

### 2016 Annual Conference Implementation of Resolutions

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**R #1 – AUTHORIZATION FOR CBOPHB TO ADDRESS CLAIMS**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Authorize The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) to negotiate, compromise, or submit to arbitration any claims for benefits that may arise under the Detroit Conference Health Care Plan, the Detroit Conference Lay Employee Welfare Plan (death and disability), the United Methodist Retirement Plans (Pre-82, Ministerial Pension Plan, Clergy Retirement Security Program, United Methodist Personal Investment Plan), the United Methodist Clergy Welfare Plan (Comprehensive Protection Plan); and for that purpose to retain legal counsel as needed.

**R #2 – ESTABLISH THE HOUSING/RENTAL ALLOWANCE FOR RETIRED OR CLERGY ON DISABILITY IN THE DAC**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

The Detroit Annual Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits moves to establish the Housing/Rental Allowance for retired or clergy on disability in the Detroit Annual Conference as follows:

- 1) An amount equal to 100% of the pension/disability payments received during the year 2017 is hereby designated as a rental/housing allowance for each retired and disabled ordained or licensed minister of The United Methodist Church who is or was a member of the Detroit Annual Conference at the time of his or her retirement or disability;
- 2) This rental/housing allowance shall apply to each retired and disabled ordained or licensed minister who has been granted the retired relationship or placed on medical leave by the Detroit Conference and whose name and relationship to the conference is recorded in the Journal of the Detroit Conference or in other appropriate records maintained by the conference;
- 3) The pension/disability payment to which this rental/housing allowance applies shall be the pension/disability payment resulting from all service of such retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers from all employment by any local church, annual conference or institution of The United Methodist Church, or from any other employer who employed the minister to perform services related to the ministry and who elected to make contributions to the pension and welfare funds of The United Methodist Church for such retired minister's pension or disability benefits;
- 4) The amount of the housing/rental allowance that may be excluded is limited to the lesser of: a) The amount designated as the housing/rental allowance, or b) The amount actually expended for housing/rent, or c) The fair rental value of housing, if required by law.

**R #3 – 2017 COMPREHENSIVE BENEFIT FUNDING PLAN**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

The Detroit Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits moves that the 2017 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan as summarized below be adopted by the Detroit Annual Conference.

## INTRODUCTION

The 2012 Book of Discipline ¶ 1506.6 requires that each annual conference develop, adopt and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan for funding all of its benefit obligations. The funding plan shall be submitted annually to the General Board of Pension and Health benefits for review and be approved annually by the annual conference, following the receipt and inclusion of a favorable written opinion from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB).

The Detroit Annual Conference has received a favorable written opinion for its 2017 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan. This document summarizes the information contained in the actual signed funding plan regarding all areas of The Detroit Annual Conference benefits liabilities.

**CLERGY RETIREMENT SECURITY PROGRAM (CRSP) Defined Benefit (DB) and Defined Contribution (DC) Program overview:** The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement program providing lifetime income and account flexibility designed for those who serve as clergy of The United Methodist Church. The program is designed to provide participants with one portion of their overall retirement benefits. CRSP replaced the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) effective January 1, 2007, which had previously replaced the Pre-82 Plan for service rendered prior to January 1, 1982. CRSP consists of both a defined benefit (DB) plan, which provides a monthly benefit at retirement based upon years of credited service to The United Methodist Church, and a defined contribution (DC) plan, which provides a retirement account balance established and funded by the annual conferences.

**Current funding plan information:** The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP-DB) annuities total liability as of January 1, 2015 is \$1.271 billion, while total plan assets are \$1.407 billion, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 111%. The Detroit Conference portion of the liability is 1.7432% and the 2017 contribution is \$1,791,670. The conference anticipates that the amount will be funded by redirecting Pre-82 surplus assets and/or by conference reserves. Additionally, General Conference 2012 approved a change to CRSP that provides each annual conference the discretion to determine whether to cover three-quarter and/or half-time clergy. The Detroit Conference has elected to cover clergy serving 50%+ under CRSP since January 1, 2014 and intends to continue this coverage in 2017.

