

Document 400 – Historical Reports

Special Editor's Note: The historical reports have, historically, tried to keep the name document numbers for the same reports year to year. However, there is no "master list" with document numbers. Where at all possible the same document numbers have been preserved, however numbers after 400.100 in this document are newly assigned for this year only. In the future, documents will simply be given the next number in sequential order and document numbers will not be preserved year to year except for reports from various conference bodies and officers.

400.B – Office of Connectional Ministries

The Office of Connectional Ministries continues to work in cooperation with staff, elected clergy and lay leadership, the Bishop and Cabinet, and the Program Council to coordinate, focus, and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church Northern Illinois Conference.

Anne Marie Gerhardt continues to increase our ability to reach our constituency through new media including a weekly e-News, social networking and a timely high quality monthly edition of the Reporter for those persons with limited access to new media. In 2013 we produced 11 issues of the Reporter and 3 issues of "The Sower" featuring Harvest 2020 and Harvest 2.0 news and inspire conference members related to these major initiatives. The Director of Communications continues to seek ways to increase communications and the two way flow of communications with conference members and to provide relevant resources, consultation, and training to our members, congregations and related boards and agencies. A major highlight this year was the development of a new conference website through Big Heart Creative Designs. We are reaching new people through a variety of media sources at reduced overall cost.

Michael Mann, Associate Director of Mission and Advocacy continues to lead in the expansion of key ministries. "Plumbline" an NIC conference-wide youth initiative, that helps to develop principled Christian leaders, in conjunction with the United Methodist Seminar Program in New York. This ministry addresses public issues from a faith perspective. JFON (Justice For Our Neighbors) Ministry has helped us continue to live out our gospel mandate to welcome the stranger. Spanish as a Second Language is a new initiative that hopes to reach congregations and individuals throughout our conference connection. Numerous immigrants with various status issues have been welcomed with the radical hospitality of the people of The United Methodist Church and legislative advocacy efforts continue to address.

The Media Resource Center continues to provide high quality vetted materials to our membership and has increased its ability to resource congregations through training, visioning, consultation, and increased technology; including the development of DVD resources of conference and district events. One hundred and seventy-six churches subscribe to the center which boasts over 4,000 resources in various formats and also provides video projection units and screens to local congregations and our staff.

The NIC continues to chart a new course for future of our camping, outdoor, and retreat ministries under the leadership of Interim Director Jeff Casey working with the Board and Board

Chair, Jim Miller.

In addition to working to strengthen existing ministries such as resourcing local congregations through consultations, leadership development, visioning and strategic planning, new ministries created include a strong emphasis in Spiritual Formation. Numerous persons participated in the Two Year Academy for Spiritual Formation in 2012-13. The NIC, through the office of Connectional Ministries held numerous training events including the annual Laity Convocation, Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, the School of Evangelism, Safe Sanctuary training and the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration with Rev. Dr. Harold Dean Trulear (it is our goal to launch a new initiative and partnership with Healing Communities- a ministry of congregations to the incarcerated and their families). The following pages including historical reports and minutes of presentations and changes will highlight other changes that have taken place during 2013-2014.

A special highlight has been the development of the Urban Strategy under Bob Biekman who serves as Coordinator of Urban Ministries for the conference. The urban strategy is an initiative launched under the leadership of Bishop Sally Dyck and engages our congregations in the areas of Literacy, Restorative Justice, Community Safety, and Food Security.

The staff continues to be attentively listening and responsive to God's voice as we contemplate our vocational life within and for the NIC and to hear the voices of its members, churches and communities that God might be glorified in our common ministry. The NIC Program Staff include Natarsha Gardner (Administrative Assistant for the Office of Connectional Ministries), Anne Marie Gerhardt (Director of Communications), Susan Gieseler (Director of Media Resources), Jeff Casey (Outdoor and Retreat Ministries Interim Director), Michael Mann (Associate Director of Mission and Advocacy), and Chris Pierson (Director of Connectional Ministries).

400.C – Treasurer & Director of Administrative Services

Something has changed in the financial health of our local churches. The financial structure of local churches appears to be more strained than in the past years. I've observed reductions in many pastoral salaries upon reappointment, reductions in lay staff, constrictions of program resources, reduced apportionment participation, and missed benefit payments. While there is speculation on the causes, there isn't consensus on the causes or if there's a trend. Hypotheses: gifts of stocks are reduced because of lost value, we are losing a generation of the most generous givers, younger generations never carry cash and churches are ill equipped to accept debit cards, years of flat or shrinking wages in the working and middle classes dampen families' ability to give, building maintenance can no longer be delayed, and other possible causes.

Possibly, the response from 2008 will not be recovery but restructuring. The answer isn't readily evident. Much is made of a post-institutional world emerging. I hope that we prepare ourselves for new models of sharing and practicing the faith. My faith is in the creativity of the Northern Illinois Conference to continue to be the church in ways we never imagined previously. Something has changed in local church cost structures. May God lead us through that change.

An April 2013 special session of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference approved the Red Door Fund upon recommendation of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. The innovative effort would refinance the mortgage debt of local churches at lower interest rates and with the potential for principal reduction in the future. By the end of December we had arranged for just over \$21 million in refinancing for 26 local churches. Participating local churches will save \$371,000 in mortgage payments annually.

Apportionment performance ended disappointedly in 2013. Through November the year 2013 receipts matched 2012 receipts nearly exactly. But then we had the weakest close to the year we have ever experienced, weaker even than the period of the financial crisis of 2008. 21% of total apportionment receipts were collected in December and January, when the norm is 25%. We ended the year less in apportionment receipts than 2012 and far from the budget amount. Consequently, the conference was not able to pay 100% of general church apportionments. Also, the \$6.7 million in apportionment receipts anticipated by the 2014 budget seem overly optimistic and the CCFA is discussing how to modify the spending plan to meet our ministry obligations to local churches, conference programs, and the general church.

A newly designed conference database has greatly improved our ability to coordinate and maintain useful information for our work together. Districts and the Conference now use a single database and we no longer need separate databases for laity and clergy. The new database includes the ability to host online registrations. District Administrators and Conference staff have given considerable work in structuring and populating the database. It promises to be a time-saving tool for the work.

Apportionment Formula

Every local church shall provide the basis for their apportionment calculation with their Statistical Report, due annually by February 20th. The statistical report data is summarized into three categories of local church expenditures defined below. For each category, a data set of five years is compiled. The highest and lowest of the five years are discarded and the apportionment calculation rates are applied to the average of the three median years. When the most recent year is the lowest of the five (reflecting a trend of recent budget constriction), the apportionment calculation rates are applied to the average of the three lowest years.

Apportionment Basis: Statistical Report Categories

1. **Senior & Associate Pastor Costs** (Basis for Support for Ordained Leadership Apportionment) The sum of these lines if multiplied by 16% to determine the local church apportionment in support of the "Support for Ordained Leadership" work of the annual conference.

~~Line 46: Clergy pension payments (CPP, CRSP)~~

Line 48: Senior Pastor base compensation (minus equitable compensation funds received from the Annual Conference)

Line 49: Associate Pastor base compensation

Line 50: Senior & Associate Pastor Housing Allowance (OR 25% of base compensation for parsonage appointments) + Senior & Associate Pastor's parsonage utilities and maintenance costs

Line 51: Accountable reimbursements

Line 52: Other cash allowances

2. **Church Programs & Operational Costs** (Basis for Mission & Evangelism Apportionment) The sum of these lines is multiplied by 14% to establish the local church apportionment in support of the “Mission and Evangelism” work of the annual conference.
- Line 53: Deacon’s compensation & benefits
 - Line 55: Lay staff compensation & benefits (except custodial)
 - Line 56: Church Program costs
 - Line 57: Church building utilities, custodial costs, property maintenance costs, property insurance costs, other operational costs (Portion of utility, custodial and property costs incurred by space-sharing is excluded; utility, custodial and property costs per average attendee above the 80th percentile are excluded)
3. **Total Church Expenditures**¹ (Basis for Strengthening the Connection Apportionment) the sum of all of the statistical lines itemized above and the lines specified below is multiplied by 1% to generate the apportionment of that particular local church to the “Strengthening the Connection” work of the annual conference.
- Line 35-42: Total funds sent through the Conference Office for second-mile, designated giving (Rainbow Covenant projects, missionary support, UMCOR disaster relief, Conference & District projects and Special Sunday Offerings)
 - Line 43b: Community Outreach funds (costs of the local church in ministry and of service to the community)
 - Line 43a: Funds given directly to UMC related causes
 - Line 44: Funds given directly to non-UMC related causes
 - Line 46: Clergy pension payments (CPP, CRSP)²
 - Line 47: Clergy health benefits payments
 - Line 48-57: Senior & Associate Pastor Costs + Church Programs & Operational Costs
4. **Additional Considerations**
- The apportionment calculations based on the above categories are adjusted with two additional considerations called “According to Means” functions. These two functions provide fine tuning to the apportionment amount based upon a local church's access to resources from within the congregation.
- a. The local church spending on cash compensation plus reimbursements and allowances for the Senior and Associate Pastor is compared to the spending of other local churches of like size. A linear regression of the data predicts a pastoral compensation level for each church given their average attendance. The amount above or below that prediction is called the “Pastoral Residual”. For each local church their individual Pastoral Residual number is cubed and multiplied by .000000001. The resultant adds (or subtracts) from the apportionment requested from the local church as summed above. The basis for the Pastor Residual additional consideration is the most recent Senior & Associate Pastor

¹ Two statistical report lines are excluded entirely from the Apportionment calculation:

Line 58: Total paid on mortgage or loan principal and interest

Line 59: Total paid for capital expenditures, major renovations, and building improvements

² Line 46 was previously categorized under 1. Senior & Associate Pastor Costs

compensation data available and the most recent year's average attendance at all weekly worship services.

- b. The basis for the Budget Size additional consideration is the most recent year's Senior & Associate Pastor Costs plus Church Programs & Operational Costs (Statistical Report Lines 48-57). For each local church the total is squared and multiplied by .00000005. this amount is added to the apportioned asking of the specific local church.

Exceptions

1. Each apportionment amount must be divisible by 12.
2. The apportionment for any year may not be more than 9% above the previous year and not less than 9% below the previous year.
3. The minimum apportionment shall be \$1,200.
4. Building costs per average attender that exceed the 80th percentile of the array of conference churches shall not be included in the calculations.
5. Up to 1% of the total apportioned can be reserved for the CCFA to respond to appeals from local churches. Appeals may only be extended by CCFA for data errors or hardship.

Audit

Again, the Northern Illinois Conference received an unqualified approval of our annual audit. The complete audit is part of this report. No management letter was written because no significant deficiencies were identified.

