

STANDING RULES

REPORT I CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT *FOR INFORMATION ONLY*

1 We are aware that changes in Book of Discipline references are in order, that some agency names
2 need to be updated, and that there may be other changes to be made. However, because of timing
3 restrictions, those updates will need to come later. As of this report deadline, no changes are being
4 proposed to the Standing Rules.

5 We are sorry for the loss of Rev Edgar Avitia from our committee.

6

7 Thank you for the opportunity to be of service to you.

8 Barbara Mobley, Chairperson

9 Mike Cave, Vice-Chairperson

Elva Garza

10 Bertha Castañeda, Secretary

Eddie Pinchback

REPORT II RÍO TEXAS CONFERENCE STANDING RULES *FOR CONFERENCE ACTION*

11 The **Mission** of the Río Texas Conference: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the
12 transformation of the world. The **Vision** of the Río Texas Conference: Uniting Peoples, Vitalizing
13 Congregations, Developing Leaders, Transforming Communities.

14

STRUCTURE AND AGENCIES

Uniting Table

15 1. There shall be a Uniting Table whose function is to coordinate mission and ministry in the Río
16 Texas Conference through the four Vision Teams focused on the four pillars of the conference
17 Vision: Uniting Peoples, Vitalizing Congregations, Developing Leaders, and Transforming
18 Communities. The Uniting Table and the four Vision Teams are responsible for focusing on the
19 Mission Field. The membership of the Uniting Table shall be: the Bishop (ex officio without vote);
20 the dean of the cabinet; the lay leader; the chairpersons of the Uniting Peoples, Vitalizing
21 Congregations, Developing Leaders and Transforming Communities Vision Teams; the
22 chairperson or a representative of each administrative agency in Rule #6; one representative
23 each from the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Committee on the Episcopacy, and the Council on
24 Children's Ministries; the presidents of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, the
25 Youth Ministries Council, and the Young Adult Ministry Council; and the chairperson. There shall
26 also be seven (7) members at large and a Mission Field Advocate, nominated by the Committee
27 on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. All references in the Book of Discipline
28 to a conference council on ministries will be fulfilled by the Uniting Table. The Uniting Table is
29 accountable to, and funded by, the Annual Conference.

30 a. There shall be a Mission Field Advocate whose responsibility is to help the Uniting Table
31 and the Vision Teams remain focused on the mission field by advocating for the people who
32 are not in our churches, including those who are in poverty, those who are young, those who
33 are marginalized, and those who are disempowered by our culture and society.

34 b. The Uniting Table and the four Vision Teams will be expected to recruit and engage lay
35 and clergy persons across the conference to serve on task forces to assist in their
36 responsibilities.

37 c. Each Vision Team will have funding through the Annual Conference budget. Meetings of
38 the Team will be funded through the amount budgeted to that Team. Appointed task forces
39 also will be funded through the amount provided in the Annual Conference budget assigned to
40 that Team.
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1 d. The Committee on Nominations shall nominate, and the Annual Conference shall elect, the
2 chairpersons of the Uniting Table and each of the four Vision Teams. None of these
3 chairpersons shall have any other specific ministry responsibilities on the Uniting Table or any
4 of the Vision Teams, nor shall they be chairperson of any other conference agency.

5 e. The Constitutions for United Methodist Women (§ 647) and United Methodist Men (§ 648)
6 are included in
7 the 2016 Book of Discipline. United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men are
8 independent organizations which nominate and elect their own leaders. Each of these
9 organizations is represented by the president and/or another designated person on various
10 agencies of the Annual Conference, including the Uniting Table. United Methodist Women
11 relates to the national organization of United Methodist Women. United Methodist Men relates
12 to the General Commission on United Methodist Men.
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15 **Uniting Peoples Vision Team**

16 2. There shall be a Uniting Peoples Vision Team whose function is to facilitate unity, witness,
17 communication and justice, and to work toward intercultural competency in all areas of
18 conference life. The membership of the Uniting Peoples Vision Team shall be: two persons
19 whose specific responsibility is Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, two persons
20 whose specific responsibility is Religion and Race, two persons whose specific responsibility is
21 the Status and Role of Women, two persons whose specific responsibility is Communications,
22 two persons whose specific responsibility is Disability Concerns, and a chairperson; all nominated
23 by the Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. The entire Vision
24 Team has the full responsibility for each of the areas of focus represented by its members. The
25 Uniting Peoples Vision Team relates to the Council of Bishops, the General Commission on
26 Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and to the
27 Uniting Table. The Uniting Peoples Vision Team is accountable to, and funded by, the Annual
28 Conference.

29 a. There shall be a Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (the
30 commission) whose function is defined in § 642 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The
31 membership of the commission shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference
32 whose specific responsibility is Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, plus all the
33 other members of the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The commission relates to the Council of
34 Bishops, and to the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The commission is accountable to the
35 Uniting Peoples Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the Uniting
36 Peoples Vision Team portion of the budget.

37 b. There shall be a Commission on Religion and Race (the commission) whose function is
38 defined in § 643 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the commission shall be
39 the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Religion
40 and Race, plus all the other members of the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The commission
41 relates to the General Commission on Religion and Race, and to the Uniting Peoples Vision
42 Team. The commission is accountable to the Uniting Peoples Vision Team and to the Annual
43 Conference, and is funded through the Uniting Peoples Vision Team portion of the budget.

44 c. There shall be a Commission on the Status and Role of Women (the commission) whose
45 function is defined in § 644 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the
46 commission shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific
47 responsibility is the Status and Role of Women, plus all the other members of the Uniting
48 Peoples Vision Team, plus a member named by the conference United Methodist Women.
49 The chairperson of this commission shall be a woman, and a majority of its members shall be
50 women. The commission relates to the General Commission on the Status and Role of
51 Women, and to the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The commission is accountable to the
52 Uniting Peoples Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the Uniting
53 Peoples Vision Team portion of the budget.

54 d. There shall be a Commission on Communications (the commission) whose function is
55 defined in § 646 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the commission shall be
56 the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is

1 Communications, plus all the other members of the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The
2 commission relates to the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The commission is accountable to
3 the Uniting Peoples Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the
4 Uniting Peoples Vision Team portion of the budget.

5 e. There shall be a Committee on Disability Concerns (the committee) whose function is
6 defined in ¶ 653 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the committee shall be
7 the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Disability
8 Concerns, plus all the other members of the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. Membership shall
9 include persons with physical disabilities and persons with mental disabilities. The committee
10 relates to the Uniting Peoples Vision Team. The committee is accountable to the Uniting
11 Peoples Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the Uniting
12 Peoples Vision Team portion of the budget.

13 14 **Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team**

15 3. There shall be a Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team whose function is to discern, develop
16 and deploy
17 resources pertinent to the fulfillment of the mission and purpose of the local church, and to
18 support the restoring of vitality to the local church. The membership of the Vitalizing
19 Congregations Vision Team shall be: two persons whose specific responsibility is Discipleship,
20 two persons whose specific responsibility is Congregational Development & Revitalization, two
21 persons whose specific responsibility is Ethnic Local Church Concerns, two persons whose
22 specific responsibility is Parish and Community Development, two persons whose specific
23 responsibility is the Small Membership Church, two persons whose specific responsibility is New
24 Church Development, two persons whose specific responsibility is Children's Ministries, two
25 persons whose specific responsibility is Older Adult Ministries, two persons whose specific
26 responsibility is Hispanic/Latino Ministries, and a chairperson; all nominated by the Committee on
27 Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. Additional members shall be the presidents
28 or designees of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, the Youth Ministries Council,
29 and the Young Adult Ministry Council. The entire Vision Team has the full responsibility for each
30 of the areas of focus represented by its members. The Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team
31 relates to the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, and to the
32 Uniting Table. The Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team is accountable to, and funded by, the
33 Annual Conference.

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35 a. There shall be a Board of Discipleship (the board) whose function is defined in ¶ 630 of the
36 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the board shall be the two persons elected by
37 the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Discipleship, plus all the other
38 members of the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The board relates to the General
39 Board of Discipleship, and to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The board is
40 accountable to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and
41 is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the budget.

42 b. There shall be a Committee on Congregational Development and Revitalization (the
43 committee) whose function is defined in ¶ 633.5e of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The
44 membership of the committee shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference
45 whose specific responsibility is Congregational Development and Revitalization, plus all the
46 other members of the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The committee relates to the
47 General Board of Global Ministries and to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The
48 committee is accountable to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual
49 Conference, and is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the
50 budget.

51 c. There shall be a Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (the committee) whose
52 function is defined in ¶ 632 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the committee
53 shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is
54 Ethnic Local Church Concerns, plus all the other members of the Vitalizing Congregations
55 Vision Team. The committee relates to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The
56 committee is accountable to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual

1 Conference, and is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the
2 budget.

3 d. There shall be a Committee on Parish and Community Development (the committee)
4 whose function is defined in ¶ 633.5 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the
5 committee shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific
6 responsibility is Parish and Community Development, plus all the other members of the
7 Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The committee relates to the General Board of Global
8 Ministries and to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The committee is accountable to
9 the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded
10 through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the budget.

11 e. There shall be a Commission on the Small Membership Church (the commission) whose
12 function is defined in ¶ 645 and ¶ 633.5i of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of
13 the commission shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific
14 responsibility is the Small Membership Church, plus all the other members of the Vitalizing
15 Congregations Vision Team. The commission relates to the General Board of Global
16 Ministries and to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The commission is accountable to
17 the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded
18 through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the budget.

19 f. There shall be a Committee on New Church Development (the committee) whose function
20 is defined in ¶ 633.5e-h and ¶ 630.3 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the
21 committee shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific
22 responsibility is New Church Development, plus all the other members of the Vitalizing
23 Congregations Vision Team. The committee relates to the General Board of Global Ministries,
24 the General Board of Discipleship, and to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The
25 committee is accountable to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual
26 Conference, and is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the
27 budget.

28 g. There shall be a Council on Children's Ministries (the council) whose function is to plan,
29 vision and advocate for children within the conference. The membership of the council shall
30 be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is
31 Children's Ministries, plus all the other members of the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team.
32 The council relates to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The council is accountable
33 to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded
34 through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the budget.

35 h. There shall be a Council on Older Adult Ministries (the council) whose function is defined in
36 ¶ 651 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the council shall be the two persons
37 elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Older Adult Ministries, plus
38 all the other members of the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The council relates to the
39 General Board of Discipleship, and to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team. The council
40 is accountable to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual Conference,
41 and is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the budget.

42
43 i. There shall be a Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries (the committee) whose function is
44 defined in ¶ 655 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the committee shall be
45 the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is
46 Hispanic/Latino Ministries, plus all the other members of the Vitalizing Congregations Vision
47 Team. At least one-third of the members shall be Hispanic/Latino persons. The committee is
48 accountable to the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and
49 is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the budget.

50 j. There shall be a Youth Ministries Council (the council), whose function is defined in ¶ 649 of
51 the 2016 Book of Discipline, and which will fulfill all references in the Book of Discipline to the
52 Council on Youth Ministries. The council will support, encourage and equip youth leaders in
53 the church. The council will consist of 3-5 youth from each district, and will represent the
54 diversity of the conference. No more than one-third of the members of the council will be
55 adults. The council is represented by the president and/or another designated person on
56 various agencies of the Annual Conference, including the Uniting Table. The council relates

1 to the General Board of Discipleship's Division on Ministries with Young People. The council
2 is accountable to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations
3 Vision Team portion of the budget.

4 k. There shall be a Young Adult Ministry Council (the council) whose function is defined in
5 ¶ 650 of the 2016 Book of Discipline, and which will fulfill all references in the Book of
6 Discipline to the Council on Young Adult Ministries. The council will provide voice and support
7 for all young adults in the conference. The council will be a group of diverse young adults
8 called to ministry and service as modeled by Jesus Christ. The council is represented by the
9 president and/or another designated person on various agencies of the Annual Conference,
10 including the Uniting Table. The council relates to the General Board of Discipleship's
11 Division on Ministries with Young People. The council is accountable to the Annual
12 Conference, and is funded through the Vitalizing Congregations Vision Team portion of the
13 budget.

14 **Developing Leaders Vision Team**

15 4. There shall be a Developing Leaders Vision Team whose function is to call and equip both lay
16 and clergy leaders for the mission field, and to especially encourage younger leaders. The
17 membership of the Developing Leaders Vision Team shall be: two persons whose specific
18 responsibility is Higher Education and Campus Ministry, and a chairperson; all nominated by the
19 Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. Additional members shall be
20 the presidents or designees of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, the Youth
21 Ministries Council, and the Young Adult Ministry Council; two representatives from the Board of
22 Ordained Ministry; the conference lay leader and the seven (7) district lay leaders. The entire
23 Vision Team has the full responsibility for each of the areas of focus represented by its members,
24 unless otherwise specified by the Book of Discipline. The Developing Leaders Vision Team
25 relates to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and its Division of Higher
26 Education, the General Board of Discipleship, and to the Uniting Table. The Developing Leaders
27 Vision Team is accountable to, and funded by, the Annual Conference.

28 a. There shall be a Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (the board) whose
29 function is defined in ¶ 634 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the board shall
30 be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Higher
31 Education and Campus Ministry, plus all the other members of the Developing Leaders Vision
32 Team. The board relates to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and its
33 Division of Higher Education, and to the Developing Leaders Vision Team. The board is
34 accountable to the Developing Leaders Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is
35 funded through the Developing Leaders Vision Team portion of the budget.

36 b. There shall be a Board of Ordained Ministry (the board) whose function, membership and
37 organization are defined in ¶ 635 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The members of the board
38 shall be nominated by the Bishop and elected by the Annual Conference. The board shall
39 relate to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The board is accountable to
40 and reports to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the Developing Leaders Vision
41 Team portion of the budget.

42 c. There shall be a Lay Leadership Team whose function is defined in ¶ 631 of the 2016 Book
43 of Discipline, and which will fulfill all references in the Book of Discipline to the Board of Laity.
44 The membership of the Lay Leadership Team shall be the conference lay leader as
45 chairperson and the district lay leaders, plus all the other members of the Developing Leaders
46 Vision Team. The Lay Leadership Team is represented by one or more of its members on
47 various agencies of the Annual Conference. The Lay Leadership Team relates to the General
48 Board of Discipleship, and to the Developing Leaders Vision Team. The Lay Leadership
49 Team is accountable to and reports to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the
50 Developing Leaders Vision Team portion of the budget.

51 **Transforming Communities Vision Team**

52 5. There shall be a Transforming Communities Vision Team whose function is to equip, educate
53 and support congregations around the areas of mission and The Advance, specific ethnic
54 concerns, and justice issues. The membership of the Transforming Communities Vision Team
55 shall be: two persons whose specific responsibility is Church and Society, two persons whose
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1 specific responsibility is Global Ministries, two persons whose specific responsibility is Native
2 American Ministries, two persons whose specific responsibility is The Advance Program, two
3 persons whose specific responsibility is the Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries, the Secretary
4 of Global Ministries, and a chairperson; all nominated by the Committee on Nominations and
5 elected by the Annual Conference. The Peace with Justice Coordinator shall also be a member.
6 The entire Vision Team has the full responsibility for each of the areas of focus represented by its
7 members. The Transforming Communities Vision Team relates to the General Board of Church
8 and Society, the General Board of Global Ministries, and to the Uniting Table. The Transforming
9 Communities Vision Team is accountable to, and funded by, the Annual Conference.

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11 a. There shall be a Board of Church and Society (the board) whose function is defined in
12 ¶ 629 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the board shall be the two persons
13 elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Church and Society, plus all
14 the other members of the Transforming Communities Vision Team, plus a member named by
15 the conference United Methodist Women. The board relates to the General Board of Church
16 and Society, and to the Transforming Communities Vision Team. The board is accountable to
17 the Transforming Communities Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded
18 through the Transforming Communities Vision Team portion of the budget. The board shall
19 name the Peace with Justice Coordinator.

20 b. There shall be a Board of Global Ministries (the board) whose function is defined in ¶ 633
21 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the board shall be the two persons elected
22 by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Global Ministries, plus all the other
23 members of the Transforming Communities Vision Team, including the Secretary of Global
24 Ministries, plus a member named by the conference United Methodist Women. The board
25 relates to the General Board of Global Ministries, and to the Transforming Communities Vision
26 Team. The board is accountable to the Transforming Communities Vision Team and to the
27 Annual Conference, and is funded through the Transforming Communities Vision Team
28 portion of the budget.

29 c. There shall be a Committee on Native American Ministries (the committee) whose function
30 is defined in ¶ 654 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the committee shall be
31 the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is Native
32 American Ministries, plus all the other members of the Transforming Communities Vision
33 Team. The committee relates to the Transforming Communities Vision Team. The committee
34 is accountable to the Transforming Communities Vision Team and to the Annual
35 Conference, and is funded through the Transforming Communities Vision Team portion of the
36 budget.

37 d. There shall be a Committee on The Advance (the committee) whose function is defined in
38 ¶ 656 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the committee shall be the two
39 persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific responsibility is The Advance, plus
40 all the other members of the Transforming Communities Vision Team. The committee relates
41 to the Transforming Communities Vision Team. The committee is accountable to the
42 Transforming Communities Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded through
43 the Transforming Communities Vision Team portion of the budget.

44 e. There shall be a Committee on Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries (the committee)
45 whose function is defined in ¶ 657 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The membership of the
46 committee shall be the two persons elected by the Annual Conference whose specific
47 responsibility is Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries, plus all the other members of the
48 Transforming Communities Vision Team. The committee relates to the Transforming
49 Communities Vision Team. The committee is accountable to the Transforming Communities
50 Vision Team and to the Annual Conference, and is funded through the Transforming
51 Communities Vision Team portion of the budget.

52 **Administrative Agencies**

53 6. There shall be Administrative Agencies whose functions are to provide ongoing administrative
54 support to the conference. Each of these functions will be carried out by a separate and
55 independent agency whose members are nominated by the Committee on Nominations and
56 elected by the Annual Conference, unless otherwise specified by the Book of Discipline. Each of

1 these agencies is directly accountable to the Annual Conference, reports to the Annual
2 Conference, and is funded through the budget of the Annual Conference, unless otherwise
3 specified by the Book of Discipline. Each of these agencies shall have one representative on the
4 Uniting Table for support of the missional emphases of the Uniting Table and Vision Teams.

5 a. There shall be a Finance Table whose function is defined in ¶¶ 611-628 of the 2016 Book
6 of Discipline, and which will fulfill all references in the Book of Discipline to the Council on
7 Finance and Administration. The Finance Table will also fulfill all references in the Book of
8 Discipline to the Commission on Equitable Compensation, whose function is defined in ¶ 625
9 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be sixteen (16) members of the Finance Table.
10 The Finance Table relates to the General Council on Finance and Administration. There shall
11 also be a Personnel Committee to carry out those functions of the Finance Table in ¶ 613.13
12 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be four (4) members of the Personnel Committee
13 plus a representative of the Finance Table and a district superintendent.

14 b. There shall be a Board of Trustees whose function is defined in ¶ 2512 of the 2016 Book of
15 Discipline. There shall be twelve (12) members of the Board of Trustees, who will be elected
16 in four classes of three members each. The first Board of Trustees will have three persons
17 elected by the Southwest Texas Conference whose terms end in June 2015, three persons
18 elected by the Río Grande Conference whose terms end in June 2016, three persons elected
19 by the Río Grande Conference whose terms end in June 2017, and three persons elected by
20 the Southwest Texas Conference whose terms end in June 2018. The members of the Board
21 of Trustees are also members of the Board of Directors of the United Methodist Río Texas
22 Conference Board of Trustees corporation, and their election shall be consistent with the
23 Certificate of Formation and the Bylaws of that corporation.

24
25 c. There shall be a Committee on Standing Rules whose function is to oversee the rules of
26 the Annual Conference, as permitted in ¶ 604.1 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be
27 six (6) members of the Committee on Standing Rules.

28 d. There shall be an Agenda and Worship Committee whose function is defined in ¶ 605.2 of
29 the 2016 Book of Discipline. The members of the Agenda and Worship Committee shall be
30 the Bishop and the Assistant to the Episcopal Office; the seven district superintendents; the
31 presidents of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, the Young Adult Ministry
32 Council, and the Youth Ministries Council; the conference lay leader; the conference treasurer;
33 the conference secretary; the chairperson of the Uniting Table; and a Worship Team
34 Coordinator recruited by the committee.

35 e. There shall be a Committee on the Episcopacy whose function is defined in ¶ 637 of the
36 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be twelve (12) members of the Committee on the
37 Episcopacy.

38 f. There shall be an Episcopal Residence Committee whose function is defined in ¶ 638 of the
39 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be six (6) members of the Episcopal Residence
40 Committee.

41 g. There shall be a Board of Pensions whose function is defined in ¶ 639 of the 2016 Book of
42 Discipline. There shall be sixteen (16) members of the Board of Pensions who will serve
43 eight-year staggered terms, with four members being elected every other year. The first
44 Board of Pensions will have four persons whose terms end in June 2016, four persons whose
45 terms end in June 2018, four persons whose terms end in June 2020, and four persons
46 whose terms end in June 2022 in order to establish the staggered terms. The 2014
47 conferences will each elect two persons for each class to make up the first Board of
48 Pensions. The members of the Board of Pensions are also members of the Board of
49 Directors of the United Methodist Río Texas Conference Board of Pensions corporation, and
50 their election shall be consistent with the Certificate of Formation and the Bylaws of that
51 corporation. The Board of Pensions relates to the General Board of Pensions and Health
52 Benefits.

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54 h. There shall be a Commission on Archives and History whose function is defined in ¶ 641 of
55 the 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be eight (8) members of the Commission on Archives

1 and History. The Commission on Archives and History relates to the General Commission on
2 Archives and History.

3 i. There shall be a Committee on Nominations (the committee) whose function is to identify
4 nominees for each elected leadership position for which the Book of Discipline does not
5 specify another method of nomination. The members of the committee shall be the Bishop
6 and the Assistant to the Episcopal Office; the seven district superintendents; one person from
7 each parent conference representing United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, the
8 Young Adult Ministry Council, and the Youth Ministries Council; the conference lay leader; and
9 six (6) at large members nominated by the Committee on Nominations and elected by the
10 Annual Conference to ensure equal representation on the committee from each of the parent
11 conferences. At least through 2024 the Committee on Nominations will consist of an equal
12 number of members from each of the parent conferences.
13

14
15 7. There shall be an Administrative Review Committee (the committee) whose function and
16 membership are defined in ¶ 636 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. There shall be three (3)
17 members of the committee and two (2) alternates, nominated by the Bishop and elected by the
18 clergy session of the Annual Conference. The committee is accountable to the clergy session of
19 the Annual Conference.
20

21 **Applying to All Agencies**

22 8. The Committee on Nominations shall work toward the goals of inclusiveness as set forth in
23 ¶ 610.5 in the 2016 Book of Discipline which states: "...special attention shall be given to the
24 inclusion of clergywomen, youth (¶ 256.3), young adults, older adults, persons from churches with
25 small memberships, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons, in keeping with
26 policies for general Church agencies. It is further recommended that the membership of such
27 agencies, except for the Board of Ordained Ministry, include one-third clergy, one-third
28 laywomen, and one-third laymen, who are professing members of local churches." The
29 Committee on Nominations shall also strive for equal representation from the districts; and, to the
30 extent possible, the diversity of those nominated should reflect the diversity of the Mission Field.
31 It will be important at least through 2020 that both the parent conferences be equally represented
32 on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Pensions, and that both be well represented on the
33 Uniting Table and the Vision Teams.

34 9. The term of membership in any conference agency is quadrennial, except where the Book of
35 Discipline stipulates otherwise. The maximum that a person can serve in an agency is two full
36 terms, except where the Book of Discipline stipulates otherwise, or when he/she is filling a
37 vacancy during the quadrennium. Filling a vacancy of an unexpired term of more than two years
38 is considered to be a full term and shall count the same as four years.

39 10. Any elected position on a conference agency which is vacant at the end of the Annual
40 Conference session or which becomes vacant during the conference year may be filled by the
41 Committee on Nominations, unless otherwise specified by the Book of Discipline.

42 11. Ex-officio members of an agency, including members of General and Jurisdictional Agencies
43 who reside within the bounds of the conference, are in addition to the agency members named
44 above.

45 12. Chairpersons of conference agencies should be sensitive to the work schedules of laity when
46 setting meetings.

47 13. When a person is absent without notice from two consecutive conference agency meetings
48 of which he/she is a member, such person shall be considered to have resigned such
49 membership, and the Committee on Nominations shall be notified that another person can be
50 nominated for the remainder of the term.

51 14. No district superintendent or conference staff person shall be eligible to serve as an elective
52 member of any conference agency. If a member at the time of appointment or hire, he/she shall
53 be considered to have resigned such membership.
54

55 **Conference Staff and Resources**

1 15. There shall be an Administrative Services Center whose function is to manage the financial
2 resources of the conference, and to develop alternative sources of funding for the conference.
3 The Administrative Services Center will encourage collaboration and partnership among all
4 program, administrative and financial entities of the conference. The Administrative Services
5 Center relates to and supports the work of the Finance Table and the Commission on Equitable
6 Compensation, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Pensions, the conference treasurer, and the
7 office of New Resource Development, as well as the other non-program agencies as needed.
8 The Administrative Services Center shall be accountable to the Finance Table and to the Annual
9 Conference, and shall be funded by the Annual Conference. There shall be a director or
10 equivalent position to oversee the functions of the Administrative Services Center, filled by
11 appointment or otherwise at the Bishop's discretion.

12 16. There shall be an Assistant to the Episcopal Office who will provide assistance with the
13 administrative tasks of the Episcopal Office. This position may be filled, by appointment or
14 otherwise, at the Bishop's discretion.

15 17. There shall be Directors who assist and coordinate with the ministries of the Vision Teams as
16 determined by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Bishop. These positions may be
17 filled, by appointment or otherwise, at the Bishop's discretion.

18 **MEMBERSHIP OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

19 18. The lay membership of the Annual Conference shall be:

20 **Lay Members Defined by the Book of Discipline**

21 a. A professing member elected by each charge, as provided for in ¶ 602.4 of the 2016 Book
22 of Discipline;

23 b. An additional lay member assigned to each charge for each additional clergy member who
24 is appointed to the charge as provided for in ¶ 602.4 of the 2016 Book of Discipline;

25 c. Diaconal ministers, active deaconesses, home missionaries under episcopal appointment
26 within the bounds of the Annual Conference, the conference president of United Methodist
27 Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district
28 lay leaders, the conference director of lay servant ministries, conference secretary of global
29 ministries (if lay), the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult
30 organization, the president of the conference youth organization, the chair of the Annual
31 Conference college student organization, one young person between the ages of twelve (12)
32 and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30)
33 from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the Annual
34 Conference, as provided in ¶ 602.4 and ¶ 32 of the 2016 Book of Discipline;

35 (The method for selecting the youth, college and young adult representatives to
36 Annual Conference will be as follows: the conference youth organization will
37 select one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17)
38 from each district; the conference young adult organization will select one young
39 person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district. In
40 the absence of a college student organization, the Board of Higher Education
41 and Campus Ministry will select the college student to serve as a Lay Member of
42 the Annual Conference. Each of the agencies is responsible for providing the
43 names and contact information for these persons to the conference secretary no
44 later than January 15 each year.)

