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**LA 1****LAY/CLERGY EQUALIZATION TABLE  
2014 EQUALIZATION OF LAY AND CLERGY MEMBERSHIP**

DISTRICT	CLERGY	LAY	RULE IIIA(1)	TOTAL RULE IIIA(1)	LAY EQUAL FACTOR
EAST	79	65	4	69	10
METRO	291	128	20	148	143
NORTH CENTRAL	192	123	10	133	59
NORTHWEST	84	64	7	71	13
TOTALS	646	380	41	421	225

## STANDING RULE IIIA(1)

	EA	ME	NC	NW	TOTAL
Conference Lay Leader			1	1	2
Core Leadership Team	1	1	2	1	5
UMM President		0			0
UMW President		1			1
Youth Organization President				1	1
District Lay Leaders	1	1	1	1	4
Young Adults under 25 yrs.	1	1	1	1	4
Council on Youth Ministry	1	1	1	1	4
Diaconal Ministers		12		1	13
Agency Chairs		3	4		7
TOTALS	4	20	10	7	41

	Membership 2014	% of Total	To Be Elected
East	10,911	8%	18
Metro	59,198	42%	94
North Central	57,605	40%	90
Northwest	14,113	10%	23
TOTALS	141,827	100%	225

## LA 2

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Standing Rules Committee

**BACKGROUND:** At the request of the Board of Laity, the Standing Rules Committee recommends the following proposed change in wording to provide clarity for the membership of the Board of Laity.

Recommended Changes: (**Bold**=Addition, ~~Strike-through~~= Deletion)

**LEGISLATION:** As it pertains to Standing Rule I. B.3.a. Special Concerns of the Laity

a. *Board of Laity*

The Board of Laity shall be constituted and function in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

~~The Board of Laity consists of a Chair plus eleven members.~~ The Chair of the Board of Laity is the Conference Lay Leader. The members of the Board of Laity are: the District Lay Leaders; **the District Associate Lay Leaders; the Associate Conference Lay Leaders**; the President of United Methodist Women; the President of United Methodist Men; the President of the Council on Youth Ministries; the Chair of the Conference Lay Servants Committee; and the Lay Leader Elect.

## LA 3

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Standing Rules Committee

**BACKGROUND:** The proposed change in wording is in response to a request from the Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee. It is intended to provide for the addition of non-voting members to the committee at the discretion of the Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries, and to provide clarity on the process of recommending a candidate for the Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries to the Conference Committee on Nominations.

Recommended Changes: (**Bold**=Addition, ~~Strike-through~~= Deletion)

**LEGISLATION:** As it pertains to Standing Rule I.B.3.b. Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee

b. *Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee*

The Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee will develop and administer the Certified Lay Servant Program, including recruiting, training, certifying, and re-certifying lay **servants and lay** speakers. The Conference Lay Servant Ministries Committee will also work to promote the use of lay servants to fulfill the purposes and functions described in the *Book of Discipline*.

The committee consists of a Chair plus twenty-one members. The Chair will be the Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries. The members will be the Director of Lay Servant Ministries from each district, a clergy person from each District district appointed by the respective District Superintendent, and three at large members from each district appointed by the respective District Director of Lay Servant Ministries. **At the discretion of the Conference Director, non-voting members may be appointed to the committee. These ad hoc members must be renewed after each annual conference.** The Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries, the District Directors of Lay Servant Ministries, and the at large members must be currently certified Certified Lay Servants.

**The Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries shall recommend a qualified and willing candidate for Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries to the Conference Committee on Nominations for election at the following Annual Conference.**

## LA 4

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Standing Rules Committee

**BACKGROUND:** The proposed change in wording is to align the standing rules with the status of Connect to the Kingdom (C2K) as it was moved from the oversight of the North Texas Conference and the Conference Council on Youth Ministries to the oversight of Tyler St. UMC on September 1, 2012.

Recommended Changes: (**Bold**=Addition, ~~Strike-through~~= Deletion)

**LEGISLATION:** As it pertains to Standing Rule I.B.3.e. Council on Youth Ministries

#### e. *Council on Youth Ministries*

The Council on Youth Ministries shall be constituted and function according to the *Book of Discipline*. Representatives from the Council on Youth Ministries shall also be designated to other Agencies of the Annual Conference when these Standing Rules so provide.

~~Connect to the Kingdom (C2K) shall be a self-sustaining ministry of the North Texas Conference related to the Conference Council on Youth Ministries. A board of directors shall be composed of youth members of the CCYM, adults in ministry with youth, pastors and other persons whose knowledge and expertise inform the ministry and leadership of Connect to the Kingdom (C2K). There shall be an ex-officio board member (a pastor or professional staff member) from each United Methodist church where Connect to the Kingdom (C2K) programs reside. The board of directors shall be nominated and elected by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries.~~

## LA 5

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Standing Rules Committee

**BACKGROUND:** This legislation shifts the responsibility for oversight and response to claims of sexual misconduct from the Core Leadership Team to the Conflict Assessment and Response Team (CART Crisis Team). The CART Crisis Team is available to respond quickly with personnel specifically trained to deal with each of the individuals involved in such an incident.

Recommended Changes: (**Bold**=Addition, Strike-through = Deletion)

**LEGISLATION:** As it pertains to Standing Rule II.F Sexual Misconduct

#### F. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

##### 1. POLICY STATEMENT FOR DEFINING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church affirms the ~~2000~~ **2012** *Book of Resolutions*, Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and **Eradication of Sexual Harassment** ~~Within the~~ **in the United Methodist Church and Society**, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the Church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. In accordance with the current *Book of Discipline*, ¶161(F), we affirm that all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3:26 states all are one in Christ, we support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation or gender.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker or volunteer.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender (*2012 Book of Discipline* ¶161(I)).

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role and exploitation of those who are vulnerable. Similarly, sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue.

Misconduct of a sexual nature within the life of the Church interferes with its moral mission. The North Texas Conference stands in opposition to the sin of misconduct of a sexual nature in the Church and society at large and commits itself to fair and expedient investigation of any charge of sexual misconduct within the Church and to take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with the *Book of Discipline*. Further, the Conference bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free of misconduct of a sexual nature and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

Because experiencing sexual abuse or harassment, and reporting such misconduct, can be difficult and frightening, we believe that the availability of trained advocates or support teams to assist victims of sexual misconduct is important, and we are committed to continuing support for the training and availability of such advocates or support teams.

We recognize that in any incident of sexual misconduct there may be many victims, including the family, friends, and congregation of the direct victim and of the person who has engaged in the misconduct. We therefore affirm as continuing goals for the Conference not only the resolution of complaints and the reconciliation of persons directly involved, but also the healing of all such indirect victims of the misconduct.

Sexual misconduct involving a clergy person should be reported to the clergy person's district superintendent or the presiding bishop. Misconduct involving paid staff, volunteers or other non-clergy persons should be reported to the pastor-in-charge, if any, or to other appropriate persons in accordance with guidelines and procedures that may be adopted by the Conference, by local churches or by other appropriate bodies within the Church.

The North Texas Conference is committed to the continuing, broad dissemination of this Policy Statement and of any guidelines and procedures adopted by the Conference, and to the continuing education of clergy and lay persons within the Conference for the purpose of preventing sexual misconduct and increasing awareness and understanding of the Conference's relevant policies and procedures.

## **2. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The North Texas Conference will not tolerate and is committed to the eradication of sexual misconduct by its clergy. The ministerial office is a position of great trust, power and responsibility, offering the opportunity for unique relationships of grace and caring. Sexual misconduct is one of the gravest violations of this trust.

These Procedures provide a process for reporting incidents of clergy sexual misconduct within the North Texas Conference. They seek to create a safe, non-threatening environment in which aggrieved persons will feel comfortable revealing allegations of sexual misconduct. It is a continuing goal of these Procedures to provide an opportunity for a reconciliation and resolution that respects and protects the rights of all parties and that acknowledges the sacred trust between clergy and the persons they serve. They are not intended to supplant or substitute for the formal complaint process set forth in the *2012 Book of Discipline*. The use of these Procedures is voluntary, and the failure to utilize or follow them is not a chargeable offense nor can it be used as

grounds for an appeal of the result of any formal complaint, review, investigation, or trial process.

The implementation of these Procedures shall be under the supervision and control of the Bishop and District Superintendents, who shall have the authority to interpret and apply the Procedures.

### STANDARDS OF PASTORAL CONDUCT

Pastors are accountable for their behavior with respect to the emotional, spiritual and physical well-being of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Breach of this pastoral relationship through sexual misconduct is unethical and abusive, even when sexual activity is initiated by the person to whom the pastor is ministering. Because of the trust and imbalance of power in such relationships, the person being ministered to must be presumed to be unable to give meaningful consent to any sexual activity with the pastor.

Because pastors often deal with individuals who are emotionally fragile and vulnerable, it is imperative that pastors:

1. be healthy psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually themselves;
2. have adequate preparation and education for helping individuals under their care;
3. have continued supervision in dealing with the inherent risks caused by dependency and/or transference; and
4. have the information necessary to make appropriate referrals.

Pastoral self-discipline requires self-awareness and takes the Christian standards and ordination vows seriously. Personal integrity and mature professional conduct must be brought to all relationships by every pastor in the North Texas Conference. The highest ethic of the pastor similarly prohibits any sexual behavior with a parishioner entrusted to his or her sacred care.

All clergy, single or married, have the responsibility of developing healthy personal relationships. Married clergy have covenanted to nurture and maintain their marriage relationship. When relational or sexual difficulties are present in a pastor's life, appropriate measures to address the difficulties should be taken.

Pastors who are appointed to parishes where there has been alleged sexual misconduct of their predecessor find themselves burdened with the inevitable consequences arising from the misconduct of a colleague. There is a tension between caring for a colleague and caring for the covenant of the pastoral ministry. By "protecting" a colleague, we risk perpetuating a relationship or pattern of abuse and victimization. This compromises the credibility and practice of Christian faith and ministry. Thus the present pastor should take immediate steps, consistent with these Procedures, to address the alleged misconduct.

The procedures for dealing with clergy sexual misconduct place an unfair and unavoidable burden on the victim of such misconduct. It is in the best interest of the church to empower the laity through education and open discussion about what standards of conduct they may expect from their pastors.



## DEFINITIONS

For purposes of these Procedures, the following definitions shall apply:

“Sexual misconduct” includes sexual abuse and sexual harassment, as such terms are defined in the Policy Statement. Sexual misconduct may include inappropriate physical contact or verbal behavior, including, for example, behavior that creates a hostile or intimidating environment and the explicit or implicit use of power or authority to coerce someone into sexual contact. Because of the imbalance of power inherent in ministerial relationships, sexual contact between a pastor and someone with whom he or she has a ministerial relationship constitutes sexual abuse even if the other person consents to or initiates the contact. More subtle behavior not involving physical contact may also constitute sexual misconduct. Further discussion and examples of sexual misconduct are included in the brochure entitled “Maintaining Healthy Relationships: What You Should Know About Clergy Sexual Misconduct,” prepared and distributed by the Division of Conference Relations of the Board of Ordained Ministry of the North Texas Conference.

An ‘allegation’ is an initial report, either verbal or written, of an alleged incident of clergy sexual misconduct.

A ‘complaint’ is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct, as set forth in ¶363.1(a) of the *2012 Book of Discipline*.

An “aggrieved person” is a person who has experienced sexual misconduct by a pastor.

The terms “clergy” and “pastor” shall refer to all persons described in ¶363.1 of the *2012 Book of Discipline*, which includes “local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members” of the North Texas Conference, “including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement.”

A “Resource Person” is a trained lay volunteer person made available by the North Texas Conference to assist and support aggrieved persons in bringing an allegation or complaint of sexual misconduct, as more fully described in the North Texas Conference Procedure for Reporting Incidents of Clergy Sexual Misconduct.

~~The Core Leadership Team~~ **Congregational Assessment, Response and Transformation (CART Crisis Team)** is the group given responsibility by the bishop to maintain the Resource Person program and lend guidance and accountability to the North Texas Conference in regards to abiding by the Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND REPORTING

Allegations of sexual misconduct should be kept in the strictest of confidence and disclosed only at the times and under the circumstances specifically provided in these Procedures. The spread of such allegations or accusations between colleagues in ministry or within congregations is harmful to the aggrieved person, the accused and to the integrity of the processes outlined in these Procedures and in the current *Book of Discipline*.

However, when clergy sexual misconduct occurs, the protection of victims, both past, present, and potential, requires that the misconduct be reported. Because of the covenant with the church which is an integral part of the pastoral office, it is a pastor's responsibility to call an offending pastor into account by immediately reporting information about sexual misconduct to his or her District Superintendent, the District Superintendent of the accused or the Bishop.

Pastors who become aware of an alleged incident of sexual misconduct by another pastor are to do their utmost to encourage and support aggrieved persons and to assist in the initiation of an allegation as provided in these Procedures. Every allegation of sexual misconduct must be taken seriously, and in no case should a pastor judge the validity of the allegation.

The requirement of confidentiality shall not prevent the Bishop or the District Superintendents from discussing allegations and related information with affected congregations, Staff Pastor-Parish Relations committees or others to whom it is necessary to make such disclosure, in accordance with the Book of Discipline, in order to protect actual or potential victims, to promote healing or for other appropriate purposes.

Although truth-telling is essential, respect must also be given to the role of pastors in receiving confessions and the sanctity of confidential relations. Nothing in these Procedures shall be deemed to require or permit a pastor to report or reveal information received in confidence as contemplated by ¶341.5 of the *2012 Book of Discipline* and relevant decisions of the Judicial Council.

## PROCEDURES

When sexual misconduct is alleged against a pastor, persons bringing allegations will be received in a respectful and caring manner. All allegations will be considered worthy of full investigation, with due respect for the presumption of innocence. Care will be taken to deal fairly and promptly with all those involved. This includes the aggrieved and his/her family, the accused and his/her family and the congregation or other institution.