Effective January 1, 2014 the CRSP-DC plan was reduced from a 3% to a 2% of plan compensation non-matching contribution. Clergy have the opportunity to earn up to an additional 1% CRSP-DC contribution by contributing at least 1% of their plan compensation to UMPIP. Therefore, if a participant contributes at least 1% of plan compensation to UMPIP, the individual will receive a conference contribution of 3%, which is unchanged from 2013. The 2017 CRSP-DC contribution is anticipated to be \$608,350 and will be funded by pension apportionment receipts from local churches.

**MINISTERIAL PENSION PLAN (MPP) Plan overview:** Supplement Three to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP), provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church from 1982 through 2006. MPP is an Internal Revenue Code section

403(b) retirement plan. Effective January 1, 2014, exactly 65% of the account balance must be annuitized when the funds are to be distributed. The remainder may be rolled over to UMPIP, into an IRA or another qualified plan, or it may be paid out as a lump sum.

**Current funding plan information:** The Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities' total liability as of January 1, 2015 is \$3.122 billion, while total plan assets are \$3.509 billion, resulting in a current plan funded ratio of 112% and no required contribution for 2017. The Detroit Conference's % of the total liability is 2.0640%. Future MPP annuitants have a total account balance of \$4.145 billion and the Detroit Conference's portion of that balance is \$61,847,711 or 1.49% of the total.

**PRE-1982 PLAN Plan overview:** Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Pre-1982 Plan, provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church prior to 1982. The Pre-1982 Plan was replaced by MPP effective January 1, 1982. If a clergy person retires within the Conference (and does not terminate), the minimum benefit payable is based on two factors: 1) years of service with pension credit and 2) the Conference pension rate. Years of service with pension credit are approved by each Conference on the recommendation of the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits (CBOPHB) in accordance with plan provisions and The Book of Discipline. The pension rate, also called the Past Service Rate (PSR), is the dollar amount chosen by the Conference as the amount payable for each approved year of service with pension credit. The pension rate may change from year to year. The number of years of service with pension credit is multiplied by the pension rate, and the product is the minimum annual benefit payable to those clergy eligible for Pre-1982 Plan benefits. In certain situations, the benefit received from the Pre-1982 plan may vary based on the applicability of what is referred to as Defined Benefit Service Money (DBSM), which is the defined contribution feature of the Pre-1982 Plan. At the time that a participant retires, the DBSM account is converted to a life based benefit. At that point, the clergy's benefit is the greater of the PSR or DBSM benefit. If the conference increases the PSR, the clergy's benefit is recalculated; but the DBSM based benefit does not change.

**Current funding plan information:** The 2017 PSR recommended to the Detroit Conference will be \$804.00, representing a 2.03% increase from the 2016 rate. The conference expects future increases to be approximately 2.00%, which is based on similar annual increases over the past several years in connection with the annual Conference Average Compensation (CAC) rate. The contingent annuitant percentage is recommended to remain at the 85% level.

Based on the final actuarial valuations from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits as of January 1, 2015 for 2017, the portion of the Pre-1982 liability and assets attributable to the Detroit Conference and its related funded status are as follows:

Funding Plan Liability	\$(51,952,502)
Assets, including In-Plan and Outside	<u>65,289,705</u>
Funded Status	\$13,337,203
Funded Ratio	125.67%

**ACTIVE HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM, Program Overview:** The Detroit Conference offers a Self-Funded Group Active Health Care Plan to its active eligible participants.

**Current funding plan information:** The total cost of the program for 2017 is anticipated to be \$5,620,000. Each charge or conference-approved agency shall share with the participant the full cost of the conference group health insurance policy covering the pastor/conference lay employee and their dependents according to the approved premium sharing schedule. It is anticipated that increases for future years will average 5.00% based on previous claims experience.

