

Rio Texas Annual Conference

Addendum

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

President' Report

For Information Only

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Christ,

The year 2020 was a time of unprecedented challenges for churches across the Rio Texas Conference. It has been heartwarming to observe the incredible ways our churches have responded by reaching outside their walls and expanding the use of technology. Many began virtual worship for the first time, expanding their reach far beyond their local communities. I am happy to report to you on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church as together we begin our pandemic recovery.

In accordance with Section 2512 of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016, the Conference Board of Trustees has the responsibility to receive and hold in trust for the benefit of the Conference, donations, personal property and real property. In addition, the Board has the power to invest, transfer or convey the properties that it holds in trust. The Board undertakes the responsibility for the oversight of Conference assets very seriously.

The assets held by the Board of Trustees include closed churches, unused parsonages and undeveloped land. The Board works closely with the Conference staff, and with recommendations from the Districts, to oversee and manage the property entrusted to it. In the event church property is no longer in use for a local church and the District believes there is no future worship or missional use for the property, it may be sold or leased.

As I have described to you in my previous report last year, the Trustees have 5-10 properties under its review and management at any time during the year. These are both urban and rural and include structures with material real estate value and others in material disrepair. Many of these properties have limited value, either due to location or condition. The intervening time between the Trustees taking control of the property and a sale can be months or even years and the Conference can incur substantial costs maintaining and securing property prior to sale.

For the years 2015 through the beginning of 2021, the Board of Trustees had expenses related to both sold and unsold properties in the amount of \$295,589.08. While many expenses are reimbursed at the time of the sale of real property, for this same period the Board of Trustees had \$106,450.02 in expenses which were not reimbursed by the sale of a specific property. These expenses were required to be reimbursed from the Trustees dedicated property management fund, which the Annual Conference increased last year. The Board of Trustees is currently authorized to withhold 20% of each property sale, up to a maximum of \$400,000 for the purpose of maintaining and securing property held by the Board. This fund allows the Trustees to have sufficient funds to adequately manage the properties under its control.

No church closures have occurred since we reported last year on the closures at Austwell, Rock Island UMC, Divine Grace, and Bishop – El Redentor.

As of February 28, 2021 Jefferson, United Methodist Church of San Antonio voted to disaffiliate with the Rio Texas Conference. The Board of Trustees is currently engaged in active negotiations with Jefferson UMC regarding the terms of its disaffiliation.

During 2021, Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Risk Management Committee will embark upon a study of property insurance options for the Conference. The Trustees are acutely aware of the difficulty caused by increasing property insurance costs throughout the Conference.

The Board of Trustees is continuing to review options with particular attention to urban properties with potential economic value. The Trustees recognize that rising real estate values require new and innovative approaches to property use and management.

At the former Parker Lane United Methodist Church in Austin, the Conference has worked closely with the Capital District to structure an innovative long-term lease of the Parker Lane property with Foundation Communities, a major provider of affordable housing in the Austin area. The Austin City Council recently approved the proposed project and closing is expected in September 2021. Upon closing, the agreement will result in a new affordable housing addition, a material financial return to the Conference and provide the Capital District with permanent offices and multiuse space in the new structure at no material cost to the District.

The Trustees are currently working with several other locations who seek to reevaluate their current facilities. We currently have congregations located in facilities they are no longer able to support or which no longer meet their needs and the Trustees are assisting those churches in evaluating their options. The Board of Trustees is committed to continuing to identify innovative options for the use of available real estate including long-term leases and joint ventures.

The Board of Trustees also continues to provide oversight over the Light on the Hill, formerly Mount Wesley in Kerrville, Texas in association with Kerrville First United Methodist. Under the leadership and vision of Kerrville FUMC, Light on the Hill continues its journey to be a Christian based community resource in the Texas hill country.

Conclusion

The Conference Staff including Kendall Waller, Tina Whitaker, Nan Pyle, and Adria Gomez do an excellent job of supporting the Board of Trustees and managing the properties in transition. . The Trustees continue to be committed to managing the properties entrusted to us in a prudent manner. The Board of Trustees and Conference staff work diligently to minimize the maintenance costs and to maximize the return to the Conference from the sale of real property.