The following procedures are established to facilitate the reporting of allegations of clergy sexual misconduct:

1. Aggrieved persons are encouraged to contact a District Superintendent, the Bishop or the designated representative of the ~~Core Leadership~~ **CART Crisis** Team. Any of these contacts may refer the aggrieved to a Resource Person. An allegation may be brought by the aggrieved person or by anyone who has verifiable knowledge or reasonable indication of sexual misconduct and is willing to pursue a resolution. This may include, for example, a pastor or lay person in whom the aggrieved person has confided or who has reliable information from other sources about the misconduct.
2. The District Superintendent, the Bishop to whom the allegation is brought or the Resource Person to whom the aggrieved has been referred shall explain these Procedures to the aggrieved person or other person bringing the allegation and advise them that use of the Procedures is not a prerequisite to an aggrieved person's ability to bring a formal complaint.

3. If an allegation is brought initially to a District Superintendent, the District Superintendent shall advise the Bishop that the allegation has been received. If the aggrieved person has not requested a Resource Person and desires one, the Bishop may assign one to assist and support the aggrieved person.

4. The Resource Person assigned shall provide full assistance to the aggrieved person throughout the process, including the following:

- a. confirming that the aggrieved person understands these Procedures and the procedures contained in the *Book of Discipline*;
- b. verifying and clarifying the allegation with the aggrieved person; and
- c. requesting the aggrieved person to prepare, with the assistance of the Resource Person as needed, a written statement of the allegation, which shall include a description, in reasonable detail, of the alleged sexual misconduct and related events, circumstances, and dates.

5. If a complaint is forwarded to the Bishop or a District Superintendent, ¶363 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline* shall determine the process to be followed. These Procedures are not intended to limit in any way the actions the Bishop or District Superintendents may take in connection with their supervisory response to a complaint of sexual misconduct or to impose any duties on them inconsistent with the 2012 *Book of Discipline* or relevant decisions of the Judicial Council. The Resource Person may continue to assist and support the aggrieved person throughout the complaint process and may attend all meetings held in connection with the process.

6. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained before, during and after the conduct of the process outlined in these Procedures, and information regarding allegations shall be disclosed only in such manner and to such persons as specifically provided herein.

7. Because of the pain and disruption that necessarily accompany sexual misconduct, it may be necessary for certain actions to be taken following the conclusion of the processes outlined in these Procedures and in the 2012 *Book of Discipline*. The Bishop and District Superintendents are encouraged to take or require such actions as they deem necessary and appropriate in their best judgment, which actions may include, for example, processes for healing within the affected congregation or institution, further resolution of unresolved conflicts and support or counseling for aggrieved persons or accused pastors.

These Procedures establish a process for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct by any pastor (as defined above). They are not designed to address allegations or complaints of sexual misconduct by the Bishop or a District Superintendent. Persons who believe they have been affected by sexual misconduct by the Bishop or a District Superintendent may contact one of the Resource Persons for information and assistance in bringing a complaint in accordance with procedures contained in the current *Book of Discipline*.

## RESOURCE PERSONS ON THE ISSUE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Resource Persons are volunteer laypersons who have been trained to provide assistance to persons who believe they have been victims of clergy sexual misconduct. Resource Persons represent the interest of aggrieved persons at all times and shall support the aggrieved persons throughout the process. Resource Persons are expected to work cooperatively with the Bishop, the district

superintendents and the ~~Core Leadership~~ **CART Crisis Team**.

Resource Persons shall be the initial point of contact with those procedures for any persons who desire to use them. A Person who believes that she/he may have been the victim of clergy sexual misconduct need not register an allegation or complaint and does not have to identify her/himself when requesting a Resource Person and making an initial contact.

Functions performed by Resource Persons shall include:

1. Explaining the church's processes and procedures
2. Providing resources and referrals
3. Helping the aggrieved person prepare a written summary of the allegation and if necessary, a formal complaint when requested by the aggrieved person.
4. Accompany the aggrieved person to meetings held in connection with the Procedures or in connection with the complaint process as allowed in the current *Book of Discipline*.
5. Calling to attention of the Bishop and the Core Leadership Team ~~CART Crisis Team~~ any hostile, vindictive, or insensitive situations that arise during the process or any failure to properly follow the Procedures or the complaint process outlined in the current Book of Discipline.
6. Giving feedback to the ~~Core Leadership Team~~, **CART Crisis Team** regarding the process.

### ~~CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM~~ **CART CRISIS TEAM**

Under the direction of the Bishop or persons acting at the Bishop's direction, the ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** shall have the authority and responsibility for administering the Resource Person Program, to recruit volunteers to serve as Resource Persons, to provide training and continuing education for Resource Persons, to provide annual training for the chairpersons of Staff Parish Relations Committees of the North Texas Annual Conference, and to broadly disseminate and make readily available information about the Resource Person Program.

### **RECRUITING AND TRAINING OF RESOURCE PERSONS**

The ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** recruits individuals to become Resource Persons who are known to have the qualities needed for this sensitive volunteer role. The ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** delegates one of its members to speak with the District Superintendent of the applicant's home church prior to discussing the invitation with the individual. Then the ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** invites the individual to complete an application form, which includes education, work history and an authorization for a criminal background check. All applicants are interviewed by a subcommittee of the ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** prior to being recommended to the Bishop, who writes a letter appointing the Resource Person.

The North Texas Conference is committed to the continuing education and proper training of Resource Persons. Initially, Resource Persons shall attend training recommended and planned by the ~~Core Leadership Team~~, **CART Crisis Team** which will include the following areas:

1. roles and expectations of the Resource Person(s);
2. local organization of the United Methodist Church;
3. leaders and their leadership positions in the North Texas Conference;

4. church and community resources;
5. the North Texas Conference Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct and Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Clergy Sexual Misconduct; and
6. The *Book of Discipline* and relevant Judicial Council rulings.

The ~~Core Leadership Team~~, **CART Crisis Team** will maintain contact with the Resource Persons and offer periodic education and training.

### 3. EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONFERENCE RELATING TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

#### DISSEMINATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Bishop, District Superintendents, and Resource Person(s) shall each have a copy of and thoroughly know the Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct, Procedures for Reporting Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the North Texas Conference and be responsible for distributing such Policy and Procedures to clergy and local church chairs of Staff Parish Relations Committees, Administrative Councils, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Women annually as these persons are elected. The clergy and the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee of every local church in the North Texas Conference shall have a copy of and be familiar with the Policy Statement on Sexual Misconduct, Procedures for Reporting Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the North Texas Conference and the complaint process outlined in the current *Book of Discipline*.

The Policy and Procedures of the North Texas Conference will be available to anyone who requests a copy.

Local churches will make available to their congregations copies of the brochure entitled “Maintaining Healthy Relationships: What You Should Know About Clergy Sexual Misconduct” and publish the name and telephone numbers of the District Superintendents and ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** contact (s). Throughout the year, copies of the brochure will be placed in accessible locations within local churches. (An electronic copy of the brochure can be found on the North Texas Conference website at <http://www.ntcume.org> under Clergy Ethics.) <http://www.ntcleadership.org/#/spprc-tool-kit>)

#### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The North Texas Conference shall provide ~~annual~~ training to educate the clergy and laity about the complaint process in the event of allegations of sexual misconduct and to heighten awareness of the clergy and laity about the seriousness of the problem of sexual misconduct, thereby aiding in the prevention of this problem in our local churches.

The goals of the training include the following:

1. to explain the abuse of power and dynamics of trust in abusive relationships;

2. to provide behavioral definitions of sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
3. to describe the impact on the victim, the perpetrator, the families, and the church;
4. to explain the Policy and Procedures of the North Texas Conference and the United Methodist Church regarding sexual misconduct;
5. to explain legal responsibilities regarding minors;
6. to introduce the Resource Person(s) and clarify their role;
7. to define the risk to church vitality, attendance and giving, liability to individuals, congregations, and the annual conference;
8. to discuss the importance of healing and how the church is an agent in the healing process;
9. to explain the need for preventative measures;
10. to discuss the importance of local church policies and procedures addressing issues of sexual misconduct;
11. to distribute copies of the brochure entitled “Maintaining Healthy Relationships: What You Should Know About Clergy Sexual Misconduct,” and to explain its purpose and educational use; and
12. to provide resources for local churches

Training will be provided separately for clergy and laity. Professionals from the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and/or others trained and knowledgeable about the issues of sexual misconduct will conduct the training.

The Board of Ordained Ministry, specifically the Committee on Conference Relations and the Residency Committee (who may choose to seek help from the chairs of the Order of Deacons, Order of Elders, Fellowship of Local Pastors, Fellowship of Diaconal Ministers, the ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** and/or the Cabinet), will be responsible for planning and organizing the training for clergy and diaconal ministers. Pastors and diaconal ministers from every local church or charge in the North Texas Conference and those in extension ministries and the District Superintendents will receive an announcement regarding the clergy training. Clergy and diaconal ministers will be expected to attend training a minimum of once every four years. Particular attention will be given to insuring the training of new pastors in the conference (through the residency program and district training events).

With the help of the Board of Laity, and the District Superintendents, the ~~Core Leadership Team~~ **CART Crisis Team** will offer training to the laity through the District Training events in January.

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Each local church shall establish its own policy statement on sexual misconduct, consistent with the *Book of Discipline* and the policy statement of the North Texas Annual Conference, and shall establish guidelines and procedures for resolving incidents of sexual misconduct by persons other than clergy, including paid staff, counselors, lay volunteers and others.

#### 5. PRIORITY OF THE *BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*

If any provision of these Procedures is in conflict with the *2012 Book of Discipline*, the current *Book of Discipline* shall prevail.

## LA 6

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Standing Rules Committee

**BACKGROUND:** A resolution was passed at the 2014 Annual Conference session to prevent the Institute of Religion and Democracy from continued use of contact information belonging to local churches of the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Within the wording of that resolution, it was resolved that the North Texas Conference develop a written confidentiality policy regarding the conference contact records. The Conference Trustees proposed the following addition to the standing rules to align with this resolution while acknowledging that there are certain occasions where the Conference would want to release contact information for the promotion of events such as Minister's Week at Perkins or a General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits workshop. The Conference Office practice has been to defer to the Office of Bishop before releasing conference contact records. This proposed change in the standing rules codifies a policy and procedure for responding to requests for contact information.

Recommended Changes: (**Bold**=Addition, ~~Strike-through~~= Deletion)

**LEGISLATION:** As it pertains to Standing Rule II.H.4. Confidentiality Policy of Conference Contact Records.

4. ***Confidentiality Policy of Conference Contact Records. Confidential contact information about members of United Methodist Churches is held in trust as protected by local churches or by the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Distribution of this information to entities beyond the North Texas Annual Conference is prohibited without specific approval of the Office of the Bishop.***

## LA 7

### EQUITABLE COMPENSATION ANNUAL DETERMINATION

**FROM:** Center for Leadership Development (CLD)

**BACKGROUND:** The primary purpose of the Equitable Compensation Pastors Funds is to assist local churches in moving from part-time pastoral positions to full-time pastoral positions; these funds are meant to be transitional funds rather than long-term subsidies. Some congregations have the potential to reach a sustained average worship attendance of adults to move from a part-time to a full-time pastoral position with short-term conference assistance. The time frame and benchmarks for moving from part-time to full-time should be reflected in yearly increases in worship attendance, Sunday School and small group attendance, professions of faith, those enrolled in annual confirmation classes, and annual increases in the number of individuals and families supporting the church's mission and ministry budget (operations) of the church. In essence, growing churches can move from a part-time to full-time pastoral position in three to five years. To continue receiving Equitable Compensation Funds a congregation in such a transitional setting shall

pay 100% of the annual apportionments.

The North Texas Conference also has a history of supporting missional settings where full-time pastors have been appointed to congregations not able to pay a full-time salary. Continued conversations with the pastor, congregation, District Superintendent, and Center Directors of the NTC are essential to ensure these congregations continue to be effective in reaching others, transforming lives, and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Annually, congregations in missional settings must also manifest the fruitful increases in worship attendance, small groups, professions of faith, confirmation classes, along with annual stewardship training and education. To continue receiving Equitable Compensation Funds a congregation in a missional setting shall pay 100% of the annual apportionments.

The Center for Leadership Development in consultation with the Bishop and the NTC Cabinet takes into consideration not only the appropriate minimum level compensation for full-time clergy of the conference but also the needs of the churches in determining whether they can afford a full-time pastor or not.

**LEGISLATION:** The CLD requests that Pastors Subsidies Equitable Compensation support and administrative expenses be apportioned at \$40,000 for 2016.

#### A. Guidelines for Conference Members and Full-Time Local Pastors

1. Equitable Compensation for Conference Members be set at \$46,258 for the minimum equitable compensation. This compensation includes:
  - a. base salary,
  - b. utilities, which shall be provided with payments made by the local church or reimbursed when paid by the pastor.
  - c. vouchered travel reimbursement, which shall be reimbursed at the IRS rate with appropriate records and documentation provided to the church,
  - d. dependent premium payments made by the local church,
  - e. dependent premium supplemental payments paid by the conference at the discretion of the District Superintendent,
  - f. and other conference subsidies received, but excluding any reimbursement for Annual Conference expenses or grants to assist with the expenses to attend expected spiritual formation or continuing education events for all of the clergy members of the conference (e.g., the Clergy Retreat) for conference members in full connection, associate members and provisional members of the North Texas Conference serving full time for 2015.

For the tenth year the same formula is being applied per the 2006 Annual Conference adopted rate at the recommendation of CF&A for changes to the District Superintendent level compensation. The percent change to the travel & utilities amount is included in the total. The amount of change for 2016 is an increase of 2.21% from \$45,258 in 2015.



## 2. Adjustments for years of service:

Years of Service	Equitable Compensation Amounts
0–5	\$46,258
6	46,358
7	46,458
8	46,558
9	46,658
10	46,758

3. Compensation for additional churches on a charge: Each charge with more than one church shall receive \$200 additional for the second church and \$100 each for the third through the fifth additional churches.

4. Housing shall be provided in a church-owned parsonage or provided for with a monthly allowance. It is expected that the minimum housing allowance that will be paid by those churches or charges that do not provide a parsonage for their pastor will be \$12,000 per year. Requests for equitable compensation salary supplements where housing allowances exceed \$12,000 will not be considered.