- **Claims Incurred But Not Reported** Since The Detroit Conference provides a Self Funded Active Health Care Plan, IBNR expenses could occur if the plan were discontinued. As of 12/31/2015, the estimated IBNR claims total is \$562,000. It is anticipated that increases for future years will average 5.00% based on previous claims experience. In the event the conference active group health care plan was discontinued, the claims IBNR claims would be funded by conference health account reserves.
- **Additional Conference Sponsored Coverage** The Detroit Conference has elected to provide health benefits coverage to the following groups during periods where, without conference funded premiums, the participants would not otherwise be provided coverage or benefits:

Category	Number of Participants	Estimated Cost
1. Clergy and/or lay participants on disability	11	\$1,539,648
2. Surviving spouses and/or children of deceased clergy and/or lay participants	4	\$273,812

The total estimated cost of conference sponsored coverage as of 12/31/2015 is \$1,813,460.

**POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFIT PROGRAM (PRM) Program Overview:** The Detroit Conference post-retirement medical program currently offers a Self-Funded Plan available to eligible Detroit Conference retired clergy members and eligible retired conference lay employees.

**Current funding plan information:** The conference's expectation for 2017 is to offer the following benefits: Supplemental medical, self-funded Rx, self-funded dental. Eligibility and cost sharing requirements are detailed in the Detroit Conference Journal under the CBOPHB annual historical report. The post-retirement medical program is funded entirely through an established reserve account designated for this purpose.

The funding obligation for 2017 is anticipated to be \$3,523,000. Based on the most recent PRM valuation dated 01/01/2015, the following is the funded position of the post-retirement medical benefits:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Expected Post Retirement Obligation (EPBO) or net conference cost    | \$74,261,304 |
| 2. Accumulated Post Retirement Obligation (APBO) or net conference cost | \$63,343,329 |

## Resolutions 2016

3. Assets designated for PRM 4. Service Cost (SC) or net conference cost	\$74,731,491
4. Service Cost (SC) or net conference cost	\$1,279,095

These values are based on a 6.0% long term discount rate, a 6.0% long-term expected rate of return on assets, and a current medical trend rate of 7.50% with an ultimate medical trend rate of 5.50%, beginning in 2023.

### **COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION PLAN (CPP)**

**Plan Overview:** The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides death, long-term disability and other welfare benefits for eligible clergy of The United Methodist Church and their families. It is an Internal Revenue Code 414(e) "church plan" funded by plan sponsor insurance premiums. Generally, clergy are eligible to participate in CPP if the conference or salary-paying unit sponsors the plan and they are able to satisfy the eligibility requirements which include full-time appointment with plan compensation equal to or greater than 60% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) or the Conference Average Compensation (CAC), whichever is less.

**Current funding plan information:** Under special arrangements, The Detroit Conference has elected to enroll eligible clergy in CPP who are appointed at least 1/4 time. CPP-eligible clergy who are granted Leave of Absence status may also be enrolled up to a maximum of one year.

For 2017, the Detroit Conference has an expected required contribution to the Comprehensive Protection Plan of \$620,800, which is anticipated to be funded by apportionment receipts from local churches. The anticipated average increase in future years is expected to be 2.00% per year based on long term annual clergy compensation.

### **UNITED METHODIST PERSONAL INVESTMENT PLAN (UMPIP) FOR LAY AND CLERGY**

**Plan Overview:** The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) defined contribution retirement savings plan for clergy and lay employees of The United Methodist Church and affiliated organizations. Participants may make before-tax, Roth and/or after-tax contributions through payroll deductions. Participant contributions, various optional plan sponsor contributions and investment earnings comprise the individual's retirement account balance.

**Current funding plan information:** Conference lay employees working an average of 20 hours per week or more are eligible upon their date of hire for a plan sponsor funded pension contribution of 6.5% of salary. Lay employees are encouraged to make contributions toward their retirement through payroll deductions to the UMPIP. The estimated contribution for the Detroit Annual Conference is anticipated to be \$80,100 and will be funded through common budget apportionment receipts received from local churches.

