

Discipleship Ministries 2026 Journal Reports

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Advocacy and Action

To faithfully answer God’s call for justice, mercy, and advocacy by partnering with individuals and organizations to reform systems that are unjust and oppressive, as guided by Scripture, The Social Principles, and the Resolutions of The United Methodist Church.

2025 Impact and Progress

United to Love Campaign Launch

In 2025, we launched the United to Love Campaign: Hate Divides, Love Unites, a movement to

align congregations across the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Area in spiritual renewal, leadership development, and justice-centered action.

Impact: The campaign has created a unifying framework for collective witness, calling congregations into deeper discipleship expressed through love in action. Through prayer, public witness, and coordinated engagement, United to Love is cultivating a culture of courageous, connected, and justice-driven ministry across the region.

Love in Action Grants

We awarded over \$150,000 in Love in Action Grants to congregations and ministry partnerships addressing critical justice issues, including racial justice, affordable housing, food insecurity, health equity, and community violence prevention.

Impact: These grants have empowered congregations to respond directly to community needs, strengthening local ministries and expanding the Church's role as a visible agent of justice, healing, and hope. Funded projects reflect innovative, community-rooted approaches to dismantling inequities and building the Beloved Community.

Justice Advocate Engagement

Through Social Action Teams and conference-wide initiatives, we are intentionally engaging and equipping Justice Advocates - people of faith committed to advancing equity in areas such as environmental justice, gender equity, gun violence prevention, legislative advocacy, immigration reform, and restorative justice.

Impact: Through advocacy days, IGNITE, trainings, webinars, and community partnerships, we are working to intentionally strengthen participation and leadership among Justice Advocates. This growing network reflects increased commitment to sustained, faith-rooted advocacy and systemic change.

2026 Goals

Our work remains grounded in the Call to Action on Racial Justice (NEJ 2016) and continues to expand through the vision of United to Love.

1. Expand and Deepen the United to Love Campaign by increasing congregational participation across districts.
2. Strengthen Love in Action Grant Impact by continuing to fund innovative, justice-centered ministries.
3. Identify and Mobilize Justice Advocates by increasing engagement and leadership development. Justice advocates are those working within one or more justice ministries within the local church, campus ministries and other ministry contexts.

4. Build Strategic Partnerships and Public Witness by deepening collaboration with community, ecumenical, and interfaith partners which includes expanding opportunities for public witness, including advocacy days, prayer vigils, and direct action.

Looking Ahead

We remain committed to building the Beloved Community through sustained advocacy, courageous witness, and Spirit-led action. Through the United to Love Campaign and the tangible impact of Love in Action Grants, we are witnessing congregations move from intention to transformation. This includes embodying a faith that not only proclaims love but actively practices it.

For more information and to get involved, visit:

<https://www.bwcumc.org/ministries/love-like-jesus/advocacy-action/>

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Rochelle Andrews

Rev. Dr. Stacey Cole Wilson, Executive Minister of Beloved Community

Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM)

The Committee on Native American Ministries seeks to promote and support Native American Ministries in the Baltimore-Washington Conference and throughout the connection.

Goal: To build awareness of and advocacy for issues affecting Native Americans so that indigenous culture isn't forgotten..

Impact: For the purpose of greater advocacy, education and awareness, we have explored issues that currently affect Native American communities such as: education; federal services to Native American People associated with political changes; Environmental Protection and Climate Change (i.e. Water)

- Federal Recognition of Tribal Status
- Native Lands and Sacred Places
- Tribal Sovereignty and Jurisdiction
- Mascots, Hate and Native Representation
- [Indian Day and UM Boarding Schools](#) Healing - calling for a reading of this report with a commitment to actions as stated.

We have supported policy statements issued by the Native American International Caucus (NAIC) and GCORR resources for Native American Ministries Sunday. We also continue to call attention to the following::

- [11 Facts About Native People in Society and the Church](#) (By Bishop David Wilson)
- [Video: Ongoing Acts of Repentance with Indigenous People](#) (By Rev. Chebon Kernell)

- [Land Acknowledgement vs. Welcome by the Original People](#) (By Ragghi Rain, Chairperson, Native American International Caucus, 2023)
- [Video & Discussion Guide: Doctrine of Discovery](#) (By Christy L. Oxendine based on Dismantling Racism webinar segment by Dr. Lisa Dellinger who is Chickasaw and Mexican)
- [Remembering Forgotten Historical Figures](#) (Wilma Mankiller, Charles Curtis, and Zitkala-Ša)
- [Book Study: The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Book Study](#)
- Native American Ministries Pastor and Leader Kit, <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/umc-resources/umcgiving/special-sundays/native-american-ministries-pastor-and-leader-kit>.
- United Methodist Report on Indigenous Boarding Schools, <https://www.umc.org/-/media/umc-media/2024/09/12/16/27/Indigenous-Boarding-School-Report-2024-final.pdf>

Resource Development and Engagement

We participated in Faithful Resistance and joined NEJ CONAM representatives in providing opening call to worship in recognition of Indigenous Peoples and Land.

Impact: This [resource](#) as requested has supported congregational learning, repentance, and action, particularly around Indigenous justice.

By the End of 2026:

1. Expand Advocacy and Policy Engagement by equipping congregations for advocacy at local, regional, and national levels.
2. Increase Congregational Engagement by encouraging participation in Native American Ministries Sunday
3. Invest in Indigenous Leadership and Youth through continued support for Native American Course of Study through scholarships and support of Arrowhead Indigenous Youth Camp.
4. Advance Truth-Telling and Healing by equipping churches to move beyond land acknowledgment toward meaningful solidarity. Examples include:
 - Encouraging congregations to engage the [Indian Boarding Schools report](#) with commitments to action
 - Promoting practices of repentance, repair, and right relationship with Indigenous communities

Looking Ahead: CoNAM remains committed to justice, healing, and right relationship with Indigenous peoples. We believe this work is essential to the church's witness and to the ongoing work of dismantling systemic injustice.