## 5. Local Pastors serving full time:

Five years or less	\$40,848
Six years or more	\$40,948
Expense recommendations same as above.	

## 6. Deacons serving under salaried appointments in a local church:

- a. Are not eligible to receive Equitable Compensation support from the Annual Conference.
- b. Shall be granted the same minimum salary as an elder in full connection when their primary appointment is within a local church. \* \*\*

\*(Judicial Council decision #807)

\*\**(2012 Book of Discipline, Paragraphs 331.10b, 625.4)*

## B. The following policies are proposed to the North Texas Annual Conference for the distribution of equitable compensation assistance in 2016:

1. A local church exists to serve, not to be served. All churches should be motivated to a larger sense of ministry. Churches whose pastors receive salary subsidy should be open to linkage with other churches in order to utilize efficiently the service of full-time conference members to reduce the need for subsidy.

2. Equitable Compensation levels can best be met when appointments are open to all ministerial members without regard to race or gender. We continue to urge every conference

member to make the subject of a fully open Conference and adequately supported ministry at the local church level a matter of daily personal prayer. Only as the love of Christ dwells in us can an Annual Conference be a communion of caring persons.

3. Growth in stewardship should be achieved by all below-minimum remuneration churches. In making application for salary subsidy, District Superintendents are to provide evidence of stewardship education and growth of the church.
4. Tenure payments are designed to honor the years of service of pastors who continue for more than five years in ministry to below minimum compensation charges because of the needs of the Conference. The Bishop and the Cabinet are urged to make every effort to move pastors to above-minimum compensation charges within five years after they begin full-time service.
5. Applications for salary subsidy from Equitable Compensation are to be made by the District Superintendent on the prescribed forms.
6. The Charge Conference of any charge unable to pay the minimum salary set by the Conference shall be informed by the District Superintendent of the guidelines for receiving equitable compensation assistance. The Charge shall be informed of the amount required to bring the compensation level up to the minimum and shall be challenged to move toward the goal of full self-support at the earliest possible time. On the application for salary assistance, the District Superintendent shall certify that the charge has been duly notified. The amount of subsidy granted to a pastor shall be acknowledged annually at the Charge Conference.
7. Equitable Compensation assistance is not available to pastors serving as associate pastors or in staff positions other than pastor-in-charge. In order that such persons receive an equitable wage and to be in compliance with Judicial Council decision #807, however, it is expected that local churches use Conference minimum standards as minimum guidelines to setting associate and staff salaries.
8. Pastors who decline an appointment which would reduce or eliminate compensation support are ineligible for the Equitable Compensation tenure payment given for years of service.
9. Equitable Compensation assistance is not available for a North Texas Conference member appointed to serve in another Annual Conference, nor is it available to members of other Annual Conferences serving under appointment in the North Texas Conference.
10. There shall be no lump sum payments to persons receiving Equitable Compensation assistance unless such sums are too small for monthly payments to be made.
11. It shall be the responsibility of the pastor receiving Equitable Compensation subsidy to inform the District Superintendent of any increase in remuneration or any changes in eligibility which occur after an application for Equitable Compensation has been approved.

**EXCEPTIONAL REQUESTS BY THE CABINET:**

All requests for exceptional support (assistance requested by the Cabinet in excess of the 25% maximum standard) shall be submitted in writing to the Center Director for Leadership Development and to the Center Director for Connectional Resources. The requests shall include the amount of assistance requested, length of time for assistance and reason(s) for exceptional request.

**SUMMARY**

In the North Texas Conference, Minimum Equitable Compensation Salary increases have been indexed annually with the % increase given to all full time pastors under appointment. For example, if the salary compensation rose 1.50 % in a given year then the request to increase the Minimum Equitable Compensation rose 1.50%. At this time it is the recommendation of the CLD to maintain the minimum EC calculation as it exists, providing parity with pastoral compensation increases in the broader conference.

**LA 8****2016 BOPHB APPORTIONMENT BUDGET**

**FROM:** Board of Pension and Health Benefits

**BACKGROUND:** The two previous apportionments to fund the work of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Insurance Subsidies and Board of Pensions) were combined beginning in 2009 to recognize that they are closely related and allow for transferring funds between the two areas as needed. The proposed 2016 apportionment budget request is reorganized from prior years, separating the administrative expenses from the direct costs related to pension and health insurance. The total budget reflects a 5% decrease totaling \$88,750.00.

At the beginning of 2015, approximately \$1.31 million remained in health insurance reserves. The target for this fund has been between \$1–\$1.5 million (approximately \$1 million was the ending balance from the conference self-funded health insurance program upon entering the denominational program HealthFlex in 1995) in order to preserve the options of the conference health insurance program. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits continues to monitor the rapidly changing legislation related to health care.

**LEGISLATION:**

<b>Description</b>	<b>2014 Budget</b>	<b>2014 Actual</b>	<b>2015 Budget</b>	<b>2016 Budget</b>	<b>% Inc/(Dec)</b>
<b>Administration</b>					
Dues	\$100	\$125	\$150	\$300	
Insurance-Workers Compensation	\$1,200	\$830	\$1,100	\$1,300	
Postage	\$2,200	\$2,186	\$2,600	\$2,600	
Printing	\$800	\$327	\$1,300	\$800	
Staff Expenses	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$400	
Supplies	\$550	\$706	\$700	\$800	
Travel-Board	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$500	
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>\$5,750</b>	<b>\$4,174</b>	<b>\$6,750</b>	<b>\$6,700</b>	
<b>Staff</b>					
Staff	\$50,000	\$46,578	\$130,000	\$130,000	
Travel-Staff	\$400	\$826	\$1,500	\$1,500	
<b>Total Staff (1)</b>	<b>\$50,400</b>	<b>\$47,404</b>	<b>\$131,500</b>	<b>\$131,500</b>	
<b>Pension and Benefits</b>					
CPP	\$628,000	\$620,700	\$680,000	\$647,000	
CRSP Supplement	\$25,000	\$18,739	\$28,000	\$25,000	
Retiree Expenses	\$7,200	\$7,121	\$9,500	\$10,000	
<b>Total Pension</b>	<b>\$660,200</b>	<b>\$646,561</b>	<b>\$717,500</b>	<b>\$682,000</b>	

Description	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	% Inc/(Dec)
<b>Health Insurance</b>					
Actuarial Services Retiree Medical	\$15,000	\$11,000	\$18,200	\$14,000	
Insurance-Medical Leave	\$38,000	\$52,065	\$58,000	\$54,500	
Insurance-Life/Add Premium	\$30,000	\$26,604	\$34,000	\$30,000	
Insurance-Retiree Current Year (2)	\$400,000	\$327,815	\$425,000	\$390,000	
Insurance-Retiree Past Service Funding (3)	\$734,000	\$722,449	\$0	\$0	
Insurance-Retiree Med For New Entrants (4)	\$213,000	\$207,145	\$330,000	\$330,000	
Insurance Supplement	\$0	\$42,100	\$51,500	\$45,000	
<b>Total Health Insurance</b>	<b>\$1,430,000</b>	<b>\$1,389,178</b>	<b>\$916,700</b>	<b>\$863,500</b>	
<b>Total Apportioned Budget (5)</b>	<b>\$2,146,350</b>	<b>\$2,087,317</b>	<b>\$1,772,450</b>	<b>\$1,683,700</b>	<b>-5.0%</b>

- 1) The conference has maintained two staff positions for a number of years for the administration of pension and health benefits, but only funded a portion of that cost within this budget. For alignment purposes, the administrative staffing costs are now reflected in this budget in full.
- 2) The transition to OneExchange for Retiree Health reduced the current year service cost. The 2015 budget was established using the Actuarial projection provided by Towers Watson. Our experience has been the cost is lower than the projected cost, so the budget for this has been lowered.
- 3) The past service funding for retiree medical care was completely funded in 2014, reducing the budget in 2015 for this line item to 0. We remain fully funded on this line item.

- (4) The Retiree Medical Liability funding plan updated by the 2008 Annual Conference session calls for this item to be frozen at \$213,000 until the Pre-82 Pension Plan and the Retiree Medical Liability are fully funded and the Past Service Funding apportionment is eliminated. This amount was increased to \$330,000 effective for 2014 and years following. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits will conduct an in-depth study of this funding plan in the coming year.
- (5) The TOTAL is a decrease of \$88,750 or 5%.

## LA 9

### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**FROM:** Council on Finance and Administration

#### INTRODUCTION

The North Texas Conference had an excellent payout of 95.9% of our total apportionments for 2014.

We celebrate that 258 out of 292 churches with apportionments paid 100%. We once again recognize the NORTHWEST District for achieving 100% payment for the 23rd year in a row as well as the EAST District for their 100% payout for the 20th year in a row! These pastors, lay leaders and District Superintendents Marvin Guier and Vic Casad are to be commended!

The total paid for apportionments was \$11,528,071 and the total paid for all benevolent causes beyond the apportionment was an additional \$615,835.

While the Council recommends that local churches strive to designate at least 25% of their total annual budgets for causes beyond their churches, it is expected that apportionments be given first claim by churches in their beyond-the-local church payments, with advance specials and other benevolences viewed as second-mile giving.

The Council continues to expect 100% payout of our apportionments and urges every church to take seriously the recommended ten-month payment plan in which 10% of the annual apportionment amount is remitted monthly. Without doubt, making monthly payments beginning in January or February is an important step in paying apportionments in full.

Paragraph 622 of the 2012 *Discipline* states that the Board of Pension and Health Benefits apportionment, the Episcopal Fund, the District Superintendents Fund, and Equitable Compensation are apportioned funds which are to be paid on the same schedule as the pastor's salary is paid. The Cabinet joins the Council in urging each church to adhere to this mandate monthly.

All churches are also encouraged to make contributions to their District Second Mile Fund. This is an important way to assist districts and the conference as a whole to achieve 100% payment of our total apportionments.

The Council and the Conference Treasurer continue to update reports in order to provide the information conference leaders and members expect in a more open and transparent way. The Council takes seriously its fiduciary responsibility and is working with conference leaders to ensure faithful and effective stewardship of conference funds.

### **END-OF-YEAR 2014 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

1. The 2014 apportionment payout was 95.9%.
2. The total unrestricted and undesignated cash held by the conference treasurer at the end of 2014 was \$6,039,486. The conference treasury held \$961,407 in the operating account, \$7,209,047 in reserves at the Texas Methodist Foundation, and an additional \$22,611,069 in deposits at the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The deposits at the General Board are designated for pensions and the retiree medical liabilities. As of the end of 2014, we now hold the reserves to fully fund our Past Service liabilities.
3. The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits voted to pay off the Pre-82 past service liability to avoid future increases in apportionments. This one-time payment of \$2,058,879 from reserves reduced the overall net assets held by the conference.
4. The 2014 financial reports may be found in the Conference Reports of this workbook.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

#### **A. Fidelity Bond for Local Churches**

Beginning in 2007, with the establishment of our Conference-Wide Property & Liability Insurance Program through PACT, a \$100,000 Employee Dishonesty (Crime) Bond was established to cover those persons authorized to handle funds in every church in the Annual Conference. Effective April 1, 2012, we placed our insurance coverage with McQueary, Henry, Bowles, and Troy. We continue to provide the \$100,000 Employee Dishonesty (Crime) Bond in our current insurance program.

#### **B. Electric Aggregation Program**

Electric utilities in the state of Texas were deregulated effective January 1, 2002. Deregulation offered the opportunity for the churches of the North Texas Conference to join together to purchase electricity. With the encouragement of CF&A, a group of large churches in the conference initiated an effort to secure a group contract for the purchase of electricity. All of the churches of the conference have been invited to participate in this effort. The program will enter its sixth aggregate contract this July and continues to be beneficial to the approximately 108 participating churches.

An additional feature of the present contract is the inclusion of 10% renewable or “green” energy for every church, which was secured at no additional cost to the group contract. Churches may choose to increase the percentage of renewable energy for an additional cost. As reported in a December 22, 2007 feature article in the *Dallas Morning News*: “In an apparently unprecedented move for a large religious group, United Methodist churches of North Texas have joined forces to buy ‘green’ electricity generated by windmills in the western part of the state.” Staff writer Sam Hodges went on to say, “Environmentalists say they’re unaware of another conference, diocese, synod or any other body of churches that has used its economic clout to spur nonpolluting electricity production.” This is a significant step as we try to live out our concern for the environment.

Effective July 1, 2015, we will enter into a new electrical aggregate contract for a 48 month negotiated rate of .0509 per kWh through July 2018, down from the current rate of .054 per kWh.

### C. Conference-Wide Property & Liability Insurance Program

In response to requests for help from several local churches and after a great deal of study and discussion over many years, the 2006 Annual Conference session voted to establish a conference-wide property and liability insurance program through the group captive established by GCFA known as UM PACT. State regulations governing group captives required each annual conference to provide a capital contribution to the captive.

In April of 2011, GCFA created United Methodist Insurance (UMI) as a single parent captive with the intent of providing greater insurance coverage opportunities and savings. By the end of the second quarter of 2012, UMI assumed all of the assets and liabilities of the UM PACT program and retained its risks and coverage. Although the North Texas Conference is no longer participating in the UMI program, we do continue to have an asset in the form of a surplus note of approximately \$449,000 held with UMI from our capital contribution. We expect this contribution to eventually be returned to our conference.

In 2011, the unusually high loss experience over the preceding five years led to a premium increase of 23% over the previous year along with an increase in deductibles from a flat \$1,000 across the board to a wind and hail damage deductible of 2% per building with a cap of \$50,000 per building per occurrence on our October 1, 2011 insurance renewal with UMI. Under the direction of the Bishop, the Core Leadership Team, and the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), an Insurance Advisory Team (IAT) was created to negotiate this program on behalf of the churches of the North Texas Conference. The initial IAT was a six member task force composed of experienced property and liability insurance professionals who were not current broker/agents, directors, or otherwise beneficiaries of any sort of insurance carrier so that they might act on behalf of the churches of the North Texas Conference without any conflict of interest. Over the course of the next several months, the IAT entered into negotiations with UMI over our existing insurance programs. In addition, they secured the services of a local commercial broker, MHB T, in order to obtain a competitive bid on our lines of coverage.

