Part III

AWARDS, REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS

CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION AWARDS

THE HARRY DENMAN EVANGELISM AWARD
(*The Foundation for Evangelism)*

The Harry Denman Evangelism Awards honors a United Methodist lay and clergy person each year who has exhibited unusual and outstanding effectiveness in evangelism by faithfully carrying out our mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." This year, these prestigious awards are presented to:

Michelle Factor
(Killearn Lakes UMC, Tallahassee)

Michelle felt a calling to evangelism for years as she served as the Evangelism Chairperson, lifting up the value of evangelism, organizing community outreach events and creating publicity for the church. "She was the champion for evangelism when the evangelism budget was less than the budget for Sunday donuts and kept asking if it was more important for the church to grow disciples or waistlines!" writes pastor Jeremy Rebman. The congregation's leaders came to recognize the family-filled community as their "mission field" and hired Michelle to be their first Director of Children's Ministry.

As the Director of Children's Ministry, she has been able to reach children with the love of Jesus, leading many children to first-time commitments to Jesus. She approaches her ministry not as if she is running a program, but looking for opportunities to share the Gospel with as many people as possible. The children's ministry participation more than doubled in the first year and has seen consistent growth ever since. As a result entire families are coming to Christ and to Church for the first time. Michelle has played a significant role in helping Killearn Lakes UMC receive 29 persons on profession of faith in 2007 and increase their average worship attendance by 30% or 98 persons.

Rev. Chan Young Jang
(Korean UMC of South Florida)

When Chan Young was appointed to KUMC, their average attendance of 72 was made up largely of older adults. Now, four years later, the weekly worshiping congregation has quadrupled in size to 330 and is filled with people of all ages.

In Chan Young's life, prayer is foundational. All group leaders gather at the church Tuesday through Saturday at 6:00 AM for an hour of prayer. Chang Young possesses a driving passion to reach people for Christ – all people. Each of the 30 plus small groups has an international mission that they support through prayer, offerings and mission trips. Recently, KUMC started English language worship for their non-Korean neighbors and they are exploring offering a worship service in Spanish. Chan Young's strong but gentle leadership has played a key role in the Korean UMC having 56 professions of faith in 2007 and their worship attendance increasing by 100 persons.

Debbie McLeod, his district superintendent writes: "I would have to say that it is the humility and prayerfulness of Chan Young that is most impressive to me. He is an outstanding preacher, leader, teacher and worship leader. But it is the room he makes available in his heart and life for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide him that says volumes to me about the character and faith of this amazingly effective pastor."

GRINDHEIM-SIMS EVANGELISM AWARD

The Grindheim-Sims Award, established by Dr. Rose Sims, honors the memory and ministries of Oscar Grindheim, James Sims, Sr., and her husband, James Sims, Jr. The Grindheim-Sims Award is given annually to the pastor of a church of less than 250 members who has distinguished him or herself through effective evangelization and church growth. The primary emphasis of this award is the number of persons received on profession of faith and an increase in average worship attendance. This year the recipient of this prestigious award goes to:

Rev. Louis Telcy
(La Piscine Mission, Naples)

Last year, La Piscine Mission received 51 persons on professions of faith and increased their weekly worship attendance for the year by 50 persons – an increase of 77%! This means that a new person came to Christ for every 1.27 people that worshiped at La Piscine Mission during January of 2007. The pastoral leader of this amazingly effective congregation is Louis Telcy.

Born in Haiti and narrowly escaping authorities with his life as a youth, due to speaking out for democracy, Louis came to America with little more than his faith. He is now a graduate of Duke Divinity School and the pastor of La Piscine since 2006. Louis led the mission to relocate from Cornerstone to Golden Gate in order to be nearer their Haitian target audience. They have a morning service and a Sunday evening service to meet the needs of people who do shift work. He leads his congregation in acts of servant evangelism where they express God's love to people in need without expecting anything in return. They help persons with translation, transportation, and in whatever ways they can to assist those new to the USA experience the love of Christ in action. Louis is creative and intentional in reaching out to persons to connect them with Christ and the La Piscine community of faith.

"My primary focus as a pastor is to offer Christ in ways that people can understand." writes Louis. "We are committed to embracing the apostolic function of the church, to embracing the Great Commission where Jesus commands us to carry forth the Gospel."

REPORTS

CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

THE CONFERENCE TABLE

The purpose of the Conference Table is to provide a setting in which persons with diverse perspectives can come together to discuss pertinent, problematic, and visionary issues. The Conference Table has become an important part of our conference culture. The CT process has helped cultivate the opportunity for voices to be heard that might not otherwise have access to our Annual Conference session or to the established committees and agencies of the Annual Conference. Styles of presentation include teaching sessions, specific proposals to be brought to the next annual conference, and free-flowing discussion that helps ideas to germinate that then get referred to task forces or agencies. All persons are welcome to the Conference Table. Information regarding the sessions is found on the conference website.

This past conference year one session that focused on older adult ministries, was held. A second session that was to focus on ministry with young adults was canceled.

The nineteenth session is scheduled for June 17, 2008. This session will focus on the issues that are to be addressed in an update of the document "In Defense of Creation" that was originally presented to the United Methodist Church by the Council of Bishops in 1985. The three key issues will be the inter-relationship between care of creation, global poverty and health issues, and peace-making.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE TABLE 18
Beyond 50, Living It Well

The purpose of the 18th Conference Table held December 1, 2007, at St. Mark's in Ocala, was to raise awareness of key issues in aging well, to motivate participants to action, and to provide resources for local churches to address the issues. The "Christians in Action" drama troop from St. Mark's presented an interpretive skit during the opening worship. Bishop Timothy Whitaker shared some thoughts based on Psalm 71, both for those who are "beyond 50" and for those who are not.

The Conference Table convener, Dr. Stephen Sapp, professor and chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Miami and keynote speaker at Tapestry II, opened the first session in which participants took a look at end-of-life issues that get more difficult to resolve as medical advances change our dying. Steve Petherbridge, a staff member at

New Covenant UMC in The Villages, directed participants' focus to financial considerations and practices that should be addressed before entering retirement. At a time when the lifespan is increasing, financial security is a difficult target to achieve without careful forethought and planning. The third session of the day, "The Endless Spiritual Journey," was opened with questions posed by the Beyond 50 Ministries Task Team chairperson, Nancy Metz, from Hope UMC in Cape Coral. Phyllis Rabb, laywoman at Temple Terrace UMC, followed with suggestions for deepening our spiritual walks.

By the end of the day, participants had been in table discussions about some difficult issues that come with living beyond 50, looking at them both personally and from the perspective of local churches. The Beyond 50 Ministries Task Team, formed in 2003, plans to further these discussions at its Tapestry III conference in February 2010.

Nancy Metz, Beyond 50 Ministries Chairperson

PREVIEW OF CONFERENCE TABLE 19
"In Defense of Creation II"
June 17, 2008, Trinity United Methodist Church, Gainesville

At its 2007 spring meeting, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church voted to revisit their influential episcopal pastoral letter and study, "In Defense of Creation," originally drafted in 1985. Twenty-three years later, Bishop Timothy Whitaker of The Florida Conference was elected as the chair for the development of a new pastoral letter, "In Defense of Creation II."

The first hearing of "In Defense of Creation II" was held in Washington D.C., Oct. 23-24, 2007, chaired by Bishop Charlene Kammerer of the Virginia Conference. Bishop Whitaker and three members of the Florida Conference Global Mission and Justice Committee, the Rev. Chris McNeill, Anna Peacock Preston, and Marion McMillan, were also present.

The themes to be presented in the letter are:

- Caring for Creation;
- Global Poverty and Health; and
- Peace Making.

What is unique about the project is that annual conferences are being asked to collect evidence and responses from United Methodist members which will be included in the body of the document. Hearings will be held in annual conferences around the world. The pastoral letter will be released in 2010. Therefore, the Florida Conference is invited to participate in the research, study, discussion, reflection, and the actions of this letter.

Bishop Whitaker invites local church members, lay and clergy, to a conference table to be held June 17, 2008, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Gainesville, Fla.

During the day-long event, there will be presentations by persons who will interpret these complex subjects even as we theologically and spiritually reflect upon them for our churches and communities. As of this printing, Dr. Nigel Smith, a professor of Geography at the University of Florida and a member at Trinity, will be addressing on "Caring for Creation." Howard Morland, a journalist who speaks out against the continued presence of thousands of nuclear warheads among nations, including the United States which has the greatest number, will speak on "Peace Making." A third presenter is being sought to interpret "Global Poverty and Health."

Participants will be invited to respond to each of the presentations. Comments will be recorded and included in the research of the final document. Live internet video will connect those who cannot attend and allow them to participate by long distance.

Bishop Whitaker looks forward to all Florida United Methodists participating in the development of IDOC2 by being present at the June 17 Conference Table and other hearings that will be planned throughout the Florida Conference between now and 2010. The themes will be lifted up at the 2009, 2010, and 2011 Florida Annual Conference sessions.

Dr. Lawrence A. Rankin
Director, Conference Mission & Justice Ministries

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

What a joy it is to serve the mission of Jesus Christ in the capacity of Director of Connectional Ministries for another year! I continue to be in awe of the way in which the Holy Spirit works to invigorate and empower the creative energies of your conference ministry.

It is important to restate what the purpose of Connectional Ministries is for our new clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference. You will find Connectional Ministries, and the work of the director defined in Paragraph 607 of the 2004 Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Connectional Ministries is the "web" of responsibilities and relationships that are required for being a faithful Church in the 21st century. It includes, therefore, the host of ministries for which the conference has responsibility, including ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness; camps and retreat ministries; higher education and campus ministry; and ethnic ministries. The people of Connectional Ministries include the ministry staff of the conference and the people who serve on a variety of boards, committees, and task teams that oversee the ministries. Our responsibilities include: (1) To envision the ministries necessary to live out the mission of the church…, (2) To create and nurture relationships and connections among local, district, conference, and general church ministries, (3) To provide encouragement, coordination, and support for the ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness…for the transformation of the world, (4) To ensure the alignment of the total resources of the annual conference to its mission, (5) To develop and strengthen ethnic ministries…, and (6) To provide for the advocacy and monitoring to ensure that the church is consistent with its stated values. The role of the Director of Connectional Ministries is to be the "steward" of the vision and mission of the conference.

The mission statement of the staff of Connectional Ministries is "to partner creatively with churches and ministries in equipping world-changing disciples." What does this mean? The explanation from last year's report bears repeating: "To partner creatively' embodies our commitment to become a first source of innovative ideas and strategies for churches and ministries. We are committed to the search for and creation of relevant, Wesleyan solutions to the challenges of the 21st century Church. We understand our work as partnership because churches and ministries are the key sources for identifying the pressing issues of the day and best practices…. The phrase 'equipping world changing disciples' points to the roles of listening, informing, educating, challenging imaginations, and providing resources."

In what ways are we working to fulfill this mission?

One creative step for several of the staff was to reconnect as pastoral leaders in a voluntary capacity with a local church in Lakeland. Larry Rankin, Erik Alsgaard, Jeff Stiggins (Director of Congregational Transformation) and I have served as a pastoral team for Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church. Because of its proximity and missional outreach in its community, our team felt a strong calling to serve Wesley as a way of insuring the continuance of its ministry and to reconnect us with local church ministry in a direct way. Wesley is also providing us with a great learning experience for doing ministry with poor people. Located directly across from several shelters in Lakeland and in a very poor, multi-cultural neighborhood, we are learning a great deal about the assets and needs of struggling people. We are extremely grateful for the openness and patience of Wesley's members to this "experiment" in ministry.

Connectional Ministries takes the role of engaging in conversation around cutting edge movements in the Christian Church very seriously. To this end, we were a co-sponsor of the Brian McLaren's "Everything Must Change" conference, held February 29-March 1st. In partnership with First Baptist Church of St. Petersburg, we drew together over 300 young adults and elders, lay and clergy, non-denominational, emergent cohorts and local church representatives for a provocative conversation on the new directions that Christians are being called to take seriously. We are extremely grateful to Kelly Moore, conference staff, who helped this event become reality.

In addition, Connectional Ministries shared leadership with Congregational Transformation and the Center for Clergy Excellence to shape the training event on Passionate Worship, scheduled for April 11 through 15, involving two different sites. Designed to replace the School of Ministry and other workshops that we have done separately, it was important to establish the "Living the Methodist Way" series together.

Changes in Florida Conference Communications also reflect the mission to partner creatively with church and ministries. Under the dynamic leadership of its director, Erik Alsgaard, Communications, has undertaken several new directives in the past year.

1) The Communications Road Show – In an effort to bring resources directly to local churches, four "road shows" were planned: one in the north, one in the south, one in the north central and one in the south central areas. Each road show provided five workshops: planning for communication, Web site development, webcasting, podcasting and crisis communication. An additional road show was requested by a local church in the Jacksonville area, which was held in late March, that brought together surrounding local churches. After evaluating the road shows, plans will be made on how to continue and improve upon the concept for fall 2008 and into 2009.

2) Focus groups and surveys – In conjunction with the Florida Conference Human Resources and Benefits office, communications conducted a series of focus groups in April, seeking to learn from conference clergy how to better communicate with them. In addition, an online survey was developed and implemented in an effort to gain feedback from as many people as possible.

3) Moving data management staff under communications – Because data management and communications staff members work together on many of the same projects and share many of the same tasks, the two departments came under one "roof" Jan. 1. The result has been an increase in formal internal communications between the two departments, with both departments meeting every two weeks in staff meetings.

4) Upgrades in BrickRiver – BrickRiver is the Florida Conference's provider for the content management system that runs the conference Web site, http://www.flumc.org. In 2007 and early 2008, communications and data management staff, along with staff from the conference's Internet technology department, visited BrickRiver offices in New Hampshire for training and implementation on new modules for the Web site. This has resulted in upgrades in the conference's ability to handle online registrations, improvements in graphics capabilities and improvements in the ability to manage conference data.

Another way in which we are fulfilling our mission is through the development of the Youth and Young Adult ministries. Following the mandate of last year's annual conference session, the Young People's Network is being developed. A strong complement of youth, young adults, and workers with youth ministries are now in place and beginning to develop opportunities for local church training and mission with young people. To this end we have enlisted Kelly Minter through a special contract to work with us to get our youth and young adult ministries up and running. Her report follows in this Connectional Ministries section.

Along similar lines, I am pleased to announce that the Rev. Vance Rains now serves as our new Director of Collegiate Ministries. Vance serves in this position 30% of his time while continuing to lead the Florida State University Wesley Foundation. Vance's key responsibilities include the oversight of the current campus ministries and the development of new ministries, including both church-related and campus based ministries. You will find more information about this work in the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry report.

I want to take this opportunity to honor and to thank the Rev. Carol Sue Hutchinson, who is retiring from the staff after 15 years of service in the areas of Christian Education, children's camping, age level ministries, spiritual formation, and congregational life. Carol Sue has faithfully served Jesus Christ and the Church as a wonderful leader, trainer, and encourager in the life of our conference. She will continue to work with us in the ongoing development of the on-line learning modules that you find on the conference web-site. Carol Sue will continue to serve part-time as the pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church in Bartow, a small membership church that she is leading into new growth and witness in their community.

As we have re-organized Carol Sue's position responsibilities, we have expanded the job description of Ms. Melinda Trotti, who now carries the title of "Director of Spirituality and Justice Ministries". Melinda brings added energy to these areas, especially as the conference expands its focus on the needs of children and poverty, following another mandate of last year's annual conference to address the needs of hungry children in Florida. Melinda is taking over the areas of safe sanctuaries/child protection, developing the local church day camping movement, working with the Children's Week event held in Tallahassee each year, and relating to the Spiritual Formation Team.

Please peruse the following reports in order to receive a full view of Connectional Ministries. Our relationships are a vital web that enhances our opportunities to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

In the service of Jesus Christ,
Dr. Anne Burkholder, Director of Connectional Ministries

ADDENDUM TO THE CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES REPORT TO THE FLORIDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008

In January 2007 the Florida Conference hosted a Conference Table on Social Witness. Through a prayerful process of discernment the Conference Table developed consensus that the focus of our social witness should be children. At the 2007 Annual Conference, the Rev. Clarke Campbell-Evans presented our conference-wide initiative and it was embraced by our church. Simultaneously, Florida Impact, a state-wide faith based advocacy group with strong ties to the United Methodist Church, was in negotiation to facilitate a state-wide effort to end childhood hunger in the next ten years based on a pilot program in Washington D.C. As the Core Advisory Group was formed for this new Partnership to End Childhood Hunger, Bishop Timothy Whitaker appointed Ms. Lynette Fields to represent him on this group. The Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church is on the ground level for this exciting unprecedented collaborative effort. The final draft of the 10 Point Plan to End Childhood Hunger was completed in early May 2008. A CD Toolkit has been developed and distributed to every delegate to the 2008 Annual Conference with the hope that every local church will identify one way to be a part of this initiative.

In consultation with Bishop Whitaker and with input from the newly forming Coalition for Advocacy and Ministry and Ministry for Children, it is recommended that the Florida Annual Conference join Florida Impact in being a strategic partner in the following ways:

1. Support Point #4 of the 10 Point Plan – Improve Working Families' Economic Security Strategy:
   - Develop at least one church or ministry in each of our 9 district by Annual Conference 2009 that will assist families in getting access to federal assistance programs including ACCESS (food stamps, Medicaid, TANF, Florida Kid Care, etc.), WIC education, and Earned Income Tax Credit education.
2. Support Point #7 of the 10 Point Plan – Expand Reach of Summer Meals Programs Strategy:
   - Over the next 3 years, 90 churches (10 per district) in the Florida Annual Conference will host or assist in the summer nutrition program.
   - Request that Bishop Whitaker convey to state governmental leaders that Florida Annual Conference's support for the Florida State Breakfast Bill sponsored by Senator Steve Wise and Representative Will Kendrick.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Summit by:
Ms. Lynette Fields, Episcopal Appointee to the Core Advisory Group of the Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger
The Rev. Clarke Campbell-Evans, Convener of the Conference Table on Social Witness
Ms. Melinda Trotti, Director of Justice and Spiritual Formation Ministries

Partnership to End Childhood Hunger – Lynnette Fields

The story of the feeding of the five thousand (well it was really way more than 5 thousand) is a story many of us are familiar with…a huge crowd is gathered and grows restless. Jesus asks the disciples to find food to feed them. Five loaves and two fish are collected and turned into enough to satisfy everyone. What was the miracle – a simple meal for a few was turned into a feast for many or were they already enough resources within the crowd sufficient to satisfy all. Either way a miracle occurred. Today we have the opportunity to participate in a modern day miracle – ending childhood hunger in the State of Florida within the next 10 years. The miracle may happen by small amounts of food being multiplied to feed many or it may happen by recognizing the resources we already have at hand. Either way it is a miracle. Something that seems impossible becomes possible with Christ at the center.

The Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger serves as an anchor around which more than 50 organizations are committed to working collaboratively to make Florida the first state in the nation to end childhood hunger. The Partnership proposes to do this by leveraging more of the federal nutrition dollars and Earned Income Tax Credits intended for but not reaching Florida's low-income families. To do this most effectively, the plan will build on public and private partnerships and systems in communities around the state.

The mission of this plan states: "We will build a stronger, healthier, better educated and more productive Florida by ensuring that all children in our state are surrounded by nutritious food – wherever they may live, learn, play, or pray."

Childhood hunger is invisible, despite its devastating and visible consequences. Yet children who don't get enough healthy foods on a regular basis pay a potentially lifelong price:

- Poorer health and weaker immune systems; more stomachaches, headaches, colds, ear infections and fatigue; and more

hospitalizations.
- Behavioral difficulties
- Impaired performance in school – academically, athletically, and socially.
- 622,423 children are at risk of hunger in Florida TODAY – that means nearly 1 in 5 children has limited access to nutritious food.
- Family poverty is the most universal cause of childhood hunger. Families living in poverty are forced to trade one necessity for another.

How can we reduce and eventually eliminate this unnecessary childhood hunger? There are many resources already at hand.
- We know from research that providing a nutritious breakfast for children in addition to improving their health also reduces behavior problems and improves overall performance in school. Point 1 in the Partnership's 10 Point Plan is to "Provide all of Florida's Children with a Healthy Breakfast". Funds are already available for many of our public schools and some of our Florida lawmakers are putting together legislation to help us leverage potentially $193 million dollars in federal school breakfast funds. We United Methodists can support these efforts by our voices.
- Point 4 in the 10 Point Plan is to "Improve Working Families' Economic Security. The Earned Income Tax Credit provides a key opportunity for increasing economic security among families by reducing the impact of federal income taxes paid by low and moderate income families. Census data show that in 2003, the Earned Income Tax Credit lifted 4.4 million people out of poverty, including 2.2 million children. In Orlando, an education initiative done through the chamber of commerce helped promote public awareness of these benefits through employers of low-wage workers. We United Methodists can help with these public awareness efforts throughout the state.
- Summer is not a welcome thing for every child because most of the Florida's 1.2 million school children from low-income families lost access to the meals they get from school. We United Methodists can help fill in this gap by opening up our churches in the summer to feed some of these children.

The United Methodist Church is strategically located across the state – we have the locations, the people, AND the sense of mission from our Wesleyan heritage committed to children and the poor. We have the wherewithal. We've got what is needed to be a strong strategic partner in this most ambitious endeavor. Why wouldn't we want to be involved? For the past three quadrennial, our Episcopal leaders have implored us to put children and the poor at the center of our ministries. In their congregational study – Community with Children and the Poor, our leaders ask us to reshape our churches so that children and poverty are the central reference point of all that the church does. They remind us that children and their total needs were of particular concern to the early Methodists. John Wesley's commitment to children and the impoverished went beyond friendship and proclamation. He sought to provide holistically for their needs. He provided education and opened free health clinics. Surely today, we can help provide nutritious food for our hungry children and build on our legacy as United Methodists. This is it – this-right now – is our moment to make it happen.

The Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church is on the ground level for this exciting unprecedented collaborative effort. The final draft of the 10 Point Plan to End Childhood Hunger was just completed earlier this month. And we are ready to embrace our role in making it a reality in our state. We don't need to study it for a year or send it to a committed – we just need to do it!

Every delegate has received a CD Toolkit that offers beginning ideas of how local churches can connect with ending childhood hunger. We are looking for examples of how you are already involved and for churches willing to train other churches. Please send us your ideas and stories throughout the year.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Summit by:
Ms. Lynette Fields, Episcopal Appointee to the Core Advisory Group of the Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger
The Rev. Clarke Campbell-Evans, Convener of the Conference Table on Social Witness
Ms. Melinda Trotti, Director of Justice and Spiritual Formation Ministries

THE LEADERSHIP CONNECTION

***"Don't just be hearers of the word. Be doers as well least you fool yourselves."* James 1:22**

The Leader Connection continues to enable and support the work efforts of various ministries and projects within the Florida Conference. Through greater education and awareness regarding the needs of churches and their surrounding communities,

the identification of related resources necessary to meet these needs, and providing monetary support to various ministries and projects, we have extended the conference's hand to congregations and individuals engaged in putting faith into action.

Three specific grants issued through the Leadership Connection include:

- "Ray of Hope" ministry in urban Miami under the oversight of Rev. Bill Bailey. This ministry offers after school activities to predominately minority school age children and aligns with Bishop Whitaker's focus on children.
- "Divorce Recovery" train the trainer sessions to be held at First Church, Orlando so that workshops can be held throughout the conference to minister to those going through the difficult process of divorce.
- Support of the Camp for Clergy Kids scholarships for the Warren Willis Camp at Fruitland Park. We recognize that often clergy member's children are the most often overlooked when it comes to opportunities for development and recreation - particularly in the form of the camp experience.

Other projects and initiatives that the LC undertook over the past year include:

- Developed a partnership with the Director of Communications for the Florida Conference regarding improvements to our "outreach" and overall communication within the conference in order to assist congregations in requesting resources and leveraging the thought partnership of the Leadership Connection.
- Established a linkage to the Conference Center Task Team to determine how the Leadership Connection can offer support to the operation and maintenance of these facilities.
- Assisted in communications regarding the upcoming "In Defense of Creation" conference table.
- Continued support and education regarding the issues facing our Youth and Young Adult ministries within the Florida Conference. Our goal is to enable growth of programming and ministries geared to this active and vital segment of the United Methodist Church.
- Activated task teams to look at issues impacting cross-racial assignments of clergy and on the issues of property usage and maintenance within the conference.

As we move ahead into 2008 we are committed to furthering the Leadership Connection's ability to provide resources and establish critical linkage points to support various needs, ministries and projects within our conference. To accomplish this we will be sponsoring a series of workshops throughout the conference that target specific issues congregations face as the church of today and preparing for the church of tomorrow.

Alice Williams, Convener

REPORTS OF STANDING TASK TEAMS

BISHOPS INITIATIVE ON CHILDREN AND POVERTY (BICAP)

The major work of BICAP has been participating in Children's Week in Tallahassee and Children's Harvest. In March, persons from all over Florida joined Bishop Whitaker in Tallahassee for Children's Week. BICAP joined with United Methodist Women and Florida Impact in Children's Week. BICAP has been one of the few faith groups working as advocates for children through Children's Week. We also participated in a state event, Children's Summit.

We are very grateful to Bishop Whitaker for his willingness to participate with us as we plan and ask each church to have passion and compassion for children in our midst. It is amazing how our elected officials listened to our Bishop as he walked the halls of our state capital during Children's Week speaking with them about the needs of children in Florida. We will participate in Children's Week again next year. Please look at the Conference web site for the exact dates in March 2009.

Last year, at Annual Conference, delegates placed school supplies in over 500 backpacks. Through our Conference outreach ministries, 3,500 filled backpacks were given out. If your congregation wants to purchase backpacks and supplies for children in your community, please contact Somebody Cares Tampa Bay at (727) 536-2273. Again, this year part of the Annual Conference offering will be used to purchase backpacks and supplies.

Study Guide: I want to encourage each local church to download *A Church for All God's Children* checklist at www.umc.org/initiative. The checklist will enable your congregation to reach out to your neighborhood. Also, please order from Cokesbury a copy of the congregational study, *Community with Children and the Poor*. It makes a wonderful Sunday school curriculum, great Wednesday series, a small group study, or Lenten series. Please think of ways your church can be

more child-friendly as we truly become a Church for all God's children.

We were very excited that last year's Conference voted to make children the number one priority. I, along with other members of BICAP, attended the Children's Coalition meeting and round table, which was follow-up to that meeting. At BICAP's subsequent conference call meeting, we agreed to merge BICAP into the new Children's Coalition. We believe it will be a better use of time and talent and the children will benefit as a result.

Thank you so much for your love and support of children and particularly those who live in poverty.

Rev. Pamela A. Cahoon, Chairperson

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY AND MINISTRY COALITION

February 19, 2008 representatives of ministries with children in the Florida Conference met to identify goals and develop strategies for local church involvement in children's advocacy and ministries with children in need. Present were representatives from Bishop's Initiative for Children and Poverty (BICAP), Committee on Global Mission and Justice, Outreach Ministries, Camp and Retreat Ministry, United Methodist Association of Preschools, Task Force to End Childhood Hunger in Florida, MFSA, Peace with Justice, and United Methodist Women.

The representatives shared their ministries and agreed to focus their energies on the following three areas: education and prayer, advocacy, and implementation of the 10 point plan developed by the Task Force to End Childhood Hunger in Florida.

The group is focused on developing a "Tool Kit" CD for local churches to reach out to children in need in their community to help them receive good nutrition where they live, learn, play, and worship.

With consultation with Bishop Whitaker and members of BICAP, it was agreed that BICAP will be folded into the Children's Advocacy and Ministry Coalition. The Coalition will meet again before Annual Conference to determine structure and future membership.

Melinda Trotti, Spirituality and Justice

CUBA/FLORIDA COVENANT TASK FORCE

BRIEF HISTORY - Cuban Methodism was "planted" in Cuba, in 1883, when the Florida Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, commissioned two Cuban Methodist lay pastors in Key West to return to Cuba and open a mission in Havana.

At the end of the "War for Cuban Independence," in 1998 Florida missionaries built upon the work of Cuban lay pastors, Revs. Enrique Someillán and Aurelio Silveira, by building churches, schools, and medical clinics in Cuba. It became evident that the destinies of Cuba and Florida Methodism were linked with the saving of souls and care and formation of disciples. Methodism in Cuba came under jurisdiction of the Florida Annual Conference as Florida Bishops Moore, Short, Branscomb, and Henley provided supportive leadership. Rev. Angel Fuster was elected post-humously as the first Cuban Bishop. Rev. Armando Rodríguez was the first active Bishop of the autonomous Cuban Conference. Bishop Armando Rodriguez provided leadership and growth in the Cuba Methodist Church until the late 80's. By the end of 1961, all Florida missionaries and Cuban pastors left the Island. Ninety-five percent of the ordained Cuban clergy found sanctuary in the U.S., mostly in Florida.

In 1994, Bishop Joel Ajo was the Cuba Bishop. Florida Bishop Hughes met with Cuban church leaders, and they became interested in reviving the historic relationship between the Cuba and the Florida Methodist churches. In 1996 a Task Force was convened by Bishop Cornelius L Henderson to draft a Cuba-Florida Covenant. In 1997, the covenant was ratified at both Conferences (Cuba and Florida) by Bishop Henderson and Cuba Bishop Francisco Gustavo Cruz, recovering from illness. With Bishop Ricardo Pereira's election in 1999, the partnerships between Cuba and Florida churches strengthened. Districts in Cuba and Florida guaranteed the distribution of the partnerships between the churches in each conference.

Eleven new churches were chartered at the 2007 Cuba Annual Conference for a total of 255 churches. Each one supports an average of 6- 20 house churches and missions numbering over 500 throughout the Island. The membership in the Cuba Conference has doubled since 1996 to over 50,000 active disciples.

The Cuba/Florida Task Force met twice, in April and September, at the Leesburg Life Enrichment Center. A special training on how to make our partner relationships and travel to Cuba more effective was done by Linda Zelenka, Group Area Coordinator/ Jacksonville at the September meeting.

One of the main purposes for the Task Force was to continue reviewing the Caravan Guidelines with the latest changes in travel regulations and share experiences of the caravan members who have traveled to their sister churches in Cuba this year. The commitment to make more partner relationships so that *all* Cuba churches have a sister church in Florida continues to be a high priority of the Task Force members.

Twenty-five caravans traveled to Cuba from Florida churches in 2007 through the Cuba/Florida Covenant. Approximately 146 travelers from the different Florida districts went on caravan trips to visit their respective partner churches. The number of caravans to Cuba in 2007 were the same as last year (25 caravans) with more travelers as a total. Seven Cuban pastors and laity guests visited Florida partner churches, giving them an opportunity to experience our style of worship, and our churches' hospitality. This is a reduced number of visits from last year due to more restrictions and lengthy procedures to get our Cuban brothers and sisters to the U.S.A.

Currently two thirds (2/3) of Cuban churches have partner relationships with Florida churches- one third (1/3) of Methodist churches in Cuba still are waiting for a partner church. The Florida Conference encourages all Florida churches that do not have partner relationships with a Cuba Methodist church to engage in a mission ministry through the Cuba/Florida Covenant, laboring in Christ's love to get 100% of churches in this relationship.