Submitted by:

Richard Church, CoNAM Member

Rev. Dr. Stacey Cole Wilson, Staff Representative

Deaf Ministries and Deaf Shalom Zone, Inc

Purpose: To grow and vitalize Deaf ministries that support the care, inclusion, and accessibility for Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled United Methodists across the annual conference.

2025 Goals:

1. Deaf Ministries offered support and consultation to local churches and ministries that supported their accessibility and inclusion of Deaf, hard of hearing individuals, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled.
 - a. ASL classes via Zoom were offered.
 - b. Consultations, resources such as grant opportunities, and ways to promote Deaf ministries.
 - c. Supported the ongoing spiritual efforts of Christ Church of the Deaf, Magothy Deaf Church, the Deaf Shalom Zone, Saint Marks UMC.
2. Assisted with and led Deaf Awareness Sunday services at 5 local churches.
3. Facilitated Accessibility Coordinator webinars across the conference with monthly check-in sessions with local accessibility coordinators.

Impact: The impact of these initiatives continues to support the inclusion, accessibility, discipleship and transformation of individuals, families, and local communities. Vitalizing and revitalizing local churches for Deaf ministries continues to be the primary focus of this area of ministry. Christ Church of the Deaf has supported church leaders by using their gifts for Bible dramas, trained new worship leader assistants, serving as greeters and ushers, cultivated their partnership with Foxwell (Deaf) apartments, community meals, and in new ways to show their presence while serving their local Deaf community. The Deaf Shalom Zone has bolstered their program and services that support underserved individuals experiencing needs for advocacy, case management, food insecurities, while working with college interns from the Deaf Studies program at Towson University. Magothy Deaf Church celebrated its 50th anniversary on May 3rd, created new community partnerships, and continued to grow in membership and attendance through creative and various discipleship, evangelistic, and missional opportunities such as Bible studies, children centered worship services that has brought in 10 new children,

community ASL classes, training new ASL interpreters and DeafBlind interpreters, Coffee with the Pastor, potlucks, Deaf group homes, and the winter soup fest.

Submitted by

Rev. Dr. Leo Yates, Jr.

Accessibility & Inclusion Coordinator of the BWC

Gender Equity – COSROW

The Baltimore-Washington Conference – Commission on the Status and Role of Women advocates for Gender Equity and equality throughout our connection and for the full participation of women in the total life of The United Methodist Church.

Goals:

1. Rebuild and fill vacancies on the committee by finding ways to include laity, clergy, and diverse voices.
2. Share information and resources to help churches address concerns.

Impact:

We prioritize the following areas:

- Monitoring - We monitor our annual conference, conference committees, teams, and caucuses to ensure inclusiveness and report this information to the UMC.
- Education - We educate on inclusiveness, expansive language, and gender issues to support the Church and the world.
- Sexual Ethics - We offer resources to address and prevent sexual misconduct in the BWC through education, policies, and support.
- Leadership - We nurture both women and men clergy and lay leaders in the church to recognize every person as a full and equal member of God's human family.

We continue supporting Parental Leave because it strengthens families by recognizing each person as a full and equal member of God's human family.

Being intentional about rebuilding will lay the foundation for constructing bridges, initiating processes, and fostering diverse relationships. It will motivate members and participants to commit resources toward achieving goals that address congregational concerns and the UMC Apology.

By the end of 2026:

We will continue hosting virtual Dinner Dialogues as an initial step toward addressing the 2024 UMC Apology, providing a space for conversation. We will also consider publishing articles in the Advocacy and Action newsletter. This approach will help us create opportunities for churches and groups to discuss and address concerns.

Respectfully submitted:
Rev. Jalene C Chase, Gender Equity (COSROW) Chair

The Gun Violence Prevention Team

The Gun Violence Prevention Team advocates for decreasing gun violence in all its forms and for helping to heal those dealing with trauma from gun violence.

Goals:

1. to raise awareness within our conference of the terrible toll of gun violence in all its various forms and,
2. as people of faith, begin to take some action to help lessen the violence.

Impact:

- We distributed safe firearm storage and suicide prevention information at annual conference and in many of our congregations.
- We distributed information particular to youth and guns at the Ignites youth conference.
- We promoted a “Silence the Violence” benefit concert at National UMC in Washington, DC to benefit TraRon Center helping young trauma victims of gun violence.
- We participated in the BWC-UMC Legislative Advocacy Day in Annapolis and advocated for a bill to protect women and children by requiring disarmament earlier in the court process of persons who have had a domestic violence protective order issued against them and also for a bill to prevent the sale of pistols easily converted into a machine guns.

By the End of 2026: We will continue to:

- Help our churches discuss the role they can play to decrease gun violence in our conference – whether by suicide prevention, safe firearm storage, community violence intervention and youth mentoring or other programs.
- Educate and promote awareness and provide resources to help churches with their own ministry to prevent gun violence.

Respectfully submitted by:
Susan Bender, Gun Violence Prevention Social Action Team Chair

Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21)

To transform and sustain vital Black congregations and Black pastors—including those in cross-racial appointments—through innovative resources, transformational learning models, and the mentoring of emerging leaders.

