resources and wisdom with those hearing a call to the Ministry of the Deacon in the UMC.

Bishop in Residence: Bishop Ernest Lyght

It was with great joy and excitement that I announced the appointment of Retired Bishop Ernest S. Lyght as the Bishop-in-Residence at the Theological School beginning March 1, 2013. I anticipate this appointment to continue until 2015. In this position, Bishop Lyght will teach and mentor students and be a presence on campus.

National Shalom Ministry of the UMC

Communities of Shalom, now in its 6th year at Drew, completed its curricular redevelopment of ShalomZone Training, which is now available through a cadre of certified national and regional trainers under the leadership of national director, the Rev. Dr. Michael Christensen.

Center for Clergy and Congregational Health and Wholeness

In October 2012 Dean Ginny Samuel made a presentation to members of the AUMTS (Deans and Presidents of the 13 United Methodist Seminaries) about the state of clergy health. She was accompanied by a staff person from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, Anne Borish, and together they invited AUMTS members to participate in the longitudinal study. While there was a unanimous support for this study, thus far Drew and Duke Divinity School are the two participating seminaries. We expect that more seminaries will join the study in the coming years. This collaborative effort will support efforts to make needed changes in the structures and programs of an MDiv degree to encourage and support students' attention to their own health and well being.

In February we launched the Seminary to Ministry longitudinal study in partnership with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. This study will track MDiv students during their time in seminary and for the first five years in ministry. Results of the survey will be helpful to faculty in its revision of the MDiv curriculum as it informs them about the realities of student health and well being while they are at Drew.

We at Drew look forward to working with the good and faithful people of the UMC as we forge deeper friendships in the shared ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Philip A. Amerson, President

In 2013, Garrett-Evangelical celebrates 160 years of creating skilled, bold, and articulate leaders for the church, the academy, and the world. We remain committed to our core purpose: to know God in Christ and, through preparing spiritual leaders, help others know God in Christ.

Garrett-Evangelical is the result of the interweaving of three institutions:

- Garrett Biblical Institute, the first Methodist seminary in the Midwest, was established in 1853 by largely the same church people who founded Northwestern University.

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- Chicago Training School, established in 1885, was an important force for women in ministry and for developing service agencies throughout Chicago. Chicago Training School merged with Garrett Biblical Institute in 1934.
- Evangelical Theological Seminary, located in Naperville and founded as a seminary of the Evangelical Church (later the Evangelical United Brethren) in 1873, joined with Garrett Theological Seminary in 1974 to form Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Last fall the seminary welcomed 107 new students, raising total fall enrollment to 390—the third consecutive year of increase. The average age of the entering Master of Divinity student is 31. Fifty-one percent are women. The ethnic/racial profile is 52% white; 20% black; 5% Asian; 3% Hispanic/Latino. Thirteen percent of the students are international.

More than 30 religious traditions, four continents, 12 countries and 32 states are represented in the student body. Two hundred twenty-four students are United Methodist. Thirty-four additional students come from other Pan-Methodist denominations.

Currently 1 student from the Nebraska Conference is enrolled in the various degree programs at the seminary.

Garrett-Evangelical's commitment to making seminary education affordable is reflected in the awarding of more than \$2 million in institutional financial aid to students each year. The seminary has created the Linked in Ministry Scholarship program. This 100 percent scholarship is awarded to the first student admitted to Garrett-Evangelical from his/her United Methodist annual conference who maintains a 3.3 GPA or above and who is a registered candidate for UMC ministry.

In January, Garrett-Evangelical completed a successful campaign to fund the Rueben P. Job Endowed Chair in Spiritual Formation. One of the first chairs in spiritual formation among Protestant seminaries, the award is named in honor of Garrett-Evangelical's distinguished alumnus Rueben P. Job, retired bishop of The United Methodist Church. The position is a legacy to Bishop Job's lifelong work and will ensure that Garrett-Evangelical continues to prepare well-formed spiritual leaders for many generations.

Garrett-Evangelical has long been at the forefront of Protestant seminaries in this area. The seminary proposed the curriculum structure for United Methodist certification in spiritual formation, formally adopted by the denomination in 2000. Since then, Garrett-Evangelical has adopted a specialized master of arts degree in spiritual formation and evangelism as well as a Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Direction.

Funds now are being received to permanently endow the Rueben Job Institute in Spiritual Formation. Information about the Institute can be found at <http://ruebenjobinstitute.org>.

Dr. Dwight Judy, Professor Emeritus of Spiritual Formation, retired at the end of 2012. He continues to serve the seminary and church through his work as Director of the Institute.

Several initiatives to support clergy and lay education are under way. During the spring semester, fifteen academic classes were offered in an online format, some with a continuing education option. During the next several months, new programs—online, on campus, and in congregational settings will begin.

Plus is a first-of-its-kind cooperative executive education program of Garrett-Evangelical and Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. The two-year leadership certification program for seminary graduates and other professionals in ministry includes eight days of seminars led by experts in non-profit leadership.

Intersection is an innovative continuing education opportunity incorporating readings, online presentations by seminary faculty, and reflection on contemporary issues of life and ministry, providing an intersection of academic studies with the concern for practical ministry. Topics range from theology, biblical interpretation, and church history to ethics and the church in society. Continuing education credit is available. Additional information is available at <http://www.garrett.edu/intersection>.