In March of 2007, Task Force Chairman Al Taylor, Conference staff persons Dr. Anne Burkholder, Icel Rodriguez and Rev. Geraldine McClellan, the North Central District Superintendent, attended the Tenth General Conference of the Cuban Methodist Church in Havana. Rev. McClellan was one of the featured speakers at an evening service and Dr. Burkholder and Al Taylor were able to address the Conference at one of the morning meetings. This time together showed that the bonds between the Florida Conference and the Cuban Church are really strong and growing. All of the Cuban Churches expressed a desire to continue our relationship in the Covenant.

The Home Page of the Covenant website www.cubafloridacovenant.org) was re-designed on the Internet, reflecting the celebration of the 10th Anniversary. New videos and power-points of Florida caravans visiting their partner churches were added. Information on website was updated. Comments sent on email from website visitors were received and answered.

DISTRICT/ AREAS ACTIVITIES

- South East/Pinar del Río & Holguín Norte- Two caravans visited partner churches in Cuba. One pastor and his wife visited Florida their sister church.
- North East/Havana- Four caravans visited partner churches in Cuba. 2 Cuban pastors and wives visited their Florida partner churches. The N.E. district is gaining new sister churches in Cuba. The credit is due to the responsive pastors, our Cuba team, and the strong, active support of District Superintendent Rick Neal. He has used district pastor meetings, the district newsletter, emails, and letters to encourage support of the Covenant.
- Gulf Central/ Matanzas –Two caravans visited partner churches in Cuba.
- North West & North Central – Cienfuegos/Central – One pastor from the NC district visited his sister church. Two caravans went to their partner churches in Cuba.
- East Central & Atlantic Central/Holguín Tunas & Isle of Youth – Eight caravans from both districts visited partner churches in Cuba. The AC District received one Cuban visitor. One Cuban pastor visited his partner church in the EC District. In December, Rev. Reinier Torre of the Las Tunas Methodist Church was appointed Superintendent of the Las Tunas district.
- South Central/Sierra Maestra & Santiago/Guantánamo – One caravan visited their partner churches. The Santiago/Guantanamo DS visited Tampa, and met with the Church Coordinators at a special gathering. A special Covenant 10th Anniversary event was successfully celebrated in September with over 160 persons attending at Hyde Park UMC.
- South West/Agramontino & Holguín Norte- Six caravans from the Ft Myers area visited partner churches in Cuba. There were no Cuban pastors/laity visitors to this area. A special Covenant 10th Anniversary event was successfully celebrated with many persons attending.

Renee Masvidal Kincaid, Secretary, Cuba/Florida Covenant Task Force

DISASTER RECOVERY MINISTRY

The mission of Disaster Recovery Ministry is to resource and equip local United Methodist Churches and districts as they assist their communities and individuals to prepare, respond and recover from disaster. In 2007 we advanced this mission through several initiatives.

Preparation: First, the ERT Leadership Team was created to evaluate the organization of our volunteers as well as the effectiveness of our trainings. This all-volunteer team provided feedback that directly impacted the type of trainings offered to churches and volunteers as well as the organization and structure of volunteer teams. In addition, our enhanced partnership with United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) has provided leadership and increased opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. The result is teams who are better informed, better prepared and better connected to the conference, their district and each other.

The introduction of "Community Arise Basic Disaster Ministry Training", a disaster curriculum developed by Church World Services, was another unique venture. More than 100 volunteers attended two pilot trainings in 2007. The feedback from the participants helped us adapt the curriculum to the needs of the Florida Conference churches. Three Community Arise training events are scheduled for 2008.

Increased staffing and better use of volunteers helped improve communications and continue the development of cooperative relationships with other organizations active in disaster, emergency management personnel, churches and volunteers. Assisting volunteers to serve where they are gifted and called by God has created a synergy leading to more participation and a renewed commitment to serving God by serving others.

There is an increased awareness among churches of the need to plan now in order to protect people and property during disaster. Understanding their capacity as well as their limitations is helping churches identify where and how they can serve in disaster. Nonetheless, there are still many churches in the conference without a plan or any sense of what to do if disaster strikes. We are working diligently with our District Disaster Coordinators and their teams to assist these churches and encourage preparation.

Recovery: Through the coordinated work of the Conference Disaster Administrative Team, the Disaster Recovery staff, volunteers, local churches, districts and community-based Long- Term Recovery Organizations, the Disaster Recovery Ministry successfully assisted in bringing resources and assistance to those whose lives have been interrupted by disaster. Our partnership with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) along with the generous donations of churches and individuals throughout the Florida Conference provided the financial resources for this important work of bringing hope and restoring lives.

Hurricanes 2004/2005 Updates: As of December 31, 2007, UMCOR committed $4,100,000 for the work of recovery in hurricane-affected areas of the Florida Conference. As of December 31, 2007, $3,820,863 of these funds had been put toward this work.

Disaster Recovery is working with several long-term recovery organizations to meet the unmet needs of survivors that continue to surface from the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes. In addition to funding, dozens of volunteer teams have been deployed into these areas to assist with major repairs and rebuilds.

2007 Tornado updates: As of December 31, 2007, a total of $60,000 was received from UMCOR for emergency response and recovery work related to tornadoes in Lake and Volusia counties. Through generous donations from churches and individuals, a total of $94,250 was spent to provide assistance to tornado survivors in 2007. In addition, one full-time staff member is on loan to the local long-term recovery organization to provide assistance with case management.

Disaster Recovery Ministry is grateful not only for the monetary support of UMCOR and the churches of the Florida Conference but we are also grateful for the willing hands and hearts of the hundreds of volunteers across this conference and the churches that nurture them. Without you, there would be no ministry.

For more information on any of the items in this report, please contact the Disaster Recovery Ministry or visit the web site (http://www.flumc.org).

Communication in Disaster

Disaster Recovery (800) 282-8011 Ext. 149
Ministry Protection (800) 282-8011 Ext. 195

If your church is damaged by disaster

- Contact your District Superintendent
- Activate your Church disaster plan
- Contact Ministry Protection

If your community is affected by disaster

- Activate your Church disaster plan
- Volunteer teams self-deploy per the church plan and their training
- Contact your District Superintendent
- Contact your District Disaster Coordinator

If another community in your district is affected by disaster

- Contact your District Disaster Coordinator for instructions
- If members of your church are trained and registered with the conference, they will receive email updates and instructions
- Check the Web site for updates and instructions

If another district in our conference is affected by disaster

- Contact the Disaster Recovery Center at the conference to offer assistance (supplies, volunteers, etc.)
- If members of your church are trained and registered with the conference, they will receive email updates and instructions
- Check the Web site for updates and instructions

EAST ANGOLA/FLORIDA CONFERENCE PARTNERSHIP

The past year has included significant developments in the work of the partnership between the East Angola and Florida Conferences of the United Methodist Church. The generous offerings provided by the churches of the Florida Conference have continued to support the reconstruction and redevelopment of Quessua, the birthplace of Angolan Methodism. In addition to the rehabilitation of the sanctuary at Quessua, other buildings that are either finished or nearing completion include a middle school, a high school, the theological school, and the Quessua parsonage.

In recent years, the Florida Conference Task Force had lent its support in encouraging the General Board of Global Ministries to send a missionary couple to East Angola. Just before Christmas 2007, this goal came to fruition as Carol and Tim Crawford were able to arrive in Quessua and begin their work there. Carol, a recently ordained elder with a doctorate in theological studies, will serve as one of the pastors at Quessua and teach at the theological school when it opens this year. Tim, an agriculturalist, will implement a plan to restore Quessua as an agricultural center for the region. They will both work closely with Bishop Quipungo in hosting visiting mission teams from the United States.

The Crawfords had their first opportunity to host a team when a delegation of six traveled from the Florida Conference this winter to further nurture the partnership. This trip marked the first time since the war that any United Methodist mission group from the United States has been able to travel beyond the region of Malange, where the East Angola Conference is headquartered. Dividing into two teams of three, the delegation was able to venture into the northeastern provinces of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul, where they were received warmly by the Angolan Methodists who had their first encounter with Methodists from America. Traveling to more than a dozen churches, experiencing their setting for ministry, and having extensive dialogue with the people provided a better sense of how local churches in East Angola and Florida might effectively partner with one another. We have much to offer them in the form of salty service and they have much to teach us about radical hospitality and passionate worship.

In 2006, the first local church partnership was initiated between Harvest UMC in Bradenton and the Igreja Metodista Unida Central in Malange. This year, the task force anticipates the initiation of at least ten additional partnerships between local churches in the two conferences. At this year's annual conference, participants will be able to register for a lunch gathering where they can learn more about these partnership opportunities and how to become involved. With the rehabilitation that is happening to the infrastructure of Angola, and with the logistical support of missionaries in country, doors are now opening for churches to be able to send groups into Angola in the near future. We look forward to an exciting year of developing relationships between the people called Methodists in Florida and the people called Methodists in East Angola.

Rev. Steve Price, Chairperson

CELEBRATE JESUS

Celebrate Jesus is celebrating its 10th year of reaching out in the neighborhoods of Florida. With roots in "Share Jesus" beginning in 1998, then becoming Celebrate Jesus, we have had 16 missions that included 210 churches, 191 of which were United Methodist! Over 2,200 missionaries have served the churches of Florida. By 2009, every district in the Florida Conference will have had the opportunity to host at least one Celebrate Jesus mission.

The vision of Celebrate Jesus is to "Awaken Passion, and Equip People to Share the Gospel and Reach Neighbors for Jesus Christ." Three groups are impacted by these missions: The community is changed because it has been prayed for and ministered to. Individual lives are changed - both the visiting missionaries and the people they meet in the community. The host church is transformed because of its renewed interest in its neighbors and by doing intentional acts of servant evangelism.

Changed Communities - During a Celebrate Jesus mission week communities are impacted in positive ways. As fresh baked goods are delivered to police and fire stations, workers are touched by words of thanks and offers of prayer. An employee at a newspaper office expressed, "I've worked here for 25 years and no one has ever thanked us." Neighbors who thought they needed an "invitation" to attend church learn that they are welcome anytime. Receiving a free gift, invitation to a block party and offer of prayer, neighbors find the church to be a place to find help, hope and encouragement. New relationships begin between churches and businesses. Schools are impacted when churches "adopt" a school during mission week and spend the next year doing acts of kindness for students and teachers. As communities watch congregations of different denominations work together in Celebrate Jesus missions, barriers come down and these communities are forever changed!

Changed Lives - Meet Miranda who unlocked the door reluctantly. After a few minutes of conversation she slowly began to open up. She was in the first 48 hours of returning to her husband and their ten year old daughter, Kelly, after being separated for seven years. Tired of drugs, alcohol, and destructive relationships, they wanted a different life but did not know where to start.

She was given a devotional book as a gift from the church, invited to a Friday night block party and prayed for at the door. When Friday rolled around Miranda, her estranged husband Joe and their daughter Kelly cautiously walked onto the church grounds where there were games for children, music and hot dogs and hamburgers for everybody. As their daughter bounced in the bounce house and played the games, the members of that small church made them feel welcome. Suddenly the sky opened up and rain pounded the area driving everyone into the church building. Realizing they were with a captive audience, the guitar player played, the singers sang and the pastor talked about what Jesus can do in a person's life. It was all they needed to hear. Kelly was the first one; then Miranda; then Joe. With arms around each other- and the few members of the church surrounding them, a broken family came into the Kingdom on a rainy Friday night.

Changed Churches - Every pastor hopes and dreams of experiencing God's resurrection power within the local church Body of Christ he/she is called to serve. Since 2001, I have been blessed beyond belief to see such a resurrection at our church. Hosting two separate Celebrate Jesus Missions in 2002 and 2005 played a tremendous role in our church emerging from the ashes and springing into teeming, abundant life as a congregation. Fresh vision, new ministries and an exciting call to "share God's love in practical ways" are just a few miracles birthed from our Celebrate Jesus Missions. Blitzing our community with kindness evangelism, our people experienced a sort of "spiritual B-12 shot" in the arm and became unstoppable for Christ. If you have not encountered the life-giving, transformational ministry of Celebrate Jesus, I urge you to contact them TODAY! Our church will never be the same for having made that call (or perhaps I should say, "for having answered that call."). The time is now for you to find the passion and power Christ brings through a CJ Mission; you will never regret it! -Rev. Debbie Nelson, pastor of Ridge Manor Community UMC.

Come Experience Celebrate Jesus! www.cjmission.org. 2008 Missions: Southeast Florida June 21-28; Key West October 4-11

Martha Gaye Duncan

UNITED METHODISTS VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

We are called to go out and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We are called to feed the hungry, help the sick, and to cloth the naked (Matthew 25:34-40). In Philippians 2:3-4, we are called to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. We are to walk in humility and consider others before ourselves. We should look after, not only the interest of ourselves, but also to the interests of others. Seek to have the attitude of Christ Jesus. In essence, we are the body of Jesus Christ. We are the hands, the feet, the mouth, and the heart of Christ. We bring hope to His people, in His Name.

Florida continues to step out beyond the 4 walls of the traditional church to reach His people. We serve locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. We serve and give in times of disaster, times of hunger, pain, and strife. We serve to ease burdens and to help our brothers and sisters look toward their future. We serve as teachers, bridges, pain relievers, builders, painters, cooks, servers, comics, prayer partners, actors, and much more. We seek to help heal His people physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We are an ear, a hand, a shoulder, a smile, but mostly we try to follow the Holy Spirit in mission. Ultimately, we desire to plant a seed and spread the Word of God through our spoken words, our actions, and our prayers to somehow help bring His people into the Kingdom.

The Florida Conference has much to praise and give thanks for and to give the Glory to our Lord, Jesus Christ. The conference sent out 101 teams, to 24 countries and 5 states. This resulted in over 960 people being deployed. Over 60 churches sent forth missionaries from the Florida Conference.

For the Florida Conference UMVIM Board, 2007 was a fresh year with new members from across the state and many new initiatives. Team Leader Training is scheduled 3 times a year in 3 separate locations across the state to make attendance a viable option whether one lives in the north, central, or southern part of the state. It is recommended that anyone leading a mission team take Team Leader Training. This training should be repeated every 2-3 years to stay current. The committee is working on implementing 2 projects. The first project, Minorities in Mission, is a program to help promote and increase minority participation in mission projects and to help build team leaders, focusing on college-aged students. The committee committed scholarship monies to help pay for a student to be part of a domestic or Florida project. The committee also voted to pick up Team Leader Training costs for any student who desires to participate in this program. That student would also be

asked to commit to participating on a mission team. The second project involves introducing missions to pastors during the first 5 years after their ordination. The committee is working on promoting and supporting new pastors to go on mission with the hope of instilling the importance of reaching outside the church walls.

We fully support all conference initiatives and are sending a committee member on the Haiti/Florida Covenant March 2008 Team. A report will be made to the board to help us understand the role me might play in supporting this initiative. A board member is planning to be a part of a future Cuba/Florida Covenant Team for the same purpose. We are excited to get the word out at trainings about our partners in missions including but not limited to: JFON, the Children's Home, and NOMADS.

One of the great connections we have made in 2007 is the strong bond of fellowship and cooperative "workship" we have forged with the Disaster Recovery Ministry. Working side by side with Disaster Recovery has enhanced the effectiveness of the Florida UMVIM response after a disaster and opened up our missionaries to another branch of serving His people.

Sue A. Macchiarella, Chairperson

WOMEN'S RETREATS

The Women's Retreat Design Team just celebrated the 24th annual Women's Retreat. Our theme for the year was "Practicing the Presence". The Retreats were held over 4 different weekends during January, February and March. Our scripture references were, "God said, my presence will go with you. I'll see the journey to the end." (Exodus 33:14), and "Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies." (Philippians 4:9b). Almost 2100 women attended these retreats and were given an opportunity to come away from their responsibilities, set their feet on holy ground and meet Jesus Christ face to face.

We would also like to thank Carol Sue Hutchinson for her years of service as the Conference Staff Liaison for the women's Retreat Design team. We wish her well as she retires from the Conference office and works in new areas of Ministry.

Sherri Lingle, Conference Staff

SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM

The spiritual formation has a vision of reaching out to all of our conference in a variety of ways that will promote spiritual growth. The definition of spiritual formation is: "a process, initiated by God, of forming us into the image of Jesus Christ for the sake of others." We seek to encourage this message through:

- A Day Apart
- Gatherings with a variety of interesting and informed leaders
- Offering Spiritual Direction through certified spiritual directors
- Prayer Labyrinth
- A beautiful and meaningful prayer room at Annual Conference
- Prayer and Wholeness Retreats
- Five-day Academy for Spiritual Formation
- Hispanic Latino Five-day Academy for Spiritual Formation
- Covenant Groups
- Providing resources
- Other outreach ministries

The twenty eight members of the Spiritual Formation Task Team are active participants who have a passion and a vision for seeing our Conference grow spiritually and serve with their various gifts in many willing ways. The team provides a booth at Annual Conference and encourages everyone to come by and learn more about what this team provides This next year promises to offer even more opportunities for spiritual growth and we hope that many more persons will take advantage of what is offered.

Frances Jennings, Chair; Melinda Trotti, Conference Staff

REPORTS OF FOCUSED TASK TEAMS

HEALTH AND WHOLENESS

Thank you to the Annual Conference for their ongoing support of Health and Wholeness. In an effort to be relevant to the Annual Conference and the local church a survey was done of all local charges asking in what ways the Health and Wholeness ministry team could be of service. A thorough follow up was done by phone contact to each church to further determine the need in the local church. During this past year the Ministry team has continued to serve as a resource, referral and advocate in assisting the local church to begin ministries of health and wholeness. The Golden Grant Fund continues to be administrated by the Team. A Bloodmobile from Bloodnet USA will be at Annual Conference again this year to help meet the needs of those needing blood or blood products. Thanks to all who have given or plan to give this gift of life.

Rev. Ginny Pearcy, Chairperson

BEYOND 50 MINISTRIES TASK TEAM (FKA OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES)

Two-thousand seven (2007) saw the Team's second Tapestry conference, designed to equip and encourage both clergy and laity, held at St. Luke's in March. Participants came from across the Florida Annual Conference as well as from Wisconsin, Kansas, Kentucky, and New York. The Task Team is developing plans for its third conference early in 2010.

In September and October of 2007 district workshops were held to discuss the aging revolution and its impact on the clergy and laity of the Florida Annual Conference. Dr. Warren Langer and Rev. Gary Bullock presented the workshops.

We invite you to check out our page on the Conference website (http://www.flumc2.org/page.asp?pkvalue=166) for liturgy resources, a link to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Association of Older Adults (SEJAOA) Web site, a link to the Center for Aging and Older Adult Ministries and its "Center Sage" newsletter, contact information for your district's representative(s) to the Team.

A speakers bureau has been created with topics on various subjects that might be of interest to district or congregational gatherings, such as "Remembering Your Story," "Bringing Lives to Closure," "Mr. Wesley's Theology," "Missions: God's Servant to a Hurting World," and "Grandparenting." There is a link on the Beyond 50 Ministries web page for more information (http://www.flumc2.org/page.asp?pkvalue=166). Another new entry to the Beyond 50 Ministries web page is a list of recommended resources. These books have been read and recommended by several Team members, and this page will be updated periodically.

Facilitators were trained with the revised materials in January. This Team-developed resource is a tool that can help clergy and lay people more effectively engage in ministry by, with, and for "beyond 50" people in your congregations. New to the manual is information specific to Baby Boomers as well as sections on creating awareness of the issues that adults beyond 50 face, and equipping congregations for that ministry. This manual is now available online through our web page at http://www.flumc2.org/page.asp?pkvalue=1315. For more information or to make arrangements for a Facilitator, please contact Sara Kelly (Bdd1032@aol.com / 407 814-1703).

We have been holding our meetings at the Conference Center in Lakeland. If you are interested in joining this ministry, please contact Nancy Metz at poornancy@Gmail.com.

Nancy Metz, Chairperson

REPORTS OF THE MINISTRY GROUPS

HISPANIC MINISTRIES

May God continue blessing your lives and ministries. We are grateful to God for His blessings upon the Hispanic Ministries in the Florida Conference for the past year. The Executive Committee of the Hispanic Assembly met four times: on February 16th at Iglesia Metodista Unida "Verdad y Vida", Clearwater, where we also celebrated our Seventh Hispanic Assembly; and the other two at El Buen Pastor UMC, Lake Placid, June 30th and in November 17th, 2007, at the Hampton Inn Hotel, Doral. The purpose of these meetings was to draw strategies and programs for the benefit of the Hispanic/Latino congregations in this Conference.

All the four programmatic areas of the Hispanic Assembly developed different workshops and training for leaders of the local Churches in the Florida Conference.

The Area of Evangelism (Rev. Amparito Garay, Coordinator) developed prayer meetings on January 12th, 2008 in Peace UMC, Miami and Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida, Tampa with the purpose of crying out to the Lord for growth in the Hispanic/Latino ministries in this Conference. They also sponsored Lent Retreats in Christ UMC, Orlando and La Nueva Iglesia Cristiana del Doral, Miami with the participation of our Hispanic congregations. They also developed for the first time the "Epiphany Festival" on January 5th, 2008 at Christ UMC, Orlando with approximately 350 persons in attendance and the participation of several professional Christian singers. During that Festival 25 people made a profession of faith.

The Area of Worship (Rev. Gary Garay, Coordinator) organized the Advent Concert at Good Shepherd UMC, Lake Placid on December 1st, 2007 featuring Christian musical psalmists like David Velázquez, Ray Santana and Duo Rosario. This was a very blessed and well organized event where we had 300 people in attendance. This area also coordinated the worship experiences in different Hispanic meetings in this Conference.

The Area of Christian Education (Leticia Zulon, Coordinator) developed Training for Couple's Ministries Leaders, led by Rev. Rini and Magalis Hernandez. Especially blessed was the Pastoral Families Retreat, where for the first time we provided rest and fun activities for Hispanic pastors and spouses in this Conference. This area celebrated different workshops like one on Liturgical Dance, a Couples Retreat and also coordinated the celebration of the second "Christian Formation Academy", for the first time offered in Spanish in the United States.

The Area of Youth/Young Adults Ministries (Yohanka Cabezas, Coordinator) celebrated on April 20-22, 2007 the Second Hispanic Youth Camp at Warren Willis Camp with 120 youth in attendance. They also celebrated a Teenagers Retreat at Peace UMC, Miami where they offered different activities for their enjoyment.

Our Area of Communications (Francisco Montes, Coordinator) has done an outstanding job by quarterly publishing "Metohispano", the tabloid that promotes and informs about Hispanic/Latino Ministries in the Conference and nationally. On 2007 for the first time "Metohispano" was published in full color and enlarged to 8 pages. This area also has been responsible for maintaining and continuously updating our web page www.ministerioshispanosfl.org, beautifully done. They also published the Workbook for our Eight Hispanic Assembly and flyers for different events. During our main Leadership Training Event in July 27-29, 2007 at LEC, Fruitland Park, this area offered a workshop on the effect of creative advertising in the secular world and its possible practical implications for the Church in the 21st Century.

For the third year in a row, the keynote in Hispanic Ministries during 2007 was the Leadership Training Workshop held in LEC, Leesburg, on July 27-29 with the attendance of 160 lay leaders of our Hispanic churches in the Florida Conference. The four programmatic areas of the Hispanic Assembly offered workshops: Evangelism offered an intensive course on Mission Theology led by Rev. Dr. Juan Feliciano; Worship offered a workshop on "Theology of Christian Liturgy" by Rev. Dr. Irving Coto; Christian Education offered a training on how to explain theological concepts to the children and youth in our churches, led by Rev. Liana Perez Felix and Communications had the workshop that was described above.

The most important event of Hispanic/Latino Ministries in the Florida Conference, as it has been for the past 24 years, is the Family Camp. In 2007 it was held at LEC, Fruitland Park, in September 2-4 with 485 persons in attendance. The Rev. Gustavo Betancourt was the keynote speaker and his leadership brought us inspiration and spiritual renewal. This year the Hispanic Family Camp will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary with a very special celebration.

During 2007 we were also part of the process which eventually led to the election of Rev. Liana Pérez-Felix as the Hispanic Director of Congregational Transformation, under the office of Rev. Jeff Stiggins. This was a prayerfully considered decision and we praise God that the Hispanic Ministries in this Conference will be strengthened through Rev. Liana's leadership in this position.

Also in 2007 we were able to give impulse to our initiative to provide theological education for both Hispanic clergy and laity, which we have called "The Hispanic Theological Institute." This is a project to encompass all theological ventures for the Hispanics in the Florida Conference and we consider it very important in order to raise the quality of leadership that we need to develop the Hispanic Ministries in this Conference. The Hispanic Theological Institute has already an Advisory Board presided by Rev. Gary Garay as its Coordinator. We are in the process of identifying and contacting human resources and curriculum designing.

We praise God for the blessings and accomplishments of this ministry group for the past four years and, as we begin a new quadrennium, we look forward for what the Lord has in storage for us in the future. May the love of God, the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Rinaldo D. Hernandez, President Hispanic Assembly

NETWORK ON MINISTRIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2007, the Cabinet of the Florida Conference decided to make an intentional focus on Youth and Young Adults. For the first time in many years, every district made a cooperative effort to form a youth and young adult delegation to Annual Conference. The effort was an unbelievable success! Through activities coordinated by Lynnette Fields, Kelly Moore, and Mike Crawford, the youth, young adults, and youth workers were able to spend time together, at the pool, participating in the U2Charist, partaking in worship through art and local bands, and eating pizza together on Florida Southern's Campus. It was at this pizza party that Carlene Fogle-Miller addressed the gathering with her concern over the lack of conference level youth ministry. Through the discussion that followed, the concept of the Network on Ministries with Young People was formed. Under this new structure there are three tables; one each for Youth, Young Adults, and Adult Workers with Young People. Each of these tables operates independently as the goals and the nature of their ministries dictate. In an effort to keep communication lines as open as possible, the leadership teams from each table are included in the plans, minutes, and (when appropriate) meetings of the other two. The leaders from all three tables will gather once yearly to communicate goals and progress. On the final day of Annual Conference 2007, this structure was proposed and approved, and action was taken shortly after to fit this structure into our standing rules.

Tasked at the end of annual conference with focusing on one goal and getting it done, each table went about things in ways unique to their ministry areas. The youth table met in November for the first time. The students wrote an operating procedure, chose "C.A.R.E." for their purpose statement (Community, Advocacy, Restoration, Evangelism), and are planning the first annual Student Leadership Summit in Orlando this October. Recognizing that ministry happens at the local church level and not interested in being event planners, the students decided instead to plan a training retreat weekend for the student leadership teams in the conference. Holding their second meeting in March, the students continued to plan for the summit and search for other ways to help resource the local churches in ministry to and with students. The youth table is lead by Carlene Fogle-Miller (president), Scott Sandlin (vice president), and Justin Wilkerson (vice president of communication).

The young adult table has concentrated on conversations and gathering information. Meeting for the first time in May, the leaders of this table have chosen training the current young adults who are within the church, and finding new ways to reach those outside our walls as their goals. The Young Adult Task Team has been merged with the Young Adult Table, with Corey Jones and Anna Peacock Preston co-leading.

The Adult Workers with Young People table has focused on creating networking groups of youth and young adult workers. Under the leadership of Dave Jans and David Benson, the table has crafted a three year focus plan, concentrating on connecting and networking in 2008; training in 2009; and resourcing in 2010. This April, three representatives from the table will travel to Washington DC for a General Board of Discipleship hosted youth worker training, in hopes of bringing information and training models back to the youth and young adult workers of the Florida Conference.

The activity in the Network has continued to build. In January Kelly Minter was put under contract with Connectional Ministries working on the formation and building of the Network, among other things. Immediately before Annual Conference the youth and young adult table will meet with the Leadership Connection in an effort to communicate the needs of the Network. The youth and young adults will hold simultaneous but separate lunches for the members of their delegation, in an effort to connect with each other and discuss their separate needs. Thursday night the youth will be gathering for an ice cream and Wii party, and a themed gathering on Friday night. Both groups have been invited to stay at Florida Southern in an effort to facilitate community building among young people across the conference.

In the next year, we will continue to shape this Network to be a group that empowers local church ministries with young people, promoting the connection and ministering to young people across the state of Florida.

Kelly Minter

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Jesus told his disciples that when they fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, visited the prisoner and cared for the sick, they were serving Him. The nine Outreach Ministries of the Florida Annual Conference share the Good News in word and deed by meeting practical needs and offering relationship with Christ. They seek to support local churches as they reach out to their communities and they provide creative services to those in need. Here are highlights for each of the ministries:

Christians Reaching Out To Society (CROS) (AC District): programs include food pantries that served over 20,000 people, a summer nutrition program for children which provided over 184,000 meals and summer camp programs. Family Connections continues to work with families that strive to move from a life of public assistance to self-sufficiency.

Church and Community Connection (EC District) has partnered with the Society of Saint Andrew to gather almost 100,000 pounds of grapefruit and oranges for Florida Food Banks. They continue to serve homeless families, immigrants, storm survivors and they are assisting several local churches in developing summer day camps for children.

Community Outreach Agency (NE District) – works to support local churches in learning the needs of their neighborhoods and in strengthening their outreach ministry. They work with afterschool programs, summer day camps for children, and an adult day care center. They assist with grant writing and volunteer training to support these ministries.

Grace Place (SW District) is the newest Outreach Ministry and continues to grow. Programs include parent education and adult education, after school tutoring programs, English language classes, summer day camp and a food pantry.

Halifax Urban Ministry (HUM) (EC District) provides emergency assistance to hungry, homeless and low income people of Volusia and Flagler Counties. Programs include monthly food bags, daily hot lunches, rent/mortgage and utility assistance, transportation assistance, emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence and much more.

South Central District Outreach Ministries (formerly Tampa Urban Ministries) is in transition, but assisted with building a leadership team to begin a Justice For Our Neighbors immigration ministry.

South Florida Urban Ministries (SFLUM) (SE District) focuses in the areas of economic development, children and youth, emergency services, reducing violence/teaching peacemaking, and increasing multicultural understanding. Programs include Branches Tutoring & Mentoring Programs, the OASIS Youth Program, the Dare to Care Serve-a-Thon, ASSETS Miami, Thanksgiving Meal Deliveries and the Emergency Services Network.

United Methodist Cooperative Ministries of Madison County (NW District) is a coalition of eight United Methodist Churches that work together to serve people in their rural community. They seek to build the Kingdom by coordinating the Florida Conference Disaster Depot, offering emergency assistance, programs for seniors, quilting ministry and visiting in the jail.

United Methodist Cooperative Ministry – Suncoast (GC District) involves local churches in ministries of love and service. Over 12,000 people are touched by the various programs including food pantries, a pre-school, Literacy and English Language programs, Refugee and Immigrant support services and a Health and Wholeness Ministry.

Each Outreach Ministry is also involved in education and advocacy. We work to build partnerships with community agencies and other ministries in order to better serve all God's children. The Outreach Ministers are a resource for your local church Mission Team and are ready to be called on to assist you in strengthening your church's outreach and witness in your community.

Marilyn Beecher, Chairperson

SHADE AND FRESH WATER

Over the past year Shade and Fresh Water has continued its excellent ministry to clergy and clergy families of the Florida Annual Conference. Primarily we have offered healing spaces, time for clergy and their families to step away from the hectic pressures of life, in order to process their current level of health and how they would like to improve their health. Through the help of Dr. Trudy Corry Rankin four individuals and two couples participated in a healing space this year.