46 **Lay Members Defined by Annual Conference**

47 d. An additional lay member assigned to each church that does not have a lay member as
48 provided for in 18a and 18b above; and

49 e. Other members as defined by the Annual Conference to include: an additional
50 representative of the executive committees of the conference organizations of United
51 Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, youth, and young adults; the president and one
52 additional representative of the executive committees of the district organizations of United
53 Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, youth, and young adults; the chancellor, the
54 conference emmaus lay director (if any), the conference scouting coordinator (if any),
55 conference associate lay leaders (if any), conference elected executive personnel (if any), the
56 chairperson of any conference agency or standing committee that reports directly to the

1 Annual Conference; lay members of the Uniting Table and Finance Table; and one lay
2 member for each unchartered new church start elected by the district in which the new church
3 start is located.

4 f. Additional lay members required to equalize lay and clergy membership shall be assigned
5 to each district based upon district membership. The conference secretary shall notify each
6 district superintendent of the number of additional lay members to be elected no later than
7 sixty (60) days following Annual Conference. Each district will determine the method of
8 election.

9 g. Through 2024 the additional lay members elected shall include members of both parent
10 conferences.

11 h. At least 10% of these additional lay members shall be age 30 or under at the time of
12 election.

13 19. In accordance with ¶ 659 of the 2016 Book of Discipline, the District Conferences will be
14 composed of all members of Annual Conference as set forth in the Standing Rules who are
15 related to churches within the bounds of their respective districts and currently elected to office.
16 In addition, it shall include the chairperson of each district agency.

17 18 **CONFERENCE PROCEDURES**

19 20. Proposals and reports from conference agencies shall be compiled in a Pre-Conference
20 Report that shall be made available as an electronic document or in printed form to all conference
21 members at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Conference session. Each report shall be
22 marked "For Conference Action" or "For Information Only."
23

24 21. The Annual Conference shall make available English and Spanish editions of all official
25 correspondence, including but not limited to the contents of the Pre-Conference Report and the
26 Conference Journal. The Annual Conference shall also provide oral translation between Spanish
27 and English, and support for hearing and vision impaired persons, during the sessions of the
28 Annual Conference.

29 22. Resolutions shall reach the floor of the conference only after consideration and action of the
30 appropriate conference agency.

31 23. The conference procedures will be governed by the following in order of precedence: the
32 Book of Discipline, the Standing Rules, any special rules adopted by the Annual Conference, and
33 the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

34 24. The conference secretary shall establish the bar of the conference. The conference
35 secretary shall nominate, and the Annual Conference elect, the persons needed to assist in the
36 proceedings of the conference. These include the timekeeper, tellers, associate secretaries, and
37 the minutes committee.

38 25. Speakers should identify themselves, giving their name and church, and whether they are a
39 clergy or lay member of the conference.

40 26. Each speech from the floor for or against a motion will be limited to three minutes. The
41 timekeeper will inform the Bishop when the time has expired.

42 27. Consent Agenda 1 consists of reports from conference agencies which are not for action, but
43 are "For Information Only." The conference acts only to receive these reports and print them in
44 the journal. Consent Agenda 2 consists of action reports about which there is believed to be little
45 or no dissent. The items included in Consent Agenda 2 are determined by a task force
46 composed of members of the Agenda and Worship Committee. Any member of the Annual
47 Conference may move the deletion of any of the items from Consent Agendas. With a second,
48 and a one-minute explanation by the maker of the motion, it will be voted on by the conference
49 without debate. If 20% of the members vote that the item be removed, it will be removed and
50 brought to the floor as a non-consent item at a time to be determined by the Agenda and Worship
51 Committee.
52

53 28. The Committee on Standing Rules shall report to the Annual Conference during the first
54 business session of each Annual Conference. Revisions or amendments must be adopted by a
55 two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Annual Conference, and become effective immediately upon their

1 adoption, unless otherwise stated in the enabling legislation. The Standing Rules may be
2 suspended at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Annual Conference.
3
4

5 29. The preliminary report of the Committee on Nominations will be presented early in the agenda
6 of the Annual Conference proceedings, including the process for nominations from the floor. The
7 final report of the Committee on Nominations will be presented and acted upon at a later session
8 of that Annual Conference.

9 30. Any report or resolution requiring action of the conference must be in the hands of the
10 conference secretary early enough to allow for printing and distribution to the conference twenty-
11 four (24) hours before the report is considered by the conference. Motions made from the floor
12 must be presented in writing to the presiding officer and the conference secretary at the time the
13 motion is made.

14 31. The conference lay leader will chair the Committee on Resolutions and Courtesies, and will
15 be responsible for appointing additional persons to assist in preparation of the report.

16 32. The only materials that are allowed to be placed on the tables of the conference floor are
17 those official materials distributed by the conference secretary and his/her staff.

18 33. The minutes shall be available online no later than sixty days after the closing of the Annual
19 Conference session.

20 **OTHER**

21 34. The Local Church Report to the Annual Conference (Annual Statistical Report) required by
22 the general church will be completed and filed with the conference no later than January 30, as
23 stated in ¶ 606.7 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. This can be done using the method determined
24 by the conference statistician to be the easiest and most effective manner.

25 35. There will be a Policy Manual containing policies adopted by the Annual Conference.
26 Changes in these policies must be approved by the Annual Conference. The conference
27 secretary will make these available as an electronic document and in printed form.
28

29 36. Any minister of the Annual Conference who conducts the funeral or memorial service of a
30 fellow minister or a minister's spouse shall provide the conference secretary with a memorial for
31 that person within one month, in accordance with the Guidelines on Memoirs to be furnished by
32 the conference secretary.
33

FINANCE TABLE (CF&A)

REPORT I
AUTHORITY OF THE FINANCE TABLE (CF&A) TO RESPOND TO UNFORESEEN FINANCIAL
SITUATIONS

FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

34
35 The Finance Table (CF&A) has the authority to adjust the budget implementation on the basis of changing
36 economic conditions and unforeseen circumstances as authorized in ¶¶613.5 – 613.11 and ¶¶616 – 618
37 2016 Book of Discipline. The Finance Table (CF&A) is authorized to grant amounts from the Conference
38 Contingency Fund or Reserves to meet any individual emergency or unanticipated need.

REPORT II
SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

39 The Finance Table (CF&A) is recommending that the salary and benefits for the Río Texas Conference District
40 Superintendents for 2025 be set as follows:
41

Compensation

42
43 Cash salary for 2025 is set at \$102,250 per annum.

1 Clergy Retirement Security Plan, Comprehensive Protection Plan, Health Benefits, and utilities shall vary
2 according to their actual cost.

3
4 ***Expenses to be Provided by the Districts***

5 Office space, office telephone (including long distance), postage, secretarial service, printing, office utilities
6 and insurance on furniture and equipment if applicable, library and periodical expenses, entertainment
7 related to the district, and other normal expenses related to the superintendency not paid by the Annual
8 Conference.

9 The district shall also provide a parsonage, parsonage utilities (not including personal long distance), parsonage
10 maintenance and insurance on parsonage or an appropriate housing allowance.
11

REPORT III
EQUITABLE COMPENSATION POLICY ON MINIMUM PASTORAL SUPPORT
FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

12 ***Minimum Pastoral Support Policies***

13 The minimum salary levels for 2025 shall be:

- 14
15 1. For a Full or Provisional member \$47,123 per annum (3.00%; \$1,373)
16 2. For an Associate member \$43,827 per annum (3.00%; \$1,277)
17 3. For an Approved Local Pastor or member of another denomination \$40,191 per annum (3.00%; \$1,171)
18
19 • Plus \$75 for each year of service completed after 2nd year with a maximum of \$1,425
20 • Plus \$200 for 2nd church in charge and \$100 for each additional church in the charge
21

22 The Commission on Equitable Compensation would like the Annual Conference to be aware of the following:

- 23 ➤ Our Minimum Salary recommendations factor in inflation, clergy needs, congregational capacity,
24 and the likelihood that clergy will be asked to contribute more to our pension after 2025.
25 ➤ The Commission has a long and proud history of factoring in racial justice and economic equity
26 concerns when evaluating requests, but we are engaged in great conversations as to how we can
27 consider these realities more proactively and publicly.
28 ➤ We anticipate having to review and revise our Equitable Compensation policies as the nature of
29 our episcopal area changes these next couple of years.

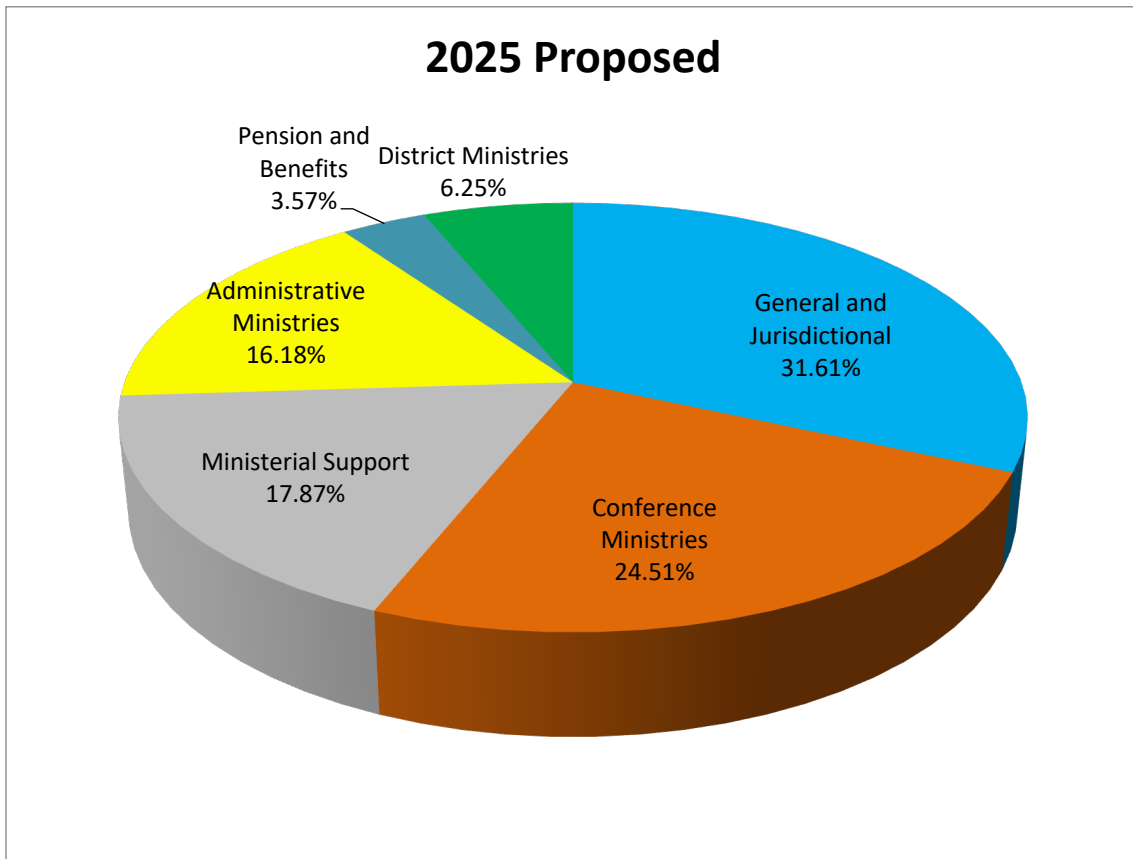
30 --Rev. Joe Tognetti

31 Chair, Commission on Equitable Compensation, 2023-2024

REPORT IV
2025 APPORTIONED FUNDS
FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

Fund Name	2023 Approved	2024 Approved	2025 Proposed	2025 vs 2024 % Change	2025 vs 2024 \$ Change
A General and Jurisdictional Total	2,321,198	2,321,199	1,769,393	-23.77%	(551,806)
B Conference Ministries Total	2,316,243	1,946,258	1,371,598	-29.53%	(574,660)
C Ministerial Support Total	1,304,835	1,247,251	999,953	-19.83%	(247,297)
D Administrative Ministries Total	1,294,857	1,242,989	905,752	-27.13%	(337,237)
E Pension and Benefits	345,000	250,000	200,000	-20.00%	(50,000)
F District Missions	700,000	350,000	350,000	0.00%	-
Grand Total	8,282,133	7,357,697	5,596,697	-23.93%	(1,761,000)

2025 APPORTIONED FUNDS



	2023 Approved	2024 Approved	2025 Proposed	% Change 2025 vs 2024	\$ Change 2025 vs 2024
A General and Jurisdictional					
1 GC: World Service	1,106,816	1,106,816	768,332	-30.58%	(338,484)
2 GC: Ministerial Educational Fund	346,657	346,657	265,764	-23.34%	(80,893)
3 GC: General Episcopal Fund	444,428	444,428	378,723	-14.78%	(65,705)
4 GC: Black College Fund	160,200	160,200	106,011	-33.83%	(54,189)
5 GC: General Administration Fund	136,303	136,303	129,853	-4.73%	(6,450)
6 GC: Africa University	36,016	36,016	23,725	-34.13%	(12,291)
7 GC: Interdenominational Cooperation	4,792	4,792	10,998	129.51%	6,206
8 SCJ: Lydia Patterson Institute	53,204	53,204	53,204	0.00%	-
9 SCJ: Mission and Administration Fund	28,677	28,677	28,677	0.00%	-
10 SCJ: SMU Campus Ministry/Reserves	4,106	4,106	4,106	0.00%	-
General and Jurisdictional Total	2,321,199	2,321,199	1,769,393	-23.77%	(551,806)
B Conference Ministries					
1 Staffing	981,410	792,325	363,098	-54.17%	(429,227)
2 Congregational Excellence	427,000	254,100	232,500	-8.50%	(21,600)
3 Clergy and Lay Leadership	384,500	369,500	337,000	-8.80%	(32,500)
4 Connectional Ministries	330,333	355,333	316,000	-11.07%	(39,333)
5 Transforming Communities	35,000	35,000	35,000	0.00%	-
6 Mission Field Ministry Office Operations	108,000	100,000	88,000	-12.00%	(12,000)
7 Contingency General	50,000	40,000	-	-100.00%	(40,000)
Conference Ministries Total	2,316,243	1,946,258	1,371,598	-29.53%	(574,660)
C Ministerial Support					
1 District Superintendent/Cabinet Support	847,835	710,251	466,954	-34.26%	(243,297)
2 Episcopal Support/Executive Fund	95,000	175,000	175,000	0.00%	-
3 Equitable Compensation	130,000	130,000	146,000	12.31%	16,000
4 Moving Expenses	200,000	200,000	180,000	-10.00%	(20,000)
5 Golden Cross	5,000	5,000	5,000	0.00%	-
6 Investigations/Emergency Response	7,000	7,000	7,000	0.00%	-
7 Cabinet Emergency Response	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.00%	-
Ministerial Support Total	1,304,835	1,247,251	999,953	-19.83%	(247,297)
D Administrative Ministries					
1 United Methodist Center Maintenance	301,000	301,000	-	-100.00%	(217,000)
2 United Methodist Center Technological Infrastructure	90,000	84,000	42,000	-50.00%	(42,000)
3 Conference Reserves	50,000	50,000	20,000	-60.00%	(30,000)
4 Commission on Archives & History	15,000	15,000	15,000	0.00%	-
5 Auditing	100,000	100,000	95,000	-5.00%	(5,000)
6 Journal	2,000	2,000	-	-100.00%	(2,000)
7 Administrative Ministries Staffing	746,094	694,226	652,989	-5.94%	(41,237)
8 Administrative Ministries Team Support	80,763	80,763	80,763	0.00%	-
Administrative Ministries Total	1,294,857	1,242,989	905,752	-27.13%	(337,237)
E Pensions and Benefits	345,000	250,000	200,000	-20.00%	(50,000)
F District Ministries	700,000	350,000	350,000	0.00%	-
Grand Total	8,282,133	7,357,697	5,596,697	-23.93%	(1,761,000)

REPORT V FINANCE TABLE (CF&A) OPERATIONS
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 The purpose of the Finance Table (CF&A) is “to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated
2 plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the Annual Conference” (§612.1
3 2016 *Book of Discipline*).

4
5 In keeping with the Disciplinary purpose, the Finance Table (CF&A) sees itself as an integral part of the mission
6 and ministry of the Conference. We are working to improve communications with the other agencies of the
7 Conference to ensure that our work is supportive of the ministries and goals of the Uniting Table and the Mission
8 Field Ministries Office.

9
10 Receipts on all funds for 2023 by the Río Texas Conference were \$7,095,956, or 78.36% of the apportioned amount.
11 The Finance Table (CF&A) is proposing the budget for 2025. The overall apportioned budget for all funds totals
12 \$5,596,697.

13
14 The Finance Table (CF&A) sees itself as joining with the local church in the work of the financial ministry of the
15 Annual Conference. We commend the 2025 budget to the Conference. It represents the uniqueness and depth of
16 ministries and missions provided by our church and economic realities of our Conference. The Finance Table
17 (CF&A), along with the Conference Treasurer, has been monitoring membership and economic trends within the
18 Conference, the Global Church, and society at large. As the goals and direction of the Conference become clearer,
19 we will be working with the Bishop, the Uniting Table, and Mission Field Ministries to ensure that the budget and
20 apportionments accurately reflect those goals and support those ministries. At the same time, we will continue to
21 work with our Conference Treasurer and other Conference leaders to improve communications, systems and
22 efficiency.

23
24 Operating Policies of the Finance Table (CF&A):

- 25
26 1. Following is the list of approved funds of the Río Texas Conference. These funds will be allocated to each
27 mission or chartered church/charge according to the formulas that follow.

28 General and Jurisdictional
29 Conference Ministries
30 Ministerial Support
31 Administrative Ministries
32 Pension and Benefits
33 District Missions
34

35 The decimal formula for apportionment calculation shall be based on the two year average of local church
36 operating expenses divided by two years of conference-wide local church operating expenses times each
37 apportioned fund. Operating expenses include only these line items from the Local Church Report to the
38 Annual Conference:

39 Line 41 – Pastor(s) Compensation
40 Line 42 – Utilities and Housing Paid to Pastor(s)
41 Line 43 – Accountable Reimbursement Paid to Pastor(s)
42 Line 44 – Non-Accountable Cash Allowances Paid to Pastor(s)
43 Line 45 – Staff & Diaconal Ministers Salary
44 Line 46 – Program Expenses
45 Line 47 – Current Operating Expenses other than Program

2 years of Local Church Operating Expenses		
2 Years of Conference-Wide Local Church Operating Expenses	X	Each Conference Apportioned Fund

1 If there are separate district apportionments determined by each district, they will be allocated according to the
 2 following formula.

$\frac{\text{2 years of Local Church Operating Expenses}}{\text{2 Years of District-Wide Local Church Operating Expenses}} \times \text{Each District Apportioned Fund}$
--

- 9 2. At the beginning of the calendar year, the Finance Table (CF&A) shall determine which portions of the
 10 Conference Ministries and Administrative Ministries are “fixed costs” (salaries, benefits, etc.) and shall thus
 11 be authorized to be paid at 100% of the approved budget. On the basis of prior-year receipts to these funds,
 12 the Finance Table (CF&A) shall then determine a percentage of the approved budget to be authorized for
 13 expenditures in the remaining items of each budget, so that expenditures shall not exceed income.
 - 14 a. Each church is expected to support all funds at 100% of the apportioned amount. (§247.14 2016 *Book*
 15 *of Discipline*)
 - 16 b. The churches are requested to make payments thereon aggregately, with the understanding that the
 17 Conference Treasurer will allocate such payments according to the appropriate percentage due the fund
 18 according to the Conference Budget.

- 20 3. An Unrestricted Fund Balance Account will be maintained by the Annual Conference at a minimum level of
 21 20% of the current total of the Conference Funds. Any undesignated interest income will be transferred to
 22 the undesignated fund balance at the end of the fiscal year.

- 24 4. All apportioned funds, pension and health benefits costs both receipts and disbursements, will be managed
 25 through the office of the Conference Treasurer. All boards, agencies, committees, and commissions shall use
 26 the Conference Treasurer as the fiscal agent.

- 28 5. The compensation (including housing and utilities) for District Superintendents shall be recommended to the
 29 Annual Conference by the Finance Table (CF&A), using a guideline formula adopted in 2017 of 1.85 times
 30 the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). The calculation was suspended in 2020 and 2021 at the
 31 request of the Cabinet. The 2023 salary calculation used the 2021 CAC instead of the 2022 CAC. The
 32 calculation, assuming utilities are \$5,000 and housing is 25% of Cash Salary, is \$71,791 x 1.85 = \$132,813;
 33 then, (\$132,813 – \$5,000) / 1.25 = \$102,250. The purpose of the formula is to relate DS Compensation to
 34 Full Time Clergy Compensation. We recommend that the salary computation should also be applied to other
 35 clergy appointed to the conference staff at Cabinet level. For the year 2024, the Cabinet has requested that
 36 their salaries be frozen at the lower 2023 rate as shown in the preceding calculation.

- 38 6. All agencies receiving funds from the Conference budget shall affirm that funds will not be expended for
 39 uses not consistent with §613.18-19 2016 *Book of Discipline*.

- 41 7. The amount of compensation designated as housing allowance for ordained staff members and district
 42 superintendents of the Conference will be set by an annual resolution of the Conference Finance Table
 43 (CF&A) after consideration of a statement of amounts to be used during the year.

- 45 8. The governing boards of United Methodist related entities must apply to the Finance Table (CF&A) to be
 46 granted the privilege of soliciting and receiving funds from churches, individuals, and other sources (but not
 47 from conference-wide offerings except as indicated in the list which follows) in keeping with §262 2016
 48 *Book of Discipline*; no capital campaigns have been approved for 2023; and the following, and only the
 49 following, conference-wide offerings are approved for 2025:
 - 50 Human Relations Day.....General Conference
 - 51 UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing).....General Conference
 - 52 Native American Awareness.....General Conference

- 1 Peace with Justice.....General Conference
 2 World Communion.....General Conference
 3 United Methodist Student Day.....General Conference
 4 Harvest Sunday (see Transforming Communities Vision Team Report).....Annual Conference
 5
 6 9. The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary of the Conference Finance Table (CF&A), the
 7 Chairperson of the Audit Committee, the Chairperson of Equitable Compensation, and the Conference
 8 Treasurer/Director of Administrative Ministries constitute the executive committee of the Conference
 9 Finance Table (CF&A).
 10
 11 10. The Finance Table (CF&A) is authorized to appoint a Conference auditor.
 12
 13 11. A Conference Fund will not be permitted to carry over unobligated budget allocations from one conference
 14 year to another unless specifically authorized by the Finance Table (CF&A). Agencies receiving funds from
 15 sources other than apportioned funds may carry over such unspent funds into the next year. Any unobligated
 16 budget allocations not authorized for carryover will be added to the undesignated Fund Balance of the Annual
 17 Conference.
 18
 19 12. Each year, the Conference Comptroller shall set a cutoff date for all apportionment payments to the
 20 Conference Treasurer to be applied to the preceding year. The cutoff date will be communicated to the local
 21 churches no later than December 1 each year.
 22
 23 13. Each Conference board, agency, or institution receiving or disbursing funds not managed by the Conference
 24 Treasurer shall maintain adequate financial records and prepare and submit annual audit reports to the
 25 Conference Treasurer and the Finance Table (CF&A). All treasurers shall be properly bonded.
 26
 27 14. The Conference fiscal year shall begin on January 1 each year, and end on December 31 each year.
 28
 29 15. The Conference Finance Table (CF&A) is responsible for designating depositories for Conference funds.
 30
 31 16. The Conference will include in each annual budget an appropriate line for each “shall” ministry as defined
 32 by *The Book of Discipline*.

REPORT VI
MEETING EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

33 All boards and agencies are urged to consider digital meeting options; this allows both economy of travel and
 34 increased participation from across the conference. When digital connection is not possible or effective, all boards
 35 and agencies are urged to schedule meetings, as far as possible, on dates and places coinciding with other groups
 36 in order to affect economy in travel expenses. Travel Expense shall be paid to members going to official in-
 37 conference meetings (between Annual Conference Sessions) at the rate of 40¢ per mile. If the travel qualifies for
 38 the use of a rental car or a flight, but the individual chooses to drive their own personal vehicle, they may do so.
 39 However, the cost of the least expensive alternative (personal car, rental car, airline ticket) will be the maximum
 40 amount that will be allowed to be reimbursed. The allowance for meals shall be \$3.00 for breakfast; \$7.00 each for
 41 lunch and dinner necessitated by the meetings. Reimbursement of 100% of lodging expenses necessitated by
 42 meetings at contracted hotels through the Annual Conference will be made for those who request reimbursement
 43 and who live more than 60 miles away from the meeting place. Those who choose to stay elsewhere will be
 44 reimbursed at the lowest contracted rate. The Conference meeting organizer will provide contracted hotel
 45 information to participants. Original lodging receipts must accompany the Disbursement Request. These
 46 allowances are not to cover full cost at all times, simply to assist in the additional expense of attending meetings.
 47

48 Childcare expenses per meeting day not to exceed \$30.00 for the first child, not to exceed \$20.00 for each additional
 49 child, shall be allowed and included in the meeting expense of the board or agency.
 50

1 Travel for duly elected delegates or representatives of the Conference to meetings of other organizations or
2 connectional agencies shall be paid as stated above. However, actual air travel, lodging, and other expenses may be
3 paid if funds are available from the board or agency concerned.

4
5 When it is necessary to fly to a meeting, flight must be booked at least 14 days prior to the meeting. If flights are
6 not booked 14 days prior to the meeting, the member booking the flight must pay the difference in the cost of the
7 flight. This does not apply in the rare instances when the meeting is an emergency meeting that is not announced
8 prior to 14 days.

9
10 Each local church is encouraged to undergird the meal, transportation, and lodging expenses of Annual Conference
11 members in attending Annual Conference by adding a minimum of \$100 to the church budget for each lay and
12 clergy delegate. The district superintendents are asked to encourage such support at each Charge Conference.

REPORT VII
AUDIT COMMITTEE
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

13 The Río Texas Conference Audit Committee is chartered and reports to the Finance Table (CF&A). The Audit
14 Committee is in the process of reviewing audits of 2023 financial statements. Audits for the Río Texas Conference
15 and Board of Pensions will be published in the Conference Journal later in 2024. Members of the Río Texas Audit
16 Committee are as follows:

17

18 Oscar Garza	Laity	Chairman
19 Zeda Alvarado	Laity	
20 Sally Cook	Laity	
21 Natalie Diaz	Laity	
22 Adria Maylone-Gomez	Staff	
23 Kendall Waller	Clergy	Treasurer

BOARD OF PENSIONS

REPORT I
PAST SERVICE RATE 2023
FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

24 The Past Service Rate for 2025 will be \$753 per year of annuity credit for the Pre-82 Pension
25 Plan. This represents a 3% increase over 2024. The Pre-82 Pension Plan, also known as
26 Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP), is a defined benefit pension
27 plan administered by Wespath and provides eligible clergy with a pension benefit for their years
28 of ministry with The United Methodist Church before 1982.