The Detroit Annual Conference, as of January 1, 2017 is planning on sponsoring the UMPIP for clergy serving 1/4 time and are eligible for a pension contribution of 2% of salary. Clergy have the opportunity to earn an additional 1% UMPIP conference contribution by contributing at least 1% of their plan compensation to UMPIP. The estimated contribution for the Conference is anticipated to be \$2,300 and will be funded by pension apportionment receipts from the local church.

**R #5 – REPEAL OF MICHIGAN’S EMERGENCY MANAGER LAW**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that we, the Detroit Annual Conference, call on Governor Rick Snyder and the State legislature to move with all due speed to repeal the Local Financial Stability and Choice Act, Public Act 436 of 2012; otherwise known as the Michigan emergency management law.

Be it further resolved that the Conference Secretary send a letter and a copy of this resolution to the Governor and the members of the Michigan State house and Senate, and, that the members and congregations of the Detroit Annual Conference work for the repeal of this law.

**R #6 – FLINT WATER CRISIS**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that as a covenant people, we, the members of the Detroit Annual Conference, pledge to support the ongoing response of the Crossroads District, the work of the district's Emergency Water Crisis Coordinator and UMCOR with our prayers, our presence, and our gifts to see that clean water, water filters, replacement filters, ongoing water quality testing, and health and nutrition information are delivered to all of Flint's residents in need.

Be it further resolved that we recognize this as a social justice issue for the church and the community. We call on Governor Rick Snyder, the EPA, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the State legislature to move aggressively to take the long-term action needed to protect, treat, and monitor the residents of Flint, both children and adults in the days, months and years ahead, and repair the damage done to this community and our state by:

- reimbursing affected Flint residents for any water bills they have paid for the entire period that the water is contaminated and unusable;
- committing long-term funding for health, nutrition, and development programs (such as Flintkids.org) through Flint hospitals, mental health systems, local school systems, churches and universities for Flint's children who are most at risk of lead exposure to mitigate developmental and health challenges they will face over their lifetimes;
- providing financial incentives for the development of large grocery stores, food co-ops and farmers' markets within the city limits to provide access to fresh foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C necessary to lessen the long-term effects of lead poisoning; and
- actively set in motion the needed resources for the identification and replacement of all lead and fouled pipelines in the city of Flint.

Furthermore, we ask that the Conference Secretary send a letter and a copy of this resolution to Governor Rick Snyder, the directors of the EPA, the Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality and Health and Human Service, and the members of the Michigan Senate and House.

We call upon the Bishop, the DAC, its congregations and individual members to work in covenant with the citizens of Flint to bring about these long-term solutions through study, advocacy and action to make the city fit for habitation. This must never be allowed to happen again.

### **R #7 – RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that the Detroit Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages all churches and ministries as well as our districts and conference to advocate for change in our local areas in how we seek to prevent crime, empower victims and punish offenders. We need to stand against our society's "culture of violence," and our failure to truly rehabilitate incarcerated persons. An appropriate response to these challenges is to work for ways that restore and preserve human dignity. Restorative justice is a cultural, political, and systemic change we can embrace.

Be it further resolved that we shall advocate for efforts that seek to address the feelings of neglect and incomplete healing of victims as well as an increase in efforts to address the needs of prisoners and ex-offenders to help them rehabilitate and re-enter society. Restorative justice, therefore, represents hope for both victims and offenders.

Furthermore, we shall, as churches and ministries throughout our conference, be advocates for programs of restorative justice in our courts and our local schools.

### **R #8 – GUN-FREE ZONES**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that the churches and ministries of the Detroit Annual Conference remain gun-free zones regardless of any changes made to laws in the state of Michigan.

Be it further resolved that our conference work in solidarity with others who are opposed to the dismantling of "gun-free zones" such as schools, hospitals, sporting arenas, bars, and places of worship.

### **R #9 – GUN CONTROL**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that we, the people of the Detroit Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, denounce the idolatry of handguns and rapid fire weapons in the United States as means of increasing security. We believe the proliferation of such weapons, while incidentally testified to as having protected some, in the long run puts

the many at greater risk. We denounce the use of the Second Amendment of the Constitution to limit reasonable gun control measures.