In 2011, the IAT presented to CFA their recommendation that we move all lines of property and liability insurance coverage to MHB T. CFA voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the IAT and to ask that this short term task force be an ongoing advisory team tasked with the work of review and continued negotiation of our insurance needs, reporting directly to CFA. The actions of the 2012 General Conference moved that oversight responsibility to the Board of Trustees. CFA continues to receive updated reports on the status of this program.

Fortunately for our churches, the Property and Liability insurance was moved to a new carrier on April 1, 2012. On April 3, 2012 the Dallas area experienced the eighth most expensive storm in the last forty years of Texas weather history. And on June 16th, the Dallas area was again hit with what proved to be the fifth most expensive insurance loss for Texas. Both of these storms ranked above the Bastrop Wildfires in terms of total losses for the insurance industry. Had we remained under our previous carriers, our churches would have experienced deductibles of approximately \$1,405,611 on the hail claims alone based on the 2% of building value deductible. Instead, our churches paid a total of \$74,260 in 2012 deductibles on these same losses under our new insurance policy. We are facing a very hard market for property insurance lines due to the recent storms, particularly in Dallas and Wichita Counties. The Insurance Advisory Committee is working very hard to provide our churches with coverage that protects their ministry dollars.

Our loss experience in 2013 improved significantly, resulting in a smaller than expected increase in premiums for the 2014–2015 year. Although we experienced significant storms in 2014 and related hail losses, the restructuring of the insurance program that allows the conference to cover more of



the first dollar losses allowed us to keep the increase in property insurance to an average of just under 5%. We did experience larger increases in General Liability and Auto causing an overall increase of just under 8% for the 2015–2016 year.

Because of continuing concern over the vulnerability of our churches in today’s litigious society and realizing that all of the other churches are at risk when some are without adequate coverage or limits, the Council is convinced that a mandatory conference wide program is the best way to protect all North Texas Conference churches in case of property losses or issues leading to liability claims. The Council desires to do everything possible to keep our churches out of harm’s way and to enhance our protection of ministry and mission.

#### D. Pre-1982 Pension Liability

The *2012 Discipline* requires the submission of an annual comprehensive funding plan for all of our benefit liabilities including our pre-1982 pension liability. (See Board of Pension and Health Benefits Conference Report items for the presentation of our Comprehensive Funding Plan as it was approved by both the Conference and General Boards of Pension and Health Benefits.)

#### E. Retiree Medical Liability

A plan to address the conference’s Retiree Medical Liability was adopted by the 2002 Annual Conference session and updated by the 2006 and 2008 Annual Conference sessions. A study group, under the leadership of Jerry Pinkerton, revisited our progress towards funding this liability in the fall of 2012. The Conference moved to OneExchange in 2013 as our connector to Retiree Supplemental Insurance coverage, resulting in a significant decrease in costs to both the retiree and the conference. (See the Board of Pension and Health Benefits report and legislation for more information.)

#### F. Salary, Benefits and Expenses for District Superintendents

As stated in the conference’s Standing Rules, “the salary of a district superintendent shall be adjusted annually by the average percentage change in the base compensation of all full-time pastors appointed to serve local churches or appointments for which the conference is responsible.” This policy was started in 2008, and called for a periodic review to confirm the increases maintain a salary level that falls at about 90% of the declension of salary packages of full-time elders. The Council on Finance and Administration reviewed the policy in the spring of 2014 and determined that the current formula is maintaining the status set by the Annual Conference in 2008.

Therefore, the amount of change called for in accordance with the policy for 2016 is a 2.21% increase, which brings the salary to \$113,171. Parsonages or a Housing Allowance are provided by the districts. Utilities are reimbursed by voucher. Travel and other business expenses are reimbursed through an Accountable Reimbursement plan.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

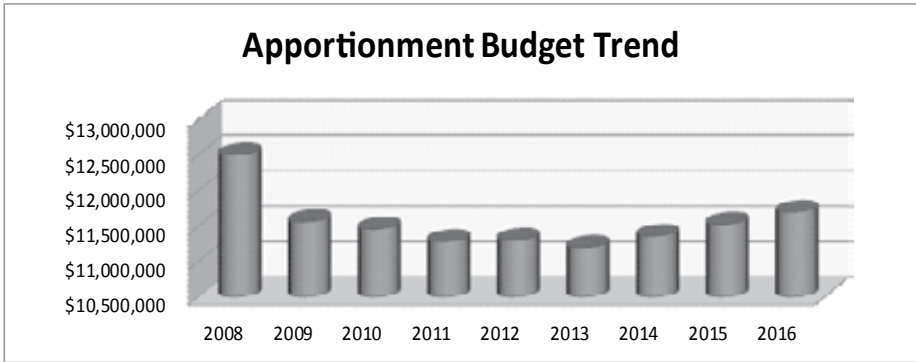
#### **I. AUDITOR FOR THE CONFERENCE TREASURY**

The Council recommends Ratliff and Associates as the auditing firm for the Conference Treasury for the 2015 audit.

## II. 2016 APPORTIONMENT BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

### BACKGROUND:

CFA has worked diligently to contain the total apportionment budget, accomplishing a net reduction of 6.5% for the past eight years since 2008. We had an essentially “flat” increase in apportionments of 0.3% for 2012, a slight decrease in 2013 of 0.6%, an increase of 1.5% for 2014, and a 1.5% increase for 2015. For 2016, CFA is recommending another 1.5% increase in apportionments to a total of \$11,699,632. The overall reduction in apportionment dollars over the last eight years translates to an average of \$810,000 per year in ministry dollars available for the work of our local churches.



Aside from General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference apportionments, the Episcopal Area fund and the District Superintendents Fund, the 2016 recommended apportionment budget is built around the four centers: (1) the Center for Leadership Development, (2) the Center for New Church Development and Congregational Transformation, (3) the Center for Missional Outreach, and (4) the Center for Connectional Resources.

The Center for New Church Starts is requesting a 5.14% increase for a total dollar amount of \$62,871. The Jump Start monies provided by the Annual Conference were fully depleted by the end of 2014. The 2015 budget included a large increase, primarily for new church starts in recognition of this shift. The 2016 budget celebrates the growth of the number of churches participating in the HCI program. The apportionments pick up a portion of the cost of this program to enable greater participation for congregations of all sizes. To meet the growing needs of this program, a part-time staff person was moved to full-time status.

The 3.67% increase in the request from the Center for Leadership Development results in a dollar total increase of \$55,193. The largest increases are in the area of children, youth and young adults. A successful launch of a new Wesley Foundation at UT Dallas has resulted in the need for a full-time campus minister in a very short time frame. Beginning in 2016, the full cost of the SMU Wesley Foundation will have shifted to The North Texas Conference. In addition, programs and services for children, youth and young adults have grown rapidly through the work of this center, creating a need to move the part-time individual working in this area to full-time.

The Center for Missional Outreach is requesting an additional \$13,519 in funding for the administrative support of the Zip Code Connection. This translates to a 2% increase over the previous year's budget.

The Center for Connectional Resources is pleased to announce a reduction of \$59,388, for a 1.73% decrease from the previous year. This reduction is in addition to a decrease of \$326,109 for 2015. With the full funding of past service liabilities, we've been able to shift funds to cover current accruals and release nearly \$400,000 per year in apportionments. A steep market decline, like the one we experienced in 2008 could result in a return of apportionment dollars designated for this, of course, but at this time, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits voted to recommend a reduction in these apportionments to the local church.

The staff budgets are aligned with their respective centers. According to NTC Standing Rule II.A.10, the District Superintendent base salaries are calculated with a 2.21% increase. Other staff raises averaged 2.5% including benefits.

In the past, the administrative staff for pension and health insurance was subsidized by \$50,000 from health insurance premiums. Due to the reporting requirements of the Affordable Care Act that go into effect for 2015, the health insurance premiums will be billed at cost and the full cost of the staff, including related benefits will be included in the apportionment budget. Additional other non-apportioned but related income may be received during the year.

The District Administration Fund budgets come from the District Conferences and are set at the District Conferences which are slated for May 17, 2015. They are not included in the total apportionment budget recommendation as they are not considered by CF&A. These apportionment items are billed to the churches within each district.

## 2016 Apportionment Budget Recommendation

Description	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	% Change
<b>GENERAL CONFERENCE APPORTIONMENTS</b>					
World Service	1,767,764	1,659,332	1,772,081	1,795,087	
MEF—Global	455,175	429,588	456,281	462,217	
MEF—North Texas Conference	151,725	199,687	152,094	154,072	
Black College Fund	242,076	229,149	242,687	245,844	
Africa University Fund	54,172	51,292	54,304	55,034	
Interdenominational Coop	47,441	44,934	47,602	48,222	
General Administration Fund	213,335	199,742	213,900	216,729	
Episcopal Fund	516,183	495,552	531,486	578,666	
<b>Sub-Total (1)</b>	<b>3,447,871</b>	<b>3,309,276</b>	<b>3,470,435</b>	<b>3,555,871</b>	<b>2.46%</b>
<b>JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE</b>					
Lydia Patterson Institute	73,244	69,425	73,244	73,244	

Description	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	% Change
Mt. Sequoyah Assembly	17,515	16,606	17,515	17,515	
Jurisdiction Administration Fund	34,304	32,581	34,304	34,304	
SMU Campus Ministries (3)	6,767	4,781	2,282	0	
<b>Sub-Total (2)</b>	<b>131,830</b>	<b>123,393</b>	<b>127,345</b>	<b>125,063</b>	<b>-1.79%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,579,701</b>	<b>3,432,669</b>	<b>3,597,780</b>	<b>3,680,934</b>	<b>2.31%</b>

#### CENTER FOR NEW CHURCH STARTS

Administration	10,000	11,140	15,000	15,000	
Staff	310,847	297,508	329,967	357,748	
Training	51,000	11,187	51,000	36,000	
New Church Coaching/ Consulting	31,000	23,937	31,000	31,000	
Mission Insight	8,500	8,856	8,856	8,856	
Healthy Church Initiative	80,000	37,546	88,000	98,000	
New Church Starts	870,319	895,382	698,275	738,365	
Release of Reserves	-395,590	-395,590	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>966,076</b>	<b>889,966</b>	<b>1,222,098</b>	<b>1,284,969</b>	<b>5.14%</b>

#### CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Administration	23,950	26,651	25,850	25,850	
Staff	342,386	388,524	446,303	455,441	
Board of Ordained Ministry	45,050	41,161	47,370	47,370	
Board of Laity	8,686	6,941	9,454	8,500	
Faith & Leadership Formation	76,500	49,478	68,200	71,500	
Texas Methodist Colleges	100,000	94,781	100,000	55,000	
Effective & Fruitful Leaders Program	42,000	37,948	34,977	31,200	
Conflict Management	12,305	10,908	12,300	12,750	
Campus Ministries (3)	460,277	479,069	526,721	560,031	
Equitable Compensation	47,000	37,287	40,000	40,000	
Intentional Interim Pastors	35,000	47,587	55,000	55,000	

Description	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	% Change
Transitional Care for Clergy	40,000	137,422	100,500	100,500	
Emerging Leadership Programs	7,500	7,418	5,000	5,000	
Leadership Dev Standing Committee	8,000	3,368	6,000	6,000	
Bridgeport Camp Program	125,050	125,050	125,050	125,050	
Less Release from Reserves	0	-166,299	-98,726	-40,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,373,704</b>	<b>1,327,294</b>	<b>1,503,999</b>	<b>1,559,192</b>	<b>3.67%</b>

#### CENTER FOR MISSIONAL OUTREACH

Staff	278,880	274,816	274,596	278,558	
Zip Code Connection	67,912	67,912	176,585	200,000	
Advisory Team	38,000	63,249	20,450	19,275	
Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns	6,000	5,673	1,500	2,500	
Church & Society	10,000	9,983	9,500	9,500	
Ethnic Local Church Concerns	154,500	129,710	140,500	121,917	
Global Ministries	57,500	56,445	52,750	57,650	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>612,792</b>	<b>607,788</b>	<b>675,881</b>	<b>689,400</b>	<b>2.00%</b>

#### CENTER FOR CONNECTIONAL RESOURCES

Administration	139,515	126,584	127,300	137,200	
Staff	590,832	526,759	612,838	641,900	
Administrative Agencies	42,500	45,788	47,900	44,000	
Annual Conference	109,770	101,387	109,770	109,770	
Ministry Center Operations	151,000	163,321	173,600	167,900	
Ministry Center Debt Service	260,000	222,255	260,000	260,000	
Moving Fund	117,000	117,294	117,000	117,000	
Camp & Retreat Center Operations	200,000	196,180	210,000	210,000	
Board of Pension and Health Benefits	2,146,350	1,927,664	1,772,450	1,683,700	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,756,967</b>	<b>3,427,232</b>	<b>3,430,858</b>	<b>3,371,470</b>	<b>-1.73%</b>

Description	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	% Change
<b>EPISCOPAL OFFICE</b>					
Area Office	69,472	76,111	75,000	75,000	
Episcopal Residence	32,000	33,874	32,000	32,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>101,472</b>	<b>109,985</b>	<b>107,000</b>	<b>107,000</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>					
Administration	224,850	240,007	224,850	224,850	
Staff	200,690	200,017	204,497	204,497	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>425,540</b>	<b>440,024</b>	<b>429,347</b>	<b>429,347</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS</b>					
Administration	70,000	67,160	80,000	85,500	
Staff (4)	473,728	475,739	481,796	491,820	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>543,728</b>	<b>542,899</b>	<b>561,796</b>	<b>577,320</b>	<b>2.76%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>11,359,980</b>	<b>10,777,857</b>	<b>11,528,759</b>	<b>11,699,632</b>	<b>1.48%</b>

**Notes:**

1. These are final numbers for General Conference Apportionments approved by Legislation enacted at the 2012 General Conference. They are adjusted each year based on an apportionment formula of membership and finance.
2. The Jurisdictional apportionments are final numbers approved by the Jurisdictional Conference at the July 2012 meeting.
3. Financial responsibility for the SMU Wesley Foundation shifted to the North Texas Conference over a period of 4 years beginning in 2012. The South Central Jurisdiction budgeted \$85,000 for SMU in previous years. This budget is now fully absorbed into the Center for Leadership Development budget under its Campus Ministries.
4. The amount of change in the DS level salary called for in the Standing Rules is 2.21%.