The Board of Trustees gathers with the focus to be good stewards of the assets of the Conference, to be innovative and creative as we plan for the church of the future which will continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Yours in Christ

Kevin Reed
Chair, Board of Trustees
Rio Texas Conference, United Methodist Church

INTERGENERATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP *For Information Only*

It has been another year full of hard and holy work for the Office of Intergenerational Discipleship. With the pandemic, I remained committed to journeying alongside faith formation leaders as we all discovered ways to equip and support disciples of Jesus Christ during this difficult time. Four tasks continue to shape the work of this office: Safety, Relationships, Research, and Leadership Development. Leaning into these four areas of ministry we all discovered creative pathways for reaching people of all ages in the many communities within our conference. I am continually inspired by the creativity, courage, and commitment of our faith formation leaders. It is a joy and an honor to serve alongside each of you as we discover ways to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Listed below are the many ministries created and offered in response to consistent and intentional research and discernment. I am grateful for the teams of hardworking individuals who make these ministries possible.

Connect

Recognizing the need for connection, support, prayer, and accountability Connect was born in the midst of the early pandemic. Connect provides monthly opportunities for leaders in faith formation to gather to connect, discuss, share best practices, and pray with one and for one another. Over the year this ministry grew and now includes: virtual monthly leader gatherings, a monthly virtual leader's book club in partnership with the Michigan conference, a 6-month cohort asking the question: "What Next?" as we consider faith formation post pandemic, as well as coaching and opportunities for discernment and support. Upcoming meetings and offerings can be found at: riotexas.org/igconnect.

Faith Formation Leadership Academy

Faith Formation Leadership Academy equips faith formation leaders in United Methodist Churches as they guide and support Christ's disciples in the work of loving God and loving neighbor. This digital learning space that offers individual courses, continuing education units, and a three-year faith formation certification launched Fall 2020 with a six week *Teaching the Bible* course. This course was followed by the winter session, *Teaching United Methodist Theology and Doctrine* and the spring session, *Teaching United Methodist History and Polity*. Funded by the Sam Taylor Grant (Discipleship Ministries), FFLA seeks to intentionally connect, train, and support faith formation leaders in the Rio Texas Conference and greater United Methodist connection. The certification includes virtual courses, monthly cohort groups, and annual spiritual retreat and renewal opportunities. This ministry offers development opportunities for new staff and volunteers as well as those seeking to continue their education. More courses including electives in various ministry areas to be offered in coming sessions. More information can be found at rtfaithacademy.com.

Growing Together Families

Growing Together families is a ministry that curates and creates resources for faith formation leaders and families as we discover how to connect to God and each other every day. This work became even more important during the pandemic. Resources include monthly newsletter for leaders and families, blog, podcast, and curated resources to help leaders and families do this important work. Growing Together Families can be found at growingtogetherumc.org.

Launch

Launch! faith formation is a series of short videos and curated resources to support and equip ministry leaders for the important work that God calls us to - the work of growing in love of God and neighbor for the transformation of today's world. In a time of uncertainty and change, the church needs adaptive and strategic ministry leaders who will lead with clarity and purpose as they shepherd their communities in the important work of discipleship. These resources have been created and curated by faith formation professionals to equip and support ministry leaders as a guide for the important work of growing in love of God and neighbor for the transformation of the world. Each playlist has four components: watch, explore, create, and learn more. Your time is valuable! Most of the playlist content takes less than 10 minutes to watch, create, or explore. The playlists are designed to be completed on their own, yet also can build on one another.

#pictureadvent and #picturelent

Intergenerational, spirit filled, invitational, and reflective, #picture invites individuals, families, and faith communities to encounter God daily through Scripture, images, and reflection during the holy season of Advent and Lent. I am grateful for the many individuals in our conference who have contributed to these daily devotionals with their words, images, and prayers. Join us next time as we pictureadvent.com and picturelent.com together. #Picture is a joint ministry between the Rio Texas and the Michigan annual conferences.