I am thankful for the opportunity of serving as Conference Treasurer and apologize broadly to all who are still waiting on a return phone call.

Grace and Peace,

Lonnie Chafin
Conference Treasurer

400.08 Conference Board of Pensions & Health Benefits

General Statement

Your Conference Board of Pensions is responsible for the general supervision of all pension and benefit programs adopted by the Annual Conference for clergy members of the conference and for all employees of local churches, boards, and agencies of the Annual Conference. It recommends and reports to the Annual Conference such changes in the pension programs as may be proposed from time to time by the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church (“General Board”) or adopted or recommended by the General Conference. It also recommends and reports to the Annual Conferences changes in the health care and other benefit programs administered by the Conference Board of Pensions.

Pensions

Clergy members with service years prior to January 1, 1982 (Pre-82) are provided with pensions administered by the General Board. This “defined benefit” pension is based on the service years to the Annual Conference (NIC) up to December 31, 1981. As of our most recent actuarial report of 2012, our Pre-82 pension liability is underfunded. In light of this, the Conference Board of Pensions has a funding plan as mandated by 2012 General Conference. This plan will fully fund the Pre-82 by 2021.

In 1980, the General Conference voted to have a “defined contribution” plan for active clergy effective January 1, 1982. This program is called the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) and each salary paying unit pays the annual contribution on behalf of each clergy person. This contribution is based on the percent of compensation set by the Annual Conference and is deposited to each clergy person’s individual account at the General Board.

In 2004, General Conference voted to end the MPP as of December 31, 2006. No more additions to individual accounts were permitted after this date. The MPP was replaced with a new pension program—The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). This program began January 1, 2007. It consists of two core benefit programs: a defined benefit core, and a defined contribution core.

CRSP payments are paid by each salary-paying unit on behalf of each clergy person. These payments include the defined contribution amount, the actuarial payment for the defined benefit amount, and a payment to the new reserve for estimated future unfunded retiree benefit liabilities. The future annual cost will fluctuate with market returns. The General Board required a payment of \$2,242,509 for the Conference's obligations under the Defined Benefit component on December 31, 2013 for service years completed in 2013. Additionally, the 2014 required payment due on December 31, 2014 is \$1,656,944. These payments reflect 2012 market performance. To date, the plans are earning more than actuarial value expectations. Currently, CRSP-DB and MPP pension plans have a funding ratio of 103.31%.

Another change involves PIP, the personal investment plan which allowed the clergy or lay employees to make additional investments for their retirement. The PIP program has been discontinued and replaced by UMPIP. This change will be transparent to the participant, as UMPIP will work in substantially the same way as the PIP. Contributions will be made to the participant's individual account. Individuals may still make additional voluntary before-tax contributions, subject to the maximum as determined by the IRS.

In 2012, General Conference voted to amend CRSP and MPP. The CRSP Defined Benefit component has been decreased from 1.25% of DAC per year of service to 1.00% of DAC per year of service effective January 1, 2014. Under the CRSP DC plan, the Annual Conference will contribute 2% of clergy plan compensation and, in addition, will match the amount of clergy contributions to the UMCIPI up to 1% of compensation. This change is effective January 1, 2014. Additionally, General Conference made quarter-time appointments ineligible for CRSP. The 2013 Northern Illinois Annual Conference voted to provide CRSP to at least half-time clergy.

MPP becomes a defined benefit (annuity) at retirement. Beginning January 1, 2014, exactly 65% of the account balance must be converted to an annuity. Clergy must roll over 35% to UMPIP, an IRA or take it as a cash distribution which is subject to taxes.

Medical Insurance

Historical Overview of Our Health Insurance Program

In January 2014, Healthflex (General Board's Plan) uses Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois as the Health Insurance provider PPO for actives, Catamaran for the pharmacy program, and United Behavioral Health for the Employee Assistance Program. In addition, the General Board has provided wrap around services to improve clergy health, ie Virgin Pulse, Center for Health, Blueprint for Wellness, etc. As a result of these programs, our claims have not exceeded our funding for the past two years. Furthermore, health care premiums have been flat for the past two years.

As a means to learn how the Affordable Care Act impacts our support of clergy health, we initiate a pilot project to enable the local church to experience with the health care exchange coverage options and the potential savings to the participating local church. Participation in the

pilot program requires the agreement of the conference board of pensions, the Cabinet, and the local church SPRC. Participation begins and can be renewed each appointment year. Starting July 1, 2014 the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits can release a clergy person from mandatory participation in Healthflex at its discretion when:

- a. The clergy person is eligible for health coverage through TRICARE, or Champus.
- b. The clergy is enrolled in coverage from a former employer or as a dependent on a spouse's employer-provided coverage.
- c. They serve a church which the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits has excluded from Healthflex participation

Comment [LC1]: Medicare eligible are excused from Healthflex as Medicare Secondary Payer opportunity. The savings are already spread over all charges so can't be added to Pilot program.

Comment [LC2]: A church can not "benefit from PTC", only a clergy person can. I'm not convinced on the necessity of this, but the idea is to underscore that it's a employer decision whether to provide eligible coverage, and not be dependent on the employee situation.

In all cases the plan benefit summary of the substitute plan must be reviewed by conference staff or a designate for suitability of coverage and network before committing to the alternative plan. The conference may reject mandatory release if a plan is insufficient in comparison to Healthflex, if the enrollment seems unreliable or susceptible to imminent change, if the premium costs to the family are too high, if participation in the program would eliminate qualifying for a subsidy, or if, in the NIC Board of Pension and Health's sole opinion the change should not be approved.

The Board of Pensions expresses its gratitude to Lonnie Chafin (Conference Treasurer), Tom Scott (special advisor to the CBOP) and to the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, especially Andy Hendren (Associate General Counsel) for their assistance in resourcing the Board on the ACA.

Health Care Coverage for Retired and Disabled Clergy

The Conference Board of Pensions engages OneExchange to aid retirees aged 65 and above in selection of suitable Medicare supplement coverage and to act as patient advocate when necessary.

Healthcare Special Grants

The Board makes available to the Cabinet funds for special grants for those congregations who are not able to provide 100% of the cost of medical insurance for their clergy. We will continue to work in cooperation with the Cabinet to assist local churches who are in financial need. We are also working with the Cabinet to reduce the number of local churches in jeopardy by defaulting or paying their benefits payments late.

Investments

The NIC holds a restricted fund ("NIC-Post-Retirement Benefits Program", p.199, 2008 *NIC Conference Journal*, Resolution 700.04) on deposit at the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits to be used for pension, health, disability, and other welfare benefit programs for NIC retired and disabled clergy families. The asset balance in this fund is detailed in a note to the audited financial statements.

Programs for Retirees

Since 1986, this Board has sponsored programs for retired clergy and spouses within the geographic areas of the Annual Conference. The Board is sponsoring a pre-retirement seminar, For Your Benefit, in October 2014 at Sycamore UMC. The Board would like to thank Lonnie Chafin Lynette Rice, Rev. Harry Nicol, and the Rev. Joseph A. Johnson, Lonnie Chafin who organized the event. Furthermore, the Board thanks Sycamore UMC who hosted the event. We recommend all clergy attend this seminar to better understand clergy benefit choices.

Additionally, the board sponsored a 2014 retiring class workshop to assist the current retirees navigate retirement.

James F. Stiles, III, Service Award

In 1989 the Board of Pensions established an annual service award in honor of its late chairperson, James F. Stiles, III. This year's recipient is Rev. Harry Nicol.

Financial Report

Our financial report is made as part of the report of the Conference Treasurer and will also be part of the audit to be published in the Conference Journal.

United Methodist Clergy Fund

I would like to thank the United Methodist Clergy Fund for their continuing support for the retirement benefit programs of NIC. The Clergy Fund donated \$1,050,000 in 2013. Without their assistance, it would be extremely difficult to maintain the high level of benefits we offer.

Defined Benefit Liability and Potential Retiree Health Liability

The Board of Pensions has completed a funding plan for this liability and submitted to the General Board for approval.

Closing Statement

We continue our work to provide our plan participants with the most beneficial and cost effective benefits available in the marketplace, and to avoid large fluctuations in costs to churches and other plan sponsors. The Board remains diligent in investigating alternative methods for the provision of benefits. We thank and praise God for mercy and grace and for the faithfulness of the people called United Methodist who continue to make care of their clergy and other servants of the church a priority. With the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will together continue in our ability to serve both active and retired clergy and laity of this Annual Conference.

Rev. Joseph A. Johnson, Chair

400.09 -- Trustees, Conference Board of

During 2013, the Conference Board of Trustees continued to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities as the Board of Directors of the Northern Illinois Conference. Officers elected in June 2013 were: Robert Burkhart, President; Brian Smith, Vice President; Tari Crema, Harlene Harden, Mike Peters as additional members of Executive Committee. Paul Stevens, Harlene Harden, Brian Smith, and Connie Augsburg were appointed to the Insurance Committee, with Paul Stevens as chairperson. The Trustees met 9 times during the year, held 4 conference calls, and met once with the Cabinet and CCFA to prepare for the special Conference session dealing with the Red Door program.

Areas of Trustee responsibility include financial investments, property and liability insurance, maintenance and repair of properties, zoning issues, the lease or purchase of property, and the sale or lease of property no longer used for Conference purposes. We care for 15 Conference-owned properties and properties under our responsibility as designated by action of the Annual Conference or Cabinet. (This does not include campgrounds, which are under responsibility of the Board of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries.) Bequests of property to the Conference are monitored and best use identified. Individual trustees take responsibility for annual inspection

of each property, bringing repair/upgrade requests to the full Board, and seeing that work is properly done.

Among decisions/actions taken during 2013:

- Expanded number of churches covered in our group property insurance plan from 209 in January to 283 at end of the year. All Conference-owned properties are in this group plan.
- Presented a Standing Rule amendment to Annual Conference to strengthen participation in the Conference Wide Property and Liability Insurance Program.
- Cooperated with other Conference groups in designing a mortgage refinancing program to benefit local churches with mortgages; signed documents authorizing specific Conference-owned properties to be held as collateral.
- Approved Outdoor and Retreat Ministries' request to borrow \$75,000 interest free on a 10 year repayment schedule from the Seager Fund; purpose is to address risk management and deferred maintenance matters at Wesley Woods and Reynoldswood.
- Sold the former Episcopal parsonage at 989 Kenilworth in Naperville for \$499,000.
- Sold the former Chicago Northwestern parsonage at 2455 W. Ohio in Chicago for \$315,000.
- Transferred the deed from the former First United Methodist Church of Aurora to Nueva Vida United Methodist Church.
- Received the Bethany United Methodist Church of Rockford church building, placing it on the market for sale.
- Upgraded and redecoreated the Aurora District parsonage, including insulation and energy saving measures recommended by a previously done energy audit.
- Assisted University Christian Ministry in financing the remodeling of all its bathrooms.
- Met with representatives of the Chicago District Campground Association to discuss its relationship with the Annual Conference.
- Assisted in the training of members of District Committees on Church Location and Building.
- Began planning for a future workshop for Cabinet, Conference Trustees, District Committees on Church Location and Building, District Strategy Teams, and Congregational Development/Redevelopment Committee, focusing on Realistic Building Practices.