The expanded Doctor of Ministry program offers four tracks of study: Congregational Leadership, African American Congregational Leadership, Spiritual Direction, and Mission in the Contemporary United States. The Garrett-Evangelical DMin program is also a portal to the Association of Chicago Theological School's (ACTS) DMin program in preaching.

Garrett-Evangelical serves over 550 students in degree-related courses, certificate programs and the summer Course of Study School. We encourage you to visit our website, www.garrett.edu, and to visit us on campus. We are grateful to serve The United Methodist Church and the church at large.

Lydia Patterson Institute

Socorro de Anda, President

In the late 1800's a Methodist woman named Lydia Patterson answered God's call to ministry with the children of immigrant families crossing the US-Mexico border and settling in South El Paso, Texas. In October, 1913, the Methodist Church opened the doors of a school in memory of this woman, Lydia Patterson Institute. In 2013, one hundred years later, we celebrate the thousands of lives that have been touched and changed through the love of Christ and the vision of one Methodist lay woman. We rejoice in the celebration of 100 years of educating thousands of students, forming leaders for the church, breaking the cycle of poverty in countless families, and bringing Jesus Christ to generations of young men and women. Numerous activities are

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planned in celebration of Lydia Patterson's 100th Anniversary throughout the year, but the most thankful celebration is that of proudly claiming the definition of a true ministry of the United Methodist Church.

In the last few years, Lydia Patterson has seen the pain in the faces of students caught in the rage of drug wars, murder, and instability in their home town. Lydia Patterson has served as their safe haven in a world of violence. By the grace of God, this past year has begun to see a more peaceful neighboring city of Juarez, Mexico. In a U.S. report, Juarez has dropped from being the most dangerous city in the world to number 19 in a list of 50. El Paso, on the other hand, has once more been rated as the 3rd safest city in the country.

As a result, our enrollment is back up to 430 students with a goal of 500 for the next school year. Parents are regaining their confidence, and many are returning to work. The need to continue to help these families more than ever, is evident. The number of scholarship students increased three-fold. We are grateful to the number of churches and friends that have stepped up and supported us with scholarship funds and apportionments for continued operations.

Last May, we graduated 81 students, all of which are in college today. The graduating class received \$1.3 million in scholarships from United Methodist colleges and universities. Ninety-five percent of our graduating students are going to college.

In 1913, when Mr. Patterson gave \$75,000 to the Methodist church to build Lydia Patterson, he asked that boys be trained to lead the Hispanic churches springing along the Rio Grande. The school opened its Ministerial Program. Many of the pastors leading churches in the Rio Grande Conference received their training here, including an Episcopal bishop. Today, Lydia Patterson trains young men and women through its Student Lay Ministry Program. Students serve in internships in local churches while at Lydia Patterson and while attending college. Many have chosen to pursue their calling by moving on to seminary.

Lydia Patterson is looking forward to its second 100 years. In preparation, it is engaged in a capital campaign to renovate its campus and equip it with the latest state of the art technology. Classrooms are being renovated. Student services will be enriched with a new media and research center and computer and science labs. New dining and fine arts facilities will be built, including a new chapel where students will be able to worship together.

The board of trustees has pledged its total commitment to the campaign. One-hundred percent of the faculty and staff have pledged to the campaign and students, alumni and parents are equally committed. The El Paso community has joined the South Central Jurisdiction and will be remembered as the creators of the legacy of the second one hundred years of "La Lydia".

Our appreciation goes out to every member of this conference, the bishop and all those who join us to prepare for the next 100 years and to continue to make a difference as we change lives and form disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center

Abby Foster, Chief Executive Officer

“Renewal” is the new mantra on the Mountain! Just as the United Methodist Church is taking its rightful place in the worldwide awakening of the Body of Christ so too is the Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center. The year 2012 marked the inaugural year for our transition from a facility that simply emphasizes Christian hospitality to a Premier United Methodist Conference and Resort Center that provides Relevant Training and Networking for United Methodist clergy and laity, 21st century Functionality and Amenities in event and lodging facilities, a Captivating Environment with walking trails and botanical gardens, and Purposeful Ownership driving honor and esteem for our institution.

As we embrace God's Purpose for Mount Sequoyah in the 21st century, we continue to seek, welcome and gather visitors and guests from every generation, race, gender and religion. On the Mountain our guests enjoy an environment where they are both functionally and spiritually connected with God and nature. They come to Mount Sequoyah for lodging, business meetings, educational events, family reunions, weddings, recreation and spiritual growth. The 13,000 guests we served in our United Methodist Environment in 2012 included College Students, United Methodists, Corporate Leaders, Veterans, University Parents, Bikers, Educators and Families. Every guest, without exception, is surrounded by the icons and spiritual disciplines of our faith and with the hospitality we extend, they are introduced to United Methodist's practices and principles, most notably John Wesley's three simple rules... Do No Harm. Do Good. Stay in Love With God.

Mount Sequoyah Center ended the year with a substantial net income for the first time since 2006 and we want to thank the Nebraska Conference for the part you are playing in our success. In addition to the apportionments you offered, United Methodist utilization of the facilities provided \$170,000 of our \$1.5M revenue in 2012 with \$3,000 coming directly from the Louisiana Conference from two the RUMC Omaha and Rockbrook UMC VIM groups. Finally, the state of Nebraska provided another \$1,000 from 10 individuals and a wedding party. And that's not all. The Nebraska Conference is also providing us with tremendous leadership and council from Mr. Marvin Morgan, Mr. Jason Oswald and Bishop Scott Jones who are active, contributing members of the Mount Sequoyah Board of Trustees.