2025 Impact and Progress

- Partnership with Wesley Theological Seminary. SBC21 continued to build its partnership with Wesley Theological Seminary to provide spaces for leadership development and prophetic engagement. The first forum, “Strengthening Our Prophetic Witness in This Present Age,” was held in February 2025 with fifty-four registrants. Featured presenters included Bishop Leah Daughtry, Paul Monteiro, and Rev. Dr. Lorena M. Parrish, with participation from Rev. Dr. Michael Bowie, National SBC21 Chair.
 - **Impact:** This forum equipped clergy and leaders with tools to strengthen their prophetic voice in both ecclesial and public spaces. Participants engaged in meaningful dialogue, shared wisdom across ministry contexts, and discerned faithful next steps for ministry in a rapidly changing social landscape.
- The Black Healing Collective (Partnership with SBC21 National)
In partnership with SBC21 National, SBC21 of the Baltimore-Washington Conference funded and launched The Black Healing Collective, a two-part initiative designed to support the emotional and spiritual well-being of Black clergy. This initiative was developed in collaboration with Dr. Michael Bowie, Chair of SBC21 National.
 - Part I was held in partnership with Wesley Theological Seminary, creating a foundational space for reflection, theological grounding, and communal care.
 - Part II was led in collaboration with Dr. Ron Bell, deepening the work through focused engagement on healing practices, resilience, and sustainability in ministry.
 - **Impact:** The Black Healing Collective provided sacred space for restoration in response to the unique challenges faced by Black clergy, particularly within the United Methodist Church. Participants experienced affirmation, renewal, and strengthened capacity to lead with authenticity, courage, and sustainability.

2026 Goals and Strategic Priorities

1. Expand Leadership Development Opportunities

- Continue creating spaces for clergy and leaders of Black congregations to grow in leadership capacity
- Strengthen support for those serving in cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments
- Develop innovative models for leadership formation rooted in the Black Church tradition

2. Deepen Partnership with Wesley Theological Seminary
 - Expand participation among clergy and lay leaders
 - Continue equipping leaders for prophetic witness and public engagement
3. Sustain and Grow the Black Healing Collective
 - Continue partnership with SBC21 National to offer future cohorts
 - Build on the two-part model to expand access across the conference
 - Integrate healing-centered practices into ongoing leadership development
4. Strengthen Support Systems for Black Clergy
 - Cultivate spaces for connection, peer learning, and encouragement
 - Develop mentoring pathways for emerging clergy
 - Center holistic well-being as essential to sustained and transformative ministry

Looking Ahead

SBC21 remains committed to strengthening the Black Church by investing in its leaders - spiritually, emotionally, and communally. Through partnerships, healing-centered initiatives, and leadership development, we are nurturing a generation of leaders equipped to sustain and transform the Church for the 21st century.

Respectfully submitted,
Reverend Ronald E. F. Triplett, SBC21 Chair

Commission on Archives & History & BWC Historical Society Joint Report 2026

Purpose: To preserve and maintain closed church records, historical documents, and stories of the Church from the past for current and future generations.

Archives & History and the Baltimore-Washington Conference Historical Society continue to grow and bring influence far beyond the bounds of our annual conference.

This year, we handled over 310 research requests that came in via email, phone, mail, the conference website, and even Facebook! This is a 15% increase over last year. We continue to support other ministry areas with providing research services and historical information in a timely fashion, as well as supporting churches that are closing. Additionally, we have resourced the Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History, the United Methodist (denominational) Historical Society, and the General Commission on Archives & History with research, materials, and support.

We provide services to local churches who are celebrating their anniversaries through resources, research, and guest speakers. Other services provided include workshops on historical preservation and document management. Please contact us for more information.

The Commission on Archives and History meets quarterly. We are grateful for our interns and retired clergy who have been volunteering time in the archives to assist in new projects. Rev. Steve Larsen has been coming in twice a month to offer support.

This year is a celebration year for us. It is the 300th Anniversary of Bishop Otterbein's birth. Our celebration, June 6-7, 2026, is the denominational celebration and will include a bus trip to historic sites around the annual conference, lectures, archaeology, and fellowship!

This year, we hired a new Archives Administrator, Shannon Katz-Dean, who comes from a long line of Methodists. She has hit the ground running and is a wonderful asset and resource!

Archives

The archives continue to grow in size and value. We work closely with the Conference Trustees to secure records from closed churches, processed those records, and file them for archival storage. We completed this year our processing of disaffiliation records! This was a large undertaking that involved retired clergy, interns, and archives staff over the course of 18 months. We are grateful for those involved.

We have limited ways to capture "born digital" records. If your church has something that should be preserved digitally, please be in touch with us. We are finishing the process of updating our very popular "clergy card catalog" in preparation for a portion of it being made digitally accessible.

Please update your local church history (we have resources for this if you need help), and send that, along with other records (such as anniversary programs, copies of deeds or important papers, etc.) to the archives. Our staff is happy to consult with you on what is important to save or send.

We have conducted several workshops for districts and local churches on archival needs, practices, and museum displays. We'd love to work with your hub, district, or local church! Please let us know how we can help.

Museum

The Lovely Lane Museum's day-to-day operations, including dusting, displays, interpretation, and content selection is cared for by staff. However, the collection itself belongs to the Baltimore-Washington Conference Historical Society. Working together, the staff and the historical society have improved displays, added or expanded exhibits on Cokesbury College, Irish Methodism, Dr. John Goucher, language missions, the original Lovely Lane Meetinghouse clock, Bishop Oxnam, and in partnership with Everstand (formerly, the Board of Childcare), our

Methodist children's homes. We also rediscovered a lost portrait of Bishop Asbury painted by an artist named Barber, just about a mile away from where it is now on display.

We launched 4 "touch boxes" for our youngest visitors this year so that they too can write letters to their Sunday School teachers like E. Stanley Jones, dress up like a circuit rider, make their own grape juice and take a temperance pledge, and explore camp meetings on their own level. Additionally, we premiered the Junior Circuit Rider Program, where visitors to 3 sites can fill out a packet, receive a certificate and badge, and take a pledge to tell the history of Methodism!