REPORT II
RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO RENTAL/HOUSING ALLOWANCES FOR RETIRED OR DISABLED
CLERGY PERSONS OF THE RIO TEXAS CONFERENCE
FOR CONFERENCE ACTION

29 The Río Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church adopts the following resolutions
30 relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergypersons:

31
32 **WHEREAS** the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"),
33 of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through
34 ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were
35 or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the church ("clergy persons");

36 **WHEREAS** the practice of the Church and this Conference was and is to provide active clergy

1 persons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

2
3 **WHEREAS** pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled clergy
4 persons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired,
5 terminated, and disabled clergy persons in consideration of previous active service; and

6
7 **WHEREAS**, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its
8 predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for
9 clergy persons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such
10 deferred compensation;

11
12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** an amount equal to 100% of the pension,
13 severance, or disability payments received from plans authorized under The Book of Discipline
14 of The United Methodist Church (the "Discipline"), which includes all such payments from
15 Wespeth Benefits and Investments, during the years 2024 and 2025 by each active, retired,
16 terminated, or disabled clergy person who is or was a member of the Conference, or its
17 predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such clergy
18 person; and that the pension severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing
19 allowance applies will be any pension, severance, or disability payments from plans, annuities,
20 or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from Wespeth Benefits and
21 Investments "Wespeth" and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity
22 arising from benefits accrued under a Wespeth plan, pension, or fund authorized under the
23 Discipline, that result from any service a clergy person rendered to this Conference or that an
24 active, retired, terminated, or disabled clergy person of this Conference rendered to any local
25 church, annual conferences of the church, general agency of the church, other institution of
26 the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the church, or any other employer that
27 employed the clergy person to perform services related to the ministry of the church, or its
28 predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a
29 plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled clergy person's pension or disability
30 as part of his or her gross compensation.

31
32 NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a clergy person's gross
33 income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code
34 section 107(2) and regulations hereunder to the least of (1) the amount of the rental/housing
35 allowance designated by the clergy person's employer or other appropriate body of the church
36 (such as this Conference in the preceding resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount expended
37 by the clergy person to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the
38 house, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities
39 in such year.

REPORT III
2024 COMPREHENSIVE FUNDING PLAN
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

40 The Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan is under review by Wespeth Benefits and Investments.

REPORT IV
REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT AND HEALTH BENEFITS COMMITTEE
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

41 The members of the Rio Texas Conference Board of Pensions are honored to serve and care for
42 United Methodist clergy and lay participants in the benefit plans sponsored by the conference.
43 These plans include pension, disability, health insurance, wellness, and optional life benefits. The
44 Board works very diligently on your behalf to administer these programs monitoring a sustainable
45 asset plan to meet our benefit plan obligations. We are in strategic partnership with Wespeth
46 Benefits and Investments who provide interpretation and guidance in our benefits plans and
47 support resources. We are proud to serve with you in ministry with integrity and transparency.

48
49 **HealthFlex**

1 Over the last year, our churches and participants have faced unprecedented challenges with
2 disaffiliation, property insurance, and health insurance premiums increases. Although the
3 individual premium credit increased by 5% in 2024, the medical rates increased by 14% by
4 HealthFlex due to our plan experience and participant utilization. While our Board does not set
5 the medical rates, at our last meeting in March we unanimously adopted a one-month HealthFlex
6 premium holiday for May. We hope that this will provide some relief to churches and participant
7 budgets in premiums for HealthFlex Insurance coverage in 2024. This premium holiday will be
8 funded by the Board of Pensions deposit account at Wespath with funds from the 2016
9 HealthFlex dividend. This fund is also used to provide HealthFlex Clergy Family Coverage grants
10 annually.

11
12 In 2023, Rio Texas health claims ended with a 130% loss ratio. In five of the last six years,
13 HealthFlex has been paying out more in claims than we have funded in contributions. The
14 primary cost driver has been high claims in the \$50,000 to \$300,000 range, prescriptions, and
15 medical inflation. While any rate increase is difficult, we are thankful for the United Methodist
16 Church connection. Because our denominational plan ended with a better claim experience
17 overall across all conferences in 2023, we have mitigated another double-digit increase for 2025
18 and instead will have a 7% increase across all 6 medical plans. Further, the Board will continue to
19 monitor the long-term impact on the health plan with the reduction of participants due to clergy
20 withdrawals in 2023 and we will continue to encourage and enhance wellness programs to
21 positively impact the well-being of our participants.

22 23 **DB Pension Plans and Compass**

24 The administration of the Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans which include the Pre-82 Plan,
25 Ministerial Pension Plan Annuities (MPP), and Clergy Security Pension Plan (CRSP) is complex
26 and requires strategic asset management to fund past service rate increases, weather economic
27 challenges and fluctuations in the assets and liabilities of plan funding levels. Wespath has begun
28 to “de-risk” the Pre-82 and CRSP-DB plan assets by increasing the plan’s allocation to fixed
29 income in a systemic approach. This lowers the plan liability exposure with a decrease in equities
30 which are more volatile. These DB plans provide lifetime annuities to beneficiaries. For 2025, the
31 Board has proposed a Past Service Rate (PSR) increase to Pre-82 plan beneficiaries of \$753
32 which is a 3% increase. This is a 6% overall increase in 2024 and 2025.

33
34 The proposed Compass Pension Plan legislation, reviewed at General Conference in April 2024,
35 would replace the current CRSP plan. Compass is designed for a changed UMC environment. It
36 considers the church’s increasing financial pressures upholding longstanding UMC values to
37 provide an income stream throughout retirement for those who have served faithfully. This plan is
38 designed to honor our clergy and remove long-term liabilities enabling a financially sustainable
39 plan for our churches for the future. Compass includes a flat rate component that promotes equity
40 for clergy at different pay levels, a 3% contribution, plus an additional clergy match of up to 4%.

41 42 **Looking Forward**

43 Our goals for 2024 and 2025 include assisting our participants with plan resources, wellness
44 opportunities, retirement planning, and reaching out to participants not currently making personal
45 pension contributions. In addition, we will continue our work with the actuaries at Wespath to
46 update the 20-year DB pension plan economic projection that assists us in the evaluation of
47 maintaining adequate reserves to meet liabilities long-term.

48
49 We are proud members of the United Methodist Church who are honored to care for those who
50 serve. I would like to thank our Board members for their dedication to our participants who invest
51 their time in this valuable work and ministry to the future of our church. We are especially thankful
52 to the United Methodist connection and our congregations for their faithful commitment and
53 support of participants who serve Christ.

54
55 Respectfully Submitted
56 Tony LoBasso, President.

REPORT V
PENSION PLANS
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

2025 PENSION PLAN CHURCH DIRECT BILLING

Effective January 1, 2025, church direct invoicing by the Conference for clergy participants under appointment for current active service will include:

- Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP) Defined Benefit required annual contribution of **\$6,132** for each eligible full-time clergy invoiced monthly.
- Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP) Defined required contribution of **3%** of Plan Compensation for each eligible full-time clergy invoiced monthly.
- Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) required contribution **3%** Plan Compensation for each eligible full-time clergy to a maximum of two times the 2025 denominational average compensation or DAC of \$77,676 in 2025 invoiced monthly.
- United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP-PT) required Contribution of **9%** for each eligible part-time clergy (3/4 time appointment or less) invoiced monthly.
- United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) optional contributions as elected by clergy as a payroll deduction invoiced monthly.
- The Rio Grande Legacy Fund will continue to provide contributions to eligible legacy churches for full-time clergy in the CRSP-Defined Benefit Plan, CRSP-Defined Contribution Plan, and the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP).
- The Rio Grande Legacy Fund will continue to provide a **9%** contribution to eligible part-time clergy appointed to a Rio Grande Legacy church in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan UMPIP-PT.

PRE-82 PENSION PLAN

The Pre-82 Pension Plan, also known as Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP), is a defined benefit pension plan administered by Wespath and provides eligible clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church before 1982. The Pre-82 Pension Plan was replaced by the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) effective January 1, 1982. One of the responsibilities of the Board of Pensions is to recommend to the annual Conference the Past Service Rate or (PSR) to clergy for each year of eligible service in the Pre-82 Pension Plan.

As the need to provide adequate clergy pension benefits evolved with establishing the Pre-82 Pension Plan, contributions were insufficient to provide the benefits required for many participants during years of active service. Therefore, it became the Conference's responsibility to ensure annual contributions in an amortization schedule would provide benefit obligations required by the plan. Each Conference's goal is for the Pre-82 Pension Plan to be fully funded until all benefit obligations have been met. However, the Plan's assets are not fixed with the potential of additional liabilities due to market volatility, Wespath policies, and the number of eligible beneficiaries. Further, any increase in the Past Service Rate (PSR) adopted by the Conference also increases the plan's liabilities. Any change in the PSR also increases the Plan's liabilities and must be funded in the year adopted in accordance with the Plan asset level and funding requirements. As of December 31, 2023, no Advance Contribution for 2025 to fund the Past Service Rate increase of 2025 is due.

MINISTERIAL PENSION PLAN (MPP)

The Ministerial Pension Plan, also known as Supplement Three to the Clergy Security Retirement Plan (CRSP), provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church from 1982 through 2006. The MPP is an Internal Revenue Code Section 403(b) retirement plan. The Conference is required to fund any liability attributable to MPP annuities due to market fluctuations, mortality/demographic assumptions, and Wespath Plan policies. As of January 1, 2023, actuarial valuation for 2025, for the MPP and CRSP plan, annuities no additional contributions are required in 2024 and 2025.

1 **CLERGY SECURITY RETIREMENT PLAN (CRSP)**

2 The current pension plan required for eligible full-time clergy is the Clergy Security Retirement Plan
3 or CRSP administered by Wespath. This plan was effective January 1, 2007, and comprises both
4 a defined contribution (DC) and defined benefit (DB) component.
5

6 **Defined Contribution (DC)** – Provides a defined amount deposited into an active full-time
7 clergyperson's account with monthly contributions. This benefit distributed at retirement is the
8 accumulated amount plus earnings (or losses) in the individual's account. The defined contribution
9 (DC) component of CRSP is 2% of Plan Compensation with a match for participant contributions
10 to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) – up to 1% of Plan Compensation.
11 Therefore, if a participant contributes at least 1% compensation to UMPIP, the CRSP DC
12 contributions will be 3%.
13

14 **Defined Benefit (DB)** – Provides a specific dollar amount at retirement regardless of market
15 conditions or investment performance. The amount is based on a formula that specifies a monthly
16 retirement benefit to eligible clergy and 70% for eligible contingent annuitants for the remainder of
17 their lives. The CRSP-DB provides a monthly retirement benefit using 1.25% of the Denominational
18 Average Compensation (DAC) at retirement multiplied by years of service from January 1, 2007,
19 to December 31, 2013. The multiplier is reduced to 1% for years of service beginning January 1,
20 2014.
21

22 Both components are direct billed to each church for eligible full-time clergy. The defined
23 contribution (DC) billing is based on 3% of Plan Compensation. The annual defined benefit (DB)
24 direct billing in 2024 to churches for each clergy appointed to full-time service is \$6,132. The annual
25 defined benefit (DB) direct billing in 2025 to churches for each clergy appointed to full-time service
26 will remain at \$6,132.
27

28 The annual DB contribution to Wespath is based on the number of eligible active full-time clergy
29 and clergy on medical leave with CPP benefits on the actuarial valuation provided by Wespath.
30 The contribution amounts due in 2024 for the DB component is \$1,323,804 and \$1,233,429 in 2025.
31 Wespath will adjust the 2024 DB Contribution due to the decrease in eligible full-time clergy. This
32 adjustment will average full-time eligible clergy as of January 1, 2022 & 2023 and decrease the
33 amount due on December 31st of each year. We expect to have the 2024 adjusted DB Contribution
34 available in June 2024. Any clergy serving less than full-time not eligible for the CRSP DB are
35 eligible to participate in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan with a required church
36 contribution of 9% of Plan Compensation.
37

38 **COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN (CPP)**

39 The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) is a welfare benefit plan administered by Wespath
40 Benefits and Investments. The CPP includes long-term disability, death and other welfare benefits
41 for eligible full-time clergy. The CPP plan is an Internal Revenue Code 414(e) "church plan" funded
42 by plan sponsor contributions. The CPP required direct billing to churches is 3% of Plan
43 Compensation for eligible full-time clergy up to two times the 2025 denominational average
44 compensation or DAC of \$77,676 in 2025.
45

46 **UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP) FOR CLERGY**

47 The United Methodist Investment Plan (UMPIP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b)
48 defined contribution retirement savings plan administered by Wespath for clergy and lay employees
49 of The United Methodist Church and affiliated organizations. Eligible participants may make
50 personal contributions through payroll deductions for before-tax, Roth or after-tax contributions in
51 a flat dollar amount or percentage of eligible compensation, up to Internal Revenue Code limits.
52 Churches are encouraged to offer the UMPIP to lay employees and may contact Wespath for
53 additional plan provisions and sponsorship.
54

55 Any clergy appointed to a church for less than full-time service is eligible to participate in the UMPIP
56 and receive a required church contribution of 9% of Plan Compensation. Also, all active clergy are

1 encouraged to participate in the UMPIP with personal contributions. For clergy to receive the
 2 maximum church-funded pension benefits in the CRSP (DC) Defined Contribution plan of 3%, they
 3 will need to contribute a minimum 1% match into the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan
 4 (UMPIP).

REPORT VI
2025 HEALTHFLEX
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

5 **HEALTHFLEX BENEFITS**

6 The Rio Texas Conference participates in the HealthFlex Plan administered by Wespath Benefits
 7 and Investments for eligible full-time clergy and Conference lay employees. The HealthFlex plan is
 8 also available to lay employees of churches who have adopted a HealthFlex Salary-Paying Unit
 9 Sub-Adoption Agreement meeting the eligibility requirements of the Plan. HealthFlex is an
 10 integrated, wellness-driven health program that supports healthier lifestyles. The HealthFlex plan
 11 is designed to provide eligible participants with a comprehensive plan including medical,
 12 prescription, and wellness benefits. HealthFlex uses incentives as part of its strategy to promote
 13 engagement in healthy behaviors and wellness programs. In addition, to the HealthFlex wellness
 14 programs, the Conference also provides additional holistic wellness benefits for clergy and
 15 Conference lay employees, including spiritual, mental, emotional and physical care components
 16 funded by grants from Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas. In 2024 and 2025 the
 17 HealthFlex provider will be **Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) National Network**.

18
 19 **2025 HEALTHFLEX PLAN**

20 The HealthFlex multi-plan option gives participants a greater choice across several HealthFlex
 21 plans with varying plan designs and the flexibility to choose the coverage that best fits the
 22 participant's health, financial and family needs. The multi-plan approach encourages greater
 23 accountability by participants for health care costs and utilization while retaining the valued
 24 HealthFlex Benefits and wellness opportunities that participants have come to expect from
 25 Wespath. We do not anticipate there will be any plan changes for 2025. However, the final
 26 HealthFlex plan design summary will be available prior to the Annual Election period in November
 27 of 2024.

28 In 2025 HealthFlex will offer six distinct plan choices for participants:
 29

HealthFlex Exchange	B1000	C2000	C3000	H2000	H2500	H5000
Lifetime Maximum	None	None	None	None	None	None
HRA Individual / Family	NA	\$1,000 / \$2,000	\$250 / \$500	NA	NA	NA
HSA Individual / Family	NA	NA	NA	\$1,000 / \$2,000	\$250 / \$500	\$0 / \$0 <i>Personal contribution allowed</i>
Deductible: Individual / Family	\$1,000 / \$2,000	\$2,000 / \$4,000	\$3,000 / \$6,000	\$2,000 / \$4,000	\$2,500 / \$5,000	\$5,000 / \$10,000
In-Network Coinsurance: Plan / Participant	80% / 20%	80% / 20%	50% / 50%	80% / 20%	70% / 30%	NA
Annual Out-of-Pocket Maximum (OPP)	\$5,000 Individual \$10,000 Family	\$5,000 Individual \$10,000 Family	\$5,000 Individual \$10,000 Family	\$5,000 Individual \$10,000 Family	\$5,000 Individual \$10,000 Family	\$5,000 Individual \$10,000 Family

HRA - Health Reimbursement Account, **HSA** - Health Savings Account

1 **2025 HEALTHFLEX INDIVIDUAL PREMIUM CREDIT (PC)**

2 The 2025 HealthFlex design will include a non-taxable premium credit (PC) of **\$1,042 per month**.
3 The PC is a fixed dollar amount provided to each HealthFlex full-time clergy and Conference lay
4 employee participant. Participants will use the allocated PC amount to select a health plan in
5 HealthFlex and pay for some or all premiums for the plan of their choice.

- 6
- 7 - **The 2025 PC amount will be \$1,042 per month** and direct invoiced. This is a 5%
8 increase from the 2024 PC of \$992
 - 9 - The PC will appear as a “credit toward purchase” when choosing a HealthFlex plan from
10 all available HealthFlex plan options.
 - 11 - Participants who choose plans costing less than their PC credit amount will “bank” the
12 excess. The unspent PC balance will then be credited by HealthFlex to the participant’s
13 Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) or Health Savings Account (HSA), depending on
14 the health plan selected or be used to offset dependent premiums. The excess annual
15 amount (unspent PC balance) is not credited in a lump sum; rather it is available on a
16 prorated, monthly basis over the plan year. Internal Revenue Code (IRC) limits for annual
17 HSA contributions will apply. Participants can then use HRA or HSA funds for out-of-
18 pocket eligible IRS health care expenses.
 - 19 - Participants who choose a plan costing more than the PC credit amount, including the
20 cost to cover dependents will contribute the additional amount by a personal pre-tax
21 payroll deduction from their church to cover the cost difference between the PC amount
22 they receive and their higher cost for monthly premiums (the participant’s share of the
23 premium cost).
- 24
25
26

27 **HEALTHFLEX DIRECT INVOICING FOR ALL FULL-TIME CLERGY**

28 To ensure the Plan is efficient and sustainable for the benefit of all participants and churches with
29 clergy appointed full-time, any church where a clergy has chosen to not participate in HealthFlex
30 will continue to be invoiced the PC through direct billing at the current amount as approved by the
31 Conference. For 2025 the premium credit (PC) will **\$1,042 per month**.

32
33

34 **HEALTHFLEX TRANSITIONAL GRANT**

35 The Board of Pensions believes that Health Benefits should not be a hindering factor in equipping
36 a congregation with the excellent clergy it needs for ministry. The Board established a grant
37 program in 2019 with funds received from churches with non HealthFlex participating clergy to help
38 clergy transition between churches. We recognize that this can be a financial burden for both the
39 church and clergy and believe this assistance will help ease the transition. Upon District
40 Superintendent’s approval, the program may provide a six-month grant of up to \$5,952 in 2024 and
41 \$6,252 in 2025. This one-time grant is to provide assistance with six months of health care coverage
42 as part of a clergy’s transition to a new church when the sending and receiving church have adopted
43 differing contributions for dependent coverage or there is a loss of spouse’s employer health
44 coverage. Upon eligibility, the grant may also be considered for clergy transitioning to Personal
45 Leave, Sabbatical, Family Leave status to bridge health coverage to another plan.

46

47 ***HealthFlex Transitional Grant Amendment 2024***

48 The Board of Pensions amended the eligibility of the HealthFlex Transitional Grant to assist
49 churches impacted by the 2023 Discerning Pathways Process who have experienced a decline in
50 church giving. This one-time grant is to provide assistance with six months of individual clergy
51 health care coverage up to \$5,952 in 2024 to eligible full-time clergy. For a church to be eligible:

- 52 • The Rio Texas Conference church must not be in the discernment process.
- 53 • The church giving decreased by 15% or more in Q3 & Q4 in 2022 vs. Q3 & Q4 2023 for
54 grants requested before June 2024. For grants requested after July 1, 2024, Q1 & Q2 2024
55 vs Q1 & Q2 2023.
- 56 • Must have a Full-time clergy appointment enrolled on HealthFlex.

- 1 • If the church enters the discernment process during the grant, the grant will be suspended.
- 2 • The maximum amount of the grant is \$5,952 for 6 months in 2024.
- 3 • If more than 6 grants are requested in 2024, additional requests may be brought to the
- 4 Board of Pensions for consideration.

5

6 **FAMILY HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE GRANT FUND**

7 The Board of Pensions recognizes that affordable health care coverage is an essential
 8 component of an attractive employee benefits package. In the current health care environment, it
 9 is evident that some clergy’s health care family coverage premium payroll deductions make up a
 10 significant portion of their salaries. To assist, the Board of Pensions has established a grant fund
 11 using the 2016 HealthFlex dividend to assist clergy whose base salaries are near the minimum
 12 salary level adopted by the Conference and paying for a significant portion of their salaries as a
 13 payroll deduction to provide healthcare for their families (P+ Family Rate). This fund will provide
 14 grants to align healthcare costs for clergy with the current P+1 tier cost based on the default plan
 15 (C3000). In 2024, the family grant amount is \$667 per month or \$8,004 annually (the difference of
 16 the family rate and the P+1 rate). In 2025, the family grant amount will be based on the default
 17 plan (C3000) of \$714 per month or \$8,568 annually (the difference of the family rate and the P+1
 18 rate). These grants require a District Superintendent’s approval and application grant request
 19 demonstrating need-based eligibility.

20

21 **2025 CHURCH HEALTH BENEFITS DIRECT BILLING**

22 In 2025 churches will continue to be invoiced for eligible active clergy participants under full-time
 23 appointment and eligible enrolled lay employees:

24

- 25 • The HealthFlex Premium Credit (PC) for each eligible full-time enrolled clergy or enrolled
- 26 lay employee.
- 27 • The Rio Grande Legacy Fund will continue to provide contributions to eligible Rio Grande
- 28 legacy churches for full-time clergy enrolled in the HealthFlex Plan (individual clergy
- 29 premium).
- 30 • Additional contributions will be direct invoiced for benefits including any election above the
- 31 PC, the cost of dependent coverage, Optional Term Life Insurance, HSA personal
- 32 contributions and the Flexible Benefits Plan funded by payroll deduction.

33 **2025 HEALTHFLEX INDIVIDUAL PREMIUM CREDIT**

34 **2025 Individual Premium Credit (PC)**

	Monthly Contribution	Annual Contribution
Active Clergy	\$ 1,042	\$ 12,504
Pre-65 Retiree (Age 62-65)	\$ 1,042	\$ 12,504
Medical leave with CPP (Max 24 months)	\$1,042	\$ 12,504
Conference Lay Employees	\$1,042	\$ 12,504

35

- 36 • Each eligible active full-time clergy will receive a monthly individual Premium Credit in the
- 37 HealthFlex plan of \$1,042 (funded through their Rio Texas Conference church) and will
- 38 choose from six HealthFlex plan options.
- 39 • Participants who choose a plan costing more than the PC credit amount or who choose to
- 40 cover dependents will contribute the additional amount by a pre-tax payroll deduction from
- 41 their church to cover the cost difference between the PC amount they receive and their
- 42 higher cost for monthly premiums (the participant’s share of the premium cost). Covered
- 43 dependents will be enrolled in the same plan selections chosen by the primary clergy or
- 44 lay participant.

- 1 • Pre-65 Retirees and or dependents will be invoiced monthly for the total cost of the HealthFlex premium.
- 2
- 3 • Conference Lay employees who participate in HealthFlex contribute a 5% cost share of the PC from payroll deduction and any additional amount above the PC.
- 4

5
6 Lay employees of HealthFlex Church Plan Sponsors do not receive a premium credit, allowing churches to set the employee/employer cost-sharing. The church elects' cost-sharing and will be billed on plan selections. A church must be a HealthFlex Plan Sponsor to offer HealthFlex to its eligible full-time lay employees. 70% of eligible church full-time lay employees must participate in the plan to remain a plan sponsor. Please contact the Conference benefit office at 210-408-4500 for information and requirements on plan sponsorship. New church plan sponsor agreements must be completed by September for a January 1st enrollment.

13
14 **2025 HEALTHFLEX RATES – Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) National PPO Network**

15

MEDICAL	B1000	C2000	C3000	H2000	H2500	H5000
Participant	\$1,220	\$1,171	\$1,020	\$1,142	\$981	\$920
Participant +1	\$2,318	\$2,225	\$1,938	\$2,170	\$1,863	\$1,748
Participant + Family	\$3,172	\$3,045	\$2,652	\$2,969	\$2,550	\$2,393

DENTAL	HMO	Passive PPO 2000	Dental PPO
Participant	\$17	\$48	\$39
Participant +1	\$31	\$96	\$78
Participant + Family	\$54	\$144	\$117

VISION	Exam Core	Full Service	Premier
Participant	\$0	\$9	\$15
Participant +1	\$0	\$14	\$25
Participant + Family	\$0	\$22	\$40

16 **2025 DEFAULT PLAN**

17 The HealthFlex exchange is a passive enrollment. Participants who are currently enrolled in HealthFlex for 2024 will automatically be enrolled in the same medical, dental and vision plans for 2025 if no elections are made during the Annual Election Period. New participants to the HealthFlex plan will be enrolled in the default plans for all of 2025 if no elections are made.

19 **2025 DEFAULT PLAN - If no plan selection is made for new plan enrollees**

20

Medical	C3000
Vision	Exam Core

21 **HealthFlex Personal Reimbursement Accounts**

22 Eligible full-time HealthFlex participants may participate in the optional participant funded Health Saving Account (HSA), Medical Reimbursement Account (MRA), or Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCA) offered as a benefit funded by participant payroll deductions and administered by HealthFlex and HealthEquity.

1 **ANCILLARY BENEFITS**

2
3 **Optional Term Life Insurance**

4 The Conference provides an Optional Term Life Insurance for full-time clergy and Conference lay
5 employees subject to the Prudential Life Insurance Company's underwriting guidelines. Eligible
6 participants may elect group term life coverage as a personal funded payroll deduction.

7
8 **Retiree Health Reimbursement Account (HRA)**

9 A Retiree Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) is provided by Via Benefits for eligible retirees
10 and funded by apportionments. The HRA is based on the stipend amount received by eligible
11 retirees before December 31, 2013. As of January 1, 2023, there are 42 retirees eligible for an
12 HRA. Eligible retirees must be enrolled in a Medicare Supplement or Advantage plan through Via
13 Benefits (formerly One Exchange) to receive the HRA. To provide sustainability of the HRA benefit
14 and not increase conference benefit plan liabilities and apportionments, the HRA is a fixed amount
15 per eligible retiree and does not increase from year to year.

16
17 Per the 2014 Unification Plan policy, the HRA stipend will not be offered to any other retiree not
18 receiving an HRA as of January 1, 2014 and is a closed participant group. The HRA provides
19 reimbursement for IRS-eligible health care expenses such as Medicare Part B premiums, Medicare
20 supplement plan premiums, and out-of-pocket expenses such as co-pay and deductibles. To
21 receive HRA funds, eligible retirees must submit a claim form to Via Benefits annually for premium
22 reimbursement or as needed for other IRS-eligible expenses.