For many years the Nebraska Conference has sent tremendous volunteers to Mount Sequoyah bringing time, energy and a plethora of skills to groom and maintain the Mountain. We are eternally thankful for all you have done and want to impress upon you that if you haven't been to the Mountain lately (or ever), now's the time to engage. With a recently approved \$300,000 matching grant from The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, our fundraising efforts have begun and we are moving forward to repurpose and renew the Mountain. The new vision for Mount Sequoyah is real and achievable and you will want to be a part of reclaiming the Nebraska ownership in this phenomenal institution.

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Thank you Nebraska Conference. As we renew our Mountain and transform it into the Premier United Methodist Conference and Resort Center that is our future, your continued engagement will validate the strength of our established presence today and ensure the promise of a powerful future for the United Methodist Church in God's plan for the transformation of the world.

Nebraska Methodist College

It is exciting to share with you that Nebraska Methodist College is celebrating its 122nd year of operation and that we are enjoying our eleventh consecutive year of record enrollment of just under 1,000 students. The Nebraska Methodist College Mission is very congruent with that of the United Methodist Church in that we exist to positively influence the health and well being of our community and we do so through education. The values that guide our work with students and each other are: caring, respect, holism, excellence, and learning. I am especially proud of our 'Center for Health Partnerships' as this too aligns very closely to the mission of the United Methodist Church! The focus of the Center is to decrease health disparities that exist throughout the community and to improve access to higher education - especially for first generation, low income students. I am pleased to report that the College continues to make outstanding strides with this population of students through our current five year, \$1.25 million Upward Bound Grant. We are in our seventh year in this grant series and it continues to build on the foundation that has been established with our partners - St. Luke United Methodist Church and Burke High School. The fabulous outcomes in serving this high risk population over the past six years have been instrumental in the continuation of this grant and allows us to continue this critical work with these young people. The 'Teen Center' sponsored by St. Luke has been a phenomenal resource and I thank you Chad Anglemyer and the entire congregation at St. Luke for your contribution to this vital and vibrant partnership!

As President of Nebraska Methodist College, I was honored earlier this year to accept the President's Award for Community Service. 2013 marks the sixth consecutive year for such prestigious recognition. Service learning and community service are at the core of our mission and are an integral component of the educational opportunities offered at Nebraska Methodist College. Our students, faculty and staff are engaged with a wide range of agencies and organizations in the provision of community service and service learning throughout our community, the state, and thanks to our partnership opportunities through the United Methodist Church - the country and the world!

Another partnership that I am extremely proud of is with the Lydia Patterson Institute and the Omaha District United Methodist Churches. In May of 2010, the Bishop and Omaha Superintendent asked if Nebraska Methodist College would be willing to sponsor a graduate from Lydia Patterson Institute who wanted to earn her bachelor's degree in Nursing. My board and I thought this would be a great opportunity and agreed to waive all tuition and fees (a \$70,000 value) for this student and the

churches in the Omaha District agreed to sponsor the students housing and living expenses (another at least \$40,000). I am happy to report that this student, Claudia Servantes has successfully completed her third year at Nebraska Methodist College in the Nursing program. I am also honored to report that a similar relationship has been established for Claudia's sister, Abigail Cervantes who has joined Nebraska Methodist College and has completed her first year in the pursuit of her bachelor's degree in Nursing. Claudia and Abigail are making great progress toward their goal of achieving a "life changing" educational experience for them personally as well as their entire family!

Nebraska Methodist Health System, Inc.

John Feaser, President & CEO

Created in 1982, Nebraska Methodist Health System (MHS) is the oldest health care system in the region. Today, MHS consists of the following affiliates: Methodist Hospital, Omaha, Neb.; Methodist Women's Hospital, Omaha, Neb.; Methodist Jennie Edmundson Hospital, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Methodist Physicians Clinic, Inc., eastern Nebraska and southwestern Iowa; Nebraska Methodist College - The Josie Harper Campus, Omaha, Neb.; Methodist Hospital Foundation, Omaha, Neb.; Jennie Edmundson Hospital Foundation, Council Bluffs, Iowa; and Shared Service Systems, Omaha, Neb.

Central to all of the affiliates of Methodist Health System is a mission of service to others. System successes in 2012 were tied to numerous growth initiatives, all focused on expanding both the quality and quantity of health care offerings available to the communities served by MHS.

Methodist Health System President and CEO John Fraser was honored with the Tim Rouse Award for Women in Leadership during the 2012 ICAN Women's Leadership Conference. Fraser was recognized for his strong belief in the empowerment of women in the workplace.

The Health System was also recognized with numerous awards for its online communication in three prestigious national competitions: eHealthcare Leadership Awards, Greystone's Best-in-Class Annual Awards and One Page Love Awards. Methodist received the Award of Merit from the National Safety Council-Nebraska Chapter for outstanding achievement in safety.

As part of its preparations for the implementation of health care reform, Methodist joined with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska and The Nebraska Medical Center and their affiliated physicians to develop a new health care network and health insurance product called SelectBlue. This collaboration is designed to increase the quality of medical care Nebraskans receive and move toward reducing medical and health insurance costs.

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Methodist Hospital was ranked as high performing in the specialties of gynecology, orthopedics, and ear, nose and throat in U.S. News & World Report's 2011-2012 Best Hospitals rankings. Methodist Estabrook Cancer Center Breast Care Center earned full re-accreditation by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, a program administered by the American College of Surgeons.

