

## 2014 CONFERENCE REPORTS

### AFRICA PLANNING COMMITTEE

The New England Conference Covenant with the West Angola Conference was initially approved by the 1999 Annual Conference and amended, signed, and formally approved by the 2000 Annual Conference.

The Africa Task Force, now called the Africa Planning Committee, was charged as the coordinating body in our conference for the fulfillment of the Covenant, the purpose of which is to significantly enhance the mission and ministry of Christ in both conferences through mutual sharing of resources and by regular exchange visits.

In May 2013, Marion Grant and I, as co-chairs of the African Planning Committee, met with Bishop Devadhar. He affirmed NEAC's continued commitment to the West Angola Covenant.

The amount of \$11,858.56 in the West Angola Covenant account, plus \$1,582.00 remaining in the Together for Tomorrow West Angola account, has recently been sent to the West Angola Conference for their ministry.

For a variety of reasons, the Committee has not been active since AC 2013. Marion Grant resigned as co-chair of the committee in January 2014 and her leadership has been greatly missed.

I was first involved in the Committee when it was known as the Africa Task Force and served for several years. It is time for me to step aside. Hopefully, new leadership can bring new energy and enthusiasm and the African Planning Committee can be a vital part of our conference.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dorothy Hollenbeck, Co-Chair

### AFRICA UNIVERSITY

2013 can best be described as a watershed year for Africa University. At 21, the impact of this trailblazing, Holy Spirit-inspired ministry of The United Methodist Church transcends the brief span of its existence.

Africa University owes its growing impact and vitality to local congregations such as yours, in the New England Conference. The New England Conference invested 100% of its asking to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment. It was one of 25 annual conferences whose leadership in giving resulted in an overall performance of 91.77% for the AUF in 2013, the highest level of any of the general church funds.

Thank you, New England, for being consistent, faithful and generous. Your contributions are providing crucial resources for nurturing global leaders and inspiring hope and transformation in Africa.

2013 Highlights:

- Enrollment: Sustained by the steadfast investment of Annual Conferences of The United Methodist Church, Africa University's enrollment grew to 1,480 full-time students from 25 African countries in 2013. Female students now account for 53% of that total enrollment.
- Scholarships: Second mile giving by individuals and churches enabled Africa University to distribute more than \$1.8 million in scholarships and financial aid to its students. Africa University also launched the Girl Child Scholarship Fund in order to provide more African women with access to higher education.
- Through new initiatives that include a "\$50 million Campaign for Endowment" and outreach to increase financial contributions from its alumni and others in Africa, the institution is working towards greater sustainability.
- Graduates: 450 students were awarded degree certificates in June 2013, growing the number of Africa University graduates currently at work in communities to around 5,000. Every day, these graduates manifest the promise and power of the Gospel to bring light and hope to a troubled world.
- Discipleship: In August, three 2013 graduates were commissioned as young adult missionaries by the General Board of Global Ministries, pushing the total number of Africa University alumni serving internationally as mission interns to seven in just two years.

"The church has a tremendous role to play in the transformation of the world," said Jacques Kazemb, an AU graduate and mission intern who worked in outreach to at-risk children and youth in Brazil. "Through a project like the Shade and Fresh Water in Brazil, the Methodist Church is contributing to a positive change in many children's lives."

Kazemb has returned to his home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a plan to start a similar initiative for marginalized children and youth.

The Africa University community—students, faculty, staff and trustees, thank you and celebrate your ongoing investment in changing lives for the better. We pray that you will maintain your commitment to this ministry. Please:

- Keep your investment in the AUF at 100% of the asking or higher. This allows for the university to meet its day-to-day and operational expenses without uncertainty.
- Encourage your local church to become an annual scholarship donor.
- Consider leading an effort to have your district invest in an endowed scholarship which can support one student a year in perpetuity.
- Take advantage of our new Dream Insurance program, which allows individuals to donate all or a portion of the proceeds of an affordable Term Life Insurance plan to Africa University.
- As you make your estate plans, remember to include Africa University in your will.
- Pray without ceasing for the ongoing success of this important effort to equip disciples to contribute to a rich, impactful and vibrant future for their nations and for our global church.

Thank you and God bless you.

Submitted by Mr. James H. Salley  
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Together, we are changing Africa: Learning here. Living here. Leading here.  
Serving God. All the time. Everywhere.

### **ANTI-RACISM STEERING COMMITTEE**

*Area Diversity – As a people who yearn for God, we recognize that racism and all forms of discrimination undermine our ability to further the ministry of Christ. (Our Five Critical Issues of the New England Conference)*

The Anti-Racism Steering committee consists of individuals who have deep commitment and experience in Anti-Racism and Dismantling White Privilege work and also representatives from Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Laity, Commission on Religion and Race, and Bishop's Office.

We celebrate Cross Racial and Cross Cultural ministry. Again, this year we have offered Cross Racial and Cross Cultural Ministry Events for both clergy and laity at Rolling Ridge.

1. Event for Supporting Clergy  
Date: June 17, 2013  
Presenters : Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, Jung Sun Oh, Charlotte Pridgen-Randolph, Rene Perez
2. Event for Supporting Laity  
Date: August 23, 2013  
Presenters: Don Rudalevige, Joan Humphrey, Lisa Fagerstrom

We also have provided two books, Many Faces One Church and Meeting God at the Boundaries to support pastor and laity in the Cross Racial and Cross Cultural ministry setting.

The Anti-Racism Steering committee with Community Change (trainers and facilitators) will offer Anti-Racism training in March and September in 2014.

On behalf of the Anti-Racism Steering committee: Travis Bonnette-Kim , Leigh Dry, Eric Dupee, Oscar Harrell, Sophia Harrell, Dot Hollenbeck, Joan Humphrey, Wendell Luke, Ricka Marsh, Lynn McCracken, Jung Sun Oh, Erica Robinson-Johnson, Don Rudalevige, Rene Wilbur.

Wendell Luke, Jung Sun Oh; Co-Chair

## BISHOP'S COFFEE/TEA PRAYER PARTNERS

Bishop Devadhar is grateful to the coffee/tea prayer partners who responded to the invitation in his 2013 Episcopal Address. As of February, 47 people pledged their support to pray and to sacrifice the price of one cup of coffee or tea daily to support new ministry initiatives, and have contributed a total of \$2,100. Thank you to these partners in prayer and mission.

The coffee/tea prayer partner is an initiative of the Bishop to encourage second-mile giving to support innovative and strategic ministries that are not budgeted. Some ways the funds may be used include

- helping younger clergy join learning groups,
- helping the laity to become apprentices for Jesus in their secular setting,
- training spiritual formation gurus all across the conference, and
- dreaming and planning other innovative ministries that will increase the ability of our laity and clergy to become transformational leaders.

Bishop Devadhar hopes that five hundred prayer partners will agree to sacrifice only \$25.00 a month,\* which is the equivalent of the price of a small cup of coffee or tea just four times a week. Along with your prayers for this effort, this is all it will take for us to get started on creating these programs and increase our impact for Christ in our communities. With 500 partners, we could reach \$150,000 for these programs and increase our reach even further!

With your help, this is a reachable goal. Together, our New England Conference churches have more than 90,000 members, with more than 30,000 in worship each week. We hope that all of our church members will consider becoming a coffee/tea prayer partner and contribute to this effort. Download bulletin inserts and commitment cards, pledge online, or find out more at [www.neumc.org/coffeebreak](http://www.neumc.org/coffeebreak).

\* 2<sup>nd</sup> mile giving after your regular tithing

Erica Robinson-Johnson  
Assistant to the Bishop

## BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

*My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. John 15:8*

The Conference Board of Global Ministries continues to encourage a passion for mission and to promote participation in missions both in our Conference, our nation and globally.

This board continues to define its ministry scope as groups evolve and change to meet the mission needs of today. In this fourth year as a functioning body within the New England Conference, we are still working to establish and strengthen connections across the varied ministries of our Conference and to develop more leadership at the district level, in accordance with our Disciplinary mandate.

We are wonderfully served by our two co-secretaries with the General Board of Global Ministries: Margaret Welch and Howard McGlaulin. Our Conference Mission Coordinator, Barbara Burnside, brings invaluable expertise. And, there are many others whose contributions allow our work to go forward.

We have met three times this past year and have worked to support a number of ministries.

- Imagine No Malaria campaign
- assisting the Moscow Theological Seminary Task Force
- implementing the Bishop Weaver Mission Scholarship Fund
- supporting this conference's varied mission efforts in Nicaragua

Through the Bishop Weaver Mission Scholarship fund, it has been a joy and blessing to be able to support two representatives of this Conference in their mission travels this past fall and winter.

These ministries and others represent the strength of the ministry efforts supported by New England Conference.

As this Conference moves to implement its Strategic Plan and reorganize for mission, we are waiting to find how that impacts our Board. With a focus on smaller boards and greater accountability within the Conference, our current structure may be transformed into a very different body. As we seek to be good stewards of our time and energies, we are looking for ways to facilitate our meetings for maximum participation and minimum travel. We continue to work to facilitate cooperation and coordination of mission efforts across the Conference and to foster greater mission organization at the district level.

The work of this Board has been greatly blessed by the generous spirit and support of many who have assisted with information as we seek to strengthen our Mission outreach in all areas. We extend an invitation to all to learn more about our projects and plans for the work of mission and ministry of New England Conference in the coming year.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. –Colossians 3:17

Respectfully submitted,  
Donavee Copenhaver, Chair

### **BOARD OF LAITY/CONFERENCE LAY LEADER**

The way is long—let us go together.  
The way is difficult—let us help each other.  
The way is joyful—let us share it.  
The way is ours alone—let us go in love.  
The way is open before us—let us begin.  
Author Unknown

The members of the Board of Laity continue to travel the way together—with joy and love, sharing and helping each other. They have been, and continue to be, a wonderful group of devoted Christians working in concert for the good of New England Annual Conference.

In 2013, a small task force of the board worked together to plan and present the Laity Session at the annual conference session. Those attending were treated to an excellent evening of prayer, Bible study, and an exposition of each of the five requirements for membership and discipleship in The United Methodist Church. There was also an opportunity for announcements and questions about what was coming up in the next few days.

Another task force assumed responsibility for reviewing videos submitted by entrants in the challenge to all of the conference's laity to give the Laity Address at the annual conference session. The winner, Patsy Frey-Davis from Bath, Maine, delighted everyone with a speech based on the theme of the 2013 Annual Conference.

Both of these sub-groups of the Board of Laity readily volunteered to undertake the tasks before them. Many members of the conference expressed high praise for the results of their work, and they truly deserve those words of appreciation.

As this report is being written, the board is planning to lead a Laity Session for the 2014 Annual Conference and to, once again, challenge laity to aspire to deliver the Laity Address.

In October, the district lay leader of Connecticut-Western Massachusetts, Pearl Washington, and the lay leader of Grace UMC of Essex Junction, Vermont, Elizabeth Stone, traveled with me to New Jersey for the Northeastern Jurisdiction Annual Lay Leaders Gathering. We were treated to several inspiring presentations on what it means for laity to honor our Lord by being fully involved in the life of the church.

Throughout the fall, laypeople participated in district meetings with Bishop Devadhar. On behalf of the Board, I want to express appreciation to the bishop for his commitment to meeting with the laity in these sessions and for his openness to their concerns.

Finally, this is an appeal to laity to consider taking on the role of district lay leader. There are openings in several districts across the conference, and sharing the responsibilities within a district can be rewarding and fun. Please let your district superintendent know if you are interested.

With gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Conference Lay Leader of New England, and on behalf of the Board of Laity,

Rene Wilbur, Conference Lay Leader

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Presented to and ratified by the Trustees at the meeting of January 11, 2014.

By *Discipline*, the Conference Trustees have overall responsibility for the custody, care and maintenance of Conference-owned properties. This includes Conference Parsonages, office facilities, camps and retreat centers and local Church properties which have been declared closed or abandoned. The Trustees also administer grant and loan programs and oversee the Conference Unit Insurance program.

**Residential Properties** – We continue our effort to encourage local District Parsonage Committees to take an active role in overseeing maintenance activities at all our District Parsonages, and providing the Trustees guidance on long-term needs for such properties. Considerable efforts were made this past year in upgrading the parsonages in Vermont and in the Tri-State District. We continued a program of site visits to District parsonages, visiting parsonages in Vermont and in Central Massachusetts. With the upcoming completion of the term of office of the District Superintendent in CtWM, efforts continue to identify a property that could serve as the Parsonage for that district.

**Loans/Grants** – The Trustees bid farewell to Debbie Humm who had served as our Grant Supervisor, and welcomed Marti Bower to take her place. Marti has continued to oversee grants issued by the Trustees. Additionally Marti has help re-establish a functioning loan process, arranging payments on several loans, and restructuring some existing loans to provide relief and guidance to local churches faced with financial difficulties.

**Insurance** – The Conference Unit Insurance Program continues to be a tremendous benefit to our churches. A welcome reduction in losses for the 2012-2013 year helped facilitate a more moderate rate increase than might have been expected. Credit also goes to our broker, Fred C. Church of Lowell, Massachusetts, for their diligent work on our behalf. I thank members of the Insurance Committee and commend to your attention the separate report submitted by co-Chairmen, LaVergne Randolph and Bruce Maxwell.

**Abandoned Properties** – One of the tasks of the Trustees which consumes a great deal of time and effort is managing and marketing local abandoned church properties which fall under the jurisdiction of the Trustees. Rev. Paul O’Neil has been in charge of these efforts for a number of years. Rev. Don Hegeman has also been working in this area for the past year. Although we had some success in disposing of properties in 2013, we still have some properties that we have held for more than 12 months, and we have added to the list during the year. We have at least five (5) local church properties the Trustees desire to sell and efforts on all such properties continue.

**Office/Business Properties** – A continuing disappointment is our inability to dispose of the Commonwealth Avenue property in Boston. We continue to search for a Buyer/Tenant for that property. With respect to the Lawrence, Massachusetts office building, in the fall of 2013, the Trustees did award a contract to a firm to complete a “facility audit” of that building in order to guide planning and financing for appropriate maintenance.

**Camps & Conference Facilities** – As the year ended, we are finally at the brink of a construction contract to complete the long-anticipated Aldersgate parsonage. Thanks go to Rob Crichlow of the Trustees and Lee Carpenter of the Aldersgate staff for their efforts. At Rolling Ridge, planning and efforts continue for long-term improvements to our Conference facility there.

Looking ahead to 2014, the Trustees anticipate the following major activities:

- **The completion and celebration of a new Camp Director Parsonage at Aldersgate in time for the 2014 camper season.**
- Acquisition of a new District Parsonage for CtWM and continued discussions on a possible relocation of our Vermont District Parsonage
- Sale of several abandoned properties on our roster.
- Some disposition of Commonwealth Avenue in Boston

Finally, I want to express my appreciation to the members of the Trustees for their dedicated service and personal support. I want to especially recognize Robbin Grill for her long years of service to the Trustees as Board Secretary, as she looks forward to resting her laptop and enjoying more time with her husband Alan, who has travelled often with the Trustees hither and yon. Best wishes!