We continue to monitor and approve distribution of proceeds of several invested funds for the benefit of NIC programs. In 2013, the following allocations were made:

- Board of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries received \$53,914 from the Seager Fund.
- Campus ministry in the Chicago Southern District received \$27,500 from the Blackstone fund.
- Northern Illinois University campus ministry received \$27,500 from the DeKalb Campus Fund.
- 17 Local church ministries from the Rockford and DeKalb Districts received a total of \$21,898 from the Keagy Fund.

Robert G. Burkhardt, President of NIC Board of Trustees

400.13 -- Commission on Archives and History

Members of NIC CAH

Rev. Dr. Charles Insun Yoon continues to serve as a chairperson with Mrs. Marilyn Steenwyk, who is a secretary, Mrs. Linda Priest, lay member of Roselle UMC, Rev. Paul Judd, Sterling First and Trinity UMCs, Mr. Glenn Palmer, lay member of Court Street UMC, Rockford, and Rev. Keck Mowry, Marengo UMC. The members of ex-officio are Rev. Dr. Richard Wang, a former chairperson, relating to the former Norwegian-Danish conference, Rev. Dr. Carol Noren, relating to the Swedish conferences, the Rev. Dan Swinson as Conference Historian, Mrs. Bettie Lusk as a member of the General Commission on Archives and History, and Mr. Don Lusk, relating to the African American United Methodist Heritage Center.

Meetings

The Commission met on August 10 at First UMC in Crystal Lake, September 28 at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (GETS) in Evanston, the site of the Northern IL Conference (NIC) Archives, October 19 at Plainfield UMC, Plainfield, Feb. 15 at Trinity UMC in Mt. Prospect, and April 12 at Marengo UMC in Marengo. The Commission discussed the display during the Annual Conference, NIC Historical Society & Conference wide workshops held in Galena UMC and Plainfield UMC, Commission's website (<https://sites.google.com/site/umcniccah/home>), donation of historical stuff to the NIC Archives, listing of closed & merged churches and disposition of records, listing of persons who served Commission & Historical Society, Kendall College (Swedish heritage), Archives Cooperative and Service Agreement, Northern IL Conference's 175th Celebration, and hosting the joint meetings of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH), North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) CAH Convocation, and the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church which will be held in 2015.

On behalf of the NIC CAH the Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon and the Rev. Dr. Dan Swinson attended North Central Jurisdiction Commission Archives and History Convocation at Our Savior's UMC, Canton, OH on July 8-11 hosted by East Ohio Conference and the joint meeting of the General Commission and Archives and History and UMC Historical Society on September 14-16 held in Drew University, Madison, NJ.

Conference Wide Workshops

The Commission offered two workshops for local church historians and trustee members at the two oldest churches in Northern IL Conference, Galena UMC on Oct. 5 and Plainfield UMC on Oct. 19. After welcoming and an opening prayer by Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon, Rev. Dr. Dick Wang started off the workshop with sharing questions on personal memories and records, emphasizing the importance of Ministry of Memory. Rev. Dr. Dick Wang, Rev. Dr. Dan Swinson, Rev. Paul Judd, and Mr. Glenn Palmer presented the topics such as Practical Exercise of Working with Records, Types of Church Documents & Archives, History Keeping and Sharing and Interpretation with the Local Church, and Church Historian Guidelines. At the end of the workshop the Commission explained about the newly reorganized Historical Society of Northern IL Conference and shared with the participants for their questions and suggestions and for further workshops.

NIC/GETS Agreement

The funds granted from Northern IL Conference made it possible to find ways to upgrade the NIC archives located in the GETS library. On February 7 Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon, Rev. Dr. Dan Swinson, and Mr. Lonnie Chafin, conference treasurer, from the Northern IL Conference and Dr. Lucy Chung, director of the United Library, and Mr. Dale McClain, CFO, from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary met at the GETS and discussed an Archival Service Arrangement between NIC and GETS. The Commission has been working on the NIC Archives for plans for making better coverage and accessible archives (e.g. digitization) in partnership with the GETS.

The Commission urges all of the churches to observe the disciplinary requirement of retaining and regularly maintaining their own church records of membership (including receptions, baptisms, marriages, funerals) and history with special care for the quarterly conference records. Each church in NIC is the custodian of its unique history as integral to our connection and church historians in each charge are vital to our ministry of memory.

Rev. Charles Insun Yoon
Chair of the Archives and History

400.14 – Program Council: Nurture Ministry Team

The Nurture Ministry Team's mission is to assist churches, districts, and our Annual Conference in the areas of Evangelism, Spiritual Formation, Youth Ministries, Young Adult Ministries, and Older Adult Ministries. Included in the Nurture Ministry Team are the Board of Laity, United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women. We also relate to the following four agencies: ChildServ, Methodist Youth Services, Rosecrance, and United Voices for Children. The Nurture Ministry Team focused on communication with our constituents in 2013. Our priority is to empower and equip others. As a result of our programming efforts and events, we work to equip people to go back to their local churches and share information and resources to enhance the work of the local church. As a team, we have focused on communicating the resources we have available to assist local churches. This has been done through a page on the new NIC website which details the resources the Nurture Team has. We have also been present at Annual Conference, district events, and conference-wide leadership training events.

The Board of Laity role is multifaceted. Members foster awareness of the role of laity in their various settings. They promote programs, develop and promote stewardship of time, talent and possessions, provide for training for lay members of Annual Conference and provide support and direction for the ministry of the laity on the local, district and Annual Conference levels. They also promote awareness of Laity Sunday and relate to lay servant ministries and other lay groups such as UMM, UMW, youth, etc. They can promote events and activities by funneling information through the various members of the BOL who are connected to the various ministries and groups throughout our Conference.

The Board of Laity promoted and worked to provide information regarding Laity Sunday. They planned, promoted and implemented our annual Laity Convocation held at Barrington UMC on February 8th. The focus of the Laity Convocation was "Who Is My Neighbor." The day featured

Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath as the keynote speaker. Finally, they focused on preparing for Annual Conference, which includes the responsibility for the election process for general and jurisdictional conference delegates.

The Evangelism work area's basic tenets are rooted in John Wesley's "*Offer them Christ*" emphasis and motto to the early circuit riders and preachers. The focus of this team is to explore and make possible creative and innovative methods of reaching out with the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. We invite distinguished Christian speakers, theologians and authors to the annual event and offer workshops and ideas to enable both clergy and laity to acquire tools and engage in sharing Christ with our world. Local churches can also avail of the ministry and services of the Conference approved Evangelists, to further their ministry of evangelism pertaining to their demographics and contexts. This year's School of Evangelism was held on October 19th at Barrington UMC and featured Phillip Yancy as guest speaker.

The Older Adult ministry continued their excellent work of 2012 and furthered their goal of providing information on ways to make older adults active parts of a church's ministry. Golden Cross Sunday has been revitalized and was included in many more churches/ specific outreach ministry. The OAM has also investigated information in our Safe Sanctuary training that focuses on elder abuse. Hopefully many more in the NIC recognize Pong Javier and Jim Barry co-chairs of the OAM from your contact with these excellent leaders at training events across the conference.

The Young Adult Council led by co-chairs Rev. Luke Pepper and Rev. Bromleigh McCleneghan are engaging local churches and leaders in determining best practices in ministry with young adults, gathering ministry ideas, and discerning needs within the conference. They have written two curriculums for use with young adults. One uses the t.v. show Glee as a focus. The second is a Lenten study. They are planning another round of curriculum writing to meet the unique needs of young adults in Northern Illinois. They will soon be promoting and disbursing scholarships to the Relevance Lead Conference 2014 for young adults.

The Youth Council offers a variety of opportunities for youth to meet in fellowship, learning and mission throughout the year. Many of these events are offered at minimal cost or have scholarship assistance provided. The NIC Annual Conference Youth Gathering was held at Pheasant Run, site of Annual Conference. This gathering culminated in the youth leading a worship service. *Come to the Lakeshore* is an annual leadership retreat for youth and youth leaders at Wesley Woods. The Plumline Study Tour of New York City involves youth from around our conference. Youth geared up in 2013 for their upcoming Mission Bolivia for high school students in July of 2014.

The Spiritual Formation ministry held a 5-Day Academy of Spiritual Formation from July 29-August 3, 2013 with forty-three lay and clergy participating. They gathered at the Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington. These spiritually hungry pilgrims joined together in fellowship and study led by Sister Kathleen Flood and Ray Buckley. There was daily study of the spiritual disciplines and bearing witness. This academic learning was coupled with worship, fellowship and covenant groups. Five international participants traveled from Bolivia and the Eurasian Conference. Their participation was a rich blessing as the Academy provided an opportunity to witness to the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives.

For two days, Oct. 25-26, 2013, more than a dozen people from all across our Conference gathered at our Conference retreat center – Reynoldswood – in Dixon, Illinois to explore our *Spirituality Through the Camera Lens*. Valerie K. Isenhower, an award-winning professional photographer, writer, and teacher/guide with the Upper Room, led us. We participated in a spiritual journey through photography as we explored meditations on both sides of the camera. The event was experiential with time spent in group prayer as well as discussion and learning. Individuals were also given ample time to get away and be still in the rustic nature of Reynoldswood and watch for signs of the Holy Spirit around us.

The Spiritual Formation Committee chose the Aurora and Chicago Northwest Districts to pilot a program to establish communities for spiritual formation within local churches through the training and nurturing of laity as spiritual formation leaders. Two or three lay members from a church (suggested by their pastor) were invited to join a group of laity from their district who are receiving training in spiritual practices and in facilitating safe, sacred space. This group will meet five times over the course of a year. One new spiritual discipline will be learned and practiced each quarter. These lay members will covenant to personally practice the discipline and to share it with others in their local church. The facilitators will provide support to the participants throughout the year. Rev. Lora Zink and Becky Potter began implementation of the program in the Aurora District in October 2013 at Grace UMC Joliet with seven participants from four churches. Barb Miller and Judy Pohlman began the implementation in Chicago Northwest District in March 2014 at Irving Park UMC with 16 participants from 9 churches.