Knowing that the process of moving to a new church is a stressful time, Shade and Fresh Water worked with Dr. Sally Campbell-Evans to host a Managing Change Retreat. This was offered following AC 2007 to clergy that were moving from a particularly stressful appointment. The success of that retreat encouraged us to offer the same in 2008.

We continue to advocate on behalf of clergy and their families as well. We have produced a DVD that helps church leaders understand the particular stress placed on a clergy family and how the church can support their clergy for fruit-bearing, sustained ministry. To ensure that we are meeting the needs of conference clergy we are developing an Advisory Board that will assist the Executive Committee in designing ministries to serve the Conference clergy and their families.

At this time we would like to thank the following for their service to Shade and Fresh Water: Joyce Johnson, Lucy Wray, Warren Wasson, Jane Holzkamp, Melba Whitaker, Dr. Trudy Corry Rankin, Jim Cook, Brinda LeBleu, Dr. Sally Campbell-Evans, Charlie Boggs, Mason Dorsey, Susan Johnson and Dionne Hammond.

We would especially like to welcome two new Board members to Shade and Fresh Water: Rev. Samuel Gonzalez and Rev. Heather Collver.

Mason Dorsey, Chair

ADVOCATES FOR SMALL CHURCH MINISTRIES (FKA Small Church Advocacy Team)

We are delighted to report that the Advocates for Small Church Ministries of the Florida Annual Conference continues in its second full year to be in ministry with our small membership churches. Our vision remains intact- to reach out and assist small membership churches in becoming and remaining healthy and effective in the advancement of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To that end, we have held meetings, District Training Events and we enjoyed our First Annual Small Membership Church Retreat with over 100 laity and clergy in attendance. The retreat was a wonderful and inspiring weekend held at the Life Enrichment Center that was both encouraging and informative. We experienced worship, workshops, fellowship, food and fun. This brought us closer together as individuals and as churches in mission together. The retreat was well received and plans for our 2nd gathering in September have already been made.

"Advocates for Small Church Ministries" continues to be made up of one or two clergy and laity from the districts of our conference. We further appreciate the encouragement and support from our Bishop Timothy Whitaker, and Rev. Geraldine McClellan of the North Central District. We are also very fortunate to continue to have the very capable and consistent help of Sherri Lingle and others from the office of Connectional Ministries as well as the guidance and support of Congregational Transformation and Dr. Larry Rankin, of the Healthy Church Academy.

We look forward to opportunities in the new appointment year to be in partnership together in order to celebrate the victories, ministries, and stories of the Small Membership Church, as well as embracing the love of Christ Jesus as redeemed people deserving to be effective ambassadors of change and transformation in our Congregations, and in our communities.

Rev. Merritt Waters, Chairperson

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

"For many years many seeds have been sown and at Annual Conference 2007, members of the Commission hope to observe the proceedings looking for a harvest". This is a line from the message of 2007 and following the 2007 Annual Conference, members of the Commission have paused to reflect on the experience. From the choosing of Delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences and even during the EXPO displays, it is evident that some work has been done concerning having women, both lay and Clergy receive support and encouragement. As we look at the Conference Delegation, we see in each category a healthy balance. This clearly speaks to the work done in preceding years proving this has borne some fruit.

Hopefully in March many celebrated the women in their churches during the observation of Women's History Month. It is hoped that this time was used to recognize the women of the United Methodist Church and the unique gifts and graces they bring. Our women both lay and Clergy serve in many ways to work towards the continued development, growth, and maintenance of the church. However, women are sometimes still "buttoned" down in certain "gentle" roles perhaps because

it has always been "done that way". We of the UMC must make direct, definite, and specific changes to this and be willing to have our women be judged by their gifts and skills and not their gender. In the midst of preparing this report, it is no mere coincidence that I saw the posting from our honored Bishop. In his message on appointments is an article "*Women in Ordained Ministry"* I encourage you to read it. What a COSROW statement! For COSROW in the Florida Conference, this says our leadership acknowledges the struggle.

The Mission Statement of COSROW in the Florida Conference says that we will work "*to share the unconditional love of God by educating, challenging, and encouraging women - especially young women -to step out in leadership and voice".* This is still a living document and the COSROW team appreciates the opportunity to be a part of this process to make this not an abstract tool but rather a reality for our women. We urge the continued uplifting and encouraging of our women.

The work of the Commission continues and while the cry remains that, *"Much has been accomplished, but much still needs to be done".* ; the hope is that this statement would no longer be coined as hopefully there would be no need for the Commission as all will find their rightful place.

Lynn Campbell, Chairperson

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN TASK TEAM

Since Annual Conference 2007, the African-American Task Team has worked diligently in reviewing the African-American Comprehensive Plan that will provide assistance to congregations in making disciples. We approach this Annual Conference ready to move forward as we announce the position of Director of African-American Congregational Development, upon approval of the 2009 conference budget. The Director of African-American Congregational Development will be a part of the Conference Office of Congregational Transformation.

Some of the responsibilities of the Director will be to:

- Work in consultation with pastors and key lay leaders in making younger disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Strategies may include, but will not be limited to: New church Development, Refocus, pastoral coaching, leadership seminars, Healthy Church Academy courses, Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century symposiums and other resources beyond the Annual Conference.

- Partner with existing African American clergy in ways that will improve both their faithfulness and fruitfulness as pastoral leaders, as well as assist in identifying and cultivating new African-American pastoral leadership, and new faith communities.

- Encourage gatherings of African American leaders (both clergy and lay) for the purpose of assisting the Annual Conference to be more effective in reaching future generations of African Americans for Christ.

- Be aware of resources beyond the Annual Conference that will further the fruitfulness of African American Ministries in Florida, and to collaborate with Connectional Ministries in strengthening youth and young adult ministries.

The Office of Human Resources of the Florida Annual Conference will commence the search for a Director following the 2008 Florida Annual Conference.

Submitted by: The African American Comprehensive Plan Task Team

Rev. Dr. Walter Monroe - Chairperson
Rev. Dr. Joreatha Capers
Mrs. Willa Young
Rev. Jeffrey Oglesby
Ms. Idella Gaston
Mrs. Debberin Tunsil
Rev. Dr. Geraldine W. McClellan -Cabinet Liaison
Rev. Margaret Kartwe-Bradley
Rev. I James Mitchell
Mrs. Rose Muller
Mr. Morris Williams
Rev. Dr. Bill Bailey

REPORTS OF MISSION/MINISTRY PRIORITIES

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

NEW CHURCH START BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2009

Pastoral Compensation for New Churches: The Annual Conference will provide the Denominational Average Compensation (D.A.C.) plus health insurance and pension to districts/churches for clergy compensation for new churches within each district on the following basis: for Parachute (traditional), first 12 months, 86%; second 12 months, 56%; third 12 months, 26%; for Mother/Daughter and Multi-Site, first 12 months, 43%; second 12 months, 28%; third 12 months, 13%. The D.A.C. for 2009 will be $58,226 (salary and housing). Health insurance is estimated at $11,520 and CRSP at $6,987.

Financial Assistance to Districts launching new missions: Districts that launch new missions will receive assistance in the amount of $15,000 a year for a maximum of three (3) years to help with facilities, supplies, programs, part-time pastoral support and other costs.

2009 Support for New Churches and Missions:

AC	47,995
EC	254,355
GC	173,986
NC	23,998
NE	15,000
NW	32,282
SC	274,062
SE	239,227
SW	110,732
Block Grant	50,000

TOTAL SUPPORT FOR NEW CHURCHES AND MISSIONS: $1,221,636

The following new churches/missions are being supported by the 2009 budget:

New ministries projected to be launched in 2009:

AC	Tamil Ministry- UMC Palm Bch
EC	Daytona Beach
EC	Hispanic Mission, Winter Garden
EC	Multi-Cultural, Kissimmee
GC	Haitian Ministry, Lakewood
GC	SE Bradenton
GC	Spring Hill Hispanic
NC	Hispanic Mission, Ocala
NC	The Villages m/s
NE	Lake Asbury
NE	Nocatee m/d
SC	Valrico area: m/d
SC	Van Dyke m/s
SE	new start
SE	New Start - multi-cultural
SW	Russian/Slavic, North Port

New ministries projected to be launched in 2008:

EC	Clermont: Hispanic Mission
EC	Groveland m/d
EC	Palm Coast Hispanic
EC	Seville Hispanic

EC Venetian Bay: m/d
GC Hispanic Mission, Holiday
GC Palmetto Hispanic
GC Verdad y Vida (Brazilian) Mission
NE Haitian Mission at Oakcrest
NW Tallahassee Korean Mission
SC Christ Hispanic, Lakeland
SC Haitian Mission, Seffner
SC Hispanic Mission, Haines City
SC Tampa Hispanic Regional
SC Wesley Memorial Hispanic, Tampa
SE N Miami Dade Hispanic, Miami
SE Haitian, Miami
SE West Kendall, Miami - Hispanic
SW N Ft. Myers Hispanic Mission

New ministries launched in 2007:
AC Haitian Ministry of Faith UMC
EC Berea Haitian Mission
EC Chinese Mission
EC HopeSpring
GC Union Street Hispanic
GC Samoset Hispanic
NW Forest Hills Hispanic Mission
SC Nine Eagles Campus: Van Dyke
SE Sanctify Haitian Church, Pompano Bch
SW Grace Community Center: m/s

New ministries launched/re-launched in 2006:
EC Christ to the Nations
EC Eagles' Wings, Poinciana
NW Good Samaritan: m/d
SW Crossroads, Sarasota

New ministries launched/re-launched in 2005:
SW La Piscine

Training and Testing for Clergy/Laity interested in/appointed to new church starts: Pastors/Laity who have been nominated by their district superintendent, screened by the executive director of new church development and approved by the Cabinet, will be tested, trained and will participate in the Healthy Church Academy and/or the six day School of Congregational Development.

Funding: $70,000

Demographics: To provide demographic data necessary for making new church start decisions. This information is available to any group within the Annual Conference through the Office of New Church Development.

Funding: $9,000

Meetings of Committee: The Committee meets in January, June and October to conduct the business of new church development. There will be twenty-six (26) members of the committee.

Funding: $ 12,000

TOTAL NEW CHURCH START NEED $1,312,636

2009 CFA REQUEST $1,076,000

The Committee on New Church Development is grateful for the 'fruit' that is being harvested as a result of new churches and missions being started since last annual conference. Dr. Lyle Schaller has said that to impact the culture for Jesus Christ and to grow the kingdom of God, we should set a goal of 3% of existing churches as the number of new churches to start each year. This goal over a period of years will result in a net gain of new churches as well as a net gain of new Christians. To reach this goal we must start 21 new churches/missions per year. To date we have started 13 new churches/missions. Several others that were projected for this conference year have been adjusted to start in the next conference year. We are grateful for these new communities of faith as they reach out to new people and unchurched people in their neighborhoods.

Our outreach to our ethnic neighbors around our churches or in new communities is increasing. The attendance at our new ethnic churches is increasing. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the funding of our new starts is for ethnic churches/missions – Hispanic, Haitian, Korean, and Chinese. This is a continually increasing and effective component of our outreach strategy of reaching new people for Jesus Christ.

We have had a Hispanic summit with lay and clergy leaders from the Hispanic churches/missions to make our models culturally relevant. Our plan over the next 1.5 years is to have similar summits for our Haitian, African-American and Korean churches/missions.

All that we do is toward the goal of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. God continues to open new doors of ministry for this kingdom-building effort. We are continually being challenged to consider new ways and new models of sharing the incredible news of God's love for all people.

Dave Elyea, Chairperson; Mont Duncan, Executive Director

THE OFFICE OF CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The mission of the Office of Congregational Transformation (OCT) is to assist congregational leaders gain increasing clarity about what it means to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" in their respective communities, today. Additionally, we provide a variety of tools to assist congregations in becoming more faithful and fruitful in fulfilling the ministry to which Christ has commissioned his disciples and to which our Conference has chartered congregations.

Constantly Learning - Congregational Transformation is a relatively new endeavor. We continue to learn how best to encourage missional clarity and to provide tools which enable congregations effectively to join Jesus in Kingdom ministry. The Cabinet, Conference staff, Conference CT Committee, District Committees of CT and the hundreds of persons involved in our different transformational processes make up a learning community committed to experimenting and discovering ever better ways to assist congregations transform. Some of our significant learnings in recent years have been:

- <u>One-sized solutions don't fit every congregation</u>: there are no silver bullets.
- <u>Transformation is a process</u>: it took time to get here and it will take time to become healthier and more effective.
- <u>Personal spiritual transformation precedes congregational transformation</u>: learning more effective ministry practices only helps if congregational leaders are clear about and committed to Christ's missional goals.
- <u>Institutional survival and personal comfort is often more highly valued than effectiveness in Christ's mission</u>: picking up our crosses to follow Christ today is personally costly and some congregational leaders – clergy and lay – struggle to do so. This is clearly a spiritual issue!
- <u>In every district there are amazingly committed, creative, exciting, fruitful and community-impacting congregations</u>: we can learn from and with one another how Christ is blessing congregations in their mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Clarifying our Mission: Five Disciple-Making Practices of Fruitful Congregations - Anticipating the lead of the Council of Bishops in adopting the "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations," we have been talking about "The Methodist Way of Discipling" over the last year. Many pastors and congregational leaders have found these five practices -- radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional discipling, salty service and extravagant generosity – to be helpful descriptions of the essential components of our core missional process of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Consequently, our connection is growing in clarity about what it really means to be faithful to Christ in today's world. The OCT has been and will continue to be active in leading workshops and developing resources for congregations to explore how they can live into the five practices.

Natural Church Development (NCD) - The standard process for transformation over recent years has been NCD and many Annual Conferences are now choosing to make NCD their standard process, as well. This is an effective process for congregations -- who are relatively healthy and whose leaders are personally committed to fulfilling Christ's mission in their community. NCD can be a standard tool used widely as vital congregations conduct an annual evaluation of their health and discern their ministry strategies for the coming year. To support congregations using NCD, the OCT now has 6 nationally licensed NCD trainers and is in the process of training new coaches. The ability to conduct training in-house has already resulted in significant financial savings. A network coaching pilot program is also underway in which one coach works with four congregations. At present, almost 10% of our congregations are utilizing this transformational process.

ReFocus Networks - Our experience has taught us that those congregations whose leaders have lost clarity about and commitment to making world-changing disciples as their mission did not find the NCD process as transformative as hoped. Some congregations need a missional reboot! ReFocus Networks (a two-phase, three-year process) were adopted following a positive pilot network. This process begins with the personal spiritual reconnection to Christ's mission by clergy and key leaders. It continues with a rigorous strategic ministry discernment and planning process for the congregation. Currently, about 16% of our congregations are involved in reFocus Networks. The stories of personal and congregational transformation that we are beginning to hear are amazing. The OCT has coordinated the training of 25 facilitators and this year, through an agreement with the National reFocusing Team, will begin in-house training with significant financial savings to the Conference. New networks (usually 6-9 pastors/congregations) are in the process of being formed to continue spreading the success of this proven process of transformation. Dr. Phil Maynard oversees our reFocus Networks and all the OCT training programs for coaches and facilitators.

Coaching Training - Another lesson from our experience: the success of both NCD and reFocus Networks is greatly dependent on the coaching skills of those leading these processes. To strengthen this critical dimension of our transformation processes and to equip a cadre of ministry/personal coaches to provide coaching service to clergy and key lay leaders in our congregations on a sliding scale, a Certified Coaching training program is being implemented. The OCT has contracted with *On Purpose Ministries* from Atlanta to provide the first round of training.

Conflict Coaches and Mediators - Some congregations find themselves embroiled in conflict which poorly expresses the characteristics of love and unity descriptive of Christ's Body according to Scripture. Also, transformational processes can engender conflict that congregational leaders are often ill-equipped to manage in Kingdom serving ways. To assist congregations in our Conference with conflict issues, the OCT will begin training a group of Certified Conflict Coaches and Mediators in the fall of 2008 through The Peace Maker organization. We hope that this will not be a major focus of OCT's services, but recognize that learning to deal with conflict effectively and creatively may sometime be essential before other transformational tools will be helpful.

Congregationaltransformation.com - The OCT has launched a new website to make information about congregational transformation more available. You may reach our website either through the Florida Conference website at www.flumc.org or directly at congregationaltransformation.com. There you can discover and download a growing wealth of resources, as well as sign up for a monthly e-newsletter and email notification of additions to our congregational transformation blog.

Hispanic Congregations - The total worship attendance of Hispanic congregations in our Conference has almost doubled since 2000! There are currently 31 Hispanic congregations and The Office of New Church Development is aggressively starting new Hispanic congregations. Over 20% of Floridians consider themselves Hispanic and that percentage is growing rapidly. Rev. Liana Perez-Felix is working with Hispanic congregations, the Hispanic Assembly and the Hispanic Institute for Theological Studies to assist our connection in being more effective in reaching Florida Hispanics for Christ.

African American Congregations - As the culmination of two years of work by The African American Comprehensive Plan Committee, the 2008 Annual Conference delegates will be voting on the creation of a Director of African American Congregational Development position. African Americans now represent 15% of Floridians. Currently there are 76 AA congregations with an average worship attendance of 70; they represent 3% of Florida United Methodists. Like the Conference as a whole, worship attendance and professions of faith in AA congregations have been declining in recent years.

The OCT 2009 Budget - The OCT budget request for 2009 is $655,713. This represents an increase of 28% as a budget line item and a real increase to the Annual Conference Budget of 18.5%. Minus the additional funds required to implement the African American Comprehensive Plan recommendations ($129,450) the OCT budget request increases $14,884 or 2.91%. Because the $50,000 budgeted for the AA Comprehensive Plan in the 2008 Connectional Ministries Budget will not continue

for 2009, the actual increase to the Florida Conference overall budget for adopting the AA Comprehensive Plan recommendations is $79,450.

Russ Graves Steps Down as Chairperson - After four years as chairperson of the Conference Committee on Congregational Transformation, Russ Graves must step down due to our Conference Standing Rules. He has worked tirelessly as an NCD coach, a reFocus facilitator, and as chairperson. He has given voice to the great need for laypersons to reclaim their Biblical roles as "ministers, missionaries and servant leaders" alongside clergy if our congregations are to fulfill Christ's expectations. "We are looking for laity with passionate spirituality who wish to be a part of what God is doing in His Kingdom. We will continue searching, seeking, recruiting, encouraging, and empowering laity across the conference. Though I step down as Chair my heart, body, and soul will remain in the midst of the processes of congregational transformation."

Jeff Stiggins, Executive Director; Russ Graves, Conf. Committee Chairperson

DISCONTINUANCES

Local congregations are the primary strategy of the Annual Conference for reaching persons for Christ, discipling them and having a Kingdom impact on the communities of Florida. Over the last year we have learned about the five practices of fruitful congregations. The basic missional practices and expectations of every local congregation in "making disciples for the transformation of the world" are to:

- Cultivate a congregation capable of **Passionate Worship**
- Extend the **Radical Hospitality** of God's love to their community and the next generation.
- Form mature followers of Jesus through **Intentional Discipling**
- Send out to the community **Salty Servants** in ministries of mercy and justice
- And pour themselves out in **Extravagant Generosity**

Congregations, like all human organizations, have life-cycles: birth, growth, maturity, decline and discontinuance. As an Annual Conference, we started 10 new congregations in 2007 and are projected to start 19 congregations in 2008. Thankfully, some declining congregations choose to go through cycles of transformation recapturing Christ's vision for their congregation and returning to effective ministry to their community. As an Annual Conference, we must also recognize when congregations are no longer carrying out our basic missional practices, are not willing or able to enter into a cycle of transformation or are no longer financially viable. These are not decisions made flippantly. And we make these decisions fully acknowledging that many small congregations are healthy and have vital ministries in their community.

After study, deliberation and prayer by the local leaders of these congregations and the members of the Cabinet, we bring you the following recommendations for discontinuance.

- We do so celebrating the many ways people's lives have been blessed by their ministries through the years.
- We do so with pastoral sensitivity for those still involved in the congregation.
- And we do so in support of the missional integrity and vitality of our Florida connection of congregations.

The following congregations are voluntary discontinuances. This means that the leaders of these congregations have voted that it is appropriate at this time for their congregation to be discontinued.

District	Congregation	Location	Effective Date
SC	College Heights Hispanic UMC	Lakeland	03/31/08
	All assets are to be transferred to the SC District.		
SC	Gibsonton UMC	Gibsonton	04/05/08
	Discontinued in order to become a district mission; all properties and assets are to be transferred to the SC District.		
SC	Wesley Memorial UMC	Lakeland	06/01/08
	Discontinued in order to become a district mission; all properties and assets are to be transferred to the SC District.		

NC	First UMC-Waldo	Waldo	12/31/07
	All properties and assets are to be transferred to the NC District.		
NC	Kendrick UMC (Abandoned)	Kendrick	07/01/07
	All properties and assets are to be transferred to the NC District.		
SE	Mt Pleasant UMC (Abandoned)	Miami	05/30/08
	All properties and assets are to be transferred to the SE District.		

Involuntary Discontinuances - At times, the leaders of a local church are unwilling or unable to vote to discontinue their congregation. Occasionally, after much study, deliberation and prayer, the Cabinet concludes that it is, nonetheless, in the best interest for United Methodist's ministry in the community, the District and the Annual Conference, that the congregation be discontinued involuntarily. We recognize that this is a painful decision, yet believe that this is still the best decision overall. The Cabinet brings to you one recommendation for involuntary discontinuance.

District	Congregation	Location	Effective Date
SE	Allapattah Hispanic UMC	Miami	05/30/08

Submitted by: The Cabinet of The Florida Annual Conference

HEALTHY CHURCH ACADEMY

Comes to you!

- Transforming education that fits your church health and growth needs in practical ways and where you are;
- Courses chosen by you and your team to fit your learning needs;
- Scheduled when you are ready at an affordable price for everyone;
- Partial scholarships available;
- Groups of churches are encouraged to contact HCA to design your learning plan for health and transformation.

Healthy Church Academy completed two workshops last summer in the Southwest District on Congregational Spiritual Formation. In February, the Florida Foundation and Conference Financial team, taught a comprehensive workshop on stewardship in the local church in the South Central District. In May the same clusters of churches hosted a workshop on relational evangelism.

HCA is sponsored by the offices of Congregational Transformation, New Church Development, and Connectional Ministries. HCA's workshops supports the learning opportunities offered by these conference ministries, including the conference-wide, the Methodist Way.

Small to middle size membership churches respond to HCA's providing learning opportunities which often are not available nor affordable by other providers. Educational quality is upheld with the careful selection of faculty who offer a balanced teaching methodology in theory and practice and within the context of those they are teaching. HCA is designed for teams of laity and clergy learners from local congregations. Follow-up support is available long after the workshop is concluded.

You can bring the benefits of HCA to your church, cluster, and district, by contacting, Dr. Larry Rankin, Dean; 1-800-282-8011 x 131; LRankin@flumc.org; www.flumc.org/hca

CONFERENCE GLOBAL MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

www.flumc.org/mission

The Florida Conference Vision Statement: "God's transforming Grace in Jesus Christ call us to become one dynamic church with diverse people in many settings, offering a new life of Christian discipleship to the world."

We are fortunate to have Melinda Trotti, Director of Justice and Spirituality Ministries, on board officially January 1, 2008.

The Florida Conference Global Mission and Justice Committee have been active in strengthening the call to mission and justice in Florida and the world. Staying abreast and being advocates for the justice for children/poverty, farm migrant

workers, in defense of creation, and many other justice issues, advising local churches to be involved in transforming the world through mission.

Melinda Trotti and Larry Rankin will be visiting Corporation of Apopka, Immokalee, Potatoes and Cabbage producers and other organizations to encourage support in offering farm migrant workers justice in working conditions and fair wages for their labor in the fields of Florida and across the nation.

Announcement from Bishop Whitaker that a second writing on "In Defense of Creation II (IDOC2) will be done through the Council of Bishops. The document is to be completed in 2009. The Bishop invited the Global Mission and Justice Committee to have input on the studies and for an upcoming Conference Table, June 2008. Three members of the committee were in attendance at the study held in Washington D. C. in October.

The General Board of Church and Society held a gathering in Ft. Worth, Texas in November, celebrating the theme "Living Faith – Seeking Justice." Speakers included Rev. Adam Hamilton, Shane Clairborne, Jim Winkler, Rev. Janet Wolfe, Jorge Lockward, and Dr. Mercy Amba Oduyoye. The event included some onsite visits to local missions in the Ft. Worth area. Florida was very well represented by young adults from the Jacksonville area, eight persons from St. Lukes UMC, Orlando, students from Tallahassee, ten members of the Global Mission and Justice Committee. It was indeed an inspiring, spiritual experience to the mission that Jesus set example for us to follow.

The School of Christian Mission, sponsored by the United Methodist Women for the entire church body was held at Bethune Cookman University, Daytona Beach, July, 2007. Several members of the CGMJ committee attended and were educated more about mission education through the United Methodist Church. It is hoped that more churches will take advantage of this mission education for their children, youth, young adults, men and women in the Florida Conference. The School will be held once again at Daytona Beach, July 22-25 and weekend event July 25-27. This is an opportunity for churches to send delegations to learn about and how to program such events in the local church for the members to attend and become active in mission. Studies for 2008 are: "I Believe in Jesus," "Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival," and the 2nd year study of "Israel and Palestine." For registration forms contact United Methodist Women, http://www.gbgm-umc.org/flaconferenceumw/ or contact the Connectional Ministries Office at the Conference Center.

Children's ministry is a priority in the Annual Conference and the Global Mission and Justice along with other groups are working diligently to promote justice and advocacy for children. "Children's Week" was held in Tallahassee in early April during the session of the Florida State Legislature. A number of activities were held in the capitol city concerning the rights of children and visiting the Legislators to be advocates for bills that support quality of life for children and their families. Our voice as a voter carries weight when we go in mass to visit, and show our support for legislation that will benefit the children of this state. The event will be held again in 2009, March 29, - April 4. Make plans now for your church to be involved in the justice ministry for our children.

Florida's Global mission is very active this year with 22 caravans by Florida Churches to the Methodist Church Cuba sponsored by the Cuba/Florida Covenant. A delegation of six conference laypersons and pastors visited the East Angola Conference in January under the East Angola/Florida Partnership, fostering church partnerships. And a medical mission team from the Haiti/Florida Covenant, visited the Haiti District of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas in March.

We lift up "Peace with Justice Sunday". It is one of the Special Sunday observances suggested for every church. A special offering is taken and 50% of that offering is retained in the Florida Conference for new peace ministries being formed within the conference. Grants are available to churches for start-up projects in their church or community. To our chagrin, less that 100 of the 745 churches participated in the special observance or offering in 2006, yet we all say we want "peace!" Other Special Sunday Offerings include World Wide Communion Sunday – October, United Methodist Student Day – November, Human Relations Day – January, One Great Hour of Sharing – March, Native American Ministries – April, and Golden Cross Sunday – September. We encourage every church to participate in these offerings.

For more information and study suggestion on mission in the Florida Conference please visit: www.flumc.org/mission.

Annie Woods, Chair, Conference Global Mission and Justice Committee

CONFERENCE ADVANCE MISSION SPECIALS

("Whose Mission Is It?" Booklet, Appendix 5)

1. Alfalit International, Inc.
2. Carver Heights Ministry, Leesburg
3. Celebrate Jesus, Inc.
4. Cuba/Florida Covenant
5. Equitable Compensation for Haitian-Hispanic Ministries
6. East Angola/Florida Partnership
7. Florida Council of Churches
8. Florida Conference Outreach Ministries
    a. Christians Reaching Out to Society, Inc., South East District
    b. Church & Community Connection, East Central District
    c. Community Outreach Agency, North East District
    d. Cornerstone Family Ministries (formerly Tampa UM Centers)
    e. Grace Place Comprehensive Child & Family Care, South West District
    f. Halifax Urban Ministries, East Central District
    g. South Florida Urban Ministries, South East District
    h. South Central District Outreach Ministries, SC *(Tampa Urban Ministries)*
    i. United Methodist Cooperative Ministries/Suncoast, Gulf Central District
    j. United Methodist Coop Ministry of Madison County, North West District
9. Florida Storm Recovery – Disaster Response
10. Florida UM Children's Home
11. Goodwill Industries
12. Habitat for Humanity Projects in Florida, by districts
13. Haitian Committee on Ministry
14. Jim Russo Prison Ministry
15. National Farm Worker Ministry of Florida
16. Refugee and Immigration Counseling Ministries
17. Shade & Fresh Water, a transitional ministry for clergy and their families
18. Society of St. Andrew (the Potato Project)
19. The Ark Training Center of the North Central District *(Resource Training Center, Gainesville)*
20. The Shepherd's Way, South East District
21. United Methodist Volunteers in Mission – Florida
22. Wesley Group Homes for Adults with Special Needs, South East District

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRIES

Beyond the ongoing work of our eight outstanding campus ministries and directors, and two United Methodist related colleges and chaplains, since the 2007 Annual Conference the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry (BHECM) has been working diligently to better undergird and support the work of the United Methodist Church in Florida on the college and university campus. Our work has focused on the following tasks.

Regular Assessment – in 2007 BHECM reinstated an assessment process, sending assessment teams to visit each of our campus ministry units in a three-year rotation. Thus far, the assessment team has visited FAMU, FSU, Access218 at UNF, UM, and USF, with Stetson and UCF scheduled for later this spring. We believe this process will offer support, guidance, accountability, and assist in providing outstanding ministry to the campus on behalf of the Annual Conference.

Conference Support – in order to provide support for our campus ministry units in a manner that is equitable, fair, helpful, and predictable, the BHECM has made several significant changes in the ways that funds are dispersed, including:

- Each campus minister has transition from an employee of the local campus ministry unit, to now becoming an employee of the Annual Conference, with the Conference determining and paying salaries.
- The BHECM pays 100% of property insurance for units with buildings and parsonages.
- The BHECM supports approximately 25% of the operating budget of each unit, requiring each unit, its director, and local board of directors to raise 75% of its operating funds.

Executive Director of Collegiate Ministry – after nearly a two-year search, including national advertising, recruiting, and a professional recruiter, Vance Rains was named Executive Director of Collegiate Ministry, in addition to serving as the Pastor of the FSU Wesley Foundation – giving approximately 30% of his time and attention to Annual Conference responsibilities. The Executive Director's primary duties include:

- Represent the work of collegiate ministry to the Annual Conference, Districts, and appropriate bodies.
- Serve as supervisor and resource to the campus ministers and ministries.
- Serve as resource to the BHECM.
- Seek opportunities for expansion onto new campuses.
- Kelly Moore will continue to cover administrative functions for the BHECM – including budget and finances – from the Conference office.

As we look beyond the 2008 Annual Conference, the BHECM faces both challenges and opportunities. The challenges, as always, include the need for greater funding, rapidly deteriorating campus ministry facilities, and more campuses that need a United Methodist ministry. The opportunities include several real possibilities for new campus ministries to be started and expanded impact on the campuses we are already serving.

As of this Annual Conference, we will also be saying farewell to two of our campus ministers. Steve Hambrick has served the CFL Wesley Foundation (located at University Carillon UMC, adjacent to the University of Central Florida) for the past five years, and is leaving to start a new church north of Atlanta. Rev. Lawrence Barriner has served the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Wesley Foundation for years and will be assigned a new appointment as of this Annual Conference. At the time of this report, the work of selecting directors for both Wesley Foundations has begun in earnest.