Methodist was also one of only 164 hospitals in the United States to receive the American College of Cardiology Foundation's NCDR ACTION Registry – GWTG Platinum Performance Achievement Award. The hospital closed out 2012 by earning "Senior Friendly" status for its NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) program. It is the second highest of four possible program levels.

Work on the surgery department's renovation and expansion got into full swing in 2012. The project, which is expected to be completed in 2015, will increase the size of each operating room by more than 50 percent to accommodate technology and other equipment. Three additional operating rooms will bring the total to 15, including two rooms for cardiac surgeries and one for endovascular surgeries.

Methodist Women's Hospital continued to exceed operational expectations. In just over two years of operation, Women's Hospital has maintained its position of delivering more babies than any other hospital in the region, including 3,725 in 2012. With approximately 600 admissions in 2012, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Methodist Women's Hospital continues to be among the Metro's leading providers of care to the area's smallest patients. The ever-growing OB-GYN services, combined with tremendous increases in surgeries and community awareness and preference have pushed Methodist Women's Hospital to exceed projections.

Methodist Physicians Clinic (MPC) welcomed 20 new physicians to the organization in 2012 and introduced the region's first physical therapy clinic dedicated to women. The Methodist Physicians Clinic Women's Physical Therapy Clinic is located at the Methodist Physicians Clinic Women's Center, 717 N. 190th Plaza.

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) recognized the physicians of Methodist Physicians Clinic-Valley for providing top-quality diabetes care. The Valley Clinic was a beta site for MPC's Patient-Centered Medical Home program for patients with diabetes. Prior to implementing the Medical Home model in October 2011, 44 percent of MPC-Valley's patients with diabetes had acceptable numbers related to the eight basic diabetes requirements. As of May 1, 2012, 74 percent of the monitored diabetic patients had numbers in the acceptable range. The program was so successful that it is being rolled out at all MPC locations. Overall, Methodist Physicians Clinic cares for 16,219 patients with diabetes.

Methodist Jennie Edmundson Hospital's (MJE) Cancer Center and Breast Center were both re-accredited in 2012. Support was provided to local cancer patients through the **Jennie Edmundson Hospital Foundation's** 2012 Spirit of Courage fundraiser, which raised \$250,000 for the Cancer Center's Charitable Patient Care Fund.

Enrollment at **Nebraska Methodist College - The Josie Harper Campus** (NMC) continued to set records with a Fall 2012 census of more than 900 students. The health professions college unveiled its expanded and renovated Nursing Arts Center in April. The Nursing Arts Center is a state-of-the-art nursing simulation facility designed to replicate the hospital environment students will encounter upon graduation. NMC also introduced a new master's degree level program that will prepare graduates for leadership and management roles in the health care industry.

For the third year in a row, NMC received funding to award five scholarships from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing through the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program. And, for the sixth consecutive year, NMC was named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction.

Shared Service Systems, which processed more than 9.9 million pounds of laundry, was selected as a 2012 "Top Business" recipient by *DiversityBusiness.com*. The distribution center received 1,116,014 cases and filled 575,693 order lines in 2012. Shared Service's drivers made 22,484 customer deliveries, traveling more than 490,000 miles.

Methodist Hospital Foundation generated contributions totaling more than \$13 million in 2012. Some of that success can be attributed to the gifts made by 72 percent of Methodist Health System employees during their annual giving campaign. The Foundation assisted nearly 30,000 individuals by distributing over \$3.4 million to cancer care, charitable care, community service and education programs.

Both Foundations join all affiliates of Methodist Health System in thanking the Nebraska Conference of the United Methodist Church for providing ongoing guidance and support in helping to meet the health care needs of our communities.

Nebraska United Methodist Foundation

Anita B. Crisp, Executive Director

The purpose of the Foundation is to develop and grow financial support for the current and future needs of our Nebraska United Methodist churches and ministries. While one measurement of success might be to look at the amount of gifts received by the Foundation, the more appropriate, and most gratifying, way is to look at the amount of funding that has been distributed by the Foundation in support of ministry and mission.

The Foundation ended year 2012 with over \$27.5 million in assets, \$17 million of which belongs to, or is specifically designated for the benefit of, individual churches in the Conference. The balance is for the support of Conference-level ministries, scholarships, and other needs.

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The 128 churches who chose to have their church funds administered within the Foundation's Portfolios enjoyed a very good year, earning 6.00% in the Fixed Income Fund, 8.14% in the Conservative Fund, 10.19% in the Balanced Fund, 12.10% in the Growth Fund and 14.57% in the Equities Fund. These rates of return were net of management fees.

During the year, the assets managed by the Foundation grew by \$2,277,424. More importantly, \$1,256,059 was distributed in support of our Conference. \$31,127 was awarded in the form of seminary scholarships, \$151,080 was in the form of direct grants to churches, \$130,355 in life income payments were paid to donors, \$872,041 was distributed directly to churches and other ministries that utilize the Foundation's Account Administration Services and \$71,456 was distributed from donor support for the Foundation's mission.

The Foundation is a ministry that allows us to celebrate the past, to work in the present, and to envision the future.....all at the same time.

The gifts of Nebraska United Methodists, and the management of these gifts at the Foundation, touch every age group in our Conference, every size church, every district, every new church start, and seminary students, wherever they study. As a result, every dollar that comes to the Foundation ultimately makes a positive and lasting difference in people's lives, whether they are the "givers" or the ones who benefit from those gifts.