Library

Our library on Methodist and Baltimore history has over 7,000 volumes. Many of these are primary sources. We continue to add volumes to it, and this year's additions include Black Methodism and local church histories. This library is available for research by appointment, and is not a lending library.

Pilgrimages

Our fourth annual Pilgrimage was hailed as the best one yet! The pilgrims traced Black Methodism throughout Baltimore, following in the footsteps of persons like Frederick Douglass.

Mark your calendars now for June 6-7 for the 300th Anniversary of Bishop Otterbein's birth, and contact us to sign up. June 5, 2027 will be our 6th Annual Pilgrimage, and will explore Black Methodism in DC.

Our mini-pilgrimages (formerly called tours) are available at most of our sites on a regular basis. Those who come are always impressed by our collection and the knowledge of the guides. Archives & History can arrange this for you through any of our sites, or even help you customize your own mini-pilgrimage for any age group.

Our Confirmation Pilgrimages are very popular! These Pilgrimages typically last 3-4 hours and cover multiple Baltimore-area sites. Be sure to make us a stop in your next class! These dates are typically set several months in advance to accommodate all the needs. This year, all of our Confirmation Pilgrimages were filled to capacity.

Future Plans

September 21-23, 2027, we will host the Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History and the Historical Society of the UMC Joint Annual Meeting in Baltimore. Volunteers and co-pilgrims are wanted to help us host!

A report cannot capture all we do. Please join us for a mini-pilgrimage (tour), conduct research, or volunteer. This is your history.

Respectfully submitted by:

Rev. Dr. Bonnie McCubbin, Director of Museums & Pilgrimage/Conference Archivist

Rev. Dr. Emora T. Brannan, Conference Historian, President of the Baltimore-Washington Conference Historical Society, President of the Conference Commission on Archives & History

Hispanic/Latine Committee

Purpose:

To love, accompany, and vitalize Hispanic/Latine and multicultural ministries by fostering belonging, strengthening relationships, developing leaders, and equipping congregations for discipleship, advocacy, and community transformation, while increasing visibility to ensure the full integration of Hispanic/Latine communities into the life of the conference.

Hispanic/Latine Faith Communities in the BWC:

- Epworth UMC (Gaithersburg, MD)
- Hughes UMC, *El Buen Samaritano* (Wheaton, MD)
- Salem UMC (Baltimore, MD)
- College Park UMC, *Nueva Vida* (College Park, MD)
- Brook Hill UMC (Frederick, MD)
- Calvary UMC, *Nueva Vida* (Martinsburg, West Virginia)

2025 Goals: In 2025, there were many leadership transitions. Pastor Cassandra Núñez was welcomed into a new episcopal-area-wide leadership role as Coordinator of Hispanic/Latine and Multicultural Ministries. Upon her arrival, she continued the implementation of a conference-wide listening strategy, entering a season of intentional engagement with Hispanic/Latine ministries across the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences. This effort sought to better understand the diverse contexts, challenges, and opportunities within these communities. Through this process, she began identifying creative and context-specific approaches for care, accompaniment, and ministry development. Guided by the core priorities of Connectional Commitment, Faithful Discipleship, and Education & Advocacy, the work focused on strengthening existing ministries and cultivating meaningful relationships.

Additionally, a new slate of HLM Executive Committee members were elected.

Impact: Key Outcomes from the Listening Season: A significant theme across ministries has been the increase of lay leadership. Lay leaders are stepping forward to guide worship, organize community outreach, and create spaces of belonging. This reflects a broader movement toward shared leadership and growth, ensuring that ministry is sustained by a community of disciples rather than dependent on a single leader. As this momentum continues, intentional pathways are beginning to emerge to support and accompany lay leaders who are

discerning a call to Local Church Ministry leadership by creatively exploring opportunities for further formation and engagement in the candidacy process.

Additionally, the growing need for advocacy, particularly around immigration, has emerged as a central concern. Churches are seeking tools, training, and theological grounding to faithfully support their communities and neighbors.

This need is being addressed through:

- Responding to emerging needs across the conference by supporting immigrant communities through advocacy, resource sharing, and strategic partnerships.
- Supporting conference-wide initiatives such as standby guardianship clinics in collaboration with Advocacy and Action Team, grass roots organizers, and other community partners
- Providing workshops that equip churches to organize and support grassroots advocacy for immigrant rights and protections.

By the End of 2026

We seek to continue building a sustainable and multiplying movement of Hispanic/Latino ministries by:

- Developing and implementing an assessment process for churches seeking to expand into multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual ministries, including but not limited to Spanish-language worship and Hispanic/Latine ministry initiatives.
- Strengthening leadership development pathways for Hispanic/Latine leaders in local churches, with a focus on equipping lay leaders for discipleship, local church ministry leadership, and community engagement.
- Deepening relational networks through intentional listening, accompaniment, and collaboration across conferences.
- Expanding culturally and linguistically relevant discipleship opportunities.
- Increasing advocacy capacity through training, partnerships, and organizing efforts that support immigrant communities.
- Supporting congregations in developing sustainable, community-rooted ministry strategies.
- Creating spaces for leaders to gather, evaluate, and celebrate ministry impact.
- Implementing systems for measuring progress and impact through stories of transformation, leadership development, and community engagement.

Our vision is to walk alongside a flourishing movement of Hispanic/Latine ministries, rooted in Christ; loving boldly, serving joyfully, and leading courageously in a time such as this.

Respectfully submitted by

Rev. Braulio Torres, Co-President, Hispanic/Latine Ministries Committee
Rev. Jen Fenner, Co-President, Hispanic/Latine Ministries Committee
Cassandra Nunez, Hispanic Latine and Multicultural Ministries Coordinator

Leadership Development Board

Purpose: To equip and nurture a culture of mature lay and clergy leadership who understand their purpose and use their gifts to build up the Body of Christ for the transformation of the world.