The Nurture Team is excited about the many ways we have for serving the churches and districts of the NIC and want to reach out to all in the NIC who are looking for assistance in creating more effective programs discipleship.

Mark Manzi, Chair
Nurture Ministry Team

400.44 -- Office of Congregational Development and Redevelopment

Since launching Harvest 2.0, we have focused our vision on Christ's commission to *go and make disciples of all nations*. We thank God for so many persons committed to this vision. With the leadership of Bishop Sally Dyck and our District Superintendents, we press ever onward!

District Strategy Teams

District Strategy Teams provide the data that begin the process of selecting sites for New Faith Communities. The District Strategy Team leaders, all of whom are members of the Conference Congregational Development and Redevelopment leadership team, recommend sites to the Cabinet. In 2013, 16 sites were identified for possible projects.

New Church Planters

We offer two venues for new church planters: *The Institute for Congregational Development (ICD)* and *The Conference Academy for Faith Community Development*. The ICD Class of 2013 graduated with 25 participants after two years of training and accountability in “incubator groups.” The Academy Class of 2013 graduated with 25 participants, mostly laypersons, also after two years of training. New classes of 2015 for ICD and the Conference Academy have begun, with 26 and 28 participants, respectively.

New Faith Communities

Over 1,500 persons worship weekly in our New Faith Communities. Urban Village Church celebrated their four-year anniversary on March 16, 2014, with over 400 attendees. Over 60 people attended our Hispanic/Latino Church Planters’ Boot Camp in 2013, including participants from six other annual conferences!

Redevelopment Opportunities for Existing Congregations

Turnaround Church: How to Reach New People: In October 2013, church teams received tools and ideas for reaching new people from consultant Jim Griffith. More than 40 persons participated.

Natural Church Development: Partnering with ChurchSmart Resources, we provided a workshop on natural church development (NCD), a proven method for vitality. More than 40 pastors and lay persons participated in 2013.

SBC21 (Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century): Our Conference has a partnership with the SBC21 National Plan. The Director of Congregational Development and Redevelopment works collaboratively with clergy and lay leadership in this vital mission of the Northern Illinois Conference.

Turnaround Church Coaching: Twelve pastors participated in this program in 2013; an enhanced version will be offered in 2014 based on feedback from the pilot project. Participants engage in workshops, monthly coaching, and determine strategies and benchmarks for vitality.

Community Engagement

We believe in vital Christians in vital churches changing communities. Community engagement is a key component of congregational vitality. Our Urban Strategy addresses four issues in the Chicago community: community safety, restorative justice, education and literacy, and food deserts. The first Urban Summit drew over 400 persons from across the Conference. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel was present and offered his endorsement of this initiative.

Conclusion

We rejoice that God is using lay and clergy across our conference to love our neighbors through vital churches and new faith communities. This Harvest 2.0 movement is raising up a new generation of leaders hungry to reach “nones” for Christ. It is an honor to serve God through the Northern Illinois Conference!

Rev. Dr. Cecelia S. Harris
Chair, Congregational Development and Redevelopment

Rev. J. Martin Lee

Director of Congregational Development and Redevelopment

400.47 NIC United Methodist Foundation

The Board of Directors of the United Methodist Foundation of the Northern Illinois Conference welcomed four new members during the 2013 Annual Meeting:

- David Foster, lay person from Irving Park UMC, Chicago
- Ken Terrinoni, lay person from First UMC, Belvidere
- Rev. Jane Eesley, Senior Pastor, Christ UMC, Rockford
- Rev. Jennifer Wilson, Senior Pastor, Wheatland Salem UMC, Naperville

We also said farewell to four board members:

- Vidette Bullock-Mixon, lay person from Sherman UMC, Evanston
- Don Pierson, lay person from Grace UMC, Lake Bluff
- Rev. Claude King, Pastor of Olympia Fields UMC
- Rev. Orlando Moller, Pastor of First UMC, Franklin Park

The officers of the Board for the 2013-2014 year are Linnea Kooistra of Harvard UMC as Chair, Jeff Wallem of Christ UMC Rockford as Vice-Chair, and Ergeline Calimlim of Cosmopolitan UMC, Melrose Park as Secretary/Treasurer. Other members of the Executive Committee are Mike Lahti (Faith UMC, Orland Park), Art Muir (North Shore UMC, Glencoe), Rev. Deb Percell (First UMC, Morris), Lynette Rice (Grace UMC, Lake Bluff), Frank Appleby (Trinity UMC, Wilmette) and Bob Whitley (Plainfield UMC).

The Foundation maintains three investment funds designed for long term investments: Conservative Fund, Moderate Fund and Aggressive Fund. Each of these options is broadly diversified with domestic and international equities, domestic and global bonds, Treasury Inflation Protected Securities, and natural resources.

The chart below summarizes 2013 investment performance:

United Methodist Foundation Portfolio				
	Market Value 12/31/2013	2013 Return	Since Inception Annual Return	Inception Date
Composite	\$53,945,308	9.5%	3.4%	06/08
Conservative	\$11,213,602	5.8%	6.2%	06/08
Moderate	\$33,919,053	9.5%	5.4%	06/08
Aggressive	\$8,812,653	14.9%	4.0%	06/08

The Foundation retains Mercer as its investment consultant. The investment opportunities available through the Foundation offer churches and agencies of the conference professionally managed, well diversified accounts, which are invested according the guidelines for socially responsible investing of The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline. The investment policies of the Foundation provide for a disciplined approach which can meet a variety of investment objectives.

The Foundation offered a grants program in 2013-14. A total \$33,000 was awarded to 21 programs during 2013 and in January 2014.

In July the Foundation sponsored the annual stewardship conference at Faith UMC, Orland Park, featuring Rev. Mike Slaughter. More than 600 people participated in this conference at the host site as well as at 10 live streaming sites in the Northern IL Conference and in Wisconsin.

The staff members of the Foundation are:

Harry Nicol, President
Janet Boryk, Director of Planned Giving
Carolyn J. Cook, Executive Assistant
Joann Turner, Bookkeeper

The annual audit of the Foundation's accounts for 2013 was prepared by Odell Hicks and Associates of Chicago. We expect it to be accepted by the Board in June of 2014.

The Foundation continues its work of preaching, teaching, leading workshops, and providing consultation to churches, individuals and agencies of the Northern Illinois Conference. The Foundation's chief aim is to multiply resources for ministry within the conference.

Harry Nicol, President,
United Methodist Foundation of the Northern Illinois Conference.

400.60 -- Program Council Historical Report

In their book, *When Moses meets Aaron*, Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont write of the church:

We labor together as people of faith to bring the kingdom of God to fruition in whatever way we define it as a faith community....We seek to protect one another and others outside the faith community from imbalances of power...

The Program Council is working with the Bishop, Cabinet and Staff of the Northern Illinois Conference to provide support to the groups, caucuses, boards and agencies that seek to bring the kingdom of to fruition. In the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church we believe that God's reign will come closer when Vital Christians in Vital Congregations bring positive Change to their Communities.

The Program Council supports our boards, agencies and groups not only by providing financial assistance but also by helping to connect them with other local, Conference and denominational

groups who are working on similar issues so that collaborative partnerships might be formed and our resources maximized. We also assist our ministry partners in the telling of their own stories of transformation so that we provide evidence of the fruit that our Conference is producing and thereby build support for our missions and ministries. Finally, the Program Council is working with our ministry partners to provide evidence of fiscal accountability by working with them to generate audits or audit letters that ensure we are—together—acting as good stewards of the resources we have been entrusted with.

We have already begun working more closely with the Northern Illinois Conference Council on Finance and Administration to align our budget with our ministry priorities and to create a budget that demonstrates our collective understanding of what God's vision of the kingdom might look like in our local communities, our Conference and throughout the world. It has been said that we must only look as far as our checkbook register to understand what is truly important to us. We are excited about working with CCFA to creating a funding plan that declares we are followers of Jesus Christ and share in his vision for a just and merciful kingdom where all live in equity and abundance. May these continue to be bright and hopeful days for the Northern Illinois Conference.

400.63 -- NIC Board of Global Ministries

In 2013 the Board of Global Ministries continued to focus on educating themselves about some of the Advance Specials and other mission projects and initiatives supported by churches and individuals of the Northern Illinois Conference. We did this by inviting representatives of various projects to share with us their stories. We heard from William Denwood who shared about the Czech Republic Initiative, Samuel Kormoi who shared about the Pan-African Rural Health & Social Services (PRHeSS) Advance Special, and Dick Alton who shared about the Zimbabwe HIV/AIDS Advance Special. The new North Central Jurisdiction Mission Interpreter, Charissa Shawcross, attended one of our meetings and shared about her role with us. Rachel Birkhahn-Rommelfanger brought a presentation about Imagine NO Malaria.

In March we welcomed our new Conference Mission Secretary, Shirley Pulgar-Hughes. She hit the ground running by attending the training for conference secretaries in New York and also the Jurisdiction Training Retreat in Michigan. We are glad to have her aboard.

Annual Conference in June brought our Rainbow Covenant Luncheon where we heard about mission projects and honored the churches that were Rainbow Covenant churches in 2012. Various members of the committee took responsibility for making the luncheon possible.

Annual Conference also presented us with Hands-on Mission Opportunities – working at the Northern Illinois Food Bank and assembling Hygiene Kits for Church World Service (CWS) and Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC). The kits were assembled using the items that churches in each district brought to annual conference. A challenge was presented to each district to bring certain items for the kits and the districts rose to the occasion. More than 1100 kits were assembled at annual conference and many additional items were also received to make more kits at MMDC. The assembly of the kits was a part of one of the breakout sessions at annual conference. Carol Meynen, Volunteer in Missions Coordinator, also presented one of the

breakout sessions that provided the attendees with information concerning VIM as well as other mission areas.

Our focus is being in mission with others and as we continue in our work we give thanks for our staff person, Michael Mann, who provides us with much support. He brings a background and a passion for mission that he shares willingly. Together the members of the board continue to share their passion for mission and for being in mission with others both near and far.

Anne Genther, Chair

400.68 – Conference Board of Laity

The Conference Board of Laity is chaired by the Conference Lay Leader, and consists of the President of UMW, the President of UMM, the District Lay Leaders (7 individuals representing the 6 NIC Districts), the Director of Lay Servant Ministries, a clergy representative, the Director of Connectional Ministries and several at-large members. The Board has various responsibilities, including the planning and implementation of the Laity Session during Annual Conference every year.