Be it further resolved that we call upon our elected officials and the government agencies responsible for the oversight and regulation of guns of all kinds to close any loopholes that allow dealers and sellers to dispense them without background checks, and,

We also support buy-back programs for handguns and rapid fire weapons to diminish their numbers over time.

### **R #10 – REDUCING MASS INCARCERATION**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that the Detroit Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church calls upon all members to contact the Governor, the Attorney General, and their legislators to request the reduction of incarceration rates in Michigan by:

- Eliminating mandatory minimum sentencing and habitual offender laws, especially as related to drug possession and non-violent offenders.
- Treating drug usage and mental illness as a demonstrated need for medical treatment rather than criminal prosecution.
- Investigating and eliminating effective racial bias in sentencing.
- Overall outcome aimed toward a drastic reduction of incarceration for nonviolent crimes

Be it further resolved that the Detroit Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages all clergy and lay leaders:

- To explore opportunities for prison ministry
- Participate in and/or direct prison worship.

And furthermore, we encourage all congregations to support re-entry programs for persons being released from incarceration.

### **R #11 – SPEAKING OUT AGAINST ANTI-ISLAM DISCRIMINATION**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

Be it resolved that we, the people of the Detroit Annual Conference, condemn the indiscriminate and ultimately harmful stereotyping of all Muslims as terrorists, or as enemies of the United States or other religions. We deplore the climate of fear this kind of stereotyping creates among the Muslim community, as well as indiscriminate acts of hate and violence directed toward them.

Furthermore, we call upon Christians to rise above such hurtfulness by speaking out against it, and by advocating for the use of speakers and resources that will better ed-

ucate Christians and the general population about Muslim life, the Islamic faith, and its diversity.

**R #13 – MINIMUM BASE COMPENSATION SCHEDULE**

It was resolved by the Detroit Annual Conference:

See chart next page:

**2017 Minimum Base Compensation Schedule**

In accordance with paragraph 625.3 of the *Discipline*, the Commission on Equitable Compensation recommends the Minimum Base Compensation Schedule of the Detroit Annual Conference as of January 1, 2017 shall be established at the following amounts:

Completed Years of Service	Local Pastor			Associate Member			Provisional Member			Full Member		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Year 1	\$33,904	\$34,480	\$34,825	*	*	*	\$37,835	\$38,478	\$38,863	***	***	***
Year 2	\$34,242	\$34,824	\$35,172	*	*	*	\$38,212	\$38,862	\$39,251	***	***	***
Year 3	\$34,584	\$35,172	\$35,524	*	*	*	\$38,595	\$39,251	\$39,644	***	***	***
Year 4	\$34,931	\$35,525	\$35,880	*	*	*	\$38,980	\$39,643	\$40,039	\$40,763	\$41,476	\$41,891
Year 5	\$35,279	\$35,879	\$36,238	\$36,852	\$37,478	\$37,853	\$39,371	\$40,040	\$40,440	\$41,189	\$41,889	\$42,308
Year 6	\$35,634	\$36,240	\$36,602	\$37,219	\$37,852	\$38,231	\$39,764	\$40,440	\$40,844	\$41,601	\$42,308	\$42,731
Year 7	\$35,989	\$36,601	\$36,967	\$37,592	\$38,231	\$38,613	\$40,161	\$40,844	\$41,252	\$42,018	\$42,732	\$43,159
Year 8	\$36,349	\$36,967	\$37,337	\$37,968	\$38,613	\$38,999	\$40,563	\$41,253	\$41,666	\$42,437	\$43,158	\$43,590
Year 9	\$36,712	\$37,336	\$37,709	\$38,348	\$39,000	\$39,390	**	**	**	\$42,862	\$43,591	\$44,027
Year 10	\$37,080	\$37,710	\$38,087	\$38,731	\$39,389	\$39,783	**	**	**	\$43,291	\$44,027	\$44,467

\* Associate Members shall have "served four years as full-time local pastor" (paragraph 322, 2008 *Discipline*).