2025 Goals: In 2025, the Board focused on transitioning from a passive reporting body to an active “think tank” that advises and shapes leadership development across the Episcopal Area. We conducted a review of the gap between Conference-level resources and local implementation. In collaboration with the Director of Connectional Ministries, we reconstituted the Board to include key voices from the Board of Ordained Ministry, Conference Laity leadership, Vitality Specialists, and district representatives—strengthening alignment and shared ownership of leadership development.

Impact: The Board’s primary impact has been the development of a more connected and collaborative approach to leadership formation. By bringing together previously siloed clergy and lay development pathways, we have helped establish a shared strategic foundation. This advisory work is beginning to foster a more cohesive leadership pipeline—one that equips disciples with both spiritual depth and practical capacity for ministry in their local contexts.

By the end of 2026, the Board will continue to advise on and refine this emerging “bridge strategy,” strengthening connections between Conference training opportunities (such as Training Tuesdays and CLM/Laity classes) and their application within local congregations. We will also explore strategies to encourage broader and more balanced lay participation in the life and leadership of the Annual Conference, with the goal of cultivating a more representative and engaged body of leaders.

Submitted by:
Pastor Shemaiah Strickland, Chair

New Faith Expressions Board

Purpose: We believe that every person deserves the opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ in an authentic, accessible, and relevant way to their context. We are compelled by God’s call to go where the people are and to breathe new life into existing churches—forming and renewing communities of faith that embody grace, justice, and

belonging. Our work is grounded in the mission of The United Methodist Church: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

2025 Goals and Impact: 2025 was a year of renewal and realignment. As the Annual Conference underwent restructuring, this impacted the work of New Faith Expressions, as we realigned with the new Congregational Vitality Team. We saw the addition of new Vitality Specialists and a new Congregational Vitality Coordinator. This team is equipping congregations in our Annual Conference to live into the vision of 100% at 100%, Every church becoming vital through Missional Action Planning.

As we entered 2025, our goal was to invite every congregation to engage with our Vitality Conversation process. The report and recommendations, uniquely created for each participating congregation, were based on the results of the Readiness 360 survey and the MissionInsite Comparativelnsite demographic report. In 2025, we engaged 15 congregations in the BWC. Our goal for 2026 is to offer this process to the entire Episcopal Area and at least double the number of congregations engaged.

In addition, as a result of the new Annual Conference Structure, the newFX Board and the Congregational Vitality Team are resourcing our Connecting Pastors and Collaborative Hubs as they begin the process of getting to know one another and developing missional strategies for their communities.

Finally, we learned in 2024 and 2025 that the Fresh Expressions Academy, as it was currently operating, was too time-consuming to generate meaningful experiments. We are therefore reworking the process to offer “Garden Day” workshops throughout the Episcopal Area that introduce Fresh Expressions to teams from local churches. This will be followed up by a “Greenhouse” online course and coaching for those teams who wish to explore Fresh Expressions more deeply.

In 2026, we are beginning to identify and assess potential church planters who may be able to start new churches in the areas we identified from our 2024/2025 demographic research.

Submitted by:

Rev. Bill Brown, Director of Congregational Vitality
Deborah Johnson, New Faith Expressions Board Chair

Wellness and Missions Board

Purpose: To reduce human suffering by engaging more people in service with the ministries of compassion and mercy—domestically and around the globe—rooted in [our theology of mission](#).

2025 Goals and Impact: In 2025, the Wellness and Missions Board focused its efforts on strengthening disaster response and long-term recovery across our Area while continuing to embody the connectional impact of The United Methodist Church.

A significant area of engagement was the long-term recovery effort in Allegany County, Maryland. Through a partnership with UMCOR and local long-term recovery groups, the Baltimore-Washington Conference was awarded a \$200,000 grant to support disaster case management, construction coordination, and direct assistance to survivors. This work includes providing direct financial assistance to households, coordinating repairs to homes, and mobilizing volunteers to support recovery efforts. Early progress has included hiring disaster case management staff, establishing systems for client tracking, and engaging local churches and partners in the recovery process.

United Methodists continued to respond generously through giving to UMCOR, supporting relief efforts for communities impacted by disaster, conflict, and systemic need both domestically and globally. In 2025, Baltimore-Washington Conference churches and members gave \$405,238 directly and \$178,812 through special giving for a total of \$584,050. This includes support for the following missionaries:

- Africa
 - [Dieudonne Kutela Katembo](#) in Angola (Advance #3022031)
 - [Fatuma Kutela](#) in Angola (Advance #3022312)
 - [Ngoy Kalangwa](#) in Tanzania (Advance #15162Z)
 - [Patrick Abro](#) in Burundi (Advance #3022175)
 - [Umba Kalangwa](#) in Tanzania (Advance #14211Z)
- Mexico
 - [Kimberly Lewis](#) (Advance #3022838)
- Latin America
 - [Belinda Forbes](#) (Advance #12109Z)

In addition to disaster response and connectional giving, the Board again participated in grant-making for ministry in Zimbabwe, honoring this long-standing partnership as it awaits the next covenantal chapter. In 2025, the Baltimore-Washington Conference awarded a \$60,000 Zimbabwe Partnership grant to support ZimVIM's Hanwa Mission School teacher housing project, in partnership with Crofton United Methodist Church. This investment reflects decades of faithful relationship and shared ministry grounded in accompaniment, mutuality, and sustainability. The expansion of Hanwa Mission School stands as a powerful witness to what is possible when the Church walks together across geography and culture. This next phase—focused on creating safe and dignified housing for teachers and their families—will strengthen the long-term vitality of the school and its ability to serve students in a remote community.

These acts of generosity reflect our shared commitment to alleviating suffering and extending God's love in tangible ways.