Respectfully submitted,  
Bernard H. Campbell, President

## BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dear Colleagues in the New England Conference,

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 U.S.**
- **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

## **CAMP ALDERSGATE**

For nearly 70 years, youth and adults have found a sacred space at Camp Aldersgate, one of your outdoor ministry sites.

Aldersgate is a place where everyone belongs and can feel the love God has for every child. Our mission is to create these communities: a place where families are beyond traditional definitions, where each person is loved for who they are not who the world tells them to be, and where people can breathe in the love of God in order to feel the peace that comes with being a child of God. We don't create walls of separation; we teach our campers how to tear them down by being God's hands and voice in the world.

Our faith teaching is based on three key truths: God loves you, God loves all of us, and God wants us to love one another. We believe we bring people to God by living our faith. We strive to show campers a world transformed by disciples of Jesus Christ. This means we talk about taking care of each other, taking care of the earth, and building relationships with our brothers and sisters from around the world. And we don't just talk about it...we model and live it every day at camp! The Aldersgate Experience is realized through faith talks that allow campers to explore their faith and ask questions without judgment, creative and youth friendly worships, and staff who mentor the values of love and acceptance in all parts of the community.

There are thousands of stories of how Aldersgate has changed people's lives and they are varied and touching. Let me tell you about "Jack." He came to Aldersgate as a young camper. I found that there was a lot going on in his life and he spent a lot of time talking through problems that kept coming up at camp and in life. Jack was in foster care and had quite a few different placements and really no sense of purpose or belonging in his life. Year after year Jack came back to camp for several weeks every summer. After about 4 years, we didn't see Jack for an entire summer. We had fears and hopes: fears that he had given up, and hopes that he found a forever family. The next summer Jack returned and we were excited to see him. He told us his story of trying to move in with family in the Southwest, but it didn't work out so he was back in New England. I asked Jack why he came back to camp and he said, "of course I would come back to Aldersgate...this is my home. This is the only place I feel like I belong. I'm not a foster kid here. I'm Jack. Nobody can take this home away from me." Jack has grown up at camp and gone through our leadership training and worked his way to senior counselor. He is giving back. He is giving the gift only he can give to those campers that come from the foster system. We know a lot of stories similar to Jack's. Aldersgate is home, the place where they feel safe and the place where they can be themselves.

And Jack's story started with the generosity of the Aldersgate community. Without the campership fund that allowed him to come to camp, we don't know where Jack would be today – instead, he is a young man growing in his faith and spreading it to others.

We focus on mentoring disciples for the transformation of the world. This is accomplished at many different levels in our summer program and through retreats and in our new YMTI (Youth Ministry Training Institute) through the entire year. YMTI is in its infancy and we are excited about where God is leading it. At Aldersgate we have felt called to support youth ministry in our conference. YMTI will provide a multi-layer, cutting-edge approach to youth ministry. Watch for youth ministry trainings, seminars, retreats, and local youth programs in the coming year.

Thank you for your support and continued prayers for Camp Aldersgate's ministry.

Your Partner in Ministry,  
Jennifer L. Becker Carpenter, Executive Director

## **CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

Candler School of Theology prepares real people to make a real difference in the real world. Our commitment to authentic discipleship and relevant ministry enables us to develop uniquely well-rounded leaders who are challenged academically, encouraged spiritually, and immersed in Christian service from the first day they arrive on campus.

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

denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

Candler celebrates its Centennial in 2014, marking our 100th anniversary with commemorative events that reflect on our past and a conference on theology and the church that envisions the future. The yearlong celebration begins in August with the opening of the second phase of Candler's new 128,600-square-foot, LEED-certified building, seven years in the making.

Not only is Candler expanding its physical space this year—it is expanding degree offerings as well. In response to the changing needs of the church, Candler is introducing five new degrees to equip Christian leaders: the Doctor of Ministry, the Master of Religious Leadership, the Master of Religion and Public Life, and two dual degrees pairing divinity and social work and divinity and development practice. With these newest additions to our degree programs, Candler graduates truly will be ready to lead wherever God calls.

Candler's student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. Our enrollment stands at 441, with 340 seeking the Master of Divinity, 47 the Master of Theological Studies, 21 the Master of Theology, 15 the Doctor of Theology, and 18 enrolled as Non-Degree students. The student population is 32 percent U.S. ethnic minority, 49 percent women, and the median age of the entering class is 27. Students represent 39 denominations, with half identifying as United Methodist.

We continue to emphasize preparing our students for leadership in an increasingly global context, and now offer 14 academic exchanges with theology schools in 12 countries across five continents. In addition, Candler has an ongoing summer internship program with the Methodist Church in the Bahamas, and participates each year in travel seminars to the Middle East and in World Methodist Evangelism Institute evangelism seminars, traveling in 2014 to Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Brazil.

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

Jan Love,  
Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION RESOURCE ASSISTANT**

It continues to be my privilege and responsibility to support all those who do the work of “making disciples for the transformation of the world” through the ministry of Christian Education. During the past year, the numbers of you who have been in touch with me has grown – and my distribution list is now well over 100 educators throughout the Conference.

This list allows me to share with you resources that can help your congregation, Church School leaders and families. I regularly send out materials via email just before the liturgical season changes – and forward information that I think will be of use to those practicing the ministry of Christian Education within the New England Conference. Many of you have been in touch with me to tell me how these materials have helped you, so if you are not yet on my list, email me at [drelizabeth@neumc.org](mailto:drelizabeth@neumc.org) to be added to list!

I greatly appreciate hearing from those of you with questions as to how you can develop or begin CE programs within your congregations. Working with you is a great joy to me. It continues to be a delight to meet some of you face-to-face as I present during your District Days. I have been to the Central MA and NH Districts “in-person” and joined the Northern Maine district virtually in May.

Safe Sanctuaries® continues to expand within my portfolio. I attended a conference in Nashville in January and had the opportunity to meet with others in the global church as we discussed “what’s next?” as we develop and implement our policies. Joy Melton’s new book on Safe Sanctuaries® for vulnerable adults was published at the end of 2013 and this is a wonderful resource to us as we work to bring our congregations into line with Resolution 209 of the Annual Conference. Joy will have a new book out within the year on expanding Safe Sanctuaries® into virtual space. John Chickering’s learning center on this very topic at Annual Conference will give us a head start on covering this important area in our policies.

I continue to enjoy teaching at both Local Pastor's Licensing School and New Pastor Orientation. It is such a delight to get to know and support these new leaders in our congregations.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with me if I can be of help to you.

Grace and Peace,  
Elizabeth L. Windsor

## **CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

The Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships Committee (CUIRC) has pursued a dynamic and full agenda this Annual Conference year. Not only has the leadership among the group been exploring the understanding of ecumenism and interreligious concerns at the local church level, we have studied and discussed Brian McLaren's book *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?: Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World* as a foundation for our own ecumenical and interreligious conversations.

Together we met both in person and virtually to imagine and to name our Conference hopes for the next three years. These include:

- developing a curriculum that encompasses both ecumenical and interreligious work that will be available for presentation at each District Day / District Gatherings where we faithfully expect to make local church connections
- being more of a presence at Annual Conference through presentations, learning sessions and advertisements
- working with the Conference Committee on Native American Ministry in planning a service of reconciliation for Annual Conference 2015
- continuing to recruit people who are passionate about ecumenism and interreligious relationships to join us in our work throughout the six states that make up our Annual Conference.

At our foundation, the CUIRC's work remains the same: to build relationships, to participate in interfaith dialogue, and to encourage Christian unity around the world. For our work and commitment to all kinds of relationships and for the Committee, we ask for your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hope N. Luckie

## **COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**

Those of us who serve on the Conference Commission on Archives and History have been gifted with the call to assist those at the annual conference and local church level with the recovery, preservation and celebration of the history of the people called Methodist within the New England area. That call is carried in a number of different ways.

Annual Conference chairpersons are by constitution, members of the Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History and are periodically required to host the annual meeting of the Jurisdictional Commission. NECCAH hosted the 2013 annual meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from May 14-16, with 55 persons participating. Our theme was "God, Grace, and Granite: Methodism in the Former New Hampshire Conference." Conference Chair and Historian, Pat Thompson, gave a power-point presentation on Tuesday, in preparation for the all-day tour on Wednesday, providing an overview of the highlights of the history of the former conference. On Tuesday evening, the group was graced with a wonderful re-enactment of the life and music of Fanny Crosby, by the Rev. Anne Partner Nelson and her husband, John.

Margaret Bickford, President of the New England UMC Historical Society, organized the tour which took us to Temple Israel, formerly the second house of worship for Portsmouth Methodists, where the New Hampshire conference was organized in June, 1829; the Newfields Elementary School, former site of the Wesleyan Academy (the first Methodist academic institution in New England); Locust Grove Cemetery, where John Broadhead, one of the founders of Wesleyan Academy, and his family are buried; Hedding Camp Meeting grounds; the conference office in Lawrence, MA, where many of our New England Methodist artifacts are on display; the Old South Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, MA, where the Rev. George Whitfield is buried; Peoples UMC in Newburyport, which displays a replica of a nationally known Angel Gabriel weathervane, and the East Parish UMC in Salisbury, MA, built in 1834 and unique in that it is a "parish" church, owned by

the parish, not the Methodists. Wednesday evening Commission members presented a pageant portraying the life and ministry of the Rev. Melville Cox, first missionary sent to a foreign country (Liberia) by the MEC Missionary Society.

In September, Pat Thompson and Commission member, Mary Kay Schueneman, attended the quadrennial meeting of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) at Drew University in Madison, NJ, to which the chairs of annual conference commissions are invited to participate to learn about the work of the General Commission and share problems and experiences with other annual conference commissions. In particular, this year, one focus was on the role of the annual conference Historian, raising the need to make this position a more formal one than presently exists within New England.

The New England Conference currently has 25 sites which have been formally recognized as places of significance to Methodists in New England and each year the Commission tries to hold at least one of its two meetings at one of the these sites. In October the meeting was held at the Crystal Lake Community Church in Ellington, CT, which is next door to the oldest Methodist parsonage in New England. Currently owned by the Crystal Lake Historical Society it is slowly being renovated so that it can be utilized as a local museum. Footprints on the Sands of Time: A Guide to the Official Historic Sites and Other Historic Places in the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church has been updated and is available from the chairperson at [pajt8817@aol.com](mailto:pajt8817@aol.com).

Our archivist at Boston University, Kara Jackman, continues the work of preserving the records of the annual conference and local churches which are housed in the archives at the University. In particular, Kara is available to work with local church historians to assist them in organizing their records; she is also available to work with churches which may be closing to assure that, where appropriate, records are transferred to a nearby church or to the archives at BUSTH. This year we contracted with Ancestry.com to digitize old membership records to make them more accessible to genealogists. Kara may be contacted at [kjackman@bu.edu](mailto:kjackman@bu.edu).

Patricia J. Thompson, Chair

### COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The Commission on Equitable Compensation has been significantly shorthanded this year, and remains in need of gifted support for our work. For the second half of 2013, the Commission has had only one layperson, and we lack representation from four districts (Mid Maine, Tri-State, RISEM, and Central Massachusetts). By God’s grace, and through the diligence and gifts of our members, we have accomplished the work the Discipline and Conference policy requires of us.

The Commission met face-to-face on four occasions during 2013, as well as by email on several more occasions. As of February 2014, the Commission has approved a total of \$166,974.50 for salary grants to be distributed to 34 pastoral appointments throughout 2014.

Grant distribution for the whole of 2013 is outlined in the chart below, including Minimum Salary, Strategic Salary, Missional Salary, Sustaining Salary and Emergency (Arrearage prevention or remediation) Grants.

<u>District</u>	<u>Total by District</u>	<u>District Percentage</u>	<u>District Average Grant</u>	<u># of Pastoral Appointments</u>
NME	\$ 26,775.00	14.61%	\$ 1,912.50	14
MME	\$ 8,022.00	4.38%	\$ 4,011.00	2
NH	\$ 18,669.00	10.19%	\$ 6,223.00	3
TRI	\$ 32,833.50	17.92%	\$ 3,648.17	9
CT/WMA	\$ 30,311.00	16.54%	\$ 4,330.14	7
CMA	\$ 7,947.00	4.34%	\$ 2,649.00	3
MBH	\$ 15,299.40	8.35%	\$ 2,185.63	7

<u>District</u>	<u>Total by District</u>	<u>District Percentage</u>	<u>District Average Grant</u>	<u># of Pastoral Appointments</u>
RISEM	\$ 20,375.00	11.12%	\$ 4,075.00	5
VT	\$ 23,023.00	12.56%	\$ 3,837.17	6
<b>NEUMC</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 183,254.90</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 3,272.41</b>	<b>56</b>

For 2015, the Commission recommends minimum salaries of \$39,330 for Elders, Deacons, Provisional and Associate Members and \$35,586 for Local Pastors. The Commission also recommends a minimum Reimbursable Account of \$2,950. There are no proposed changes for years of service increments this year.

This year, the Commission has developed an Arrearage Policy in compliance with ¶ 624.2 of the 2012 *Discipline* to be voted on by the Annual Conference. We have been working on a Certification of Payment Form to help limit Annual Conference liabilities due to salary arrearages which will fulfill requirements of the Arrearage Policy once passed.

This year, the Commission on Equitable Compensation is recommending changes to our Grant Program for 2015. We recommend three Grant categories: Minimum Compensation, Strategic Compensation, and Sustaining Compensation Grants. While these derive from our existing Grant program, the intention is to provide more effective support to churches in transitional situations where meeting Base Compensation may become difficult for a variety of reasons. One result is the introduction of maximum grants size based on total base compensation, including years of service increases.

The Commission welcomes questions and requests for assistance from districts and local churches regarding the guidelines and application forms for salary grants. In addition, the Commission is available to help with understanding and advocacy around matters of pastoral compensation, both for clergy and local churches. Supplemental assistance is also provided with strategic plan formats, audits and financial records. The following individuals are members of the Commission. They are listed with the Districts in which they reside:

- Mrs. Rose Gwinn, MBH
- The Rev. Deb Estey, VT
- The Rev. Dr. Pat MacHugh, (D.S.) NME
- Pastor David (D. J.) Martin, CTWMA
- The Rev. Geisa Matos-Machuca, NH
- The Rev. David Nicol, Chairperson, NME
- Pastor Alecia Reeves-Freeman, MBH
- The Rev. David Williams, CTWMA

Respectfully submitted  
David A. Nicol

### COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (CCFA)

CCFA is charged “to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures and management services for the annual conference;” “serve in a liaison role among conference agencies with responsibilities;” recommend budgets, capital campaigns, apportionment methods, cooperate in providing interpretive budget materials, recommend funding procedures for local churches and remain connectional relationships. (BOD 611-613.6)

In carrying out these responsibilities CCFA seeks to actively engage with the mission and vision of NEUMC, being transformed by the Spirit, promoting unity and mission, to proclaim Christ boldly, and effectively equip and support NEUMC, while employing plans and practices of fiscal management and administrative service that reflect our vision.

Bishop’s Financial Summit II:

1. **Mission Share Interpretation Team:** We will convene such a team to help in telling stories of our common mission, expand use of social media and other digital resources, targeted emails and work to develop a one stop shop for resources at the conference website.