Board of HECM

FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST CAMPS AND RETREAT MINISTRIES

The staff, board and volunteers of the Florida United Methodist Camps and Retreat Ministries remain committed to provide:

- Welcoming natural places set apart for sacred retreat and community.
- Nurturing experiences in Christian faith, discipleship and leadership.
- A witness to the servant life of hospitality, earth care, justice and love.

Each of our four sites continues to grow in the summer camp and retreat seasons. The summer of 2007 brought expanded participation at the Life Enrichment Center (Grandparents Camp, Camp Pioneer and Day Camp) and Riverside Retreat (overnight camp for Children and Youth tripled enrollment over its 2006 debut). At Warren W. Willis Camp the themed program for Children, Jr. Highs and Sr. Highs called "Unfailing" brought over 3600 campers to 10 weeks of sessions at 98% capacity.

During the retreat season in 2007 the sites continue to function at near capacity on weekends. The Life Enrichment Center hosted 192 events (110 United Methodist). Riverside Retreat hosted over 6000 people with only two empty weekends. Warren Willis Camp grew participation significantly with Confirmation Retreats, trip camps and other youth retreats. Lake Asbury Retreat Center hosted 42 events throughout the year.

Staff and volunteers continue to upgrade all facilities and grounds with special use of NOMADS, Workampers and other volunteers, including everything from much-needed painting to total renovations of lodges and meeting areas. There is a renewed emphasis on preserving the natural setting for sacred retreat with work on landscaping and environmental planning. The first fully-funded project of the "Together" Capital Campaign, the Longmiller Worship and Program Center at Riverside Retreat, broke ground in the spring of '08 and is scheduled to be completed by summer.

The Board of Camps and Retreat Ministries and staff seek to develop self-sustaining site operations over the next four years and re-direct apportionment funds to new program development and scholarships. Over $90,000 in scholarships was given out in 2007 with $110,000 expected in 2008. New partnerships are forming with district-owned centers - the Manfred Center near Miami and Centenary Camp near Tallahassee. A new initiative in 2007-08 partnered with day camps affiliated with district outreach programs and local churches, including training of staff and developing curriculum.

The conference is especially grateful to the work of our site directors Martha Pierce (Riverside Retreat), Mike Standifer (Warren W. Willis Camp) and Melinda Trotti (Life Enrichment Center). Melinda concluded her interim role as director of the

LEC in December, 2007 to return to conference staff work in Lakeland. After an extensive search process we welcomed the Rev. Jess Schload from New Hampshire as the new LEC Director starting January 1, 2008.

We celebrate in 2008 the 60th Anniversary of summer age-level camping in the Florida Conference at the Warren W. Willis Camp. A special summer curriculum leads campers and staff to know THE STORY: hear it – join it – live it! We invite a new generation of campers and guests to continue the story that changes lives, cares for creation, and develops leaders as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Rev. David Berkey, Executive Director, Florida United Methodist Camps and Retreat Ministries

DISCIPLINARY PRIORITIES

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Work has begun on the Sarah D. and L. Kirk McKay Archives Center at Florida Southern College! Our Florida United Methodist Heritage Center will be housed in this state-of-the art facility, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year. We are grateful for the contributions from churches and individuals that were the catalyst for this exciting project. We are indebted to Mrs. Sarah McKay, whose generous gift has made it possible for this long-held dream finally to come to fruition. We look forward to welcoming the conference to our new home a year from now. In the meantime the archives continue to be housed in a small room in the library, as well as in another college facility and a commercial storage space.

The archives has received records and histories from several conference agencies and organizations, as well as a number of commemorative church plates to add to the collection. In the past year more than one hundred requests for information and research from churches and individuals have been answered.

At Annual Conference in 2007 the commission presented a commemorative bust of John Wesley to each of the newly ordained elders. In addition, the ordinands received copies of Robert M. Temple's history of the conference, *Florida Flame,* as well as cards giving the chain of their ordinations back to Thomas Coke.

The Florida Conference Historical Society held its seventeenth annual banquet during the 2007 Annual Conference. The Reverend Jose Bove spoke on "'O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing': A Tercentennial Celebration of Charles Wesley." Everyone interested in the history of Methodism in Florida is encouraged to become a member of the society.

Members of the commission continue to be available to local churches and to districts for workshops for local church historians. *Memory and Ministry: Caring for Your Church's Heritage,* a video produced by the General Commission on Archives and History, is available for local churches and other organizations interested in managing and preserving their records.

The commission was represented at the annual meetings of the SEJ Historical Society, the SEJ Commission on Archives and History, and the General Commission on Archives and History. Nell Thrift, archivist, is chairperson of the SEJ Commission and member of the General Commission.

This year's SEJ Historical Society annual meeting will be held July 8-11 at Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens, Tennessee. The theme will be *The Ministry of Methodism in the Holston Conference: Highlighting the Methodist Episcopal Church.* This gathering offers Florida Methodists a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our heritage and to enjoy the fellowship of the group.

During Annual Conference clergy who are celebrating significant anniversaries of their ordination as deacon will be recognized:

Ordained Deacon 1938
Harold E. Buell
E. Clayton Calhoun

Ordained Deacon 1958
Robert M. Brittain
W. Joe Clark
Alfred W. Eustus, Jr.
Theodore M. Haggard (deceased 1/9/08)

Harold M. Hendren
C. Edward Murfin, Jr.
Orville H. Ripley, Jr.
Michael G. Rivas
Riley P. Short
Branson L. Thurston

Ordained Deacon 1983

C. Lerbie Alligood
James A. Altman, Jr.
Marta J. Burke
Alfonso T. Delaney
Nicholas Godun II
Donald P. Hanna
David H. Hodges III
James F. Jennings
James E. Lake
Rodney M. McClarnon
Ronald Z. McCreary
Thomas H. McLeod
Clifford V. Melvin
Steven L. Souders
Patrice C. Spencer
Asa W. Sprague
Henry M. Steinmeyer
Barry M. White

Consecrated Diaconal Minister 1983

Vicki R. Walker

Churches celebrating anniversaries will also be recognized. Banners from the anniversary churches will displayed in the arena during the conference session.

125 years (1883):	Bartow, First
100 years (1908):	Barnett Memorial, Enterprise; Inman Memorial, Jacksonville; Florida United Methodist Children's Home
50 years (1958):	Asbury, Vero Beach; Christ, Holly Hill; Cutler Ridge, Miami; Flagler Beach; Forest Hills, Quincy; Grace, Lake Mary; Lakeside, Lake Worth; Lakewood Park, Lakeland; Palm Springs, Homestead; St. Mark's, Indialantic; Sylvan Abbey, Clearwater
25 years (1983):	Christ, Palm Bay; East Lake, Palm Harbor; Shady Hills; Suntree, Melbourne

M. McCoy Gibbs, Chairperson

BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE LAY LEADER AND BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

It is a responsibility of the annual conference lay leader to report to the annual conference each year. It is my pleasure to inform the members that the work of the laity continues to bear fruit. Yet there continue significant challenges to our being as effective as possible. As this will be the last report from me as conference lay leader, I have decided to highlight key areas, and provide for a more extensive report at the above site, which is at the conference website, tab ministries, then laity matters.

Our board meets twice annually, and more often with parts of the board by conference call, in order to conserve resources. We actively email as helpful to individuals and our collective work.

For new members, I am completing four years of service in this office, which I consider an honor, preceding which I served four years as the compensated director of connectional ministries for the conference, with a year in between. I come to my comments well equipped to make them. This report is for more than, but includes the preceding year.

As the recent Pew study (along with several others) makes clear is that the United States Christian church organizations are facing some serious challenges which could lead to their demise as an effective instrument in building the Kingdom of God. We have faced that reality far earlier than our counterparts around the country, brought into our conversations the most able minds and have taken a number of strategic actions seeking to be faithful to the mission of the denomination: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

First, the leadership of the conference and districts, clergy and lay alike, know where we are as we address the culture which surrounds us, and are thus grounded in reality. Second, we have a strong commitment to developing collaborative leadership throughout our system, from the area bishop serving the Florida Conference and the Conference Lay Leader, through the District Superintendents and District Leaders of Laity to where it matters most…the appointed pastor-leader and resident lay leadership of that congregation. Bishop Whitaker and I fully appreciate that those congregations which have a healthy, collaborative, authentic relationship between the appointed pastor and the leadership of the congregation, there will be an effective church on mission. Where that is not the case, the odds are high that the local church is struggling to meet its mission.

Third, we are gaining focus in our work. Our Council of Bishops, the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, our general agencies and consultants all have been at work and that work has been carefully and prayerfully considered. "The Methodist Way" is a primary focus. Your Board of Lay Ministry is joining with the Conference Committee on Congregational Transformation to provide an outstanding set of learning opportunities concerning this area of focus the day before conference begins. I encourage all members of the annual conference to participate. You will hear more at annual conference about this. As for the Board of Lay Ministry, our focus has been on continuing a comprehensive effort at nurturing collaborative clergy/lay leadership at the district level as a precursor to changing the culture of the laity. While perfection has not been reached, we are on our way!

The challenge ahead is deepening leadership learning at the local church level, for clergy and laity alike. The board is prepared to assume a key role in that work, which offers significant possibilities for heightened mission effectiveness in our local churches.

I am humbly grateful for having had this opportunity to serve through leadership during these challenging times. Godspeed!

Bill Walker, Conference Lay Leader

LAY SPEAKING MINISTRIES

The purpose of Lay Speaking Ministries is to train members to be able to serve their church and community in a better way through their leadership, their roles in caring ministries and through communicating the word of God by preaching, teaching, and evangelism.

Our number of Lay Speakers is growing rapidly with courses being offered in Spanish, Creole, Korean, and Vietnamese. We really appreciate the churches that have offered their facilities and provided lunch for those taking courses.

Our District Directors work very hard throughout the year, providing both Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking courses several times a year. Two new courses were introduced by the General Board of Discipleship at the Association for Conference Directors of Lay Speaking Ministries held in Norcross, GA in January: "From Your Heart to Theirs", which addresses the preparation of an engaging sermon; and "Justice in Everyday Life", helping to understand our Social Principles as a 'means of grace'.

Both these courses will be offered at our 12th Annual Conference Training Event at the Life Enrichment Center on August 22-24. Other courses that will be offered are "Leading in Prayer", "Storytelling", and "Lay Speakers Meet John Wesley the Person". In addition to these ten-hour courses, this will be a weekend of worship and fellowship. Dr. Roger Swanson will be the keynote speaker on Friday evening.

With God's help and guidance our ministry will continue to grow under the guidance of our new Conference Director, starting in June, Gwen Dube` from Jacksonville. I have been blessed to be able to serve these past seven years, and thank everyone for their support and prayers.

Gayle Hogan, Conference Director

LAY RENEWAL

Our year has been a prayerful one. We started with a successful mission in MacClenny. Then we had our other scheduled missions postponed and rescheduled for this fall (November). The various churches involved had some unforeseen situations and so we respected the wishes of the Congregations and Pastors to move our mission to later dates in November.

We feel very strongly that our ministry is a building block for spiritual growth that contributes to the other parts of our continuing relationship with Christ. Our Coordinators and Witnesses are involved in other ministries and are extremely busy, however they feel it is their calling to tell of Christ in their lives. They believe, as I do, that the best witness of Christ is the one in your life. We look forward to serving your congregation when you feel the Lord has a purpose for our Ministry. We are very cost conscious and our requirements are very minor. We travel at our own expense, you feed us (Good Methodist potluck of course and put us up in your congregation for the weekend) and we ask for a love offering on Sunday. The weekend mission also contributes to a building of Small Groups Ministry, Outreach to Neighborhoods and Community. It also strengthens the relationships of the Church's Lay Mission Committee, as they work together to promote the weekend.

Richard and Judie Barnes

FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST MEN

Greetings in the name of Jesus from the Conference United Methodist Men. I wish to express my thanks to the Conference Committee and the Board of Directors for their support, leadership, service and dedication to Jesus Christ. A special thanks to Don and Sue Heishman for their tireless efforts in the service of the King.

In 2007 we completed 59 years of men's retreats and 31 years of couples retreats. The spring of 2008 we just completed the 32nd Annual Spiritual Retreats for couples and celebrating 60 years of Men's retreats in October 2008. We will make a test run of a service project for a local United Methodist Church in the area on Saturday afternoon of the Men's Contemporary retreat. The theme for 2008 is Jesus Is the Lighthouse. At the time we celebrate 60 years of men's retreats in Florida, we also celebrate with the General Commission of UMM 100 years of making disciples. Also, a milestone for Florida United Methodist Men was that John Dowell was elected as the incoming president of NACP, National Association of Conference Presidents for the next quadrennium.

Please stop by the United Methodist Men's booth to pick up information about the 2008 men's retreats in October and the 2009 Couples' retreats. We have a great line up of speakers. I would encourage men and couples that if you have not been able to attend a retreat to please give us a try. May I also ask for your help in promoting and supporting the Leesburg Men's and Couples' retreats in your church?

We still have more work to do with our district reorganization. We would like to encourage each local church to promote small groups of men meeting for Prayer, Bible Study and Accountability. We also want to encourage the chartering of men's fellowships in the local churches. Any of the conference officers are ready and willing to come to your local church or District meetings to encourage MENS Ministry. I recently had the pleasure of meeting with the men of First Hernando, Skycrest in Clearwater and North Naples. I also was able to speak to St. Paul's in Ocala on Sunday when they celebrated United Methodist Men's day in their church.

We continue to provide Ministry scholarships for those in college and seminary with plans on entering the Florida Conference. We have a large number of men and women in the pulpits of the Florida Conference today that have benefited from a United Methodist Men's scholarship. Please see our web site, www.ummflconf.org, under scholarships for an application or contact Joel Fears our scholarship chairman.

In addition to ministry scholarships we continue our support of the United Methodist Children's Home, the Jim Russo Prison Ministry and the Scouting Ministry. We have had a great past but we cannot live in the past as the scripture tells us that today is the day of salvation and today is the day of opportunity.

It was with pleasure that in 2007 the Reverend Gerald F. VanDyken, Jr. was the United Methodist Men's recipient of the Southeastern Jurisdictional - G. Ross Freeman award from Florida. We will be presenting another deserving recipient of the G. Ross Freeman award this year, Rev. Kevin James.

We look forward to seeing you at a Men's or Couples' retreat very soon. Please check our Web site (www.ummflconf.org) and our toll free number (877-815-3692) for current retreat information and reservation forms.

Jesus Is The Lighthouse, Rodney Akers, Florida Conference President of United Methodist Men

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Called By God

Women from across the Conference gathered to celebrate the legacy and heritage of foremothers of the Organization of United Methodist Women during Conference Annual Meeting at Florida Southern College at the Brandscomb Auditorium in Lakeland, Florida, November 10, 2007. A Parade of Children opened the meeting carrying flags, banners and balloons depicting the work of the organization. The tune "We're March In the Light of God" was the message. Excitement filled the place.

We celebrate our gifts, time and talents as servants called by God to be in mission as we continue to fulfill the purpose. Women, Children and Youth are our priorities.

We celebrate our membership in a 2-year long campaign. The Florida Conference was rewarded a certificate from The Southeastern Jurisdiction for leading in membership throughout the jurisdiction. Some say we are on decline, but I say we are alive and well, and will continue to reach out. I encourage you to "Get Connected," join United Methodist Women.

We celebrate Teens and College/University Women. Young circles are being established in districts, and the goal is to establish teen district circles that reach beyond the local church. During the September Spiritual Life Retreat over 45 Teens and College/University women attended an overnight Mini-Retreat. Ages ranged from 13-21 years of age. As they departed for home they looked with excitement and, asked, "Can we do this again?"

We celebrate the School of Christian Mission. Over 135 young people attended the weekend event from Pre-K through 12th grade and about 21 young adults age 19-21. The school was held at Bethune Cookman University. Dr. Trudie Kibbe Reed, President of the University participated.

The elections of officers took place at Conference Annual Meeting, Nov. 10, 2007 which I am proud to represent you for another two years. We ended the year with Goals and Evaluation in December 2007, and began with Leadership Training in January 2008.

Children Week in Tallahassee is another important adventure. Many traveled and joined in the Bishop Initiative's (BICAP) and the Conference Mission and Justice to lobby and speak to representatives throughout the state - "One Voice for Children."

Called by God, United Methodist Women traveled to Hampton, Virginia to attend the last Southeastern Jurisdiction Meeting known to many of its kind. Every 4 years we come together to elect leaders of the Core Planning Group and Directors to Women's Division. Annie Woods was elected as Vice President.

We will attend Regional School where training is given which prepares us for the Florida School of Christian Mission. There are 3 studies offered this years, "I Believe in Jesus" is to love and live as Jesus lived, valuing all creation; "Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival" teaches us that creation includes all that comes from God and all that comes from the heart and mind of God is scared; and "Israel/Palestine," a 2 year course; while God has given humanity the gifts of life and relationship, too often we have created barriers between people and land. To gain more insight, I invite you to attend the 2008 School of Christian Mission at Bethune Cookman University, July 22-25, week school or July 25-27, 2008, weekend event.

During 2007 the conference team was stricken by death: Tish Bear, Spiritual Growth Coordinator. We celebrate her life on the team, and we celebrate her new life with Christ.

The Conference Mission Team is dedicated, and we are challenged to do the work of Mission Ministry to Women, Children and Youth. We take the calling to be in ministry seriously and we live out the purpose by accepting the call knowing that we are vessels, balls of clay in the "Potter Hands" who molds us and shapes us into a new creation committed to the work to the "Least of These".

Your financial support is appreciated, and we have pledged over $600,000. God has gifted us to be all that we can be, and to use our gifts as we remember our foremothers who paved the way some 138 years ago. We are an organized unit of women with a PURPOSE.

In His Service, Paulette Monroe, President

MINISTRY OF THE ORDAINED

THE CENTER FOR CLERGY EXCELLENCE

It is appropriate to begin this report by saying "thank you" to folk who have related directly to the Center for Clergy Excellence and are now completing their respective terms of service.

Annette Pendergrass has served twelve years on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and the last four years as the Board's chairperson. Her insight and key leadership have been instrumental in assisting the Board to be a highly effective gathering of people who care deeply about the church and the clergy who serve the church. She has empowered this Board to be fully cognizant of its responsibilities to the individuals who apply for a clergy relationship as well as the churches and other ministry settings in which they will serve.

Scott Baker has served eight years on the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the last four as its chairperson. In that capacity he also served as the chair of the Joint Committee on Incapacity. It is in this latter role that he related to the Center. The Joint Committee on Incapacity deals with clergy who are struggling with health issues. Scott brought to this group a focus of passion and compassion that led the committee to do the right thing for those who were applying.

Terri Hill has stepped in to chair the Committee on Elder Effectiveness. This instrumental group was ably led by Terri as she picked up where Bob Tindale had left off. Both of these leaders viewed the work of this committee as a process of trying to restore referred elders to a level of effectiveness that would help them serve the church with joy again.

Barbara Williams Riddle is completing four years of serving as the chairperson of the Preachers Relief Board. Whereas in the past the Board primarily dealt with housing needs, the Board is now challenged by clergy who are often faced economic issues forced by health insurance costs and other variables in their lives. Barbara has helped the Board create a better process of gaining full information on applicants so that the best decision can be made to assist clergy who are in need of some financial help. She has done this with the constant balance of the available funds and the needs of the individuals.

Dan Casselberry just came on the Commission on Equitable Compensation, and started as its chair! I marvel at how quickly he has grasped the scope of the responsibilities of the Commission and the leadership he has already provided. And, I look forward to his continuing leadership on the Commission.

This year focused on young clergy, and in particular, the recruitment of young clergy. Plans are underway for an invitational event for young people who are 18 to 25 years of age and are either are expressing a call to ministry, or are willing to explore the possibility of such a call in their lives. The event will be held in Orlando on February 20-22, 2009 and is entitled, **SCREAM: Getting Ready for the Ride!** Seventy-five young adults will be invited to attend this event. If you know of someone who should be invited, please forward their information to me at ddodge@flumc.org.

I am grateful to the team of folk who are planning this event and giving overall direction to this area of emphasis. They include Cory Britt, Melissa Delker, Melissa Pisco, Vance Raines, Scott Smith and Nancy Dixon Walton. The next area of focus for this group will be on the continued nurturing of young clergy after ordination.

As we remember from what Lovett Weems told us last year at annual conference, the denomination has seen the percentage of young clergy decrease to an all time low. We also can remember that Lovett commended us for being above the denominational average and to continue to grow in this area. The last two probationary members classes reflected one-third of its members to be thirty-five and younger. This year's class reflects just over 31% in that age group.

Our trend toward a younger group of clergy has every prospect of continuing. In my visits to Candler, Gammon, Duke and Asbury-Wilmore, nearly 80% of the students with whom I visited were thirty years of age or younger. This is significantly different than when I did my first set of campus visits in 1997. While the Asbury-Orlando campus tends to be an older population due to its commuter nature, there is still a significant number of younger students who are a part of that campus's enrollment.

The United Methodist Church continues its denominational efforts to provide opportunities for young adults to explore a possible call to ministry. This is done through a number of ways, including the website, www.explorecalling.org, and a national event, Exploration 2009, to be held in Dallas, Texas November 13-15, 2009. The Center for Clergy Excellence will provide financial assistance for young people who wish to attend this event but are not able to afford it financially.

In the midst of this emphasis on young adults and ministry, it is important for us to remember one other thing that Lovett said to us. In response to the question, "Are young clergy better?" Lovett responded, "No, they're just younger!" We continue to need persons of all ages to respond to the call that God placed in their lives.

In the year ahead the other major focus of the Center for Clergy Excellence will be on life-long learning for clergy. With the assistance of the Chairs of the Order of Elders and Order of Deacons, and the President of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, we will be building a system within the Florida Conference to bring significant opportunities to Florida for ongoing theological education, spiritual formation, and clergy skill development. If you have ideas of what would be helpful to you, please forward those ideas to me.

Finally, I want to say a huge "thank you" to Winnie Dean and Wanda Byrd. Their dedication to the people and the processes that relate to the Center continue to amaze me. The proficiency in which they both complete their tasks often goes unnoticed precisely because they do it all so well! As an annual conference we owe both of these dedicated servants of the church a great deal of gratitude.

I continue to look forward to the journey ahead, while constantly wondering what God might have in mind around the next corner.

David A. Dodge, Executive Director

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY REPORT

The Florida Conference Board of Ordained Ministry is charged with the responsibility of providing leadership, both lay and ordained, to the churches of the Florida Annual Conference. Our goal is to provide leadership that is equipped to lead the churches of the Annual Conference in fruitful and vital ministry within their communities and beyond. This important and challenging work is carried out by an incredibly faithful, loving and invested group of folks, both lay and clergy who understand both the awesome privilege and the incredible responsibility of serving in this area of leadership in the annual conference. Our work together involves everything from helping people to discern the call of God in their lives, to mentoring, shaping, encouraging, evaluating and providing ongoing support and enrichment opportunities for a lifetime of service to Jesus Christ and the church. As we carry out this work, we are constantly seeking new ways to evaluate, refine, and improve all of our processes to accomplish our goals with both grace and effectiveness.

This year, the board received 67 applications. At annual conference we will commission two Probationary Deacons and 14 Probationary Elders. We will also ordain two Deacons and 13 Elders and we will license eight Local Pastors.

One of the great concerns of the BOM at this time is the high cost of the education that is necessary for preparing people to serve in ministry. The rising cost of education, combined with fewer opportunities for scholarships and grants is causing many candidates for ministry to graduate with high levels of educational debt that will clearly be a burden for them to carry into ministry. To that end, we are excited about the potential for providing more funding for ministerial candidates as a result of the Together! Campaign for the Florida Conference that is currently being planned. We will also be working with District Committees on Ordained Ministry to help candidates be aware of current funding opportunities that may be available to them to ease some of the financial strain.

We were also encouraged this year in our visits with candidates for ministry at our seminaries. While we continue to need to focus on the growing shortage of younger clergy across our denomination, we were encouraged to see a drop in the overall age of those attending seminary from Florida at this time. It was clear that this change is the result of the diligent efforts of local churches, pastors and campus ministries in helping young adults consider their vocation, providing the time and space for them to explore those issues in the context of their faith. This is clearly a role in which every church and pastor needs to provide leadership.

We are again grateful to Rev. Kendall and Karen Taylor for serving as hosts for our candidates during our January interviews. They continue to provide a wonderful spirit of hospitality and support to all of those going through the interview process and we know their welcome and their prayers were very much appreciated by all the candidates.

Carole Rooks continues to provide excellent leadership in training our District Committees on Ministry and our candidacy mentors and Tim Carson continues to lead the team that oversees the Residents in Ministry process for our probationary

members. We are very grateful to the work of each of these folks. Likewise we are incredibly grateful to those who serve on the Conference Relations Committee and the Executive Committee of the Board.

I would also like to personally thank all those who will be leaving the Board of Ministry after fulfilling their terms of service, including Emilio Chaviano, Henry Cribb, David Hodges, Mac Steinmeyer, Wayne Curry, Juanita Bryant, Durwood Foshee, Carmen Johns, Donna Heck, Jacquie Leveron, Waite Willis, John Hill, Linda Mobley and Emily Ann Zimmerman. Your faithfulness and dedication to this work has served the church well and will continue to make a difference for years to come.

The Board and all of our candidates continue to owe a great debt to Winnie Dean, Administrative Assistant in the Center for Clergy Excellence, who takes great care of the board and all of our candidates. Our conference is also incredibly blessed to have Rev. David Dodge serving as the Executive Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence. David's thoughtful and visionary work in this area makes serving on the Board of Ordained Ministry a joy and a privilege. And finally, I offer my deep appreciation for the dedicated, mission minded group of lay and clergy persons across the conference that serve on the Conference Board and that serve on District Committees of Ordained Ministry. Thank you for your investment of time, energy, heart and faith in this important ministry of the Annual Conference.

Submitted respectfully, Annette S. Pendergrass, Chairperson

RECOMMENDED FOR ELDER IN FULL CONNECTION

Deborah L. Allen
Age 32; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Gulf Central District.

Kandace L. Brooks
Age 48; single; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District.

John G. Fisher
Age 45; married; Asbury Theological Seminary, Atlantic Central District.

Britt W. Gilmore
Age 32; married; Duke Divinity School; East Central District.

Christine A. Holden
Age 35; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; North Central District.

Richard A. Jones
Age; 39; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Atlantic Central District.

John K. Legg
Age 41; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; South Central District.

Armando J. Rodriguez, Jr.
Age 44; married; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; South Central District.

Alex A. Shanks
Age 29; married; Duke Divinity School; South East District.

James J. Therrell, Jr.
Age 33; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District.

Kimberly C. Uchimura
Age 49; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; South Central District.

Sallie B. Vandervort
Age 58; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Gulf Central District.

Nancy D. Walton
Age 37; married; Duke Divinity School; North West District.

RECOMMENDED FOR DEACON IN FULL CONNECTION
John M. DeMarco
Age 40; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Atlantic Central District.

Richard D. Landon
Age 43; married; Candler School of Theology; Gulf Central District.

RECOMMENDED FOR PROBATIONARY MEMBERSHIP
Anne H. Butcher
Age 46; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; South Central District; Candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Heather M. Collver
Age 37; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; South East District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Jaime A. Faberlle
Age 37; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Anthony R. Fotsch
Age 35; single; Asbury Theological Seminary; South East District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

W. Ryan Hall
Age 34; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Dionne C. Hammond
Age 41; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; South Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Brian T. Hurley
Age 33; single; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Rebecca T. Hyvonen
Age 48; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Nakako E. Kellum
Age 39; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; North Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Jeffrey N. Peppers
Age 46; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Atlantic Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Katherine M. Pestel
Age 27; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Gulf Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Gordon A. Pike
Age 56; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; North Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Robert B. Roseberry
Age 27; married; Candler School of Theology; Gulf Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Hung Bo Sim
Age 46; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; Atlantic Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Mary B. (Molly) Warren

Age 55; married; Asbury Theological Seminary; East Central District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

Kimberly Weir
Age 40; single; Asbury Theological Seminary; North East District; candidate for Commissioned Minister.

TO BE LICENSED AS LOCAL PASTORS
Kristen A. Bjorn
W. Stephen Hart
Robert Johnson
Ronald W. Mueller
Jose D. Nieves
John Peavey
Charline Pierre
F. J. Eric Shepard
Esperance St. Louis
Wilfrede Toussaint
Lai Minh (Sabrina) Tu
Chester J. Zarzycki, Jr.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND

The Ministerial Education Fund apportionment supports a fundamental part of the connectional ministry of the United Methodist Church. It enables all local churches throughout the conference to assist persons who are candidates for ministry. With the contributions made by members of the churches during 2006, your Board has been able to assist persons up to $3,000 per year. This help is often crucial for candidates, many of whom give up other careers to enter the ministry. These are the guidelines which the Ministerial Education Fund committee uses in administering these funds:

Ministerial Education Funds (MEF) will be made available to all certified candidates who are attending seminary. Local Pastors in Course of Study Schools may receive scholarship assistance from MEF, as can persons attending the Licensing School. MEF funds may also be used to provide scholarship assistance to local pastors and deacons, licensed by the Board of Ordained Ministry, who are enrolled in an ACPE-approved CPE program.

MEF student aid money will be made available to certified candidates for Diaconal Ministry who are enrolled full-time in a master's degree program. The same MEF repayment process will be used for diaconal ministers coming to Florida from other conferences as is used for ordained ministers. No MEF grants will be used for professional certification.

MEF continuing education grants will be made available to Diaconal Ministers to help finance their two annual continuing education units on the same basis as such funds are made available to ordained ministers.

Certified candidates for diaconal ministry taking the foundational studies shall be entitled to MEF assistance on the same basis as local pastors attending the course of study.

Distribution of MEF receipts is 90% for students and 10% for continuing education.

Ministerial Education Fund (MEF)	2005	2006	2007
Apportioned to local church	1,352,653	1,348,223	1,312,782
Received from local churches	1,127,102	1,078,261	967,974
75% of MEF monies received are sent to the General Church for Seminary students			
Total sent to General Church	897,054	858,068	725,936
25% of MEF monies received remain in the Florida Conference for student aid and continuing education			
Total Florida Conference Funds available	281,775	220,192	241,978
For Student aid (90% of retained funds)	253,598	242,609	217,780
For Continuing Ed (10% of retained funds)	28,178	22,019	24,198
Student Aid			
Amount available from prior years	514,622	625,258	770,714
Received from other sources (non-Apportioned)	1,000		
Current Year Allocation	253,598		217,780
Disbursed for students	(143,962)	(97,153)	(91,288.59)
Available for future use	625,258	770,714	897,205.41
Continuing Education			
Amount available from prior years	27,276	27,390	18,360
Received from other sources (non-Apportioned)	728		
Current Year Allocation	28,178	22,019	24,198
Disbursed for continuing education	(28,792)	(31,049)	(35,669.43)
Available for future use	27,390	18,360	6,888.57

COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The Commission on Equitable Compensation exists to assist churches who are in need of financial support on a short term basis. It is our goal to see transformation come through the implementation of new vision by making disciples for Jesus Christ. The Commission's purpose is to provide short term grants that assist in this process of making disciples. These grants are designed to help churches continue in full time ministry as they revision their future, thus helping them to return to a self supporting status. It is our prayer as a commission, that we can be both a facilitator and an encourager in the ministry of churches in need of short term financial assistance.