With each new year, the Foundation's scope broadens, and the funds available for distributions, grants, and scholarships increase because donors have understood the importance of a lasting gift, and churches have understood the importance of developing endowment and investing those funds for growth as well as for income.

John Wesley said, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." The Foundation's work and the generosity of the Conference members will be our legacy and will be reflected in the work that can be carried on by future generations.

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to do the work today that will enable countless ministries to succeed in the future in making Disciples for Jesus Christ.

Nebraska Wesleyan University

Fred Ohles, President

On the eve of the creation of a new Annual Conference encompassing Kansas and Nebraska, I want you to know that in the past two weeks I've brought to western and eastern Kansas greetings from United Methodist related higher education in Nebraska. And now I bring those same greetings to you, my fellow Nebraskans.

All of us know that we live in an era of great challenges that affect our churches, our hospitals and other healthcare organizations, and our universities. It seems to me right that I speak of these three varieties of serving institutions in one breath because we have been linked together for so long in a variety of ways: churches founded universities; some universities own hospitals; and we all know of people who treat hospitals as if they were sacred sites, well, in a sense they are.

Across this trinity of institutions, today we're responding creatively and becoming 21st century servant organizations. I think of the Annual Conference about to be born and I think of new programs we're launching at Nebraska Wesleyan in Nursing, Business, and Social Work. All of us, nurturing minds, bodies, and spirits, have tradition to draw upon as we face our challenges. At the same time all of us are looking beyond tradition alone because we must in order to go on doing the Lord's work well. With gusto we say, "Thank God! Praise the Lord!" for divine guidance that helps us along right paths to sustainable futures.

We in the church-rooted, faith-graced, truth-loving, forward-looking universities and colleges across the Great Plains stand ready, as you know we have at Nebraska Wesleyan for 125 years, to sing for joy with you, to pray with you, to partner with you in ways that are true to our university mission, to address today's challenges together with you, so that all of us will be strong in our service and strong in our faith and strong in our gratitude for a very long time.

Connection to the Annual Conference: The fact that the people of the Nebraska Annual Conference gave generously to NWU for scholarships and support of the University Minister position in 2012 is indication of the abiding close relationship between the people of the Church and the University.

For its part Nebraska Wesleyan made available these amounts to United Methodist students: During the 2012-13 academic year, 277 United Methodists students received \$2,446,562 in scholarships and grants provided by Nebraska Wesleyan University. Included in this total are 109 students who received \$78,750 in Nebraska United Methodist Scholarships and three ministerial dependents who received \$31,835 in ministerial discounts.

Even more important is what happens in the lives of people touched by these dollars. It happens every day in the classroom, in the arts, on the playing field, and in the wide variety of extracurricular activities where dedicated faculty and staff encourage students to live out their potential. It happens in the University Minister's worship services, counseling, and programming, in her relating to the entire campus to encourage and develop faith. It takes place through Wesleyan Live classes. Nebraska Wesleyan provides the space and all the utilities for the Conference Historical Archives in the lower level of the Cochrane-Woods Library. Two groups of clergy have been guests of President Ohles for lunch and conversation on campus. On several occasions Dr. Ohles has visited local UM Churches across the state.

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A new initiative is beginning to engage the campus community in a focus on vocation. The first programs of this emphasis have been funded with a grant from the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), generously underwritten by Lilly Endowment. In the current phase students, faculty, and staff are being encouraged to "tell their story" to student interviewers. The point is for individuals to celebrate and understand their life story as the foundation for a vocation and career that are more than a "job," a career that matches their personal history and deep-down interests. Finding one's true vocation as a way of enjoying not only a meaningful career but a deeply meaningful life is the goal. This broadened sense of vocation rests on NWU's strong history of training undergraduates for teaching and preaching.

University Ministries Programming: Through opportunities in the University Ministries office, students, faculty, and staff are continuously offered opportunities to live out our mission of engaging the campus community through energizing worship, faith discernment, and meaningful worship. This year, a new worship experience was started in connection with First United Methodist Church. Held on Sunday nights at the church, the worship averages 50 attendees made up of students, church members, and participants from the neighborhood. A free dinner after the service has fostered an atmosphere of fellowship. Regular Bible studies met throughout the school year and included student, faculty, and staff participation. The office supported another great group of interns, including two interns who worked closely with the Risk-Taking Mission and Justice team, focusing on the areas of HIV/AIDS Awareness and Food Security.

Thanks to support from the Annual Conference, in November we were able to take a group of five students to the "Imagine What's Next" conference put on by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. At this conference, our students connected with students across the country from other United Methodist colleges and campus ministries and brought back an excitement for continued work in the United Methodist Church. During Spring Break, a group of 11 traveled to Washington, D.C. to learn about the intersection of Faith and Politics.

Our office partnered with the Annual Conference once again to provide a lively Confirmation Day event February 15-16, 2013. Increased attendance this year saw 200 participants who gathered to learn more about what it meant to "Be Bold" in their faith as United Methodists and were led by enthusiastic NWU students. Youth Annual Conference and various pastors' retreats were also hosted in connection with the conference.