2. **District Finance Teams:** We are laying the ground work for district teams that will come alongside local churches to walk with the local church through various financial and stewardship aspects of its current ministry life. We expect to then work with a pilot project district team, so that we are ready to roll this out across the conference next year.
3. **Mission Shares Formula and Process:** CCFA has examined a wide array of formulae and process in the UMC connection. Some are designed to leave the conference with insufficient cash reserves, while others allocate costs with wider or narrower nets covering local church expenses, income and membership. In addition, some conferences have more or less direct billed expenses (such as pension), and we are looking at our options for this. Nevertheless, we are not recommending changes at the present time, as we believe that the system is relatively equitable to the extent that all churches strive to participate fully.
4. **Collaborative Purchasing:** There are limited options for regional purchasing. Major expenses (heating) have diverse supplier systems. Without adding staff at the Conference, large scale combined purchasing does not seem tenable. However, we will work to share information about vendor discounts and collaborative purchasing organizations; encourage the use of local, regional and national collaborative purchasing organizations; and provide a limited database of information on discounts and collaborative purchasing organizations and church contacts.
5. **Resourcing Beyond Mission Shares:** CCFA is looking to: develop a grant-writing network within the annual conference, including laity and clergy with grant-writing skills and/or interest in being trained with representation from each state and partnership with the United Methodist Foundation of New England. The network will be tasked with the following:
  - a. develop a list of conference entities and projects seeking grants
  - b. identify in conference and beyond, sources of grant funding, seed money available for new conference initiatives, and joint non-profit and religious grant-notification groups. CCFA is considering hiring grant writers for specific projects.
6. **Performance Based Budgeting:** We expect to develop information for boards and agencies on budgeting and evaluation to be used in developing the 2016 budget requests, provide workshops for churches and conference boards at district leadership days, in cooperation with UMFNE.

CCFA is working with the Trustees on a **Capital Campaigns and Gift Acceptance Policy** to give clarity for all. This will be posted when done at the Conference website.

We extend a sincere word of thanks to all churches and their members who have made the sacrifices necessary to keep current their mission shares. We know that the burden is felt in unique ways in each congregation, and we understand the struggles some have. Let us all remember that we stand at a critical juncture in our history, in which we must make new investments to grow the Kingdom of God for the future if there is to be a future for Methodism here.

Ralph Wesley Howe, President

Nancy Bischoff, Vice President

## DEACONESS ABUNDANT LIFE COMMUNITIES

Deaconess Abundant Life Communities, founded by Methodists, has been present for and served older adults since 1889 as the New England Deaconess Association. The Deaconess provides aging services and accommodations to meet the changing needs of older adults. With dedicated staff and excellent facilities, we continue to adapt in order to provide high quality support and care to all of our residents. Our Core Values Statement highlights how we spread our “Wings of Love” and is the foundation for all we do:

**Deaconess Abundant Life Communities...**

**Cares** compassionately for our residents, staff, volunteers, and their families while sharing

**Abundant life** with an attitude of joy, hope and commitment;

**Reaching out** to our community with a holistic focus on body, mind and spirit in an

**Environment** which leads to continued excellence and financial strength as we

**Strive** for new and innovative ways to better serve older adults.

The Deaconess has transformed and built new retirement communities in Concord, MA (Newbury Court), Northampton, MA (Rockridge), Provincetown, MA (Seashore Point), and Gilford, NH (Wesley Woods). In 2014 we open a second phase to Seashore Point in Provincetown which includes, for the first time for the Deaconess, residential

condominiums for purchase. Through these transitions, we continue to honor our heritage on a daily basis by being grounded in our core values and our unchanging commitment to caring and compassionate service. We surround every resident with a sense of abundant life that touches body, mind and spirit. Each of our staff members see what they do as more than just a job and therefore in each day we feel the responsibility we have to each resident and are dedicated to surround them with a love that reflects God's love for them.

At Newbury Court in Concord, we have both market rate and affordable independent living apartments, a memory support neighborhood to meet the needs of older adults with Alzheimer's, skilled nursing and rehabilitation and Adult Day Care. In Northampton, Rockridge has independent and assisted living, memory support for Alzheimer's, as well as affordable residential care. Seashore Point, in Provincetown provides condominiums, skilled nursing and outpatient rehabilitation services. At Wesley Woods and at Wesley by the Sea in Wells, ME we have been proud to be partnering with Preachers Aid Society to support retired pastors and their spouses.

We celebrate our historical connection with the United Methodist Church and proud to provide leadership in elder care and ministry within the Conference. Please feel free to contact us at (978)369-5151 if you have any questions or needs concerning our organization, issues of long-term care, or retirement living and we would be glad to assist you. You can find out more about the Deaconess and our Deaconess Abundant Life Communities at [www.nedeaconess.org](http://www.nedeaconess.org).

Herb Taylor

## **DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES/ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP**

"So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." Romans 12:5

It is a joy and honor to serve the body of Christ through the ministries of the New England Conference. Together we care for one another in connection and resource our churches for fruitful mission and ministry so that we can transform the world. From my first day September 1, 2013, I have joined you around committee and task force tables, celebrated with you at communion tables, prayed with you in sanctuaries, and represented you in ecumenical gatherings. I have served with Bishop Devadhar on your behalf, caring for pastors and clergy members of our conference and making important connections beyond our conference in the larger church and world. Most every day, I help to connect at least one of you with the resources you need to do your best ministry...and for that, I am grateful to be able to serve in this role.

Our collective work this year helped shape new strategies for mission and ministry through our work on the Strategic Planning Team, CFA and Stewardship Task Force. We have welcomed the resources of Dr. Elizabeth Windsor, as our Christian Education Resource Assistant. Creative partnerships between churches are meeting needs among immigrants and refugees through JFON and other ministries. Our team of gifted Camp and Retreat Ministry directors and their boards are finding new ways to resource and partner with our churches to reach more young people. The committee on leadership regularly evaluates the work of our leadership teams and recruits new servants where needed. The conference vision table is a place where we network and collaborate on strategies for the conference. Our Hispanic/Latino ministry is growing exponentially in leadership development and new faith communities. New leaders are training for the necessary work of disaster response.

Every day, I give thanks for the work of Rev. Jim McPhee, who served in this role for over a decade. His hard work and dedication to this work challenges me to do the same, and his organization and guidance helped to make the transition go very smoothly. I am also grateful to partner with a wonderful team in Lawrence and around the conference including our program staff: Rick McKinley, Alex Wood and Rosemary McNulty; our Consultant Network coordinated by Barb Lemmel; our Camp and Retreat Directors: Jennifer Carpenter, Michael Moore, Norm Thombs, Larry Peacock, brand new co-directors at Covenant Hills Jeffrey and Ashley Dodson; and those who serve part-time in a variety of ministries: Lori McKinley (congregational development), Emma Escobar (Latino Ministry), Elizabeth Windsor (education/safe sanctuaries), Barbara Burnside (missions), Calvin Scherle (communications), Lisa Abbott (database), and Joy Mueller (statistician).

As I listen and learn more from you every day, I am grateful for your service and devotion to Christ. At the same time, I sense the need for us to focus our energies around some common strategies for mission and ministry, and for alignment of our resources around those strategies. I hear the desire for more connection and support and accountability. I wonder how we can do better at communicating so that for every question I answer, those who aren't asking the questions know the answers too. And, I recognize that there are stories of transformation and new life that need to be shared and told. These are our challenges and my goals for the coming year as we continue to serve God together.

I encourage you to let me know how I can better serve you. Keep asking the questions. Share your stories. Invite me to your churches and events. Tell me your stories. Subscribe to my blog The Vine ([www.neumc.org/vine](http://www.neumc.org/vine)).

Connected in Christ,  
Erica Robinson-Johnson, February 2014

## DISABILITIES COMMITTEE

The Disabilities Committee is focusing on awareness, education and advocacy. The members are interested in presenting sessions or speaking at local churches, District Training Events, and Annual Conferences. Two committee members will be presenting at the 2014 Annual Conference Learning Centers. Come hear us at “Radical Hospitality” and “Welcoming the Stranger.” Members are willing to provide special needs training for camp counselors, Sunday School teachers, Directors of Christian Education, and any other individuals or groups who are interested. Three committee members and their families attended Family Camp 2013 at Covenant Hills Christian Camp in Cabot, VT. Additionally, the committee is pursuing the possibility of providing on-line information and resources via a link to the New England Conference website. There are regional and national training events about including those with special needs in local congregations. It is our hope to send some committee members to a national training event. These members would then provide education and resources to the committee and local congregations in the New England Annual Conference.

Members of the committee have listened to concerns expressed by past annual conference attendees. Many of the concerns related to lack of accessibility at Gordon College. The areas of primary concern were lack of accessible seating in the chapel, the height of the beds in the dormitories, lack of accessible bathrooms in the dormitories, lack of accessible parking on campus, lack of usable electrical outlets in the chapel for plugging in oxygen tanks, difficulty hearing the speakers, and the dining hall food line that was too narrow. Several others expressed concern over the doors in some buildings. The automatic doors opened outward towards the person trying to use them. The public bathroom doors were too heavy for some attendees to push in or out independently. Some other concerns were related to medical coverage. In the past, there had been a first aid provider as well as a first aid kit in the chapel during sessions. In 2013, there was no provider and a first aid kit was not made available until part way through conference. Another concern expressed was that there were no telephones in the dorm rooms if there was a medical emergency. The family dormitory had mold and mildew in the basement rooms. If there are any concerns that have not been expressed, please contact Sheri Smith at [sherismith27@gmail.com](mailto:sherismith27@gmail.com).

The committee is always looking for new members. Most of our business is conducted electronically via email. In the future, we hope to employ more technology including the use of Google + hangouts for meetings. The annual in-person meeting occurs at Annual Conference.

At Annual Conference 2013, the committee members wore brightly colored hats to be more visible. Look for us at Annual Conference 2014 wearing special t-shirts! Keep your eyes out for increased signage at this year’s Annual Conference. If you have any issues or concerns at Annual Conference, feel free to talk with a committee member.

Thank you for your continued work on creating welcoming and inclusive communities of faith! Continue to pray for the ministry of this committee, of the New England Annual Conference, and of the United Methodist Church.

Respectfully Submitted  
Sheri Smith, Chairperson

## DIVESTMENT TASK FORCE

**BACKGROUND:** The Divestment Task Force was created to implement Resolution 204, which was passed by the 2005 New England Annual Conference (“Resolution on Divesting from Companies that are Supporting in a Significant Way the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Territories”). The task force functions as a committee under the Board of Church and Society.

Several points are important: The resolution does not call for divestment from Israel, but from companies supporting the occupation; task force recommendations are not binding; and selective divestment as a tool to end the occupation is

supported by many Christian organizations, including the World Council of Churches, and by a number of Israeli and international Jewish organizations.

Our ongoing mandate is to write to companies believed to be supporting the occupation and give them 60 days to deny the involvement or to indicate that they intend to end it. After that time they can be placed on the divestment list, which is subject to re-evaluation over time. The task force votes on which companies to send letters to, engages in a dialogue with them when possible, and then votes again before adding them to the list.

**REPORTS:** The task force issued its first report in 2007 and another one in 2010, altogether recommending that United Methodist churches and investment managers in the New England Conference divest from 29 companies. The initial report and other resources and information are available on the Conference website at [www.neumc.org/divest](http://www.neumc.org/divest). Our research has been commended by people around the world, and we are working with United Methodist and other groups in the U.S. and those in other countries to build a shared base of knowledge.

**RESOLUTIONS:** In 2011 the task force was one of the sponsors of Resolution 314 entitled “Petition for Aligning UMC Investments with Resolutions on Israel/Palestine” that was passed by our Conference and others, and forwarded to the 2012 General Conference.

In 2013 the task force and the Board of Church and Society were two of the sponsors of Resolution 207 entitled “Divestments from Companies that have Refused Many Requests from United Methodists to End Their Involvement with Israel’s Occupation,” which was passed by our Conference.

**CURRENT WORK:** Three areas are currently being addressed. First, the work of the task force is ongoing. As of this writing in 2014 the divestment list is being revised and updated, and will include 27 companies. Ideally the updated list will be available on the Conference website ([www.neumc.org/divest](http://www.neumc.org/divest)) before our Annual Conference in June. In addition, letters are being sent to other companies concerning their involvement with the occupation.

Second, given the call for boycotting settlement products found in Resolution 6111 passed by the 2012 General Conference, an additional criterion is being developed regarding companies that support the occupation by buying products from the settlements.

Third, as a result of Resolution 207 that was passed by the New England Conference in 2013 (see above), there is a disconnect between how the Conference wants its money to be invested by the United Methodist Foundation of New England and what the Foundation is actually doing. To resolve this contradiction, the bishop has asked that representatives from Church and Society and the Foundation enter into a dialogue to work out their differences. Accordingly, the next step is for Church and Society to respond to this request by the bishop. Unfortunately, Church and Society has not met since the last annual conference so this issue has not been addressed.

Anyone who has questions or comments about the task force and its work, or who would like to invite a speaker to discuss that work and the situation in Israel/Palestine, is encouraged to contact the chairperson.

**CONCLUSION:** Selective divestment is consistent with the United Methodist commitment to a just and sustainable peace for all the people of the Middle East. The work of the Divestment Task Force is consistent with repeated calls by the General Conference for an end to the Israeli occupation, and offers a tangible way of working toward this goal, on the wings of love, powered by our presence and our service.

Respectfully submitted,  
William P. Aldrich, Chair

## **GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLEGE**

Green Mountain College is a four-year, private, liberal arts college with roots growing deep in the United Methodist Church. As one of the New England Conference’s two United Methodist-affiliated colleges, GMC prepares students for productive, caring, and fulfilling lives by taking the environment as the unifying theme underlying its academic and co-curricular programs. Through a wide range of liberal arts and career-focused majors, the college fosters the ideals of environmental responsibility, public service, global understanding, and lifelong intellectual, physical, and spiritual development.

We are honored to offer two scholarships to United Methodist students who attend GMC:

The Orrin F. Ireson United Methodist Scholarship is named in honor of a former trustee of the College, and a distinguished Vermont United Methodist clergyman and New England church leader. This year’s recipient was Taylor Hudson.

The Troy Conference Legacy Scholarship was established by trustee, Lorene Wilbur, and her husband, Stan, in collaboration with Robert Williams, in memory of his alumnae parents. This scholarship recognizes the historic ties between Troy Conference Academy, Green Mountain College and the United Methodist Church, and is awarded through the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation. This year's recipient was Cleopass Nakoma.

Green Mountain College's value-rich educational programs reflect many of the United Methodist Church's social principles and values as articulated in the Book of Resolutions (2012). Under the leadership of GMC's Religious & Spiritual Life Committee, an increasing number of academic and co-curricular programs assist students by supporting their spiritual needs and helping them grow in their understanding of different faiths and religious practices. GMC's nationally recognized (by groups such as the Sierra Club and the Princeton Review) Environmental Liberal Arts Curriculum (ELA) challenges students to make connections across disciplines, to explore problems from multiple viewpoints, and to become leaders. Courses such as This Sacred Earth: Spirituality and the Environment, and Stories of the Spirit, which I teach within the ELA curriculum, provide students with an opportunity to discuss issues of faith in their lives and in the world at large. This Spring I am leading a group of students on a pilgrimage to Ireland, which is the culmination of a semester's study of Irish religion, history and culture as well as of the concept of pilgrimage and the human quest for meaning.