The Laity Session of Annual Conference 2013 consisted of two segments. Part I was entitled, “If We Are Your Neighbors, Why Aren’t We Welcome?” During this segment, a video of the same name was shown to the gathering; the video consisted of a woman who described her visits to two United Methodist Churches in the Northern Illinois Conference, as she reflected on the vast contrast in how she and her family were treated. The gathering then divided into break-out groups for discussion. The presentation gave everyone an opportunity to reflect on our churches’ hospitality, what we can do to improve, and how we can implement successful strategies from some of our churches.

The second portion was entitled, “It’s Laity Session. Let’s Make an Impression.” This segment consisted of a “game show format” wherein various representatives of groups within the UMC of Northern Illinois had a very brief time during which to describe their ministries, so as to encourage participation from others.

The Conference Board of Laity will have met six times by the time of Annual Conference 2014. After Annual Conference 2013, we began planning the activities for the year, which included:

- Promoting Laity Sunday 2013, with the theme of: “Disciples Called to Action – Developing Effective Lay Leadership.”
- Planning the Laity Convocation 2014
- Planning the Voting Procedures for General and Jurisdictional Conference which, for the first time, would take place two years before General Conference – rather than one year.

In continuing with the overall denominational theme of, “Who Is My Neighbor”, the 2014 Laity Convocation had the theme of, “Who Is My Neighbor? Who Can’t I See?” and it was held at Barrington UMC. The keynote speaker was Rev. Elaine A. Heath, the McCreless Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. She captivated the audience with her moving presentation about caring and reaching out to, “the least of these,” as

she challenged us to use our God-given gifts to reach those who are marginalized. It was a fitting start to the day, as attendees then proceeded to four workshops:

- “Stop the Violence – At Home!” – Addressing domestic violence issues in our communities.
- “No Room at the Inn” – Methods to combat homelessness and provide support in the interim.
- “Give me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses” – Strategies to support immigrants in the United States, and why we should.
- “Taking It (church) to the Streets” – Discussion of the Urban Strategy initiatives that focus on community safety, restorative justice, education and literacy, and food security.

Despite the “polar vortex”, there were over 200 people in attendance at the 2014 Laity Convocation, and for the second year in a row, the Aurora District won the “Special Recognition Award for Most Attendees from a District at the Laity Convocation.”

We welcomed three new members to the Conference Board of Laity this year: the new President of United Methodist Women, and the two new District Co-Lay Leaders for the Chicago NW District.

In preparation for the election of Lay Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences 2016, the Board published the guidelines for candidates, and distributed them, along with Candidate Forms to the Lay Members to Annual Conference.

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Finally, the Board of Laity continues to seek to strengthen the connection by encouraging participation at the Conference level from all the Districts.

Arnold Rivera
Conference Lay Leader,
Chair, Board of Laity

400.75 -- Communications

In 2013, the NIC Communications office made several changes to improve on the sharing of timely information and news to the conference. In May, we found out the unfortunate news that the United Methodist Reporter would stop its presses. The communications team quickly came up with a plan to find a new printer and designer to keep the conference paper continuing on a monthly basis. We began working relationships with P&P printing in Peoria, Ill., and a freelance designer. The July Reporter was published with a new look, better quality and without any delays. The shift also saved the conference on monthly costs.

We also continue to send out a weekly eNews and use social media to share updates, news and photos. The NIC Facebook page reached 1,000 followers and continues to grow. The Twitter page has more than 1,300 followers and is gaining momentum. The weekly eNews receives on average a 40-45% open rate.

The redesign and launch of a new conference website, www.umcnic.org, was the biggest project and change. We contracted with Big Heart Creative to review and develop a new site that

would be easier to navigate and appeal to users. We received input from conference staff, the communications commission and others to incorporate needs, wishes and pertinent information. The site launched in February 2014 with no glitches. The new hosting site also saves the conference \$275 a month.

Media Resource Center

The Media Resource Center serves the churches of the Northern Illinois Conference, providing educational curriculum materials on a wide variety of subjects. We aim to support people in their journey of Christian faith and service in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the past year we culled about 300 VHS tapes from the collection. They had not been requested in 10 years. All were given to churches or sent to a recycler. A mean average of 70 resources were checked out each month. 105 churches are paid subscribers, while 45 other churches use the Media Resource Center paying a per item usage fee.

The collection consists of over 4,400 items, including 298 curriculum sets (DVD and VHS), 700 DVDs, 2,100 VHS tapes, 10 Banners from the UMW, and 863 books (many of which are part of curriculum sets). The Media Resource Center has also participated in the video-taping of many conference events, and the preparation and distribution of DVDs which allow those who could not attend to hear the message. Some of these include the Annual Evangelism Summit, and the Laity Convocation.

400.77 -- United Methodist Women Historical Report 2013

Our theme this year is “looking back, while moving forward” taken from the Ghanaian word “Sankofa.” We looked back at our past and forged forward. We once again held a Human Trafficking prayer vigil and service at the Daley Plaza in Chicago leading up to the Superbowl. Bishop Sally Dyck stood with us, as we held a silent prayer vigil during lunch at the Laity Convocation.

Mission u, “Learning together for the Transformation of the World” was held in January at Camp Reynoldwood and in the summer at Judson University. The studies were Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly; The Roma of Europe; and Poverty. This year’s mission project was making baby blankets for Assembly.

As the Deaconess Program celebrated their 125th year anniversary, our own, Charmaine Cothran, Rachel Harvey and Myka Kennedy-Stevens shared their witness during the annual conference. During the lunch, our new banner, made by Linda Priest was unveiled.

Our bi-annual Spiritual Retreat was led by Rev. Julie Bunt at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Center. Surgical gloves were sent to missionary Alma Jocson at the Ganta Hospital in Liberia. We once again we sang witness with our Korean sisters. We also purchased translation equipment for our Spanish and Korean speaking sisters to be used at our events and programs. Social Action also successfully aided in the stoppage of the building a detention center in Crete. We lobbied in Springfield with other faith groups for “Common Sense Gun Laws” in addition to writing letters to our representatives on a number of issues. We participated in an Immigration Rally at the Chicago ICE headquarters.

As an ecumenical group, we participated in the annual World Day of Prayer and Church Women United. We fellowshiped, prayed, and studied the Bible and convened at meetings and a convention with world Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. Harriett Olson (UMW-CEO) and Yvette Richardson (UMW-President) were present at the convention. In August we hosted the North America Region 4 Convention held in Indianapolis, Indiana. We dressed in uniform with our world vests. Our own Judy Siaba led the conference as president. Dr. Carolyn Johnson, a past UMW President led the bible studies. I was elected to chair the 2014 Illinois State Assembly.

LIMITLESS: Redefine tomorrow is our youth and young adult mentorship programs lead by Katie Lindsay-McCoy.

A new partnership was formed with the United Methodist Men. The Northern Illinois Conference and the Illinois Great River Conference UMM and UMW will have a Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry for prisoners.

Our scholarship for women in graduate programs or seminary was reinstated. Michele Watkins-Branch was the recipient. We will also offer a scholarship to a "ROMA" woman to attend Assembly, which was a suggestion for Rev. Dr. Norval Brown, one of our Mission u study leaders.

Jesse Cunningham and Irma Clark are Ambassadors for the Healthy Planet, Healthy Family Program. I was honored to be a UMW delegate to the People's Global Action and United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development. One of the actions we took was with the hundreds of people from around the world, including Bishop Julius Trimble from Iowa, was walking across the Brooklyn Bridge to bring awareness to the plight of migration. We welcomed new units from the Chicago Northwestern District, United Church of Rogers Park and Viet Nam UMC.

At our annual celebration, we collected birthing kit supplies which resulted in 15 boxes sent to the Midwest Distribution Center. As we "looked back", past president Norma Jung-Stein made a pictorial display with highlights of the current and past presidents. Present were Alyce Teemer, Nancy Duel and Anne Genther. They received a flower and recognitions for their leadership.

This report ends with a heartbroken message. Marcy-Newberry, our one and only mission institution by the vote of the board of directors voted "to cease all programming activities after June 28, 2013. This UMW mission institution has been serving the Chicago west side community for over 130 years. Before there was a movement for immigration rights, human rights, and civil rights, the UMW were in the forefront. We continue to keep the Marcy-Newberry family in our prayers. The good news, as we move forward, the future brings hope with new promises and new tomorrows, thus new beginnings.

UMW, continues "turning faith, hope and love in action for women, children and youth around the world."

With a Servant's Heart,
Rita L. Smith, President

400.83 -- ChildServ

ChildServ values greatly the prayers, presence, gifts and service of all who join with us to help at-risk children and their families throughout northern Illinois to build, achieve and sustain better lives. Founded as The Methodist Deaconess Orphanage in Lake Bluff, Illinois in 1894, ChildServ's vision and values are rooted in the Biblical mandate to serve the least and the last. We are nourished by the Wesleyan tradition of mission and social justice, and we are blessed daily in our connection with the people of the United Methodist Church. We are grateful for that connection and for their loving and generous support.

Fiscal Year 2013 was again difficult financially for non-profits, especially those serving the hungry and hurting here in Illinois. Public funding was yet again eliminated, reduced or subjected to a deliberate late-pay strategy. Although the State's budget woes did not severely adversely affect the agency's performance in delivering foster care and adoption services, ChildServ did struggle to manage both cash flow and credit as a result of the State's late pay strategy. Further, State budget cuts have begun to jeopardize long-established and successful programs. Late in Fiscal Year 2013, for example, ChildServ was notified by Chicago Public Schools that ChildServ's very successful and long-running early childhood education program known as HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters, which has for many years served on average 130 at-risk children and their parents in Chicago) would not be funded. Thanks be to God, sustainable sources remain to be secured and we were able to provide for 114 HIPPY clients, but for the time being, HIPPY continues to help at-risk children and their parents prepare for successful starts in school.

In addition to the successful funding of HIPPY, there were many other reasons to celebrate. Among the 2,750 clients we served, those ChildServ is especially proud to highlight are:

- 461 were served by our Foster Care services with 31 children achieving permanency through adoption, guardianship, or reunification with their biological families, or they achieved another positive outcome, such as graduation or employment;
- 10 of Wendy's Wonderful Kids were placed in final adoptive homes and 24 were matched with potential adoptive families;
- 970 clients were served by our Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) with 64% of children who need ongoing supports that address learning challenges were successfully connected to community resources;
- 250 were served by our Family Child Care Home with 76% of children meeting physical, emotional, cognitive and social developmental targets when screened;
- 268 were received counseling services available through our Armour Military services where 88% of our clients maintained or improved their overall level of functioning, as measured by clinical evaluation tools.

For all this and more we give thanks to God and to the people of the United Methodist Church. Hallelujah!

James C. Jones, President/CEO

400.93 – United Voices for Children

2013 was a year of challenge and change for the United Voices for Children Board of Directors (UVC). I'm happy to say we've weathered the storm. We remain committed to speak and act on behalf of troubled and needy children who lack the voice of an advocate.