## GUIDELINES FOR APPORTIONMENTS FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

A. Formula for Two-Part Decimal:

1/3 membership and 2/3 finance

B. Procedure for Computation of Decimal for Each Church:

The membership part is computed by dividing the total 2014 church membership of the Annual Conference (less discontinued churches and fellowships = 141,827) into the 2014 membership of each church. This becomes the church's membership decimal.

The finance part is computed by adding the amounts of the operating expenses reported paid by each church in columns 48, 49, 51–53, and 55–57 of the 2014 Statistician's Report. (No funds reported in other statistical columns are included in this computation.) This total is then divided by the Conference total of these same columns (less discontinued churches and fellowships = \$85,894,392). This becomes the local church's finance decimal.

The finance decimal is doubled. The membership decimal is added to the doubled finance decimal. This total is divided by three to become the apportionment decimal.

C. Procedure for Computation of Apportionments for Each Church:

The apportionment decimal for each church is multiplied by the Conference total of each apportionment to determine the amount that each church is asked to pay toward the apportionment.

D. Margin for Correction:

To assure that 100% of the amount of each apportionment will be distributed to the churches, no more than one quarter of one percent may be added to each apportionment when needed.

## LA 10

### RESOLUTION FOR THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS MEETING ACCESSIBILITY

**FROM:** Rev. Tom Hudspeth, Consultant, United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries; General Secretary, World Federation of Deaf Methodists

**Rationale:**

The Discipline specifies that there shall be no discrimination based on disabilities, yet ¶610.4 is not

sufficiently strong to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in meetings of the annual conference, its districts, boards, and committees. Adopting this petition ensures that the intent of the paragraph is met.

**Desired Action:**

Amend ¶610: Conference Agencies as follows:

The annual conference is responsible for structuring its ministries and administrative procedures in order to accomplish its purpose . . . . It will monitor to insure inclusiveness—racial, gender, age, and people with disabilities—in the annual conference.

4. ~~Whenever possible,~~ Every effort shall be made to ensure that all meetings scheduled by the annual conference and its districts, boards, or committees ~~should~~ will be held in places that are accessible to persons with disabilities even if this means scheduling meetings outside church-related facilities.

## LA 11

### RESOLUTION FOR THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS MENTAL ILLNESS BENEFITS

**FROM:** Rev. Tom Hudspeth, Consultant, United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries; General Secretary, World Federation of Deaf Methodists

**Rationale:**

Disability insurance which restricts benefits for “nervous-mental conditions”—common practice—unjustly discriminates against some employees compared to others, violates Social Principle ¶162X and is counter to the principles of Resolution 3303, Ministry in Mental Illness. GCFA is the appropriate agency to enforce non-use of UMC funds for such insurance.

**Desired Action:** Amend ¶806 to add a new paragraph following paragraph 8.

It shall be responsible for ensuring that no United Methodist board, agency, or other entity shall provide to their own agency, other agencies or to annual conferences disability compensation insurance for clergy or laity which offers different levels of protection based on whether or not the diagnosis is for a **mental-nervous condition**.



## LA 12

### RESOLUTION FOR THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS NON-DISCRIMINATION IN DISABILITY COMPENSATION

**FROM:** Rev. Tom Hudspeth, Consultant, United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries; General Secretary, World Federation of Deaf Methodists

**Rationale:**

Long term disability insurance protects employees around the world by providing continuing compensation in lieu of salary when an accident or illness prevents an employee from continuing their service to their employer. Ideally, such insurance provides for compensation based purely on the existence of a disability that prevents continuing employment, and continues for the duration of that disability.

In many countries such insurance is often subject to a limitation for disabilities based on “mental and nervous conditions.” The primary reason offered for such a discrimination between disabilities is the comparative difficulty of validating disabilities whose evidence relies on self-reporting. Other reasons may include the belief that mental and nervous conditions are more likely temporary in nature and therefore a time limitation, typically two years, is appropriate. The limitation therefore places the administrative needs of insurers over the wellbeing of the persons they are committed to insure. In the United States, courts have held that discrimination in disability insurance is not addressed by non-discrimination provisions of either the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Affordable Care Act. In the United States, disability insurance is generally regulated at the state level.

**Desired Action:**

The United Methodist Church affirms its long standing support for persons with mental illness and their families. Jesus Christ made no distinctions in his healing ministry between persons with physical disabilities and those which we might today call mental illnesses. We call upon the General Board of Church and Society to advocate globally on behalf of non-discriminatory long-term disability insurance for workers, and to support and encourage the work of Annual Conference Boards of Church and Society in such advocacy at state and regional legislative bodies.

## LA 13

### RESOLUTION FOR THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**FROM:** Rev. Tom Hudspeth, Consultant, United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries; General Secretary, World Federation of Deaf Methodists

**Rationale:**

Since each annual conference is required to establish a procedure for clergy medical leave, an active or retired ordained person with a disability must not be an optional, but a required, part of the decision making body to ensure a fair and just course of action.

**Desired Action:**

Amend ¶ No. 652 as follows:

Each annual conference shall establish a procedure by which it will manage clergy medical leave. The annual conference may establish a joint committee on clergy medical leave. If the annual conference establishes such a committee, it shall be composed of two representatives each from the Board of Ordained Ministry and the conference board of pensions, and one active or retired minister with one or more disabilities named by the Conference Committee on Disabilities, or—if there is no conference Committee on Disabilities—then by the bishop, all of whom shall be elected either annually or the beginning of each quadrennium, and when a vacancy occurs. Further, a district superintendent shall be appointed from time to time to the committee by the bishop to represent the cabinet. Unless and until other members are elected, the chairperson and registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the chairperson and secretary of the conference board of pensions, and the chairperson of the Conference Disability Committee or others designated by them, shall be authorized to represent their respective boards and the disability committee in organizing itself either annually or at the beginning of each quadrennium by the election of a chairperson and a secretary. If the annual conference does not establish a joint committee, the annual Conference's established policy and process for managing nonetheless should involve the Board of Ordained Ministry, the conference board of pensions, the Conference Committee on Disabilities and, representation from the cabinet.

**LA 14**

**RESOLUTION FOR THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS  
PREJUDICE AGAINST MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES**

**FROM:** Rev. Tom Hudspeth, Consultant, United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries; General Secretary, World Federation of Deaf Methodists

**Rationale:**

The current clause opens the door to prejudging disabled provisional members as unfit for ministry. The health examination includes matters irrelevant to effective ministry. Jesus upheld disabled persons as “clean.” John Wesley designed Methodism as an inclusive, not exclusive body of Christ with all and for all; so must we.

**Desired action:**

Revise ¶ 324.8 as follows:

Each candidate shall present a satisfactory certificate of good health by a physician on the prescribed form. If a provisional candidate has one or more irremovable disabilities, those conditions shall have no bearing on the question of endorsing the candidate as an ordained elder or deacon in The United Methodist Church, with the decision based solely on the candidate having met the professional standards and is effective as a provisional member in ministry.

**LA 15****DISCONTINUANCE OF SHERMAN KEY MEMORIAL UMC—  
NORTHWEST DISTRICT**

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Cabinet

**BACKGROUND:** Key Memorial United Methodist Church of Sherman has declined dramatically in recent years. The congregation has suffered a large number of deaths and members moving out of the community, and it is no longer able to operate its large facility or to retire its debt of approximately \$160,000 or to reach its community in a significant way.

An indication of interest in purchasing and repurposing the Key Memorial property has been received from Grand Central Station, an ecumenical community service organization begun by the First United Methodist Church of Sherman which continues to provide the majority of its leadership. First UMC of Sherman has also indicated a desire to broaden and expand its mission and ministry in east Sherman. At a time when increased mission and ministry is needed in east Sherman, Key Memorial UMC has little, if any, potential to fulfill the purpose of a United Methodist Church as described in Para. 201–204 of the *2012 Book of Discipline* (BOD). However, the remaining members of Key Memorial UMC have not been willing to close voluntarily and leave a legacy to others, despite a very gracious offer from First UMC to welcome them and to care for their spiritual needs.

The Cabinet believes that Key Memorial UMC is no longer sustainable as an autonomous church and that it would not be responsible leadership to fail to take advantage of the desires and abilities of First UMC of Sherman and Grand Central Station to broaden and expand service to the east Sherman community. It would also not be exercising appropriate fiduciary responsibility to risk waiting and leaving the North Texas Conference to be forced to assume the liability for the property and the indebtedness.

Thus, District Superintendent Marvin Guier, with the support of Bishop Michael McKee and the NTC Cabinet, initiated the process to discontinue a church found in BOD Paragraphs 213 and 2549.2. See the report below which was approved unanimously by the task force created to carry out the work of that process.

The task force's report which includes the recommendation that the church be closed was presented to the Key Memorial congregation as required by the BOD process by Task Force Chairperson Chris Dowd and DS Guier. An appropriate discernment period followed. Then a Church Conference was held to receive the congregation's response to the report. The only response offered by the church

conference was to vote not to close the church voluntarily. Approximately two months later the chairperson of the church council contacted the District Superintendent with a proposed facility swap with a church of another denomination with a much smaller facility, which would purchase the Key Memorial facility in exchange for the assumption of the debt and their facility but still make it available for the funerals of the remaining Key Memorial UMC members. The Cabinet expressed a willingness to consider the proposal, but proof of funding by a third party for the other church was not forthcoming. The leadership of Key Memorial UMC has shown no interest or ability in developing a plan of ministry to do more than survive as an institutional church.

The Northwest District Board of Church Location and Building has approved the report of the task force recommending the discontinuance of Key Memorial UMC.

**LEGISLATION:** The NTC Cabinet recommends that Key Memorial United Methodist Church of Sherman be discontinued, that the property be sold to Grand Central Station of Sherman, and that any remaining proceeds after the indebtedness has been satisfied be pledged to broaden and expand the United Methodist witness and service in the east Sherman community through the First UMC of Sherman.

### **TASK FORCE REPORT**

#### Introduction:

Rev. Dr. Marvin Guier, the District Superintendent of the Northwest District of the North Texas Conference, with the support and encouragement of Bishop McKee and the cabinet, has directed this task force to assess the potential of Key Memorial United Methodist Church. Broadly speaking, we are called to determine how best to address the many needs of the East Sherman community. The question to answer is: how best can we be stewards of the United Methodist witness in this community? The following report is submitted in accordance with Paragraphs 213 and 2549.2 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012*.

#### Task Force Members:

##### Clergy:

Rev. Chris Dowd, Chair—Senior Pastor, First UMC Sherman  
 Rev. Jim Welch—Former Pastor, Key Memorial UMC  
 Rev. Roy Spore—Senior Pastor, Waples UMC Denison  
 Rev. Cassie Wade—Associate Pastor, First UMC Sherman

##### Laity:

Mary Lois O'Neal—Lay Leader, Key Memorial UMC  
 Alberto Lupercio—Trustees Chair, Key Memorial UMC  
 Tom Busby—Lay Leader, Northwest District; member, Grace UMC Sherman  
 Dorothy McKee—Grand Central Station; member, First UMC Sherman

#### The Function of the Local Church:

According to Paragraph 202 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012*, “The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God’s creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church.”

Background:

Founded in 1880, Key Memorial United Methodist Church has a rich heritage and important history in Sherman. Located just east of downtown, the congregation was well located for ministry in the community growth decades of the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's, at one point numbering over 1,000 members. By 1970, membership had dropped below 1,000. By 1980, while membership had dropped to 800, there were 300 or so in worship, representing a high water mark in the congregation's history. Since the early 1980's, the congregation has been on a steady decline in membership, worship attendance, and ministries.

Recognizing the challenges of their aging congregation and the changing demographics of the neighborhood, in 2006 Key Memorial hired Church Development and Finance Associates to conduct a Vision and Values Workshop. The consultants were engaged to analyze Key Memorial's current ministries and future prospects, and to issue recommendations for how to reverse the trends of decline. The final report included the stark warning that if their recommendations were not accepted and implemented by the congregation: "...then the Consultants would suggest a completely different plan for the next three to five years. Briefly this plan would call for a new pastor, probably retired, that could serve as a chaplain to the current congregation ministering to them as they continue to age and at some point, when the financial burden becomes too great for the remaining members, disband the congregation and sell the wonderful property."

Several of the recommendations, most notably the recommendation to reach out to the Hispanic community, were attempted but were unsuccessful. Several of the recommendations, most notably the recommendation to incorporate more elements of contemporary worship in an attempt to reach younger families, were not implemented. Eight years later, the congregation has reached the stage predicted by the consultants.

Today, the building and grounds of Key Memorial are well located for ministry to a different population—lower income and Hispanic neighbors, who have replaced the more affluent Anglo neighbors who used to surround Key Memorial. However, the congregation is unable to carry out such ministry. There are less than 50 members remaining, of an average age in their early 70's. There are under 30 in worship each week. The congregation is only able to utilize and maintain 15–20% of the square footage of the building, and even that is used only on Sundays. Ministry possibilities are limited, and beginning January 1st, for reasons detailed below, it is unlikely that the congregation will be able to meet its financial obligations.