Our students express their commitment to community and to making the world a better place through direct involvement, volunteering in a variety of venues throughout the Poultney community and region. Thanks to the leadership of Rev. David Adams and Poultney UMC, many GMC students and community members, including several international students, have participated in life-changing Alternative Spring Break trips to volunteer at Red Bird Mission over the past four years.

In the past year as Campus Chaplain, I have been involved with a variety of activities including: Diversity Week's community creation of a "Mandala of Faith and Spirituality," a candlelit "All Saints Labyrinth Walk" in memory of loved ones who have died, a student-led "Christian Club & Weekly Bible Study," twice-weekly Guided Meditations, a sunrise walk entitled "Sacred Spaces on Campus," Ash Wednesday Services, and discussions of religious questions both formal and informal. As a joyous part of my responsibilities I have officiated at several college-related weddings, and I continue to provide spiritual support for students, faculty and staff.

Green Mountain College is committed to fostering lifelong spiritual development among its students and is proud of its affiliation with the United Methodist Church. We deeply appreciate your faith in us as expressed through New England Annual Conference's continuing financial support of the office of Campus Chaplain at Green Mountain College.

Many Thanks and Many Blessings on you all,

Shirley Oskamp, Chaplain - [oskamps@greenmtn.edu](mailto:oskamps@greenmtn.edu)

## HISPANIC/LATINO COMMITTEE

The Hispanic/Latino Ministries is grateful to God for a great year of work and challenges. The committee sought to live up to its motto "United in one mind and one vision" throughout this year. All the events held had the purpose to strengthen the Hispanic/Latino Ministries in order to better serve the Hispanic/Latino community of the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church. The following were activities held in the year 2013:

1. The Hispanic/Latino Ministries met six times throughout the year. These meetings were opportunities for organization and also fellowship. Time for churches, missions, and communities of faith to share their struggles and blessings.
2. Participated in Annual Conference with a display table, music, and provided our annual report.
3. The Hispanic/Latino Ministries also gathered for a moment of fellowship during lunch at Annual Conference where we celebrated the graduation of Geisa Matos-Machuca with a Masters in Divinity and Santos Nelson Escobar with a Doctor in Ministry.
4. We celebrated our Annual Family Camp where we had more than 200 adults, youth, and children gathered to learn about our theme "United... One Mind, One Vision."
5. The Hispanic/Latino Ministries co-organized with Boston University School of Theology the 48th Annual Assembly of Methodist Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans (MARCHA). The 2nd Annual Assembly of ACLAMEN and a meeting with the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA). For the first time in MARCHA's history the Annual meeting is held in the New England Conference. The Committee was proud to also host

ACLAMEN and HYLTA as organizations that seek to provide leadership development for female clergy and youth/young adults.

6. Our coordinator, Emma A Escobar, received the MARCHA award for leadership in the United Methodist Church and the Latino Community.
7. We were able to organize a Hispanic/Latino youth/young adults committee. They are in the process of planning the first Hispanic/Latino youth/young adult retreat that will take place in April 25-26.
8. The Hispanic/Latino youth/ young adult committee organized a Christmas dinner and concert where about 200 people attended. In this service we celebrated our diversity and three languages were spoken during the service (Spanish, English, and Portuguese).
9. The Hispanic/Latino Ministries held a graduation ceremony with Rev. Dr. Christian De La Rosa, stoles were presented to Geisa Matos-Machuca as she graduated with a Master of Divinity and Rev. Dr. Santos N. Escobar who graduated with a Doctorate in Ministry.
10. The Biblical Leadership Institute continued its 3rd year of providing training to more than 30 leaders throughout the Hispanic/Latino Ministries. The first class will be graduating in the year of 2015.
11. The coordinator, Emma Escobar, will be stepping down from her position as of May 2014. The committee will be selecting a new coordinator. The new coordinator will be introduced at Annual Conference.

#### Goals for the 2014-2015 year:

1. With God's purpose we hope to graduate the first class from the Biblical Leadership Institute.
2. To obtain recognition from The United Methodist Church and/or Boston University School of Theology for the Biblical Leadership Institute.
3. To continue to strengthen the youth/young adults committee.
4. Create the School for Worship and Arts: this new program will be integrated to the formation of leaders in the Biblical Leadership Institute.
5. Execute the three-year plan that was made in consultation with the National Plan along with funds from Hebrews 11.

#### Acknowledgements:

Thanks be to God for giving the committee the opportunity to serve in God's kingdom. Special thanks to the Biblical Leadership Institute's professors for their commitment to develop leaders for the betterment of our United Methodist Church. Thank you to all the pastors for their leadership and commitment to continuing to bring the message of love, justice and mercy to the Hispanic/Latino Community in the New England area. May God continue to use us. Amen.

Emma Escobar

### **IMAGINE NO MALARIA "SAVING LIVES"**

Imagine No Malaria Executive Steering Committee

Voting For: 9 Voting Against: Abstaining:

Imagine No Malaria is an extraordinary effort of the people of The United Methodist Church, putting our faith into action to end preventable deaths by malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, especially the death of a child or a mother. The New England Conference has wholeheartedly joined this historic endeavor and is committed to saving lives during this quadrennium (Res 206, 2012). Each \$10 gift represents a life and approximates the cost of a bed net which can protect one person or several persons each night.

As of early 2014, the New England Conference's response to Imagine No Malaria has saved over 30,000 lives through gifts and pledges. Congregations, individual donors and Conference groups are engaging creatively, including the United Methodist Foundation of New England's \$50,000 Mother's Day 2014 Challenge. Imagine No Malaria is also vitalizing congregations, strengthening mission participation and increasing community engagement through public displays and presentations, special offerings, pie auctions, chili taste-offs, swat parties, movie nights, birthday celebrations, road races, festivals and concerts. By working together we shall reach our goal of saving 100,000 lives – our Hallelujah goal is 150,000 lives!

We offer deep gratitude to lead supporters including Anne and G. Neil Harper, John Regier, David Fitts, 100% of the Executive Steering Committee including Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, Rene Wilbur, Ellen Bridge, Bishop Clif Ives, LaTrelle Easterling, Jim Mentzer, Joe Moser, Erica Robinson-Johnson and Bonnie Marden (Field Coordinator); and 100% of the New England Conference Cabinet plus other individuals who have saved lives through generous personal, online or texting gifts. These donors invite others to consider a personal pledge for the two remaining years of our Conference campaign.

We also celebrate the leadership of the 200+ churches who have already submitted life-saving dollars, the commitment of congregations with projects underway and these churches who have, as of early 2014, reported goals for the lives they intend to save through Imagine No Malaria: Agawam MA UMC, Bethany UMC in Rochester NH, Brunswick ME UMC, Crawford UMC in Winchester MA, East Longmeadow MA UMC, Hampden Highlands UMC in Hampden ME, John Street UMC in Camden ME, Lake Shore Park UMC in Lynn MA, Peoples UMC in Newport ME, North Sebago ME UMC, Orrington ME UMC, Sudbury MA UMC, Winthrop MA UMC, and St Andrews/Covenant UMC in Worcester MA. This list is growing rapidly! Consider setting a congregational goal this year to save lives and change the world!

Look for ongoing invitations and opportunities to save lives and change the world! Pledge forms, information on free resources, church stories and Conference Ambassadors are available at [www.neumc.org/INM](http://www.neumc.org/INM). In addition, testimonials from African families and UMCOR's 2013 report on services to medical facilities and communities in Africa are available. Thank you for supporting the variety of Imagine No Malaria activities during Annual Conference 2014 and 2015! Opportunities during Conference will include the Mosquito Race/Walk (Fri dinner) and a Wiffle ball Tournament (Fri lunch) plus Silent Auction items and other swatting challenges for all to participate in this historic endeavor for the United Methodist Church. Lives are being saved and our New England life-giving "Net" work is growing!

Bonnie Marden

## **INSURANCE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Since the last Annual Conference, the Insurance Committee of the New England Conference Board of Trustees met in November of 2013 and will have met in May 2014 to monitor the Conference Unit Insurance Plan as this report was prepared in February 2014. In addition, the committee communicates on a regular basis by email for votes and other business that does not require a physical meeting. The Church Mutual Insurance Company is our primary insurer for the period August 1, 2013 – July 31, 2014, providing coverage for Property, General Liability, Crime, Automobile and Excess/Umbrella Liability as well as our Workers' Compensation coverage that renewed in January 2014. The Fred C. Church Insurance Agency of Lowell, MA continues as the Conference's insurance broker, providing service on claims, loss prevention, risk management and general insurance questions.

The August 2013 claim year has gone well with lower claims to date through January 2014 of 21%, compared to the previous 3 years when we had loss ratio of 110%, 129% and 54% in the Property/Liability Package. As this report was being prepared in February, we had 14 claims for property damage due to the extreme cold temperatures experienced in January 2014 with loss reserves of \$284,218. We hope that the incurred losses do not exceed this amount.

The Insurance Committee would like to remind all churches that with Church Mutual, each church will have its own Blanket Limit for all building values and contents plus a 25% cushion. It is more critical than ever that each church is insured for full replacement cost. During the past year, the Fred C. Church Insurance Agency has been in contact with those churches that we believe are 50%-60% underinsured. We want to do everything possible to be sure that no individual church suffers a major property loss without carrying adequate limits to pay for repairing, replacing or rebuilding any church property.

The Insurance Committee continues to monitor local church payments of their insurance billings. We challenge every church to make payments on time and in full. The committee thanks all of the churches that paid their premium in full by October 15, 2013 with the 9% discount or enrolled in the Automatic Clearinghouse Account process with a 7% discount through the OAS and Vanco Services, LLC. We also want to thank all the churches that faithfully pay their premiums each year.

For the upcoming August 1, 2014 renewal period, the Insurance Committee, with the help of the Fred C. Church Insurance Agency, our broker, will provide the best coverage and rate possible for the 2014/2015 renewal period.

The Insurance Committee would like to thank the Fred C. Church Insurance Agency for all that they do for our Conference and especially working with all the churches in the Conference either by phone, email or a personal visit, if necessary.

Over the 18 years that the Unit Plan has been available to all churches in the Conference they have been able to use the savings in premiums to carry out more mission and ministry within our conference and around the world. The Conference Unit Insurance Plan is an example of our connectional life as a conference and how together, with God’s help, we can do more than we can do separately.

Grace and Peace,  
LaVergne Randolph, Co-Chair Bruce Maxwell, Co-Chair

### **MCH, Inc. - Rockland, Maine**

MCH was blessed with an active and exciting year in service to seniors, disabled individuals and others who tend to “fall between the cracks” here in Mid-coast Maine. We helped approximately 3,000 people in their quest to remain independent, mobile and active in their communities.

Residents at the Methodist Conference Home, Rankin Center, Stevens House and the other housing that we manage, lived in safe, well-maintained and affordable housing. Basic services like meals, housekeeping, grocery shopping, laundry and emergency call buttons were available to those who need a little help to live independently. Our skilled and knowledgeable services coordinators helped them to find other services that they needed at local medical, social service and governmental agencies. Those who needed help getting around town could make use of a variety of transportation programs offered by our transportation subsidiary.

Demand in the community for the Meals on Wheels program that we operate in Knox County continued to be high. Despite cuts in federal funding we were able to serve all who requested meals. We have always been blessed with a solid corps of dependable, kind volunteers, who not only deliver meals, but take a few moments to chat with recipients and get to know them. The volunteers alert our staff to any situations that require a little extra care.

The anticipated change in how Medicaid transportation is provided in Maine took place in August. It was a very rough transition for Medicaid members who had to get used to a whole new system of finding rides to their medical appointments. It was also a rough transition for Coastal Trans, our transportation subsidiary. We provided far fewer rides in the second half of the year. We closed a dispatch office and reduced staffing. Fortunately we were able to accomplish this mostly through attrition, with very few layoffs.

At the same time that our Medicaid programs were struggling, our new Transportation Coupon Program grew rapidly. Under this program people with disabilities are able to use local taxi companies and only pay half of the fare themselves. This program has proved to be very popular and helpful, providing easier and more flexible access to transportation even on nights and weekends. We have been told by the Department of Transportation that we may expand the program next year to all seniors, regardless of whether or not they have a disability.

With increased staffing and greater volunteer involvement, our fundraising and development programs were very successful. We were able to increase donated income by another 33%. The MCH Neighbor Foundation has laid a good foundation for our fundraising efforts in the future and provided excellent leadership for this very important part of our efforts. Many of the programs we operate are dependent on additional funding to match grant funds and federal and state funds. We continue to see reductions in federal and state funding, so the need for donated income continues to grow. We have set an ambitious target for fundraising for next year with plans to increase fundraising by 40%.

We have begun in a small way to build an endowment for the organization. One of our very first endowed funds was a \$10,000 fund to support enrichment activities for our residents. This fund was established by the Rev. Linda Campbell-Marshall in honor of her mother, Millie Campbell, who was a long-time resident of the Methodist Conference Home.

We are blessed to have the support of the New England Annual Conference in the work that we do, especially in the form of the Methodist clergy and laity who give their time and talents to shape the direction of this organization.

#### **Methodist Conference Home, Inc. Board of Directors**

<u>Name</u>	<b>Class of 2014</b>	<u>Representing</u>
Pastor Elizabeth Bilodeau		Methodist Clergy
Jeffrey Nims		Methodist Laity
	<b>Class of 2015</b>	
Jane Sturgeon		Methodist Laity

Rev. George Hodgkins Timothy Dresser		Methodist Clergy Community
	<b>Class of 2016</b>	
Lark Blum Jeanette Perry		Community Community
	<b>Class of 2017</b>	
Jennifer Curran Jo Anne Parker Carole Martin		Methodist Clergy Methodist Laity Community
	<b>Ex Officio</b>	
Charlotte Gulezian Rev. Beverly Stenmark Rev. Lee Karker,		Coastal Trans Board Chair Mid Maine District Superintendent Executive Director

### MISSIONS & EARLY RESPONSE TEAMS

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28*

While 2013 has been a year of transition in the leadership of our volunteer United Methodist Volunteers in Mission and Disaster Response programs, God has blessed us with both new leaders and the continued involvement of our long-time former leaders. We were pleased to have Gerard Piscitelli of Wesley UMC in Worcester, MA, step forward to replace Doug Spanks who wanted to retire after many years as the conference disaster response coordinator, but has offered to have continued involvement on a district level.

I thank Doug for his selfless contribution and welcome Gerard’s enthusiasm and experience in mission. Gerard was called upon soon after his Annual Conference introduction to respond to Lebanon, NH’s flooding, along with Dave Stackpole and several teams from our conference. He also filled a last-minute need for an adult chaperone for another church’s Appalachia Service Project team later in the summer, then last fall he went on a mission journey to Guatemala.