I appreciate the work of our board members, officers, agency representatives and coordinator that devote their time and effort to make our organization successful. They follow through on their commitments, not because of any great honor or compensation, but because of their desire to improve the lives of children, youth and their families. I appreciate the efforts of 92 local churches who are dedicated to making UVC a thriving organization with in the Northern Illinois Conference (NIC).

In June 2013 over 125 persons attended the UVC Breakfast during the Northern Illinois Annual Conference. Each child serving agency was highlighted and the 2013 awards were given to the following recipients:

Bishop Jesse R. DeWitt Award

Rev. Donald Baker, retired pastor of First UMC, Evanston, founder/director of Youth Organization Umbrella (Y.O.U.) for servi ng over 15,000 youth living in the Evanston area.

Dorothy Paige-Turner, Christ the Carpenter, Rockford, a retired music and art integration specialist. Her efforts have increased Children's Church participation.

Katherine B. Greene Award

Julie Sgarlata, a Christian Educator at Sycamore First UMC, nominated for a number of successful ministries across the church and for her involvement with the "Christian Kids," after school program.

Kandy DeWitt, a member of Friendship UMC, Bolingbrook, nominated for organizing and directing "The Study Club," a community-based homework assistance/tutoring program since 2008.

Certificates of Appreciation for the 5th Sunday Appeal were awarded to the following churches:
Aurora: Gary Memorial UMC;

Chicago-N: FUMC of Evanston and Sherman UMC;

Chicago-S: FUMC at The Chicago Temple;

DeKalb: FUMC of DeKalb and Grace UMC of Maple Park;

Elgin: UMC of Libertyville and FUMC of Elmhurst;

Rockford: Christ UMC of Rockford and Milledgeville UMC.

We were successful in launching an online information gathering survey tool, Survey Monkey, during Annual Conference. Our hopes of examining the comments and creating a practical plan to update the Child Advocate Network (CAN) have been delayed. However, the data can be used later this year to take a fresh look at the child advocate job description, process and resources to meet these needs.

Also at the end of June, Marcy Newberry Association announced its closing. A very valued friend and colleague, Rev. Margaret Ann Williams, was automatically removed from the UVC Board of Directors. Rev. Williams 33 years of service on the Board and her insight will be greatly missed. In September, we experienced the death of our colleague, Treasurer and Board Representative for ChildServ, Michael Adams. For the second time in 2013, the board was devastated and stunned as we struggled to be a cohesive unit. We are grateful to Rev. Bill Lenters, retired Chaplain from Rosecrance for his guidance through our grief & brokenness at the loss of two valued Board members. Also, thanks to Gina Tober, Board Representative, MYSI Corporation for accepting the position of Treasurer.

Thanks to our board member, Rev. Robert Biekman, we were able to enter into dialog with Bishop Dyck and the Urban Strategy Team to begin formulating plans for shaping a collaborative relationship between the two entities. We are prayerful that this collaboration will benefit the families across the Northern Illinois Conference.

We have four members who are leaving the Board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them: Rev. Linda Deming who served as Secretary for the past two years, Rev. Kimberly Neace, Rev. Jacqueline P. Ford and Rev. Dennis Langdon. UVC is grateful for your service and dedication.

To the remaining members of the Board, I want to express my gratitude for your dedication and support given to me personally and to UVC. It has been my pleasure to serve as President of this Board for the last seven years.

In closing, Thanks to the Visionary folk who worked so hard to organize United Voices for Children. They recognized the need for a catalyst and conduit to help maximize the effectiveness of the church and child serving agencies partnership. Their vision will continue to live if we work and strive together to build new relationships and learn new things. We have much to be proud of... and so much work to do in the future...for ourselves, our children and generations to come.

Lois Moreland –Dean
Board President, United Voices for Children

400.97 -- Rosecrance Health Network

Rosecrance was founded in 1916 by Methodists who saw the need to establish a safe place for children who needed a home. Today, some 98 years later, Rosecrance, a nonprofit, licensed and accredited agency, is Northern Illinois' leading provider of substance use and mental health disorder treatment. The mission of Rosecrance is to provide help, hope and recovery to children, youth, adults and families.

2013 Rosecrance Highlights

- Provided treatment services to 16,509 individuals
- 6,295 admissions of those who suffer from substance abuse and 10,214 admissions of those individuals who were severely mentally ill
- Served 5,178 children and teens
- 51% of all families who received substance use disorder services resided in greater Chicagoland
- 99% of all people served for mental health disorders resided in Winnebago, Boone and McHenry counties

- Kinley Charity Care fund provided \$460,355 to 377 individuals needing financial support
- Opened a new conservatory on our adolescent campus
- 2013 Foundation Benefit attended by over 800 individuals who heard stories of recovery from Rosecrance alumni and raised funds to support charity care
- Trained staff and provided Mental Health First Aid training to more than 100 first responders in Rockford
- The Rosecrance Chicago Board hosted fourth annual “Cooking Up Hope” fundraiser in Naperville and raised \$100,000 to support plans to open a new recovery resident for Chicago area college students
- Collaborated with SwedishAmerican Hospital to manage their inpatient psych unit
- Provided \$1,712,796 in uncompensated charity care in 2013

Child and Teen Programs

The Rosecrance Griffin Williamson campus provides substance abuse assessments, inpatient treatment and outpatient treatment for teens struggling with addiction. The 84-bed treatment center has an on-site accredited school, a chapel, fitness center, gymnasium, a six-acre authentic healing garden and a full curriculum of experiential therapies including art, music, recreation, horticultural therapy. Rosecrance Griffin Williamson is located off Interstate I90 in Rockford.

The Rosecrance Berry Campus provides diagnosis and outpatient treatment for childhood emotional disorders. Programs include community support, school-linked services, screening and assessment, child and family group counseling, and family support and education.

Rosecrance also operates two licensed recovery homes for teen girls and boys, Hillman House and Marlowe House. The goal of these homes is to prepare residents to successfully transition back to living with their families or independently. The residents attend school, may have a part-time job, and are taught positive coping skills and life skills.

Outpatient treatment services are also provided in Belvidere, McHenry and Crystal Lake.

Adult Programs

The Rosecrance Harrison Campus is a 97-bed facility that provides detoxification, inpatient and outpatient treatment services and offers a Medically Assisted Recovery Clinic for adults 18 years old or older who struggle with relapse from opiate addictions, particularly heroin. This campus also offers programs designed specifically for mothers, veterans and young adults (ages 18-26) and has a strong experiential therapies program including art, music, recreation, yoga, and meditation. Built in 1995 on ten acres, the campus is located in southeast Rockford.

Greendale House provides transitional housing for mothers with children, adult single women and young men. This licensed recovery home provides a safe, secure, drug free supportive environment for adults who are new in recovery.

The Rosecrance Ware Campus and satellite offices provide services to severely and chronically mentally ill adult members of our community. Mental health assessments, outpatient treatment, rehabilitation programs, housing and psycho/social rehabilitation services are provided to these individuals. We opened a new Triage Center last year, which operates like a mental health emergency room, to address some of the needs that existed when Singer Mental Health Center was closed by the State.

Outpatient treatment services are also provided in Belvidere, McHenry and Crystal Lake.

Chicago Offices

Rosecrance has offices in Geneva, Northbrook, Naperville, Oak Park, Frankfurt and Lincoln Park. These offices provide free consultations, referrals, intensive outpatient programs for teens, and community outreach services. Prevention/Early Intervention Education programs are held in Naperville and a parent support group called “Parent Café,” are held weekly at the Rosecrance Naperville Office.

Thank you for your continued gifts, support and prayers as we provide help, hope and recovery to children, teens, adults and families who struggle with substance use and mental health disorders.

Philip W. Eaton,
President/CEO
Lynne D. Vass. CFRE
Senior Vice President of Development

400.99 -- Wesley Willows

From the very beginning of Wesley Willows in 1963, our organization has been one that spends a great deal of time, effort, and resources on the essentials of planning. It is often easy to do planning without understanding all of the implications of transforming planning or turning “Ideas into Action.” Fiscal year 2013 was all about delivering on plans and ideas; from a \$750,000 heating domestic water project that took several months to complete to a simpler project of replacing heavy public doors with lighter weight ones, making life easier and safer for our residents. Our capital planning of turning ideas into actions offers a five year look ahead and includes the brainstorming of board members, residents, and staff. We are a community of individuals that works together to improve programs, services, buildings and grounds.

In 2013, under the Chairmanship of Don Williams, our Board of Trustees acted on an idea to create a Community Accountability Policy to help us track and quantify those things we do as an organization that provides benefits to the community including charitable care. This policy gives us a proactive approach to prepare for any challenge to our not for profit status by documenting the good that we do and it also allows Wesley Willows to be a stronger organization.

At Wesley Willows we embrace a culture of excellence. Each year we conduct a Resident Satisfaction Survey of all residents on the campus. The survey evaluates how residents feel about their homes or apartments; the services offered; the friendliness of the staff; and the leadership in each of the service areas. The 2012-2013 surveys recorded a 96% overall satisfaction of Wesley Willows by residents and 97% said they would recommend Wesley Willows to others.

In 2013, Wesley Willows was home to over 600 residents of which 25% or about 150 are 90+ years old. The average age of all residents on campus is 84. The average age at admission for Willows Suites is 82 and for Willow Ridge homes, it is just over 76. Wesley Willows is a community which attracts seniors of all ages and serves its mission to help seniors enjoy a long and healthy lifestyle.

Physical Fitness programs on the campus were stepped up with a variety of programs. *Let's Go* was a contest with a "Go Card". Residents were encouraged to keep track of their participation in fitness activities from January 1st through March 30th. At completion, prizes were awarded. This contest was followed with the introduction of Zumba Gold, a dance/exercise class, and later, a *Getting Fit For Life* program initiated by our resident Alan Bloomfield.

In 2013, Our Good Samaritan Fund provided over \$1.2 million in charitable support to our residents in need. Fundraising is conducted throughout the year through planned giving, annual appeals, and grant requests. In June, we celebrated our 41st Annual Benefit at the Rock Valley College Starlight Theatre with the production of *Les Misérables*. The event raised \$69,000 with a net of \$54,140 for the Good Samaritan Fund.