Guidelines for 2009 - Equitable Compensation funds will be granted in accordance with the following guidelines. Only the Equitable Compensation Commission at the request of a District Superintendent may grant exceptions.

1. Who is qualified to receive minimum salary funds?
   a. All full-time pastors who are not excluded in Section 2.
   b. Student Pastors - maximum allowable $3,700 from Equitable Compensation Funds with total salary not to exceed $8,000.
   c. Ministers serving full time pastoral assignments with an average attendance of 100 in worship. If the attendance figures drop over a three year period, consideration will be given to the church becoming part of a circuit or part-time, if the church wants to remain eligible for Equitable Compensation funding. The exceptions are student appointments and part-time pastors.
2. Who is not eligible for minimum salary support?
   a. All pastors who are retired.
   b. Part-time pastors are not eligible for minimum salary support except in those cases where ministry within the discretion of the District Superintendent and Cabinet warrant special support. The amount of support available will not exceed 50% of the amount available on a full-time basis.

c. Full time appointments with less than 100 in average worship attendance.
d. Ministers on Leave of Absence.
e. Associate Pastors.
f. Any ordained conference member not under pastoral appointment.
g. Those who are appointed from other Annual Conferences under Disciplinary appointment of ¶¶346.1 and 346.2.

3. To be eligible, a pastor must live in the bounds of his/her parish and give full-time service to that charge. Studies pursued in an approved college or university is considered part of the work of the ministry if approved by the District Superintendent.
4. Applications for Equitable Compensation funds are submitted twice a year and must be received by the Conference office on or before November 1st and April 1st.

The November 1st application requires:

a. The signature of the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
b. A Vision and Mission statement as envisioned by the whole body of the church.
c. A written Ministry Plan for implementing the Vision and Mission statement into the life of the church.
d. A Treasurers report, including all assets, for the current year to date status of the financial condition of the church.
e. A request for funds by the Charge Conference and the signature of the District Superintendent.
f. A copy of the congregation's Stewardship Commitment Plan.
g. A copy of the most recent "Congregational Category Survey."
h. Summary of the Measurable Goals accomplished to date as reflected in Evangelism, Worship, and Outreach.

The April 1st application may be completed by the District Superintendent and submitted to the Conference office. If not submitted the previous November, the application must include all of the above requirements. All congregations receiving Equitable Compensation Grants must renew their application by the April 1st deadline. Please use the application form found at www.flumc.org and note on the application "A Request for Renewal" for the current funding year.

5. Additional support, up to $2,000, is available for "Missional Congregations." "Chartered Churches" with documented outreach to the poor, through service and evangelism may also apply for "Missional" support, with the approval of the District Superintendent. The church must be receiving an Equitable Compensation grant in order to be eligible for this additional support.
6. Before a church is granted salary support, the church must conduct, or agree to conduct, a Stewardship Commitment plan.
7. The maximum allowable salary support is 20% of minimum salary.
8. Assistance may not be received from both Missional Funds and New Church Development Funds. Assistance may not be received from both Minimum Salary Support Funds and New Church Development Funds.
9. Churches whose salary support is at "The Minimum" may apply for assistance with utilities, health insurance, or moving expenses.
10. Churches/missions must submit a plan for ministry when making an initial application for equitable compensation funds. This plan must demonstrate the need for assistance and the manner in which the church/mission will be working to eliminate that need in a timely way.
11. Churches/missions may receive the requested assistance for up to five years. In year six (6) the original request will be reduced by 25%; in year seven (7) by 50%; in year eight (8) 75%. There will be no assistance granted after the eighth year.
12. Any funds granted to those churches approved, will first have to pay any outstanding balances owed to the Florida Conference. Those items that must be paid in full include:
    a. Health Insurance premiums
    b. Property and Casualty premiums
    c. Pension premiums
    d. Workers Compensation premiums, and

e. "The Clergy Support" line item from apportionments. The approved funds from the grant will be used to pay the balances of any outstanding debit and the balance of the funds will come to the church.

13. Reimbursement Accounts: Charges receiving Equitable Compensation Funds may establish a reimbursement account up to $2,000.
14. Salary reduction for pension purposes: Clergy receiving Equitable Compensation funds may designate a portion of their compensation to the "Before Tax" contribution for the pension program.

Minimum Salary Recommendations - The Commission has reviewed the cost of living index and suggests the following minimum salary levels for full time appointments.

	2008	2009
Full Connection	$35,000	$36,750
Probationary Members	$33,000	$34,650
Associate Members	$32,000	$33,600
Local Pastor with M. Div. or five years of Course of Study	$31,000	$32,550
Local Pastor with less than five years of Course of Study	$30,500	$32,025

ADDITIONAL EQUITABLE COMPENSATION INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Missional Congregations:

1. Missional situations are those missions or organized churches in areas which demand an effective ministry but are not financially capable of providing such ministries without Conference assistance. There will be an annual review by the District Superintendent, to determine if each Missional situation in the district meets the guidelines.
2. The Equitable Compensation Commission may provide amounts up to $2,000 for Missional support, and an additional $2,000 may be granted for Haitian and Hispanic congregations in exceptional circumstances. Request for salary support from Equitable Compensation Commission for Missional situations shall be made by November 1st and April 1st and shall accompany the Equitable Compensation Request form.
3. Eligibility for extended Missional support. A mission must meet the following criteria to receive extended support and will be annually reviewed to determine continued compliance until they are able to establish independence. Chartered congregations are not eligible.
   a. Provide evidence that the mission has a vision statement, rooted in the Great Commission, which actually functions to shape the decisions about deployment of people and financial resources in ministry.
   b. Provide evidence that the pastor exerts effective leadership in casting and realizing the vision.
   c. Provide evidence of the mission's effectiveness in making and growing disciples.
      1) The mission makes a number of new disciples (first time professions of faith or "restorations") at least equal to 10% of its average worship attendance.
      2) The mission has a system of nurturing discipleship for all persons, long time Christians and newly professed ones.
      3) The mission carries out a consistent program of teaching the stewardship dimension of discipleship including sacrificial proportionate giving by all disciples.
      4) The mission has a worship average attendance of at least 125, or grew in attendance in the past 12 months at a rate that would project reaching 125 in no more than 5 years.
      5) Provide evidence that the mission is taking responsibility for a greater and greater percentage of its total expenditures. The goal is financial independence in some reasonable time frame.

Transforming Congregations - Congregations which are in need of transformation, according to the Conference's definition adopted in 2003, may receive a grant of no more than $10,000 per year for up to five years, if they cannot afford the salary of available pastors with the requisite transformational skills and leadership ability. The Cabinet will follow these guidelines in making appointments according to "fit" and will use funds from the Commission to supplement salaries if needed to achieve the "fit."

1. The congregation has a vision statement that actually functions to shape decisions about deployment of people and financial resources.
2. The vision is rooted in the Great Commission.
3. The projected pastor is committed to stay at the church for at least 6 years.
4. The congregation wants "transformation" for Missional rather than for survival reasons. They understand the need they have for transformation and agree to cooperate in transforming with the pastor appointed to lead.
5. The leaders of the congregation are committed to transforming. They have an understanding of what transformation is, what it is going to cost in terms of sacrifice and fundamental change in congregational life, and how long this will take.

6. The church is willing to re-evaluate its leadership structures and put leaders in place who are willing to implement the changes transformation requires in the local church context.
7. The church will enter the NCD transformation process using a coach certified and assigned by the Office of Congregational Transformation. The Congregation must have taken the NCD Assessment with the results shared with the Office of Congregational Transformation. An alternative process may be chosen with the approval of the District Superintendent, the Office of Congregational Transformation and or the District Congregational Transformation Team.
8. A church in transformation, while experiencing fundamental and often painful change, is still a part of the UM connection. Some churches undergoing transformation may have difficulty fulfilling the following responsibilities (i.e. connectional giving, pension and health insurance contributions for pastor, property insurance, workers compensation premiums.)

*In order to receive help from the Commission on Equitable Compensation the church will affirm these as responsibilities they intend to fulfill. If the church has been unable to fulfill these responsibilities they will develop a covenant, signed by the "Leadership Team" and carry out a plan to reach annual fulfillment within 5 years. The process of transformation may temporarily cause a reduction in the number of people participating in the life of the church and a reduction in financial strength. In this situation temporary accommodation can be arranged, without lessening the church's long term commitment to fulfill their connectional responsibilities. The Superintendent recommends the church for this program in partnership with the Office of Congregational Transformation.

Utilities, Health Insurance, Moving Expenses - The Equitable Compensation Commission recommends that each local church pay the Pastor's utilities and the group hospitalization premium. In hardship situations pastors may apply through their District Superintendent to the Equitable Compensation Commission for $720 in utility payments not covered by the local church. The Equitable Compensation Commission will pay up to $5,000 of the base Health Insurance plan. In areas where HMO's are available, they shall be considered the base plan.

The Equitable Compensation Commission joins with the Cabinet in recommending that each receiving church pay actual moving expenses within the bounds of the Florida Conference. Pastors at minimum salary level may apply through their District Superintendent to the Equitable Compensation Commission for funds not to exceed $500 or 75% of the total cost if not paid by the local church.

Parsonage Fund - This fund is intended for the purchase and upgrading of parsonages and not for rental property or pastors living in their own homes. Application can be made through the District Superintendent for grants not exceeding $3,600 for full time minister or $1,800 for part-time minister. The funds, if granted, will be paid upon the submission of receipts for the work completed to the parsonage, or the proof of a mortgage.

2009 Budget Request

The Council on Finance and Administration is requested to appropriate $350,000 for the Equitable Compensation Commission for the fiscal year 2008. The Conference Treasurer shall remit funds to the District Superintendents and or the church as certified by the Executive Director of the Equitable Compensation Commission.

	2008	2009
Equitable Salaries	$ 85,140	$150,000
Transformation Grants	$ 43,750	$10,000
Longevity	$ 10,500	-------
Missional	$ 46,800	$35,000
Haitian/Hispanic	$ 23,260	$25,000
Pensions	$ 21,140	$30,000
Utilities and Moving	$ 10,460	$11,000
Health Insurance	$ 74,550	$45,000
Parsonage Fund	$ 31,580	$40,000
Workers Compensation	$ 1,475	$1,500
Administration	$ 1,345	$2,500
Grand Total	$ 350,000	$350,000

Respectfully Submitted, Dan Casselberry, Chairperson; David A. Dodge, Executive Director

FLORIDA CONFERENCE BOARD OF PENSIONS AND HEALTH BENEFITS

This report marks the completion of my eighth and final year as a member of the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits and thus, my final year as Chair of the Board. I have many people to thank for the fruitful journey we have traveled. As your Board we have struggled to understand and to administer changes in health plans and pension plans, always seeking to improve service to the members of the Florida Conference and keep costs under control in a very volatile and inflationary industry. Words are inadequate to express my gratitude for the assistance that we on the Board have received from many, many people.

I want to thank the Treasurer's Office, Randy Casey Rutland and now Mickey Wilson, for their indispensable guidance. In addition Wendy McCoy, our Conference Benefits Officer, has added professionalism and expertise that has served everyone, from members of the Board of today to the surviving spouses of retired pastors of years gone by. Along with them we must express appreciation for the work of their staffs, especially Helen Mitchell, Lois Durham, and Casey McCoy.

The Board has been well served by AON Consulting throughout my tenure. They have made the myriad of options and details of plan designs understandable to people who do not have a career in insurance or pensions such as myself. Finally I especially must thank the members of the Board themselves. Frankly, the work they do is sometimes taken for granted, appreciated by some, avoided by some, and sometimes, I hate to say, even ridiculed as boring and superfluous. It is not boring and superfluous work though, to those who are struggling to cope with today's escalating prescription prices or to pay the bills with the income of a retirement check after serving the Conference for their entire careers.

Barbara Pearce has put in countless hours examining proposals and assisting Wendy in working out the best possible financial and service arrangements for our Health Insurance program. I am pleased and reassured as a Conference member that she will continue to assist the Board in a consultative capacity.

I consider it an honor to have served the Conference in this humble, behind the scenes capacity. I thank all of you for allowing me to contribute whatever gifts God has given me in this way for all these years.

Our Board, at our February meeting, expressed its concern that too often when a pastor changes appointment, the necessary paperwork for the reinstatement of pension and health benefits options does not get attended to in a timely manner (or at all!) resulting in lost benefits to Conference members.

We encourage the Conference to include in packets that are given to pastors that are moving explicit guidelines as to what they must do to continue their benefits, such as their personal contributions to their individual pension plan (UMPIP) for example.

Report I – Past Service Rate - The Conference Board recommends that the Past Service Rate for 2009 be set at $716 which continues our goal of remaining at 1.10% of our own Conference Average Compensation. This results in an increase in the past service rate of 3.02% over 2008.

Report II – Special Grants - The CBOPHB recommends special grants for Richard Johnston, William Johnston, Walter McMullen, Deborah Parsons, Donald Rock, Rev. Charles Constant and Rev. Thomas Black. The CBOPHB recommends continued special grants for former lay employees of the Florida Annual Conference: Elizabeth Hogan, E. J. Hogan and Mary Winslow.

Report III – Apportionment Recommendation for 2008 - The CBOPHB recommends the Apportionment for Pension and Health Benefits Programs, amounts that are required to meet the needs of the pension and health benefits programs of the Annual Conference according to Paragraph 1507 of the The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church – 2004 include the health insurance supplement and the funding for the reduction of retirees health insurance unfunded liability. The health insurance supplement currently is included in the Conference Clergy Support apportionment. The Apportionment for Pension and Health Benefits would be apportioned to the local churches by a formula determined by the conference Council of Finance and Administration and would include the current policy of prior claim on unpaid amounts by the local church for the following years.

The CBOPHB recommends the following amounts with referral to the Council of Finance and Administration as necessary to fund the Apportionment for the Pension and Health Benefits Programs for 2008:

Apportionment for Pension and Health Benefits Programs:

Retiree Health Insurance Supplement	$ 0
Insurance & Retirement Workshops	$4,500
Special Grants	$10,000
Pensions Support	$65,000
Total	$79,500

Statement of Financial Position - This year's statement has been revised to report all financial information by using audited financial statements. Prior year's statements reported financial results using "restated" numbers but did not incorporate audited financial statements. Details of these plans along with complete audited financial statements are available upon request from the Conference Treasurer.

Florida Annual Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits
Statement of Financial Position

	2005 Audited	2006 Audited	2007 Preliminary/Unaudited
Cash	-	-	6,218,731.00
Accounts Receivable	-	371,403	942,904.00
Investments:	-	-	-
Affiliated Organization	1,136,337	1,189,844	203,925
General Board of Pensions	26,450,202	28,625,710	30,383,979
Intercompany Fund Balances	1,037,136	2,104,712	
Total Assets at Close of Year	28,623,675	32,291,669	37,749,539
Income:			
Interest Income	-	-	59,208
Conference Service & Admin	-	-	1,892,237
Contributions & Grants	13,137	-	13,590
Net Investment on Return	2,092,328	3,531,427	2,651,689
Other Income			6,667
Total Revenue	2,105,465	3,531,427	4,623,391
Expenses:			
Conference Service & Admin	-	-	2,461,956
Other Expenses	-	-	75,394
Total Assets	-	-	2,537,350
Net Increase (Decrease in Assets)	2,105,465	3,531,427	2,086,041
Prior Year Balance	26,518,210	28,623,675	34,241,143
Net Assets	28,623,675	32,155,102	36,327,184

Report IV – Housing/Rental Allowance Resolution - Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the Florida Conference. The Florida Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

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

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

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (the "Discipline"), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits ("GBOPHB"), during the year 2008 by each active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and THAT the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, or a disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson's pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2) and regulations thereunder to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year.

Finally, at our February meeting, we heard from Dan O'Neill of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. He informed us of the critical need to provide more adequate funding for the pensions of clergy who serve many of the conferences overseas. Fifty five of sixty six annual conferences need additional pension support. While the Florida Conference has signed over our annual refund check from Cokesbury each year to assist in this effort, much more is needed. A goal of $20,000,000 has been set church-wide to assist the 55 annual conferences of 38 countries fund their pension programs so that their clergy will have an adequate, if modest, way of living after retirement. The Board was enthusiastic in its support of this effort and formed a Task Force to keep informed on this critical subject and to make recommendations to our own Board (and in turn to next year's Annual Conference) in light of any action taken at General Conference this year. We encourage the Annual Conference to follow this exciting avenue of ministry closely as we reach out to our denominational brothers and sisters all across the world.

Once again, thank you for the privilege of serving you these past eight years. It is with enthusiasm (and some relief) that I endorse the nominations of the new officers, Barbara Riddle, Chair; Shane McIntosh, Vice Chair; David Juliano, Secretary; and Michele Maier, Preacher's Relief Board.

Scott Allan Baker, Chairperson

HEALTH INSURANCE REPORT

At last year's Annual Conference, there was much to celebrate. It seemed unlikely that we could top that accomplishment for this year but the items to celebrate for this year continue to astound me. Your CBOPHB has worked tirelessly to address the many challenges presented throughout the year with board members devoting many hours of deliberation, thought, prayer and hard work to arrive at this point in time.

These are the updated numbers for the 5-year plan for Clergy Cost Sharing, ratified at the 2004 Annual Conference. Here is an overview of that Schedule, four years into the Schedule:

Schedule Approved at AC 2004							
Year	Total Estimated Cost - Clergy Health Care	Local Church %	Clergy %	Monthly Blended Rate	Monthly Participant Cost	Monthly P + 1 Cost	Monthly Family Cost
2005	$5,373,000	84%	16%	$750.00	$60.00	$155.00	$155.00
2006	$4,863,600	83%	17%	$700.00	$60.00	$155.00	$155.00
2007	$5,027,000	82%	18%	$750.00	$70.00	$175.00	$175.00
2008	$6,352,592*	81%	19%	$800.00	$75.00	$185.00	$185.00
2009		80%	20%				

*This amount has been subsidized by $720,024 to help offset projected increases. In addition, subsidies were also applied to Lay Employees (both Conference and Local Church employees) and Retirees to help mitigate projected increases of renewal rates.

Once again, this Board is celebrating our ability to remove the cost for Retiree Health Care from Apportionments, which has been one of the largest line items in Apportionments in the past. Several factors contribute to our ability to fund this item through methods other than Apportionments. First, a re-structure of the CPP – Clergy Protection Plan (essentially the long-term disability plan that covers clergy for disability and a broad range of other benefits) netted a reduction in the overall cost of that benefit to local churches. Second, a favorable earnings growth on the balance in the Deposit Service Account (DSA) allowed us to look at using a portion of those earnings for other purposes. Third, the Medicare prescription subsidy received at the end of 2007 is projected to be higher than 2006's subsidy and 100% of that subsidy is applied to the cost of retiree health care. After careful deliberation and review of available assets to fund this very important benefit for our covered Retirees, the Board voted for 2009's Budget to keep this line item removed from the Apportionments budget and use other resources to pay for Retiree Health Care. Had this number remained in the Apportionment's budget, it would be well over $1.67 million for 2009. This amount is used to pay for the Retired Clergy credits that are allowed, based on years of service to the Florida Conference, and other costs associated with Retirees for their health care benefits. The application of these credits to Retired Clergy allows the cost of health care to be more affordable in retirement. Funding the Retiree Health Care cost will be reviewed on an annual basis and evaluated each year, based on available resources. For this, we celebrate.

The board met in June and August of 2007. The Report from the Task Force was received. The Task Force was charged with exploring a self-funded option as a method of funding the health care benefits for covered participants, along with all the risk factors and potential benefits of this funding method. A thorough review of the Report was completed by the board. The recommendation from the Task Force to move to a self-funded Plan was accepted and approved by the board. The Benefits Office and the Treasurer's Office were to undertake all the necessary steps and processes to establish the self-funded basis for 2008, which has been accomplished. A Health Insurance subcommittee was established, consisting of seven board members, the Conference Benefits Officer and the Treasurer and supported by AON Consulting. The subcommittee is charged with monitoring the newly established self-funded Plan and provides support to the Benefits Office through the setup process, implementation of the Plan and actual management of the Plan. The subcommittee will meet more frequently than the full board.

In our continuing efforts to review and clarify eligibility wording for covered participants and their dependents throughout our Conference, our board reviewed the policy relating to surviving spouses of deceased Active clergy as it relates to continuation of health benefits. A Task Force had studied this issue (and financial implications of same) and made a proposal to the full board, which allowed a longer continuation period and recognition of years of service to help offset the cost of health care benefits. This proposal was accepted and implemented. For this, we celebrate!

The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) makes the following recommendations:

a. The CBOPHB is authorized to make decisions relating to benefits and offerings of coverage for the Florida Conference, including but not limited to the ability to adopt plans that include outside funding, self funding, or a combination thereof. These decisions will be made after study, research and evaluation, and consultation with industry experts, actuaries, consultants and other resources available at the time.
b. CIGNA is to continue as our carrier for the Basic Life Insurance Program. Minnesota Mutual is to continue as carrier for the Supplemental Life Insurance Program and will be paid 100% by each participant without Conference Funding. Minnesota Life is the carrier for an additional Voluntary Life with AD&D, paid 100% by each participant without Conference funding.
c. The firm of AON Consulting shall continue to serve as Agent of Record for the Life Insurance Program.

As we do every year, the board reviewed and approved a Budget for 2009, to be included in the CF&A Budget. It should be noted that the budget for Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits has gone from $3,139,320 in 2006 down to $79,500 for 2009. For this, we celebrate!

The CBOPHB continues to closely monitor all facets of the health benefits program for Clergy, Lay Employees and other covered participants. The Board is working on your behalf in conjunction with industry experts and others who advise us as we move forward through the maze that is health care and all it entails. The rising cost of health care continues to be a denominational as well as a national issue.

The CBOPHB expresses grateful appreciation to AON Consulting for their expertise and guidance through the many challenges of the past year. Their level of professionalism and support of this Board have been invaluable. In addition, the Conference Staff who work with our Board, specifically Wendy McCoy, Director of H.R. and Benefits and Mickey Wilson, Treasurer, have provided enormous support, encouragement and assistance throughout this past year. Their Offices and their internal staff – Lois Durham, Helen Mitchell and Casey McCoy – make sure our meetings are scheduled and coordinated appropriately. For each of them, we give Thanks and Praise!

On a personal note, I would like to reflect on my eight years of service to this board. It has indeed been an amazing journey, one that has challenged and tested me but has blessed me in more ways than I can count. It has strengthened my faith as I have worked together with the board members, as each person on our board or supporting our board has used their gifts and graces to help mold the benefits package and protect the covered participants that we serve. Our Chair, the Rev. Dr. Scott Baker, has led our board through many difficult and challenging situations, ending up exactly where we were intended to go. He has my greatest respect. There have been so many individuals who have supported our board, provided the benefit of their wisdom and helped us understand the correct path to take to serve this Conference and each of you. I echo Scott's comments in his Report and acknowledge that it has been an enormous blessing to me personally to have served on this board. One individual who has provided wise council to me on more than one occasion is the Rev. Dr. E. Keith Ewing. For his integrity, wise council and friendship, I give thanks! Thank you for allowing me to serve in this capacity.

Barbara Pearce, Vice-Chairperson

JOINT COMMITTEE ON INCAPACITY

The Florida Annual Conference provides incapacity benefits through participation in the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP). For benefit year 2009 and beyond, the Incapacity Benefit will equal 70% of Plan Compensation capped at 200% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). The minimum incapacity benefit will be 40% of the DAC. These benefits are coordinated with Social Security benefits. As the DAC increases the CPP Benefit will increase proportionately. In addition, there is a 3% annual increase each July, provided the benefit was in effect by the previous December 31.

The Joint Committee on Incapacity has approved continuing incapacity benefits for the Conference Year 2008-2009 for the following persons: Michael Bozeman, Thomas Ettinger, Pamela Feeser, Carol Green, Albert Hicks, Douglas Kirk, Skip Parvin, Carlo Sevilla, Michael Shirley, Robert Sterner, Matthew Swartsel, Thomas Weber, Brian James. We ask that all of us keep these persons and their families in our prayers.

Scott Allan Baker, Chairperson

PREACHER'S RELIEF BOARD

PROPERTY MANAGER'S REPORT: The Rev. Paul Morris reports that we have seventeen properties and one of them is currently vacant. All our homes are in good repair and are covered by the Conference property insurance. Value of all properties as listed on the tax rolls is over $900,000. The Preacher's Relief Board is deeply indebted to the Rev. Paul Morris who administers our retirement housing. Retiring clergy interested in housing should contact either Rev. Morris or Rev. David Dodge in the Center for Clergy Excellence.

RETIRING CLERGY: The Preacher's Relief Board will assist with moving expenses for retiring clergy at the Annual Conference who are on minimum salary. The Preacher's Relief Board hosts the annual retirement luncheon at the Annual Conference. Clergy retiring at this Annual Conference will be the guests of the Preacher's Relief Board.

NECESSITOUS CASES: The Preacher's Relief Board was able to assist several families in the calendar year 2007. Those clergy persons who find themselves in difficulty can petition for relief from The Preacher's Relief Board by going on-line to www.flumc.org; click on Ministries, then Center for Clergy Excellence or by calling the Rev. David Dodge in the Center for Clergy Excellence. All queries are taken seriously and kept in the strictest confidence.

OTHER MATTERS: A gift of $2,000 was made to the Association of Retired Clergy in the Florida Annual Conference to assist with scholarships to their annual gathering. Requests for these scholarships should be made at the time of the application and to the Association of Retired Clergy in the Florida Annual conference. $4,000 was awarded to the Clergy Kids Retreat for the purpose of scholarships and expenses.

FINANCIAL MATTERS: Churches, Clergy, and other organizations wishing to donate to the Preacher's Relief Board can designate their funds through the Conference Treasurer's Office. Individuals wishing to donate homes or property should consult with Rev. David Dodge.

IN GRATITUDE: The Preacher's Relief Board is grateful to David Dodge, Wendy McCoy, our Conference Benefits Officer and Mickey Wilson, our Conference Treasurer, who serve ex-officio on the board. We extend a very special "Thank You" to Winnie Dean in the Center for Clergy Excellence for her excellent assistance throughout the year, and a most heartfelt thanks to Rev. Paul Morris, who graciously ministers to our residents.

Rev. Dr. Barbara Williams Riddle, President, Preacher's Relief Board

THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE

COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) and other Conference leaders say Thank You! Gifts received in the Conference office for all connectional offerings, apportionments, advance specials and other gifts totaled over $22,000,000 last year (see attached chart). Although down significantly from the $24,000,000 received in 2006, your giving helped advance the cause of Christ and further the mission of the Church in Florida and around the world. Thank you for your generous response to God's call and presence.

In a state where the hurricanes of recent years have sent the cost of insurance sky rocketing, making the cost of property and casualty insurance a still larger burden to the local churches, the members of the Florida Annual Conference continue to demonstrate their understanding of connectionalism.

- Giving to conference and denominational apportionments totaled $15,280,000, down from $16,777,000 for 2006.
- The percentage of apportionments given was 81.7%, again down significantly from 87.2% for 2006 and well below the recent five-year average of 86.3%.

Although the total gifts were down significantly from 2006 to 2007, the 2007 collected P & C premiums exceeded $18,300,000, up from $14,998,000 in 2006. Although apportionment giving was down, an overall reduction in operating expense and a year with little storm activity combined to further strengthen the financial condition of the Conference.

CF&A has worked diligently to prepare the 2009 budget and 10 financial recommendations, soliciting input from all committees, agencies and groups who are stakeholders in the budget. We do not take conference-level budget decisions lightly. These decisions reflect our collective priorities and mutual expectations. Our overriding principles for decision making are twofold:

1. Align our resources with the vision and mission of the Annual Conference, and
2. Be financially prudent in light of our current situation and recent trends.

CF&A is united with the Bishop and Cabinet in stressing the importance of every church supporting our connectional ministry by giving 100%. We strive to work with all congregations to move steadily closer to full support of the United Methodist Church in Florida and across the globe. We urge every church to embrace good stewardship as an important discipline of the Christian life and a key component of a healthy church. That discipline should express itself in a practical, positive, helpful and biblical stewardship program that will better enable church members to live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

The recommended conference level 2009 budget is an increase from 2008. We believe this is a prudent, responsible and ministry supporting proposal.

Budget Highlights:

- A careful analysis of the funds held by the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits projected an increase sufficient at this time to fund the 2009 retiree health benefit and therefore no apportionment funding is required for this purpose in 2009.
- The Florida Conference share of the denominational budget will increase $195K, $75K of which is a result of the Lake Junaluska dam project. The Connectional Church represents 43.6% of the Total Budget. Once again the Florida conference has the opportunity to lead the way in giving to the ministries of the general church by being apportioned more than any other conference.
- The Southeastern Jurisdiction of the UMC has requested that churches throughout the jurisdiction contribute to the reconstruction costs of the dam at Lake Junaluska, the Jurisdictional headquarters located in western North Carolina. Florida Conference's share of this cost is $300,000. To reach this goal, CF&A recommends adding $75,000 a year for four years to the SEJ apportionment beginning in 2009. The SEJ 2009 apportionment, as recommended by CF&A, includes this additional money.

After much prayer and hard work, the Council on Finance and Administration offers the following budget and financial recommendations for 2009. CF&A believes this budget appropriately balances our mission and ministry obligations and expectations with our financial and membership realities. We ask you to support these recommendations. Together, as one church in many places, we can accomplish what no individual congregation could do alone.