In 2025, we also experienced important leadership transitions. We give thanks for the faithful and dedicated ministry of Thea Becton, who provided strong leadership as both the Wellness and Missions Coordinator and in disaster response and recovery. Following her service, Derek Matthews began serving as Recovery Director, bringing continuity and leadership to ongoing recovery efforts in Allegany

County. We also welcomed Robert Gillette as the new Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC), strengthening our capacity for coordinated disaster readiness and response.

Additionally, we welcomed Annemarie Schaefer as the Area Wellness and Missions Coordinator. Annemarie now leads the work of aligning wellness, missions, and disaster response across the Area, helping to strengthen systems, partnerships, and engagement opportunities for congregations.

By the End of 2026, we look forward to continuing to deepen and expand this work. Our priorities include

- a. Building a fully populated and actively engaged Area Wellness and Missions Board;
- b. Identifying a Volunteer in Mission (VIM) Coordinator in each district to strengthen local leadership and connectional impact; and
- c. Networking health & wellness ministries and VIM teams.

Together, we will continue to cultivate a culture of compassion, readiness, and response—equipping congregations to serve their neighbors, respond to crises, and participate in God’s transforming work in the world.

Submitted by:

Mikele Haskins Delmore, Global Ministries Secretary
Annemarie Schaefer, Staff

Young People’s Ministry Board

Purpose: Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we activate, connect and engage more young people as disciples of Jesus for the transformation of lives, churches and communities.

The YPM Board coordinates, oversees, supports, and contributes to the crafting of the vision of all young people’s ministry within the conference (including, but not limited to campus ministry, the work of Young Adult Council, and the work of the Campus Ministries Task Force).

2025 Goals and Impact:

As our context changes rapidly, many churches continue struggling to keep up with the next generation. Like many local churches, we continue to be in a learning and experimentation cycle required for this adaptive challenge. We continue to use the simplified objectives created out of the goal areas set in 2018.

- **Objective 1 - Growing Local Church Youth Engagement.** In 2025, we conducted district YPM meetings to connect with local churches to learn of their needs at the local level and provided resources to local churches to help them grow youth engagement. We provided bible study guides to assist youth leaders with extending IGNITE conversations on belonging in local churches. Children and Youth leaders attended a

retreat focusing on the assets and challenges in their local churches. We were awarded the Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer grant from the Lilly Endowment which will support congregations in experiencing, developing and implementing strategies for intergenerational worship and faith formation.

- **Objective 2 - Expanding the Impact and Places of Campus Ministry.** While we didn't add any new sites this year, campus ministries continued to grow in both participation and presence. See Campus Ministry Task Force Report for additional details.)
- **Objective 3 - Increasing Young People's Engagement Beyond the Local Church.** We have one Young Adult serving as the Co-Chair of the NEJ Young Adult Council and who was also selected to participate in the 2026 Council of Bishops Leadership Gathering. In the Fall. Close to 200 youth and leaders attended campfires at our Retreat and Camping sites to worship and reconnect with one another. We held an informational meeting about IGNITE to increase youth attendance. In March, over 1,300 youth and leaders attended IGNITE. Additionally, 30 young adults served as part of the IGNITE Squad and held a listening session leading young adults into discerning their call and engaged with young adults interested in mentorship. While at IGNITE youth and Young Adults assembled over 1,300 hygiene kits that were distributed to 25 agencies across the Episcopal Area serving youth, young adults, and families.
- **Objective 4 - Developing Innovative, Discipling Leaders (Students, Young Adults and Adults).** Youth, including those who served as members at large for Annual Conference, took on additional leadership opportunities by joining the Young People's Ministry Board, participating in Connectional Table, Discipleship Council, and participating in IGNITE planning meetings.
- **Objective 5 - Cultivating an Ecosystem of Innovation.** We are working to embed innovation in as a part of encouraging young people to discern and act on their call. As young people engage in intergenerational worship collaborates, we anticipate seeing more innovation by young people.
- **Objective 6 - Special Needs Ministry.** The Commission on Disability continues to work with congregations to make accommodations necessary for all God's children to experience places of belonging. This includes a special educator to support this critical work.
- **Objective 7 - Mental Health.** We continue to point people to our [YPM Wellness site](#) for resourcing and hosted a dynamic and interactive workshop at IGNITE focusing on coping skills through art and body movement.
- The YPM board awarded Missional Innovation grants totaling \$25,000:
 - \$5,000 Onebody College Ministry, Bethany Korean UMC, Baltimore Metropolitan District
 - \$5,000 Youth Missions, Glenelg UMC, Greater Washington District
 - \$5,000 MLK Jr Day of Service, Glen Mar UMC, Greater Washington District
 - \$3,250 The Reintroduction-Isaiah 43:19, Bowie UMC, Greater Washington District
 - \$2,250 Fanning the Flame: Children and Youth Initiative, Clinton UMC, Baltimore Suburban District

- \$2,250 Body, Mind, Spirit Young Adult Hub, North Carroll Cooperative Parish, Greater Washington District
- \$2,250 Next Level Leadership, Project Transformation, Greater Washington District

By the End of 2026:

- Strengthen our area-wide strategy for a youth discipleship pathway that focuses on faith formation and relationship building. Plans include a pool party kick-off on June 20, 2026 at Camp Pecometh, campfires in the fall; and opportunities for youth and young adults to help plan the IGNITE Conference for youth on January 22-24, 2027.
- Ensure Young Adults remain connected through listening sessions, participating with IGNITE Squad, and campus ministries.
- Five issues of the Area YPM Newsletters will have been produced keeping pastors and youth workers informed of discipleship opportunities for children, youth and young adults, as well as celebrating the works of all age level ministries.