Awards and Recognition

- Wesley Willows resident Bill Johnson and his daughter, Lori Burke, expressed their appreciation to the staff of Wesley Willows for the excellent care given to wife and mother, LaVada, by awarding three \$1,000 Certified Nursing Assistant scholarships to three staff members.
- Mary Jo Lafferty, R.N. celebrated 35 years of service caring for residents at Wesley Willows. Mary Jo began her nursing career at Wesley Willows as a CNA and quickly advanced with continued education. In 2013, fifty-five employees celebrated over 10 years of service to Wesley Willows
- Residents Ed and Mary Anne Rounds were named Outstanding Philanthropists at the Rockford AFP National Philanthropy Day Awards in November. Organizations especially grateful were Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois, Boy Scouts of America Blackhawk Area Council, and Wesley Willows.
- Marie Mayfield was recognized at the Rockford AFP Annual *Honor Your Own* celebration for her more than 25 years of volunteer service to Wesley Willows. Her service ensured the continued support of our Golden Oldies resale shop for the Wesley Willows Auxiliary and the Good Samaritan Fund..
- Resident and Founders Club Member, Robert Kelly was awarded the John Wesley Fellows Award for his witness, vision, and stewardship to the United Methodist Church. The award, recommended by the Northern Illinois Council of United Methodist Men, was presented to Mr. Kelly by NICUMM president Steve Nailor.

- Thomas D. Glenny received the 2013 Service Above Self Award from the Rockford Rotary Club. Nominated by Wesley Willows, the award honors an individual for their outstanding volunteerism in the community. Mr. Glenny is particularly appreciated for his work at Aldersgate United Methodist Church and as a long time friend to Wesley Willows.
- Wesley Willows dedicated its first sculpture on campus – *Dance for Eternity* was unveiled in September, 2012. A gift from John and Robbie Mink, the sculpture was designed and created by Rockford artist Salem Barker.

Our organization is blessed with many dedicated volunteers, residents, and staff. All work to serve our mission and with their help it is easy to turn ideas into actions and *Inspire Seniors to Celebrate Life!*



Bill Pratt
President & CEO

400.100 -- LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

The implications of the name change from Lay Speaking Ministries to Lay Servant Ministries by the 2012 General Conference are still being worked out in the Conference. New responsibilities for the District and Conference Committees on Lay Servant Ministries are beginning to fall into place and the new criteria for becoming a Lay Speaker have been communicated across Lay Servant Ministries.

All the while, the districts continue to have Lay Academies. Two districts – Elgin and DeKalb – continue to undergo changes in leadership and establishing their Lay Academies. Strong academies continue to be held twice a year in Aurora and Chicago Southern. Rockford has been consistent in its involvement of youth in its academies and Chicago Northwestern has had a growing participation of children in a specially adapted Lay Servant Ministries course.

There are a number of courses offered on line through www.BeADisciple.com and the Conference Committee has begun setting guidelines on how those can be incorporated in the certification renewal process.

The facilitators being used in the academies have been and continue to be of the highest quality.

More importantly, Lay Servants are serving in their local congregations and across their districts and the conference in a multitude of ways. Working in areas of leadership, communication and caring they are fulfilling the overall direction for Lay Servant Ministries. The some 600 Certified and Local Lay Servants in Northern Illinois can be found in all facets of service to others and their congregations in the name of Jesus Christ.

Roger L. Curless
Conference Director
Lay Servant Ministries

400.101 – General Board of Higher Education & Campus Ministry

Greetings from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry! In 2014, GBHEM staff have been busy with two initiatives assigned to the Board by the General Conference 2012 — the Young Clergy Initiative and the Central Conference Theological Education Fund.

- Ninety-one applications were submitted in the first round of grants from the **Young Clergy Initiative**. The second round deadline is July 2, 2014. First-round awards will be made in May.
- Proposals for solar electrification of a rural theological school and training teams of pastors to mobilize people to change their communities were among 57 grants for more than \$1 million awarded from the \$5 million **Central Conference Theological Education Fund** for Africa, Europe, and the Philippines.
- We hope you will visit our redesigned website (www.gbhem.org). The new site features an enhanced search engine, new content, and a user-friendly reorganization.
- GBHEM has expanded our use of social media. In addition to our new website, we have more than 4,800 followers on Twitter, and more than 1,500 like our Facebook page. We've added Google+, Linked In, and Pinterest, and have beefed up our YouTube channel.
- Technology has enabled us to make our training and resources more readily available to the church. The UMC Cyber Campus and Online Consortium (www.umccybercampus) provide free video training sessions and lectures, as well as an online listing of continuing education courses.
- Our Division of Ordained Ministry's 2013 training events, retreats, and webinars reached more than 700 district superintendents, elders, chaplains, clergywomen, deacons, candidates, and annual conference staff.
- The GBHEM and Africa University Boards met jointly on the AU campus in March and witnessed the dedication of the Ubuntu Retreat Center, funded by the West Michigan Conference. The AU Board elected Dr. Munashe Furusa as the new vice chancellor.
- Close to 5,000 AU graduates are changing the African continent. Enrollment in 2013 was 1,480 full-time students from 25 African countries. Women now account for 53% of the student body.
- The Collegiate Ministry office is planning their student gathering, **Imagine What's NEXT 2014**. NEXT will be held November 7-9 in Denver, Colo.
- Collegiate Ministry supported the training of 500 campus ministers through **LEAD, Prepare / Shared Space, UM Campus Ministry Association, Exploration, and Refresh**.
- In 2013-2014, GBHEM's Loans and Scholarships office awarded \$5.5 million in loans and scholarships to 2,442 students. L&S also partnered in the creation of a **UM scholarships portal** offering one-stop-shopping for students and their parents. View the portal at scholarship.umc.org.
- At **Exploration 2013**, 152 young adults signed commitment cards saying they felt the call to ordained ministry. Plans are already underway for **Exploration 2015**.

- A pilot project sponsored by GBHEM and GBOD to provide e-readers for the Gbarnga School of Theology in Liberia has proved so successful that additional funding is being sought to expand the project to other seminaries in Africa. To give online, go to drint.org/donate.
- For the first time, an entire issue of *Interpreter* magazine (March / April 2014) was devoted to a single issue — United Methodist higher education.
- *The Christian as Minister: An Exploration into the Meaning of God's Call* was published last summer and will soon be published as an e-book through a partnership with Abingdon Press. Our first foray into digital publishing was in 2013 with *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Pastoring Large Churches*. We are now publishing a printed version of this title.
- The Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development established five regional offices: Methodist University, São Paulo, Brazil; Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea; Reutlingen School, Germany; Methodist University of Cote d'Ivoire; and GBHEM, Nashville, Tenn.

400.102 -- Justice For Our Neighbors

In 2013, Northern Illinois Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON) received financial support from the Northern Illinois Conference of \$15,000. With that support, JFON was able to accomplish its mission to be “a faith-driven ministry whose mission is to provide welcome to immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in our congregations and communities by providing free, high-quality immigration legal services, education and advocacy, and to encourage cross-cultural community building.” Furthermore, we accomplished the following goals:

Clients

Our goals always begin and end with how we are able to extend welcome to all of God's people, especially vulnerable immigrants. Last year, we served approximately:

- Over 150 clients were provided immigration legal services.
- Of those clients, over half were able to be taken on as cases.
- The cases we saw included victims of violent crime, survivors of domestic abuse, youth seeking deferred action, family petitions, and many other cases.

Former clients began to share their story, including one at a celebration for the legal clinic in Aurora.

Volunteers

Our goal is to provide a space for transformation for our volunteers. We continued to see an increase in volunteers at all levels, increasing our pool from about 45 volunteers to about 125 across all locations throughout Northern Illinois. Volunteers are always welcome in this life-changing ministry. Visit www.jfonnic.org for volunteer opportunities.

Clinics & Staff

Our clinics are where the stories of transformation happen for our clients and our volunteers. This year, we opened 2 new clinic sites in Northern Illinois.

Opened 2 new JFON clinics providing immigration legal services in Chicago (housed at Humboldt Park UMC) and Rockford (housed at Court Street UMC).
With the help of the National JFON, hired a paralegal to assist in immigration legal services.
The contribution from the Northern Illinois Annual Conference makes up approximately 20% of the total budget for JFON. It could not exist without the support of the Conference and the many volunteers and donors who give. If you would like to give of your financial support or your time, please visit www.jfonnic.org.

400.103 – CLEER Project

The end of life is a significant time in people's lives and the life of their families as they "do the hard and spiritual work of preparing for death". The care African Americans receive at life's end as well as African Americans' attitudes about end-of-life decisions and care tend to differ from the general US population. Several trends illuminate the difference in African American attitudes, values and preferences regarding end-of-life concerns. Patients and their loved ones often turn to their faith leaders and faith community for support, comfort, guidance and strength when faced with a terminal illness. It is often the case that clergy members receive little or no formal training in guiding, supporting and caring for people with end-of-life concerns even though clergy members are often called upon to minister to the dying and their loved ones. The CLergy End-of-Life Education Resource (CLEER) Project offers clergy the opportunity to develop skills relative to providing pastoral care at the end of life by developing their understanding of end-of-life issues and assisting the dying and their loved ones.

The CLEER Project is a Project of the Chicago Southern District of the United Methodist Church and is funded through the Racial Ethnic Local Church Concerns Grant of the General Board of Discipleship. The goal of the CLEER Project is to address the education needs of clergy and faith community leadership to equip and empower them with information to effectively minister to individuals, families and groups facing end-of-life issues and decisions.

The objectives of the CLEER Project are to increase clergy knowledge of end-of-life issues including the impact of culture on end-of-life decision making and care; improve clergy understanding of palliative and hospice care and discuss its basic principles; improve clergy capacity to provide pastoral care at the end of life; enhance clergy skills to support families through the end-of-life process and decision making; and improve clergy capacity to help persons die well and with dignity.

The CLEER Project consists of a project launch, exploratory focus groups, Lunch & Learn education sessions, and a symposium. The CLEER Project was launched on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 at Advocate Christ Medical Center. Kat Cook-Biekman conducted a presentation entitled, *End-of-Life Decisions and Care Among Culturally Diverse Populations*. The exploratory focus group sessions were held during October-December 2013 to determine existing knowledge and needs regarding end of life. The Education Lunch & Learn series addressed the topic areas of *Advance Care Planning, Palliative and Hospice Care, Organ Donation, Dying Well and Coping with Grief and Loss*. The CLEER project will culminate with a day-long symposium on July 8, 2014 at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn, IL.

The CLEER Project Co-founders are Reverend Robert E. Biekman and Kathryn Cook-Biekman. Kathryn Cook-Biekman also serves as the Project Director. The Project has a Steering Team consisting of clergy and laity within the United Methodist Church. CLEER Project partners include Advocate Christ Medical Center Office for Mission and Spiritual Care and the Chicago End-of-Life Care Coalition (CECC).

400.104 -- Spiritual Formation Training

Becky Potter and Barb Miller shared this model with Bishop Dyck in March 2013. She gave input and support to the program and suggested piloting it in two districts. The insights gained from the two pilot sites will be used to revise the model. It then will be expanded throughout the Conference.