Disciplinary Tasks:**Assessment of Current Ministries**

Subcommittee: Rev. Chris Dowd (convener), Rev. Jim Welch, Mary Lois O'Neal, Tom Busby

## Evaluative Tasks:

1. Present ministries of the congregation
  - A. Adult Religious Education
    - 1) Sunday School classes with Trinity Class with average attendance of 12 and a second unnamed class with average attendance of 6-7
    - 2) Sunday evening Bible study with average attendance of about 8
    - 3) No midweek studies
  - B. Monthly potluck fellowship
  - C. Choir of 6
  - D. No mid-week programming other than choir rehearsal on Wednesdays
  - E. Key Care (a.k.a. "The Green House")
    - 1) Enthusiastically supported ecumenical food bank and clothes closet, meeting

- an important need in the community where clients receive up to three bags of food every 90 days; Backpacks for Back to School; and a Community Thanksgiving meal
- 2) Open MWF from 1–4pm
  - 3) 35 regular volunteers; more than half of volunteer hours are not from Key Memorial members
- F. Community activities hosted:
- 1) Spanish class for 6–7 people from the community
  - 2) Spanish Baptist congregation (Liberty Baptist Church) where 40–50 people, worship and have Sunday School on Sundays. They pay \$200/month rent; no long-term lease
2. Number of leaders and style of leadership
- A. As of July 2014, served by a quarter-time local pastor (served by a half-time retired pastor previous two years)
  - B. Leaders include: Jack Bumpus, Church Council Chair; Sue Gudgel, PPR Chair; Cathy Ballau, Finance Chair; Mary Lois O’Neal, Lay Leader, and Alberto Lupercio, Trustees Chair
  - C. Leadership is deeply committed to their congregation and committed to the ministry of the United Methodist Church. To this point, leadership has not been receptive to the possibility of discontinuing the congregation and moving as a group to First UMC Sherman.
3. Fiscal and facilities needs/health
- A. Currently able to use and maintain about 15-20% of the facility’s square footage
  - B. The majority of the square footage being utilized is a sanctuary that is significantly larger than needed for the current community.
  - C. In December 2012, an employee of the Learning Center (child care worker and bookkeeper) embezzled \$65,000.
    - 1) Learning Center closed with no prospect of reopening.
    - 2) Severe financial impact. Delinquent back taxes have been paid; IRS waived penalties and fines. Took until February 2014 to make up the deficit.
  - D. Finances:
    - 1) Indebtedness of \$160,000 is currently being repaid on 3% interest-only terms to Texas Methodist Foundation, \$400 per month.
    - 2) Effective January 2015, payments revert to the loan terms of \$1,200/month.
    - 3) In 2013, the church sold the parsonage and a parcel of land across the street from the church that had been a parking lot. They have been using the proceeds to cover budget shortfall. Per the direction of the District Superintendent, in accordance with the *Discipline*, these funds may no longer be used to fund the operating budget.
4. “Other items that may impact the church’s ability to fulfill the mission of the Church” (Paragraph 213)
- A. The church property is in a prime location and is well suited to meet the needs of the community.
  - B. There exists the opportunity for the property to have a second life as a community center providing a wide range of services to the community.
  - C. First UMC Sherman is excited about the possibility of welcoming the members of Key Memorial through transfer of membership. The possibility exists either of joining one of the two existing worship services, or launching a new worship service in Hopkins Chapel. Additionally, the members joining from Key Memorial could either participate in existing Sunday School classes or form one or two new classes of their own.

5. Statistical trends, including new members, baptisms, professions of faith, and small group participation
  - A. Membership: 70 names were read at the 2013 charge conference. After the 2014 charge conference, membership will be approximately 45, of whom 10 are in nursing homes or are homebound.
  - B. Worship attendance: high 20's
  - C. Evangelism and Outreach
    - 1) In 2012 and 2013, 1 person joined, by transfer of membership from another UMC: No baptisms during that time and no confirmation classes during that time.
    - 2) No intentional programs to reach new members

### Assessment of Community

Subcommittee: Rev. Cassie Wade (convener), Rev. Roy Spore, Alberto Lupercio, Dorothy McKee

#### Evaluative Tasks:

1. Unique missional opportunities and needs of the community
  - A. The immediate neighborhood around Key Memorial UMC bordered by Pecan St (to the north) Travis St (to the west), Grand Ave (to the east), and Sherman Airport (to the south).
    - 1) Ethnicity: 53% minority population (Hispanic, African-American, and Asian) in this neighborhood. The reported 37% Hispanic population may be under-reported because of the significant presence of undocumented individuals who are residing in this area. Percentages are not expected to change in the next five years. There is an opportunity to provide services in two growing areas: English language classes and legal assistance for undocumented persons.
    - 2) Income: 67% of all households earn \$50K and below. The average household income in this area is \$45K, but the median income for Hispanic households is only \$38K and for African American households is only \$29K. There is a continuing need for assistance with basic needs: housing, food, and clothing in this very low-income neighborhood.
    - 3) Family Unit: Single parent families comprise 47% of households. Affordable, quality child-care is a growing need.
2. Growth potential of the surrounding community
  - A. Demographics are expecting a 2% increase in single parent families in the next 10 years.
  - B. Due to the increase in Hispanic-based business (e.g., restaurants and food markets), we believe that there is a growing Hispanic population in spite of the demographics from MissionInsite. We also believe that this will continue to grow as these families move to communities outside of the Metroplex.
3. Distance from and collaboration with other United Methodist Churches in the area, as well as other nonprofit agencies offering services in the community
  - A. There is a United Methodist Church (First Sherman), just to the west of the immediate neighborhood, which has offered ministry cooperation to support the congregation and the neighborhood. Members from First Sherman are committed to providing resources (human and financial) to social services in the area.
  - B. Southwest of downtown and east of 75, El Divino UMC is a member of the Rio Texas Conference. They are a small membership congregation, with a facility not well located for future potential. They are an English-speaking community comprised primarily of

persons whose families immigrated several generations ago. They do not appear to have a vibrant ministry with recent immigrants to the area.

4. Government-regulated social services in the area are difficult to navigate. Benevolent services offered by churches and 501(c)3 agencies are more approachable, but resources are often limited.

A. Food

- 1) Daily—Grand Central Station
- 2) Food Pantry—Key Care; otherwise limited supplies in churches and Share Ministry with smaller amounts given out. Most significant and reliable food pantry is Key Care.
- 3) “Share—Taking It to the Streets” provides food assistance for the homeless.
- 4) Meals on Wheels for the elderly via application process.

B. Housing

- 1) Most of the low income housing requires application process through qualifying agencies (Texoma Council of Governments—TCOG). Typically have long waiting lists for both housing and utilities.
- 2) Shelters and transitional housing are not located in the neighborhood and persons must travel as far as Denison for shelter.
- 3) Crisis and rehabilitation protection housing is available for those in need of such protection and specialized care.

C. Medical Care and Other

- 1) Grayson County Health Department is located at the edge of the neighborhood offering some low costs services: women, children, immunizations.
- 2) Grayson County Health Clinic offers resident indigent care for minimal to no cost: outside of neighborhood, several miles away.
- 3) Prescription assistance available through TCOG, Medication Assistance Program, and on a limited basis through Grand Central Station and several churches nearby.

D. Service Statistics from Grand Central Station, assumed to be representative of Share Ministries and Key Care.

- 1) Birth through 17—11%
- 2) 18–59—68%
- 3) Over 60 21%

E. Transportation: TAPS has expanded its service to the Key Memorial neighborhood, to provide non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid members.

F. Legal: Grace UMC provides a free legal clinic weekly.

G. Low-Cost Childcare: no ministry providing this specifically and limited facilities that take the Texas Workforce Commission childcare subsidy

5. Number and size of churches of other denominations in the community and (if possible) the ministries offered by those congregations

A. There are 16 identifiable churches in the neighborhood (1 Spanish speaking church, and at least 3 African American Churches). All these churches are small and most (10) have little or no web presence defining their ministries.

B. Six churches have some programing available to service the community in the following areas: children’s ministries; computer classes; fellowship and scouting; Habitat for Humanity; and food pantry and clothes closet.

Assessment and Recommendations:

1. It is the assessment of this task force that Key Memorial United Methodist Church has reached the point where it can no longer function as an autonomous local church.



- A. With the invitation to join another United Methodist Church nearby, the congregation's spiritual needs can be met without the expense of remaining an autonomous congregation.
2. The task force therefore recommends that:
- A. At the 2014 Charge Conference, the congregation vote to discontinue. Discontinuance would be finalized by the 2015 North Texas Annual Conference.
- B. Current members transfer their membership to First United Methodist Church Sherman or another church of their choosing.
- 1) During the discernment process, the community at Key Memorial is invited to worship in Hopkins Chapel and conduct Sunday School on the First Sherman campus, giving them the opportunity to experience what this change could bring. Details to be worked out with Rev. Chris Dowd.
- C. The property be sold to a local nonprofit that has expressed interest in repurposing it as a community center providing much-needed services, including (potentially) shelter and affordable childcare.
- 1) A critical ministry of this church and of this community is Key Care, which receives a large amount of food from the North Texas Food Bank for distribution to the community. We recommend that this ministry continue to operate under the umbrella of another local nonprofit, perhaps Grand Central Station, whether in its current or an alternative location.

## LA 16

### CLOSING OF SHOOKS CHAPEL UMC—EAST DISTRICT

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Trustees

**BACKGROUND:** Because only a small number of members remain at the Shooks Chapel UMC, they agreed that they cannot continue. Members of the church concluded that now is the time to close the church.

**LEGISLATION:** The North Texas Conference Board of Trustees recommends that the property be sold and the proceeds from the sale be pledged to a new church start in the East District or within the conference.

## LA 17

### CLOSING OF SOUTHWOOD UMC—METRO DISTRICT

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Trustees

**BACKGROUND:** Because only a small number of members remain at the Southwood UMC, they agreed that they cannot continue. Members of the church concluded that now is the time to close the church.

**LEGISLATION:** The North Texas Conference Board of Trustees recommends that the property be sold and the proceeds from the sale be designated for new and/or existing ministries within

urban transitional communities as described in ¶212 of the *2012 Book of Discipline* and consistent with the Annual Conference's urban ministry strategic plan in accordance with ¶2549.7. Property includes the assets of the church along with the church site and the parsonage.

## LA 18

### MERGER OF SALTILLO UMC AND OLD SALTILLO UMC— EAST DISTRICT

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Trustees

**BACKGROUND:** Because only a small number of members remain at the Saltillo UMC, they agreed that they cannot continue to operate as a separate church. Members of both churches conclude that now is the time to merge into one congregation. The membership of the Saltillo congregation has merged with the Old Saltillo congregation.

**LEGISLATION:** The North Texas Conference Board of Trustees recommends the merger of these two congregations. The Conference Trustees, the Saltillo congregation and the Old Saltillo congregation have agreed to the merger. The Conference Trustees recommends that the merged church sell the Saltillo property and incorporate the proceeds of the sale with their funds and property.

## LA 19

### RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE RENTAL HOUSING ALLOWANCES FOR RETIRED OR DISABLED CLERGYPERSONS OF THE NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Board of Pension and Health Benefits

**BACKGROUND:** To be in compliance with Internal Revenue Service Revenue Ruling 75-22, 1975-1,49, as it relates to clergy housing, the North Texas Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

**LEGISLATION: WHEREAS**, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"), of which the North Texas 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"); and

**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; and

**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 2016 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 there under 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.

## LA 20

### PRE-1982 SERVICE YEAR RATE FOR 2015

**FROM:** Board of Pension and Health Benefits

**BACKGROUND:** Paragraph 1506.7 of the 2012 *Discipline* states that the responsibility for past service annuity rate for ministerial service rendered before 1982 be determined by each annual conference. Legislation passed at the 2012 General Conference removed the wording from Paragraph 1506.7 requiring the Past Service Rate increases be a minimum of .8% based on

the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). Furthermore, General Conference 2012 passed legislation requiring full funding of any Past Service Rate increases by December 31 of the year preceding the proposed increase. In order to provide an increase in retirement benefits that keeps pace with inflation, the North Texas Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits is recommending the adoption of the percentage increase known as the “Cost-of-Living Adjustment” (COLA) as published by the Social Security Administration as the established rate for the annual increase in the Past Service Rate with a cap of 4%. The cap can be increased on recommendation of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits and approval by the Annual Conference.

**LEGISLATION:** That the pre-1982 Service Year Rate for 2016 be increased by 1.7%, in accordance with the COLA rate as published by the Social Security Administration in October of 2014, and established at \$762 for approved service of clergy members in full connection, probationary members, associate members and local pastors of the conference.

## LA 21

### **RATIFICATION OF COVENANT STATEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND METHODIST HEALTH SYSTEM**

#### Introduction

Methodist Hospitals of Dallas d/b/a Methodist Health System (“System”) has been providing care to the sick and the injured, as well as the education of people who provide this care. Golden Cross, a faith based program of Methodist Hospitals of Dallas, is included in this covenantal statement of relationship between the North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and Methodist Health System.

#### Covenant Statement

In 1980, the North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (“Annual Conference”) and System adopted the Covenant statement attached to this Ratification as Exhibit A. The Covenant statement has been in place and serving as the relational statement between the Annual Conference and the System for over thirty years.

#### Purpose of Ratification of Covenant Statement

The Annual Conference and the System are financially and legally independent organizations. The Annual Conference and the System view the Covenant statement as setting forth the fundamental elements of what has been and will continue to be an enduring, dynamic relationship that is fundamentally important to both. The System has been and remains committed to the Covenant statement as an integral part of its mission. The Annual Conference has been and remains committed to the Covenant Statement through its spiritual support for the various System projects throughout the geographical bounds of the Annual Conference.

#### Ratification

1. The Annual Conference and the System hereby affirms and ratifies that each are financially and legally independent organizations.

2. Without limiting the affirmation of independence as set forth in paragraph 1, the Annual Conference hereby affirms and ratifies the Covenant statement and thereby its commitment to the health and welfare ministries of the System, and Methodist Health System hereby affirms and ratifies the Covenant statement and thereby its commitment to continue to be dedicated to the health care ministries.