After a year-long search, two mission-passionate people from Maine agreed to share the role of conference United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) coordinators, taking on part of Dave Stackpole’s significant dual role as UMVIM and Early Response Team (ERT) trainer and Conference UMVIM & ERT Coordinator. Susan Baker of Readfield UMC and Jeff Munson of Brunswick UMC are the conference UMVIM coordinators focusing on the broader context of missions along with long-term disaster recovery in the conference, while I have taken on the ERT Coordinator’s role. Please help me welcome Susan and Jeff, who have taken mission trips or led teams to Haiti, Zambia, the Gulf Coast, and led work teams at Camp Mechuwana in Maine.

Thanking Dave, a twenty-year veteran UMVIM leader who is truly one of a kind, is not easy. His leadership spans mission trips to Puerto Rico, Slidell and New Orleans, LA and Haiti, setting up the conference’s first ERT trainings, recruiting ERT-trained groups to respond after Hurricanes Katrina and Irene and other disasters, to help build Good Shepherd church in Grey, ME and a bunk house at Down East Maine Mission with John Blackadar, a former NH District Superintendent. Dave also credits John with helping him establish two conference churches as Mission Central HUBs to collect UMCOR cleaning buckets and health and other kits and certify them as properly constructed before delivery to Mission Central. We worked in 2013 to expand the number of collection points around the conference in response to Hurricane Sandy and a list of those churches can be found on our website under Missions & Disaster Response. I took my UMCOR Team Leader Training from Dave this past year and appreciate his considerable wisdom and his mentoring.

With a new leadership team in place, we instituted a Disaster Response and UMVIM Steering Committee as an advisory group for Missions and as a way to help orient the new leaders. This group has helped to update our portion of the website to make it easier to find resources for mission or disaster recovery, worked to develop a presentation to take to churches seeking someone to speak about UMVIM or disaster response and is working on ways to help individuals join mission teams – either at the district or the conference level.

Working with the Director of Connectional Ministries, we found a less expensive alternative for background checks required of badged ERTs through our conference insurance program, which offers us a discounted rate.

One of my goals since becoming the part-time missions' coordinator was to institute a detailed expense tracking system and reimbursement procedures for disbursing UMCOR grant monies. With the help of the treasurer's office, that was accomplished this year and will make UMCOR reporting easier in the future. It has already helped as we closed out the UMCOR grant from the Massachusetts tornados.

We called on ERTs in the conference to standby once this year during the flooding in Lebanon, NH. We planned for some ERT and UMVIM trainings in 2014 and aim to get new trainers certified, in order to offer more classes.

I continue part-time with the NY Annual Conference as their Sandy Recovery Volunteer Coordinator and thank the New England Conference teams that continued to serve in our own conference, in NY and around the world.

May God bless each of you to be a blessing to someone else.

Barbara Burnside

## **MOSCOW UNITED METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY TASK FORCE**

As I write this, the Winter Olympics are going on in Sochi, Russia. There has been much discussion about the threat of terrorism, increased oppression in Russia, and the negative attitude toward homosexuals. At the same time, the civil conflict that has spread throughout Ukraine is continuing. Will Ukraine become closer to Russia or to the West? All these questions show the struggle going on throughout Eurasia and the importance of the United Methodist Church in these countries and especially of the Moscow Theological Seminary that uses the United Methodist academic resources of our seminaries in the United States to train the pastors throughout the countries of the former Soviet Union that are now called Eurasia. The goal is not to Westernize these people but to provide the theological resources needed to form communities of compassion, justice, and faith. We can also build a single global community as an example to the world as a whole of how to live in peace among cultural differences. The United Methodist Church is one of largest global churches being present in all areas of the world, making that both a challenge and an opportunity. The Moscow Theological Seminary can enable us as a church to meet that challenge and fulfill the opportunity.

At last year's Annual Conference we held a learning center attended by over twenty people explaining the Seminary and the importance of its role in the Eurasian countries. Then, having been asked by the President Nikolaev of the Seminary to become part of the Board of Trustees, I attended my first meeting in Moscow. Half of the Board is made up of Americans, both from United Methodist seminaries and from Annual Conferences, and of Eurasians, all local pastors. Bishop Eduard Khegay of the Eurasian Annual Conference, whose ancestry is Korean, grew up in Central Asia, and received his seminary education in the United States, chairs the Board. Recently the Russian government certified the Seminary as an educational institution removing one of the major barriers it has been facing. The Board also set a goal of raising \$4,000,000 to establish an endowment and provide scholarships. Since there is not a tradition of education institutions raising their own funds or of students paying for their own higher education, the endowment and scholarship funds is crucial. It also shows the importance of our Annual Conference meeting our \$50,000 goal.

This year we will reach out to interested churches and individuals to reach the goal. With several other important financial campaigns going on in our Annual Conference, it is not an easy task regardless of its importance. All people and churches wanting to be involved can contact me at [sjohnson@bu.edu](mailto:sjohnson@bu.edu).

Sam Johnson, Chair

## **NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE MISSION u**

Greetings from the New England Conference Dean for 2013 Mission u. Please note the name change from School of Christian Mission to Mission u effective as of 2013. On behalf of Mission u I did submit a Resolution to New England Conference, see Resolutions, uplifting a request that every church in the conference set aside funds as part of their budget to fund scholarships for attendance to Mission u. Please note that scholarships are also available from your local UMW units, the District UMW, and/or the Conference UMW – in that order. Requests should be made thru the Presidents of each of these organizations.

The 2013 Mission u event took place at Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, New Hampshire from July 26th-July 28th, 2013 with approximately 120 in attendance. Our opening worship was presided over by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar. We extend a sincere thank you to the Bishop and his wife, Prema, for sharing their time with us. We also express thank you to missionary, Belinda Forbes, who shared greetings from Nicaragua as well as information about what her work

is there; her emphasis was on Poverty. On Saturday we had an opportunity to join with the Korean community in worship with communion, music and fellowship. Thank you to JiYoung Jin, the Rev. Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang and the Korean community.

The studies for 2013 were: Poverty facilitated by Deaconess Lucie Fortier; Sacramental Living & Walking Justly facilitated by the Rev. Wanda Santos-Perez; Roma of Europe facilitated by Roberta Bragan; Children's study, Immigration facilitated by Tammi Verity and Fran Grenier. The Korean Study, Living Sacramentally & Walking Justly was facilitated by the Rev. Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang. I wish to express a special thank you to the Mission u team – it takes a full working team to make Mission u “A Glory To GOD” & God's presence was present!

The 2014 Mission u will be held at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, New Hampshire from July 25th – 27th, 2014. In 2014 we will be adding a One- Day Latino event in addition to the One- Day Korean and English events we have been offering. This offering will be headed up by Rev. Wanda Santos-Perez and we look forward to this new addition.

The 2014 courses being offered are: Geographic: The Roma of Europe facilitated by Leeda Marsh; Social Issues: the Church & Disabilities facilitated by the Rev. Will Green; Spiritual Growth: How Is It With Your Soul? facilitated by the Rev. Kim Kie; Children: Disabilities facilitated by Tammi Verity and Fran Grenier. Our mission emphasis will be “Say No To Malaria”. Please make your local units aware and be prepared to support this mission financially in 2014.

Registration forms will be available on the New England Conference and District websites by March 1, 2014. Please note that we will be charging a \$50 upfront, non-refundable fee at the time of registration. This fee will be part of the full registration fee.

We look forward to seeing you in July of 2014!  
Marie MacDougall, Dean and Peg Swett, Acting Assistant Dean

## **NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST REGIONAL MINISTRY**

Springfield, MA  
February 26, 2014

### I. Introduction:

New Hope United Methodist Regional Ministry (New Hope) is a collaborative urban ministry serving the greater Springfield area. New Hope named after the former merged congregation New Hope United Methodist Church (Liberty Street and Chicopee Falls) was founded in 2009 for the purpose of organizing greater Springfield United Methodists for urban mission and ministry. The participating congregations are Springfield churches Trinity United Methodist, Wesley United Methodist and the mission congregation of La Resturacion. Greater Springfield congregations include St. Paul's United Methodist located in Ludlow, Faith United Methodist in Chicopee and East Longmeadow United Methodist. A recent and welcomed addition to the regional ministry is the newly organized greater Springfield Brazilian mission outreach ministry.

### II. Funding Report:

The New Hope 2013 mission and ministry year included the following:

- The New Hope board approved the advance funding of \$11,500 in order to access an equal amount in UMCOR funds allocated for tornado relief efforts in Springfield. By providing the front end funds New Hope was able to partner with UMCOR and Rebuilding Together Springfield to assist five Springfield families who were not eligible for additional assistance to cover tornado damage and loss. Rebuilding Together Springfield, a well established non-profit providing housing rehabilitation assistance to low income families, arranged for the purchase of replacement furniture, appliances and bedding items. Additionally, Rebuilding Together Springfield contracted for the repair of windows, ceilings, a chimney and a garage door replacement. Once completed the project costs were reimbursed to New Hope by the Annual Conference accessing the UMCOR funding.
- The New Hope board approved and provided an emergency grant in the amount of \$2,373.47 to the Springfield Rescue Mission to assist with the securing of a Mission residence building after a 2012 gas explosion severely damaged the property.
- The New Hope board approved and provided a grant in the amount of \$20,000 to contract with Community Legal Aid, Springfield, MA for a full-time AmeriCorps immigration attorney and part-time supervision attorneys for the Springfield Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) clinic housed at Trinity UMC. By providing these initial funds for the clinic New Hope was able to access a \$10,000 reimbursement in Annual Conference appropriated JFON funds.
- The New Hope board requested that the Trustees of the Annual Conference invest \$100,000 of New Hope funds with Common Capital Community First Fund for a period of three years. These invested funds will be used to

provide loans to local businesses and community projects that do not qualify for traditional bank loans. The New Hope board saw the Common Capital investment as a way to return and invest United Methodist dollars in the greater Springfield area after the closing of the New Hope United Methodist Church.

III. Narrative Report:

The New Hope board is an active coalition of lay and clergy members from the greater Springfield United Methodist Churches. Wesley and Trinity United Methodist Churches form the core congregations and are funded by the New Hope board to support the congregation's local ministries (after-school programs, prison ministry and outreach ministries.) Additionally, New Hope provides support for the administration of the JFON clinic and organizing of funding and volunteers for the annual Rebuilding Together Springfield neighborhood revitalization campaign.

The New Hope board is developing by-laws for the future organization of this vital urban ministry. The New Hope board looks forward to future community partnerships and the connectional strength of the greater Springfield United Methodist faith community.

Respectfully submitted and in Christian Service on behalf of the New Hope Board,  
Gary Richards

## NICARAGUA PLANNING COMMITTEE

"Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well." 1 Peter 4:10

Your New England Conference Nicaragua Covenant has been living out this command day in and day out for 27 years. The Covenant is the hands and feet of Christ, serving marginalized people in Nicaragua by providing medicine, food, education, sanitation, clean water, self-sufficiency, and hospitality for mission teams.

**Our mission:** Transformed by the Holy Spirit, the Nicaragua Covenant develops, facilitates, and supports programs of compassion, justice, and mercy that enhance the lives of our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua. The covenant supports programs in five areas. Here are the achievements for 2013:

**We feed the hungry-** Nutritious rice/soy meals were served to 450 elementary school children in 6 communities, 3 times each week. For many of the children it is the only nutritious meal they receive that day. An adult community center also receives assistance. Five community gardens which we established help supplement the food packets.

**We educate children-** We financially support 13 teachers in 6 primary schools teaching 780 children. Scholarships were provided to 25 high school students and 20 university or tech school students. Several students who have been beneficiaries of assistance since early grade school are now pursuing engineering degrees at the university with our assistance. Teams from Conference have renovated and resupplied five schools in the last several years.

**We provide health care-** Our mobile health clinic reaches 60 rural villages and urban barrios. In 2013 the clinic provided 20,112 medical and 4,896 dental patient visits. All services are without charge. A clinic manager and nurse were added to our staff in 2013 to improve services. The clinic team, consisting of a medical doctor, a dentist, a nurse, and a coordinator leave our home base on Tuesday morning and travel to remote villages, returning Friday evening. A separate team visits villages closer to Managua on Saturdays.

**We provide sustainable development-** Our water and sanitation projects target the underlying causes for premature deaths in children and many of the diseases our mobile health clinic treats. Our medical staff identifies villages with serious water issues and we partner with El Porvenir, a non-profit based in Colorado, to engineer a solution. Congregations in the NEAC have adopted projects and raised the funds for the materials. The people in the village provide all the labor. In 2013 we completed our third water and sanitation project. In the village of Las Mercedes a water catchment system was built high up on a hill and the villagers hand dug a 3 foot deep trench for 1.3 miles to bring clean water to their children. The village leaders report a dramatic reduction in childhood illness. Our 2014 project will be in San Benito, where 800 people are without potable water and the wells they do have run dry between the rainy seasons.

**We promote Women's economic development and self-sufficiency-** Women's dignity is lifted enormously when they learn a marketable skill. We support sewing schools in Colonia, Leon, Nandasmo, and Managua. In 2013 the schools graduated 40 women, providing them with the skills they sought to help them be self-sufficient. Many of them will sell their own creations or work in the Free Trade Zone, where their skill is highly valued. Some graduates are self-employed producers connected with Spirit Wind, a nonprofit selling their creations here in New England.

**We provide a home base for mission teams-** In 2013 we finished renovating a beautiful 6 bedroom home acquired through a special gift from a trust which embraces our work, and the entire cost was borne by the trust. Quinta Amanecer is our mission headquarters which hosts visiting mission teams, has a training/conference center, and is the home of our mobile medical clinic.

The members of your Nicaragua Covenant are grateful to the NEAC churches and private trusts which have taken action to confront the injustice, exploitation, and oppression so prevalent in Nicaragua. Our service is limited only by the generosity of our supporters.

On behalf of the committee:

Bill Taylor, Chairperson Sandy Melius, Co-chair Kevin McNally, Executive Director  
[www.nicargaucovenant.org](http://www.nicargaucovenant.org)

## OFFICE OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Congregational Development is a holistic approach to the development and growth of a congregations ministries, participation, and impact on its community and world. This work continues to be a collaborative effort, including District Ministry Team, District Superintendents, District New Church Start Committees, our Parish Consulting Network, and several others.