Rev. Tim Smiley, Incoming President, Council on Finance and Administration

GIFTS, SPECIAL OFFERINGS, AND APPORTIONMENTS RECEIVED FROM FLORIDA CONFERENCE CHURCHES
THROUGH THE CONFERENCE TREASURER'S OFFICE

AREA OF GIVING	AMOUNT RECEIVED IN 2007
GENERAL ADVANCE SPECIALS	
Human Relations Day	$ 12,253
One Great Hour of Sharing	70,470
Native American Ministries Sunday	12,457
United Methodist Student Day	14,931
World Communion Sunday	27,856
Peace with Justice Sunday	12,199
National Advance Specials (all)	113,638
UMCOR Advance Special	316,719
World Advance Specials (all)	182,139
TOTAL	$762,662
OTHER SPECIAL GIFTS	
United Methodist Children's Home	$856,204
Hurricane and Storm Recovery	123,897
Conference Advance Specials (all)	252,192
Other special gifts (various)	267,851
TOTAL	$1,500,144
FLORIDA CONFERENCE APPORTIONMENTS	
Clergy Support	$3,850,184
Conference Benevolences	3,156,418
Conference Services and Administration	1,688,408
New Church Starts	686,543
TOTAL	$9,381,553
DISTRICT APPORTIONMENTS	
District work fund (all 9 combined)	$1,707,958
District Missions and Church Extension (all 9 combined)	1,225,093
TOTAL $2,933,051	
CONNECTIONAL CHURCH APPORTIONMENTS	
World Service	$2,924,060
General Administration	254,355
Episcopal Fund	969,753
Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	77,227
Ministerial Education Fund	967,973
Black College Fund	389,158
Africa University Fund	89,674
SEJ Jurisdictional Fund	226,702
TOTAL	$5,898,902

GRAND TOTAL RECEIVED IN 2007 $20,476,31

2009 Requested Apportionments

1

1	**Florida Conference 2009 Budget Detail**							
2	**Recommended by CFA**							
3		**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2008-2009**	**2008-2009**	**Portion**	**Comments**
4		**Budget**	**Budget**	**Recommended**	**Dollar**	**Percent**	**of 2009**	
5				**Budget**	**Change**	**Change**	**Total Budget**	
6								
7	**Connectional Church**							
8	World Service	3,815,015	4,063,550	4,017,359	-46,191	-1.14%	21.80%	
9	Ministerial Education Fund	1,312,782	1,320,667	1,389,464	68,797	5.21%	7.54%	
10	Black College Fund	522,744	525,883	554,312	28,429	5.41%	3.01%	
11	African University Fund	115,438	116,131	124,059	7,928	6.83%	0.67%	
12	Episcopal Fund	980,917	1,062,702	1,091,230	28,528	2.68%	5.92%	
13	General Administration	329,938	357,716	447,645	89,929	25.14%	2.43%	
14	Interdenominational Cooperation	101,641	104,307	108,288	3,981	3.82%	0.59%	
15	Jurisdictional Conference	303,158	320,112	333,725	13,613	4.25%	1.81%	$75K for Junaluska Dam
16	**Total Connectional Church**	**7,481,633**	**7,871,068**	**8,066,082**	**195,014**	**2.48%**	**43.76%**	
17								
18	**Conference Benevolences**							
19	**Connectional Ministry**							
20	Hispanic Ministry	70,000	80,000	88,000	8,000	10.00%	0.48%	
21	Services	125,000	125,000	81,000	-44,000	-35.20%	0.44%	
22	Outreach Ministry Subsidy	144,902	0	0	0		0.00%	
23	Communications	80,000	393,000	747,888	354,888	90.30%	4.06%	Data Mgmnt Staff added
24	Emerging Ministries	130,000	130,000	110,000	-20,000	-15.38%	0.60%	
25	Staff Compensation	764,206	668,000	522,000	-146,000	-21.86%	2.83%	
26	Administration	71,846	71,846	105,000	33,154	46.15%	0.57%	
27	Contingency	70,000	30,000	40,000	10,000	33.33%	0.22%	
28	**Total Connectional Ministry**	**1,455,954**	**1,497,846**	**1,693,888**	**196,042**	**13.09%**	**9.19%**	
29								
30	**Higher ED & Campus Ministries**							
31	Campus Ministries	845,900	821,500	1,100,000	278,500	33.90%	5.97%	
32	Colleges	460,000	451,000	430,000	-21,000	-4.66%	2.33%	
33	Salaries & Administrative	209,025	161,787	170,000	8,213	5.08%	0.92%	
34	**Total Higher Ed and CM**	**1,514,925**	**1,434,287**	**1,700,000**	**265,713**	**18.53%**	**9.22%**	

1		2007	2008	2009	2008-2009	2008-2009	Portion	Comments
2		Budget	Budget	Recommended	Dollar	Percent	of 2009	
3				Budget	Change	Change	Total Budget	
4								
5	**Other Programs**							
6	Congregational Transformation	282,000	511,157	655,614	144,457	28.26%	3.56%	African American Initiative
7	Board of Camps & Retreat Ministry	714,285	510,000	525,000	15,000	2.94%	2.85%	
8	Status on Role of Women	1,000	2,500	2,000	-500	-20.00%	0.01%	
9	Religion and Race	6,000	0	0	0		0.00%	
10	Outreach Ministry Subsidy	0	224,280	235,494	11,214	5.00%	1.28%	
11	Christian Unity & Interrel.	11,700	0	0	0		0.00%	
12	Archives & History	15,000	15,000	15,000	0	0.00%	0.08%	
13	Board of Lay Ministry	23,300	27,500	27,500	0	0.00%	0.15%	
14	**Total Other Programs**	**1,053,285**	**1,290,437**	**1,460,608**	**170,171**	**13.19%**	**7.92%**	
15								
16	**Total Conf. Benevolences**	**4,024,164**	**4,222,570**	**4,854,496**	**631,926**	**14.97%**	**26.34%**	
17								
18	**CFNCD- New Church Starts**	**908,000**	**1,076,000**	**1,076,000**	**0**	**0.00%**	**5.84%**	
19								
20	**Conference Services & Administration**							
21	Administrative Committees	17,235	12,000	3,000	-9,000	-75.00%	0.02%	
22	Annual Conference Administration	25,000	30,000	21,000	-9,000	-30.00%	0.11%	
23	Annual Conference Session	170,000	170,000	207,500	37,500	22.06%	1.13%	
24	Conference Building Services & Operations	704,000	480,000	200,000	-280,000	-58.33%	1.09%	
25	Information Technology	135,000	220,000	395,000	175,000	79.55%	2.14%	
26	Board of Trustees	336,800	340,000	400,000	60,000	17.65%	2.17%	
27	Bishops Capital Commission	50,000	10,000	10,000	0	0.00%	0.05%	
28	CF & A Financial Services	497,000	625,000	573,000	-52,000	-8.32%	3.11%	
29	HR/Health Benefits	64,300	0	50,000	50,000		0.27%	
30	Contingency	150,000	90,000	90,000	0	0.00%	0.49%	
31	**Total Conference Services & Administration**	**2,149,335**	**1,977,000**	**1,949,500**	**-27,500**	**-1.39%**	**10.58%**	

1		2007	2008	2009	2008-2009	2008-2009	Portion	Comments
2		Budget	Budget	Recommended	Dollar	Percent	of 2009	
3				Budget	Change	Change	Total Budget	
4								
5	**Clergy Support**							
6	Board of Pensions	119,500	93,000	79,500	-13,500	-14.52%	0.43%	
7	Retired Clergy Health Ins	1,575,714	0	0	0		0.00%	
8	Joint Commission on Incapacity	76,000	86,000	100,500	14,500	16.86%	0.55%	
9	Center for Clergy Excellence	218,500	230,000	279,450	49,450	21.50%	1.52%	
10	BOOM	181,500	186,000	231,000	45,000	24.19%	1.25%	
11	Equitable Compensation	400,000	350,000	350,000	0	0.00%	1.90%	
12	Clergy Matters	45,000	32,500	40,000	7,500	23.08%	0.22%	
13	Area Administration	232,500	201,500	226,500	25,000	12.41%	1.23%	
14	DS Salaries and Benefits	990,000	966,000	1,056,478	90,478	9.37%	5.73%	
15	DS & Cabinet Expense	128,000	90,000	122,000	32,000	35.56%	0.66%	
16	**Total Clergy Support**	**3,956,714**	**2,235,000**	**2,485,428**	**250,428**	**11.20%**	**13.48%**	
17								
18	**Conf Level Budget Areas**	**11,038,213**	**9,510,570**	**10,365,424**	**854,854**	**8.99%**	**56.24%**	
19								
20								
21	**Total Florida Conf Budget**	**18,519,846**	**17,381,638**	**18,431,506**	**1,049,868**	**6.04%**	**100.00%**	
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								

1	**Florida Conference 2009 BUDGET SUMMARY**			
2	**As Recommended by action of CF&A**			
3		**2007 Budget**	**2008 Budget**	**2009 Budget**
4	Total Connectional Church	7,481,633	7,871,068	8,066,082
5				
6	Conf Benevolences			
7	Total Connectional Ministries	1,455,954	1,497,846	1,693,888
8	Total HE & CM	1,514,925	1,434,287	1,700,000
9	Total Other Programs	1,053,285	1,290,437	1,460,608
10				
11	Total Conf Benevolences	4,024,164	4,222,570	4,854,496
12				
13	Total New Church Starts	908,000	1,076,000	1,076,000
14				
15	Total Conf Services & Admin	2,149,335	1,977,000	1,949,500
16				
17	Total Clergy Support	3,956,714	2 ,235,000	2,485,428
18				
19	Fla Conference Budget	11,038,213	9,510,570	10,365,424
20				
21	Total Conf Budget	18,519,846	17,381,638	18,431,506
22				
23	dollar change from prior year	-721,174	-1,138,208	1,049,868
24				
25	percent change from prior year	-3.70%	-6.10%	6.04%
26				

COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2009

Recommendation No. 1

It is recommended that the mileage allowance for all persons traveling by automobile for conference meetings be set at IRS allowable business rate (for 2008 this is 50.5 cents per mile) plus tolls. Actual expenses for travel by other means will be reimbursed up to, but not exceeding, the above mileage rate. The per diem for conference meetings shall be an amount equal to the cost charged at the Leesburg Life Enrichment Center. In clearly unusual, hardship situations, the president of the Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A), in consultation with the conference treasurer, will have authority to adjust these amounts. To qualify for per diem and travel expenses, members of the agencies must be present for the entire meeting, unless excused for emergency reasons by the chairperson.

Persons authorized to represent the conference in an official capacity in meetings beyond conference bounds may be reimbursed for actual expenses. Prior approval from the conference treasurer is required to be eligible for reimbursement. The group requesting approval must also indicate which fund will be used for reimbursement. In keeping with the spirit of good stewardship, expenses are to be kept to a minimum.

To maximize resources of both time and money, conference groups should meet only when necessary to accomplish conference business. Whenever possible, groups are also encouraged to schedule meetings in conjunction with other conference events. Appreciation is expressed to those involved in conference business that pay all or part of their expenses to assist in reducing conference expenses.

Recommendation No. 2

Housing allowances, when provided to employees of conference institutions and groups, should be based on the prevailing rental rate in the area in which the staff member is located. Professional staff occupying conference-owned parsonages will be responsible for stewardship of the parsonages in accordance with the Florida Annual Conference Parsonage Guidelines as published in the 2004 Conference Journal and/or as amended.

Recommendation No. 3

It is recommended that the fair share formula be used to determine the local church apportionment for all conference and general church budget areas. The fair share formula is based on the following items as reported in the most recent year-end statistical report compiled by the conference statistician:

Pastor & Associate Compensation
Deacon & Diaconal Compensation
Other Staff Compensation
Current Expenses for Program
Current Operating Expenses

The total amount spent in each local church on these items is divided by the total amount spent on these items for all conference churches. This calculation determines each local church's fair share percentage or decimal. This "fair share decimal" is then multiplied by the amount approved for each area in the conference budget to determine the amount each local church is asked to give.

In calculating the fair share decimal (above), the conference statistician shall subtract from each church's reported operating expense the actual amount paid by each church to the conference risk management program for property and casualty insurance. Churches shall continue to report the amount paid to the conference risk management program as a current operating expense in the annual statistical report forms so that church operating expenses can be accurately reported to the denomination.

The Florida Annual Conference continues to recognize the importance of New Church Development and the role of the Mother/Daughter relationship. Therefore the expenses of the Daughter church, which are paid by the Mother church, should not be included in the operating expenses of the Mother church for the purpose of computing apportionments.

Each district is asked to ensure that the total amount apportioned to the churches in that district is fully paid. Each district may decide how the apportionments within the district will be shared by the churches in order to achieve the 100 percent goal.

Any Clergy Support apportionment and Episcopal Fund apportionment not fully funded by a church shall be carried forward to the next year and added to that church's apportionment.

Apportionments should be given in full and on a timely basis. Local churches are encouraged to give 10 percent of each apportionment item per month during the first 10 months of the year.

Recommendation No. 4

It is recommended that the District Work Fund apportionment be calculated using the same formula for all churches in every district throughout the Conference, based on the compensation paid to the church's pastor(s) and other appointed clergy. The Cabinet and CF&A working together shall establish a percentage to use in this formula (for 2008 it is 5.4%) so that district-level mission, ministry and administration are adequately funded, in keeping with the spirit of good stewardship.

Recommendation No. 5

It is recommended that expenditure of funds shall be in accordance with the Discipline and the Conference Standing Rules. No agency, individual or group may obligate conference funds in excess of anticipated income. Amendments to a budget to accommodate pressing needs must be proposed to CF&A for consideration within the context of available funds and other conference priorities. See particularly Standing Rule 419.4.b, 419.4.c, 419.4.f, and 419.4.i.

Recommendation No. 6

It is recommended that any board, agency or other entity seeking funding in the 2010 conference budget submit their budget requests to the conference treasurer by January 16, 2009, unless an exception is made by the CF&A executive committee. Groups that have designated or other funds available to them will provide that information when submitting their budget requests.

Each group's budget request must be in the format and include the information requested by CF&A. The budget request must include line item explanation of the amounts requested and show the signature of the chairperson or secretary of the group. All budget requests must conform to the standing rules; especially rule 419.4.g pertaining to zero-based budgeting.

Recommendation No. 7

It is recommended that the following conference-wide fund raising appeals be approved: General Conference Advance Specials, The Florida United Methodist Children's Home Fifth Sunday appeal, the New Church Starts Conference Advance Special, the Congregational Transformation Conference Advance Special, and the Bishops' Conference Capital Commission through the Florida United Methodist Foundation.

Recommendation No. 8

It is recommended that The Council on Finance and Administration be authorized to negotiate favorable rates for and to establish a loan or line of credit (secured or unsecured) not to exceed $1 million ($1,000,000). In the event of a financial shortfall this loan or line of credit would be used to manage cash flow needs for operations of the Conference. Any use of this loan or line of credit shall be reported to the Annual Conference upon its next meeting. Note: No such loan or line of credit was used in 2007.

Recommendation No. 9

It is recommended that the Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Bishop, be empowered to act on financial matters between sessions of the Annual Conference. Such actions shall be reported to the Annual Conference upon its next meeting. Note: No such special action was taken during 2007.

Recommendation No. 10

It is recommended that the 2009 Conference budget and apportionments as described in the worksheet entitled "2009 Budget Summary as Recommended by Action of CF&A" be adopted.

Dan G. Johnson, President
Council on Finance and Administration

FLORIDA CONFERENCE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Makeover shows have enjoyed remarkable success in recent years. Some shows offer the "extreme" format in which a home is torn down or a person's entire wardrobe is dumped. Of course, a new home or wardrobe is finally revealed. Other shows operate with minimal renovation budgets. These shows depend on a coat of paint, some new accessories or a stylish new haircut to breathe new life into the makeover challenge. The work of the Florida Conference Board of Trustees covers the full spectrum, including renovation and new construction.

The new Prayer Chapel at the Life Enrichment Center (LEC), a new parsonage for the campus ministry at Florida State University are representative of the work your trustees oversee. The long awaited creation of an archives center for the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church is finally underway. The center will be included in an addition to the Roux library at Florida Southern College. (You can visit that site at the corner of McDonald St. and Johnson Ave. While there, visit the newly opened Frank Lloyd Wright Water Dome). We continue to receive reports and support the work from our Conference Center Task Force. We are grateful to the task force for their innovative and continued consideration of how the Conference Center might best serve the ministry of United Methodists in Florida.

We are especially grateful for the vision and scope of the Bishop's Capital Campaign. Many of the pressing capital needs for renovation and expansion will be addressed through this well conceived campaign. Your trustees have supported the renovations of the rooms at the LEC and a new addition to the beautiful facilities at our Riverside Retreat conference facility in Alva. This addition is made possible through a generous gift to the Bishop's Capital Campaign.

While there is exciting growth ahead for the Florida Conference, your Conference Trustees are undergoing a makeover in their own work. We are charged with oversight of all Conference owned property but we are moving away from direct oversight where ever practical and possible. We are asking that groups such as Higher Education and Camps and Conferences include capital expense requests in their own budgets and that these groups give oversight to needed disbursements for repair and renovation. This will expedite this process for ministry groups. Your trustees will continue to serve in an oversight and monitoring capacity, serving as the officers of the corporation where needed. However, we are moving away from being perceived as the funding source of last resort. It is our hope that the various ministries of the Florida Conference, which utilize conference owned properties, will provide for the upkeep and provision of the facilities which they use as part of their overall ministry.

The trustees of the Florida Conference are grateful to serve in a capacity which allows for renewal and expansion of those places where lives are changed and commitments to Christ are made. Thank you for allowing us to serve on your behalf. Our request for funding in 2009 is $400,000.

Grace and Peace, David McEntire, Chairperson

DEPARTMENT FOR MINISTRY PROTECTION

2008 PROPERTY/CASUALTY & WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Department for Ministry Protection of the Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is charged with administering all aspects of the comprehensive insurance program for the Conference.

The years following Hurricane Andrew in 1992 revealed the need for a comprehensive, Conference wide insurance program. The current insurance program, and Ministry Protection Department (formerly known as Risk Management), was formed in 1995 when this need was identified to bring cohesiveness in insurance coverage to all United Methodist Churches and related ministries within the Conference.

Now, thirteen years after the program inception, the insurance program has been tested through multiple hurricanes, other catastrophic claims and national insurance market turmoil. Through it all, the insurance program has remained steadfast in its ability to provide comprehensive and cost-effective insurance coverage for all Conference churches, schools and affiliated ministries, regardless of whether the church is inland or located in the Florida Keys.

In early 2008, the Department for Ministry Protection was pleased to announce a conference-wide reduction in the property, casualty and workers compensation insurance premiums by almost 22%, the first such premium reduction in many years. This represented an overall savings to local churches of over $4,000,000… an amount clearly much better spent on ministry than insurance premiums. This significant reduction gained widespread attention as well as national press coverage.

The Department team consists of four experienced staff members who bring a wide range of insurance, risk management, safety consulting, claims management, underwriting, accounting and local church experience to the conference. Conference staff includes:

- Mark B. Thomas, Director. A fifth generation United Methodist formerly responsible for multiple insurance programs in Louisiana, most notably in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. Experience includes risk management, safety consulting, claims and litigation management, and catastrophic claims handling.
- LaNita Battles, Risk Management Specialist. A graduate of Bethune Cookman College, with many years of claims, underwriting and insurance training and communications experience, LaNita manages the insurance claims for the Conference and its churches.
- Cynthia Truemper, Administrative Assistant. Also a United Methodist with a business and finance background, Cindy is responsible for the billing and premium receipts for the Department, as well as general risk management and safety inquiries.
- Kathryn Elliott, Support Staff. Recently joining the Department from a local church, Kitt provides accounting and risk management support to the Department and local churches.

As in years past, insurance broker Arthur J. Gallagher and Co. continues to provide an onsite, dedicated employee to assist the conference and local churches.

The Ministry Protection Department reports to the Conference Treasurer and Committee for Ministry Protection. Currently, this committee is comprised of 16 members of whom five, including the Bishop, are conference staff. Collectively, the skills of this very active and dedicated committee include but are not limited to: attorneys, CPA's, insurance agents and pastors.

The insurance program is structured to provide broad and comprehensive insurance coverage for all conference churches and affiliated ministries. These coverages include, but are not limited to:

- Property: Includes windstorm, hail, flood and earthquake coverage;
- Liability: Includes general liability, property damage to others, sexual abuse and molestation, employment practices liability, and medical payments coverage;
- Automobile: Includes liability and physical damage coverage, medical payments and uninsured/underinsured coverage
- Crime: Includes theft, burglary, robbery or employee dishonesty coverage;
- Workers Compensation and Employers Liability: Provides coverage for employees that are injured as a result of their employment;
- Activities Medical Insurance: Provides coverage for bodily injury for accidents to volunteers of the church, youth group participants, children enrolled in daycare, nursery, pre-k and camps, excess over their personal insurance;
- Terrorism: Property and casualty coverage.

Our insurance program is very unique in the United Methodist realm as it provides standardized and comprehensive coverage for all conference churches, schools and affiliated ministries, regardless of location. Currently the program insures over:

- $2,000,000,000 in property from the Apalachicola River to the Florida Keys, both inland and directly on the coast;
- 700 vehicles, including private passenger vehicles, buses, vans, trailers, golf carts and even a few watercraft;
- 220 pre-schools and schools located throughout the conference;
- 8,500 employees who are covered by workers compensation insurance;
- Literally tens of thousands of volunteers ;
- Innumerable local church affiliated ministries, programs and events, held both on and off church property;
- In addition, the program provides comprehensive coverage for a wide variety of other unique exposures such as the Conference Camps and Retreat Ministries locations, the Methodist Children's Home and District Offices.

The conference insurance program is held up as a model to other United Methodist conferences throughout the country and is constantly striving to find proactive ways to improve our insurance program while at the same time hold down the cost of insurance. The department has also implemented some very comprehensive program initiatives over the last year including:

- Implementation of a conference-wide loss prevention and safety program with an emphasis on fire and life safety inspections at the local church with instructional seminars and training. Additionally the Department will begin a monthly series of online risk management web training seminars.
- Revising the online insurance database, CONNECT, to make it more user friendly, while at the same time gathering the necessary information from the local church to report to the conference insurance carriers.
- Providing detailed recommendations against the ownership and use of dangerous fifteen passenger vans within the conference. The Department also has provided information regarding options for safer transportation as well as a premium incentive program when a fifteen passenger van has been sold or taken out of use.
- Routine property, casualty and workers compensation claim audits of our conference insurance adjusters to ensure prompt and proper handling of insurance claims.
- Implementation of a multi-year property appraisal program, at no cost to the local church.
- Pre-hurricane season meetings with the conference property insurance companies and adjusters to formalize loss mitigation, claims handling procedures, insurance payments and claim documentation.
- Revision and continued updating of the Department for Ministry Protection website with more information and resources.

In 2008, the Department for Ministry Protection will continue with an ambitious agenda geared toward continued risk management education to our churches.

Long-standing insurance broker Arthur J. Gallagher and Co. continues to provide valuable year round services and support to churches, camps and to the Ministry Protection Department. In addition to providing an onsite representative, the AJG team brokers and procures the comprehensive insurance coverage, calculates the annual premium allocations to the local church, maintains the property and automobile database, issues insurance certificates as well as provides expertise and advice to the Department and conference churches.

Our sincere thanks go out to our conference churches who clearly share in our vision that our work is not simply "risk management", but truly "Ministry Protection". Our churches and their valuable and Godly ministries are safer and more secure because of it.

Please feel free to visit the Ministry Protection web pages located on the Florida Annual Conference website for more information as well as upcoming events and programming. Of course, you can always call us as we would be happy to assist you in any way possible.

May God Bless and Protect You, The Department for Ministry Protection

EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON THE EPISCOPACY REPORT

The Committee on the Episcopacy met in Lakeland on October 30, 2007 with 10 members present. A presentation of the new Episcopal Assessment Survey was made, explaining its origin, development and use. The survey had been completed by the extended Cabinet and committee members and is a tool used in the process of appointing Bishops in the Southeast Jurisdiction. The results of the survey overwhelmingly reflect our approval and support of the work being done by Bishop Whitaker in our conference. Bishop Whitaker received the results as an affirmation of his ministry in Florida.

The Committee unanimously affirmed the return of Bishop Timothy Whitaker to the Florida Conference for the next quadrennium. The Episcopal Quadrennial Profile and the Bishop's Quadrennial Profile were reviewed for submission to the Southeast Jurisdiction Episcopal Committee. We are blessed by our Bishop's leadership and management style and thank God for his witness and guidance in the Florida Conference.

Lou S. Miller, Chair

EPISCOPAL ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

For the last four years, Mary Alice Massey and I have been serving on the Southeastern Jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy. This committee is made up of one layperson and one clergy person from every Annual Conference in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The primary charge of this committee is to oversee the election and assignment of our Bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church. Throughout this quadrenium, we have been diligently working on the election and assignment process for the Jurisdiction. Much good work has been accomplished.

On July 17, in just six and a half weeks, the 2008 Southern Jurisdictional Conference will be called to order. At that time, one Bishop will be elected. Currently, there are six endorsed candidates making their selves available for the Episcopal office. We invite you, the Florida Annual Conference, to call the congregations of the Florida Annual Conference to prayer for this important election. Pray that God's will is accomplished.

Following the election of one Bishop, Mary Alice Massey and I will join the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference Committee on Episcopacy to prayerfully make the assignments of the Bishops to the Annual Conferences. The Florida Annual Conference at last year's Conference as well as the Florida Annual Conference Committee on Episcopacy has asked for the re-assignment of Bishop Timothy Whitaker to the Florida Area of the United Methodist Church. We believe we have compelling missional reasons to request Bishop Whitaker's return. Mary Alice and I also ask for your prayers as we represent Florida during this important time of decision-making.

Thank you, Jorge Acevedo

COMMITTEE ON STANDING RULES

This year has seen many requests from various conference agencies to amend their Standing Rules. Additionally, we have completely overhauled the Standing Rules for the Committee on Resolutions along with adding rules for the new Network of Ministries with Young People. Many of the changes are technical in nature and are offered to bring the Standing Rules in line with the ongoing practices of their respective Conference agencies. Because there are so many changes this year, we have reprinted the entire proposed set of Standing Rules in their entirety. Below, we will highlight areas of change for you to review.

1. Paragraph 206 is completely new in its entirety. This paragraph was drafted and reviewed by persons on both the Committee on Resolutions and Committee on Standing Rules. We feel it is a less ambiguous set of rules that will enable the Committee on Resolutions to accomplish their work in a more timely and clear fashion.
2. Paragraph 208 is a technical amendment to clarify that the entire Cabinet and District Lay Leaders are members of the Annual Conference Event Committee.
3. Paragraph 301 is a technical amendment to reflect the addition of the new Network of Ministries with Young People.
4. Old paragraph 302 on inclusiveness was removed because this requirement is already set forth by the *Discipline* and was superfluous. It also placed an additional unworkable obligation upon the Conference office.
5. Paragraph 303 is a technical amendment to clarify that the Annual Conference elects District Leadership Councils and other district committees as required in Standing Rule 610.
6. Paragraph 401 has multiple technical amendments to recognize the re-ordering of paragraphs that has occurred, and in some cases, the re-naming of conference agencies.
7. Paragraph 403.2 is an amendment to clarify the vision and mission of the Conference Table. Paragraph 403.5 is an amendment to make less restrictive the meeting times of the Conference Table.
8. Paragraph 404.2 is a technical amendment to clarify the purpose of the Leadership Connection. Paragraphs 404.4 and 404.5 are amendments offered to align the Standing Rules of the Leadership Connection with their current practice.
9. Old paragraph 405.2d regarding the Council on Ethnic Diversity is deleted.
10. Paragraph 406.2 and 406.3 are technical amendments to align the Standing Rules with the ongoing practices of the Committee on New Church Development.
11. Paragraph 407.3 is a technical amendment to provide for clarification of membership of the Conference Committee on Congregational Transformation.
12. Paragraph 410.3 is an amendment offered to increase the membership of the Board of Camps and Retreat Ministries and to provide for the election/selection of those members.

13. Paragraph 412 is a technical amendment to provide for the new Network of Ministries with Young People.
14. Paragraph 413 is new and creates the Network of Ministries with Young People.
15. Section V is amended to include several conference agencies already under this area but which had been inadvertently left out over the years.
16. Paragraph 415 is a technical amendment to reflect this agency now being named the Committee on "Clergy" Effectiveness rather than the Committee on "Elder" Effectiveness.
17. Paragraph 419 is amended at the request of the Council on Finance and Administration. Paragraph 419c is amended to remove a difficult requirement for managing conference expenditures. Paragraph 419i is amended to remove the word "urgent" as a qualifier for when conference reserve funds may be used. Paragraph 419j is amended to add the Human Resources Director to the Conference Personnel Committee.
18. Paragraphs 420.9 and 420.10 are amended to provide clarity for which conference agency/entity provides upkeep and maintenance for conference-owned parsonages and property.
19. Paragraph 422 is amended to provide for the addition of ex-officio members to the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.
20. Paragraph 427 is amended to add the Human Resource Director to the Conference Personnel Committee.
21. Paragraph 611.4 is amended to provide for the inclusion of the Treasurer's office in the annual financial audits of the district offices and their finances.

Should anyone have questions about the proposed changes to the Standing Rules, I invite you to contact me at (386) 677-3581 or jay.therrell@flumc.org. I will do my best to answer your questions or at least refer you to the appropriate Conference leader who can better explain why a committee/agency/board drafted the language they did. The Committee on Standing Rules extends its appreciation to the many people who did not serve on the committee, but helped achieve the end result. I extend my personal thanks to my fellow committee members who give of their time and talent despite being very busy people.

As always, the Standing Rules are a work that requires continual updating and attention. I welcome your input as to any changes or suggestions you might have.

Jay Therrell, Chair

TASK FORCE FOR THE NEW CONFERENCE CENTER

The Conference Center Task Force was created because of the inadequacy and limited nature of the current Annual Conference Offices. In the past year, the Task Force established by Bishop Whitaker has moved from considering a building that would be built, bought or leased to house the Conference Staff, the Bishop's Office and possibly the Conference Foundation, to an entirely different concept of an Annual Conference Center that would be a true place of ministry, not only for the Administration of the Conference, but also for the community in which it is located.

A new Conference Center could incorporate the ministries and administrative offices of the Florida Annual Conference into a facility that would include training for clergy and lay leadership involving current technologies and emerging trends in ministry. The facility could serve as a center for worship, outreach and spiritual growth for the community surrounding it. The concept is still in the formative stage, but many exciting and dynamic possibilities are already taking shape. One of the most encouraging developments is the partnering that has taken place between the Annual Conference and Florida Southern College and with the City of Lakeland. A new Conference Center could bring these partners together in creative and innovative ways.

Florida Southern is very interested in the current property on which the Conference offices are located. This acreage, contiguous to the college, is a location that would be well suited for a program the Department of Education has developed that trains teachers to work with autistic children and children and disabilities. A lab school would be located on the property that would serve the needs of the college and community.

As we are considering possible sites for a Conference Center, the Task Force is looking for property or facilities that would be more than an office building. The Center would impact and serve the community as well as serve the Annual Conference. In this regard we have had discussions with the City of Lakeland Redevelopment Authority. The staff persons we spoke with were very interested in a Center for the United Methodist Conference that would be located in downtown Lakeland,

especially a facility that would include services and ministries to the surrounding community. The staff further indicated their willingness to work with the Annual Conference in determining the best site and helping with the acquisition of property if necessary.

The partnership with Florida Southern College could have additional benefits as they have instituted a new degree in Youth Ministry. The new Conference Center could include in its on-going ministry a unique setting for internships in Youth Ministry, as well as in children and family ministries for pre-ministerial students and for Christian education majors.

A facility is envisioned as a Conference Center with Flexible space for worship and multi-purpose use, space for Conference staff offices, the Bishop's office and ample parking. The building would need to be environmentally and technologically state-of-the-art. The Center would be built to accommodate current staff with flexibility for changes in personnel and in work styles. There will be space for meetings and gatherings of various sizes and activities. It would have the technology and communication equipment necessary for current and future use with capabilities for video-conferencing, and the broadcasting of training events and seminars.

The development of a plan for a Conference Center will continue to take time. The vision for a Conference Center that is a Center for ministry for the Annual Conference and for the local church is an exciting one, but one that is emerging and developing.

The Annual Conference is in the leadership gifts phase of the multi-million-dollar capital and endowment campaign **Together! Bringing Hope, Changing Lives.** The "Together!" campaign seeks to encourage increased financial support for local ministry, while raising capital and endowment gifts to support shared ministries of the Annual Conference. The new Conference Center is not part of this campaign since details of the project had not been determined when the "Together!" campaign case was approved. This Task Force has been in communication with the Bishop and Bishop's Capital Campaign Committee and fully supports the priorities of the campaign. Once a vision for the Conference Center has been approved by the Annual Conference and specific funding objectives have been determined, the Conference Center project would become part of a subsequent campaign, in which case the vision and financial goals would be brought to the broader membership of the Conference and tested in a feasibility process similar to the one used for the "Together!" campaign.