REPORT VII
2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

23 The 2023 financial statements of the Río Texas Conference are in the process of being audited.
24 The 2023 audit will be included in the 2024 Río Texas Conference Journal

REPORT VIII
2025 PENSIONS AND HEALTH BENEFITS BUDGET
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

	2023 Approved	2023 Actual (Unaudited)	2024 Approved	2025 Adopted	% Change 2023 vs. 2024	% Change 2024 vs. 2025
Pension & Benefits Apportionment	345,000	345,000	250,000	200,000	-28%	-20%
Pension Administration and Grants						
Sources: Apportionment	345,000	322,262	250,000	200,000	-28%	-20%
Uses:						
Office	36,500	20,120	25,949	22,000	-29%	-15%
Audit	28,500	22,039	24,220	24,220	-15%	0%
Retiree HRA Actuarial Requirement	5,000	700	-	800	-100%	100%
D&O Fiduciary Insurance	34,509	33,482	35,605	36,500	3%	3%
Legal Fees	30,000	105,456	30,000	30,000	0%	0%
Interim Pastoral Support - Disability	22,000	27,094	16,650	19,980	-24%	20%
Clergy CPP Medical Leave Grants	43,146	2,000	18,500	-	-57%	-100%
Basic Life	13,345	9,933	10,315	9,500	-23%	-8%
Delinquent Direct Billing	54,000	4,960	29,800	-	-45%	-100%
Retiree HRA	78,000	56,586	58,961	57,000	-24%	-3%
Total Uses	345,000	282,370	250,000	200,000	-28%	-20%
Excess/(Deficit)	-	39,891	-	-		
Benefit Plans						
Sources: HealthFlex	4,644,000	3,727,335	4,053,650	3,754,000	-13%	-7%
HealthFlex Waiver	57,000	55,100	35,712	23,808	-37%	-33%
CRSP-DC - CPP, CRSP-DB*	2,517,964	2,089,844	2,216,658	1,698,371	-12%	-23%
UMPIP / UMPIP-PT	1,059,607	853,626	807,067	721,244	-24%	-11%
Flex Plan/HSA	357,670	255,638	250,981	236,679	-30%	-6%
Optional Life	36,800	25,140	28,372	25,500	-23%	-10%
Total Sources	8,673,041	7,006,683	7,392,440	6,459,602	-15%	-13%
Uses: HealthFlex Premiums	4,644,000	3,718,404	4,053,650	3,754,000	-13%	-7%
HealthFlex Transitional Grant	51,300	9,500	35,712	23,808	-30%	-33%
CRSP-DC - CPP, CRSP-DB*	2,489,133	2,088,029	2,216,658	1,975,306	-11%	-11%
UMPIP / UMPIP-PT	1,059,607	852,924	807,067	721,244	-24%	-11%
Flex Plan- HSA	357,670	254,911	250,981	236,679	-30%	-6%
Optional Life	36,800	25,252	28,372	25,500	-23%	-10%
Total Uses	8,638,510	6,949,020	7,392,440	6,736,537	-14%	-9%
Excess/(Deficit)	34,531	57,663	-	(276,935)		
Other Matters						
Sources: Investment Income						
Wespath -RGC Legacy	426,003	1,052,141	117,783	407,684	-72%	246%
Wespath- RTC Invest/Benefit Reserve	150,215	660,244	72,160	273,544	-52%	279%
Wespath- Disaf. Pension Liabilities		228,052		191,013		100%
Wespath - RTC Deposit Account	83,284	218,310	24,257	107,428	-71%	343%
Total Investment Income	659,502	2,158,747	214,200	979,669	-68%	357%
Uses:						
RGC Legacy - Benefits	408,891	375,683	408,790	370,000	0%	-9%
Clergy Family Medical Grant	43,200	79,503	64,032	64,032	48%	0%
Clergy CPP Medical Leave HealthFlex Grant -2024				25,008		100%
Pre-82 Past Service Rate (PSR)	710	710	731	753	3%	3%
Adv. Contribution Past Service Rate	-	-	-	-		

*2024-2025 Pension Liability Deficit for CRSP-DB Defined Benefit Plan due to Clergy Withdrawals/Disaffiliation

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Responsibilities of the United Methodist Rio Texas Conference Board of Trustees

The role of the Conference Board of Trustees can be found in Paragraph 2512 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The property of the Rio Texas Conference is held by the Board of Trustees and it is the responsibility of the Board to oversee and protect the assets of the Conference. Board is responsible for two primary areas: 1) hold in trust donations or bequests, and 2) hold real and personal property of the Conference.

The Board of Trustees owns, maintains or holds a trust interest in the Conference administration building and properties of all local churches within the Conference. When a local church closes it is the responsibility of the Board to either make a plan for missional use or divest that property. When property reverts back to the Board's control, that property may be placed for sale or another missional use sought for the property. A major continuing concern is the cost of holding property. The longer a vacant property is held, the higher the cost of securing and maintaining it. The Board continues to explore new and innovative alternatives to use those properties that are no longer active worshiping communities.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for oversight of the disaffiliation process. The Board developed the Discerning Pathways process with the Bishop and the Cabinet. Discerning Pathways is a process for the graceful disaffiliation and exit of churches from The United Methodist Church in the Rio Texas Conference. 84 churches were recommended by the Board for disaffiliation in 2023 after having followed the Discerning Pathways process in a fully cooperative way. The disaffiliation of those churches was approved by three different Annual Conferences held in May, June and December of 2023.

The Board is in litigation currently with 27 churches that have declared themselves disaffiliated, refused to follow the Discerning Pathways process and refused to pay their apportionments or retirement obligations. While we deeply regret having to pursue litigation, the Board of Trustees will continue to pursue every available remedy to fulfill its responsibility to protect the assets of the Conference.

Property Matters

- El Campo: Wesley Chapel: The church closed June 1, 2022. Property is being donated to Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church After School Activities Program.
- Donna: First UMC: The church closed December 31, 2021. Property sold.
- El Paraiso: 1917 N. Montana St, Alton, TX is a mission of Mission: El Mesias UMC. The property is leased to the El Valle District.
- Kenedy: El Buen Samaritano Parsonage: The church closed August 31, 2022. Property is leased and posted for sale.
- San Antonio St. John's Church closed April 7, 2024. Las Misiones District Strategy Team has leased the property. Their intention is to move Nueva Amanecer from Browning to St. John's.
- McAllen: Former RGC District Parsonage: Property sold.
- McAllen: Trinity: The church closed. The property is leased to the Baptist Temple, the next-door neighbor.
- Raymondville: Bethel: The church closed December 31, 2021. The church building was leased to Bridge Church and a sale to the Bridge Church is currently in process.

- 1 • Converse: New Hope/Cimarron Praise: New Hope UMC closed June 2014. The property is leased to
2 the Las Misiones District, which is subleasing the property to Tabernacle House of Prayer.
3
- 4 • San Antonio: Browning UMC: The church closed April 2011. Las Misiones District leases the property
5 for use by Nuevo Amanecer.
6
- 7 • San Antonio: Divine Grace: The church closed September 2020. Las Misiones District leases the
8 property for use by Iniciativa de Impacto Comunitario (Impacto).
9
- 10 • San Antonio: Jefferson: Legal mediation resulted in the leasing of this property to Jefferson Community
11 Church (JCC) effective June 2022. JCC defaulted on the lease agreement July 1, 2023 and the Board
12 has re-acquired the property and is placing it for sale.
13
- 14 • Primera: El Buen Samaritano: Property is in the process of being sold to the local non UMC
15 congregation.
16

17 **Innovative Steps**

18
19 The Board will continue to seek new and innovative ways to use Conference property and to partner and
20 act as a resource to local churches.
21

- 22 • Light on the Hill
23 This is the former Mount Wesley Conference Center in Kerrville. Under the wonderful leadership of
24 First UMC Kerrville, Light on the Hill serves a 6 county area offering transitional housing, counseling,
25 mental health, employment assistance, a feeding ministry, children's camp, and more.
26
- 27 • Parker Lane UMC
28 The 7-acre grounds have been long-term leased to Foundation Communities, a provider of affordable
29 housing for families. The site is under construction and nearing completion. The transaction included
30 no cost office space on site and the Capital District is placing Austin Region JFON in this space.
31
- 32 • Austin New Church UMC
33 The Board continues to be in communication with both Austin New Church and local developers about
34 the possible re-development of this site.
35
- 36 • Cherrywood Center
37 This is the former Austin: Asbury UMC/Servant Church UMC. The Capital District is operating the site
38 as a multi-use non-profit community resource with multiple tenants on the property, including a
39 worshiping church, Austin Justice Coalition, and 2 childcare centers. The facility is economically self-
40 sufficient and improvements to the facilities continue to be made.
41
- 42 • San Antonio Emanuel UMC
43 The congregation is working with the HEB Foundation and others to develop a plan to re-develop its
44 site, keeping a church in place, while adding affordable housing and community services.
45
46

47 We pledge to continue our steadfast support of the Rio Texas Conference as it continues its work to make
48 disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
49

50 Yours in Christ

51
52 Kevin Reed
53 President, Board of Trustees
54 United Methodist Rio Texas Conference

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 Bishop Schnase, Río Texas Annual Conference family, greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus
2 Christ. Since last we met the Board of Ordained Ministry has been at work identifying, assessing, and
3 equipping clergy leaders for effective and fruitful ministry. Despite the challenging times and circumstances
4 our denomination and conference have been going through, this Board has continued to diligently strive to
5 complete our tasks in a Godly and equitable manner. We thank God for the grace that has enabled us to
6 improvise and innovate to continue our work with faithfulness.

7
8 The purpose of our credentialing work is to identify persons that have demonstrated the five qualities of a
9 missional leader: ethnic and cultural proficiency; a heart for evangelism; faith in their calling from God;
10 ability to develop and equip missional leaders; and catalytic capacity.

11
12 This year we recommend the following candidates for commissioning as Provisional Elders: Thomas R.
13 Hankins, Ryan Douglas Jacobson, Brad King, Austin William Daniel Mertz, Matthew Ratliff, E.J. Ruiz; and
14 the following candidates for commissioning as Provisional Deacons: Allison Woodley Angell, Victoria Ayala,
15 Bonnie Lynn Bevers, Rebecca Paulsen Edwards, Julianne Snape; and the following for full membership
16 and ordination as Deacon: Rachel Diane Latimer; as Elder: Jennifer Denyse Crate Kelley.

17
18 We are grateful for the sacred work entrusted to us. We ask your continued prayers as we seek to be faithful
19 in fulfilling our responsibility on behalf of the Annual Conference.

20
21 Grace and peace

22 Rev. David E. Payne, Río Texas Board of Ordained Ministry Chairperson

NOMINATIONS REPORT

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

23 Greetings Río Texas Conference in the name of the Lord!

24
25 This annual conference we will be electing conference leadership for the quadrennium to come. This
26 report is intended to lay out the basic nominations process for the upcoming conference in Corpus Christi
27 this June. Again, we will elect a full slate of Río Texas Conference leadership after the upcoming General
28 Conference in June 2024.

Nominations Process

29
30 This nominations process will align with our Standing Rule #8 and the Book of Discipline. The Committee
31 on Nominations shall work toward the goals of inclusiveness as set forth in ,r 610.5 in the 2016 Book of
32 Discipline.

33
34 Online nominations were open from February 15 - March 15.

35
36 The conference Committee on Nominations met to consider filling vacancies lifting possible candidates
37 while considering gifts, gender, ethnicity, clergy, and lay. We took into account online nominations as well
38 as nominations from the committee.

39
40 Report 1 will occur Friday morning with the names coming from the nominating committee.

41 Those individuals nominated have already been asked and said yes to serving if elected.

42
43
44 Nominations from the floor will occur in the following manner:

1 A table will be placed in the back of plenary session where any delegate can fill out a form
2 nominating someone to fill an open slot on a board or committee.

- 3
- 4 1. The person being nominated must say yes to the possibility of serving before their name is
5 submitted.
- 6 2. The person nominated must be a member of a church of the Rio Texas Conference or clergy of
7 the Rio Texas Conference.
- 8 3. Forms must be completely filled out and with legible writing.
- 9 4. You must indicate on the form which position you are nominating for.
- 10 5. Submit your nomination at the table in box marked "Nominations Box".
- 11 6. Nominations will cease 4pm on Friday June 7.

12
13 Nominating Committee will gather to organize the slate once nominations cease.

14
15 Nominations from floor will not occur for the board of ordained ministry.

16
17 Report 2 for consideration and adoption on Saturday morning June 8.

18 Grace,

19 Rev. Dr. Robert Lopez

20 Assistant to the Bishop

21 Director of Connectional Ministries

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES VISION TEAM / MISSION, SERVICE, AND JUSTICE MINISTRIES

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

22 Transforming Communities Vision Team

23 We offer thanks to Cynthia Engstrom, Cindy Johnson, Sonia Cruz, Julie Smith, Jim McClain, Becky
24 Wright, Javier Leyva, Terrence Hayes, Becky Ysaguirre, Diana Woods, Debra Johnson, and Minerva
25 Briones for their steadfast service on the Transforming Communities Vision Team. Several have served
26 on the vision team since the inception of the Rio Texas Conference, January 2105. The charge of the
27 vision team is to envision the church's role of community transformation in the context of the Rio Texas
28 Conference mission field. Mission, Service, & Justice Ministries continues emerging to be organized
29 around three areas of focus: 1.) Community Health and Wellbeing, 2.) Creation Care and Justice, and 3.)
30 Migration & Border Realities. These areas of focus intersect and cross-reference in various ways and
31 reflect active and emerging mission and ministry realities within the Rio Texas Conference region.

32

33 Statistics self-reported by local churches in 2023 indicate that conference-wide, 964,930 persons were
34 served by community ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy as reported by 203 of 347 churches.
35 75,897 more persons were served than in 2022. The ways local churches engage their communities
36 varies as these details of the means of engagement are not qualified in the reporting. Even so, it may be
37 safe to assume that these ministries of outreach and engagement may flow out of the named areas of
38 focus: ministries such as feeding programs, health and wellness ministries, community gardens, and
39 responding to the needs of asylum-seekers. Now in post-pandemic and disaffiliation times, we are seeing
40 the needs of communities arise and the opportunity for the church to respond and discover what God is
41 doing in our midst through these encounters and relationships. Outreach, justice, and mercy ministries
42 bring relief, build relationships, and seek the wellbeing of communities and the awareness to seek justice,
43 reflecting the ministry of reconciliation that God has given the church.

Year		20.a Number of mission teams sent from the local church	20.b Number of persons sent out on mission teams from the local church	21 Total number of community ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy offered by the local church	21.a Of the ministries counted in Column 3, how many focused on global / regional health?	21.b Of the ministries counted in 21, how many focused on engaging in ministry with the poor / socially marginalized?	22 Number of persons from the congregation serving in mission / community ministries	23 Number of persons served by community ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy
1	2015	82	1,112	n/a	n/a	n/a	18,714	677,004
2	2016	101	1,217	n/a	n/a	n/a	25,258	660,583
3	2017	182	1,514	5,726	1,721	3,770	42,059	849,230
4	2018	122	1,144	2,044	731	1,638	28,267	902,994
5	2019	122	1,203	2,372	695	2,714	29,741	986,992
6	2020	62	270	1,869	684	1,450	21,681	850,380
7	2021	45	233	1,643	672	1,289	23,478	943,625
8	2022	56	553	1,954	837	1,420	27,796	889,033
9	2023	42	186	1,682	816	1,284	21,240	964,930

1 **Community Health and Wellbeing**

2 The church is called to seek the health and wellbeing of its' geographical community, and in doing so, will
3 find its health and wellbeing. The 964,930 persons served by local church community ministries for
4 outreach, justice, and mercy reflect the various ways the church connects to its' community responding to
5 its needs and hopefully building relationships while doing so. These ministries are in the realm of addressing
6 the [social determinants of health](#) and the basic [vital conditions of community](#). As the church lives into post-
7 pandemic and disaffiliation times, the church is called to a time of healing within while also being an agent
8 of healing in the community. [United Methodist Hymn #265 "O Christ the Healer"](#) states: "O Christ, the
9 healer, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends. How can we fail to be restored
10 when reached by love that never ends?" Bishop Joel Martinez once said, "Each generation must
11 add its stanza to the great hymn of the church." This gives great framing for our ministries in and with
12 community for these times.

13
14 The [Transformational Communities Network](#) [TCN] is now in its eighth year of existence. The TCN process
15 continues to evolve having trained 25 church / community teams over the past seven years. Four more
16 teams have joined in 2024. The TCN process is based in the theology of Shalom [[Jeremiah 29:7](#)] and on
17 the assumptions that: 1.) Faith-communities have a charge to seek the well- being of their geographic
18 communities, 2.) Every person has gift, talents, knowledge, and dreams to contribute and is of sacred worth,
19 3.) Community change is complex and requires multi-sector collaboration, 4.) Every community has within
20 its bounds the requisite assets for transformation, and 5.) Transformation is a long- term process that
21 unfolds as we engage the community.

22
23 A movement of engaging in the principles of [Asset-Based Community Development](#) [ABCD] is alive our
24 mission field through the active work and learnings of the Transformational Communities Network, the [New](#)
25 [Wineskin Initiative](#), and Methodist Healthcare Ministries' [Thriving Together / Prosperemos Juntos](#) program.
26 TCN and the New Wineskin Initiative partner monthly offering Storytelling Café. TCN offers general webinar
27 workshops throughout the year and now two Shalom Summits annually. The Homegrown Shalom Training
28 is offered annually to church / community teams interested in seeking the wellbeing of their church's
29 geographic community. Go to www.tcnriotx.org to learn how to connect to these training, learning, and
30 networking opportunities.

1 The Rio Texas Conference has received a \$1,250,000 5-year grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. to help
2 establish the Transformational Communities Network Academy for Congregational and Community
3 Transformation [ACCT]. The project is funded through the [Lilly Endowment Inc. Thriving Congregations](#)
4 [Initiative](#). The aim of the initiative is to encourage the flourishing of congregations by helping them deepen
5 their relationships with God, enhance their connections with each other, and contribute to the vitality of their
6 communities and the world. ACCT looks to offer courses in the Fall of 2024.

7
8 A [Community Action Poverty Simulation](#) [CAPS] kit is available to churches interested in organizing a
9 poverty simulation. The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) bridges that gap from misconception
10 to understanding. CAPS is an interactive immersion experience. It sensitizes community participants to the
11 realities of poverty. CAPS is based on real Community Action clients and their lives. CAPS exists to
12 promote poverty awareness, increase understanding, inspire local change, and transform perspectives.

14 **Creation Care and Justice**

15 The Creation Care Committee, as a subcommittee of the Mission, Service & Justice Ministries of the Rio
16 Texas Annual Conference, was formed after seven Zoom workshops titled “UMC Annual Conference
17 Organizing” during the winter of 2021-22. These workshops were the result of the United Methodist Creation
18 Justice Movement (UMCJM) and the EarthKeeper program from the Global Ministries. Due to issues around
19 disaffiliation, the committee has primarily worked in the background engaging in the monthly meetings of
20 the UMCJM Annual Conference steering committee and the UMCJM Jurisdictional Committee.

21
22 The United Methodist Creation Justice Movement (UMCJM) is a grassroots coalition that integrates the
23 creation care work of Global Ministries, United Women in Faith, Church and Society, Higher Education, and
24 more. We have presented several webinars, individually and collectively at the national and jurisdictional
25 levels, on different creation justice topics and have sought to organize United Methodist congregations in
26 the Jurisdiction in their quest to become more carbon neutral and better stewards of God’s creation. To
27 assist the Bishops and their Annual Conferences to meet the stated goal of Net Zero, the South-Central
28 Jurisdiction cohort of the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement has composed “An Overview of and
29 Reference Guide”. This Guide will be available prior to Annual Conference sessions.

30
31 This year, the committee is pleased to announce the “R.I.O. Net Zero” plan. This plan is based on a
32 document produced by [ecoAmerica](#) called “MOVING FORWARD: A Guide to Climate Action For Your
33 Congregation and Community”. R.I.O. (Reduce, Invest, and Offset) begins by encouraging every
34 congregation to determine the maximum impact of energy saving options by conducting an energy audit.
35 By joining the free ENERGY STAR Program, congregations can get an energy baseline using the EPA’s
36 free online Portfolio Manager. This not only provides a comparison of energy usage in your local area but
37 is also one of the key requirements for many grant funding opportunities.

38
39 Once an energy audit is done, the trustees and administrative board can examine effective strategies to
40 reduce environmental impact and invest in cost saving projects. Not only will congregations lead the way
41 in moving toward net zero, but they will also reduce long term operational costs in their congregations.
42 There are several programs offered by different agencies to help with these projects. Those interested in
43 becoming a point person in their district to help direct congregations towards these resources are
44 encouraged to contact the Transformational Network.

45
46 The last piece “offset” is currently being developed at a conference level to help congregations support one
47 another financially in this move toward net zero. Due to the recent changes within the conference, this last
48 piece has been delayed while the conference office has dealt with other more pressing issues. A proposal
49 for “offset” will be presented to the conference in 2025.

51 **Migration and Border Realities**

1 The Rio Texas Conference is grateful for Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas' funding support
2 of the **Addressing Migrant Hospitality Needs** project. This project is an expression of work of border-
3 point ministries from Del Rio to Brownsville. These ministries remain faithful and steadfast in response to
4 the Biblical mandate [[Exodus 23:9](#), [Leviticus 19:34](#), [Matthew 25:35](#), [Hebrews 13:1-2](#)] and the [United](#)
5 [Methodist Church Social Principles](#) for God's humanity to welcome the sojourner. The project offers a
6 snapshot of the continual and emerging developments of these border-point ministries addressing migrant
7 hospitality needs. These ministries draw upon the historical journey and witness of the United Methodist
8 Church offering hospitality to the migrant at the border of the region the UMC and MHM serves.

9
10 The *Addressing Migrant Hospitality Needs* project applied the granted MHM funding of \$500,000 to provide
11 funding and program support to six border-point United Methodist ministries within the Rio Texas
12 Conference region that assist migrants and refugees, build out and understand its congregational networks
13 and connections, and promote engagement opportunities by local communities to showcase their efforts in
14 assisting migrants. The identified border-point ministries are 1.) Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition
15 – Del Rio, 2.) Mission Border Hope – Eagle Pass, 3.) Holding Institute – Laredo, 4. & 5.) El Valle District
16 Immigration Response supporting the welcoming ministries of the Humanitarian Respite Center – McAllen
17 and Good Neighbor Settlement House – Brownsville, and 6.) La Posada Providencia – San Benito.

18
19 During a September 2023 visit to Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Laredo, the operational systems of assisting
20 migrants through respite care, travel facilitation, and orientation to a new reality in the U.S. was clearly
21 apparent. The successes expressed reflect the evolution of the border-point ministries strengthening their
22 organizational and operational capacities and remaining steadfast in welcoming arriving migrants.

- 23 ▪ **Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition - Del Rio** adapted to higher number of migrant arrivals.
24 In 2021, VVBHC assisted 23,317 persons. Mid-way 2023, over 32,000 have been assisted.
25 VVBHC partnered with out of town / out of state mission groups, some of which built a wood deck
26 providing easier non-muddy access to the porta-potties. Additional facilities improvements include
27 construction of a shaded concrete pavilion with seating. The new pavilion is a remarkable addition.
28 Children have a place to ride bikes, toddlers can use push toys / walkers, volunteers and migrants
29 are shaded from the intense sun, and new electrical outlets allow for the use of chargers. A new
30 changing room was installed allowing for families to change their clothing in private.
31
- 32 ▪ **Mission Border Hope – Eagle Pass** experienced developing processes to serve and meet asylum
33 seeker needs. They hired the services on onsite licensed vocational and registered nurses
34 providing basic triage and non-emergency medical needs and lessening ambulance calls and trips
35 to the hospital. Nursing staff can administer medications in partnership with a pharmacy. A better
36 organized in-kind donations solicitation and distribution system was developed. The ministry
37 coordinates with Custom and Border Patrol to receive highly vulnerable asylum-seekers such as
38 gender related violence survivors and persons with disabilities.
39
- 40 ▪ **Holding Institute – Laredo** has been able to find sponsors for increasing number of migrants not
41 having sponsors. The organization has strengthened to be able to meet the increased volume of
42 migrant arrivals using the same number of staff and volunteers and have seen an increase in their
43 efficiency in doing so. A water filtration system was installed in the kitchen. Holding Institute has
44 remained open while other border shelters are closing. In addition, Holding Institute has remained
45 stable in local community outreach, effectively serving arriving migrant while not putting not putting
46 aside localized needs aside makes the Holding Institute unique. The biggest success is being able
47 to keep families off the streets. Laredo is the only border community not doing street releases,
48 which reflects care coordination and efficiency with local networks.
49
- 50 ▪ **El Valle District Immigration Response** connected with churches who have not partnered in
51 mission service to see the churches connect with the immigrant ministries of the **Migrant Respite**
52 **Center – McAllen** and the **Good Neighbor Settlement House – Brownsville**. The Brownsville

1 churches, El Buen Pastor UMC and First UMC came together for the first time to work together in
 2 mission service while seeing person stepping up their mission service activities. Area Wesley
 3 Nurses have formed a relationship Good Neighborhood Settlement House and First UMC McAllen
 4 increased in awareness of the Brownsville ministry. Grant funding was used to encourage
 5 congregations to become more aware of border issues and of those working directly with migrants
 6 and refugees.

- 7
- 8 **La Posada Providencia – San Benito** coordinated the construction of new buildings: a resource
 9 center with office spaces, a commercial-grade kitchen, dining hall, and classrooms and 3 resident
 10 houses. Key renovations were made on an existing resident house. La Posada was able to fill key
 11 staff positions: executive Program Director, Operations Manager, Volunteer / Development
 12 Coordinator, Case Manager, and Administrative Assistant. There is excitement about the qualities
 13 and expertise each of the persons carry stepping into these roles reflecting the steadfast growth
 14 of the ministry’s facilities and program.

15

16 The project timeline recording the number of persons served through the border-point ministries is from
 17 July 2022 through June 2023. During this period, 263,002 migrants were received and assisted the various
 18 ways described. Numbers vary month to month, based on Customs and Border Patrol’s processing of
 19 migrants, lateral transfers, and releases to the border-point ministries for humanitarian assistance. Numbers
 20 also vary based on the type of assistance offered such as pass through respite, short / long-term sheltering,
 21 and case management, or supporting through volunteer and supply provisions. Twenty-five different
 22 countries of origin have been noted with the majority being from Latin America.

Number of Persons Served						
2022-2023	Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition Del Rio	Mission Border Hope Eagle Pass	Holding Institute Laredo	**El Valle District Immigration Response	La Posada Providencia San Benito	Total
Jul	6,259	13,386	7,799	-	143	27,587
Aug	4,501	14,657	12,495	500	218	32,371
Sep	2,277	14,817	6,941	1,700	200	25,935
Oct	2,434	14,402	13,050	4,348	106	34,340
Nov	5,126	15,726	16,900	5,680	116	43,728
Dec	7,431	19,538	17,800	2,480	124	47,373
Jan	1,608	3,673	2,820	530	31	8,662
Feb	14	2,427	620	530	25	3,616
Mar	39	3,263	775	530	47	4,654
Apr	242	4,518	3,405	-	23	8,188
May	3,652	7,044	5,973	-	36	16,705
Jun	3,152	3,650	3,507	-	14	10,323
TOTAL	36,735	117,101	91,785	16,298	1,083	263,002

23 ** El Valle District Immigration Response provided fund to organize supply procurement for needed items
 24 used by the Humanitarian Resource Center - McAllen and Good Neighbor Settlement House -Brownsville

Countries of Origin	
Latin America: <i>Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti</i>	14
Eurasia: <i>Russia, China, Romania, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan</i>	8
Africa: <i>Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon</i>	3
TOTAL	25

THE OFFICE OF CREATING/VITALIZING CONGREGATIONS AND DEVELOPING LEADERS

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 **“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs**
2 **up; do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:18-19a**

3

4 The landscape of our conference is changing, and yet there is hope all around. Springs and signs of new
5 life. While was we were was great...we can no longer dwell on the past but walk boldly in what God has
6 for us now. While we cannot fully see what the future holds, we trust that God is doing new things in Rio
7 Texas and the United Methodist Church. Amen and amen.