### Highlights of the work this past year include:

- 2013 Ripple Effect (School of Cong. Development): This past year's event saw 128 different churches participating, a 19% increase over any of the previous 5 years.
- Overseeing the Together for Tomorrow and Urban Ministry grant process. In 2013 the grants supported 14 different projects in a variety of settings.
- Continuing to identify and deploy pastors to start new churches. In 2013 our Conference saw 5 new starts in a variety of contexts. In addition, one recent new start launched a second site in September 2013. In early 2014 we are assessing at least 5 potential planters and expect to launch additional new churches in the coming months.
- In support of both new church starts and turn-around situations, 15 pastors are receiving coaching to give them the opportunity to more deeply explore calling, ministry, and the leadership skills necessary to lead a congregation to greater missional impact in its community.
- The Lay Missionary Planters Network (LMPN), a system of identifying, training and deploying lay people to launch new faith communities continues to expand. Two additional churches began using the LMPN training material to expand the network. In early 2014 we launched another network in northern New Hampshire and there are plans to continue to launch new networks in new places to reach new people throughout the year.
- The Hebrews 11 process is now fully in place and implemented. The Board of Congregational and Community Development receives proposals each fall and spring. In 2013, over \$400,000 was distributed in both urban and non-urban areas, to support the work of both existing congregations and new church starts.
- 2013 saw the implementation of the "Ministry Action Potential Study." This is a process developed by Rev. Phil Maynard and Rev. Jeff Stiggins in the Florida Annual Conference that helps churches "Discover the Possibilities" by exploring their current reality and then make decisions related to the missional opportunities in front of them. As of this writing, 9 churches have used the process with more churches already scheduled.

### There are of course new things in the works in the area congregational development. Among them are:

- Once again we'll offer Ripple Effect November 14 - 15, 2014 at Grace Chapel. Our keynote speaker will be Jack Levinson, New Testament professor at Seattle Pacific University. He'll be joined by his wife Priscilla Pope-Levinson. Our worship design leader (who will also lead 4 important workshops on worship is Cathy Townley. More information is available at [www.rippleeffectne.com](http://www.rippleeffectne.com) along with details on how to register your team.
- The Northeast Jurisdiction will offer **Launchpad**, a church planter bootcamp. Launchpad becomes even more important as we prepare lay people through the LMPN process. Exact dates are being figured out but it will be either in August or September.
- A team has been working hard on developing the **Urban Ministry Training Program**. This training program is modeled after the work of John Vincent at the Urban Theological Unit in Sheffield, England, a training that many of our churches used to transform their ministry during the 1990's and early 2000's. Our first cohort groups launched in May 2014 and we expect good things as we focus on ministry in our urban settings.

Submitted in grace and peace,  
 Rick McKinley, Director of Congregational Development

**PREACHERS' AID SOCIETY OF NEW ENGLAND**  
**Serving Our Pastors Since 1832**

2013 has been a wonderful year for the Society and its mission. 2014 brings even more promise. Here are some of the things we celebrate and hope that all of you in our Annual Conference will join us in a chorus to God for ministries well begun and almost done.

**Together for Tomorrow.**

With our final payment of over \$400,000.00 to the New England Annual Conference this year, the Preachers' Aid Society will fulfill its commitment of \$2,500,000.00 for the Retiree Health Care portion of our Together for Tomorrow Capital Campaign. For generations to come, our retired pastors and surviving spouses will have resources available to help supplement the cost of medical care in the "Golden Years."

Not only does this complete our Campaign commitment, it also marks a total of \$5,500,000.00 that the Preachers' Aid Society has given to this effort including gifts given prior to the sustaining fund. The health of our retired pastors has always been at the top of our mission and ministry and we are grateful to God for allowing us to make a very significant impact in this area.

**Because They Serve.**

Ten years ago, your Preachers' Aid Society started on a bold venture to create a small supply of retirement housing for our pastors that was affordable, comfortable and environmentally noteworthy. This spring we will complete the first two phases of this and will have, in total, 29 homes in two states. Wesley Woods, in Gilford, New Hampshire, is a joint effort with Deaconess Abundant Life Communities. There are 8 homes for retirees there. Wesley by the Sea in Wells, Maine will be completed as this Annual Conference convenes with 21 additional homes. In addition, we have completed construction of an attractive Community Building where retirees can gather for fellowship and small groups can meet. This summer the main offices of the Preachers' Aid Society will relocate to that facility. Both of these communities have only been possible because your churches and pastors along with our retirees and Board of Directors have supported our program generously.

This summer we will begin the final effort in our Because They Serve Capital Campaign which will allow us to pay off and maintain the affordability of these homes for present and future retirees. We will continue our programs of local Church capital campaign partnerships which have raised over \$1,426,000.00 for local capital needs and we will move into the final phase of working with active pastors and local congregations that do not need special campaigns but are willing to pitch in and help us reach our goal. You will be hearing more about these now and in the months to come.

In all of this, United Methodists throughout New England have been loving and generous to the work of education, housing, visitation and emergency assistance which are the core programs of our Society. We thank you and we thank God for the wonderful work we are able to do in and through your support.

Respectfully Submitted by:

David M. MacMahon  
 President – Board of Directors

Thomas J. Gallen  
 Executive Director

**ROLLING RIDGE RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER**

"Rolling Ridge is beautiful, the staff helpful and it seems to have the programs I need...even when I don't realize I need them."

This guest summed up the ministry of Rolling Ridge. We say we are "a true oasis of quiet beauty, gracious hospitality and transforming programs." We do offer peace in a world of busyness and stress, silence in the midst of noise and competing voices, and the simple beauty of woods and water away from bright lights and blinking screens. We provide time to listen, space to rest, places to worship, dream, plan, and play. We continue to offer the hospitality of Christ to individuals and groups who are often mind-weary and body-tired. By God's grace, 7,050 people renewed their spirit at Rolling Ridge.

This year we celebrated 65 years of ministry with a glorious afternoon tea, music and presentations. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean of BU School of Theology, gave the keynote address and Rev. Jim Todd received the first Loaves and Fishes Award for simple acts of faithfulness and compassion. Additionally, we celebrated our landscape designer with a state-wide symposium on Fletcher Steele with 5 nationally known presenters.

Nearly 35 programs were offered during 2013, including a sold out Nurturing Passionate Spirituality Day with a keynote by Bishop Devadhar. Our popular retreat series, "A Day Apart for Busy People" offers monthly opportunities to grow in faith

and witness. Sixteen people completed Gateways to God, a two-year training program in spiritual direction and congregational formation in June. Our annual peace and inter-faith program brought Imam Suhaib Webb from the Islamic Cultural Center of Boston to speak on the way ahead for peace in our multi-cultural world. His presentation was keenly appreciated after the events of the Boston bombing. Still Waters, our new monthly Sunday Evening Contemplative Worship Experience began in September with 50 people.

We continue to provide meeting space for many Conference groups, particularly Board of Ordained Ministry, Residency in Ministry and Licensing School as future church leadership is guided and taught. Local UM churches hold retreats and picnics here, as they have for 65 years.

New improvements to our facilities include repaired fire escapes, a new refrigerator, new outside benches and an indoor labyrinth.

Summer picnics and pool events, and a day camp for 300 children from Lawrence Community Day Care, kept us busy in the summer. In the winter, we served a Christmas lunch and gave presents to residents of a homeless shelter in Haverhill.

The Board of Directors, with blessing of the Council of Finance and Administration, has begun, Restore, Rebuild, Renew - The Campaign for Rolling Ridge, to raise \$4.2 million to increase the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, add an elevator and accessibility to our facilities, create a dining patio overlooking the lake, add and revamp meeting rooms and fix the Fountain. Beginning a new Center for Spirituality and Leadership with a focus on spiritual renewal, leadership development and church revitalization is a key element in the Capital Campaign.

Please think of us first when you plan a church overnight retreat, a personal retreat or a weekend picnic. Do plan early since weekends are very popular and we are often booked 6-9 months in advance.

Please continue to hold us in your prayers as the Capital Campaign progresses (we have raised in cash and pledges over \$700,000) and we accomplish the vision of the Master Plan the Conference prepared in 2003.

Check out the programs on our website and sign up to receive our bi-weekly news from Rolling Ridge. Most of all, come to the Ridge this “a true oasis of quiet beauty, gracious hospitality and transforming programs.”

As a Conference Advance Special, we are so grateful for your gifts. Thank you! We abide in your prayers and we give thanks to God for sharing ministry with you in New England and beyond.

Larry Peacock, Executive Director

## SEXUAL ETHICS RESPONSE/INTERVENTION TEAM

As the Response/Intervention Team reported in prior years, our actions as a team continue to be grounded in our theological foundation - “The church of Jesus Christ is created to be one community ... [and] when any part of the community is injured physically, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally, the well-being of the whole community is violated and all suffer. Therefore... those [in leadership] must hold the role and its responsibilities in sacred trust – Do no harm and be faithful to the love of God.”

The Team also remembers Jesus’ words and his operating principles of healing – “Do you want to be healed?” and accountability – “Go and sin no more.”

The New England Annual Conference Response/Intervention Team responds and intervenes in lay and clergy sexual ethics issues. We also respond to calls surrounding sex offenders in worship – how does the church remain open, grace-filled, and safe? More and more of these concerns come to the R/I Team for resourcing and help.

Clergy sexual misconduct cases continue to decline in number, but they do remain. We have not received a lay misconduct case this year. We hope this decline is because of increasing education around sexual misconduct, its prevention, and a deepened understanding of the sacred trust placed upon clergy and church leaders in their service to their people either in the church or their extension ministries.

The conference continues to use the services of a forensic psychologist for both evaluation of the respondent and for intervention guidance for cases the bishop decides should go forward. The report from the forensic evaluation of the respondent remains in the confidence of the bishop at his will for his final disposition of the case. Rev. Dr. William Barter is that psychologist, who also led the R/I Team training in March 2014 with resources from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

In January 2014, Bishop Devadhar conducted an all-day meeting for the Cabinet, leadership team, chair of the R/I Team, a Team member, conference chancellor, and chancellor from New Jersey for discussion and to hear thoughts and suggestions from Garlinda Burton, former general secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women and current consultant on sexual ethics for the denomination. One of Garlinda’s insights to us was that we in New England have

one of the best Sexual Ethics policies in the country. We will be taking her suggestions for “perfection” and working on that policy throughout the next year.

New lay and clergy members continue to join the Response/Intervention Team while some leave due to other responsibilities. The Team holds as a priority the diversity of its membership – ethnic heritage, age, gender, clergy, and laity. We are called together in the spring and in the fall for training around various issues that arise from cases and in response to new chargeable offenses, including those related to social media as defined in the current Book of Discipline.

The R/I Team also works toward prevention. Licensing School and New Pastors' Orientation participants hear the theological foundations undergirding sexual ethics and the damage violations do to victim-survivors, congregations, and even church leaders – both clergy and laity.

Marilyn Robb continues to serve on the national Inter-Agency Sexual Ethics Task Force which allows New England to be among the first to receive resources from the denomination and to offer materials and insights back to the denomination. Staff changes in sexual ethics at the general church level as well as changes in our own conference leave the leadership of sexual ethics in transition and open to new possibilities. A quadrennial denominational summit on sexual ethics, organized by the IASETF originally scheduled for January 2015 has been postponed to the fall of 2016 due to all the personnel changes and General Conference of 2016.

We all continue to hold safety, justice, and mercy as a priority in the community of Jesus Christ that is the church.

“In order to recover, you have to uncover.”  
America Anonymous by Benoit Denizet-Lewis

Marilyn Robb, R/I Team coordinator, and the NEAC R/I Team

## **SPIRIT WIND**

Your Fair Trade Marketing Cooperative

We give thanks to God and the Annual Conference for your support of our work. Having grown out of the former covenant relationship between Iglesia de Cristo de Nicaragua and the New England Annual Conference, we are happy to be serving you and our sisters in Nicaragua. Our vision is to accompany people, especially women, in economically disadvantaged situations through development of “fair trade” enterprises. Our purpose is to market fair trade products from Nicaragua, to raise awareness among the economically privileged of New England, and to broaden and deepen partnerships with the people of Nicaragua.

We had a year of growth thanks to your order of 300 name tag wallets for the 2013 Annual Conference session. Partnering with Eagle Wings, our sister cooperative formed by the sewing women of the Iglesia de Cristo, we were able to supply these wallets for our Annual Conference session and have begun work on 300 more for this year's session. On a recent trip, we ordered about \$3,000 in new merchandise and donated over \$2,000 to various groups who are working with artisans, indigenous peasants, farmers, and at risk pregnant women to help them make a living, feed their families, and find health care.

Other accomplishments include our first fair trade experience in Nicaragua. Seven conference members traveled to Nicaragua for a ten-day experience staying with members of a women's coffee bean cooperative, learning more about the process of making pottery, and helping to place the order with the Iglesia de Cristo seamstresses. One of our trip participants had this to say about her experience:

“We were not “tourists” but Christians from another country looking to take an interest in and be a part of what the folks there are trying to do to better their situation. I especially liked being able to spend an overnight with the local people, they are so hospitable.” – Marilyn Rohdin.

Spirit Wind is planning a similar experience for January, 2015.

Beginning in June of 2013, Spirit Wind made a change in our organization by inviting you to become members in our purchasing cooperative. This invitation has resulted in 20 members and two editions of our newsletter with another due out in March. Our goal is to have 100 members who elect a board and join together to support one another, encouraging more fair trade options. If you would like to become a member of our cooperative, or just find out more information, please email us at spiritwindne@gmail.

Submitted by Sharon G.W. Jones.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION INITIATIVE

***“Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out.” The Message Romans 12:2***

We are excited that in May 2013, 16 persons completed our first two-year training for individual or congregational spiritual direction. The program, called **Gateways to God**, is led by The Rev. Wendy Miller and is offered over the course of 6 retreats to both laity and clergy. The next **Gateways to God** has 21 participants registered who will begin in March 2014.

The fifth annual **Nurturing Passionate Spirituality Day** was held in March with Bishop Devadhar delivering the morning address. This single day offers a wide variety of popular workshops for personal spiritual growth and for taking back to the congregations.

The annual **Clergy Spiritual Renewal Retreat** was led by Revs. Susan Morrison and Cynthia Good. There was a good response to the rhythm of the retreat as they looked at “Living Mindfully through the Hours of the Day.” We look forward to welcoming Dr. Elaine Heath, author of *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*, as the retreat leader in 2014. The Spiritual Formation Initiative offers this retreat for our conference clergy annually with funding assistance from the Board of Ordained Ministry.

At Annual Conference each year we equip the **Prayer Room** to provide a space for one to go for a quiet time to lift up matters of conference or other prayers. If you have not attended we encourage you to visit the **Prayer Room** in the Phillips Music Center. In 2013 we led the first “**blessing of the space**” before Annual Conference began, moving from building to building and lifting up prayers for the space we would use on campus during Conference.

We were delighted to receive a Hebrews 11 Grant from Congregational Development for scholarships for laity to our programs. Not many were used in 2013 as we put our process together, but we have already approved a number at the end of 2013 for programs beginning in 2014.

Churches have been signing up for our **Fresh Air** program, **Deepening the Congregation’s Prayer Life**. This three-hour program was developed by the Spiritual Formation Initiative to provide congregations with trained facilitators to lead specific modules. We are now doing some pilot presentations of **Spirituality and Children** and are looking for churches to try it out. Visit the Spiritual Formation Display at Conference to find out how to have **Fresh Air** offered at your church or go to “Spiritual Formation” (under Resources and Tools) on the conference website.

On October 9-11, 2014, we will sponsor the Upper Room **Three-Day Academy** at Rolling Ridge. The Rev. Dr. Dwight Judy will lead us in “A Quiet Pentecost.” The three-day academy is not just teaching, but rather an experience of how one might live a life of deeper faith. If you haven’t been before, come and try it out. If you have, you will probably make room on your calendar. Scholarships will be available for up to 50% of the tuition for laity and local pastors not eligible for MEF.