\*\* "No member shall be continued on probation beyond the eighth regular session following their admission to provisional membership" (paragraph 327, 2008 *Discipline*).

\*\*\* Full members shall have "...served full time under episcopal appointment for at least two full annual conference years..." (paragraph 335, 2008 *Discipline*).

The Commission, based on the Consumer Price Index, are recommending a 1.0% increase this year.

The chart reflects the minimums, not maximums which pastors will be paid. Congregations can pay their pastors an increase of at least 1% of the tenth year compensation for each additional year of service. For example: A Local Pastor with 15 years of service could be paid \$38,087 for their ten years of service, plus an additional \$1904 for the five years beyond the schedule, or a minimum of \$39,991.

Any questions, please contact Rev. Mark E. Zender at revmarkzender@sbcglobal.net or cell phone 313-690-7248.

## CABINET CO-DEAN'S REPORT

**Rev. Anita Hahn,  
Superintendent in the Grand Traverse District**

**“Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God!”**  
(Philippians 1:3)

This last year we have been on a journey, together. At Annual Conference 2015, in our separate spaces, we all affirmed that we were ready to date *seriously* and we began preparations for our marriage, spending the rest of our lives, **together**. There is strength in the bridges that we are building. Committees and agencies are formally talking about our similarities and differences, while focusing on not what is the ‘better practice’ but focusing on what is the new ‘best practice’ for transforming Michigan and this world for Jesus Christ. At Annual Conference 2015, Rev. Dr. Tara Sutton and I became the new Deans, Dr. Sutton for the Detroit Annual Conference Cabinet and me for West Michigan.

Our first agenda item was to plan for our Fall Cabinet Retreat. Until the fall of 2014 our Cabinet retreats were, for the most part, at two different times and in two different places. This last fall, the most important thing that we wanted to do was to get to know each other. We spent significant time sharing with each other both the dynamics of our districts and our strategic plans. We talked about the exciting things that we are doing, about our hopes and dreams, and we talked about our fears or aches for the future as we see fewer Elder appointments being sustained and smaller congregations choosing to let go of their church buildings so that their resources may be used to support new ministries. Realities that continue to tug at our hearts and souls as we continue to look to the new relationships and ministries that God is calling us to engage. We have also appreciated Dirk Elliot and Gary Step working with us and their wisdom for new church ideas and effective ministries.

After we met together for the retreat we knew that we had built relationships with each other that we did not want to lose and therefore did not want to return to our separate “Cabinet” meetings. We were ready to journey, intentionally, together. Unfortunately, we couldn't figure out how to change our fall schedule to accommodate meeting together so we set our joint meeting schedule to begin with our Winter Retreat. We began to look differently at how we would work together and we asked Rev. Elbert Dulworth to oversee the appointive process for both conferences. For a few years now, we've tried to work with appointments—an hour on and a half-hour off. This might sound like a great way to work and we all wish we could take half-hour breaks—often! What we found was that in those half-hour time periods, some of the most honest, informal, encouraging and hope-filled conversations, happened. Sometimes it provided time for a walk or for personal care that was needed. It gave space for conversations that lead to some of our most effective, creative, appointment work.

Our bond has been strengthened as we have walked through the loss of both clergy colleagues, friends and parents this last year. We have had tugs in our personal families that have caused us anxious moments and we have sought prayer and encouragement from each other. We have tried to prioritize prayer (we pray often) and the need to support each other as we navigate issues in practical ways—what is right and wrong and what does *The Book of Discipline* say, as well as spiritually.

## Dean of Cabinet's Report 2016

This past February, Rev. Dr. Tara Sutton stepped aside for a second Leave. “Tara, I am grateful for who you are, your leadership, your friendship and your health! God has blessed me because of knowing you. I will never understand why ‘tough stuff’ happens to good people, but I know that you have found healing—physically and emotionally this last year and as you anticipate your next appointment, you are right where God needs you to be.”