Thriving Congregations

The Rio Texas Conference has four churches participating in a 4 year thriving congregations project through a Lily Grant awarded to Vibrant Faith. These churches include: Colonial Hills United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Floresville United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church Harlingen, and First United Methodist Church Victoria. Each church works with their team and joins a monthly Rio Texas Cohort meeting. These churches are

coached by Rev. Dr. Campen and resourced by the staff at Vibrant Faith. This last year, teams worked to discern their vision of what it means to thrive. Moving into the summer of 2021 they will begin asking God where are you calling us next? I'm excited to see what these communities create as they continue to thrive.

Trusted con Confianza

The Rio Texas Conference is still hard at work creating safe spaces for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We currently have over 4,000 certified adults engaged in fruitful ministry across our conference. We currently have 11 facilitators trained to lead certification sessions online and in person sessions across our conference. We hosted our third facilitator training retreat in February 2020. The Rev. Joy Melton, author of *Safe Sanctuaries*, joined us once again as our guest speaker. In the midst of a pandemic, these facilitators have led a total of 104 facilitated sessions. We now have a certification and a recertification track. Information on certification and recertification can be found at: riotexas.org/safesteps.

The Trusted Coalition and working teams (Policy and Training) continue this important work in the midst of the pandemic receiving and reviewing all evaluations and working to strengthen the policy and the training curriculum. Safe Gatherings launched a new training module on digital media and made it available to all individuals who completed their training in the last year. It is also included in the Safe Gatherings training moving forward too. It is an excellent resource for individuals and churches.

It has been a blessing to meet and hear from leaders across our conference as they celebrate their work and gain tools for safe ministry. We are grateful for the work of these ministry leaders and their commitment to the safety of the children, youth, and vulnerable adults in their care. Together we are keeping all of God's children safe.

Youth Ministry Council (YMC)

The Rio Texas Conference Youth Ministry Council equips and supports young leaders so they can lead well as they work as Christ's disciples for the transformation of the world. This diverse group of 6th-12th graders is led by Phillip Higginbotham, the Young Leader Development Coordinator. Members of the YMC exhibit gifts for leadership and strive to live into Christ's great commandment loving God and neighbor in all they do.

The youth ministry council met monthly over the last 12 months. They continue to focus their work on supporting and equipping young leaders in our conference. They gather to pray, discern, and support one another in the work God is calling them to do. They are working towards a young leaders development event in 2022. You can stay up to date on details and find information about joining this terrific team at riotexas.org/ymc.

Youth Ministry Leader Development

Beginning in 2021, six congregations, youth leaders, and ministry teams committed to a 12 month leadership development project with the Rio Texas Conference and Ministry Architects. Funded by the conference, districts, and churches, these leaders and teams are engaging in monthly coaching and quarterly team development as they imagine what relational youth ministry looks like in today's world. It is amazing to hear what these churches are doing to welcome and support young disciples in their communities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am excited to see how their ministries continue to develop and grow over the next 6 months.

Other ministry this year

In addition to all of these projects, I continue to curate resources and provides training and coaching for faith formation leaders. All resources can be found at the intergenerational discipleship webpage:

riotexas.org/igresourcesandtraining

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

Prayerfully submitted by,
Rev. Dr. Tanya Campen

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
President's Report
For Information Only

Since its founding in 1911 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Southern Methodist University has served as a nonsectarian institution of higher learning. Our mission is to expand knowledge through research and teaching and serve as a powerful catalyst for the growth and development of Dallas and the broader North Texas region. With continued Methodist representation on its Board of Trustees and welcoming students of all faiths, the University is reaching a higher level of accomplishment and global recognition in our second century of shaping world changers – for today and tomorrow. Consistent with the University's appreciation for its Wesleyan heritage, the University submits voluntarily this report to the Rio Texas Annual Conference.