We are looking forward to offering another **Retreat Leaders’ Training** facilitated by Susan MacKenzie in 2014. Watch for more information.

The Spiritual Formation Initiative continues to partner with Rolling Ridge as they host our meetings and offer a variety of programs inviting participants to step aside from busy lives and grow in their faith. More information on both Rolling Ridge and the Spiritual Formation Initiative programs can be found at their respective websites: [www.rollingridge.org](http://www.rollingridge.org) and [www.neumc.org](http://www.neumc.org) under “tools & resources”. The front hallway at Rolling Ridge reminds us of Jesus’ invitation in Mark 6:31 to “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” May your life be blessed with opportunities to rest in God’s love.

Evie Doyon and Cathy MacGovern, Co-Chairs

## STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION TEAM

The Steering Committee [SC] coordinates, implements, and oversees the work of the Response and Intervention Team and implements strategies and policies in the area of prevention and education. The committee includes representatives from the Cabinet, Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Laity, Parish Consultant Network, and Response and Intervention Team; the Bishop’s Assistant, Communications Director, Chancellor and Survivors.

The SC meets twice per year at the beginning of the Response Team training events, and stays for the training. We are grateful for the wisdom and leadership of Marilyn Robb as the coordinator of the Response Team. This year we have experienced transition in the membership of the SC, including the convener. We give thanks for the gifted leadership of Jim McPhee and Evelyn Johnson Moore, who convened the SC for several years. The work of revising the current policies is ongoing, as is reviewing the work of the team. We were invited to participate with the Cabinet in an information event to

learn from experts in the field how we can improve our policies/procedures, and will continue to make revisions that will improve this ministry. We anticipate our March meeting to begin planning for national training in 2015 as well as conference-wide quadrennial sexual ethics training (last training was in 2011). We will continue to work on ways of sharing the resources of the team as well as our misconduct policies with clergy and laity throughout the connection.

Erica Robinson-Johnson  
Assistant to the Bishop and Convener of the SC

## STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

The Stewardship Development Task Force was recommended by the Bishop's Financial Summit, approved by the 2012 annual conference, and was charged to work with UMFNE to design, implement, and secure funding for a holistic-year-round plan for supporting and resourcing stewardship development in the local church. In particular, the task force was asked to

- a. Develop and promote quality stewardship resources, products, and services that are useful, accessible, and sustainable
- b. Consider forming a network of consultants or district teams who will work with UMFNE and connect at least once a year with each local church to discuss issues of stewardship and connect leaders to needed resources
- c. Establish collaboration with the churches to facilitate infusing stewardship into the life of the church
- d. Look for ways to work with existing church networks and establish new 'natural' networks
- e. Creatively utilize technology in the development of connectional networks and training resources throughout the Annual Conference.

Since Sept. 2012, the Task Force has met regularly to implement the tasks that were assigned to the group. The first year we focused on collecting resources and programs that are offered by the United Methodist Foundation and the Preachers' Aid Society. We have compiled resources that are available in the New England Conference and also at the General Board. And, we have explored ways to tap into current programs that are being offered through The United Methodist Foundation of New England, the Preachers' Aid Society, and the General Board of Discipleship, including: webinars, online gatherings, consultations, and more.

During the 2013 Annual Conference, we handed out surveys and were pleased to have over 300 surveys returned. The surveys were taken by 181 Laity, 104 clergy who are presently serving in a local church, and 19 clergy who are retired/special appointment. Most of the surveys were from churches that has 25-100 people but with good representation from small and large churches as well. There was a good representation among various budget sizes with middle sizes predominant. From these surveys, we have gleaned much useful information and are working to implement from our learnings. Unfortunately, our sample of churches with varying ethnicities was too small to draw statistical significance in the difference between churches with varying ethnicities in comparison with their stewardship ministry. Thus, the team decided to meet with ethnic churches and leaders to learn about how they understand stewardship, what their practices are, and what kind of resource they need.

It is our hope to gather enough data and information by the 2015 Annual Conference to have several recommendations to present.

This report has been approved for submission by the Stewardship Task Force.

Sandra Bonnette-Kim, Chair

Task Force Members:

William Burnside, Oscar Harrell, Bob Hill, Kim Hornung-Marcy, Bonnie Marden, Jim Mentzer,  
Gary Richards, Erica Robinson-Johnson, Kristin White, and Kim Yeasir

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

### Preconference Journal Report

Our approach:

Our approach to strategic planning prioritizes forming a desirable vision of the future and then identifying necessary elements to bring that vision to fruition. From the beginning of our committee's work, we have tried to avoid the allure of solving problems as we identify them and have tried instead to be faithful to this approach to strategic planning. As we have shared in past reports, our approach is based on consulting with author and strategist Gil Rendle. Once again, we invite the Conference to remember that the wilderness is a time to process deep, different, and difficult changes- such a journey is part of the way into the promises of God. The wilderness experience is not merely an experience of loss and fear, but a time of remembering purpose and seeking a new future. We continue to affirm and be guided by the vision statement of our Conference, five areas of critical focus for New England and the mission of the UMC. Our approach to strategic planning is centered on the images of Joshua and the people of God crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3-4) and Peter's brief but faithful walk on the water with Jesus (Matthew 14: 22-32).

Listening to the New England Annual Conference:

This year we have focused on listening to the conference through a broad series of interviews, meetings and conversations with various parts of the conference including: a majority of districts, Board of Ordained Ministry, Vision Table, the Cabinet, Spiritual Formation Initiative Team, the Parish Consultants Network, and clergy. We identified diverse groups of leaders throughout the conference to ask their input on what our future should be, what is working or what is not working in our life together. We have learned that there is an enormous variety of passions, frustrations and directions coming from a very large assortment of committees, cultures, perspectives and areas with no clear leadership uniting them. As we vision in the wilderness, it is clearly time for leaders to take first steps that create new possibilities.

Based on what we heard:

Although we are now in the second year of a process that was intended to be completed in just one year, as of this preconference report, we are still working on solidifying potential changes to our current structure and operation. We anticipate no major changes to the overall framework of our organization within the next two years. Some of the key areas for our focus that have clearly emerged include:

**Spirituality:** There is a drastic need for spiritual awakening in our church that would renew our life through a commitment to spiritual formation on all levels of our life together as a conference.

**Leadership:** We are not convinced that our current recruitment, development, encouragement, and support for leadership are adequate for a renewed future.

**Connection:** We feel it is essential to either redefine the role of the District Superintendency as a regional management or refocus our understanding that this administrative position is the nexus of all mission in our denomination. We continue to ask how we are to recover our connectional identity through smaller, contextual, and more effective units?

In the coming months before Annual Conference:

Although we have discussed changes to the structure and operation of our Conference, our most ambitious planning has been found too unrealistic for implementation. The current district structure – both numbers of districts and staff serving each area – will remain in place until at least 2016. We would suggest that the Cabinet work over the next two years to develop a re-structured superintendency system, which meets the changing needs of our ministry in New England.

We also intend to bring a framework to organize, streamline, and align our various boards, agencies, and committees.

Given that this committee was appointed as a departing gesture by our former Bishop from a convened financial summit at the end of the last quadrennium, we continue to feel the need to match our strategic planning with a still-developing relationship with our current Bishop and other leaders.

Will Green

## TREASURER

It is a joy to work with the spirit-filled men and women who make up the New England Conference (NEC). I am thankful for the creativity, compassion and heart for our shared ministry. I believe this feeling of partnership is Spirit-led and adds great dimension to the Conference staff's ability to work effectively on churches' behalf.

One of the pleasures of being your Treasurer and at the same time a challenge are the variety of issues, such as, the recent IRS requirement on “Responsible Party,” the implications of the Affordable Care Act, the additional grants for the mission in Nicaragua, and helping our local church leaders with their own new challenges.

**Financially**, receipts from Mission Shares were \$5,923,000 and were higher than 2012 by \$75,000 or 1.3%. This represented 78.9% of our Mission Share budget, a 0.4 percentage point increase from 2012 and 1.6 percentage point increase from 2011. By utilizing a small amount from its reserves, the conference was able to boost its World Missions’ payment to 80% or \$1,262,000.

We were pleased to continue to pay 100% of our apportionments for Africa University and over \$92,000 in special Sunday offerings (Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries, Peace with Justice Sunday, World Communion Sunday and United Methodist Student Day).

In 2013, the conference’s mission-share operations had an \$80,000 gain to its reserves. We did, however, use \$93,000 of reserves to help fund Camp Aldersgate and Rolling Ridge Retreat Center expenses.

There were 25 churches in 2013 that paid more than 100% in Missions Shares billed and the conference had 336 churches in the 100% or greater category. I want to thank you for your commitment in supporting the work of the conference.

We still continue to receive pledges for the **Together for Tomorrow Campaign** and by the end of 2013, had over \$14.4 million in pledges and \$12.0 million in pledge payments. A total of \$3.8 million had been distributed back to local churches to support their ministries and more than \$6.0 million had been disbursed to the five conference ministry initiatives.

**Health Insurance and Pension Costs** continue to claim a disproportionate share of conference and local church resources, both financial and human. These costs are higher than the conference’s operating expenses, as more than \$9.1 million was paid to the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) for both retired clergy’s health insurance and active clergy’s health and pensions. I am pleased to say that the markets continued to climb last year. As a result, the value of the plan’s assets also increased, allowing the Pre-82 Pension plan to continue partially funding retiree health care costs. As many of you know, the GBOPHB is exiting from providing a supplemental health insurance plan to retirees. By the time Annual Conference occurs, your Conference Board of Pensions will be presenting an alternative plan for our retirees.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our chancellor, Bill Hewig, for his quiet, yet critical service to this conference through his **legal expertise**. His job is to limit the conference’s exposure to legal risks, but he brings so much more to the table, as he understands that church is about relationships, not just the rules of law and he seeks problem-solving resolutions with that in mind. For his willingness to give a quick opinion to local churches and steer them in a helpful direction, for his sharp, realistic and well-informed legal mind, for his understanding of our churches’ mission, the way he considers all sides of an issue and adds a reasonable perspective, I am eternally grateful.

It is also my pleasure to acknowledge the considerable contribution, dedication and Christian principles reflected everyday in our **conference staff**. I very much appreciate the ministry and spirit of common purpose from:

Debbie Cannella, Remittance Specialist  
 Steve Hart, Financial Services Manager  
 Glenna Keleher, Administrative Assistant  
 Joy Mueller, Statistician  
 Thelma Phelan, Benefits Assistant  
 Janis Salesi, Conference Benefits Coordinator  
 Daniel Sierra, Accounts Payable/Payroll

Finally, I am humbled by my colleagues in ministry all over the conference who inspire me by their example and support me with their prayers.

In Christ’s Service, Bill Burnside

## UNITED METHODIST ECONOMIC MINISTRY

Salem, Maine 04983

The United Methodist Economic Ministry (UMEM) has been in ministry for more than 40 years. It first opened its doors as a thrift shop in 1969, and continues to serve the people in this particular region of Northern Appalachia. The UMEM is located in northern Franklin County of Maine, where much of the local economy is based on lumber and its products,

seasonal jobs associated with the ski or tourist industries, or traveling to a more populated area for employment and/or services.

We have been—and continue to be—the people, volunteers, staff, and supporters who stand in the gap between available resources necessary for basic life and abject poverty. Without many hours given by volunteers, knowledgeable and compassionate staff, and supporters with gifts of financial and material resources, the lives of our clients would be markedly different.

Since 1978, we have annually hosted mission teams and work groups. Each team is instrumental in the mission and ministry of the UMEM. Last year, we hosted 9 mission teams and two teams of NOMADS. These volunteers repaired homes and helped with much needed repairs at both our Solon and Salem sites. These jobs included repairs to roofs, ceilings, bathrooms, floors, emergency egresses, replacing windows, ramps and more. Every family is greeted by work teams who not only complete work on their homes, but who bring a sense of hope to what is often a life of crisis. Families experience Christ in the care given not just to their home, but to the persons living in the home.

We continue to feed the hungry with an active food cupboard. The requests for food assistance are up in numbers from last year. We estimate that 1/3 or more of our population in the areas we serve are in need of help to feed their families. Heating assistance has been possible through grants and the generosity of the churches and individuals of the NEAC and local oil companies. We thank each person who has tended to the needs of God's people through financial gifts and gifts of time and talent to the UMEM.

The sneakers and backpack program continues each fall. This past year we served almost 200 children through the backpack and sneakers program. This program relies on the donations of churches and individuals, as does the Christmas Shoppe program, which served an equal number. Our local crafters continue to make wreathes for sale each Christmas season. We are looking for other crafting projects to stimulate cottage industry to supplement the incomes of our clients. We hope to continue to offer an on-site VBS in Salem. One of our long time mission teams brings VBS to the children of our area.

The Thrift Shop in Salem and in Solon continues to thrive. Each provides much-needed, gently-used clothing and household goods. The donations of clothing are a blessing we receive from many churches and individuals. Again, thank you for such a wonderful outpouring of support.

We share the Gospel through the gifts of each volunteer. The UMEM is often the first place its clients come when faced with the difficulties of life. We have repeatedly experienced how God is working with and through, the staff and many volunteers who are part of the body of Christ in ministry at the UMEM.

January brought with it the hiring of a half-time Executive Director. Michele is excited to be a part of the UMEM and its vision and mission for years to come. Along with staff and dedicated Board members, the UMEM is working on a Strategic Site plan for its current properties and looking toward partnering with other missional ventures in our Conference and beyond.

As the UMEM moves into its next phase of leadership, the Board of Directors continues on how to expand and strengthen its financial base and its communication of the Gospel through service. We continue a focus on stabilizing funding using Giftworks to track and create a way to offer opportunities for giving to the UMEM. We continue to explore and implement ways to increase our presence on the internet and web, as well as in print media.

Michele St. Cyr, Executive Director

## **UNITED METHODIST ELDER CARE**

Number of Board Members: 13

Our mission at United Methodist Elder Care remains as it was when the facility opened in the 1970's – to “provide a community where older persons can live in comfort, with dignity and a sense of purpose.” We strive to maintain this ideal in an environment of ever changing needs, opportunities, obstacles, and challenges.

United Methodist Elder Care's vision is of a proactive, growing and flexible organization that seeks to serve a larger number and greater diversity of persons in the New England Conference and in the larger community of southeastern New England. Also, United Methodist Elder Care strives to provide outstanding facilities and services to its residents and the community at large.

On December 31, 2011, Arbor Hill Assisted Living officially opened its doors to the first residents. Since that day, Arbor Hill's census has grown to its capacity, a total of 50 residents' lives have been enriched by the additional services, activities

programs and caring staff. We have reached our goal of 100% occupancy. Arbor Hill is home to low to moderate income elders in need of “affordable” care and services.

UMEC’s subsidiary corporation, ElderCare Consultant’s LLC’s partnership with the Woonsocket Housing Authority to replicate our model of an “affordable assisted living” community continues. ElderCare Consultants’ Home Care Division provides the assisted living service component of the Authority’s program. This program provides services to Woonsocket Housing’s community.