And thanks to Rev. Elbert Dulworth who continued his role of overseeing Appointments as well as stepped up to the role of Dean – again. Rev. Dulworth comes with skills of management, care and visionary leadership, and a heart for Jesus. As we anticipate our 2016-2017 year we are grateful for Rev. Dulworth's willingness to lead us another year. We have also talked about the roles in the Cabinet team and how they can be shared so that one person is not overwhelmed with the details of being Dean. And I thank Elbert for allowing me this opportunity to share this first Dean's Report to the Michigan Conference!

This occasion meant so much to me that I invited my family to come, my husband Kevin, my daughter Lisa and son Andrew, Wesley is studying at Hillsong College in Sydney, Australia, instead of inviting him we are going to go see him at the end of June! And when you have a *really* important event you invite your Mom, Karleen Dude, she is in central Illinois watching the live stream; and you invite your in-laws, Keith and Mariann Hahn; and thank you Grand Traverse District and my edge of the Heartland District, and to be honest—all of you who have seen something in me and encouraged me and loved me, even on the tough days!

As I organized my thoughts for this report, Alexander Rossi, age 24, won—a bit unexpectedly the 100th run of the Indianapolis 500! He was a young person-trusted by his elders. He had an excellent team behind him—just in case you are unaware, a race is not won by the “runner” it is won by the team who provides care along the way. Growing up, I was always more intrigued with the pit crew and the reality that a race can be won or lost by the team behind the driver. What does it mean to run a race knowing that you can trust the persons on your team, you can make decisions that you don't necessarily agree with, but you are able to support, because you are on the same team and you have a clear goal/vision in front of you. You have built a solid relationship with your team members so that you don't have to question another persons' motives or intentions. And may I add that **there is a clear vision?**

This last year we (the Cabinet) had intentional conversations about what it means to be a “District” and a “District Superintendent.” We see with clearer vision what it will mean to be leaders in the conference and to continue to lead the local church. As we have learned how different we are—we have also learned what is vital to us in this role of Superintendency. Vital to each of us is to continue to have time and space where we can build relationships with the local churches and clergy on our districts. We have seen the need and celebrate the ways that we are reaching out beyond our local churches to make a difference in our communities and world. As we send missionaries around the globe—life changing relationships are made. As we open doors at laundry mats, soup kitchens, and free stores—relationships are built, lives are restored and Jesus Christ is bringing healing to our neighborhoods.

We are working with our church conference forms to be streamlined across the state. I have learned as a District Superintendent that the forms you complete each year, if

done well do focus you with a clear vision for another year of ministry. But we are aware that maybe some of the information could be gathered in an easier way. We continue to know that we need to ask churches to be accountable to the Kingdom building task at hand and not simply doing something so that the checklist is complete.

We want to continue to empower, reach and engage our young adults and persons who will be our new clergy. Being willing to support, listen to, and pray for our new leaders (lay and clergy) is going to be vital for the new growth that will come to our denomination.

We want to use our effective clergy well and we want to work to empower clergy and lay to use the gifts that God has given them to the fullest extent. We each celebrate those times when we can empower the exciting ministries happening in a local and church and we each mourn those moments when we struggle to find the right leadership to guide the church seemingly simply due to decreasing financial resources. We want to give appropriate educational opportunities and coaching to clergy so that each can reach new heights of effectiveness.

Key in our ministry moving forward is discerning how we open the door of our churches without judgement or condemnation. Jesus said, "God sent his son into the world not to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved."

This last spring as I drove around our conference, I listened to a lot of "The Andy Griffith Show", in most places I could tap into the show on Netflix. It felt safer than falling asleep or other things I might do while driving.