Respectfully submitted by: Pastor Natiya M. Bennett, Area Young People's Ministry Coordinator

Campus Ministry Task Force

One of the Young People's Ministry goals from the 2018 Strategic Plan was to expand the impact and places of campus ministry. We have seen spiritual and numeric growth this year. In all we have 636 students in our collective campus contact databases, 609 students engaged, 157 committed (attending two or more events per month in our established ministries) and 27 student leaders.

BWCs United Methodist Campus Ministries are experiencing a season of foundation-building, relational growth, and creative outreach.

2025 Goals:

Across campuses, ministries aimed to deepen student engagement, build interfaith and community partnerships, and establish or strengthen official campus ministry organizations. Specific focuses included student leadership development, faith-based conversations on justice and belonging, and collaborative campus events.

Impact:

These ministries collectively fostered safe, inclusive spaces for students to explore faith, identity, and justice. Common threads include growing student-led initiatives, increased partnerships with campus offices and other faith groups, and hands-on mission work —

- **Frostburg's Campus Ministry** centered on creating a beloved community along with faculty by hosting an open dialogue on the difference between religion and Christian Nationalism, 60 students assembled hygiene kits and flood buckets for UMCOR, and

fostered healthy self-care with 85 males students at their “You Good Bro?” mental health forums.

- **Howard’s Wesley Foundation** collaborated with the Office of the Dean of the Chapel in which over 50 students for their Alternative Spring Break Program, created a welcoming environment integrating bible studies with current students and 25 Wesley Foundation Alumni.
- **The Bear HUB** provided spiritual support for 20 students in interfaith Discipleship Series in collaboration with the Assistant Director of The University Memorial Chapel, taught students on the importance of establishing a consistent prayer life, and connected with students at Annual Prayer Walk and Homecoming.
- **The Terp HUB** made meaningful connections with students at UMD College Park’s Second Look Fair, led 6 International students in a journey through the 28 Days of Prayer Devotion, and created a Breakaway Zone for students during Fall finals.
- **The Bulldog HUB** established a weekly Pull Up for Prayer Station at the Student Center in collaboration with The National Pan-Hellenic Council reaching 60 students, taught students to continue their focus on prayer by handing out over 200 prayer journals, and kept students encouraged during the Fall final exams by providing mini-Jesus figures.
- **The Tiger HUB** engaged a new prospective student at a Game Night in the Student Union Center, participated in the 28 Days of Prayer in which one student co-led in one of the days of prayer, and 3 students served as IGNITE Squad members.

By the End of 2026:

While newer ministries continue to seek to formalize student organizations, others are engaged in broadening interfaith partnerships, strengthening leadership pipelines, and creating missional opportunities that embody Christ’s love in tangible, justice-rooted ways on and beyond campus.

Respectfully submitted by: Rev. Dr. Michael Armstrong, Campus Ministry Task Force Chair

The Bear HUB at Morgan State University

2025 Goals:

The Bear HUB aims to build partnerships with Greek organizations, grow our student network, host regular gatherings, and continue to move toward becoming an official student organization, creating a consistent faith community for Morgan State students.

Impact:

Collaborated with the chaplain to design and lead engaging Bible study sessions for community members. Established a partnership with a small organization at Morgan State University to support student engagement and ministry initiatives.

By the End of 2026:

The Bear HUB will strengthen its ministry through three primary areas of focus. First, it will

establish active partnerships with at least two local churches in the Baltimore City East Hub, including a rhythm of quarterly connection with pastors and hub leaders. Second, it will expand its on-campus presence by collaborating with faculty, staff, and existing religious organizations to host regular Bible studies, workshops, and student engagement opportunities. Third, it will build a peer network with other campus ministers to support coordination, shared learning, and mutual encouragement.

Respectfully submitted by: Rev. Michael Carrington, Bear HUB Coordinator

The Bulldog Hub at Bowie State University

2025 Goals:

The Bulldog HUB aims to complete the process to become a recognized student organization, expand our leadership team, and increase student participation offering transformative opportunities for faith, service, and justice on campus.

Impact:

Partnered with two Greek-letter organizations to strengthen engagement and build connections with students on Bowie State University's campus. Organized HUB gatherings focused on prayer and fellowship, resulting in a local pastor donating 200 prayer journals; guided students in developing personal prayer tracking practices, while also providing devotional resources. Maintained a weekly prayer station in the Student Center serving an average of 40 students, with three to ten students consistently demonstrating leadership by arriving early to assist with setup. Effectively partners with student organizations affiliated with the National Panhellenic Council to enhance campus engagement.

By the End of 2026:

The Bulldog HUB intend to enhance the use of technology and digital platforms to better connect with students and expand ministry reach, strengthen partnerships with local churches with a focus on collaborative ministry rather than membership growth, build relationships with Bowie State University faculty and staff to support efforts in becoming a recognized student organization, and hire one student intern to support ministry initiatives and enhance program effectiveness.

Respectfully submitted by: Pastor Bresean Jenkins, Bulldog HUB Coordinator

The Terp HUB at University of Maryland College Park

2025 Goals:

The Terp HUB will focus on improving communication with students and strengthening it's

social media presence on campus, continue to facilitate a welcoming space for students to grow in faith, and equip students for leadership thereby solidifying recruitment efforts.

Impact:

Made meaningful connections with students through tabling at annual campus fairs. Collaborated with the Lutheran and Black Religion Campus Ministries. Journeyed through the 28 Days of Prayer with international students. Established a sense of presence for students seeking to grow in faith formation and personal development. Created a safe community for non-religious students to study scripture and question theological concepts.

By the End of 2026:

The Terp Hub seeks to

- continue improving content creation on social media as a means of maintaining on-going communication with students and increasing recruitment.
- enhance student engagement by increasing collaboration with other campus ministries.
- connect with 20 new students and expand student leadership.