Speakers and Events: This year the Mattingly Distinguished Visiting Scholar program sponsored several events to engage both the campus and greater Lincoln community. In the fall, Gail Simonds, a clergy person who works with LGBT college students in Michigan, presented a lecture on campus titled "Queering the Good Book." She met with a variety of classes and student groups, and led a conversation with area clergy. In the Spring semester Dr. Robert Jewett, the theologian-in-residence at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, presented a lecture titled "Spielberg's Lincoln and the Issue of American Exceptionalism." During the Spring semester, the Swan Endowed Lecture

Series brought Rev. Ruth Karlsson, Licensed Local Pastor in the Nebraska Conference and Executive Director of Released and Restored. Rev. Karlsson presented a lecture titled "After Prison, Then What?" which explored the importance of rehabilitation services for inmates in order to reduce the rate of recidivism in Nebraska. She also met with four classes and students interested in prison ministry work.

Perkins School of Theology

William B. Lawrence
Dean and Professor of American Church History

Perkins received positive evaluations from all three of our accrediting bodies during the past year: The Association of Theological Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and University Senate of The United Methodist Church.

New faculty and staff members are strengthening our mission of preparing women and men for faithful leadership in Christian ministry. D. Max Whitfield was named Bishop in Residence for 2012-2016 while Dr. Brad R. Braxton joined our faculty as Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics and Dr. James Kang Hoon Lee joined our faculty as assistant professor of the History of Early Christianity. Dr. Arlene Sánchez Walsh, associate professor in the Graduate School of Theology at Azusa Pacific University, was 2012-2013 visiting professor. Dr. Mark W. Stamm, Christian Worship, and Dr. Rebekah Miles, Ethics and Practical Theology, were promoted to full professor. Rev. Connie Nelson was selected as director of Public Affairs and Alumni Relations, and Dr. Rebecca Frank Bruff became director of our Center for Religious Leadership. Dr. Ruben Habito, professor of World Religions and Spirituality, was named Interim Coordinator of the Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Direction programs, an administrative transition shifting these important responsibilities to a highly qualified full-time faculty member. Searches for new faculty members in the fields of History of Christianity and Christian Theology have resulted in candidates with exceptional promise, and we anticipate filling those positions for the start of the 2013-2014 academic year.

Our 2012 entering class has a median age of 29 – the first time in nearly a decade that the median age has been under 30. Among all Perkins students, more than two-thirds are United Methodist and more than one-third are persons of color. The Doctor of Ministry program continues to grow with new cohorts of students from southern Asia taking classes in Singapore and in Dallas. Our Ph.D. program, one of only two highly rated doctoral programs among the 15 at SMU, includes two Latino Ph.D. students supported through a grant from the Luce Foundation to Perkins' Center for the Study of Latino/a Christianity and Religions.

To be sure, Perkins is not immune from the challenges faced by schools of theology and seminaries across the United States. However, we are blessed with gifted faculty and staff members, inspiring students, beautiful facilities, and vibrant ministries. We thank our many colleagues, friends, and alumni/ae across the connection for continuing generous support, including referrals of prospective students.

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Regional West Medical Center

T. S. Sorensen, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

Last year was one of great success and many honors for Regional West Health Services.

Regional West Medical Center was named one of the nation's Top Performers on Key Quality Measures by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America. Regional West was recognized for its accountability measures for both heart attack and pneumonia. Out of 3,376 hospitals that submitted accountability measure data to The Joint Commission for 2011, Regional West Medical Center was one of only 620 U.S. hospitals to meet or exceed the target rates of performance.

In July, the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network (RNHN) completed its new \$19M fiber optic medical network, which extends throughout the Nebraska panhandle. Governor Dave Heineman was on hand for the celebration, welcoming members of the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network board of directors and representatives of participating panhandle hospitals and clinics. The 750-mile fiber optic network spans 12 western Nebraska counties, connecting nine primary care hospitals and dozens of affiliated health care clinics in western Nebraska.

Regional West Physicians Clinic's Kent Lacey, MD, was named Nebraska's 2012 Family Physician of the Year by the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians. The Award was presented to Dr. Lacey by Governor Dave Heineman in a ceremony at the State Capitol in Lincoln last fall.

Regional West Health Services joined the new statewide health information exchange known as Nebraska Health Information Initiative, or "NeHII". Regional West Physicians Clinic's independent laboratory and Regional West Medical Center Lab took the first steps in implementing the electronic health information exchange system. Through NeHII, physicians working with the Regional West Physicians Clinic have secure access to share and exchange clinical patient information and medical history electronically, if necessary, with other hospitals and healthcare providers.

We recruited 13 new physicians in 2012. We're especially pleased to welcome emergency medicine physician Joe Margheim, MD and anesthesiologist Brent Ellison, MD, two former Scottsbluff-Gering residents and both graduates of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, who chose to return to their hometown to practice medicine. Family medicine physician Monica Sarawagi, MD, who completed her family practice residency in Scottsbluff as part of the University of Nebraska Medical Center Family Practice Residency Rural Training Track, also joined our medical staff.

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In March 2012, Regional West Medical Center joined with Regional West Foundation and the Festival of Hope to bring the Prevent Cancer Super Colon™ exhibit to Scottsbluff in recognition of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Hundreds of area residents toured the 20-foot long, 8-foot high colon replica that was on display at Monument Mall, while Regional West physicians and nurses explained how colon cancer occurs, grows, and is diagnosed and treated.

Linda Rock, executive director of Prairie Haven Hospice, Scottsbluff, was awarded the Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Association's highest honor, the 2012 State Impact Award, for her lifelong work at the local, state, and national level on behalf of hospice. Rock has served as the executive director of Prairie Haven Hospice since it was founded in 1998.

Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was totally renovated and expanded from six to eight beds. The nurses' station was expanded and a procedure/formula prep room was added to the unit.

Finally, we were saddened by the death of Dr. Richard Rojas, one of the first full-time, board-certified emergency medicine physicians to join the Regional West Emergency Department. He was a member of our active staff for 30 years, and he is greatly missed.

As we continue our mission to provide the finest health care services for western Nebraska, we express our appreciation for the continued support of the United Methodist Church, which has played a vital role in the growth of our hospital.

Saint Paul School of Theology

Dr. Myron F. McCoy, President

Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary of the United Methodist Church that educates leaders to make disciples for Jesus Christ, renew the Church, and transform the world. We are one institution with two campuses, in Kansas City and in Oklahoma City.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, 196 students from 12 annual conferences and 9 countries were enrolled in degree programs at Saint Paul School of Theology on both campuses. The Course of Study School at Saint Paul served 236 students at the Kansas City, Missouri, Springfield, Missouri, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma locations.

In November 2012, the Saint Paul School of Theology Board of Trustees voted to enter into an Agreement for Building Occupancy and Commitment to Collaborate between Saint Paul School of Theology/Kansas City and the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. The agreement concluded a period of study and represents the seminary's vision to create a nationally recognized, vibrant, innovative focus of theological education aimed at preparing leaders for congregations and faith communities in the changing culture and emerging field of mission. It seeks to provide

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learning in the practice of ministry for both clergy and laity that is characterized by excellence. The Kansas City campus will move to Leawood, KS in the fall of 2013. The Oklahoma campus will remain at Oklahoma City University.

Saint Paul at OCU began its 5th year in September. Two new faculty members have been added in Oklahoma. Bishop Steven Charleston was appointed as Visiting Professor of Native American Ministries, a position funded by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. Dr. Stan Basler, DMin '00, joined the faculty in January 2013 as Visiting Professor of Restorative Justice and Prison Ministry.

Twenty-four master's degree students and three doctoral students graduated from the Kansas City campus in May 2012. Six master of divinity students graduated at the 2nd Commencement Convocation in Oklahoma in August 2012. The first graduates of the Seminary Lite program in Oklahoma also received certificates.

The 3rd Saint Paul Korean Doctor of Ministry cohort began this winter. This program is a partnership with Hyupsung University in Seoul, Korea.

Saint Paul School of Theology will host *A Seminary Celebration: Looking Back, Looking Forward* on April 25-26, 2013 on its Kansas City Truman Road Campus. The event will celebrate the past, present, and future of the seminary. Activities will include a retirement luncheon honoring Dr. Sondra Matthahei MRE '69, the installation of Dr. Harold Washington as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean, the Cleaver Lecture on Justice featuring Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, a prayer breakfast, and closing worship service in Kresge Chapel.

The class of 1963 will be the 50 year honor class at the 52nd Commencement Convocation on May 17 for the Kansas City campus. Dr. Sondra Matthahei '69, retiring Professor of Christian Religious Education, will be the speaker. UMC Arkansas Bishop Gary Mueller will speak at the 3rd Commencement for the Oklahoma City campus.

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

Southern Methodist University

R. Gerald Turner, President

This is an exciting time at SMU, as the University celebrates the centennial of its founding in 1911 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and its opening in 1915. Highlights of recent and current developments follow:

- SMU's total fall 2012 enrollment was 10,893, including 6,249 undergraduates and 4,644 graduate students. Ethnic minority students made up 24.7 percent of total enrollment and 27 percent of undergraduate enrollment. A record number of 1,282 international students came from 89 foreign countries.
- SMU consistently ranks in the top one-fourth of the "best national universities" in *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. In the 2013 report, SMU ranks 58 among 280 national universities, an increase of four points from the previous year.

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- SMU's external awards for research and sponsored projects have increased significantly. During 2011-12, SMU received \$22.4 million for research and sponsored projects throughout the U.S. and worldwide on six continents.
- SMU Unbridled: The Second Century Campaign, launched in 2008, is the largest fund-raising effort in the University's history, with a goal of \$750 million. At campaign midpoint in 2012, gifts totaling \$664.8 million are providing funds for 231 scholarships; 23 endowed academic positions; 17 academic program endowments, including support for two schools and one academic department; and 16 new or renovated facilities.
- SMU's Residential Commons Complex, currently under construction, includes five new residence halls and a dining facility. Completion in 2014 will enable SMU to implement a residency requirement for sophomores along with first-year students. The halls will include classrooms and faculty accommodations.
- A new general education curriculum for undergraduates, implemented in fall 2012, is designed to prepare students for the demands of an increasingly interconnected global society, with emphasis on ethics and engaged learning programs. Undergraduate students participate in scholarly research, civic engagement, professional internships and creative activity related to education goals.
- The George W. Bush Presidential Center, opening at SMU in April 2013, consists of the Library, Museum and independent Institute. The Center will be a valuable source of research materials and is already sponsoring programs for scholars, students and visitors. Current Bush Institute programming includes a leadership development program for Egyptian women.
- Thomas B. Fomby, professor of economics in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, and Marcia K. Armstrong, associate dean for master's programs in Cox School of Business, have been elected to the Economic Advisory Committee of the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration.

SMU treasures its Methodist heritage, and we ask for your continued prayers and support.