3. Furthermore, the System, inclusive of Golden Cross, acknowledges that before it can use the official United Methodist insignia as exemplified in Exhibit B or the term “United Methodist” in its name, mission statement, publications, or promotional or marketing material that it must first obtain approval of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

The Covenant statement relationship will be reviewed at a minimum of every four years by Methodist Health System with the Board of Trustees of the North Texas Annual Conference as part of the ongoing communication and cooperation between the Annual Conference and the System. Any change in the Covenant statement requires the approval of the Annual Conference through its Board of Trustees and the approval of Methodist Health System through its Board of Directors. The Covenant and relationship established thereby shall continue until either party, upon a year’s notification, indicates the desire to terminate the relationship.

METHODIST HEALTH SYSTEM  
A nonprofit corporation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Date: 12-10-14

THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
A nonprofit corporation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Date: 12-1-2014

#### EXHIBIT A COVENANT BETWEEN NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE AND METHODIST HOSPITALS OF DALLAS

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Trustees

Ministry in the name of Jesus Christ is the purpose of The United Methodist congregations of any conference. The Annual Conference and its agencies and affiliate institutions exist to serve as an extension of the ministry of outreach to persons. United Methodists serve in local health care institutions through hospitals, and caring and outreach are extended beyond the scope of local congregations.

The covenant statement exists to articulate the relationship of Methodist Hospitals of Dallas (Hospitals) and the North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church (Conference) in this particular ministry of caring and healing. The assumptions of the covenant include the following:

First, each party to the covenant relationship must have something of value to offer the other, and something to gain from the other. A covenant implies that a sharing process is to take place in which each party is to give of itself and, in turn, to be enriched by what the other has to offer.

Second, Hospitals and Conference hold in common a mutuality of goals, objectives and purpose which relates to the specific functions and areas of expertise of Hospitals

symbolized in the healing arts, pastoral care, post-secondary education for health careers and community services in preventive and rehabilitative medicine

Third, Hospitals and Conference recognize each other as mature and independent entities. Hospitals has its own governing board. While the charter statement of Hospitals:

“In the event the corporation is dissolved, all of its liabilities and obligations shall be paid, satisfied and discharged and all of its assets and property then remaining shall be distributed to the North Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church or such other entity as may be entitled to hold property for the benefit of The United Methodist Church.”

indicates a relationship with Conference, Conference cannot make decisions of governance for Hospitals. Hospitals recognize that Conference is not legally responsible for liabilities and indebtedness.

Fourth, Hospitals and Conference both recognize high standards of care and administration.

Fifth, the objectives of Hospitals and Conference generally complement one another. Hospitals provide direct services on behalf of Conference, such as pastoral care, education opportunities and the rendering of charity services to the indigent. In turn, financial support of some of Hospitals’ programs is a direct evidence of support by the Church of the Hospitals and their objectives. The Hospitals are interlaced with persons who bring to their work in all capacities the concerns and commitments of their religious faith.

The foregoing is to be carried out through a mutual covenant relationship between Conference and Hospitals.

This covenant, as approved by Conference and Hospitals, affirms that the care of the sick and injured and the education of persons to care for them is a ministry of the Church and that Hospitals covenants to serve as an extension of that ministry as outlined in the following four areas:

Ministry. In the name of Christ the area of function and expertise of Hospitals is in touching the lives of persons in need of healing, comfort, and education in the healing arts. This implies that the policies and personnel of Hospitals exhibit the characteristics of the Christian faith.

Influence. While Hospitals and Conference are autonomous organizations, there are areas of their life in which they influence each other. Influence allows each party to receive the insights and concerns of the other party without the threat of sanction. While attempts to influence may at times be uncomfortable for either or both parties, the hope is for a growth in ministry and increased understanding of needs and issues.

Communication. For any covenant to have vitality, it seems apparent that there should be established and used links of communication. The links of communication need to be both formal and informal. The formal links are those administrative channels provided for the fulfillment of responsibilities and liaison. The informal links are those which exist between persons in both organizations to share concerns, information and issues but are not authorized for making decisions.

Support. Support is felt by both Hospitals and Conference as they work together in areas of ministry. The expression of support may be both tangible and intangible. Within the covenant

relationship, the tangible support between Hospitals and Conference are those actions which sustain specific policies or acts of ministry. The specific policy or act is identified as an area of mutual concern to both Hospitals and Conference. The support may be personal participation, financial or material resource. The decision as to what is supported and the extent of support is a mutual or negotiated decision for each item and may not be assumed. The intangible support could be identified as the encouragement of persons who speak in favor of the mutual ministry endeavors and offer their good will and volunteer help. Each organization in support of the mutual aims and objectives and the activities of the other in furtherance of such aims and objectives undertake and have undertaken:

### HOSPITALS

To develop basic goals and purposes which reflect a commitment to Christian life and learning, and when seeking to bring about a change in a position held by Conference will do so without force or direct authority.

To assume responsibility for the fiscal operations of Hospitals.

To use funds given and accepted in trust for designated purposes in full compliance with the wishes of the donor.

To assist Conference and the local churches to meet the health care and educational needs of disadvantaged patients and students.

To commit to the fullest extent possible the resources of Hospitals in the provision of educational, religious and health care programs and services for both ministers and lay people.

To provide opportunity for members of the hospital community to serve the Conference and local churches on a released time or nominal fee basis (speakers, committee, and special project assignments, counseling service for parsonage families, etc.).

To provide the physical facilities and services of the Hospitals to Conference for meeting on an "at cost" basis.

To acknowledge affiliation with, and support from, Conference in published documents and statements.

### CONFERENCE

To respect the integrity of Hospitals as places of health and pastoral care, medical education, research and community services and to support their need for and the right to carry out these functions with the freedom to act in accord with the most enlightened scientific and moral leadership and judgment available to the governing board of each institution. When Conference seeks to influence these activities and decisions, it will do so without force or direct authority.

To recognize that Conference budget support holds meaningful significance to Hospitals as an indication of relationship as a voluntary supporting body, although Conference does not bear the legal and financial responsibility of the Hospitals. Any major financial assistance in the future is open to mutual decision of Hospitals and Conference.

To encourage the churches and United Methodist families to provide ways in which Hospitals may freely and acceptably recruit United Methodist students for health and related careers.

To encourage local churches and United Methodist Church members to support Hospitals with their gifts, bequests, prayers, influence and voluntary service.

To work with the Hospitals in helping to meet the health care and educational needs of disadvantaged students and patients.

To utilize the resources of Hospitals in joint development of continuing education programs for both ministers and lay persons.

To encourage local church and Conference groups to make use of Hospitals' physical facilities and services for seminars, meetings and conferences of all kinds.

To encourage local churches to provide physical facilities and services to Hospitals for use on an "at cost" basis and to assure Hospitals that the Conference office and facilities are available for use on an "at cost" basis.

To acknowledge the relationships of Conference to Hospitals in published documents and statements.

The covenant relationship herein designated is best described as an interdependent one in which Methodist Hospitals of Dallas and the North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church each do that for which it is best equipped to do in the corporate ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

Approved by Methodist Hospital of Dallas

Board of Trustees on October 27, 1980

**Exhibit B**

United Methodist Insignia





## LA 22

### INCORPORATION OF THE BRIDGEPORT CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Trustees

**BACKGROUND:** The Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center has provided vital camping ministries for youth, children, and young adults since its inception in 1947. Many have heard their call from God to either lay or ordained ministry while attending or serving in leadership at this site. The North Texas Conference Board of Trustees (The Conference Trustees) fully supports the mission and vision of the Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center as a ministry of the North Texas Annual Conference (The Conference). In this litigious society, The Conference Trustees sought the advice of an attorney to provide protection to the both The Conference and the Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center while maintaining the connection between the two.

The North Texas Annual Conference Board of Trustees is, itself, separately incorporated and yet wholly owned by the North Texas Annual Conference. Furthermore, our District Offices were once separately incorporated from the North Texas Annual Conference when they held real property. The Conference and the Cabinet will continue to provide oversight of programming through the ex-officio membership of the related staff of Center for Leadership Development on the Bridgeport Board of Directors. The Conference Treasurer will serve as an ex-officio member of the Bridgeport Board of Directors to provide ongoing oversight of the camp facilities. Furthermore, The Conference will continue to include the financials of the Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center in its own consolidated statements in keeping with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for related entities. The recommendation is to incorporate the Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center such that the North Texas Annual Conference appoints a minimum of 60% of its Board of Directors each year.

**LEGISLATION:** The Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center be incorporated and that a minimum of 60% of its Board of Directors be named by the North Texas Annual Conference at its Annual Conference Session each year.

## LA 23

### INCORPORATION OF THE PROTHRO CENTER AT LAKE TEXOMA

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Trustees

**BACKGROUND:** The Prothro Center at Lake Texoma (The Prothro Center) has provided vital conference and retreat ministries since its inception. In 2002, The North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church (The Conference) broke ground on the planned additions and renovations at The Prothro Center in accordance with the Master Plan approved at Annual Conference for a quality retreat and conference center for adults and families. Since then, the facility has been used extensively for conference meetings, events and retreats as well as local church retreats. In this litigious society, the Conference Trustees sought the advice of an attorney to provide protection to

both The Conference and The Prothro Center while maintaining the connection between the two. The North Texas Annual Conference Board of Trustees is, itself, separately incorporated and yet wholly owned by the North Texas Annual Conference. Furthermore, our District Offices were once separately incorporated from the North Texas Annual Conference when they held real property. The Conference Treasurer will serve as an ex-officio member of The Prothro Center Board of Directors to provide ongoing oversight of the camp facilities. Furthermore, The Conference will continue to include the financials of The Prothro Center in its own consolidated statements in keeping with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for related entities. The recommendation is to incorporate The Prothro Center such that the North Texas Annual Conference appoints a minimum of 60% of its Board of Directors each year.

**LEGISLATION:** The Prothro Center at Lake Texoma be incorporated and that a minimum of 60% of its Board of Directors be named by the North Texas Annual Conference at its Annual Conference Session each year.

## LA 24

### INCORPORATION OF THE BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** North Texas Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits

**BACKGROUND:** The North Texas Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (BOPHB) currently functions under the auspices of The North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (The Conference). The BOPHB met with an attorney to discuss the exposure of the assets designated for retiree health care. Unlike pension benefits which can be placed in a qualified plan that protects the corpus from creditors, there are no qualified plan vehicles to protect the assets set aside for retiree health care. Nonetheless, the Conference is held to a fiduciary responsibility to provide those benefits. By placing the assets in an incorporated entity, the assets will have a higher level of protection from creditors. The entity would be wholly owned by The Conference and would function much as the Conference Board of Trustees currently functions, as a separately incorporated entity with its Board appointed by The Conference at its annual meeting. The officers of the current board would serve as elected or ex-officio members of the incorporated Board of Pension and Health Benefits, subject to the *Book of Discipline*.

**LEGISLATION:** The North Texas Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits be incorporated and that a minimum of 60% of its Board of Directors be named by the North Texas Annual Conference at its Annual Conference Session each year.

## LA 25

### SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY BY-LAWS AND CERTIFICATE OF FORMATION CHANGES

**FROM:** Edward Burger, President and Professor, Southwestern University

#### **Introduction and Request**

As a result of the affiliation of Southwestern University (“Southwestern”) with the Texas, North Texas, Central Texas, Rio Texas, and Northwest Texas Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church (each a “Patronizing Conference”) the current By-Laws of Southwestern require that certain changes to the By-Laws and Certificate of Formation of Southwestern must be confirmed by 2/3rds of the Patronizing Conferences with each conference having one vote. Specifically, the existing By-Laws include the following: “Any change in the composition of the Board of Trustees and the method of selection for members on the Board of Trustees shall be confirmed by the Patronizing Conferences.”

During a meeting on January 30, 2015, the Board of Trustees of Southwestern unanimously approved certain amendments to the By-Laws and authorized the President of the University to make certain conforming changes to the Certificate of Formation.

These changes resulted from a number of informal discussions among the Trustees and two meetings, one on June 20, 2014, and another on August 14, 2014. The first meeting was attended by twenty (20) trustees. The second meeting was attended by twenty-five (25) trustees. Some attended in person and some via telephone. The purpose of both meetings was to identify any changes that could lead to a more effective Board of Trustees recognizing the challenges facing Southwestern and other colleges and universities. Southwestern also sought and received Episcopal input.

A written summary of the ideas generated from these meetings was provided to the entire Board of Trustees and during a regular meeting of the Board on October 17, 2014, the summary of ideas was unanimously approved by the 30 Trustees attending.

In all these meetings Trustees with a close relationship with the United Methodist Church actively participated. The summary of ideas included the following: “The relationship between Southwestern and the United Methodist Church is important and should be maintained and enhanced.”

Southwestern requests that the North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (the “Conference”) confirm the following changes to the By-Laws and the Certification of Formation.

#### **LEGISLATION:**

##### **By-Laws Changes**

The following are the changes to the By-Laws for which confirmation by the Conference is requested.

1. Due to the unification of the Rio Grande and Southwest Texas Annual Conferences

there will no longer be trustees elected by the Rio Grande or Southwest Texas Annual Conferences, but there will be four trustees elected by the Rio Texas Conference (same as the number elected by the Texas, North Texas, and Central Texas Annual Conferences).

2. At least one member of the Nominations Committee (committee's name changed to Trusteeship Committee in the amended By-Laws) must be a United Methodist.
3. The Board of Trustees will include two Bishops of the United Methodist Church nominated and elected by the Bishops of the Patronizing Conferences after consultation regarding each individual nominee with the Board's Trusteeship Committee, giving due regard to the comments, requests, and concerns of that committee. At least one of the episcopal trustees serving at any given time must be a Bishop of one of the Patronizing Conferences. (Currently there are five Bishops of the Patronizing Conferences who are *ex officio* trustees. Consequently, the present By-Laws require the Bishops to serve regardless of whether she or he has the time or interest.)
4. The University is lifting the requirement that a certain number of trustees elected by the respective Patronizing Conference be United Methodist clergy.
5. The requirement that a certain percentage of the Board of Trustees be members of the United Methodist Church is also lifted. (Currently the requirement is 60%.) Due to the number of Trustees to be elected by the Patronizing Conferences and the Episcopal trustees [totaling 20] as provided in the amended By-Laws, the Board will always have at least 44% of its members who are United Methodist. This is a higher percentage than that of comparable United Methodist-related colleges and universities in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana and greater than the percentage reported by representatives of the University Senate of the United Methodist Church following a site visit on November 18–19, 2013.)
6. The Supplemental Trustee Category consisting of four positions is eliminated and those positions are "at large trustee" positions in the amended By-Laws. Thus, pursuant to the amended By-Laws, there are 20 "at large trustee" positions, which is the same as the total of "at large" and "supplemental" trustee positions under the existing By-Laws.
7. The University is lifting the requirement that the 20 at-large trustees, which are nominated by the Nominations Committee (Trusteeship Committee in the amended By-Laws) and elected by the Board of Trustees, be confirmed by the Patronizing Conferences.