As part of United Methodist Elder Care’s outreach to the community, the staff and residents of Winslow Gardens continue their mission to spread God’s love, joy and laughter through a Caring Clown Ministry, as well as, sharing their vocal talent through the Time and Again Chorus. The Caring Clowns are about God’s sense of humor, giving and receiving God’s love and entering into relationships. The Clowns and the Chorus have spread their joy to many United Methodist churches, assisted living facilities, adult day care centers, civic groups, childcare facilities, and schools.

Our facilities have been in operation for over 43 years and although we are able to provide a decent, safe and affordable environment for our residents, the buildings are aging and continually need upgrading and system change to stay competitive with the market.

United Methodist Elder Care hosted its 5th Golf Tournament at the Alpine Country Club in June of 2013, raising \$10,443.75 for support of projects at Linn Health Care Center and Winslow Gardens.

Continual decrease in revenue, as a result of “rebalancing” the funding system and transitioning low acuity residents from nursing homes, will alter the manner in which long-term care providers, such as United Methodist Elder Care, will accomplish their mission of providing quality services to a frail population. Supplemental funding is critical to continue the mission and ministry of this organization. We ask that the Conference enhance the strength of its commitment and dedication to our mission and ministry by encouraging individual Conference churches and church members to help us weather this Medicaid storm, through financial support.

On behalf of the Trustees and residents of United Methodist Elder Care, thank you to all who express their support of the Centers through Golden Cross and other donations. Your \$3,249.45 in Golden Cross dollars during 2013 funded bed reserves for hospitalized residents of Linn Health Care Center and provided subsidies for personal care, housekeeping, and meal services for Retirement and Assisted Living residents. It has proven to be a valuable and essential service, one that is not often provided by our counterparts in the nursing home industry.

Paul Parks, Jr., Executive Director

## UNITED METHODIST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

As we take a look back at 2013, we would like to start by saying thank you for celebrating 65 years with us. Last year we had a wonderful anniversary and were proud to have you help celebrate our accomplishments as a credit union.

In January we launched our new eBranch Internet banking and billpay services and now have 24/7 live member service, mobile banking and remote deposit. In April, we introduced Shared Branching with access to 7,600 branches and in June, we enhanced our internal loan processing systems as well as our new membership application.

It was great to see that our 65th anniversary year coincides with a good year for us, and the economy in general. These advances, though slow, have been strong signs of an impending recession recovery. In the U.S., we have seen this recovery in unemployment, which fell to its lowest in 5 years; housing sales and the GDP, which grew 3.5%; home prices, which jumped 13.6% from 2012; foreclosures, which fell 24%; and Dow Jones, whose industrial average finished 2013 at 26.5%, its best return since 1995.

At United Methodist FCU, we have had many notable signs of this recovery. For instance, we had an increase of \$15.1 Million in our loans and our total assets grew 2.4% from 2012. We also saw a spike in investments, with increases of 9.4% from 2012, and a 2% increase in total shares and a net income to reserves increase of over 128%.

Along with financial growth, we also saw a decrease of 17.5% in total liabilities and a 17% decrease in total expenses.

Though many are subtle signs, all are great indicators of our financial growth and stability as we all continue to face the many challenges left from the great recession.

In total, we ended the year with assets of \$84,365,929.

Donna Lee Fowlie

## UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF NEW ENGLAND

**Dedicated to Serving all the United Methodists of the New England Conference!** With our unique passion for connecting faith and finances, the United Methodist Foundation of New England continued to be recognized in 2013-2014 as a trusted partner in the areas of stewardship, planned giving, and financial services in support of local churches, boards, and agencies all across New England.

The Foundation strengthened the financial capacity of local churches by offering stewardship programs that emphasized a year-round approach to financial management. Programs like “Faith & Money” shift the conversation from “fund-raising” to “faith-raising” by identifying generosity as a core value for engaged Christians. By delivering resources for individual members of congregations, as well as for church committees, the Foundation proclaimed that faithful stewardship is a spiritual discipline grounded in classic Biblical and Wesleyan theology.

In exploring new ways to serve, the Foundation provided financial support for Bishop Devadhar’s spirituality initiative and its goal of providing nationally-known speakers each year in the discipline of personal spiritual formation for every district during the current quadrennium. The Foundation’s commitment to this endeavor in 2013 focused specifically on a series of six seminars by Dr. Clif Christopher, noted United Methodist communicator in this field. More than 300 clergy and lay leaders came away from these sessions with a clearer understanding of what it means to be generous disciples.

Mindful of the need to demonstrate good stewardship itself, the Foundation loaned one of its staff members, Bonnie Marden, to the annual conference to serve as the field coordinator for the “Imagine No Malaria” campaign. Then, in early 2014, the Foundation announced the creation of a \$50,000 challenge grant in support of this financial campaign. Local churches across New England were invited to conduct special activities during Mother’s Day Weekend in support of efforts to wipe out deaths from malaria in Sub-Sahara Africa. Funds raised during this weekend were matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the Foundation up to the challenge grant’s total.

The Foundation’s grants-making ministry was again strongly supported by the UMFNE Annual Appeal, which regularly seeks financial gifts from Foundation board members, staff, and supporters of the Foundation’s work. Through these acts of generosity, the Foundation provided grants totaling more than \$50,000 in 2013 to fund stewardship initiatives and mission-oriented ministries in the following churches and institutions:

Binghamville UMC – Fletcher, VT	Charlton City UMC – Charlton, MA
Camp Aldersgate – N. Scituate, RI	Christ UMC – Northampton, MA
Greenwood Memorial UMC – Dorchester, MA	Harbor UMC – Scituate, MA
Hope.Gate.Way UMC – Portland, ME	Living Faith UMC – Putnam, CT
North Ferrisburgh UMC – N. Ferrisburgh, VT	People’s UMC – Greenville Jct., ME
Pleasant Street UMC – Salem, NH	The River UM Communities of Faith – Woonsocket, RI
Westfield UMC – Westfield, MA	

The Foundation continues to be a leader in socially responsible investing (SRI) among United Methodist Foundations nationally. All holdings in UMFNE portfolios are regularly screened against the SRI list published by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Because of this commitment to SRI investing, the Foundation remains uniquely qualified to manage individual church accounts and endowments. In 2013, the “net-of-fees” total returns for each of the Foundation’s core investment strategies – Stock Pool (25.01%), Fixed Income Pool (– .91 %), Alternative Investment Pool (.43%), and the Money Market Pool (.50%) – were all in line with their corresponding benchmarks while providing reduced risk and volatility. In the process, local church assets under management at the Foundation topped \$100 million for the first time in Foundation history!

This year we thanked and recognized Alexx Wood, who has completed her term of service on the Foundation’s Board since our last report.

### **Members of the 2013–14 Foundation Board of Directors:**

Rev. Richard Black	Wesley Blair, III (Board Treasurer)
Rev. Sandra Bonnette-Kim	Rev. Barbara Cann
Lee Carpenter	Pamela Carpenter
Rev. Theodore Crass	Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar
Rev. Brigid Farrell	David Fitts (Board Chair)
Joseph Gardino	Rev. Robert Hill
Rev. Anne Marie Hunter	Cathy MacGovern
Rev. James Mentzer (President)	Rev. Harbour Mitchell, III

Kristine Owen  
 George Reagan  
 Brad Stayton  
 Janice Swenor (Board Secretary)  
 Sabina Terrades  
 Rev. Ronald Wilson

Kirk Randlett  
 John Regier (Board Vice-Chair)  
 James Stephen  
 Rev. Herbert Taylor  
 Stanley Wilbur

David W. Fitts  
 Chair, UMFNE Board

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

As I write this report summer is ending , harvest is beginning and autumn is arriving. Since the beginning of the year, the United Methodist Women (UMW) as a group has plowed and sowed the seeds of gratitude, order and harmony into our lives to work together as a team across New England. September has often been seen as the beginning of a new program year – a time for change in the natural world and a time for turning over a personal new leaf so that our lives may be restored. Unlike New Year's resolutions, those promises made to ourselves in September are usually unknown to others.

As individuals and as a group we need only to be open to positive change.

Our UMW Purpose remains the same with only a few beginning words missing:

United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Our Vision as stated in the handbook:

United Methodist Women is turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

- We provide opportunities and resources to grow spiritually, become more deeply rooted in Christ and put faith into action.
- We are organized for growth, with flexible structures leading to effective witness and action.
- We equip women and girls around the world to be leaders in communities, agencies, workplaces, governments and churches.
- We work for justice through compassionate service and advocacy to change unfair policies and systems.
- We provide educational experiences that lead to personal change in order to transform the world.

This past year the New England United Methodist Women Team met with Bishop Devadhar who encouraged us to connect with prayer and to try to financially support the Taize trip for young people. We have also been active participants in rallying for just immigration laws, for laws to protect our children and not guns, and for fair trade. While we do not give our mission dollars to the Imagine No Malaria campaign, we do support it as individuals and in our local churches. A pleasant change for the National organization is the re-connection of the Deaconess program with the United Methodist Women. The New England Conference UMW welcomes a new program representative from the National Board, Sohyun Han. The New England Conference UMW is excited about the active participation with the Korean United Methodist Women.

Cooper Community Center in Roxbury, MA is the only United Methodist Center in New England and has been a top priority for our attention. We certainly encourage individual churches to "get on board," go see the facility, meet those who run it, and support it financially.

Mission u, a cooperative venture between the United Methodist Women and the New England Conference, was held at the University of New Hampshire in July and will be held there again the last weekend in July 2014. Its topics will be: Disability, It Is Well With My Soul and Roma. This course of study is open to all men, women and children.

Our goals for the future include 1. attending National Assembly in Louisville, KY, in April 2014, 2. offering a seminar in New York City on one of the major topics such as environment, domestic abuse, immigration, among other topics of interest, and 3. becoming more intricately involved with the Hispanic United Methodist Women.

The UMW is always trying to change, renew and rejuvenate to stay relevant in today's society.

Arlene Mackie, President  
 New England United Methodist Women

## UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

January 2014

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

United is one of the fastest growing, accredited seminaries in North America. Why are Christian disciples and leaders signing up for our traditional and online programs? They are doing so because United is committed to teaching the Bible and the historic Christian faith, cultivating spiritual formation for personal and social holiness, and renewing the Church for the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. What could be more important or exciting?

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

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

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

Enrollment at United continues to grow, and we invite you to call or visit soon!

For more information, please contact [admissions@united.edu](mailto:admissions@united.edu).

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

[www.united.edu](http://www.united.edu)

By Wendy J. Deichmann, President

"Spirit Led, Renewing the Church"

## VISIONING TABLE

During the past year, the conference vision table has worked on clarifying and refining the purpose of the table and on organizing our body to serve this purpose effectively. We also worked closely with the conference strategic planning committee to give feedback to the planning process.

### **The Purpose of the Vision Table:**

**To be a place of communication, coordination, and accountability in order to support and align the ministries of the annual conference (districts, conference boards/committees, and local churches) around the conference's vision, mission, and critical issues.**

The Visioning Table is directly accountable to the Annual Conference, and serves as the connecting point of collaboration for vision, mission, and ministry in the conference as well as between the annual conferences.

### **Structure and Membership**

- Approximately 40 members with about half representing conference board and agencies, and about half as "at large" members who are gifted in visioning, energy, organizational and motivational skills, etc. Each member will serve on a quadrennial term.
- The Executive committee with no more than 8 voting members.
- The whole committee meets twice a year and the executive committee meeting at least twice a year.

### **Ministry Areas**

The membership of the Visioning Table will be drawn from these categories of ministry:

Local Church Ministry – at large representatives from diverse New England churches, Laity and Clergy

Mission/Justice Ministries – Cong. Development, Church/Society, UMW, UMM, Global Ministries, Ethnic Committees and Caucuses, Volunteers in Mission, Church and Society etc.

Administrative Ministries – Trustees, CFA, Pensions, Personnel etc.  
 Leadership Ministries – Bishop, Cabinet, Board of Ministry, Board of Laity etc.  
 District Ministry – representatives from each district.

Submitted by We Hyun Chang, chair

## WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC – [www.WesleySeminary.edu](http://www.WesleySeminary.edu)

The past year has brought many blessings, change and growth to Wesley Theological Seminary. We continue to focus our work on preparing our students for leading churches that go out into the world and moving people to live the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Here are a few of the newest developments at Wesley:

- The Rev. Dr. Robert K. Martin joined the seminary as Dean and Professor of Christian Formation and Leadership.
- The Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe joined Wesley as the James C. Logan Professor of Evangelism and Urban Ministry. He directs the Urban Ministry program and Course of Study. Paul Kang-Kul Cho is serving as assistant professor of Hebrew Bible. The Rev. Dr. Doug Tzan is now teaching Church History part-time and is mentor to United Methodist students.
- Mike McCurry (former press secretary in the Clinton presidency) has been named Distinguished Professor of Public Theology and co-director of the National Capital Semester for Seminarians. The Rev. Dr. H. Beecher Hicks, senior minister of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Largo, Maryland, will serve as Distinguished Visiting Professor of Homiletics. With support from Lilly Endowment Inc., the Rev. Dr. James P. Wind (former president of the Alban Institute) has joined the faculty as Visiting Distinguished Professor. He joins our faculty for three years to lead a research project studying large congregations and the leadership they and their pastors wield in church and society.
- The Lewis Center for Church Leadership celebrated ten years of offering resources to help congregations reach more people and fund their ministry. See [www.ChurchLeadership.com](http://www.ChurchLeadership.com).
- Our Heal the Sick Initiative has graduated its inaugural classes for the Health Minister certificate and the Faith Community Nurse Certificate. The initiative is a unique program at Wesley to help congregations become involved in public health initiatives in their parish, part of our Center for the Missional Church.
- Lewis Center director, the Rev. Dr. Lovett Weems, and Wesley Board of Governors Chairman, the Rev. Tom Berlin, released the book *Overflow: Increase Worship Attendance & Bear More Fruit*.
- Completed construction of a new, LEED-certified residence hall.
- Now offers course auditing for \$100 per credit hour and CEUs for \$100 per unit.
- Five pastors from Beijing, China, joined us for the spring semester in a special program of study through the work of the Rev. Dr. Kyunglim Shin Lee, Vice President of International Relations.
- Wesley was named to Faith3.org's list, *Seminaries that Change the World*. This list was announced in the Huffington Post on November 12, 2013. One of the several reasons for the attribute was Wesley's Center for the Missional Church, which is headquartered at Wesley Downtown, in the heart of Washington, D.C.
- Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded Wesley a grant to research and develop a program to strengthen United Methodist elders' and future elders' financial literacy and financial-management skills.

Please be in prayer for Wesley Theological Seminary. We cannot do our ministry alone, and your participation with us in the greater mission of God enhances us mightily. We are striving to provide you with the kinds of educational opportunities that will take your ministry to the next level. In turn, we depend upon your participation in and contribution to our ministry as well. *So, pray for us often, avail yourself of the school's offerings, give to Wesley, and identify and send us persons who are called and who have a high capacity for fruitful ministry.*

David McAllister-Wilson, President