8

9 **Creating Congregations**

10 What a joy it has been to see the healing and excitement of our sisters and brothers who have chosen to
11 help create a new congregation in their area after disaffiliation meant there would not be a United Methodist
12 presence otherwise. In Seguin, we now have Walnut Springs UMC which celebrated a year of worship in
13 February. The congregation now worships about 45 on Sunday mornings. Currently the congregation
14 shares space with La Trinidad UMC in Seguin! Rev. Naomi Ramirez has welcomed retired Revs. Ron
15 Welborn and Bill Knobles and the entire group worshipers with open arms. What a blessing! I also want
16 to thank their partner church, FUMC New Braunfels, who has helped Walnut Springs oversee their finances
17 and give coverage as needed. Thank you thank you thank you! At the writing of this report, we do not yet
18 have a church planter to send to the Clear Springs / Seguin area, but I hope to have one appointed this
19 season.

20

21 Rev. Cody Logan has been leading Hill Country UMC in Marble Falls for the last year. He was appointed
22 in July 2023 and has done a wonderful job getting the congregation out in the community. They have
23 partnered with a local school, had “pancakes in the park” on Fat Tuesday, have been on the local radio and
24 Pastor Cody and team are planning a “bark in the park” event and sunrise service on Easter. They are
25 building on the anticipated crowds at the annual Bluebonnet Festival and the eclipse in April. They now
26 worshiping about 40 a week. Join me in praying with Hill Country UMC to find land or a building they can
27 purchase to have a permanent place in Marble Falls. I also want to thank Hill Country UMC’s partner church
28 – Bee Creek UMC. What a blessing you have been providing coverage for this new congregation. (I also
29 want to thank Johnson City UMC who was their willing partner church until they disaffiliated).

30 Our third new congregation is Grace UMC in Brady TX. Rev. Bun Jackson has held the group of 30 to 35
31 faithful UMC members together as they gather in the former Rio Grande Conference church building. Rev.
32 Jackson and her leadership team have done the deep work of healing and discerning who they are now
33 and what God is calling them to be. They have begun reaching out into their neighborhood, have Palm
34 Sunday and Easter Sunrise Service plans and currently worship about every Sunday morning in a former
35 Rio Grande Conference church. Thank you to FUMC Mason who is the partner church for this new
36 community of faith! It is such a joy to see the energy and joy of these communities of faith born from the
37 past leaning into a new future.

38

1 **Impacto Comunitario** continues to grow and thrive under the leadership of pastora Liliana Padilla as she
2 serves the west side community of San Antonio both as a community of faith as well as community center!
3 Keeping close connections with Westlawn UMC and other area churches, Liliana and community volunteers
4 provide many services. Here is Rev. Liliana's report:

5
6 *We see the face of Christ in everyone. We worship God on Sundays, we learn in our Bible studies, and we
7 prepare our young people for confirmation and baptisms. We celebrate baby baptisms and new professions
8 of faith. We fasted and prayed together. And we understand our calling and mission.*

9 *A Biblical text that guides each of the activities we do is Matthew 25.*

10
11 ³⁷ ***“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or
12 thirsty and give you something to drink?’***

13 *We serve warm food Sundays at 12:00 pm and Thursdays at 6:00 pm. During our 21 days of Fasting, we
14 served vegan meals every day at 6:00 pm. We have installed community refrigerators to provide free food
15 for the community in partnership with Incarnate Word University. We have served lunch through meal
16 programs for children during 7 weeks of summer with the Food Bank. At Woodhill Apartments, we served
17 lunches and meals for children during 8 weeks of summer, also with the Food Bank we also provide
18 community dinners on Wednesdays and breakfast tacos or hamburgers on Thursday afternoons once a
19 month. At Pecan Hill, Sunshine Plaza, and Villa Valencia Apartments, we catered for other special events
20 too.*

21
22 ³⁸ ***Or a stranger and show you hospitality?***

23 *English Classes: Monday and Thursday 9am-12:00noon and 6:00-9:00 pm (SAISD)*

24 *Computer Classes (SAISD), Adult Education Classes in Spanish & GED Classes (Mexican Consulate)*

25 *Teen Cooking Classes & Folk Dance Classes, Health Fairs (YWCA), Small Business Course (YWCA)*
26 *Community Health Workers Cert. (UTHEALTH) Crafty Summer Nights (Collins Garden Library) Back to
27 School Fair (District 5) Back School Backpacks Giveaway (@Impacto and Woodhill Apartments) We hosted
28 a Reading club, Monthly Cultural events, Lottery Games and Garage Sales, Collins Garden Association
29 meetings, Collins Garden Elementary School Meetings, San Antonio Alliance Meetings, TOP meetings,
30 COPS Meetings, Honduran Consulate Registration for IDs, Family trips and camps. We also supply VIA
31 bus tickets & work referrals.*

32
33 ***Or naked and give you clothing?***

34 *Every Sunday: Clothing Closet, Diapers Dispensary, Furniture and household items, financial education
35 classes, Taxes and ITIN numbers, Training on shelters and Domestic violence, Entrepreneur Fair
36 (Honduran Consulate).*

37
38 ³⁹ ***When did we ever see you sick ...***

39 *We hosted training of Community Health Workers (UTHEALTH), New Mom Boot Camps (Health
40 Collaborative) Vaccinations @ Impacto and Woodhill Apartments (YWCA), Soccer Fridays, Mammograms
41 (Christus San Rosa); Counseling Services & Community Presentations as well as resources for women &
42 Youth groups (YMCA).*

43
44 ***or in prison and visit you?***

45 *“I am a Good Driver” class (Sheriff's Office) We supported families experiencing family violence, helped
46 find safe shelters, and hosted trainings such as on shelters and domestic violence, Know Your Rights
47 (American Gateway), Information on Immigration issues presentation (JFAI), & visits from legal firms to
48 Impacto.*

49
50 ⁴⁰ ***“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers
51 and sisters,^[a] you were doing it to me!’***

1 *We thank God who supports us (and the different groups that associated with us!) to serve the community*
2 *and have a greater impact.*

3
4 **New Wineskins** under the leadership of Rev. Ray Altman continues to do the deep work of creating
5 intentional faith communities both online and in person neighborhood connections. Rev. Altman also is
6 leading clergy cohorts teaching others how to reach into their neighborhoods. He has recently partnered
7 with Abel Vega and Rev. Bob Clark as they expand the Transforming Community Network to share stories
8 and training of how the church and the community are strengthened as church and community work
9 together.

10
11 **The Journey UMC** It is exciting to share that The Journey UMC chartered on April 21, 2024. It was a
12 beautiful celebration of the church's beginnings under the leadership of Rev. Kyle Toomire as well as
13 celebrating all the lay and clergy leadership along the way. Current pastor, Rev. Kenneth Polk and his
14 leadership team have done an amazing job getting the church ready to reach its full potential in Plumb
15 Creek.

16
17 **The Rock UMC** celebrated two years in their new building last Easter and have been a blessing to their
18 local area and the wider San Antonio area. Their worship attendance is slowly rising. The Rock is perfectly
19 positioned to reach all the new growth at the 1604 / I-10 area. Windsong UMC began to re-focus and reach
20 out into the community. They are working on ways to expand their financial resources using their building
21 and property. Praise God! Continue to pray for these three churches as they continue to grow.

22 23 **Lay and Clergy Leadership Development**

24 Seminary internships have slowed down considerably; however, we have been blessed to help sponsor a
25 9 month Perkins student in Brownsville over the 23-24 school year, and we will be helping support a Duke
26 student make her way back to the Rio Texas Conference for a summer internship in the Valley shared
27 between two churches. Please remember, there are funds to continue to offer scholarships to churches
28 who engage with seminary students.

29
30 Over the last 6-9 months, it has been a joy to see how the Rio Texas Lay Servant Ministry team and the
31 NM Lay Servant Ministry team have combined efforts to offer even more opportunities for laity in the two
32 conferences. They continue to offer courses both in person and online in English and expanding to Spanish
33 (interpretation is always available). Scott Maderer and his team are working hard to equip laity for all forms
34 of service in their local church as well as supporting other churches via pulpit supply in Rio Texas. Kathy
35 Jewel from NM is helping Rio Texas expand our understanding and use of Certified Lay Ministers. What a
36 blessing.

37
38 Rio Texas clergy have benefited from multiple gatherings with consultant Claire Bowen from Atlanta,
39 Georgia. Because of her training, we held 17 on boardings across the conference last summer. We have
40 certified an additional 3 people who will conduct on boardings this summer. To date our certified on
41 boarders are: Rev. Cheryl Broom, Rev. Paul Escamilla, Rev. Jon Herrin, Rev. Karen Horan, Pam Owens,
42 Rev. Robert Waddle, Rev. Stan Whites and Melissa Wiginton. We are grateful for our connection with
43 Claire and how she brings wisdom and perspective.

44
45 Rio Texas began On Boarding of clergy and District Superintendents back in 2022. This is a process where
46 clergy and laity are certified to help bring new pastors/DS "on board" in larger complex systems, unique
47 settings and for cross-racial/cross-cultural settings. The on boarding process has been so well received
48 that each year we have increased the number of churches to experience the process. In April, 2024 the
49 conference sent three more people to be certified increasing our certified On Boarders to 7. We have
50 learned that on boarding pastors helps to strengthen both the church and the pastor often giving them a 6-
51 month head start in their ability to lead well and set goals. Because of this amazing training, 33 churches
52 and 3 DSs have experienced on boarding since 2022. These churches and pastors have praised this
53 process, and plans are in place to do as many on boardings as possible this summer.

1 It is my hope to offer preaching cohort partnerships with Perkins Center of Preaching Excellence again in
2 the fall. If you are interested, please let Karen Horan know so we can determine if there are enough for a
3 group in English and/or Spanish.

4
5 **Vitalizing Congregations:**

6 Cohorts have been in place on a variety of topics including Neighboring, visioning and focused mission of
7 local churches, and economic diversity – ways to use property as a means to create new revenue streams.
8 I am grateful to District Strategy Teams and others who offer these resources.

9
10 Congregational grants for existing congregations have been on the rise since we met last year. These
11 grants come from New People New Places grants, Transforming Congregation grants, and Strengthening
12 the Black Church grants. Some districts have also used conference funds to give micro-grants to existing
13 churches. Since last Annual Conference \$150, 248 have gone to local churches to help them reach new
14 people for Christ. (FYI the May NPNP grants are not included in this number). Of this amount, \$51,243 has
15 gone to our historical black churches, and \$40,500 have gone to start or strengthen Hispanic ministry in
16 our conference. Some of these funds support our restart church program as well. What a joy to partner
17 with these churches as they reach new people to become more vital in their area!

18
19 May God continue to bless these ministries and the Rio Texas Conference.

20
21 Respectfully Submitted,

22
23 May God continue to bless these ministries and the Rio Texas Conference.

24
25 Respectfully Submitted,

26 *Rev. Karen Horan*

27 *Director of Creating /Vitalizing Congregations and Developing Leaders*

28 *Rio Texas Conference*

TEXAS UNITED METHODIST COLLEGE ASSOCIATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

29 The Texas United Methodist College Association exists to advocate for our Texas Methodist college
30 students attending one of the six United Methodist institutions of higher learning in Texas. Gifts received
31 from our Annual Conference partners are passed along to deserving students through the Texas
32 Methodist Scholarship Program. During the 2023-24 academic year, we awarded \$72,500 in scholarship
33 support through this program to students at Huston-Tillotson University, McMurry University, Southern
34 Methodist University, Southwestern University, Texas Wesleyan University, and Wiley College. These
35 scholarships are given based on financial need and oftentimes make the difference in a student attending
36 college and persisting to graduation. The importance of these specific scholarships cannot be overstated
37 especially given the impact on **access** and **affordability** for those who receive these funds.

38 The students receiving support through the Texas Methodist Scholarship Program represent a wide range
39 of vocational interests. Attending United Methodist institutions, they have the opportunity to develop their
40 faith and find a career path leading to a life of service and contribution to the greater good. It is our hope
41 that in supporting our Methodist students at our own institutions they will contribute to the growth of the
42 Church, whether that be as an ordained minister, in another church-related role, or as active laity. By
43 encouraging their exploration of faith, we know that some will enter the ministry – whether that be a direct
44 path out of college to seminary or as second-career ministers, which is increasingly the norm.

1 I must also report that due to the declining nature of our funding model, the TUMCA board will consider a
2 logical path forward for our organization. Although funding for United Methodist students is an important
3 part of our model, we must also face the reality that there may be a better option to provide funding for
4 our students. It is my intent to continue conversations with our conference representatives to ensure the
5 best and most informed decision is made.

6 On behalf of the Texas Methodist Scholarship recipients, we would like to express our appreciation to the
7 Rio Texas Conference for your support of this important program. To learn more about the Texas
8 Methodist Scholarship Program, the impact on students, and the Texas United Methodist College
9 Association, please visit www.tumca.net.

10 Gratefully,
11 Michael Hutchison
12 President, TUMCA

CONFERENCE STAFF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) AND YOUNG PEOPLES'
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

13 In seasons when things are moving and changing so fast, we tend to find things that help us anchor
14 ourselves and find some ground to keep up with so many views, voices, and scenarios about what the
15 future holds. All these changes sometimes could lead us to guard ourselves and miss what God is doing
16 around our community. We are in a liminal time: General Conference and Jurisdictional conference will
17 bring significant innovations to our church. Many people make their predictions and multiple scenarios; I
18 pray for God's wisdom and comfort during this time. One of the underlining themes I've seen across these
19 areas, which I have the blessing to oversee and be part of, is reconnecting with God and one another.

20

21 **Youth Camps**

22 Bonnie Bevers continues working with the Youth Ministry Council (YMC) and coordinating full participation
23 in the Rio Texas Conference events, ensuring representation of Rio Texas Conference youth at the national
24 events. This year, the YMC students, under Bonnie's supervision, decided to run a campaign about Mental
25 Health for Youth. They have sent multiple flyers with information and resources to create awareness among
26 youth and adults. If your church is interested in receiving this information, contact Bonnie at
27 yldc@teamriotexas.org

28

29 We have identified five pastors/youth coordinators, one from each district, who will help us keep
30 communicating and have conversations about new events for local churches. YMC report will share more
31 details.

32

33 We hosted 2 Conference Summer camps last summer and 3 District-hosted Mid-Winters this year. All
34 camps welcomed youth from everywhere in our conference, and all had new local churches reconnecting
35 with one another and having conversations about collaboration and support. I am thrilled to hear
36 conversations from adults and youth about new possibilities. I celebrate their cooperation and work to
37 enhance the local youth ministry. We are preparing to host 2 Conference camps this Summer, 2024, at
38 Buda, TX, July 7 – 12, and Palacios, TX, July 14 -19.

39

40 Kingdom Kamp had a Reunion event on September 2, 2023, at FUMC Borne. A few former students came,
41 and many new friends took advantage of the one funday event. My dream for this ministry is to continue
42 doing one-day events closer to local churches to advocate and promote inclusiveness in all local
43 congregations. We plan to host three one-day events at our conference this year. Please let us know if your
44 church does Ministry with people with different capacities.

1 **Campus Ministry**

2 We started our conference year with ten campus ministries, and as we end this Conference year, we have
3 11 campuses, at least one campus ministry in each District. I give thanks to God for the commitment of
4 each campus pastor. The newest campus is Angelo State University, which is partnering with two local
5 churches. Wesley SA hired Rev. Dr. Todd at the beginning of 2024, and he is revamping their ministry and
6 presence at SAC and Trinity University and developing the staff to reach more students. UTRGV, in
7 collaboration with FUMC Brownsville, is partnered and doing great ministry in El Valle. These are only small
8 tidbits about Campus ministry around our conference. Thanks to the leadership of Rev. David McMinn and
9 Rev. Dr. Todd, an ecumenical Mid-Winter Camp was hosted at Joh Knox Ranch. It hosted almost a hundred
10 students from across the jurisdiction. The students and campus Pastors made new connections. In May
11 2024, a few campuses from our conference will partner with the UM Army College Mission trip in Gruene,
12 TX, for a week of service to the community, leadership development, and fellowship.

13
14 We partnered with the Conference Board of Ordain Ministry to offer a Summer internship to college
15 students. Two churches in Austin had welcomed, mentored, and were blessed by the gifts of these students.
16 The ten-week program allowed interns to look closely at what a pastor does. We are looking to expand this
17 program for students of a minority group exploring their call into Ordained ministry in all our Conference.
18 Please pray for and support mentors and students in this journey.

19
20 We continued hosting Zoom meetings with all campus Ministers to share ideas and collaborate. All campus
21 ministries' leadership benefitted and collaborated to create new student opportunities. To hear more details
22 on what each campus does, do not miss the opportunity to visit riotexas.org/campus-ministry. Here, you
23 can find the contact information for each campus ministry. You can help us connect to your college students
24 by sending their contact information. Many campuses have a presence in social media, so please make
25 sure to follow and share; or take advantage of the opportunity, during the Annual Conference, to visit the
26 Campus Ministry booth in the Ministry marketplace and ask us questions. I encourage you to support
27 campus ministry with your prayers, presence, and monetary gifts.

28
29 Scholarships are a tangible way to invest in the life of Young people. Three students, two from the El Valle
30 District and one from Las Misiones District, received the Albert & Nancy Wilson Merit Award. Six students
31 from our Conference were awarded TUMCA Scholarships. Thank you for your generosity. If you want to
32 invest in the lives of young people, get involved and ask us how you can support Campus Ministry or any
33 of the Endowment funds that give scholarships to United Methodist Students.

34
35 **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**

36 Annual Conference delegates voted to support the Anti-Racism and Equity Coalition last year. In the year
37 since we recruited a few new members, we have continued recruiting members for the coalition. The Anti-
38 Racism and Equity Coalition hosted Be The Bridge Training in Laurel Heights UMC in San Antonio, TX. A
39 good number of members from the Conference Board of Ordain Ministry, the District Committee in Ordain
40 Ministry, and a few District leaders took this three-day training. We celebrated the conversations that took
41 place and hope that this training helps members continue making the process of ordination and
42 credentialing more Equitable, Inclusive, and Diverse. The Anti-Racism and Equity Coalition report will
43 present more details about upcoming plans. Thank you to the co-chair, Rev. Caroline Pittman, and the
44 guidance of Dr. Pam Benson and all the members who are vital to unfolding this critical work.

45
46 The Uniting Peoples Vision team, under the leadership of Rev. Nohemi Ramirez, had multiple meetings
47 over Zoom. Religion and Race invited all Conference members, lay, and Pastors to engage in a 30-day
48 devotional titled "30 days of anti-racism" in March. The Uniting Peoples Vision team decided that in 2024,
49 we will support Religion and Race initiatives and Communications. In 2025, we will support the initiatives
50 from the Status and Role of Women and Disability concerns. If you want, or if your church has a group
51 interested in supporting or engaging on any of the mentioned initiatives, please feel free to contact my office
52 or Rev. Nohemi, and we will connect you with the chairs of each group.

53

1 I trust in God's hands when I see these and many other events in ministry and the fidelity of each leader
2 and each Conference member. It gives me hope and direction that as we reconnect with God and one
3 another, we are advancing into the vision of the book of Revelation, as talked about in chapter 21:3-4.
4 Thank you for giving me hope and direction. This coming year, I want to continue having conversations and
5 witnessing God's actions in our communities and ministries.

6
7 Yours in Ministry.

8 Rev. Miguel A. Padilla

9 Yours in Ministry,

10 Rev. Miguel Padilla

11 Conference Staff Equity Diversity Inclusivity

12 and Young Peoples

13 Rio Texas Conference

INTERGENERATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

14 It has been another year full of hard and holy work for the Office of Intergenerational Discipleship. I remain
15 committed to journeying alongside faith formation leaders as we all discover ways to equip and support
16 disciples of Jesus Christ in our constantly changing ethos. Four tasks continue to shape the work of this
17 office: Relationships, Research, Resources, and Leadership Development. Leaning into these four areas
18 of ministry, we continue to discover creative pathways for reaching people of all ages in the many
19 communities within our conference. The creativity, courage, and commitment of our faith-formation leaders
20 inspire me. It is a joy and an honor to serve alongside each of you as we discover ways to make disciples
21 of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

22
23 Listed below are the many ministries created and offered in response to consistent and intentional research
24 and discernment. I am grateful for the teams of hardworking individuals who make these ministries possible.
25 I do not do this work alone, and I thank all the leaders God has gifted who have come alongside me and
26 our conference in these efforts.

Connect

27
28
29 Connect was created out of an expressed need for connection, support, prayer, and accountability. This
30 ministry continues to change and thrive as ministry leaders seek connection, support, and resources. In
31 2023, I met with leaders across the connection to connect, listen, and learn as ministry leaders across our
32 conference shared their celebrations, their struggles, and their hopes. My call was renewed as I listened to
33 stories of courage, vulnerability, and faithfulness. IN 2024, Connect work will include updating the
34 Conference faith formation leader database, connecting with and listening to leaders as they share their
35 celebrations, challenges, and ministry needs, as well as district gatherings for ministry leaders. We will
36 continue to distribute the monthly Connect newsletter and provide curated resources and training
37 opportunities on the website, too. The newsletter and website provide ministry leaders with resources and
38 training opportunities to support them in their ministry. All recordings and resources, along with upcoming
39 meetings and offerings, can be found at riotexas.org/igconnect.

Faith Formation Leadership Academy

40
41 Faith Formation Leadership Academy equips faith formation leaders in United Methodist Churches as they
42 guide and support Christ's disciples in the work of loving God and loving neighbor. This digital learning
43 space offers online courses, continuing education units, and a three-year faith formation certification. I am
44 grateful for Rev. Jessica Petersen's leadership on the FFLA ministry team. In the last Annual Conference
45 year, we offered *Ministry with Children, Faith Formation in Rural Communities, Inclusive Ministry with All*
46 *God's Children, Ministry Planning and Administration, Teaching UMC Theology and Doctrine* (Now an

1 asynchronous course), *Volunteer Ministry*, and *Coaching and Guiding Parents in Building a Faith at Home*
2 *Practice*. We also offered a 24-hour spiritual renewal retreat and monthly cohorts led by experienced
3 ministry leaders within our conference. Special thanks to Rev. Janet Larson and Rev. Leigh Lloyd for their
4 leadership as mentors. The rest of 2024 will bring our 4th spiritual renewal retreat (Led by Rev. Dr. Paul
5 Escamilla), a new asynchronous *Teaching UMC History and Polity* course, and *Human Development and*
6 *Faith formation* (Fall 2024). Funded by the Sam Taylor Grant (Discipleship Ministries), FFLA seeks to
7 intentionally connect, train, and support faith formation leaders in the Rio Texas Conference and greater
8 United Methodist connection. This ministry offers development opportunities for new staff and volunteers
9 as well as those seeking to continue their education. More courses, including electives in various ministry
10 areas, are to be offered in coming sessions.

11
12 This year, we are celebrating four ministry leaders who have completed the three-year certification process:
13 **Christi Brogan, Rev. Kathy Fulton, Rhonda Russell, and Sharon Sharp**. The certification includes 12
14 virtual courses (a total of 72 learning hours), monthly cohort groups, and an annual spiritual retreat. We
15 celebrate their hard work and their ministry. They are assets to our conference. These individuals will also
16 receive celebration materials so their churches can join us in honoring their hard work and ministry. More
17 information can be found at rfaithacademy.com.

18 19 **Sacred Roots: A Family Faith Formation Initiative**

20 Funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. Christian Parenting and Caregiver initiative, *Sacred Roots lives into its*
21 *mission*, equipping families with children 0-3 years of age to embed spiritual practices into their daily lives
22 as they grow in their faith together. This 5-year project is informed by deliberate research to listen to and
23 uncover insights from parents and caregivers of young children. The objective is to gain a better
24 understanding of parent/caregiver values, worries, and needs, which will, in turn, inform the design of this
25 initiative's offerings. As we listen to parents and caregivers, we create simple ways for families of all
26 backgrounds to deepen their faith, supporting them as they incorporate faith-forming practices into their
27 family life. Furthermore, we actively share our discoveries with ministry leaders, equipping them to continue
28 supporting family faith formation in their communities.

29
30 In 2023, the Sacred Roots Team worked hard to design and implement the first phase of their initiative,
31 which focused on building relationships and encouraging church leadership and families in the spiritual
32 practice of prayer:

- 33
- 34 - *Partner Churches*: Eager to build relationships with church leaders and families, Sacred Roots began
35 implementation by inviting and onboarding partner churches. We identified churches as the “bridge”
36 between the Sacred Roots team and the families we seek to support. We sent personal invitations to
37 30 churches and received interest from six initial churches that entered a partner church covenant
38 with Sacred Roots. We divided these six churches into two cohorts led by the implementation team
39 consultants. These consultants meet with their cohort monthly to coach them in connecting and
40 building relationships with parents and caregivers in their communities.
 - 41 - *Survey*: Next, we worked with EffectX to launch a study to reveal the values, needs, and worries that
42 influence parents/caregivers as they strive to raise their children in the Christian faith. We also
43 worked to identify the level of support parents and caregivers feel from their faith community. We had
44 a 78% return rate, yielding 55 responses from church connections and 254 responses from a
45 crowdsourced list. We are currently in the process of reviewing and analyzing the data collected as
46 well as planning our next steps in our listening campaign. Sacred Roots consultants will share a
47 snapshot of the data received and information gathered with partner churches this summer (2024).
 - 48 - *Distribute Resources*: We compiled a welcome packet for partner churches that included an invitation
49 to pray for their families, a PDF guide to welcoming young children in their congregations, and
50 resources to share with their parents/caregivers. Resources for parents/caregivers included a letter
51 from the church, a breath prayer sticker for the parent/caregiver to pray independently, and a
52 movement prayer with directions as an invitation for parents/caregivers to pray with their child.

1 These activities laid a strong foundation for the work of Sacred Roots. With a clear sense of purpose and
2 direction, we have embarked on an exciting journey forward. Our goal is to inspire and support parents and
3 caregivers, assuring them that they are not alone amidst parenting challenges. With God by their side,
4 parents/caregivers possess all they need to impart Christ's love to their children, nurturing them as they
5 collectively grow in love for God and their neighbor. The Sacred Roots team and network are here to
6 accompany, shepherd, and guide, offering encouragement, wisdom, and tools for the journey.

7
8 Learn more and subscribe to our newsletter for updates at: <https://sacredrootsnetwork.com/>

9 10 **#pictureadvent and #picturelent**

11 Intergenerational, spirit-filled, invitational, and reflective, #picture invites individuals, families, and faith
12 communities to encounter God daily through Scripture, images, and reflection during the holy season of
13 Advent and Lent. With over 3,400 subscribers, we continue to grow as we reach people across our
14 conference, denomination, and world. I am grateful for the many individuals in our conference who have
15 contributed to these daily devotionals with their words, images, and prayers. Join us next time as we
16 pictureadvent.com and picturelent.com together. #Picture is a joint ministry between the Rio Texas, Great
17 Plains, and Michigan annual conferences.

18 19 **Thriving Congregations**

20 2023 brought the final year for the 4-year thriving congregations project through the Lilly Endowment Grant
21 awarded to Vibrant Faith. The Rio Texas Conference had 3 churches that participated in this important
22 work for all four years: Colonial Hills United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Floresville United Methodist
23 Church, and First United Methodist Church in Victoria. Each church worked with its leadership team,
24 congregation, and community to identify faith formation practices that encourage thriving in their unique
25 contexts. These churches were coached by Rev. Dr. Campen and resourced by the staff at Vibrant Faith.
26 This last year, lay and clergy leaders continued to ask, "What does it mean to thrive?" as we specifically
27 identified and celebrated ways they, as ministry leaders, thrived and led their congregations and
28 communities through fruitful and effective ministry. It has been a blessing to journey with these churches
29 and to see how God works through their leaders and their communities. I'm excited to see how God
30 continues to work in these communities as they continue to thrive.