### **Certificate of Formation Changes**

The following are the changes to the Certificate of Formation for which confirmation by the Conference is requested.

1. Article Four was amended to broaden slightly the University's authority to accomplish its educational purposes by providing that it may promote higher education in "any or" all of its branches and confer "any or" all diplomas.
2. Article Six was amended to substitute the University's current president, Edward B. Burger, for his predecessor, Jake B. Schrum, as the University's registered agent.
3. Article Seven was amended to reduce the maximum number of trustees from 50 to 45 and to lift the requirement that 60% of the trustees be United Methodists.

## LA 26

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**FROM:** Standing Rules Committee

**BACKGROUND:** In 2012, the North Texas Annual Conference adopted the MinistrySafe Safety System as Policy for all North Texas Conference and District events and the minimum standard for local congregations. Under the section entitled *Screening for Adults*, the Policy states: “All screening shall be done in accordance with the guidelines to be established by the Conference MinistrySafe Awareness and Training Task Force.” The screening process was established by the Task Force under the advisement of MHBT Insurance Agency and MinistrySafe representatives, but the language in the policy was never updated to include the screening process required for policy compliance. This amendment includes the established screening process in the North Texas Annual Conference MinistrySafe Safety System Policy.

Additionally, there has been some confusion over wording under the *Supervision for Nursery/Childcare* section regarding Texas state licensure requirements. This amendment seeks to clarify that language.

Finally, there are some minor proposed revisions regarding language under the *Training* section to bring the Policy up to date with the MinistrySafe Safety System, and the addition of a *Maintaining Compliance and Best Practices* section which encourages local congregations to visit the MinistrySafe website for training and other tools.

Recommended Changes: (**Bold**= Addition, ~~Strike through~~ = Deletion)

**LEGISLATION:** As it pertains to Standing Rule II.G. MinistrySafe System

#### **G. MINISTRYSAFE SAFETY SYSTEM**

##### **MINISTRYSAFE SAFETY SYSTEM FOR ALL CONFERENCE AND DISTRICT EVENTS NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

###### **Introduction to Annual Conference Policy**

OUR CALLING AND OUR MANDATE IS TO ENSURE A SAFE HAVEN FOR ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE.

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God’s people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18:15–17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary. Scriptures provide examples of how sanctuary is to be a community of protective nurture and harmony (Psalms 20:1–2, 27:4–5).

As Christians, we are called to create a protective environment in our churches. They must be holy, safe and protective communities for all of God’s children, regardless of age or ability. The purpose of this policy is to address the communal responsibility of our children, youth, and vulnerable persons at all local churches, and at all District or Annual Conference sponsored events. The North Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy with procedures in place (1) to help prevent the opportunity for the occurrence and/or the appearance of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable persons, (2) to help provide

safeguards for workers from false accusations and/or suspicions and (3) to hold accountable all those who minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, vulnerable persons, workers, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

### **Scope of Annual Conference Policy**

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid persons, whether lay or clergy who have any direct or indirect contact with children and youth who participate in any activities or events sponsored by the North Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and/or its Districts.

This Annual Conference policy is effective as of July 1, 2012 for all Conference and District Events. The North Texas Annual Conference policy shall be applicable at all Conference and District activities. The local congregation's policy may expand the Conference policy, but may not/should not alter the minimum standards established by the Conference or those standards mandated by the State of Texas' licensures.

### **Supervision**

An adult is defined as anyone 18 years of age or older.

A youth assistant is anyone under the age of 18 who may work with children and youth only when supervised by at least two adults over the age of 18 years. Youth assistants cannot be in charge of, nor left alone with children and youth. Background checks on youth under the age of 18 are inaccessible, so choose youth with great care. If using youth assistants, ensure the following is completed: 1) Application, 2) six-month volunteer history and 3) verify references. Also note, with using youth assistants, MinistrySafe training will need to be adapted for age-appropriateness.

To achieve compliance with the MinistrySafe policy it may be necessary to combine groups; recruit, train, and reference additional volunteers; or cancel an event. It is also strongly encouraged that there be present at least one adult who is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.

Observation of activities in rooms is essential, whether it is done by windows, open doors, glass doors, electronic technology, etc.

All volunteers seeking to work with children, youth and vulnerable persons, shall have at least 6 months involvement in a local church or provide a written recommendation by a senior pastor or appropriate designee.

For the sake of outreach, evangelism, and family involvement in our ministries, Parents, Grandparents, and Legal Guardians who have not met these criteria may volunteer as guest, so long as 2 or more properly MinistrySafe trained staff or volunteers are on site and in charge. Any such individuals who intend to be a guest on an ongoing basis shall be subject to all MinistrySafe guidelines and screenings.

Supervision for Nursery/childcare at Conference and District events:

- There shall be a minimum of two (2) adults per room or within line of sight.
- The State of Texas Childcare Minimum Standards ([http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care)) must be followed **for all Texas State Licensed**

**Day Cares or Schools.** ,particularly in relation to the number of adults to child ratio:  
Supervision of children and youth at Conference and District events:

- Conference and District events shall observe the—“2 Adult Rule” (2 adults per classroom, 2 adults within line of sight). -OR-
- Any one-to-one mentoring or consulting shall be conducted in sight of another adult.
- -OR-
- Understanding that there is safety in numbers, one adult can be in contact with multiple youth (6th–12th grades) so long as they are in line of sight of other adults.

### **Overnight Accommodations**

At events that require overnight accommodations:

- At least (2) adults are present in every room/cabin. - OR -
- When staying in a hotel, adults shall sleep in an adjoining room with the same gender of the children/youth; or if necessary for children/youth to share a room with an adult, adults shall sleep in separate beds from children/youth so long as any one adult shall not be alone with any one child/youth.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

**Verbal Abuse**—Any verbal act that humiliates degrades or threatens any child or youth.

**Physical Abuse**—Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person’s physical or mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual’s caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual’s age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to physical health of a child or youth.

**Sexual Abuse**—Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) incest, 2) rape, 3) prostitution, 4) romantic involvement with any participant, 5) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child or youth in sponsored activities of this church, 6) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content.

Examples are not limited to: displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one’s own or another person’s body, touching another person’s body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse.

**Emotional Abuse**—Exposing a youth or younger child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the youth or child that she or he is worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care. Emotional abuse may include being locked in closets or other confining spaces, being incessantly told they are bad, or being forced to abuse alcohol or illegal drugs.

**Neglect**\_Endangering a child or teen’s health, welfare, and/or safety through negligence. It may include withholding food, medical care, affection to destroy the child or teen’s sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

**Ritual Abuse**—Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a child or youth, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility for the victim’s welfare. Typically the perpetrator appeals to some higher

authority or power to justify his or her abuse. Examples of ritual abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to the youth or child victim or to people related to the victim.

### Screening for Adults

Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children and youth and vulnerable persons. Screening calls for a careful gathering and review of information in search of those who can provide safe and caring supervision in a safe environment. All screening shall be done in accordance with guidelines to be established by the Conference MinistrySafe Awareness and Training Task Force and the Conference's designated Liability Insurance Agency's screening process.

### Screening Process

**Volunteers and staff members are to perform and document the screening following process:**

- **Complete a Safety Application Form**
- **Complete a face-to-face interview**
- **Complete a reference check**
- **Complete a background check**
- **Complete the MinistrySafe online training**

**Compliance Renewal requires MinistrySafe online training every two years and background checks every two to three years, unless licensure or legislative requirements are more frequent and/or stringent.**

Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children and youth:

- Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful
- Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.
- Drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application.
- Persons having a criminal history of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.

If there are questions regarding an individual's background check or screening, due to special circumstances (acquittals, discharges, exonerations, pardons, etc.), please notify the District Superintendent or appropriate Conference Staff before making those decisions.

### Training

The North Texas Annual Conference shall ~~develop and implement training~~ **has adopted MinistrySafe Safety System as the training standard** for all persons in leadership who work with children, youth and vulnerable populations at the District and Conference level. None of these persons shall, after July 1, 2012, have any direct or indirect contact with children and/or youth until they have completed the MinistrySafe Safety System **screening process**. We recommend that at the beginning of each Conference/District event a review of this policy be conducted. As of January 1, 2013, all congregations shall implement this same training standard.

The **North Texas Annual Conference MinistrySafe Safety System Policy** must be reviewed and renewed annually.

### Reporting of Incidents

1. When an adult leader of an event or activity suspects that abuse or any suspected violation of the Texas Penal Code is taking or has taken place, he or she shall call 911 when



needed and report the abuse to the appropriate local law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (800-252-5400). The adult leader shall contact the administrator or event leader immediately, and cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.

2. Address any needs the child or youth may have, medical or otherwise. Report to the parent(s) and/or legal guardians(s).
3. The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and well-being of the children or youth, be removed with dignity from further contact with the children and youth until an appropriate investigation has taken place. The matter shall remain confidential. If the adult event leader is the respondent, then the report should be made to that person's supervisor.
4. Following the report of an incident, the adult event leader, or supervisor in charge shall speak with the alleged victim, and document the report, according to Section 5.
5. All such conversations shall be documented. Careful and confidential documentation is essential. The documentation should include the following:
  - a. The name of the adult leader observing or receiving the disclosure of abuse, including the date, time and place and any action taken by this person.
  - b. The alleged victim's name, age, and date of birth.
  - c. Any statement made by the alleged victim.
  - d. Name of the respondent, the date, time and place of any conversation or any statement made by the respondent.
  - e. Any action taken, i.e. suspension of the respondent.
  - f. Date and time of call to the appropriate agency, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation and case number assigned.
  - g. Date and time of call to law enforcement agency, name of officer spoken to and content of that conversation.
  - h. Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
6. Notify the Conference/District authorities immediately.
7. It shall be the goal to provide supportive care to both the victim and the respondent and to restore such persons to wholeness. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system, provisions of the current Book of Discipline, appropriate counseling referrals and continued pastoral visitation.
8. Confirmed reports of proven incidents of abuse shall be retained in a confidential file for future screening purposes.

### **Media Response**

The Bishop shall be informed of all investigations or allegations of abuse. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from the Office of the Bishop.

**Do not give out any information, simply state that all inquiries will be answered through the Office of the Bishop.**

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Appropriate Discipline**

Children and youth should be made aware that appropriate behavior is expected at all events. Gentle reminders are always necessary when dealing with children and youth. When these reminders don't work, then discipline needs to move to the next step. In cases where behavior has to be addressed, designated event adults should handle it. In no case is physical discipline an appropriate measure to deal with problems. A reasonable response might include a period of "time out" for the child or youth. This should be done with necessary supervision keeping MinistrySafe guidelines in mind.

Keeping parents involved is important. They need to be kept up-to-date on their child's behavior. For serious offenses, the appropriate response will be to send the child or youth home immediately. Parents and the leaders will help make proper arrangements.

### **Appropriate Physical and Emotional Boundaries**

Physical boundaries are most important in dealing with children and youth. Persons working with children and youth have to understand and respect those boundaries. Obviously these boundaries change as children grow older. A young child sitting in the lap of a caregiver is most appropriate, whereas an older child or youth sitting in an adult's lap would not be acceptable. Hugs and kisses from a toddler to an adult are entirely different than the same from a youth.

Emotional boundaries are also important. As a child grows older it is important for the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships. It is important for those working with children and youth to not step outside of those lines and allow the younger person to become too attached to them. It is important for the older person to be careful where conversations might lead and to steer clear of inappropriate talk. When an adult recognizes that there might be an issue with these boundaries, great space should be allowed to come between them and the child or youth in question. If that does not solve the problem, then the event leadership should address the issue.

### **Leader Misconduct**

It is a privilege to work with youth. Great responsibility is required. Those who violate this policy shall immediately be removed from contact with children and youth and appropriate authorities shall be notified immediately.

### **Spiritual Boundaries for MinistrySafe**

As we seek to lead young people in the development of their faith story, it is essential that we guide them and do not manipulate their emotions. This is especially true at longer youth/children's events. The attendees may be exhausted by longer and more active days than they are accustomed to and thereby more susceptible to emotional manipulation. It is therefore necessary that, as we present the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the opportunity to follow Jesus in a life-long journey, we present the invitation with "no strings-attached." We must allow each person involved to make their own decisions without stigma, coercion, or pressure in any form. As we do this faithfully, we will see more fruitful commitments in the lives of all our participants.

### **Maintaining Compliance and Best Practices**

**Local congregations are encouraged to visit the MinistrySafe website for training and other tools: [www.ministrysafe.com](http://www.ministrysafe.com).**

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**LA 27**  
**PETITION TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**FROM:** The North Texas Retiree Fellowship

The North Texas Retiree Fellowship submits this petition to the 2015 North Texas Annual Conference:

“We ask the Annual Conference to restore live Retiree speeches during the Annual Conference session. For the past two years and this session of 2015, highly edited videos have replaced live presentations. In the previous many decades, retirees were given the opportunity to “share a word” at this high moment in their lives. The videos lack the spontaneity and interaction possible only in a live talk and the absence of spouses does not allow the Conference to recognize and hear those who have been loyal partners in ministry across the years.

Retiree speeches have been an important part of who we are as a Conference family. They become unforgettable moments in the lives of our retirees. They serve as an important link of retiree to active ministers and are an inspiration to the laity. The Retiree Fellowship fully supports time limits on the speeches as determined by the Conference planning committee and enforced by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Please join the Retiree Fellowship in our request to return live Retiree speeches beginning next year.”