Therefore, the Spiritual Formation Committee of the Northern Illinois Conference chose the Aurora and Chicago Northwest Districts to pilot a program to establish communities for spiritual formation within the local churches through the training and nurturing of laity as spiritual formation leaders.

Two or three lay members from a church (suggested by their pastor) will be invited to join a group of laity from their district who are receiving training in spiritual practices and in facilitating safe, sacred space. This group will meet five times over the course of a year. One new spiritual discipline will be learned and practiced each quarter. These lay members will covenant to personally practice the discipline and to share it with others in their local church. The facilitators will provide support to the participants throughout the year.

Rev. Lora Zink and Becky Potter began implementation of the program in the Aurora District in October 2013 at Grace UMC:Joliet with seven participants from four churches. Barb Miller and Judy Pohlman began the implementation in Chicago Northwest District in March 2014 at Irving Park UMC with 16 participants from 9 churches.

5-Day Academy of Spiritual Formation

July 29-August 3, 2013, forty-three lay and clergy, participated in the Northern Illinois Conference *5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation*. Gathering at the Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, spiritually hungry pilgrims joined together in fellowship and study. Sister Kathleen Flood and Ray Buckley led the participants in daily study of the spiritual disciplines and bearing witness. This academic learning was coupled with worship, fellowship and covenant groups. Five international participants traveled from Bolivia and the Eurasian Conference. Their participation was a rich blessing as the Academy provided an opportunity to witness to the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives.

Spirituality Through the Camera Lens Workshop

For two days, this past October (Oct. 25-26, 2013), more than a dozen people from all across our Conference gathered at our Conference retreat center – Reynoldswood – in Dixon, Illinois to explore our *Spirituality Through the Camera Lens*. We were led by Valerie K. Isenhower, an award

winning professional photography as well as a writer and teacher/guide with the UpperRoom.

We participated in a spiritual journey through photography as we explored meditations on both sides of the camera. The event was experiential with time spent in group prayer as well as discussion and learning. Individuals were also given ample time to get away and be still in the rustic nature of Reynoldswood and watch for signs of the Holy Spirit around us.

Everyone left the retreat energized by what they had experienced and asking for more opportunities for similar experiences. A true gift from God, through the work of our NIC Spiritual Formation committee.

400.105 – St. Paul School of Theology

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 Oklahoma City and the Greater Kansas City area.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, 201 students from 23 annual conferences and 4 countries were enrolled in degree programs at Saint Paul School of Theology on both campuses. The Course of Study School at Saint Paul served 216 students the Overland Park, Kansas, Springfield, Missouri, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma locations.

Twenty master's degree students and twenty-three doctoral students graduated from the Kansas City campus in May 2013. Six master of divinity students graduated at the 3rd Commencement Convocation in Oklahoma in August 2013. Laity from the Seminary Lite program in Oklahoma also received certificates.

Saint Paul at Oklahoma City University (OCU) began its 6th year in September. Dr. Amy Oden came to the Oklahoma City campus as Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality. The Association of Theological Schools authorized the campus to offer all courses leading to the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, Master of Arts (Theological Studies), and Doctor of Ministry Degrees. They also lifted the residency requirement to complete one-third of the courses on the Kansas City campus. This is a major step in the development of Saint Paul at OCU. The success of Saint Paul in Oklahoma City has been a collaborative effort, strengthened by the support of the Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church and United Methodist-related Oklahoma City University.

The seminary sold its Truman Road campus in Kansas City, Missouri to Guadalupe Centers, Inc. Guadalupe Centers, Inc. is the longest continuously operating organization serving Latinos in the United States. They provide early childhood, secondary, preparatory and adult educational programs; facilitate access to health and social services for all ages; promote and provide Latino cultural enrichment events; and sponsor social activities for diverse communities.

Students and faculty began classes on the Greater Kansas City (GKC) campus located in the East Wing of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas, in

September. Classes continue to be video-linked with the Oklahoma City campus. The seminary's staff and faculty offices are located under a mile away from the classroom location.

Saint Paul will launch three new masters' curricula in the fall of 2014. For the MDiv students, the new curriculum marks a return to a more praxis-based, integrated curriculum. The curriculum is grounded in spiritual formation with numerous practicums and faculty-led small groups to integrate seminary studies with vocational formation. Students will reflect upon their work during two intentional assessments mid-way through the degree and near the end of their studies.

The degree programs will require fewer hours which will mean less debt for Saint Paul graduates. The MDiv will require 79 credit hours for the degree rather than the 90 credit hours now required. The Masters of Arts in Christian Ministry and Masters of Arts (Theological Studies) will also be completed in fewer hours--54 credit hours for the MACM vs. 60 now and 49 for the MA(TS) vs. 60 now.

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

400.106 – Boston University School of Theology

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! Thank you for your prayers and support for United Methodist theological education. This has been a bountiful year for Boston University School of Theology, beginning with the arrival of a passionate community of students from 35 states and 16 countries. The year has had many highlights.

BREAKING NEWS:

- **Doctor of Ministry:** The School has unfolded a new Doctor of Ministry program designed to enrich church leaders in traditional and non-traditional settings and to deepen their theological understanding and commitment to the practice of ministry. The DMin focuses on transformational leadership. It includes four intensive seminars on campus in August and January, a series of online courses, and opportunities for students to work closely with faculty as they research their own unique questions and visions.
- **Community Center:** The School's renovated Community Center has become a favorite gathering space – sustainable, hospitable, and accessible. It is the welcoming home for weekly community lunches, study, conversation, play, seminars, retreats, and parties.
- **Religion and Conflict Transformation (RCT) Clinic:** The RCT Clinic sponsors projects to address conflict in congregations, interfaith peacebuilding, restorative justice, and mediation.
- **Expanded Scholarship Options:** The School has expanded its scholarship options to include full tuition scholarships for UMC certified candidates for ordained ministry, African American Thurman scholars, Latino/a Raices scholars, and School of the Prophets scholars.

DEEPENING SPIRITUAL LIFE: The community enhances spiritual growth in many ways.

- **Building intentional living communities:** The School sponsors and helps support

Theology House, Green House, and Beane House of Study, where students live with intentional and communal practices.

- **Enhancing spiritual life** through weekly worship, reading retreats, winter retreat, daily morning prayer, and small groups.
- **Offering spiritual journeys**, including the Vocations Vacation to ministry and service sites and the Seminary Singers tour to local churches.

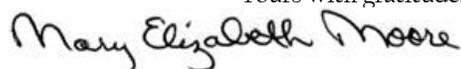
ENGAGING THE WORLD: BU School of Theology students and faculty have traveled and served extensively in the world during the past year:

- **Giving** hundreds of volunteer hours across the Boston region, U.S. and world in church camps, homeless shelters, peace organizations, global United Methodist programs, and other settings.
- **Traveling** in study groups to Turkey (Ephesus), Israel & Palestine, Cuba, rural and urban ministry sites, and churches and service organizations across the US
- **Sponsoring** conferences on global Christianity and the Dictionary of African Christian Biography
- **Serving** in local churches and community agencies in contextual education placements, courses, and special internships.

PONDERING CRITICAL ISSUES: The School's annual theme was "Free at Last," to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. and his immortal "I Have a Dream" speech. The community engaged in urgent questions regarding race, sexual orientation and gender identity, and poverty, creating open and respectful spaces to discuss themes that are important to, and controversial in, the church and larger society.

The ministry of the Boston University School of Theology is to partner with you in serving the church and in caring for the larger human family and God's precious creation.

Yours with gratitude,



Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean, Boston University School of Theology

400.111 -- Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary continues its commitment to develop and nurture skilled, bold and articulate leaders for the church, the academy and the world. Since our founding 161 years ago, we have articulated and lived our core purpose: to know God in Christ and, through preparing spiritual leaders, help others know God in Christ.

Last fall, we welcomed 171 new students, bringing the fall Master of Divinity enrollment to 399. The gender/ethnic profile is: 51% female; 55% white; 20% Black; 5% Asian; 3% Hispanic/Latino/a. Fourteen percent of the student body is international. Thirty-five denominations, four continents, thirteen countries and thirty-three states are represented in the student body.

Seventy-percent of the students in all degree programs are United Methodist. Currently, 46 students from the Northern Illinois Annual Conference are enrolled in the various degree programs at the seminary.

Garrett-Evangelical is committed to making seminary education affordable, and easing the financial stress on students. This academic year, the seminary awarded over 2.5 million dollars in financial aid, offered numerous federal work-study positions, and assisted with paid internship opportunities in diverse settings through field education.

In fall 2014, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary begins a guaranteed tuition rate initiative for master's level students. Students are guaranteed the same tuition rate for two or three years, depending on the program in which they enroll. Tuition rates for new Master of Divinity students will be guaranteed through the Summer 2017 Term. Tuition rates for new Master of Arts or Master of Theological Studies students will be guaranteed through Summer 2016 Term. This initiative is yet another step in insuring students enter the world of ministry with as little student debt as possible.

Last September, the seminary celebrated the establishment of the fully-endowed Rueben P. Job Chair of Spiritual Formation. At the same time, we installed Dr. Frederick W. Schmidt as the Rueben P. Job Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation. Garrett-Evangelical is the first among Protestant seminaries in the United States to have a fully funded chair in spiritual formation.

Two revered faculty retired this past year. Larry Murphy, professor of the history of Christianity, retired after 39 years of service. He was a key individual in developing the seminary's Center for the Church and the Black Experience.

Ruth Duck, professor of Christian worship, retired in December. A world-renowned hymnist, her most recent book, *Worship for the Whole People of God: Vital Worship for the 21st Century*, was published in October 2013.

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. Among the options are:

- *Plus*, a first-of-its-kind cooperative executive education program of Garrett-Evangelical and Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, involving two-years of seminars led by experts in non-profit and church leadership for professionals in ministry;
- *Intersection*, an online continuing education opportunity, incorporating readings, online presentations by seminary faculty, and reflection on contemporary issues of life and 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>.
- A *Doctor of Ministry* program offering five tracks of study: Congregational Leadership; African American Congregational Leadership; Spiritual Direction; and Mission in the

Contemporary United States; and the Association of Chicago Theological School's (ACTS) D.Min. program in preaching.

In the coming months, Garrett-Evangelical will roll out new programs—online, in Evanston, in congregational settings, and on the campuses of select United Methodist-related colleges. 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.

On January 1, 2014, I became president of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the seminary and the church in this capacity. Garrett-Evangelical is blessed with a great heritage and a strong future. Please let us know if there are ways we can work with you as we continue to seek to be a seminary for the church and the world. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Lallene J. Rector, President