31 32 **Trusted con Confianza**

33 The Rio Texas Conference is still hard at work creating safe spaces for children, youth, and vulnerable
34 adults as we celebrate seven years of safe ministry. Over 3,000 certified adults are currently engaged in
35 fruitful ministry across our conference. In 2024, we launched an adapted, completely asynchronous
36 certification process and have seen 237 newly certified leaders in the first two months of the process going
37 live.

38
39 The Safe Ministry Team continues to receive and review all evaluations and feedback, working to update
40 and strengthen the training curriculum. We are grateful for the work of Rio Texas Conference clergy and
41 laity and their commitment to the safety of the children, youth, and vulnerable adults in their care. Together,
42 we are keeping all of God's children safe.

43 44 **Other ministry this year**

45 In addition to all these projects, I continue to curate resources and provide training and coaching for faith
46 formation leaders. In the past year, I offered webinars and workshops on Children's spirituality, Family Faith
47 Formation, Effective Volunteer Ministry, and Faith formation in today's world. I partnered with Vibrant Faith
48 and Lifelong Faith, two organizations providing resources and training to local church leaders. I also
49 continue to visit with churches, conferences, and other faith communities about my book, *Holy Work with*
50 *Children: Making Meaning Together*, as they design effective ministries with children in their contexts.
51 Finally, I curate resources for important conversations in our churches and homes alongside playlists for

1 holy seasons including Advent and Lent. All resources can be found at the intergenerational discipleship
2 webpage: riotexas.org/ig

3
4 I continue to enjoy my work with faith formation leaders throughout our conference. It is humbling and
5 inspiring to see all that God is doing in and through intergenerational discipleship in our conference. I am
6 grateful to serve alongside each and every member of the conference and look forward to more
7 conversations, collaboration, and fruitful ministry in the next twelve months.

8
9 Prayerfully submitted by,
10 Rev. Dr. Tanya Campen
11 March 15, 2024

UNITED METHODIST MEN
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

12 Help Men grow In Christ So Others May know Christ

13
14 On behalf of the leadership of the Rio Texas Conference of United Methodist Men I bring you greetings and
15 prayers in the name of our Lord and Savior. The United Methodist Men of Rio Texas continue to serve our
16 churches and communities by offering Bible studies, book studies, prayer groups, feeding the hungry,
17 clothing the homeless, mentoring, performing community service projects and workshops.

18
19 We want to thank to our former servant leaders Crossroads District UMM President Milton Chapman, Hill
20 Country District UMM President Dwight Goode, Las Misiones District UMM President George Hampton and
21 Rio Texas UMM Conference Secretary Jack Moncure for their service to the Rio Texas Conference and
22 the Districts they served in and many blessings upon them and their family. Congratulations to our new
23 Crossroads District UMM President Lean Rodriguez. We are looking for servant leaders in the Hill County
24 and Las Misiones Districts. If you have a desire to serve, please contact me.

25
26 To renew your local churches Men's Ministry Charter, click on the following:

27 <https://www.gcumm.org/support/chartering>

28
29 To renew your Every Man Shares Magazine click on the following:

30 <https://www.gcumm.org/support/ems>

31 <https://www.gcumm.org/files/uploads/EMSBrochure2016.pdf>

32
33 If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

34 Charles E. McGarity, Jr, President
35 Rio Texas Conference United Methodist Men
36 South Central Jurisdiction United Methodist Men
37 cmcgarity_umm@att.net
38 riotexasumm.org

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN (UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH)
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 I knew that when I accepted this position of becoming the Rio Texas Conference United
2 Women in Faith President, it would be a challenge.

3
4 But I knew that our Lord was with me in my first year as President and He continues with me.
5 Especially during this phase that our United Methodist Church is going through, with Churches
6 disaffiliation, we're going to lose some members.

7
8 Our Conference paid only 86% of our pledges for 2023.

9
10 We are not sure about this year because as I said earlier with ladies withdrawing their
11 membership or Local Units disbanding, it will be hard to accomplish our pledge.
12 We are emphasizing that even if the Church is disaffiliated, they are still members of our
13 organization.

14
15 We have 2 Districts struggling, Crossroads & West, the Districts closer to the Churches that
16 stayed in these districts and have UWF Local Units, are adopting them, because we are a
17 supportive Community.

18
19 I attended the Texas Legislative Event on January 28-30 in Austin, TX.

20
21 The Chair of this Event was Abby Gutierrez, UWFaith member of La Trinidad, San Antonio, Las
22 Misiones District and my Daughter, which I'm very proud of her.

23
24 Rio Grande Endowment Fund: The former Rio Grande Conference had some monies in an
25 endowment fund and some leaders, former members of it, decided that the money will be for
26 scholarships only for members or descendants of members of the former Rio Grande
27 Conference.. We created the guidelines and application form. Ann Marie Cantu, our
28 communications coordinator, posted the Guidelines and the Application forms on our Website.
29 I'm inviting all of you that visit our Mission Institutions in our Conference, take your youth
30 groups, men and women organizations.

31
32 Southside Community Center in San Marcos, Texas
33 <https://www.southsidecommunitycenter.org/>

34
35 Holding Institute Community Center in Laredo, Texas
36 <https://www.holding-institute.org/>

37
38 Good Neighbor Settlement House in Brownsville, Texas
39 <https://www.goodneighborsettlement.org/>

40
41 You have the opportunity to serve here in Texas, no need to go out of the Country ;)

42
43 I belong to the Conference Vision Team Committee and the Uniting Table Committee. We had
44 meetings at the Conference Office, Bishop Schnase talked to us about the sad situation that our
45 Rio Texas United Methodist Church is going through, let's keep praying for our Church in general.

1 I'm looking forward to what The Lord has in store for as United Women in Faith!
2
3 Respectfully submitted,
4 Minerva Briones.
5 Conference President

RIO TEXAS CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE COMMITTEE
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

6 The mission of the United Methodist Disaster Response Ministry is to provide a caring Christian presence
7 in the aftermath of disaster. During the past year, the primary focus of the ministry has been to repair and
8 rebuild homes damaged by windstorms in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties in the spring 2023. Thanks to a
9 generous grant from UMCOR, several homes have been rebuilt and others are scheduled for the coming
10 months. Teams are still needed to assist in this effort. Visit riotexasresponse.org for details and to register
11 your team.

12
13 The Martinez Disaster Response warehouse in Kerrville hosts First Saturday workdays each month. This
14 has been a popular mission opportunity for groups and individuals. The first Saturday morning of each
15 month people gather to assemble or verify kits that are stored at the warehouse and distributed in the Rio
16 Texas Conference or across the country as the need arises. The warehouse is affiliated with UMCOR which
17 designates three kits for use in disaster response or other humanitarian needs. Cleaning kits (flood buckets)
18 are distributed during disasters to provide material needed to clean homes following floods. Hygiene kits,
19 and the new feminine hygiene kits, are more frequently used in homeless or migrant ministries. Church
20 groups are encouraged to assemble kits and send them to the warehouse. Traditional hygiene kits are
21 presently the most pressing need.

22
23 The Rio Texas Conference has not experienced a major disaster for the past several years. This is great
24 news, but it has had some troubling consequences. Fewer volunteers are attending training and many
25 trained volunteers have not renewed their credentials. The obvious concern is that we may not be as
26 prepared to respond to the inevitable disaster when it strikes.

27
28 Disaffiliation has negatively impacted the disaster response ministry in several ways. First, several key
29 leaders have stepped down from their position because they are members of a disaffiliating church.
30 Likewise, volunteers from disaffiliated churches may or may not respond when disasters occur. Finally,
31 even though we intend to respond to any disaster that occurs within the Rio Texas Conference, responding
32 in areas without the assistance of a local congregation presents added challenges compared with areas
33 where we can collaborate with local United Methodist partners.

34
35 Please help us meet these challenges by becoming a disaster response volunteer. Many different volunteer
36 positions are available. Some require physical strength and stamina while organizational or communication
37 skills are needed for others. The best place to begin is to take our Early Response Training which is offered
38 several times each year. If you already trained, consider being a part of the leadership team. Contact
39 Eugene Hileman, the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, to explore how you can become a part
40 of this exciting ministry.

41 Visit the Disaster Response website (riotexasresponse.org) for contacts and information about all disaster
42 response activities and programs.

43
44 Respectfully submitted,
45 Eugene Hileman
46 Rio Texas Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

MISSIONARIES AND MISSIONARY SUPPORT 2023

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 The Rio Texas Conference is well-represented by people responding to God's Call to serve in mission with
2 Global Ministries in 2023:

- 3
4 • **Missionary Support in 2023:** Congregations gave **\$25,681.36 in 2023** to support Global
5 Ministries Missionaries who are bringing the Good News across the country and around the world
6 (a **decrease of \$130.03**). Many Rio Texas congregations support one of the nearly 201 Global
7 Ministries missionaries serving in over 60 countries. For example in 2023: **Guillermo (Willie)**
8 **Berman (Mexico), Rev. Anna Troy (of RTC), Patrick Abro (Africa), Cristian Schlick**
9 **(Mexico/Central America), Bruna Farat (Costa Rica), etc.**

10
11 **Rev. Anna Troy** of RTC continues serving as Director of Open Heart Ministries in Clarksburg, WV
12 <http://openheartwv.weebly.com/>. In 2024 Global Ministries will be introducing the following
13 Missionary to RTC: **Rev. Eliad Dias dos Santos** serving the Methodist Church of Italy. Her bio is
14 at <https://umcmmission.org/?s=Eliad+Dos+Santos>

- 15
16 • **Global Ministries Advance Project Support** Giving: Congregations have also supported Global
17 Ministries projects by giving **\$31,447.08 in 2023**. This was a **decrease of \$21,922 from 2022**.
- 18
19 • **UMCOR Special Focus Giving:** Congregations supported Global Ministries with their gifts to
20 UMCOR in 2023 of **\$256,296.89** (a **decrease in UMCOR Giving of \$412,465.33 from 2022**).

21
22 These totals along with missionary support totaled giving to Global Ministries of **\$313,425.33 in 2023** a
23 **decrease of \$434,517.36**. We recognize University UMC, with gifts to Global Ministries in 2023 totaling
24 **\$19,300**.

25
26 If you feel called to become a missionary yourself, please explore the various categories of short-term and
27 long-term adult and young adult mission service opportunities that are described on the Global Ministries
28 web site (<https://www.umcmmission.org/serve-with-us/missionaries>)

29
30 **United Women in Faith** (United Methodist Women) note there are currently five active deaconesses from
31 and serving in the Rio Texas Conference. They are:

32
33 Tara Carnesi; Direct Care, Sunnyglen Children's Home. San Benito
34 Sonia Cruz; Bus Operator at VIA Metropolitan Transit, San Antonio
35 Cindy Johnson; Consultant for La Posada Providencia, San Benito, Texas
36 Julie Smith; Clinic Coordinator at Smithville Community Clinic, Smithville, Texas
37 Diana Woods; Social Services Coordinator, Buda UMC

38
39 Deaconesses and Home Missioners are laywomen and laymen who are called by God to be in a lifetime
40 relationship in The United Methodist Church in full-time ministries of love, justice, and service. After
41 commissioning, each person finds his or her own place of employment.

42 The Office of Deaconess has been part of our tradition as a church since 1888. The Office of Home
43 Missioner was established at the 2004 General Conference. Currently, the Deaconess and Home
44 Missioner program is administered by the National Office of United Methodist Women.

45

1 **Blessings, Becky Wright, Conference Secretary of Global Ministries**

UMCOR SUNDAY 2023
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

2 UMCOR Sunday (formerly called One Great Hour of Sharing) is one of the recognized church-wide Special
3 Sundays with offerings of the United Methodist Church. Participation in the UMCOR Sunday offering is one
4 of two basic requirements for Rio Texas Conference congregations wanting to achieve Five Star church
5 status. (The other requirement is 100% payment of apportionments.)

6

7 In 2023, the total UMCOR Sunday offering from Rio Texas churches was **\$32,931.26**, a **decrease of**
8 **\$11,667.42** from the amount collected in 2022.

9

10 Capital District – 15 churches; \$10,259.70
11 Coastal Bend District – 15 churches; \$3,374.67
12 Crossroads District – 30 churches; \$1,565.68
13 El Valle District – 8 churches; \$1,009.00
14 Hill Country District – 16 churches; \$7,458.34
15 Las Misiones District – 20 churches; \$8,207.87
16 West District – 6 churches; \$1,056.00

17

18 Special thanks to **Northwest Hills United Methodist Church, Austin, Texas** for giving the largest single
19 congregational offering in **2023 of \$3,145.00**.

20

21 The Methodist Committee on Relief (now UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief) was founded
22 in 1940s to respond to suffering after the onset of World War II. For 80 years it has been the global
23 humanitarian aid and development organization of The United Methodist Church. All UMCOR Sunday
24 receipts help support the small but impactful UMCOR staff who are specialists in disaster response and
25 recovery. Funds also ensure adequate training for emergency response coordinators, construction
26 volunteers, case managers who assist victims of disasters, chain saw gangs, and sheetrock installers.
27 UMCOR's broad scope of work includes disaster response, refugee ministries, hunger and poverty
28 programs, and sustainable global development projects.

29 Because we in Rio Texas join our church's offerings with those of United Methodist congregations around
30 the world, UMCOR remains strong in its day-to-day operations. When needs are immediate, UMCOR can
31 respond quickly and efficiently with signs of extravagant grace and expert assistance.

32 Thanks to all the congregations that supported this vital offering in 2023 and made it possible for the United
33 Methodist Church to reach out in caring to our neighbors in need.

34

35 **Becky Wright, Conference Secretary of Global Ministries**

ADVANCE GIVING 2023 AND THE FIVE-STAR PROGRAM
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 The Rio Texas Conference Advance program is modeled on The Advance of the General Board of Global
2 Ministries. It is an accountable, designated, “second-mile” giving arm of the annual conference that ensures
3 100% of each gift reaches its intended mission or ministry. You, the donor, decide which program or
4 ministry to support through the Rio Texas Advance. The Conference Treasurer’s Office receives and
5 processes your gifts and forwards them to the project. The project receives 100% of every gift given through
6 the Rio Texas Advance.

7 “Five Star” is the designation given to Rio Texas Conference congregations that participate in the Advance
8 program by doing the following things:

- 9 - paying 100% of their apportionments
- 10 - contributing toward UMCOR Sunday (formerly called One Great Hour of Sharing)
- 11 - contributing in each of the following FIVE mission categories
 - 12 A. one Rio Texas district or conference Advance project
 - 13 B. one national Advance project somewhere else in the U.S.
 - 14 C. one international Advance project
 - 15 D. one UMCOR project
 - 16 E. support for a Global Ministries missionary

17
18 In 2023, 73 Rio Texas Conference churches achieved Five Star mission giving status, a decrease from
19 2022 of 43 churches in the Rio Texas Conference

20

Capital District 10

Austin: Northwest Hills
Austin: Oak Hill
Austin: St. Luke
Austin: Tarrytown
Austin: University

Austin: Wesley
Austin: Westlake
Bend
Cedar Park: First
Leander

Coastal Bend District 8

Beeville: First
Bishop: First
Bruni
Corpus Christi: El Buen Pastor

Corpus Christi: Island in the Son
Goliad: Fannin Street
Portland: First
Skidmore

Crossroads District 26

Altair: Wesley Chapel
Bastrop
Columbus: First
Columbus: St. Paul
Evan’s Chapel
Fentress
Gonzales: Henson Chapel
Hallettsville: First
La Grange: St. James
Luling: First
Luling: William Taylor
Manor
Prairie Lea

Richardson-Brown Chapel
Runge
Seguin: La Trinidad
Shiner: First
Shiner: Johnson’s Chapel
Smithville: First
Stevens Chapel
Telferner
Victoria: First
Victoria: Webster Chapel
Winchester
Yoakum: First
Yorktown: First

El Valle District 4

Brownsville: Templo Emmanuel
Edinburg: First

McAllen: St. Mark
Rio Grande City: St. John

Hill Country District 10

Boerne
Carrizo Springs
Comfort: Gaddis Memorial
Crystal City: Swindall Memorial
Kerrville: First

Kerrville: St. Paul's
New Braunfels: First
San Marcos: Jackson Chapel
Walnut
Wimberley

Las Misiones District 10

Floresville
Floresville: El Mesias
San Antonio: Epworth
San Antonio: Jacob's Chapel
San Antonio: La Trinidad

San Antonio: Oak Meadow
San Antonio: St. Matthew's
San Antonio: Trinity
San Antonio: Westlawn
San Antonio: Windcrest

West District 5

Brackettville
Del Rio: First
Rankin

Sonora
Veribest

1

73 Total

2

We are grateful to each of these congregations for their generous mission giving in 2023.

3

As of March 2024, the following Rio Texas district and conference projects are approved to receive Advance contributions -- and local churches will receive Five Star credit for their gifts -- through December 31, 2024.

4

The projects are listed in the online catalog under the "Admin Services" tab on the conference website.

5

6

Capital District

7

#1106 Wesley Foundation of Austin

8

#1124 Caritas of Austin

9

#1129 Austin Habitat for Humanity

10

11

Coastal Bend District

12

#1201 Corpus Christi Metro Ministries

13

#1216 Mission of Mercy

14

#1220 Justice for All Immigrants-Corpus Christi

1	<u>Crossroads District</u>	
2	#1325	Cathedral Oaks Worship & Retreat Center
3	#1326	Crossroads District Mission
4	#1327	Lighthouse 2911
5	#1331	Golden Age Home
6		
7	<u>El Valle District</u>	
8	#1406	Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Inc.
9	#1409	Women Together Foundation, Inc.
10	#1427	El Valle Ramp Project
11	#1428	El Valle District Border Refugee/Immigration Ministries
12	#1429	La Posada Providencia
13		
14	<u>Hill Country District</u>	
15	#1526	The Helping Center of Marble Falls, Inc.
16	#1530	Mission: Border Hope
17	#1531	The Barnabas Connection
18	#1532	United Campus Ministry at Texas State
19		
20	<u>Las Misiones District</u>	
21	#1605	San Antonio Metropolitan Ministry, Inc. (SAMM)
22	#1607	Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio
23	#1608	Mobility Worldwide – San Antonio (formerly PET Project)
24	#1609	Wesley Foundation of San Antonio
25	#1620	Texas Diaper Bank/Diaper Assistance
26	#1621	Magdalena House
27	#1626	Justice for All Immigrants-San Antonio
28	<u>West District</u>	
29	#1729	Wesley Trinity Daily Bread Program aka Soup Kitchen
30		
31	<u>Rio Texas Conference</u>	
32	#502	Methodist Children's Home in Waco (MCH)
33	#2005	Kingdom Kamp
34	#2007	Mission Service Project (MSP)
35	#2013	Academy for Spiritual Formation Scholarship
36	#2016	Methodist Border Friendship Commission
37	#2026	U. M. ARMY
38	#2037	Project Transformation
39	#2038	Russia/Eurasia Initiative
40	#2050	Rio Texas Conference Disaster Response Fund

- 1 #2059 Texas Methodist Scholarship Program
- 2
- 3 National Mission Institutions
- 4 #1101 Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, Capital District
- 5 #1217 Wesley Community Center, Robstown, Coastal Bend District
- 6 #1218 Wesley Community Center, Corpus Christi, Coastal Bend District
- 7 #1426 Good Neighbor Settlement House, Brownsville, El Valle District
- 8 #1622 Holding Institute, Laredo, Las Misiones District
- 9 #2039 Southside Community Center, San Marcos, Rio Texas Conference

10
 11 All district and conference Advance projects must re-apply for listing every quadrennium. As of January 1,
 12 2021, the new Rio Texas Advance catalog for the 2021-2024 quadrennium is online on the conference
 13 website, and approved projects are ready to receive contributions from generous congregations across the
 14 annual conference.

15
 16 Becky Wright
 17 Rio Texas Conference Secretary of Global Ministries

GLOBAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MINISTRY
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

18 The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) embraces the ministry of learning and
 19 leadership formation in the Wesleyan and United Methodist tradition, stewarding the intellectual life and
 20 educational mission of the UMC. Our mission is to bring people together to **discern, learn, and lead** for the
 21 Church and the Academy, creating a world where everyone is living fully into God’s call on their lives.

22
 23 GBHEM programs - like Course of Study, Exploration, Journey Towards Ordained Ministry (JTOM) and
 24 Passage UMC - support the development of transformative leadership in The United Methodist Church. We
 25 remain committed to building and sustaining collaborative cross conference networks that foster collegiality
 26 and guide credentialing for licensed and ordained ministry.

27 Alleviating student debt through financial support remains a priority for GBHEM. The GBHEM Office of
 28 Scholarships awarded over \$3.9 million in scholarships to 2,100 students in 2023. Scholarships were
 29 awarded to students all over the world including 54 annual conferences and two central conferences. In
 30 addition, GBHEM stewarded the distribution of roughly \$20,000,000 in grants and scholarships to United
 31 Methodist ministries.

32
 33 Because of your generous support, each year approximately \$10 million is apportioned for the 11 historically
 34 black colleges and universities (HBCUs) related to the church through The Black College Fund. The funds
 35 are utilized for enhancing capital improvements, providing scholarships to students in need, and providing
 36 resources for faculty, staff, and students.

37
 38 GBHEM also supports the next generation of critical thinkers and leaders through the University Senate
 39 peer-review and evaluation process for church-related educational institutions. The UMC is related to 107

1 educational institutions across North America, the largest cohort of protestant educational institutions in the
2 USA. Similarly, 52 educational institutions representing 25 countries formed the Africa Senate for Methodist
3 Education (ASME) this past year providing culturally appropriate standards for the evaluation of Methodist
4 education throughout the African continent.

5
6 Among its various activities, GBHEM is also responsible for two initiatives approved by General
7 Conference: The Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development (MGEFLD), which includes
8 the Grants and Scholarships Program (GRASP); and the Central Conference Theological Education Fund
9 (CCTEF). The CCTEF advances theological education in all central conferences by strengthening
10 theological institutions, creating networks among these schools, and increasing access to theological
11 education.

12
13 Since 2008, GBHEM has established 11 regional Leadership, Education and Development Hubs (LEAD
14 Hubs) around the world. Each LEAD Hub is a part of the agency's strategic plan to connect with The United
15 Methodist Church worldwide through collaboration with Pan-Methodist and Ecumenical leaders in Africa,
16 Asia Pacific, Europe, and Eurasia, Latin American and the Caribbean, and North America.

17
18 For the past two years, GBHEM and the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) have been moving toward
19 greater collaboration and strategic alignment, attending each other's consultations, and bringing together
20 program ministry staff in the areas of scholarships, granting, regional work, shared services, theological
21 reflection, and leadership formation and training. Last October, the board of directors announced that my
22 colleague and friend, Roland Fernandes, would become general secretary of both agencies when I retire in June
23 of 2024.

24
25 We celebrate our partnership with your Annual Conference and thank you for nurturing and supporting
26 United Methodist lay and clergy leaders throughout the UMC world-wide connection.

27
28 Respectfully Submitted:

29 Rev. Greg Bergquist, General Secretary (GBHEM)

METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

30 Greetings from Methodist Children's Home (MCH) and the more than 10,000 children, youth and families
31 we serve each year. As an independent 501c3 organization, your continued voluntary support of our vision
32 to empower all we serve to experience life to the fullest is as important as ever. I invite each of you to visit
33 our website at MCH.org to learn more about how to refer a child for placement, or a call to join our ministry.

34 Your support provides the resources needed to offer the care, programs and talented individuals needed
35 to positively impact the lives of those we serve through residential care on the Waco campus and Boys
36 Ranch and through 14 MCH Family Outreach offices, including San Antonio and Corpus Christi.

37
38 We are now in our 134th year of ministry. Here are some highlights of the past year:

- 39 • We launched our new strategic plan, Imagine 2028, to guide MCH growth and innovation for the
40 next five years.

- 1 • We opened a new MCH Family Outreach office in the Permian Basin, to serve Midland, Odessa
2 and surrounding areas through family preservation services and community-based programs.
3
- 4 • We completed the Building Hope capital campaign on the Waco campus, which began in 2015,
5 and opened the Stone and Harris Homes.
6
- 7 • We launched and expanded free professional counseling services in two MCH Family Outreach
8 locations.
9
- 10 • We announced plans for a new vision at the MCH Boys Ranch to provide for young men with
11 more complex, specialized needs and began renovations to have this new program operational in
12 2024.
13
- 14 • We expanded our efforts through the Together We Flourish initiative by investing in other like-
15 minded organizations.
16
- 17 • We grew our community collaborations, especially in the Outdoor Education and Recreation
18 program with several groups joining for day-long team-building exercises and activities. Other
19 community collaboration highlights include annual high school career events where students
20 gained knowledge about life after graduation from high school.
21
- 22 • We once again received the highest ratings from Charity Navigator and Candid (formerly
23 Guidestar).
24
- 25 • Construction began on the Waco campus of the Embry Vocational Building which will expand
26 vocational opportunities for young people served through our charter school.
27
- 28 • Family Outreach staff presented services to various communities throughout our service area of
29 Texas and New Mexico through fairs, school events and partnering agencies.
30
- 31 • The MCH Bulldogs boys' track and field team took home the Texas Christian Athletic Fellowship
32 Men's State Championship Title, a first in school history. The MCH Bulldogs fought hard in their
33 fourth run for a state football championship but ultimately fell to Victory Christian Academy.
34
- 35 • We expanded our horsemanship program opportunities at the MCH Boys Ranch. Students learn
36 how to care for their horses and further bond through fellowship with other youth.
37
- 38 • As a TBRI (Trust Based Relational Intervention) Ambassador Organization, MCH staff continued
39 to train other like-minded groups across the nation in TBRI.

40 Our achievements in the past and those yet to come are directly related to the many individuals and
41 congregations throughout our service area, including the Rio Texas Annual Conference, who support our
42 work and ministry through financial gifts, prayers, advocacy and service on the Board of Directors. We look
43 forward to a continued partnership with you all for many years to come.

44

45 Thank you for supporting our vision to empower all we serve to experience life to the fullest.

1 Trey Oakley
2 President and CEO

AFRICA UNIVERSITY
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

3 **Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the**
4 **God of peace will be with you.—Philippians 4:9 (NRSV)**
5

6 Africa University greeted 2024 with bold faith and eager confidence because of the goodness of United
7 Methodists who are faithful, generous, and enthusiastic about investing in changing lives and communities.
8

9 In 2023, sustained by the support of The United Methodist Church, Africa University:

- 10 • Provided more than \$2M in scholarships and financial aid grants to students who would otherwise
11 fail to access higher education.
- 12 • Enrolled 2,219 young women and men from 26 African countries.
- 13 • Saw its alumni swell to more than 12,000 serving in 32 African countries, with the addition of 954
14 graduates in June.
- 15 • Launched its second new academic unit in less than a year—the College of Engineering and
16 Applied Sciences—with a first cohort of 279 students.
- 17 • Developed new products, such as lozenges made from the indigenous *Zumbani* plant, and IT
18 solutions to reduce food waste and make vital research findings more accessible to those who
19 need the information.