Respectfully submitted by: Rev. Chania Dillard, Terp HUB Coordinator

The Tiger HUB at Towson University

2025 Goals:

The Tiger HUB focused on progressing toward official student organization status by identifying student leadership, securing an on-campus advisor, and developing a constitution. Additional goals included hiring two student interns, increasing student engagement through tabling and campus events, hosting regular worship and fellowship gatherings, and collaborating with other student groups to strengthen its presence within Towson University's campus ministry network.

Impact:

The Tiger Hub became an official member of Towson University's Religious Council. Hosted a game night in the student center that created opportunities for new student engagement and inquiry. Three students participated with the IGNITE Squad, building relationships with incoming first-year students attending IGNITE. Maintained connection with current Tiger HUB students through 1:1 check-ins.

By the End of 2026:

The Tiger HUB will complete the process of becoming an official student organization, establish a consistent rhythm of student engagement and spiritual formation, and strengthen its leadership structure through the hiring of a campus minister and two student interns.

Respectfully submitted by: Pastor Natiya Bennett, Area Young People's Ministries Coordinator

United Campus Ministry at Frostburg State University

2025 Goals:

The ministry focused on deepening interfaith partnerships and expanding leadership development and mission opportunities. Key priorities included strengthening students' engagement with scripture, cultivating a discipleship approach that centers their relationship with God, and rebuilding connections with local churches to support collaborative ministry with congregations and clergy.

Impact:

Increased student participation from an average of 5–6 last year to consistently maintaining 15–20 active members this year, largely through peer-to-peer recruitment strategies. Established a formal board of student officers and successfully encouraged more students to assume leadership roles within campus ministry. Organized and hosted two Men's Mental Health Conferences, each drawing 30–35 attendees and fostering meaningful dialogue around wellness and faith. Expanded partnerships with the University Program Council and assisted in leading school-based retreats, while also building community connections through collaboration with Lavale Lions. Introduced music into campus ministry by forming a praise and worship team, currently with four consistent student participants. Secured in-kind donations of musical instruments through a partnership with a church in Alexandria. Completed the NYU Faith Innovation Certificate Program and the Wesley Theological Seminary Health Ministry Program, enhancing ministry innovation and health-focused leadership skills.

By the end of 2026:

The ministry will focus on three key areas. First, it will launch an after-school program, with a pilot beginning in March 2026 and full implementation by September 2026. Second, it will expand its worship rhythm from one monthly gathering to weekly services, strengthening opportunities for spiritual formation. Third, it will broaden its network of support by diversifying funding sources and deepening partnerships with the University Program Council and campus stakeholders to engage students in conversations around culture, belonging, and campus life.

Respectfully submitted by: Pastor Elijah Ferebee, Frostburg State University Chaplain

The Wesley Foundation at Howard University

2025 Goals:

The Wesley Foundation at Howard University aims to increase social media presence amongst students. We seek to foster a stronger relationship with campus Administration. We will foster stronger support for the Wesley Foundation by reevaluating the composition of the Wesley Foundation Board. We will continue to deepen discipleship and expand student engagement through weekly gatherings and worship service opportunities.

Impact:

Participant in the Compelling Preaching Initiative through Luther Seminary. Baptized 3 students. Empowered students to lead in all areas of the baptism service. Distributed over 75 bibles to students on campus. Made personal touches with over 250 students through one-on-one encounters. Walked two students through their vocation of call leading to one being ordained as a Deacon in the African American Methodist Episcopal tradition and the other enrolling in seminary studies at Candler School of Theology.

By the End of 2026:

Partner with at least 2 United Methodist congregations within the BWC for service learning and fellowship opportunities. Recruit at least two new members for The Wesley Foundation at Howard University Board. Plan and Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service in partnership with Christian constituencies within the Howard community to reach a broader population.

Respectfully submitted by: Rev. Jacob Cogman, United Methodist Chaplain

Retreat and Camping Ministries

Purpose: To provide camp and retreat opportunities that utilize experiential learning and communal Christian living to guide individuals as they grow in love of God, self, neighbor, and nature.:

We celebrate the unique impact time spent on retreat or at summer camp at Harmison, Manidokan, and West River has on young and old alike. Camp favorites like worshipping at God's Open Window, screaming on the zipline or giant swing, taking in the sunset from the dock or vesper point, and telling stories around the campfire are just some of the ways camp is good for the body, mind, spirit, and community. This past year 1,450 young people participated in BWC summer camp programs. This was an increase of more than 10% and was nearly a 20-year high!

After growing steadily since the pandemic, retreat usage decreased in 2025 and is about 20-25% below 2019 levels. A couple of large group cancelations had a significant impact this year. There are lots of opportunities for growth in our retreat ministry and we continue to

explore new partnerships and experiment with Retreat and Camping Ministries-sponsored retreats to connect with more people throughout the year.

Retreat and Camping Ministries was excited to be a part of the planning team for the new Ignite Youth Retreat in Ocean City. The camps hosted fall campfires with music, activities, and worship to promote the event and during Ignite, led games group games and facilitated lots of free time fun. We look forward to ongoing involvement to help support and grow this event.

On our sites we continued to invest in facility improvements. Harmison had significant work done on the driveway and replaced the deck on the retreat center. Manidokan finished the renovation of the four cabins and replaced the mechanical and chemical systems for the pool. West River replaced several pieces of kitchen equipment and windows in the dining hall.

Looking ahead, drawings were completed for a proposed renovation of Peace Lodge at West River to make it ADA compliant. Camp Harmison is preparing to do work on Heritage Lodge which is used as a storage area and has fallen into disrepair. Manidokan staff will be focusing on building relationships throughout the community and our UMC connection to support summer camp ministry and retreat usage.

Finally, West River is preparing to commemorate its 75th anniversary at the end of 2026 which will kick off a yearlong celebration of ministry.

Respectfully Submitted by: Chris Schlieckert, Director