During one episode, Opie (Andy's son) was stingy (it appeared) with his financial resources. He did not give to the fund drive to help the poor at school. Andy was appalled and even more disgusted because a member of the community who was heading up this fund drive was breathing down his neck and letting him know that his son, Opie had only given 2 cents. Andy was short tempered with him. Opie kept trying to tell his dad about the use of his money, he was saving it to spend on a girl, Maryellen. It was clear that Andy did not want to hear anything about how Opie was going to spend his money frivolously on Maryellen until Aunt Bee stepped in (Aunt Bee is the Aunt/house keeper/care giver of the family) and she looked at Andy and said, "**You know Opie's heart.**" She knew that Opie would not choose to keep his allowance for a frivolous reason so finally Andy sat Opie down and asked about how he was going to use his money. Opie responded that he was going to buy Maryellen a coat. Opie went on to say, "See hers was looking awfully tattered last year," and Opie wanted to make sure that she had a new winter coat next year and Maryellen had shared that her family couldn't afford a new one. When Andy asked Opie why he never shared this piece of info with him, Opie simply responded, "You never asked."

I pray as we head into this next year that we will focus on building real relationships with people. That in knowing the heart of persons, even though we may not agree, we will find means for understanding their heart and even take time to listen.

*When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and Jesus was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the*

*crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, 'Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and take your mat and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the paralytic—'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!' (Mark 2:1-5)*

### **When Jesus saw their faith...**

Who do you love enough to dig a hole in a roof and to place them at the feet of Jesus? Hear the longings and the hearts of those you seek to love and to serve and dare to share your own heart, too. This last year I renewed my love for Jesus when my Dad died. And I renewed the ache in my heart to share the “good news” with all of creation—because why should anyone have to live without knowing the strength of Jesus Christ? Of an amazing God—and yet—I’m aware that just because someone is not in my church does not mean that they do not know God. May I have as much courage to share my story as to hear another’s story!

The other piece of this story is the care of the four who knew that they had to bring their friend to Jesus and I don’t know who you would trust with your life— But I’d allow these persons (Cabinet colleagues) to lower me through the roof into the presence of Christ—in fact they have! And I would trust anyone in this room to do the same! As I’ve met you and witnessed your heart, I know that I can trust my life to your care. You won’t let me drop—

As we move forward as one conference, we will continue to have pains. To make the necessary adaptive changes that are necessary, we have to be willing to let go of everything that we know in order to understand another’s perspective in order to hear the Word of God. If we continue to move forward in fear of persons and ideas that we do not understand, we will continue to find ourselves amidst arguments and barriers that we cannot cross.

Church! God has called us to reach to hear a broken world. Some of us will close our churches this next year so that the resources we have left can impact a new congregation. Some of us will reach around the globe in a new mission opportunity that has yet to be revealed to us. Some of us will empower a new mission or ministry—just because someone comes to us and says, ‘let’s try—and you do! And the most important thing that I have learned as a District Superintendent is that Jesus is my Savior and at the end of the day, I am God’s and God is mine—and you have that same promise full of forgiveness and grace and passion!

Thank you for continuing with us on this journey of seeking to reach ALL GOD’S CHIL-

DREN that next year when we come around to this time of Conferencing we will be able to continue to share how lives are better because of the real relationships that we have chosen to engage. **THANKS for being the Church!**

The church showed up in Flint this last year, or that's when we heard about our arrival as water became the crises that swept over the state.

We have heard words of hope and encouragement through the mouth of our Bishop and other leaders in our midst.

We said goodbye to Joanne Bartelt, Superintendent of the Blue Water District until just two years ago. Now she is bringing treats to God I am sure, on a daily basis. Hospitality is in tip-top shape in the Kingdom, now!

We shared our call stories and shared how adults God placed in our paths intentionally took interest in us and thus we stand before you, today. There was someone in our life who loved us unconditionally! And that's why we are here, today.

#### **Things Dad Highlighted In Romans:**

(And hope does not disappoint us,) because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)

(But God proves his love for us in that) While we were still sinners Christ died for us! (Romans 5:8)

For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (Romans 7:11)

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit. (Romans 8:9)

But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (Romans 8:10)

So then, brothers and sisters, we were debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. (Romans 8:12)

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; (Romans 8:18-19)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:26-28)

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:31-35)

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In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)

**VISION: Win or nothing! We are dependent on the pit crew to win or lose the race.**