United Theological Seminary

Wendy J. Deichmann, President

Is God calling you or someone you know to the ministry of Jesus Christ? If so, we invite you to explore how United can assist you in fulfilling God's purposes for your life and how you can help others in this journey. Come and check us out in person or online at www.united.edu!

United is one of the fastest growing, accredited seminaries in North America. Why are Christian disciples and leaders signing up for our traditional and online programs?

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They are doing so because United is committed to teaching the Bible and the historic Christian faith, cultivating spiritual formation for personal and social holiness, and renewing the Church for the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. What could be more important or exciting?

In addition to expanding our service in the Midwestern US, United will continue to enhance its use of technology to deliver theological education in underserved regions in North America and beyond. United's hybrid/online UMC FLEX Master of Divinity degree was designed specifically to meet the requirements of the UMC for ordination and it is accessible anywhere with good Internet service. Our hybrid/online UM Course of Study is expanding each semester, along with UM Certification offerings.

What's new at United? Three new professors joined our excellent team of faculty in 2012 and a search is underway for yet another. United and Aldersgate Renewal Ministries have developed a new partnership, and we have piloted a new certification program focused upon ministries with persons with disabilities. Each year, United's doctoral program adds new mentors and focus groups for advanced ministry study.

Please let us know if you have questions about how we can best assist you or, if you would like to help make it possible for an American or international student to study at United.

Enrollment at United continues to grow, and we invite you to call or visit soon! For more information, please contact admissions@united.edu.

Thank you for your prayers, partnership, service and support in the ministry of Jesus Christ!

Wesley Theological Seminary

Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson, President

As a new residence hall rises on the home campus, Wesley is building an institution that fosters vital churches for the next generation. We have developed a vision for what the church of the future should be, and have become a new kind of seminary. More than a good graduate school, we have become like a research university dedicated to serving the church.

The Lewis Center for Church Leadership continues to expand its programs and the readership of the premier online resource for churches: Leading Ideas. Through the Center, we are administering three new programs funded by grants from the Lilly Endowment. One enables us to continue our Lewis Fellows program, an intensive post-seminary leadership training initiative for young clergy. Another will reach pastors, five to ten years beyond seminary. They will engage with thought leaders in Washington, D.C. on the subjects of courage, doing good well, generosity and well-being to help expand their field of vision and lead their churches to engage more effectively in their communities. The third program takes a hard look at the economic challenges facing future ministers. We will conduct research into our

graduates' debt, analyze information about current compensation packages, and review the consequences of debt on the well-being of graduates. We will review our own economic and funding strategies and improve institutional practices while creating educational programs that better prepare future pastoral leaders as managers of personal and congregational finance.

Our extension campus in downtown Washington, D.C. at Mount Vernon Square is developing as a center for missional churches as we help churches turn inside out in mission evangelism, community transformation and public theology. Our work there is spiritually and physically centered on an intentional living community of students and of faculty and church partners ministering in the shadow of Capitol Hill. We are engaging in hands-on learning/serving experiences in urban communities through our Urban Fellows and Missional Fellows programs.

The biggest new development is the Heal the Sick Initiative (HTS) developed in partnership with three hospital systems and the White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives. In HTS, Wesley will be the catalyst and educational partner in the development of a pilot program of parish-based health care in the Baltimore-Washington-Northern Virginia Region modeled after several successful programs nationwide. The HTS will prepare ministry leaders to support their congregations in the development of health ministries which include care and support for their members' overall well-being, as well as care for their neighbors, particularly the poor. Wesley became the only seminary to be a charter member of the Maryland-DC Campus Compact which unites institutions of higher education that participate in service learning programs with the goal of making these programs more fruitful for both the students and the communities in which they work.

Wesley is actively recruiting the kind of students who want to be Disciples of Jesus Christ and transform the world at all levels of ordained and lay ministry. We have continued to increase financial aid while holding down the cost of tuition. We launched a new 36-hour Master of Arts degree in the fall which uses a flexible curriculum to enable students to acquire a basic theological education. And the Wesley Course of Study has been re-designed to accommodate both weekend and summer students. Wesley has entered into two dynamic partnerships this year. The first is with the Center for Discipleship at Southwestern College in Winfield, KS, and makes unique lay study courses developed by Wesley in its Wesley Ministry Network available to the public on a large scale. And, Wesley is now partnered with Pfeiffer University and Union Presbyterian Seminary to make it possible for United Methodist students to complete their Master of Divinity degrees at Union Presbyterian Seminary's Charlotte, NC campus.

Meanwhile, Wesley has become a truly global seminary so that we may serve the church where it is growing the most and that we might benefit from the spiritual vision and vitality of global Christianity. We completed the final two class terms of a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program for 14 West African leaders engaged in educating persons for pastoral ministry in Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Cameroon. And we began

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our sixth Global Asian D.Min. track. In addition, there are currently 22 international students from around the globe studying in Master's degree programs. And, we have established new relationships in China and India.

The Wesley faculty remains very productive in its scholarship for the church including new books this year by Kendall Soulen, [The Divine Name and the Holy Trinity](#), Eileen Guenther, [Rivals or a Team? Clergy-Musician Relationships in the Twenty-First Century](#), Lucy Hogan, [The Six Deadly Sins of Preaching](#), Scott Kisker, [Longing for Spring: A New Vision for Wesleyan Community](#), and Lovett Weems, [Focus: The Real Challenges That Face the United Methodist Church](#).

The coming year will bring more exciting changes to Wesley as we continue our efforts to develop strong and dynamic leaders for the church and the world.