The Task Force will continue to work with Florida Southern College, with the Bishop and with the Conference Board of Trustees to explore options and plans for a comprehensive Conference Center and potential avenues for funding. It is our vision to develop a Center that will link the Annual Conference's work to the life of the local church, will help to train and support clergy and lay leadership of the churches in our conference, and be a place of ministry, of worship and outreach in the local community.

The Conference Center Task Force requests that the Annual Conference extend it work for another year in order that it might continue to develop the vision and plans for an Annual Conference Center.

Robert M. Gibbs, Chairperson

REPORT ON GENERAL CONFERENCE

Good evening Bishop and delegates to the 2008 Florida Annual Conference! My name is Bill Walker and I am the Florida Annual Conference Delegation Head. I would like to introduce my partner in guiding this auspicious group, Jorge Acevedo.

I was privileged to serve alongside Bill in leading the Florida Delegation to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, Texas several weeks back. Imagine 992 delegates representing 18 million United Methodists around the globe! Imagine meeting from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 or even midnight in legislative meetings. Imagine creative and inspiring worship utilizing choirs, bands, dance troops, drama groups and video technology. Imagine spirited debate interspersed with moments of brevity as well as tearful disagreement. This was General Conference 1008!

The 2008 General Conference is now history. The Florida Conference elected 26 delegates to represent you in Fort Worth – 13 clergy and 13 laity. Rather than bore you with a long report, we sent our intrepid reporters and camera crew to the gathering for this short DVD presentation. Watch this!

What does General Conference mean to the average Florida United Methodist Christian! Well, it means that in a few months we will have a new Book of Discipline, but more importantly, it means we have a new focus. The Bishops of our church in keeping with our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world have given our church four focus areas.

They are developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world, creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and revitalizing existing ones, engaging in ministry with the poor, and stamping out killer diseases by improving health globally. These are our new measuring sticks to evaluate every United Methodist Church. We are excited about this as a delegation and have hope that together with the help of the Holy Spirit live into our new future with hope!

I would like to ask you to join Jorge and me in thanking the wonderful delegation from Florida that did superb work on your behalf in Fort Worth, Texas. If you were a delegate or alternate to General Conference, would you please stand? Let's thank these precious friends!

Bill and I do have one order of business that requests the endorsement of the Florida Annual Conference for the Nominations Pool. These names appear on the screens. I move that the Florida Annual Conference endorse the nominations pool of the Florida Conference delegation to the SEJ Conference.

Bill Walker and Jorge Acevedo

NOMINEES TO THE JURISDICTIONAL POOL

Each Conference "…shall elect the persons most recently elected as Delegates to the General Conference,…" The following persons most recently elected as General Conference Delegates have agreed to have their names placed in the Jurisdictional Nominee pool.

Clergy

1. Anne Burkholder
2. Bob Bushong
3. David Dodge *(currently serving on General Board of Higher Education & Ministry – desires to continue)*
4. Clark Campbell-Evans
5. Sue Haupert-Johnson
6. Candace Lewis
7. David McEntire
8. Debbie McLeod *(currently serving on the Connectional Table – desires to continue)*
9. Geraldine McClellan

Laity

1. Rodney Akers
2. Joyce Waldon Bright
3. John (Jad) Denmark
4. Walter Dry
5. William (Russ) Graves
6. Jeannie Jacques
7. Disney Weaver
8. Mickey Wilson

Recommended Nominees to the Jurisdictional Pool from the Delegation:

Clergy

1. Sharon Austin
2. Joreatha Capers
3. Jaime Faberlle'
4. Tracy Hunter
5. Moses Johnson
6. Nakako Kellum
7. Chris McNeil
8. Montreuil Milord
9. Walter Monroe
10. Emily Oliver
11. Louis Telcy
12. Miguel Velez
13. Vicki Walker

Laity

1. Larry Boston
2. Yohanka Cabezas
3. Abigail Evans
4. William Fackler
5. Joel Fears
6. Julie Fleurinor
7. Carlene Fogle-Miller
8. William Francis
9. Jimmy Garrett
10. Starr Garric
11. Marian Goodman
12. Bruce Harter
13. Deadra Harvey
14. Matthew Kleckner
15. Justin LaRose
16. Cedric Lewis
17. Nora Madan
18. Molly McEntire
19. Sarah Mitchell
20. Paul Nessler
21. Agnus Poeeda
22. Robert Suggs
23. Julia Waters
24. Paula Whitaker
25. Erica Windham

OUR EXTENDED CONNECTION

BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1904 by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

Bethune-Cookman University has a rich history and mission that inspires the university community to serve in the Christian tradition the educational, social, and cultural needs of our students. The school has evolved from the educational and training school for Negro girls begun by Mary McLeod Bethune in 1904 to one of the most important institutions in Daytona Beach and the state of Florida. Its positive influence on our community and state in the areas of education and social progress is profound and far-reaching. Its economic impact is measured in multiplied millions each year.

I am thankful for our privileged partnership with The Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church; it is the foundation of support for my goal of providing value centered education and experiences for our students, and it sustains the legacy of faith, scholarship and service.

The University was highlighted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* along with such institutions like Harvard and Yale for reaching a growth of 21.2 percent increase in endowment. Since 2004, the institution's endowment has grown from $24.9 million to $42.4 million as of December 31, 2007. Our Stewardship Covenant ensures that the University evaluates efficiency measures to continue to exemplify operational effectiveness while maintaining high levels of intellectual and learning excellence.

Bethune-Cookman University's enrollment is 3,433, an 11 percent increase over the Fall 2006 semester, and a 33 percent increase in the total enrollment since the Fall of 2002. In 2007 the institution awarded $58,461,070 in financial aid assistance to 95 percent of the student body. Many of the students attending the University are low- to moderate income and would not otherwise be able to attain their dreams of a college degree without this support. We are grateful to the members of the Florida Conference of the UMC who have reached into their hearts to make investments in our future leadership.

Nothing tells the story better of the transformation of our students here at Bethune-Cookman than their own testimony. Recently I received news of a recent graduate who went on to medical school and has received his MD. He has written his Bethune-Cookman University professors to express his appreciation for their care and concern that guided him to, in his words, "achieve what I have achieved and also what I am going to do, right from the time we worked together in World Vision Club." This new doctor is returning to his country, Kenya, in mid April with the vision of inspiring his countrymen and women to overcome their challenges in health and economic issues and educational barriers. Dr. Charles Wambulwa has become a transformative leader imbued with the moral and spiritual courage of Mary McLeod Bethune.

In December the University dedicated a new facility for its Nursing program. The School is prominently located on International Speedway Boulevard, the main thoroughfare in Daytona Beach, and serves a growing population of nursing students with expanded classroom and study space, simulation lab space, and cutting education technology. It includes a community wellness center and clinic from which partnerships with area health care agencies and hospitals and the Volusia County Housing Authority will involve student nurses and faculty in services that promote chronic illness prevention. Through the wellness center B-CU will address health access disparities in the local community.

Religious Life - The Religious Life program at Bethune-Cookman University is designed with a campus ministry approach to include not only students but faculty and staff as well. There are many challenges for this ministry due to the fact of a complex society with diverse spiritual needs. The main core of the Religious Life program is student led so as to meet the needs of the student population. They have participated in strategy, planning and implementation of all Religious Life programs. Religious Life students have participated in programs such as Religious Emphasis week, Retreats, Chapel Worship, Forums, Special Programs such as "September 11, 2001" Memorial worship, Prayer sessions, monthly chapel worship for Freshman College and student support groups. The "September 11" Memorial Worship was held in the Performing Arts Center with over 1500 students, faculty and staff in attendance.

Religious Life programming includes collaboration with University departments and other groups, such as the Black Males Think Tank in Higher Education and the Black Women's Think in Higher Education. The Religious Life department seeks to foster community partnership between the university and the community with such groups as the Mary McLeod Bethune Roundtable, Daytona Beach Black Clergy Alliance, N.A.A.C.P., local churches, City of Daytona Beach, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee and other civic groups.

We are also involved in the Daytona Beach Motor Sports Think Tank which is designed to planning and implement programs for community diversity as it relates to the Motor Sports industry. Our Civic Engagement component includes our involvement with the Daytona Beach Vision Steering Committee for the City of Daytona Beach Florida to seek computer input for community needs. Under the umbrella of Religious Life is a component responsible for Senior Consecration Worship and participation in joint planning for Commencement.

We also were involved in planning for the Florida United Methodist Mission School, which was hosted at Bethune-Cookman University during July 17-22, 2007. We are in the beginning phases at this time for Florida United Methodist Mission School planning for July 2008. During last academic year we established a Religious Life Task Force for the purpose of future planning. It is because of collaborative efforts, group participation and a student-centered approach that our Religious Life programming has made efforts to enhance the spiritual lives of the Bethune-Cookman University family.

School of Graduate Programs - The University's first graduate program, the M.S. degree program in Transformative Leadership, is enrolling students from around the nation and has over 36 students since it was started a year ago. We hope to add two additional master's degree programs: the M.S. in Nursing and the M.S. in Environmental Science.

Bethune-Cookman University will continue to flourish and be blessed through your friendship, prayers and support.

Trudie Kibbe Reed, President

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Candler School of Theology is grounded in the Christian faith and shaped by the Wesleyan tradition of evangelical piety, ecumenical openness, and social concerns. Our mission is *to educate faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries in the world*. Candler is one of the thirteen official seminaries of The United Methodist Church and is one of nine schools at Emory, a top twenty research university, founded in memory of Methodist Bishop John Emory and his commitment to "mold both character and intellect."

Unlike other large research campuses, Emory is neither indifferent to nor embarrassed by religion. Rather, this university is eager to address an urgent need at home and abroad: helping different faith traditions cooperate rather than collide. Emory prides itself in being a destination university internationally recognized as an inquiry-driven, ethically engaged, and diverse community whose members work collaboratively for positive transformation in the world.

At Candler, we proclaim the Gospel and nurture students' growth in the Christian faith. A stellar faculty, a dedicated staff, and vibrant students form an active community of teaching and learning that prepares excellent leaders for Christian ministries. We carry out this mission, however, in an extraordinary university-based educational environment where hearts and minds engage across deeply held religious differences, preparing our students to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Candler's faculty continues to be among the most distinctive in theological education. Forty-three members hold full-time appointments, and five hold part-time appointments. An additional twenty-three serve in an adjunct capacity. Woodie White and Jack Meadors serve as the United Methodist bishops in residence. Bishop L. Bevel Jones III remains at Candler working with the Development Office.

In our commitment to the practice of ministry, we partner with eighty churches to ensure that ministerial preparation takes place in both the local church and on the campus. Candler's Contextual Education program intentionally pairs a faculty member with supervisors from church and community ministries so that teaching teams represent the church and the academy. Twenty-two teaching supervisors support our Contextual Education and Teaching Parish (student pastor) programs. The Rev. Dr. Alice Rogers has broadened the Teaching Parish program to include students appointed to churches in the Alabama-West Florida, North Alabama, North Georgia, South Georgia, and South Carolina Annual Conferences. We also taught more than 250 United Methodist students in the Course of Study in 2006-2007.

This year, enrollment was 535, with 440 in the Master of Divinity program, 54 in the Master of Theological Studies program, 12 in the Master of Theology program, 10 in the Doctor of Theology program and 19 enrolled as Special, Non-Degree students. Eighty-three percent of students are enrolled full-time. The student population is 25 percent US ethnic minority, 11 percent international, and 52 percent women. Nearly 50 denominations are represented with 52 percent of MDiv students being United Methodist from 37 Annual Conferences. Other denominations of the Methodist family represented at Candler include African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, and the Methodist Church of Korea. The average age of our students is now 31, with 57 percent under thirty. The median age of our MDiv students is 27.

Lots of wonderful new initiatives are underway. We will move into Phase I of our new building in early August 2008. It offers 65,000 square feet for classrooms, offices, and community life. We hope construction on Phase II will begin late in 2008. It will hold the Pitts Library and the Wesley Teaching Chapel. The first year of implementation of a new MDiv curriculum is nearly complete. This program deepens faculty roles in advising and mentoring and requires a course in a religion other than Christianity. A new director of lifelong learning should be in place by fall 2008 to initiate a renewed emphasis on programs that benefit congregations and their leaders in continuing education. Designed to address the changing needs of church and society both at home and abroad, this program will work cooperatively with local churches, judicatory leaders, and denominational agencies to strengthen the church and its ministries.

At the center of our upcoming capital campaign is a program to boost financial support for students. This year, 76 percent of eligible students received scholarship support from Candler with an average scholarship covering 71 percent of tuition. Among these awards, more than $2.4 million was provided to 198 United Methodist students. Gifts from the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) have played a large role in this support. However, so much more needs to be done. More than 60 percent of Candler's MDiv graduates leave school with educational debt. This burden undermines their effectiveness in ministry, such that some seek alternative employment. Your continued support, gifts, and prayers mean a great deal as we work to provide a strong educational program as well as support for the courageous and committed students who choose to undertake the challenge of theological education.

Thank you for your support of Candler. Candler exists to serve the church of Jesus Christ and The United Methodist Church in particular. If you have insights on what we could do better to fulfill this service, please let me know.

Jan Love, Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics, Candler School of Theology

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Duke Divinity School prepares students to become effective, faithful leaders in the church, the academy and the world through its attention to spiritual formation and transforming ministry as well as to leadership and academic rigor. The school is committed to preparing ordained leaders in the United Methodist Church. It is also an integral part of Duke University, and divinity students enjoy and contribute to the university's intellectual, spiritual and social resources.

Programs: The Divinity School began work on two major initiatives in 2007 that build on previous efforts to partner with the church and other institutions to provide leadership in areas of great importance to congregations.

The Duke Endowment awarded Duke Divinity School $12 million in the summer of 2007 to lead a wide-ranging effort that aims to assess, track and improve the health of every United Methodist pastor in North Carolina. The Divinity School is collaborating with the Western North Carolina Conference and the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church on the project.

The initiative in clergy health, planned to last seven years, will include an initial health assessment of ministers followed by a longitudinal study of their physical, spiritual and mental health. Information gathering will focus on such issues as job satisfaction, spiritual practices, exercise, cultivating friendships and general well-being.

Also in 2007, the Divinity School began planning for an initiative in Christian leadership that will help Christian leaders combine theological insight with wise business practices to meet real-world challenges.

Leadership Education at Duke Divinity will teach, coach and provide resources for leaders of key Christian institutions that support and sustain congregations and pastors. Its reach will extend from bishops and executive directors of denominations to senior leaders of seminaries and other organizations that serve congregations.

Supported with a $14 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., the initiative will develop a variety of programs that focus on leading and managing Christian institutions. The initiative also will convene Christian leaders at Duke and across the country to address pivotal issues, and will develop a website where leaders of Christian institutions can interact to share resources and ideas.

Students: We welcomed a superb and diverse group of new students to Duke Divinity School in the fall of 2007. Total enrollment remained steady at about 575 students representing 34 states and seven foreign countries. More than half of our Master of Divinity students are United Methodist, 14 percent are Baptist, and the others come from more than 30 different denominations in the Christian faith.

The median age of the entering Master of Divinity class continues to be low – this year it was approximately 24. The overall entering class has an ethnic minority enrollment of approximately 21 percent. The median undergraduate G.P.A. of the entering class was 3.61. We also welcomed our second class of Doctor of Theology students. Eight outstanding students entered in this class, out of more than 50 applications.

Our field education program continues to provide important contextual learning for students. More than 180 of our students experienced summer field education placements, including many in rural United Methodist congregations (whose stipends were supported by The Duke Endowment), 12 in our Teaching Congregations program, 6 in the Center for Reconciliation's Teaching Communities program, and 18 international placements in South Africa (5), Guatemala and El Salvador (4), Brazil (2), Canada (2), Peru (2), Uganda (2), and Kenya (1).

Events and Activities: The Divinity School hosted "Charles Wesley at 300," a three-day conference in June 2007 celebrating Wesley's life and work. The school also sponsored our annual Summer Wesley Institute for scholars from around the world to gather for four weeks of study, research and conversation.

In August 2007 the Divinity School was well represented at the Oxford Institute of Methodist Studies, where eight faculty and one Th.D. student participated and several provided significant leadership.

The Divinity School's Center for Reconciliation convened a gathering of more than 40 Christian leaders in Africa in November 2006 and again in January 2008 to develop strategies for focusing the church's work in addressing issues and conflicts such as genocide, civil war and AIDS.

In February 2007, the Divinity School welcomed Archbishop Elias Chacour, a Palestinian-Israeli priest, educator, peacemaker and leader, for several days of lectures and conversation. And the Right Reverend George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke at the Divinity School the following month as a part of the efforts of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies.

The Divinity School hosted the Fund for Theological Education's summer conference for African-American doctoral students in June 2007. In addition, we hosted the Hispanic Summer Program, which brought to our campus Hispanic students and faculty for two weeks of coursework, worship and reflection.

Faculty: Stephen Gunter became Associate Dean for Methodist Studies and Research Professor of Evangelism and Methodist Studies. Gunter taught at Candler School of Theology before serving as President of Young Harris College. This new position enables the Divinity School to build on strengths in Wesleyan Studies and further develop service and outreach to United Methodist constituencies.

Edgardo Colon-Emeric joined the Divinity School as director of our new Hispanic Studies Program and Assistant Research Professor of Theology and Hispanic Studies. We anticipate this program will enhance course offerings and field education for M.Div. students, while also addressing Course of Studies education and other workshops for practicing Hispanic pastors.

Lauren Winner, who had been serving as a visiting faculty member, joined the Divinity School in a full-time tenure-track capacity. A Ph.D. graduate of Columbia University, Winner is well-known for such books as "Girl Meets God" and "Mudhouse Sabbath." She also writes regularly and widely for such publications as Books and Culture, Christian Century, Christianity Today, and The New York Times Book Review.

Paul Griffiths, an internationally known scholar in the field of Catholic studies, was appointed as Duke Divinity School's first William K. Warren Foundation Professor of Catholic Theology. Griffiths previously was the Schmitt Chair of Catholic studies at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

Notable books published by our faculty in 2006-07 included "Early Methodist Spirituality" by Paul Chilcote; "Prophets, Sages, and Poets" by Jim Crenshaw; "Places of Redemption" by Mary McClintock Fulkerson; "Matthew" and "The State of the University" by Stanley Hauerwas; "Saving Women" by Laceye Warner; and "Power and Passion" by Sam Wells.

Honors & Achievements: Richard Lischer, Duke Divinity School's James T. and Alice Mead Cleland professor of preaching, was presented with a lifetime achievement award by the Academy of Homiletics.

Richard Heitzenrater, William Kellon Quick professor of church history and Wesley studies, was honored for his academic achievements in a special session of the American Society of Church History.

We are thankful for the relationships among the United Methodist Church, this Annual Conference, and Duke Divinity School, and we look forward to another year of working to prepare men and women for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

Dean L. Gregory Jones

FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE

Florida Southern College remains deeply committed to continuing our tradition of offering the highest caliber of academic and student life programs to our students who are some of this generation's most promising young women and men. We are gratified by our continued success in achieving our mission of preparing students to make a positive and consequential impact on society, and I am pleased to share some of our notable achievements this past year.

One of the most exciting accomplishments was completing funding for the Sarah D. and L. Kirk McKay, Jr. Archives Center, which will house The Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church historical materials and artifacts, as well as our Frank Lloyd Wright, Center for Florida History, and Citrus Institute and Citrus Hall of Fame materials. In March 2007, we welcomed Dr. James Hadley Billington, Librarian of Congress, who was installed as Florida Southern's 73rd Honorary Chancellor and participated in the ceremonial groundbreaking for the new archives center. Construction of the facility is under way and is expected to be completed in spring 2009. We look forward to dedicating the archive wing, which will provide researchers unprecedented access to the Conference's valuable historical documents while also serving as a laboratory for students to gain experience in historical research, archival techniques, and modern research technology.

Florida Southern is increasingly earning recognition as one of the nation's premier small private colleges. The College was selected for inclusion in the 2008 edition of *The Princeton Review's* guide to "The Best 366 Colleges," a distinction shared by only 9% of American colleges. Florida Southern's national ranking in *U.S. News & World Report* improved in 2007 from 8th

position to 5th position in the category of "Best Baccalaureate Colleges in the South." As for value, *U.S. News & World Report* rated FSC #4 in its "Best Value" rankings. *The Princeton Review* also consistently ranks FSC as a "Best Value College," and *Barron's* calls us one of the nation's "Best Buys in College Education." The respected and popular *Fiske Guide to Colleges* has recently informed us that Florida Southern will be included in their next publication, which highlights impressive institutions throughout the United States.

The College received a significant grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund to hire an Assistant Dean of Student Success and Retention, Louise Johnson, to ensure that our first-year students receive the academic, social, and spiritual support they need. Several initiatives have been launched, including a new faculty advising/mentoring program that pairs faculty advisors with students. Assistant Dean Johnson's efforts are producing positive results, including strengthened relationships between students and faculty, improvement in student academic performance, enhanced peer relationships among students, and greater student pride in the institution.

Another important accomplishment last year was the appointment of an outstanding Dean of Students, Matt Thompson, who is revolutionizing our student life programs, engendering enthusiasm and a spirit of esprit de corps among students, and increasing students' campus involvement. Dean Thompson is emphasizing programs that foster student leadership development, focus on wellness, and encourage community service. Through Dean Thompson's leadership, the College's Center for Community Service organized a community-wide Day of Service. Five hundred students participated, contributing 1,350 volunteer hours to nine local nonprofit agencies. The response from students and partner agencies was so overwhelmingly positive that we decided to institutionalize this as an annual event.

In recognition of the College's and our students' exemplary service efforts and pervasive culture of service, the Corporation for National and Community Service, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education, named Florida Southern to the *President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll,* which is the highest federal commendation an institution can achieve for its commitment to service learning and civic engagement.

Considerable progress was made this past year on the restoration of the Frank Lloyd Wright campus. In June, the World Monuments Fund of New York included the campus on its 2008 Watch List of "100 Most Endangered Sites" in the world. Concurrently, with funding from the State of Florida, a $1.6-million total restoration of Wright's Esplanades was completed. Simultaneously, a state grant matched by FSC alumnus and trustee M. Clayton Hollis '80 and his family enabled us to complete, for the first time, Wright's Water Dome. The Water Dome World Premiere was attended by more than 3,000 and made headlines in the United States, as well as France, Japan, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom.

Construction on the first of two new residence halls being funded by alumni Carol and Barney Barnett is nearing completion and will be ready for occupancy next fall. The residential life center is designed by world renowned architect Robert A.M. Stern. Stern is Dean of the Yale School of Architecture and has created a masterpiece well integrated with the Frank Lloyd Wright campus, enabling us to extend our significant architectural legacy. Construction on the second residence hall will begin this summer. We broke ground on the magnificent new Dr. Marcene H. and Robert E. Christoverson Humanities Building, also designed by Stern, and will begin the first phase of construction this summer. Additionally, we broke ground for the Joe K. and Alberta Blanton Nursing Building, a modern facility that will provide future nurses with state-of-the-art training opportunities. These new buildings will greatly enhance the quality of the engaged learning experience for Florida Southern students.

Florida Southern students continue to garner national awards for leadership and academic achievement. Malena Frett '07 and Christina Martin '08 were elected as regional directors for Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) national leadership honor society. Malena also received ODK's prestigious Eldridge W. Roark, Jr. Meritorious Service Award while Christina, together with Courtney Baker '07 and Amy Clampitt-Holsenbeck '08, were among only 40 students nationwide chosen by ODK to attend the organization's 2007 Community Leaders of Tomorrow convention. In recognition of outstanding scholastic accomplishments, Lynsay McCaulley '07 was invited to present a paper at the international Harry Potter conference in Canada; Angela Munoz '07 won the Brooks Award for her first place presentation at the Southeastern Tri Beta Biological Honor Society meeting; and a team of Florida Southern marketing students out-performed teams from six other institutions to win the Scholastic Achievement Award of the national Chevrolet Marketing competition. These and other achievements are a testament to the exceptional talent of our students and the outstanding teaching of our faculty.

Campus Ministries continue to be a vibrant part of the student life experience of the College. The goal of religious life on campus is to provide students with a variety of opportunities to put their faith into practice and grow in discipleship. With eight student-led ministries from which to choose, almost every night of the week provides occasions for worship, study, accountability group discussions, and fellowship. Highlights from this past year include a number of Christian concerts, a Winter Break mission trip to continue hurricane relief in Mississippi, and the Wesley Fellowship hosting author and activist Shane Claiborne.

Florida Southern College continues to build on its extraordinary success to advance toward an even higher standard of educational excellence. Our College community is fervently committed to educating the whole student—spiritually, academically, socially, and physically—so that they will graduate prepared to make positive and consequential contributions to our world. I am deeply grateful to The Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church for the vital role it has played in our institutional heritage and for its ongoing advocacy of our important mission.

Anne B. Kerr, Ph.D., President

FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME

STATEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND
THE FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME, INC.

PREAMBLE

The United Methodist Church has a history of Christian responsibility for service to people through the arm of its social welfare agencies, as evidenced in the ministry of this Home.

Since its founding in 1908 by the Florida Methodist Conference, three central values have driven this ministry:

1. God in Jesus Christ proclaims that every human being is of infinite value in God's sight; and therefore, those who know God respect the value of every person.
2. It is the plan of God's creation that human life come forth and receive nurture in families.
3. Children need an atmosphere of love, acceptance and guidance that they may come to know God's purpose and joy.

Out of these values arise our mission and the cooperative ministry between this Home and the Florida United Methodist Conference.

FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME PURPOSE STATEMENT
The Purpose of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home is to create an atmosphere which enables children and families with special needs to experience God's love and care as presented in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Combining Christian influences with a healing, caring, therapeutic community, the Home provides a continuum of highly specialized services designed to strengthen individual and family life.

PROGRAM STATEMENT
The Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc., an agency of the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church, provides Christian nurture to troubled and/or dependent children, youth, and their families through residential facilities and programs. Such facilities and programs include family life education, counseling, child and family advocacy programs, chapel programs, music, health and physical fitness, vocational, a Day Care Program designed to serve families, independent living, higher education and other therapeutic activity, to the end that the worth of the individual shall be affirmed, families shall be assured, and God shall be worshipped and served in our time.

STATEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP
"Here we propose, by the help of God and the cooperation of all good people, to found a noble institution for the relief, education and training of destitute, fatherless and motherless children, who may look to us for help." (From 1908 Journal Florida Annual Conference). Thus began the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. With creation of The United

Methodist Church and union with the Sarah Hunt Home came the Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc. whose not-for-profit 501 © (3) corporate office is located at 51 Main Street, Enterprise, (Volusia County) Florida.

With such a heritage blessed by God, and faithfully supported by God's people, we now seek to clarify and strengthen the relationship between the Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc. and the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church.

1. Receive nominations and elect members to the Board of Trustees of the Children's Home, in keeping with the charter and by-laws of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home;
2. Continue to provide benevolent support to the Florida United Methodist Children's Home through channels such as the Fifth Sunday and Christmas offerings, encouraging its people to make special gifts, and be supportive of the Home's programs of planned giving;
3. Make available opportunities and resources for financial support in keeping with the policies of the Council on Finance and Administration and in offering Florida United Methodist Foundation, Inc. assistance with planned giving;
4. Permit the Florida United Methodist Children's Home to use elements of the name and logo of The United Methodist Church and/or the Conference, including a reference to the relationship;
5. Cooperate with the Florida United Methodist Children's Home in furthering the promotion and interpretation of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home's missions and programs;
6. Communicate with the Florida United Methodist Children's Home any changes in the rules and actions of the Annual Conference and of the General Conference which may affect the Florida United Methodist Children's Home;
7. Receive an annual audited financial report from the Florida United Methodist Children's Home;
8. Maintain for its own benefit liability insurance against direct human service liability.

The Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc., agrees to:

1. Continue its tradition of offering quality services to children, youth and families, to develop innovative concepts to help with their changing needs with guidance from the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church;
2. Submit an annual audited financial report to the Annual Conference;
3. Advise the Annual Conference of any major changes in program or direction;
4. Follow guidelines as approved by the Annual Conference, in matters of funding;
5. Maintain membership in the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries;
6. Submit to the Annual Conference for approval any changes in the Florida United Methodist Children's Home's Articles of Incorporation;
7. Furnish an annual report to the Annual Conference;
8. Maintain active relationship with the Health and Wholeness Team;
9. Provide ex-officio membership on the Board of Trustees for the following: the Bishop of the Florida Conference; the District Superintendent of the district in which the Home is located, and a representative from the Health and Wholeness Team.
10. Maintain for its own benefit liability insurance against direct human service liability.

Neither the Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc., nor the Annual Conference accepts any legal or financial responsibility for the operations of the other. Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc. and the Conference mutually agree to hold each other harmless for any liabilities arising out of their relationship.

This Statement of Relationship shall be subject to review and amendment at least once during each quadrennium.

By action of the Board of Trustees of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc., meeting on March 25, 2008.

_____ Signed _____

Date Board Chair

By action of the Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church meeting in session in Lakeland, Florida, May 30 , 2008.

Signed _____ _____

Date Bishop

THE FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION, INC.

The Florida United Methodist Foundation, Inc. was organized under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the State of Florida on July 19, 1966. Its purpose is to facilitate charitable giving to churches, institutions, boards or agencies of the Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. As such, The Foundation serves as a channel in the handling of gifts to United Methodist institutions through charitable estate planning opportunities. The Foundation is legally authorized to serve as trustee in the administration of charitable trusts created for the benefit of any United Methodist institution, local church or church organization. It is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation is registered with the State of Florida Division of Securities as an Issuer-Dealer in a limited security. As of December 31, 2007, the Foundation had $ 227,289,314 in total assets under management.

Members of the corporation are the lay and clergy members of the Florida Annual Conference. Members of The Board of Directors are elected to a term of three years, and service is restricted to nine consecutive years.

Officers and staff of The Foundation are available, without fee, to assist local churches in establishing a Permanent Endowment Fund and Committee for the purpose of creating their own planned giving programs, and present workshops on wills and charitable estate planning on behalf of local churches, districts or other church-related agencies. Additionally, officers of The Foundation are always available, without fee, to provide information, on a confidential basis, regarding opportunities whereby personal asset accumulations may be used to benefit the individual and the ministries and churches of The United Methodist Church. Information can be provided to individuals regarding the variety of charitable estate planning vehicles. These vehicles include wills, revocable or living charitable trusts, donor advised funds, life insurance policies, gift annuities and gifts of appreciated property.

The Florida United Methodist Foundation will serve as Trustee in the management of revocable or irrevocable charitable trusts established to benefit the church or its related institutions. Trustee services include the professional management of trust assets; record keeping and reporting, accounting and the regular payment of income to the donor or other beneficiaries. The instructions of the donor(s) are faithfully observed. A nominal fee will be assessed in order to cover administrative expenses.

Through an Investment Management Agreement, The Foundation will invest local church, district and Conference endowment funds or other permanent funds. Once an appropriate investment strategy is determined by The Foundation and the investing unit, the funds are placed under professional management. A small fee is assessed in order to cover administrative expenses. As of December 31, 2007, The Foundation managed assets of $ 88.5 million (Fair Market Value) in these trusts and money management agreements.