20

21 Through faithfulness and generosity, the Rio Texas Conference invested 65.15 percent of the asking to the
22 Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2023. The unwavering engagement of United Methodists of
23 the Rio Texas Conference has helped Africa University to evolve into the cornerstone institution for The
24 United Methodist Church’s mission of disciple-making for transformational impact in Africa and beyond.
25

26

26 As United Methodists fortify themselves for a vital and vibrant witness beyond the 2020 General Conference
27 in 2024, and its outcomes, Africa University urges the members of the Rio Texas Conference to:

- 28 • **Endeavor to invest in the Africa University Fund at 100%, using the amount approved at the**
29 **2016 General Conference—\$9,368,872 million for the 2017-2020 quadrennium—as your goal.**
- 30 • **Help identify at least two (2) churches** (keystone congregations) **in your conference that will**
31 **commit to provide second mile gifts of \$6,500 each or \$13,000 in total for annual**
32 **scholarships for two undergraduate students.** *(This will help address any shortfall in giving to*
33 *the Africa University Fund.)*

34 Thank you, Rio Texas Conference, for your steadfast witness. Thank you for ensuring that Africa University
35 continues to nurture and send forth ethical and effective leaders whose daily efforts increase food security,
36 overall health, good governance, abundance, and peace in their communities.

37 Let us keep doing this important work together and may the God of peace be with you!

38 *James H. Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement, Africa University, and*
39 *President/CEO of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. Email: jsalley@africau.org Tel: (615) 340-7438*
40 <https://support.africau.org>

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 Your partnership, prayers, and support are a cherished gift as BUSTH seeks to serve the church and the
2 world! In a year like 2023, BUSTH's commitments to equip transformational leaders for peace and justice are
3 all the more necessary and significant. We are hopeful and vigilant in our continued partnership with you.
4

5 NEWS:

- 6 ● Students: Our academic year 2023-24 entering class was among our most diverse, with 86 new
7 students enrolling, 34% of whom are international students.
- 8 ● Faculty: In September we welcomed visiting [faculty member](#) David Anderson Hooker, Visiting
9 Associate Professor of Religion and Conflict Transformation. Two new faculty searches are
10 underway—an Assistant Professor of Religion and Society and the Martin Luther King, Jr.
11 Professor of Religion and Black Studies.
- 12 ● Expanding Online Programming: BUSTH's first fully online master's degree—the Master of
13 Religion and Public Leadership (MARPL)—continues to expand after welcoming its first students
14 in fall 2022. MARPL seeks students who wish to be prepared for leadership roles that creatively
15 engage the challenges of public life. Learn more at bu.edu/sth/marpl.
- 16 ● Faculty Research: Associate Dean Cristian De La Rosa received a Lilly Parenting Grant for
17 \$1.25 million. Our faculty members published more than 75 books, scholarly articles, op-eds,
18 and book reviews during 2023. Many were interviewed by media publications for their work on
19 academics and activism, fat liberation, caring for creation, responding to congregational trauma,
20 and the spread of Christianity in Africa. Selected stories can be found at
21 bu.edu/sth/research/faculty-research/.
- 22 ● Scholarships: We continue to offer free tuition to UMC-registered candidates for ordained
23 ministry and leadership fellowships that support students in ethnic, gender, and sexuality
24 studies. New funds include the Research & Teaching Fund and Affirmation & Empowerment
25 Fund. We have newly endowed funds for DEI, Theology & the Arts, and Doctor of Ministry.
- 26 ● Accreditation and Curriculum: BUSTH received a renewed full and unqualified listing by the
27 University Senate of the United Methodist Church. BUSTH is concluding a curriculum review for
28 the MDiv and MTS programs which will launch in fall 2024.
- 29 ● Online Lifelong Learning: BUSTH offers online courses for professional and spiritual enrichment
30 of religious leaders. Recent offerings include “Sustaining Spirits while Empires Crumble” and
31 “Preaching Mark with Different Voices.” To learn more, visit bu.edu/sth/oll.
- 32 ● Development: Recent accomplishments include endowing the Faith and Ecological Justice
33 Fund, and new funding for student scholarships and academic programs.

34
35 COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE and COMPASSION:

- 36 ● BUSTH's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers webinars on timely inclusion efforts,
37 such as “[Increasing Participation of Students of Underrepresented Backgrounds](#).”
- 38 ● This year's [Lowell Lecture](#) topics explore the role and responses of theological education for the
39 challenges of today with lectures from Rev. Dr. Ted Smith (fall) and Dr. Keri Day (spring).
- 40 ● Work continues to improve accessibility, sustainability, and responsible investing as written in
41 our 2030 Strategic Plan. BUSTH is the first certified Green School at BU and is active in the
42 Green Seminary Initiative.

43
44 With faith and gratitude,
45 G. Sujin Pak, Dean

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 Since 1914, **Candler School of Theology at Emory University** has educated faithful and creative leaders
2 for the church’s ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United Methodist Church,
3 Candler holds true to the Wesleyan value of ecumenical openness, enthusiastically welcoming students
4 from more than 40 denominations, with nearly half of Master of Divinity students coming from the Methodist
5 family, including United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian
6 Methodist Episcopal, Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, and others. Our student body
7 reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 419 from 12 countries and
8 38 states, and 44% persons of color. This diversity is a blessing, enriching our life together and providing a
9 “learning laboratory” for ministry in the 21st century—ministry that cultivates community across difference,
10 welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies Christ’s love in and among us.

11 Candler offers six degrees (Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Religion and Public
12 Life, Master of Religious Leadership, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry) and ten dual degrees, most
13 of which are available in hybrid or online formats. Response to our new hybrid-format Master of Divinity,
14 which launched in Fall 2023, has been strong: 65% of 2023’s MDiv entering class chose the hybrid model,
15 blending online classes and in-person intensives. Plus, around 20% of MDiv students participate in
16 Candler’s Teaching Parish program to earn contextual education credit as they serve as student pastors in
17 local churches. Our proven DMin program—with a near 90% completion rate—is 90% online as well. These
18 flexible options plus Candler’s recognized academic excellence and hands-on learning opportunities are
19 opening possibilities for even more people to follow God’s call to ministry.

20 Reducing student debt through generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2023-2024, we are on
21 track to award \$6.3 million in scholarship support, with 100% of MDiv students receiving aid. All MDiv
22 students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receive full-tuition scholarships, and
23 all MDiv, MTS, MRL, and ThM students receive a scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition. MDiv students
24 also receive financial coaching and complete a financial literacy program to strengthen their budgeting skills
25 and reduce debt. That knowledge will serve them—and the ministries they serve—well into the future.

26 Candler is growing in exciting directions as it creates avenues to bring high-quality theological education to
27 a wider audience. It is a hub of Christian learning with multiple entry points. Those who aren’t seeking an
28 advanced degree can engage in learning through The Candler Foundry, our innovative program to make
29 theological education accessible to the public through short courses, events, and related activities; the
30 United Methodist Course of Study to educate licensed local pastors; the new Candler Center for Christian
31 Leadership to refine business-related skills of United Methodist leaders; and La Mesa Academy, offering
32 diplomas in pastoral leadership via a two-year hybrid program with courses in Spanish, English, and
33 Korean.

34 One of the biggest news items of the year for Candler is the announcement that after nearly 18 years, Dean
35 Jan Love will step down from Candler’s deanship in the summer of 2024. Through Dean Love’s
36 transformational leadership, Candler has expanded to offer three new degrees, five new dual degrees, and
37 more online and hybrid options, including the highly successful hybrid MDiv and DMin degrees. She has
38 increased the diversity of Candler’s faculty and student body, continued the school’s tradition of world-class
39 scholarship in hiring 75% of the current full-time faculty, and grown the number of endowed professorships.
40 Her efforts have enhanced Candler’s ability to fulfill its mission in a rapidly changing environment, and she
41 leaves the school in a strong position. The next dean of Candler is expected to be named by early summer.

42 Candler depends upon your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you
43 advance this essential ministry in the life of our denomination. We invite you to visit us online at
44 candler.emory.edu.

45

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

3 Duke Divinity School can attest to the work of God’s Spirit to usher us into a season of hope and continued
4 faithfulness to the mission and calling to serve the church, academy, and the world. In 2023, the Duke
5 University president and provost appointed Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric for a full five-year term. In his
6 Opening Convocation sermon, he stated: “This year marks the 25th anniversary of my ordination in the
7 United Methodist Church. This is the school that prepared me. Today, I give God thanks for still allowing
8 me to serve as a minister of the gospel and I renew the vow I made when I was installed as dean. By the
9 grace of God and en conjunto with you, I will uphold this school’s ‘commitment to God and the people of
10 God, to the highest standards of academic excellence, and to this university.’”

11
12 In the next three years, we will celebrate a number of centennial milestones: Duke University and The Duke
13 Endowment (2024), the 17th centennial of the Council of Nicaea (2025), and Duke Divinity School (2026).
14 As a foretaste of those occasions to reflect and celebrate, we have had two important milestone
15 celebrations in 2023. The Office of Black Church Studies (OBCS) commemorated its 50th anniversary, an
16 occasion to rejoice in all that God has done through OBCS to bless our Duke Divinity community and to
17 extend the gifts from the Black Church to the whole church. As just one example of the impact and influence
18 from OBCS, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale (D’79) received Duke University’s Distinguished Alumni Award in
19 recognition of her outstanding contributions in ministry and service.

20
21 The Hispanic House of Studies (HHS) celebrated its quinceañera (15th anniversary), another opportunity to
22 have our hope buoyed by God’s work in our midst. HHS was created by the Divinity School, with support
23 from The Duke Endowment, to support the formation of ministers to Hispanic/Latinx congregations and
24 communities in the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Annual Conferences and beyond. These
25 efforts are not confined to a limited silo but extend throughout our academic and ministerial programs. For
26 instance, we now offer the “Rediscovering the Heart of Methodism” course in Spanish on Divinity+, an
27 online resource that is widely available for ministers and congregations.

28 This fall, we welcomed 215 entering students from 35 different states as well as new community members
29 who hold either primary or secondary citizenship in 16 other countries including Canada, Chile, China,
30 Finland, Germany, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Russia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Korea, Sri
31 Lanka, Syria, and Zimbabwe. The Master of Divinity program gained 104 new students, with 54 residential
32 students and 50 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled 13 new students;
33 the Doctor of Ministry, 22; Master of Theology, 11; Master of Theological Studies, 29; the Doctor of Theology
34 welcomed five new students to campus, and five special students enrolled. The Certificate in Theology and
35 Health Care welcomed 11 residential students to campus and 15 in the hybrid program. Across all degree
36 programs at the Divinity School, 31 percent of the incoming class identified as a race or ethnicity other than
37 white. Black students made up 21 percent of all students; Latinx students, seven percent. Fifty-four percent
38 of students in the incoming class identify as female. There were 25 denominations represented in the M.Div.
39 entering class, with 26 percent affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Baptists made up 10 percent of
40 the incoming students; Anglican or Episcopal students, 10 percent; and nondenominational students, 12
41 percent.

42 Duke Divinity School continues to invest in pathways to support Methodist leadership and pastoral
43 formation. Divinity+ launched the Church Administration series focused on developing practical skills for

1 church leaders. More than 1,000 learners have enrolled in the first two courses, “Theology and Time
2 Management” and “Strategic Management.” We inaugurated the Certificate in Chaplaincy, designed to
3 prepare students to provide spiritual care in a variety of settings such as hospitals, hospice, prisons, higher
4 education, and the military. The certificate can be earned as part of the residential M.Div., Th.M., and M.T.S.
5 degree programs.

6 The school has also welcomed new leaders who bring their gifts to the work of advancing the mission to
7 serve Christ and the church. Two houses have appointed new directors: the Office of Black Church Studies
8 is led by the Rev. Dr. Eric Lewis Williams (D’05), assistant professor of theology and Black Church Studies;
9 and the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies has named the Very Rev. Timothy Kimbrough (D’83), Jack
10 and Barbara Bovender Professor of the Practice of Anglican Studies. Key members who have joined our
11 staff team include Anita Lumpkin, executive director of enrollment management; and the Rev. Sarah Belles,
12 a Duke Divinity alumna and ordained elder in full connection with the Western North Carolina Annual
13 Conference, as the director of student life.

14 Several new programs demonstrate Duke’s sustained commitment to connecting with churches and
15 ministers. With gratitude to funding from the Lilly Endowment, the Divinity School has launched the
16 Transformative Preaching Lab to prepare creative, culturally competent preachers who can reach
17 audiences in effective and engaging ways. It will expand preaching training for students in the hybrid
18 modality of the M.Div. program with new courses and preaching laboratories along with new capacities to
19 explore and engage digital tools for community worship and preaching. The Transformative Preaching Lab
20 also provides new opportunities for formation in trauma-informed preaching and preaching in immigrant
21 communities, issues that are especially salient in communities across the country and around the world.

22 The Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative has launched the Mental Health Track for Christian mental
23 health practitioners as part of its Certificate in Theology and Health Care. This hybrid certificate program
24 offers spiritual and theological formation for mental health clinicians in a range of disciplines. The research
25 and programming from other Duke Divinity initiatives, including Theology, Medicine, and Culture; Duke
26 Initiatives in Theology and the Arts; Leadership Education at Duke Divinity; and Thriving Rural
27 Communities, continue to provide numerous opportunities to bear witness to God’s creativity, compassion,
28 and care for communities and congregations.

29 Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church
30 and partnership with this annual conference. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as we join the
31 leading of God’s Spirit in the task of preparing people for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke
32 Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

33
34 Respectfully submitted by Edgardo Colón-Emeric
35 Dean of Duke Divinity School

DREW THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

36 Drew University Theological School educates and mentors pastors, preachers, deacons, activists,
37 teachers, thought leaders, and change agents for ministry and service in the church and society. Drew
38 Theological School is diverse in theology, vocations, age, as well as racial, ethnic, national, and
39 international identities. Many Drew students are just beginning their ministry, while others come to graduate
40 theological education with prior ministry experience. The latter reflects a growing trend among all theological

1 schools in the United States and Canada. Drew holds in-person classes in Madison, New Jersey, several
2 classes meet exclusively online, while other meet in hybrid fashion, i.e., partially online, partially in-person.
3 This is also the case with chapel worship which originates in Seminary Hall, but also is live-streamed so
4 that students around the world participate. Drew Theological School is a global seminary with a global
5 student population serving the worldwide church.

6
7 In Fall 2023 Drew Theological School welcomed 104 new students in all degree programs, with total student
8 enrollment (by head count) growing from 364 students in Fall 2021 to 407 in Fall 2023 semester. Enrollment
9 of international students at Drew increased from 120 students in Fall 2021 to 169 students in Fall 2023.
10 This number includes students who are studying full-time in the U.S.A. on a student Visa, students who are
11 studying online from their home country, and students in the South Korean Cohort of the Doctor of Ministry
12 program.

13
14 Drew's interdisciplinary degree programs provide real-world apprenticeships, promotes adaptive leadership
15 skills, and encourages innovation through team-taught core courses as well as a variety of electives that
16 integrate theological disciplines and faith practices. The Drew faculty's shared values are infused across all
17 aspects of the teaching and learning: 1) a commitment to anti-racism; 2) gender and sexual-identity equality;
18 3) eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and 4) interfaith understanding and cooperation. Drew
19 Theological School has an increase in United Methodist students, additionally, Drew has many United
20 Methodist Global Fellows pursuing further education for ministry. UMC graduates are serving in
21 conferences across the United States, and especially within our nearby regional United Methodist
22 conferences of Greater New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and New York Annual Conference.

23
24 **Rev. Edwin David Aponte, PhD, ThD (honorary)**
25 **Dean and Professor of Religion & Culture**

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

26 Gammon Theological Seminary is the Interdenominational Theological Center's United Methodist
27 constituent member in Atlanta, Georgia. The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) is a Christian
28 Africentric ecumenical consortium of seminaries and fellowships that educate students to commit to
29 practicing justice and peace through a liberating and transforming spirituality to become leaders in the
30 church and local/global communities. Gammon was founded in 1883, bearing the name of the Rev. Elijah
31 H. Gammon, a generous clergyman, businessman, and philanthropist. Rev. Elijah H. Gammon invested
32 and endowed the founding of Gammon Seminary in partnership with Bishop Henry Warren and the
33 Freedman's Aid Society. Gammon has educated Black Clergy for almost 140 years, with graduates
34 serving every level of the church, including Bishops, Superintendents, General church leaders,
35 Conference staff, and Clergy in every jurisdiction. Gammon/ITC offers the following degree programs: the
36 Master of Divinity, the Master of Arts in Religion and Education, and the Doctor of Ministry. The support
37 given to The United Methodist Ministerial Education Fund by United Methodist Conferences continues to
38 enable Gammon students to be grounded in the Wesleyan tradition of theological education.

39
40 Our 17th President/Dean, Rev. Dr. Candace M Lewis, and the Gammon staff team continue to lead
41 innovatively in chartering a "Brand New Day" for Gammon's recruitment, retention, research and
42 resources, fund development, and scholarship endowments in her first two years of service.

43
44 **Our new initiatives and celebrations this year, 2023 – 2024, at Gammon, include:**

- 1 • In May 2023, Gammon held our 1st Annual Student Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Tournament,
2 receiving \$70,000 in donations to assist students with their tuition, which also helped Gammon
3 build more relationships and partnerships.
- 4 • In June 2023, The Rev. Walter H. McKelvey Endowed Scholarship Fund was launched by Dr.
5 Loretta F. McKelvey (wife of the late Rev. McKelvey) and Dr. Walter Kimbrough with a
6 \$50,000.00 matching gift in partnership with the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation.
- 7 • In June 2023, The Florida Conference raised and donated over \$ 60,000.00 to the Rev. Geraldine
8 McClellan Endowed Scholarship Fund, which is now fully endowed by the Florida United
9 Methodist Foundation.
- 10 • In July 2023 and December 2023, Gammon hosted the Ebony Exploration Event for 75 young
11 adults under 35, increasing participation and forming strategic partnerships with external
12 organizations to enhance the program's reach and impact.
- 13 • In December 2023, we celebrated our 140th Founders Day Event/Pastors and Leaders
14 Conference, with over two hundred persons attending workshops (in person and virtual) and our
15 Scholarship Gala Dinner, hosted at IMPACT Church in Atlanta, GA.

16
17 The greatest challenge facing Gammon Seminary is the rising cost of theological education and the
18 significant debt our students incur as they answer their call to full-time ministry. Therefore, Gammon is
19 committed to raising a million dollars in the next two years to offer full-tuition scholarships to students
20 called and committed to full-time ministry in the United Methodist Church. We are grateful to this Annual
21 Conference for your support of theological education and your commitment to ensuring pastoral
22 leadership is theologically trained to lead us forward in the Wesleyan tradition.

23
24 **Respectfully submitted,**

25
26 **Rev. Dr. Candace M. Lewis, President-Dean**

GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

27 For 170 years Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has been in service to the Church and the
28 Wesleyan/Methodist connection through the formation of Christian leaders in ordained and lay ministries.
29 As the result of a new strategic planning process that seeks to position the seminary more fully and
30 purposefully in service to the global church, Garrett adopted a new mission and vision that will focus our
31 work to this end: *Forming courageous leaders in the way of Jesus to cultivate communities of justice,*
32 *compassion, and hope...for the thriving of the Church and the healing of the world.*

33
34 During this past academic year, Garrett also welcomed its largest entering class in over a decade, with
35 124 new students, and a current enrollment of 314 students representing 37 states and 21 nations from
36 across the globe. We have experienced particular growth in students from the African continent and the
37 Indian subcontinent, adding to an already richly diverse student body. While our denominational diversity
38 also continues to grow, we also proudly welcomed growth in our United Methodist students who
39 constitute more than 50% of our student body.

40
41 Of particular importance in the past year has been the partnership we have entered into with Phillips
42 School of Theology of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME). Phillips students are now also
43 fully Garrett students and together we are preparing the next generation of CME leaders in a robust pan-
44 Methodist/Wesleyan context alongside UMC, AME, and AMEZ students. Phillips President, Dr. Paul
45 Brown, is now also affiliated with our faculty, teaching CME History, Doctrine, and Polity, as well as

1 spiritual formation and organizational leadership courses. It is our hope and intention to continue to grow
2 this partnership and foster a truly pan-Methodist/Wesleyan ethos which includes our growing global
3 Methodist partners in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Additionally, last year, all Garrett degree programs
4 were made truly hybrid so that students can study with us and earn their degrees either on our Evanston
5 campus or in virtual learning spaces around the globe. This has added an amazing breadth of
6 experience and contexts to our classrooms, where we seek to address real-world challenges with gospel
7 inspired solutions or responses.

8
9 Garrett's world-class faculty continue developing curricular innovations that are responsive to the church's
10 growing needs, while also contributing a significant body of scholarly work to their respective fields. Our
11 faculty are also at work developing The Garrett Collective, an online platform of theological learning and
12 resources for churches and partner organizations inspired by our faculty's research and/or strategic
13 partnerships. Finally, at this critical juncture in the history of United Methodism, faculty leaders are
14 providing essential guidance to UMC students, while also continuing to envision with hope the next
15 expression of Methodism that is responsive to the Spirit's call for such a time as this.

SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

16 Educating tomorrow's leaders by offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning courses at a FLEXible
17 schedule, Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary serving a diverse community committed to the
18 formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through rigorous academic life. Grounded in the
19 academic study of faith and ministry, theology is practiced in a traditional classroom and remote spaces.
20 Our contextual curriculum features Ministry Collaboration Groups, Practicums, Spiritual Formation
21 Retreats, and Seminars. Students learn from dedicated faculty, experienced pastors, and community
22 leaders about best ministry practices, leaving our graduates with the tools and first-hand experience
23 necessary to meet the needs of a changing world.

24
25 At the core of our mission at Saint Paul is the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through
26 rigorous academic life. In 2024, we are launching two exciting new programs to revitalize current pastors
27 and preachers and prepare seminary students for music ministry. First, with the help of Lilly Endowment's
28 Compelling Preaching grant and the leadership of Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and
29 Worship and Director of Contextual Education and Pause/Play Center for Preachers, Saint Paul School of
30 Theology is creating a Center that addresses the risk of losing heart and prophetic imagination as a
31 preacher in this divided world. The [Pause/Play Center for Preachers'](#) mission is in its name: to hold space
32 for busy preachers to pause and play their way into a renewal of their vocation as preachers of the Good
33 News. Second, for Fall 2024, as part of our Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) degree program,
34 we will launch a first-of-its-kind specialization in Modern Worship Music. Saint Paul will partner with The
35 United Methodist Church of the Resurrection and their [COR Worship Collective](#) to prepare students to write,
36 produce, and perform modern worship music. Students will integrate a worship leaders' skills with their
37 study of theology, the bible, history, and worship in a diverse, inclusive, and spiritually enriching
38 environment. Lastly, we recently completed the (Theo)Logic Studio on our Oklahoma Campus. The Studio
39 serves as a dedicated space for creating, recording, and editing digital media resources tailored to the
40 ministries of students, staff, faculty, and alums, encompassing content development ranging from podcasts
41 and video resources to digital graphics.

42
43 We continue to invite Saint Paul students, alums, and friends to join us in a hybrid format, where participants
44 may join in-person or online, allowing everyone to come together as one institution from wherever they are.
45 Saint Paul offers weekly chapel services throughout the academic year featuring students, alums, faculty,

1 and local leaders. In addition, weekly Spiritual Formation allows attendees to engage in spiritual practices
2 led by new Oklahoma Chapel Coordinator Rev. Alanna Ireland '23. Some practices take us outdoors or to
3 other sacred spaces, and others have us connect with community leaders.

4
5 For the 2023-2024 academic year, we brought 41 new, faithful theologians from across the world to our
6 learning community. International students from South Korea, Belgium, and Mexico added to the global
7 learning environment on both campuses and online. Twenty-seven percent of incoming students identified
8 as a race or ethnicity other than white, and 53 percent identified as female.

9
10 Saint Paul staff and faculty continue contributing to the academy, church, and society. The faculty of Saint
11 Paul School of Theology maintains high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and
12 engagement. Over the past year, their many activities and publications have been so numerous that space
13 permits only sharing selected highlights:

- 14 • Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, Lindsey P. Pherigo Associate Professor of New Testament Studies and
15 Biblical Interpretation, published *Translation as Incarnation: The Bible in the Twenty-First Century*
16 *Global South* and was the featured guest speaker of our January forum.
- 17 • Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, Assistant Professor of Ethics, Church, and Society, published *Black*
18 *Theology and The Black Panthers*
- 19 • Dr. Elaine Robinson, Professor of Methodist Studies and Christian Theology, published *Leading*
20 *with Love: Spiritual Disciplines For Practical Leadership*
- 21 • Rabbi Michael Zedek, Rabbi-in-Residence, published *Taking Miracles Seriously: A Journey to*
22 *Everyday Spirituality* and hosted a forum with Dr. Jeanne Hoeft, Associate Professor of Pastoral
23 Theology and Pastoral Care, and Franklin and Louise Cole Associate Professor in Town and
24 Country Ministries, on The War in Israel and Traumatized Communities
- 25 • Dr. Mike Graves, Professor Emeritus of William K. McElvaney of Preaching and Worship, published
26 *Jesus' Vision for Your One Wild and Precious Life (on Things Like Poverty, Hunger, Polarization,*
27 *Inclusion, and More)*

28
29 The 2023-2024 Fiscal Year brought a change in leadership to the Seminary. Rev. Neil Blair '80 retired as
30 President on December 31, 2023, and President Jay Simmons, formerly Vice President of Institutional
31 Advancement, took the helm at the start of 2024. In addition, Saint Paul Board of Trustees' Chair Dr. Amy
32 Hogan stepped down as Board Chair, with Ms. Sharon Cleaver assuming the position until the end of June
33 2024. Our current strategic plan is set to conclude within the coming year. Consequently, the Board of
34 Trustees formed a task force several months ago to prepare the next iteration of our strategic plan.
35 Members of the Seminary's Executive Leadership Team are now working with faculty and staff to refine the
36 draft scripted by the task force. These efforts will continue over the next few months until we have a
37 document ready for review by the Board of Trustees. While we are still too early in this effort to comment
38 on any specific initiatives, the plan ultimately endorsed by the Board will guide all our efforts for the next
39 several years. Therefore, this effort is critical in defining how we ensure that Saint Paul remains a vital and
40 vigorous Seminary committed to preparing our students for creative and innovative ministry.

41
42 For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Saint Paul Course of Study (COS) School educated 250 individual students,
43 including 79 new students, with approximately 600 registrations and offering 46 classes. Serving 31
44 Conferences, 89 Districts, 116 Full Time and 126 Part-Time Licensed Local Pastors comprised these
45 registrations. Seventy percent of these students are taking more than one course. To help offset student
46 costs, twenty percent of all students received aid from their conference or church. COS School continues
47 to attract a diverse student body. One hundred eighty-eight students ranged in age from 30 to 65, and 62
48 students ranged in age from 66 to 82. Students self-identified across four racial/ethnic groups. Fifty-two
49 percent were male, and forty-eight percent were female. Many COS School students serve more than one
50 church, many rural, with a few dozen students serving three or more churches. We helped 23 students

1 finish the 20-course program this year, issuing them certificates of completion. With approval from GBHEM,
2 the school has continued its course offerings in both asynchronous and synchronous online formats.
3 Utilizing this online format, we reached students in 28 states. We continue to offer online registration
4 completed by the student with the ability to access their student account through Populi as used by our
5 Seminary students. COS also uses the same learning platform, Moodle, as our Seminary students. By
6 implementing the Course of Study School into Populi, these students share the same benefits as the
7 Seminary, allowing them to participate in the Saint Paul experience. They have full access to the Seminary
8 library on campus and online, with several required readings accessible as an eBook. We have invited COS
9 School students to join our Saint Paul School of Theology Weekly Chapel Services and Spiritual Formation
10 gatherings and other Saint Paul events.