The Foundation provides Charitable Gift Annuities to individuals who wish to give a meaningful charitable gift to their church and yet also retain the security of regular income payments over their lifetime, or over the lifetime of a loved one. The Foundation assesses an administrative fee for this service; however, this fee does not diminish the value of the gift annuity to the annuitant. As of December 31, 2007, The Foundation managed over $4.8 million (Fair Market Value) in gift annuities.

The Foundation established The Florida United Methodist Development Fund, Inc., in 1976 in response to the loan needs of the churches of the Florida Annual Conference. It is operated as a loan fund within the Foundation.

Florida residents, churches and church organizations can open a Participation Account (redeemable on a "demand" basis) upon which the Foundation pays interest. The Board of Directors sets the interest rate, 5% as of January 1, 2007, quarterly. From the accumulation of these investments, the Fund makes first mortgage loans to churches of the Conference for new building construction and major renovations. The maximum loan term is twenty (20) years, and the maximum single loan amount is 5% of the amount invested in The Fund. The interest rate for loans, 7% as of January 1, 2007, is adjusted quarterly to 2.0% above the rate being paid to investors in The Fund.

The minimum investment is $100.00. Interest is paid at the end of each calendar quarter. As of December 31, 2007, investments totaled $ 93.6 million. At the end of 2007, the Fund had a loan balance of $ 62.6 million. Funds not yet loaned are deposited only in Certificates of Deposit and U.S. Government obligations. The Fund maintains a capital reserve of $1,500,000, plus an additional 10% in liquid assets, which serves as security for the investors' deposits.

For a copy of the Offering Circular or for a copy of the Loan Guidelines, please contact The Florida United Methodist Foundation, Inc., at P. O. Box 3549, Lakeland, FL 33802-3549.

In 2007, the Foundation's fundraising ministry directed campaigns for four churches that together raised $1,688,879. The campaigns assisted those churches with renovation and expansion needs, debt reduction and new-building construction. The Foundation also conducted a pre-campaign feasibility study for a church that is conducting a major renovation of its worship facilities.

In 2007, the Foundation's newly established Emergency Grant ministry awarded its first Emergency Grant to Faith Primera Iglesia, an Hispanic Mission in Tampa, which needed $10,000 to replace its air conditioning system. Because of the way the building was constructed, the church was unable to open sanctuary windows for ventilation, and faced emergency repair costs that far exceeded its operating budget allocations. Emergency Grant Funds set aside by the Foundation helped Faith Primera continue its ministry. The Foundation accepts Emergency Grant applications throughout the calendar year. Guidelines and application forms are available on the Foundation web site, www.fumf.org.

In fall of 2007 the Foundation held its first Stewardship Summit for the Florida Annual Conference. More than 170 clergy and lay attendees participated in the one-day event which featured question and answer sessions, workshops and a keynote address by Rev. Dan Dick of the General Board of Discipleship. The Foundation plans to continue offering this conference-wide stewardship program on an annual basis.

The Foundation continues to serve as the Conference Development Office, working with the Bishop's Capital Campaign Commission whose purpose is to raise capital and endowment funds on an ongoing basis for the Florida Annual Conference. This represents a fundamental change in the way in which the Annual Conference approaches capital fundraising. In the past, the Annual Conference has relied on a series of ad-hoc capital campaigns to address specific needs in which the local church was viewed as the primary giving unit. Churches were assigned target fundraising quotas that were essentially quasi-apportionments.

Under the new approach, the Annual Conference will be in a continuous mode of identifying ministry opportunities; and identifying, qualifying, cultivating and developing individual donors who can make significant gifts to the Annual Conference to further its mission and ministry.

Immediately preceding the 2007 Annual Conference, the BCCC received a feasibility study report from its outside consultant, which summarized the results of multiple focus groups held throughout the conference as well as results from a series of confidential interviews with clergy and lay members of the conference.

The 2007 Annual Conference endorsed the BCCC's decision to implement a capital and endowment campaign for the Annual Conference:

Together!
Bringing Hope, Changing Lives
The Campaign for the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church

As of submission of this report, the campaign is in the conference leadership phase, in which volunteer conference leaders, conference staff, and volunteer leaders of participating agencies affiliated with the conference are making pledges and gifts to the campaign. This will be followed by major donor solicitation, during which campaign staff and volunteers, in partnership with local church pastors, will call on individual donors to ask for gifts, first to support the donor's local church, and second to support shared ministries of the Annual Conference.

During the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008, the clergy chair of the campaign, supported by Foundation staff, has met on a district-by-district basis with the clergy of the Annual Conference to explain the new fundraising model, which includes the local church as a beneficiary of the process, to describe the role of conference clergy in the entire process, and to receive advice from pastors on the implementation of the campaign in their local churches.

The Foundation continues to update its donor database with the names of potential donors who were identified via the feasibility study and through meetings with clergy and laypersons of the Annual Conference.

As of the submission of this report, approximately $3 million has been pledged or received toward the Together! campaign objectives. The first major gift of the campaign, $700,000 from the estate of Mrs. Alice Lockmiller, has been received and is funding current construction of a new Worship and Program Center at the Riverside Retreat facility.

We expect major donor solicitation to continue through and beyond the 2009 Annual Conference.

We expect to announce the general phase of the campaign at the 2009 Annual Conference, during which all members of Florida United Methodist churches will be asked to consider a gift to support the shared ministries of the Annual Conference. All donors, regardless of the size of their gifts, may choose to designate their gift to support one or more of the shared ministries, or may choose to make an undesignated gift to the campaign.

We plan to use the local church as a vehicle for communication of the campaign objectives to its members and friends, and will provide comprehensive communication materials in multiple formats and languages to support that communication process.

We are grateful for the trust that the Florida Annual Conference, its districts and agencies and the members and friends of its churches have placed in the Foundation. We will do our utmost to honor that trust.

Duncan Gray, Chairperson; Thomas W. Marston, President

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Founded in 1883 – Dr. Walter H. McKelvey, President

Gammon Theological Seminary is one of thirteen accredited theological institutions of The United Methodist Church. Gammon is the only historically African American graduate theological school related to the United Methodist Church.

Gammon will celebrate its 125th year of founding this year during the annual Founders' Day and Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series, October 6-9, 2008. "Remembering Who We Are: Seeking New Pathways" is our theme for our 125th celebration. Bishop Violet Fisher will serve as our Founders' Day Worship Service Speaker and Bishop Gregory Palmer will serve as our guest lecturer for the Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series. A Founders' Day Banquet and Gala will be held during this event to honor the alumni who have matriculated at Gammon and served The United Methodist Church for the last 125 years. The Methodist Episcopal Church founded Gammon Theological Seminary in 1883. Bishop Gilbert Haven and the officers of the Freedmen's Aid Society had purchased nearly 500 acres of high land in the southern suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. Gammon initially began as a Department of Theology at Clark University. Through the efforts of Bishop Henry White Warren and the gift of $20,000 for endowment from the Rev. Elijah H. Gammon, a Methodist minister of the Rock River (Illinois) Conference. The enthusiasm of these two men led to the construction of Gammon Hall. The Rev. Wilbur Patterson Thirkield was elected dean, and Gammon School of Theology was officially opened on October 3, 1883.

Gammon is the United Methodist member of the consortium of theological schools, known across the world as The Interdenominational Theological Center located in Atlanta, Georgia. We offer a broad curriculum in the scholar-minister tradition and also offers a holistic educational experience that continues to stress scholarship and service.

Students prepare for administration and leadership, counseling, teaching and preaching and a range of other spiritual and secular roles, with a blend of scholarship in the classroom and practical experience in the community. The interdisciplinary curriculum integrates theological studies with preparation for the ministry, merging theory with practice to equip the student for scholarship in the academy, service in the parish, and leadership in the community. Degree programs offered are Master of Divinity; Master of Arts in Christian Education; Master of Arts in Church Music; Dual Degrees and Doctor of Theology and Doctor of Ministry with a Specialty In Pastoral Counseling;

Madelyn C. Greene, Alumni & Student Affairs Director
404/581-0310: mgreenegammon@bellsouth.net

GEORGIA FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Our world is constantly changing. We have witnessed major changes in the financial community over the past year, from fluctuating interest rates to a dramatic rise in gas and other consumer products. Even though you are surrounded by other transformations in your financial life, your credit union has remained an unfailing protector of your funds and financial health. Our continued focus on the well being of our members is reflected in our consistent and steady growth each year, no matter any outside influences.

A quick glance at our financials will show slight variances between this fiscal year and the one prior. On closer inspection, you'll quickly see the sound increases and strong foundation that this credit union continues to build. Our net worth has increased, showing a correct balance of expenditures and capital. Loan interest did not make a dramatic rise, but did show an improvement. As our membership and number of share accounts grew, so did our need for dividends, which attests for the slight climb. Bottom line, your credit union continues to make the solid growth that will allow us to maintain success in the years to come.

We are only concerned with doing business one way—the way that's right for our members. Slow and steady wins the hearts of our members. Let all your fellow church and family members know how much you enjoy doing business with your credit union—ask them to join! Your recommendation is one of our most successful methods of advertising. All the best for the coming year!

Rev. James R. Mitchell, Chairman

INSTITUTE OF PREACHING

The Institute of Preaching of the Florida Conference was established to help accomplished preachers, both relatively new to their ministries and who have served for many years, fully develop their preaching gifts. 2007 marked a new day for the Institute having made the transition from a large group format, to a small group of eleven persons who participated in three retreats for one-on-one coaching and teaching. This first class of pastors included persons with diverse backgrounds from around the state. The retreats were in Durham, NC, Tampa, and Gainesville. The partnership with Duke Divinity Schools Continuing Education Programs, directed by Nathan Kirkpatrick, is off to a wonderful start, and the teaching and mentoring from Dr. Rick Lischer and Christine Parton-Burkett, both members of the Duke faculty, were most helpful.

The first year was a great experience and the format will remain largely the same, with some minor changes taking place based on participant feedback. The most substantive change is that the Institute invited the Western North Carolina conference, with their own funding, to select a group of six persons to attend the retreats along with the ten-twelve Florida Conference participants.

All elders who have served for five years and preach regularly are invited to apply for the Institute. The institute is not designed for remedial work, but rather to help good preachers enhance their gifts for preaching. The Institute covers all expenses with the exception of travel to and from each retreat. We invite others to apply for next year's Institute beginning in January 2009.

For more information and an application please go to: www.flumc.org/iop

Rev. Jack Jackson, Chair

SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION CONNECTIONAL TABLE

Greetings on behalf of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Connectional Table and our President, Bishop Lawrence McCleskey. I am pleased to report to the Florida Annual Conference on some of the actions and accomplishments at Lake Junaluska and in the jurisdiction.

We were excited to consecrate the Bethea Welcome Center at Lake Junaluska on July 9, 2007. There were United Methodist leaders from several general agencies, colleges and universities present for this historic event. We are happy to report that

the building is in use and offers Christian hospitality to Lake Junaluska guests and visitors to Western North Carolina. We thank the Florida Conference for your financial commitment to make this symbol of reconciliation a reality.

Lake Junaluska grounds and facilities are a priority. We have completed the new Lake Junaluska golf course clubhouse. This was supported by a number of individuals who use this part of Lake Junaluska's ministry of recreation. As we prepare and plan for Lake Junaluska becoming a premier conference center for The United Methodist Church, we have a representative group from around the jurisdiction serving on the Lake Junaluska Campus and Stuart Center Design Group to recommend a master plan for the campus. We have Cornell University studying our operations and services to better serve The Church.

Along with looking at our facilities, we have reorganized our ministry area into the Ministry Event Development Office. Rev. Roger Dowdy is giving superb leadership in evaluating our ministries, establishing procedures, and developing partnerships to meet the needs of The United Methodist Church. An agreement has been made to establish Alban Institute at Lake Junaluska. We began to experience this partnership April 13-16, with *Healthy Congregations* seminar led by Alban Institute. The centerpiece of the partnership will be an Alban Institute seminar July 6-10, at the newly envisioned Ministry Summit (formerly the SEJ Minister's Conference). There is a new relationship between Ministry and Marketing at Lake Junaluska. Ken Howle and Roger Dowdy are leading us in considering new possibilities for the future, built on research of needs of The Church coupled with good business practices.

The Ministries with Young People continues to serve the largest numbers of United Methodists at Lake Junaluska. The summer youth events and winter ski retreats are being well attended this year. An outstanding multi-cultural event, *Embracing God's Diversity,* was held in December. The leadership of the jurisdiction made this one of the most exciting and diverse groups that has ever met at Lake Junaluska.

Below are snapshots of the work of the seven southeastern jurisdiction agencies:

GULFSIDE ASSEMBLY – Mollie Stewart reports the Board feels good about the SEJ and thanks them. A draft of what the new campus might look like has been drawn. Two years after Katrina, during the week of August 13, we sensed a clear direction of hope and a future bright with promise. They began the relationship building in the community, began talking to officials in Waveland and the state and began building partnerships. They are considering senior housing on the gulf and won't be selling any more land but will utilize what they have. When the tax revenues go through, they will redeem 25 acres of previously owned land. They are not duplicating ministry but enhancing what they have. They have a house that is being used as an office and a place to stay when in the area. When the campus is completed, that house will be used for the director's home.

INTENTIONAL GROWTH CENTER - Larry Ousley reports that the Intentional Growth Center has been in business for 30 years and their area shows signs of health. They planned fifty seven (57) events this year. They drew on reserve funds each of the last three (3) years but this year have not and think they will break even at the end of the year. They trained over four hundred (400) interim ministers in this denomination. They are getting a good response from district superintendents all over the country with 1/3 from outside the jurisdiction. They helped with "heads in beds" in the Conference Center with $175,000 of business. IGC is grateful for the Morgan Charitable Trust that will help as they move into the future. They are planning a major keynoting event in 2008 and look forward to working with the Lay Leaders.

SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTIONAL AGENCY FOR NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES (SEJANAM) - Darlene Jacobs reports that SEJANAM became an agency in 1993 to strengthen Native American ministries. It provided advocacy, technical assistance in writing grants with $250,000 representing almost one hundred (100) tribes and twenty three (23) churches and ministries, over six thousand (6,000) who are United Methodists. They work with churches in rural and urban areas and one of the largest Native American churches with one thousand (1,000) members. They have a platform for holy conferencing and going beyond the boards of the SEJ. They allow for modeling and growth. Programs have increased from 25 to 50% and one of the largest Native American events in The United Methodist Church is at Lake Junaluska. Through mission trips we have erected homes and are establishing health clinics, water systems, and have two hundred fifty (250) team members for that mission project alone. They are in ministry in Mississippi with Choctaw and in Louisiana where Katrina struck. They have received $100,000 for the Cummins endowment for the support of SEJANAM's program. They are raising money to name the Cummins and Queen room in the Bethea Welcome Center. Their agency is unique as it is the only one of its kind throughout all the jurisdictions. It gives presence, a voice and visibility in the jurisdiction. They deal with violence, health and other issues in the course of their work and appreciate the support of the SEJ.

SOUTHEASTERN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AGENCY FOR REHABILITATION, INC. (SEMAR) - Chryl Eure reports that SEMAR is the oldest agency – thirty eight (38) years old. The most defining moment in 2007 was the creation of the Laurels of Junaluska, affordable housing for the elderly. October 12 was the grand opening and the residents moved in November 15 to a safe and comfortable place. We appreciate the Western North Carolina Conference and Givens Estates making this a reality. SEMAR provides technical systems to annual conferences for persons with developmental disabilities. They have entered into a contract with Mike Dyson to run SEMAR. He will lead the Board in strategic planning and determine how SEMAR can continue to be effective for The United Methodist Church. They are seeking additional board members, interested people with a passion and desire to be involved with persons with development disabilities.

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION (UMVIM) - Nick Elliott thanks all annual conferences for their support over the last thirty one (31) years. They began in the SEJ and are now national. In 2005, twenty six thousand (26,000) people went out in service and in 2006 it was thirty one thousand (31,000). Half of them responded to the hurricane disasters on the gulf coast. 80% of the Katrina relief people are faith based and United Methodist.

HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER - Clay Smith reports that the United Methodist Church has more local churches than there are US post offices. Rural communities are growing for the first time in one hundred (100) years. Hinton does consulting, provides training and builds effective ministries. Mollie Stewart and Clay spent four (4) days in the Virginia conference, three (3) days in the Florida conference and will spend every weekend to Easter next year working with small group congregations. They have a wonderful First Parrish Project for young clergy in small churches. Thirty five (35) came to Hinton for six (6) weeks during the last two years – ten (10) of whom are United Methodist. They work with affordable housing and substance abuse intervention. They have a conference and retreat center which brings in one thousand two hundred (1,200) people a year. At General Conference in April someone took trees from Gulfside Assembly, and is making furniture for general conference. The whole church is committed to Katrina relief and Gulfside Assembly.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY - Nell Thrift reports that Art Swarthout is the interim director of Archives & History and The Heritage Center. The main focus of The Commission is the Heritage Center, which acquires, organizes, preserves and makes available records of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The Center provides training for confirmation classes from throughout the jurisdiction, with approximately one thousand three hundred (1,300) young people using the Center in 2007. The Museum is also part of the tour for youth groups meeting at the Lake. In addition, drop-in visitors, researchers, and mail, telephone and e-mail requests for information make the Heritage Center a vital and lively place. The Center has received several notable acquisitions this year. Anne Blanchard, widow of the Reverend Richard Blanchard, author of the hymn "Fill My Cup", continues to share manuscripts of his music as well as hymnals and other copies of his many songs. The family and friends of Bishop Ed Tullis have recently donated artifacts of his life and ministry, including photographs and diplomas. When you are at Lake Junaluska visit the Heritage Center in the lower level of the Harrell Center.

We were thrilled to host the United Methodist Council of Bishops and the Extended Cabinet in November. In July it will be our honor to welcome the 2008 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference to Lake Junaluska. The SEJ Connectional Table appreciates the support we receive from annual conferences.

Jimmy L. Carr, Executive Director

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION - FLORIDA CONFERENCE CELEBRATING CHILDREN [2008 - 1]

WHEREAS, the 14th Annual Children's Week "Celebrating Children" will take place in Tallahassee from March 29, 2009 to April 4, 2009, bringing thousands of parents, children, professionals, community leaders and concerned citizens together to share valuable knowledge and information about children's issues across the state and in our Capital City; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Children's Week is to create a shared vision of the State of Florida's commitment to its children and families and to engage a long-term process to develop and implement strategies for moving the shared vision forward; and does so by encouraging Children's Week activities to occur locally in all of Florida's Counties to strengthen and enrich our families and our communities.

WHEREAS, multiple local and statewide non-profit organizations representing many different children's issues are participating in the celebration of Children's Week in each county, providing a holistic approach to the well-being of children, and encompassing all issues which impact Florida's children and families.

WHEREAS, the Statewide Children's Week Celebration will be on March 29, 2009 to April 4, 2009 in Tallahassee in partnership with Bishop's Initiative on Children and Poverty, Conference Global Mission and Justice Committee, Conference United Methodist Women, and other interested committees;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MARCH 31st, 2009, IS TO BE FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION IN THE FLORIDA CAPITOL CITY!

Submitted by Conference Global Mission & Justice Committee

RESOLUTION - PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY CELEBRATION [2008 – 2]

WHEREAS, at the heart of the Old Testament is testimony to shalom which Isaiah's prophecy in particular speaks to and in the New Testament Paul delivers a message of hope and John of Revelation tells of a new heaven and a new earth and

WHEREAS, Peace with Justice is a faithful expression of shalom in the Bible and encompasses harmony, wholeness, health and well being in God's creation and is more than the absence of war. It is the active presence of peace and the forthright practice of justice and is present when swords of destruction are turned into plowshares of creation. Peace with Justice is living a whole Gospel life and

WHEREAS, Peace with Justice Sunday is one of six church wide special Sundays with an offering that shall be celebrated in each United Methodist Church annually and illustrates the nature and calling of the church as the people of God and gives persons the opportunity to contribute offerings to special programs (*The Book of Discipline 2004* Paragraph 263) and

WHEREAS, historically Peace with Justice Sunday has been celebrated on the first Sunday after Pentecost because Pentecost celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit calling for God's shalom and

WHEREAS, 50% of the receipts remain in the Conference for disbursement and 50% is disbursed by the General Board of Church and Society mostly by grants in the United States and around the world for peace with justice issues (*The Book of Discipline 2004* Paragraph 264.5). General Board monies were given (2007) to Faith-based Organizing for Fair Food, Immokalee, FL, and Conference monies have been given to assist persons to go to China, Palestine, Africa¸ and to Justice for our Neighbors and

WHEREAS, less than 100 of 745 churches celebrate Peace with Justice Sunday in the Florida Conference and

WHEREAS, free resources are available at www.umcgiving.org, link to Special Sundays, then link to Peace with Justice Sunday or call toll free 1 888/346-3862

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we encourage local United Methodist churches in the Florida Conference to celebrate Peace with Justice Sunday every year with an offering that would greatly increase the opportunities to respond and become involved with God's plan for shalom.

Submitted by Florida Conference Global Mission & Justice Committee (2008)

RESOLUTION - HONORING GOD'S CREATION [2008 – 3]
Referred to Conference Table #20

WHEREAS The Bible clearly states that creation is the work and art of God. (Genesis 1 and 2);

WHEREAS The Psalmist boldly declares, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,"

WHEREAS the Apostle Paul declared that salvation and renewal included all of the earth,

WHEREAS the United Methodist Social Principles Paragraph 160 of the *Book of Discipline 2004* states, "All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it . . " God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Economic, political, social, and technical developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives. However, these developments have led to regional defoliation, dramatic extinction of species, massive human suffering, overpopulation, and misuse and overconsumption of natural and nonrenewable resources, particularly by industrialized societies. This continued course of action jeopardizes the natural heritage that God has entrusted to all generations. Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God's creation," and

WHEREAS the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church is preparing a new document, *In Defense of Creation 2,* for the 21st Century, which will have a focus on environmental stewardship, and

WHEREAS resources are available to assist churches in development environmental stewardship from the United Methodist Book of Worship, the United Methodist Hymnal, the General Board of Global Ministries Women's Division, the General Board of Church and Society, the National Council of Churches Environmental Ministries, Cokesbury and others, and

WHEREAS we the people of the United Methodist Church in the Florida Annual Conference seek to model and embody environmental stewardship that honors God's work in creation;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the churches of the Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church are committed to making changes in their ministries and lives that will honor and align with God's teachings on Creation and enable future generations to experience the fullness of God's work;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Church Council of each United Methodist Congregation in the Florida Annual Conference adopt and implement a "Green Church Covenant", to be submitted annually with Charge Conference Reports (A (Sample/Model "Green Church Covenant" follows.)

Submitted by Conference Global Mission & Justice Committee

Sample "Green Church Covenant" for Environmental Stewardship

We the people of _____ United Methodist Church covenant to respect and preserve God's Creation by:

List how church will reduce consumption:
(1.)_____ (2.)_____ (3). _____
Suggestions: turn off unused lights; create community compost sites; incorporate eco-friendly dinnerware; eradicate Styrofoam use; reduce the use of fossil fuels; reuse existing structures and other building materials; implement water conservation practices; reduce energy consumption by using Energy Star products, reduce paper usage in church communications; encourage carpools; buy fair trade and organic goods including coffee when possible; change the thermostat to lower energy usage; and, have the goal of reducing church electric/gas energy consumption by 10% within one year.

List how church will practice reusing:
(1.)_____ (2.)_____ (3). _____
Suggestions: use washable dishes; repair items instead of purchasing new goods; install water collection cisterns for lawn watering; goods and clothing swaps and sales; and, have church members bring their own coffee mugs.

List how church will practice recycling:
(1.)_____ (2.)_____ (3). _____
Suggestions: purchase recycled paper products; develop recycle centers (for the community or office) for paper, plastic, and aluminum; and, create community compost sites.

List ways church will educate members on environmental stewardship:
(1.)_____ (2.)_____ (3). _____
Suggestions: integrate stewardship of creation into worship; create a "Green Team" to implement green practices; incorporate environmental stewardship education into Sunday schools, small groups, and large groups; create educational community gardens for food or butterflies; and, plant churchyards with Florida-native vegetation.

Through this covenant we declare our faith in God and our stewardship of God's creation.

RESOLUTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL PROCUREMENT PROGRAM [2008 - 4]

WHEREAS, the local church is experiencing ever greater challenges in finding ways to lower costs and become better stewards of money and resources and,

WHEREAS, the collective purchasing power of Conference churches is vast, it is seldom if ever consolidated for the advantage of all and,

WHEREAS, the consolidation of purchasing would lower the costs of goods and services utilized by the local churches and the conference agencies, making more funds available for ministry and,

WHEREAS, a collective procurement effort has already been undertaken by the East Central District in conjunction with Enterprise Car Rental for discounted rental car rates for the benefit of pastors and staff and,

WHEREAS, rising energy costs are raising the price of all goods and services to the local church and conference and,

WHEREAS, churches are striving to meet the Conference Asking goals, while struggling to meet local ministry needs and,

WHEREAS, no church has all the requisite procurement expertise for the acquisition of all the goods and services that all churches purchase throughout the year and,

WHEREAS, development of a professional procurement program for the conference will allow our churches and conference agencies to benefit from utilizing our aggregated purchasing power:

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that a Procurement Team task force comprised of three laity and three clergy will forthwith be formed to explore the feasibility of a procurement process that utilizes our aggregated purchasing power to the advantage of the local church and conference agencies; and report back to the 2009 Annual Conference for the implementation and costs of said program. Task force members will be responsible for their own expenses.

The Administrative Council of the First United Methodist Church of Deland
Rev. Owen R. Stricklin, Senior Pastor
Mr. Bill Hall, Annual Conference Delegate
Mr. Van Rhodes, Chairperson of Administrative Council

RESOLUTION - SUPPORTING A GLOBAL MARSHALL PLAN [2008 – 5]

WHEREAS, Jesus said, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me;"

WHEREAS, THE United Methodist Church has a rich history of support for Peace with Justice issues;

WHEREAS, the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church has voted to revisit their influential Episcopal pastoral letter and study, "In Defense of Creation (1985)," and has elected Bishop Timothy Whitaker of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church as the Chair for the development of the new pastoral letter, "In Defense of Creation II;"

WHEREAS, the themes of "In Defense of Creation II" include Global Poverty and Health and Peacemaking;

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has a proven track record as an effective Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), delivering relief to hurting people in the United States and around the world;

WHEREAS, U. S. House Resolution 1078 (H. Res. 1078) has been introduced in Congress and referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a Global Marshall Plan holds the potential to demonstrate the commitment of the United States to peace and prosperity;

WHEREAS, the Global Marshall Plan calls for the United States and other leading industrialized nations to contribute 1 to 2% of their Gross National Products over the next 20 years to the eradication of extreme poverty and disease throughout the nation and the world;

WHEREAS, the Global Marshall plan would deliver the relief funds "within the ethical framework of generosity and magnanimity, not merely of instrumentality," utilizing Non-Governmental Organizations like UMCOR to ensure the effective distribution of the relief;

WHEREAS, one of the three original sponsors of H. Res. 1078, the Honorable Emanuel Cleaver, is an Elder in the United Methodist Church and Senior Pastor of a United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Missouri;

WHEREAS, a copy of H. Res. 1078 is attached to this resolution;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the 2008 Annual Conference of the Florida United Methodist Church endorses U. S. House Resolution 1078 and calls on Florida's Congressional Representatives to sign on as co-sponsors of the resolution.

Submitted by Dr. Tom Tift, Lay Delegate, Atlantic Central District (FUMC Boca Raton, 625 N.E. Mizner Blvd., Boca Raton, FL 33432; 561-702-8391)

[Note: Implementation of this resolution would require that Florida's delegates in the House of Representatives receive notification. Dr. Tift is willing to take responsibility for the implementation at no cost to the Conference.]

UNITED STATES HOUSE RESOLUTION 1078
April 3, 2008
Co-sponsors: Keith Ellison, Emanuel Cleaver, Jim Moran

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a Global Marshall Plan holds the potential to demonstrate the commitment of the United States to peace and prosperity.

WHEREAS, after World War II, the United States established a program to provide for the reconstruction of Europe, named after General George C. Marshall and commonly referred to as the 'Marshall Plan', which has been hailed by leaders of World War II allied and enemy countries as the most magnanimous act by the United States in history;

WHEREAS by providing assistance to Europe through the Marshall Plan, the United States recognized the direct link between economic growth and political stability, thereby investing resources into economic development and assistance;

WHEREAS the Marshall Plan made possible new measures of international cooperation through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other institutions that have enhanced the security, freedom, and prosperity of the United States and the world;

WHEREAS the United States has established foreign assistance programs, as described in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, with a goal of the 'encouragement and sustained support of the people of developing countries in their efforts to acquire the knowledge and resources essential to development and to build the economic, political, and social institutions which will improve the quality of their lives';

WHEREAS annual United States appropriations for foreign development assistance in its many forms, whether considered as a proportion of the Federal budget or as a proportion of gross domestic product, never again have reached the levels seen during the first years of the Marshall Plan;

WHEREAS more than 1,000,000,000 people worldwide live on less that $1 per day, and another 1,600,000,000 people struggle to survive on less than $2 per day, according to the World Bank;

WHEREAS at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, the United States joined more than 180 other countries in committing to work toward the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to improve life for the world's poorest people by 2015;

WHEREAS the United Nations Millennium Development Goals include the goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than $1 per day, cutting in half the proportion of people suffering from hunger and unable to access safe drinking water and sanitation, reducing by two-thirds child mortality, ensuring basic education for all children, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria, while sustaining the environment upon which human life depends;

WHEREAS United States citizens and nongovernmental organizations have proposed a new Global Marshall Plan, including

1. Providing enough funding to eliminate global poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education, and health care, plus restoring the global environment;
2. Creating international nongovernmental mechanisms for receiving funds contributed through foreign aid and alternative sources of financing, and for distributing such funds in a way that is environmentally sensitive, respectful of native cultures, safeguarded against corruption, protected from manipulation to serve elite interests, and empowering of the people in each region;
3. Revising existing trade and other agreements in which the United States is currently involved so that such agreements favor improving the lives of the poor of the world; and approaching future agreements awith like intent;
4. Creating a greatly expanded Peace and Justice Corps of the United States that would provide ways for people with useful skills to volunteer two years at any age toward the goals of the Global Marshall Plan;
5. Providing training to foreign militaries to become experts in ecologically sensitive construction of those aspects of their own societies that need relief and reconstruction, including agriculture, health care, housing, infrastructure, education, computers, and other appropriate technology; and
6. Providing training to children and adults worldwide in techniques of nonviolent communication, diversity, environmental sustainability, family and parental support, stress reduction, emergency health techniques, diet and exercise, and caring for others who are in need of help; and

WHEREAS the attacks against the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent global war on terrorism, have enhanced United States strategic concern for the economic and political future of countries worldwide;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that it is the sense of the United States House of Representatives that

1. The elimination of poverty and hunger, assurance of basic health and education for all, and resolution of environmental crises remain key foreign policy goals for the United States;
2. A Global Marshall Plan holds potentially transformative power of a reinvigorated, comprehensive approach to foreign development assistance that would demonstrate the commitment of the United States to peace and prosperity to people who may have doubted the dedication of the United States to those ideals; and
3. A Global Marshall Plan must operate within **the** ethical framework of generosity and magnanimity, not merely of instrumentality, and to be successful and must be perceived as more than a new attempt to extend influence into the world.