11
12 Saint Paul is a financially healthy Seminary. We operate with a balanced budget, no debt, and an
13 endowment that is 9-10 times the size of our annual expenses. Sustainability has been our focus over the
14 past six years, and we have achieved our goal. Investments in our future bring exciting new opportunities
15 for our students, staff, and faculty. As always, we continue to be grateful for donations from the community
16 that provide technology, scholarships, and evolving academic programs to students. Our significant
17 technological investments have allowed us to maintain a hybrid educational delivery model, providing a
18 flexible working arrangement for our students.

19
20 We are continuing to enhance our partnership with Zoom and Neat. We now have Neat Bars & Neat Boards
21 in all our classrooms. In addition, during this last year, we implemented a Neat Board in Harris Chapel on
22 our Oklahoma Campus. We also have Neat Boards in multiple common areas to encourage ad-hoc use of
23 the technology for breakout groups and other miscellaneous meetings between our two campuses and our
24 remote students. One of the best features of this technology is its ability to receive automatic real-time over-
25 the-air feature upgrades. Zoom & Neat continue enhancing our learning environment by rolling out new
26 enhancements, including enhanced whiteboarding, noise cancellation, and AI features. Our Neat
27 equipment continuously monitors several environmental factors within our classrooms: air quality,
28 temperature, humidity, VOC, and CO2, as well as being able to tell if the classrooms are occupied and how
29 many individuals are in the room. We can also monitor the audio/video quality and network connectivity in
30 each of our classrooms, as well as the connection quality for all remote students attending the class. We
31 are excited about the additional enhancements that will come to our classrooms from Neat and Zoom over
32 this next year.

33
34 Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover
35 more and answer the call. Your advocacy for the Seminary and generous financial support have been vital
36 in realizing our accomplishments. Many thanks for the innumerable ways you have helped Saint Paul. Your
37 prayers and actions on behalf of the Seminary are a blessing to all of us.

38
39 Jay K. Simmons, President

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

40 Southern Methodist University (SMU) has served as a nonsectarian institution of higher learning since its
41 founding in 1911 by the citizens of Dallas and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. SMU's mission is
42 to expand knowledge through research and teaching and to serve as an igniter and facilitator of growth in
43 Dallas and North Texas. With continued Methodist representation on the Board of Trustees and by
44 welcoming students of all faiths, SMU is reaching a higher level of accomplishment and global recognition

1 as shaping world changers. Consistent with the University's appreciation of our Wesleyan heritage, SMU
2 voluntarily submits this report to the Rio Texas Annual Conference.

4 **Students, faculty, and staff**

5 SMU continues to attract academically excellent and diverse students. The Class of 2027 comprises 1,592
6 new first-year and 283 new transfer students. For the 2023-24 academic year, 7,115 undergraduates and
7 4,727 graduate students make up the total student population of nearly 12,000, representing all 50 states
8 and 87 countries. 56% of them are from other states, 41% are Texans and 3% are international students.
9 Once they graduate, they will become Mustangs for life, joining 136,000 alumni worldwide and 61,000 in
10 DFW.

11
12 SMU's annual economic impact on the Dallas metro area exceeds \$7 billion. Our faculty members, graduate
13 students, and even undergraduates conduct research that enhances our region and world. The White
14 House and U.S. Department of Commerce have selected SMU to lead a federally funded initiative for
15 economic development in the semiconductor supply chain. The Texoma Semiconductor Hub is the only
16 one of its kind in Texas among 31 hubs nationwide.

18 **Comprehensive capital campaign and research funding**

19 SMU's collective vision for the future of the University and Dallas is propelled by the University's
20 comprehensive campaign: *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow*. As of March 2024, donors have
21 contributed over \$1.288 billion to date toward this multiyear \$1.5 billion goal to attract and support
22 outstanding students and faculty, explore new fields and cutting-edge technologies, and positively impact
23 Dallas and the world beyond.

24
25 Strengthening SMU's position as an institution of academic and athletic distinction is the upcoming
26 transition into the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), where SMU athletic teams will compete against some
27 of the country's most academically focused colleges and universities. The heightened prestige and visibility
28 from participating in the ACC will also bolster the University's academic priority of becoming a Research
29 One (R1) institution in the Carnegie Classification system.

30
31 For 2023, SMU reported \$59.7 million in research expenditure which included external funding for domestic
32 and global research. Current funding agencies include the National Science Foundation, National Institutes
33 of Health, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Energy, National Institute of Justice, Cancer
34 Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), Google, and Toyota USA Foundation.

36 **Rankings**

37 SMU continues to receive strong recognition and high rankings among prestigious reviewers, including:

- 38 • Top 20% best national universities by *U.S. News & World Report* (2024). Also, first among
39 Dallas-area universities, a Best Value School, one of the Best Colleges for Veterans, and a Top
40 Performer on Social Mobility among national universities by USNWR (2024).

- Among the nation’s best institutions for undergraduate education in *The Princeton Review’s* “Best 389 Colleges” and its “2024 Best Southwest Colleges.”
- Top 5% best nationwide colleges (68 out of 2,238) by College Factual (2024). Also, top 1% of the U.S. best liberal arts/sciences and humanities schools for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree and among the highest-paid graduates across a range of fields.
- “Higher research activity” as classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- And Perkins Chapel at No. 10 on the list of the nation’s most beautiful college churches and chapels by College Rank.

Perkins School of Theology

The SMU Board of Trustees has authorized Perkins School of Theology to offer a new hybrid format for its Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Ministry degrees. Starting this fall, the new modality will ensure that Perkins continues to deliver the outstanding personal graduate education that is their hallmark and allow additional flexibility for students who may not reside in Dallas.

As Bishop Michael McKee serves as dean of the Perkins School ad interim, a committee has been convened to search for the school’s next dean. The committee includes members of SMU’s Board of Trustees; the Perkins Executive Board; faculty, staff, and students from Perkins; and key University stakeholders.

SMU remains grateful for the enduring work of our Perkins School of Theology in the instruction and training of clergy for all Wesleyan traditions and other denominations. We ask for your prayers and continued support as we strive to further our mission to make a positive impact on the world around us.

Warm regards,
R. Gerald Turner
President, SMU

SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ***FOR INFORMATION ONLY***

Southwestern University continues to rank among the best liberal arts institutions in the nation. In 2023, *U.S. News & World Report’s* Best Colleges rankings ranked the University 89th among national liberal arts colleges and second among national undergraduate liberal arts colleges in Texas. Southwestern also ranked 124th nationally and second in Texas in the social mobility category, which measures how well schools graduated students who received federal Pell Grants. Recently, the *New York Times Magazine’s* College-Access Index has named SU the leading university in Texas for economic diversity among its students. Our commitment to preparing students for successful careers is also evident, as The Princeton Review ranks us first in Texas and 5th in the nation for Best Career Services.

Southwestern had a record 6,585 applicants competing for a spot, an increase of 18.5% over last year. The University ultimately welcomed 403 first-year students for a total enrollment of 1,459 in fall 2023. The

1 acceptance rate fell to 39%, and Southwestern also met its academic and diversity goals, with more than
2 25% of incoming students identifying as Hispanic for the fourth year in a row.

3 Our world-class faculty of scholar-teachers celebrated a number of accomplishments in 2023. Naomi Reed
4 (anthropology) co-hosted an eight-episode The Texas Newsroom podcast *Sugar Land*, which explores the
5 narrative surrounding the Sugar Land 95 and the local school district's plan to construct a school atop the
6 gravesite. Michael Cooper (music) published the first monograph on Margaret Bonds and her music titled
7 "Margaret Bonds: The Montgomery Variations and Du Bois Credo," the book was published by Cambridge
8 University Press as part of the New Cambridge Music Handbooks series. Fumiko Futamura (mathematics)
9 authored a successful grant proposal for the Japan Foundation's Japan-America Society Capacity Building
10 Grant Program, securing \$26,625 to support Japan-America Society of Greater Austin's programs and staff,
11 which provide Japanese classes, cultural programming, and events in the Austin area.

12
13 Our students received several honors and recognitions. In a remarkable feat of academic excellence, 100%
14 of the sixteen 2023 medical and dental school applicants have been accepted. Thirty-five students were
15 inducted into Southwestern's chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. Two students were awarded
16 scholarships from the Texas United Methodist College Association, and one student received the Benjamin
17 Gilman International Scholarship. Two recent graduates were selected as 2023 Fulbright Award winners.

18
19 In athletics, the Pirate football team joined the Southern Athletic Association (SAA) in fall 2023, and all 20
20 men's and women's varsity sports will be making the conference change beginning in the 2025-2026
21 season. Southwestern finished second for the SCAC President's Trophy. The Pirates garnered 96 all-
22 conference selections, including 56 first-team selections, 19 second-team selections, and 15 honorable
23 mention selections, as well as two SCAC Coach of the Year awards. The Pirates also earned three All-
24 America honors in 2023 and five All-Region selections. Finally, Men's Golf earned an NCAA Tournament
25 bid.

26
27 In 2023, Southwestern hosted the Roy and Margaret Shilling Lecture featuring keynote speaker Kevin
28 Young, a respected scholar and current *New Yorker* magazine poetry editor. The University held the third
29 annual SUnity Day, a cross-campus event focused on unifying our community and hosted Ainsley Carry,
30 the University of British Columbia's vice president for students, who gave the keynote address "Disputed
31 Memorials on Campus: How Universities Respond." More than 195 students, mentored by 50 faculty and
32 staff, led panels, presented posters, gave performances, and set up exhibitions during the 24th annual
33 Research and Creative Works Symposium.

34 **Ratification of Trustees**

35
36 As stated in the University By-Laws, "Conference trustees are nominated by the University's board of
37 trustees, upon recommendation to the board's trusteeship committee, and elected by their respective
38 conferences." Conference confirmation of "trustees at large" is no longer required by the By-Laws.

39
40 There are no trustees requiring ratification by the Rio Texas Conference.

41 **Conclusion**

42
43 I would like to take this opportunity to personally invite you to visit Southwestern and experience, in person,
44 our vibrant intellectual community.

45
46 Respectfully yours,
47 Laura E. Skandera Trombley
48 President

PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1 Perkins celebrates our vital connections with the Rio Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist
2 Church.

- 3 • Eight (8) students affiliated with the Rio Texas Annual Conference are enrolled at Perkins, 6
4 Master of Divinity students, 1 Master of Theological Studies student and 1 non-major student.
- 5 • During the 2023-24 academic year, 5 students from the Rio Texas Annual Conference received
6 funding from the PACE (Perkins Annual Conference Endowment) grant, with the average
7 overall financial aid award per student totaling \$3,147.
- 8 • Three (3) Perkins students from the Rio Texas Annual Conference currently are taking part in
9 internship.

10
11 **Enrollment Update**

12 Enrollment at Perkins for the 2023-24 academic year totaled 293 students. The Houston-Galveston
13 Extension Program, in its sixth year of providing a combination of online and residential classes leading to
14 the M.Div. and M.A.M. degrees, totaled 87 students during the 2023-24 academic year.

15 **Institutional Highlights**

- 16 • The SMU Board of Trustees voted at its December 2023 meeting to authorize Perkins School of
17 Theology to offer a new hybrid format for its Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Ministry
18 degrees. The new modality, open to those enrolling in Fall 2024, is designed to accommodate
19 students from across the country, providing them with the flexibility to join the Perkins community
20 while minimizing the need for extensive on-campus presence. The program combines a majority
21 of online coursework with occasional immersive experiences. The Board of Trustees also
22 approved new curriculum requirements for four of Perkins' degree programs: the Master of
23 Divinity, Master of Arts in Ministry, Master of Theological Studies and Master of Sacred Music.
- 24 • Dr. Elizabeth G. Loba, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, has convened a
25 committee – chaired by Dr. Peter Moore – to search for the next dean of Perkins School of
26 Theology. The committee includes members of SMU's Board of Trustees; the Perkins Executive
27 Board; faculty, staff and students from Perkins; and key university stakeholders who interface
28 with the school.
- 29 • Christina Rhodes, who has served a variety of roles in development and enrollment management
30 at SMU since 2017, has been appointed Assistant Dean of Enrollment Management at Perkins.
31 As Assistant Dean, Rhodes will play a pivotal role in crafting a vision for Perkins' recruitment,
32 admissions and scholarship aid.
- 33 • Dr. Frederick Aquino joined the Perkins faculty as Professor of Systematic Theology in August 2023. He
34 is a noted scholar and theologian who previously served on the faculty of Abilene Christian University
35 since 1998. Dr. Aquino received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from SMU in 2000.
- 36 • Dr. Elias Lopez was named director of the Perkins Doctor of Ministry program in June 2023. He is
37 a 2018 graduate of the Perkins D.Min. program and earned his Master of Divinity from Perkins in
38 2010. Dr. Lopez also is director of the Perkins Intern Program.
- 39 • The Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Pace III (M.Div. '82) and Rev. Dr. Clayton Oliphint (M.Div. '88, D.Min. '96) were
40 selected as recipients of the 2023 Perkins Distinguished Alumnus/a Award. The award recognizes
41 Perkins graduates who have demonstrated effectiveness and integrity in service to the church,
42 continuing support for the goals of Perkins and Southern Methodist University, outstanding service to the
43 community and exemplary character. Dr. Pace has served as Senior Pastor at St. Luke's UMC in
44 Houston since 2006, and Dr. Oliphint has served as Senior Pastor at First UMC Richardson since 2001.
45 They were honored at a banquet on the SMU campus on Nov. 13.

- 1 • Eleven congregations were selected for the third and final cohort of the Lilly Endowment-funded
2 Testimony HQ initiative to develop thriving congregations through the practice of testimony as
3 community engagement. These congregations were selected from applications submitted from
4 churches within a 350-mile radius of Dallas. The cohort congregations will each receive up to
5 \$5,000 in grant funding to support their Testimony HQ work from January through December
6 2024.
- 7 • More than 3,500 people visited Bridwell Library in April 2023 to view the Codex Sassoon, one of
8 the most important and influential works of global religious and cultural history. More than one
9 thousand years old, the codex is the earliest and most complete Hebrew Bible. Carbon-dating
10 indicates it was created in the 10th century, but the book spent most of its existence out of the
11 public eye. Viewers of the exhibit were also invited to attend Codex Fest – a series of lectures,
12 music and other events and activities on the Perkins campus organized by Bridwell staff and
13 others.
- 14 • The Office of the Provost recognized Dr. James Lee, Associate Professor of the History of Early
15 Christianity, as a recipient of this year’s Provost Research Fellowship – a \$15,000 cash award –
16 designed to provide research support to SMU’s outstanding scholars during the current academic
17 year.
- 18 • The installation of the Caren and Vin Prothro new chancel organ in Perkins Chapel – a project
19 that has been ongoing over the last two years – has been completed by the Ortloff Company of
20 Needham, Mass. This extraordinary instrument was built in 1927 by E.M. Skinner, the country’s
21 premiere organ builder at the time, and its color palette is absolutely unique in this area. The
22 organ is doubly significant because of its pristine condition (never altered in 100 years) and first-
23 rate restoration. Its original home was Fourth Presbyterian Church, Manhattan NYC.
- 24 • We are saddened to announce the death of the Rev. Dr. Charles Aaron, co-director of the Perkins
25 Intern Program, who passed away unexpectedly on November 29. Dr. Aaron received his Master
26 of Divinity from Perkins in 1985. He began serving as an adjunct professor at Perkins in 2002
27 before joining the staff full-time in 2017.

28
29 The highlights listed above are reflective of the vibrant engagement of Perkins faculty, staff and students.
30 Our mission is to equip persons for faithful leadership and Christian ministry in a changing church and
31 society; to educate those seeking a deeper understanding of the Christian faith; and to strengthen the
32 church, academy and world through service, scholarship and advocacy. We thank our many colleagues,
33 friends and alumni in the Rio Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church for your generous
34 support, including referrals of prospective students.

35 Grace and peace,

36
37 Bishop Michael McKee
38 Leighton K. Farrell Endowed Dean, ad interim
39 Perkins School of Theology

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

40 For more than 150 years, United Theological Seminary has prepared men and women to serve as faithful
41 and fruitful Christian leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the
42 seminary served 547 students, representing 36 states, 20 countries, and 43 denominations, with 38% of

1 students identifying as United Methodist. United in Christ, the student body is a multi-ethnic, multi-racial
2 community that is 43% African American, 27% White, 18% international, 9% Hispanic, and 2% Asian or
3 Pacific Islander.* During the 2022-2023 academic year, 120 graduates completed their programs.
4

5 **Houses of Study**

6 United's academic programs include seven Houses of Study for denominational, church renewal, and/or
7 language- and culture-based ministry, including online Spanish and Korean houses of study. These houses
8 of study have enrolled over 120 new master's students in the United States and around the world.
9

10 **Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center**

11 In 2023, the Bishop Bruce Ough Innovation Center, directed by Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, engaged more
12 than 5,000 participants through 64 resourcing events and activities. The Center partnered with the Black
13 Methodists for Church Renewal Laity Advocacy Committee to conduct the 2023 Laity Leadership Institution.
14 The Center also launched a *Dynamite Prayer* movement, based on the guidebook *Dynamite Prayer: A 28*
15 *Day Experiment* (Invite Resources, 2022) by Rev. Kibbey and Rev. Dr. Rosario Picardo. Multiple United
16 Methodist conferences and more than 90 congregations across denominations committed to be part of a
17 Dynamite Prayer Wave and received resourcing on the practice of "breakthrough prayer."
18

19 **New Faces at United**

20 Over the past year, the seminary welcomed several new members to the United community. Bishop James
21 Swanson, most recently bishop of the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church, was
22 installed as United Methodist Bishop-in-Residence. Dr. Pauline Paris Buisch and Rev. Dr. Xavier L.
23 Johnson joined the faculty as Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Assistant Professor of Preaching
24 and Black Church Studies, respectively, and Dr. Eliseo Mejia came on board as the Academic Oversight
25 Officer for the Hispanic House of Study.
26

27 **Reducing Student Debt**

28 Finances shouldn't stand in the way of a seminary education. That's why United has launched the Fresh
29 Wind: Where the Spirit Takes Flight campaign to add \$10 million to the scholarship endowment, which will
30 dramatically increase the seminary's capacity to provide scholarships to students for many years to come.
31 As of January 2024, the seminary was more than 70% toward the \$10 million goal.
32

33 Kent Millard, President
34

35 * *Student data represent unduplicated headcount enrollment for the 2022-2023 academic year.*
36 *Demographic figures represent those who responded.*

GOLDEN AGE HOME ***FOR INFORMATION ONLY***

37 Located in Lockhart, TX, Golden Age Home Assisted Living (GAH) provides compassionate, faith-based
38 care within a supportive community setting. As a non-profit organization, Golden Age Home is dedicated to
39 offering personalized assisted living services, ensuring a high quality of life for our residents. Our
40 commitment to dignity, respect, and holistic care positions us as the best choice for senior living in Central
41 Texas. Our mission has always been clear: to create a nurturing environment for seniors that combines
42 health care, balanced nutrition, and engaging activities within a Christian framework, all at an affordable

1 price. Since achieving our nonprofit status in 1964, Golden Age Home has unwaveringly served our
2 community with dignity and excellence.

3
4 It's an exciting time for our organization. Last year, the Board of Directors participated in training to improve
5 the governance of the Board of Directors as we prepare for the next steps in the future of Golden Age
6 Home. The future includes:

- 7 1. Grow our Board of Directors by welcoming 3-5 new members over the next 18 months.
- 8 2. Preparation and implementation of the 2030 Strategic Plan.
- 9 3. Develop and construct a new Assisted Living Home to also include specialized Memory Care on
10 the current property.
- 11 4. Capital Campaign fundraiser for the new home.

12
13 Serving on the Board of Directors is a great way to make a difference in your community and help nonprofits
14 achieve their mission. If the things listed above excite you, we invite you to apply for a seat on our Board
15 of Directors. Join us and make a real difference in the lives of seniors!

16
17 The Golden Age Home (GAH) originated from a dream shared by the Lockhart community and members
18 of the First United Methodist Church of Lockhart in the late 1950s. Since opening its doors in November
19 1960, GAH has been a cornerstone of the Lockhart, TX community. Nearly sixty years after its inception,
20 GAH remains dedicated to serving the community, providing housing and support to approximately 40
21 residents between the ages of 50 and over 100 in our independent and assisted living accommodations.
22 GAH maintains a value system that emphasizes treating each individual with integrity, dignity, respect,
23 compassion, empathy, dedication, and loving-kindness. Today, GAH is guided by a volunteer Board of
24 Directors and Executive Director, Nicole Burnett.

25
26 Golden Age Home is approved for the Advanced 5-Star Program as a District Advanced giving.

27 **#1331 Golden Age Home**

PROVIDENCE PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

28 Bishop and the members of the Rio Texas Conference, thank you on behalf of our Board of Directors, staff,
29 and those working hard to achieve their own personal level of success. Your dedication in partnership with
30 the ministry of Providence Place is immeasurable.

31
32 The year of 2024 marks 129 years of service; all possible because of your loyal and faithful support from
33 individual donors and United Methodist Churches throughout the Rio Texas Conference. Every day, we
34 have the wonderful opportunity to see God's hand in our ministries as the lives of women, children and
35 families are transformed.

36
37 Providence Place experienced many transitions in during the past year. The Board of Directors made a
38 bittersweet decision to eliminate residential services and sell the property located at 6487 Whitby Road.
39 The decision was made due to trends within the residential services community and the growing cost of
40 those services. The agency relocated to 326 Sterling Browning Road in February 2024. The move also
41 allowed us to innovate how services are provided.

1 Providence Place is redefining how services are provided to victims of crime and trauma survivors.
2 Providence Place strives to develop programs that are culturally competent and have transformational
3 community impact; redefining how clients receive service will, without doubt, generate immeasurable
4 impact. Providence Place provides Trauma Informed comprehensive services to survivors of complex
5 trauma and victims of crime including but not limited to intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse
6 and professionals of other non-profits.

7
8 The relationship between Providence Place and The Rio Texas Conference, along with individual churches,
9 has been lifechanging in so many ways. Together, we have helped young women facing unplanned
10 pregnancies, provided a home for countless young adults, offered hope and restoration for survivors of
11 complex trauma, and created loving homes for children in foster care. What makes our programs unique is
12 our ability to serve women, children and families using a trauma informed care model. This commitment to
13 women and families started with our founder, Madame Volino, when she first sought help from Travis Park
14 Methodist Church in San Antonio and changed her life from a brothel owner to a sanctuary for women and
15 young children in need.

16
17 Without a doubt, churches and their congregants have played a significant role in the success of Providence
18 Place for 128 years; something we will never forget. I encourage you to call to arrange a speaker for your
19 congregation or church group, and request offering materials for an annual church offering. We couldn't
20 continue these ministries without you and we would love to come and share the stories of Providence Place!
21 If we could be a resource to you, contact our Mission Advancement Team at (210) 696-2410 or at
22 mission.advancement@provplace.org. Also, please visit our website at www.provplace.org to learn more
23 about these special ministries and to hear first-hand stories from those we have served.

24
25 Respectfully,
26 Dr. Judith Bell, President and CEO

METHODIST HEALTHCARE MINISTRIES
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

27 The following are individuals elected as members of the Board of Directors for the 2024-2025 Board year
28 (June to June). These names are submitted for election by the Annual Conference:

- 29
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rev. James Amerson | Barbara Lyons |
| Karen A. Angelini | Edwin Miles |
| Mike Bacon | Sam O'Krent |
| Douglas W. Becker | Kerwin L. Overby |
| Raymond Chacon, Ph.D. | Pastor Candice Parry |
| Erica Benites Giese | Erika Prosper |
| Rev. Greg Hackett | Jacqueline Pugh, M.D. |
| Susan Hellums | Jim Rice |
| Rudyard Hilliard, M.D. | Thomas Sanders |
| Ashley Hixon | Erica Sosa, Ph.D. |
| John E. Hornbeak | John Stoll, M.D. |
| Alan C. Kramer | Rev. Virgilio Vazquez-Garza |

Pendleton B. Wickersham, M.D.

1 Ex Officio Members with Vote:

2 MHM Board Chair: Michael Porter MHM

3 Board Chair-Elect: Alan Kramer

4 MHM Immediate Past Chair: Lavonne Garrison

5 Bishop of the Rio Texas Conference: Bishop Robert Schnase

6 Assistant to the Episcopal Office: Rev. Dr. Robert Lopez

7 District Superintendent of Las Misiones District: Rev. Dr. Robert Ortiz

8 Two Persons Representing Transformation Communities Vision Team:

9 • Rev. Javier Leyva

10 • Rev. Cynthia Engstrom

11 **Submitted by Methodist Healthcare Ministries**

TEXAS METHODIST FOUNDATION

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

12 Texas Methodist Foundation is deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve congregations, ministries,
13 communities, and church leaders across Texas and New Mexico. In 2023, TMF honored David McCaskill's
14 retirement after 24 years of service as Senior Vice President of Loans and Investment Services and
15 welcomed Chris Miller to the foundation as Vice President of Lending. TMF invests all its resources to
16 strengthen the church's mission in partnership with investors, philanthropists, borrowers, and leaders,
17 creating a cycle of generosity. TMF deeply appreciates its partnership with the Rio Texas Annual
18 Conference of the United Methodist Church, serving its congregations and leaders toward bringing about
19 the loving world God Imagines. We appreciate the opportunity to report the ways we served Methodists this
20 past year.

2023 Year in Review

Within the Rio Texas Annual Conference

- 25 • Loans to churches in the Rio Texas Annual Conference totaled \$43.9 million at the end of 2023.
- 26 • Churches and agencies, not including individuals, within the Rio Texas Annual Conference had
27 \$52.3 million invested in the TMF Loan Fund.

Throughout Texas and New Mexico

- 30 • As of December 31, 2023, total assets under management by TMF were \$684.8 million.
- 31 • TMF Loan Fund investments ended the year at \$315.6 million, and the loan portfolio was \$284.1
32 million.
- 33 • TMF's philanthropic impact totaled \$10.4 million in 2023:
 - 34 ○ TMF received \$4.6M in new charitable gifts which supports churches and nonprofits
 - 35 across TX & NM as well as TMF's Grants and Learning & Innovation Ministries
 - 36 ○ TMF's Grants ministry distributed \$1.5M to 76 churches and nonprofits in Texas and New
37 Mexico, serving over 316,000 individuals.

- 1 ○ In addition to our Grants ministry, TMF distributed \$4.28M from donor directed
- 2 endowments and donor-advised funds to support churches and nonprofits.
- 3 • TMF's Leadership Ministry was renamed Learning & Innovation (L&I) to reflect how it supports
- 4 and emboldens leaders across the Methodist ecosystem, creating space for new learning and
- 5 inspiring innovation, serving over 500 leaders in 20 groups and 40 Learning & Innovation events.
- 6

7 **TMF Board Members**

8 TMF Board members previously elected by the Rio Texas Annual Conference include:

- 9 • Mr. Nathan Johnson, Jr., Layperson, serving through 2025
- 10 • Rev. Dr. Robert Lopez, Clergy, serving through 2025
- 11 • Rev. Taylor Fuerst, Clergy, serving through 2026
- 12
- 13

14 Respectfully Submitted,
15 Rev. Lisa Greenwood, President