SMU Update

COVID-19

SMU arose as a leader among academic institutions in managing the global pandemic by hosting in-person classes and athletic seasons, avoiding significant furloughs and layoffs, and preventing large outbreaks of COVID-19 on campus. We pivoted in the middle of the 2020 spring semester to fully online instruction, and then to two months of essential-only employees working on campus. Over the summer months, we designed and implemented a strategy to provide a successful fall semester with the flexible education experiences and in-classroom options that our students and families requested, while protecting the health of our community members and the financial strength of the University.

Students, Faculty and Staff

Despite the pandemic, our enrollment for fall 2020 was strong. Remarkably, the Class of 2024 comprises 1,531 students—only 13 students fewer than the previous year—from 43 different countries as well as the United States. Additionally, students of color make up 31% of the first-year class, up from 25% last year. This is the most ethnically and racially diverse first-year class in SMU history, with significant increases in Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx students, and an 11% increase in students who identify as Black or African American.

Rankings

SMU continues to receive high rankings and recognitions among prestigious reviewers, including:

- Top 20% best national universities by U.S. News & World Report (2021) and first among Dallas-area universities.
- Top 11% (No. 88 out of 800) of U.S. universities by The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education (2021).
- One of the nation's best institutions for undergraduate education by The Princeton Review's "The Best 386 Colleges" and among its "2021 Best Colleges: Region by Region" Also, SMU's Guildhall ranked among the top five graduate schools to study game design.
- Top 5% best nationwide colleges and top 3% best Texas colleges by College Factual (2021).
- SMU's Perkins Chapel at No. 16 out of 35 of the nation's most beautiful college churches and chapels by College Rank.
- No. 39 in computer and information sciences and No. 48 in engineering among DIVERSE Issues in Higher Education's annual list of Top 100 Producers of Minority Graduate Students in STEM (2020).

Funding

In FY 2020, SMU received nearly \$30 million in external funding for domestic and global research. Current funding agencies include the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Defense and Toyota USA Foundation. SMU's private fundraising finished FY 2020 very strong with more than \$121.5 million in gifts, making it a record year. We raised \$48 million in current-use funds in FY 2020, surpassing the three-year goal of \$150 million.

Research and Graduate Education

SMU continues moving toward its goal of becoming a tier-one research institution, which will elevate our national rankings and reputation. Leading our academic efforts is our new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Elizabeth Lobo, whom we selected after a nationwide search of top candidates. We also launched the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies this fall, increasing our research and Ph.D. offerings.

Perkins School of Theology continues to expand its partnership with Houston Methodist Hospital – site of the Perkins Houston-Galveston Extension Program – in what is thought to be the only seminary located within a U.S. hospital. In spring 2021, a new concentration in health care chaplaincy for students pursuing the M.Div. degree was launched. And beginning June 2021, Perkins will add a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree program in Houston, in addition to the existing D.Min. program in Dallas. Since fall 2018, the Houston-Galveston Extension Program, first established in 1995, has been offered in a hybrid format for M.Div. and M.A.M. students, and the first M.Div. graduates will receive their degrees in May 2021.

SMU is making an impact on the world around us. We are grateful for our ongoing work through the Perkins School of Theology in the education and training of all branches of the Wesleyan tradition. We request your continued prayers and support for our University and its mission.

Warm regards,

R. Gerald Turner, President, Southern Methodist University

PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY – SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
Dean's report
For Information Only

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

- Nine (9) students affiliated with the Rio Texas Annual Conference are enrolled at Perkins, including: Seven (7) Master of Divinity (M.Div.) students and two (2) Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) students.
- Five (5) Perkins students were placed as interns within the Rio Texas Annual Conference during the 2020-21 academic year, in the Coastal Bend, Capital, El Valle and Hill Country Districts.
- The hybrid Houston-Galveston Extension Program, in its third year of providing a combination of online and residential classes leading to the M.Div. and M.A.M. degrees, totaled 103 students during the 2020-21 academic year or slightly more than half of the 200 students enrolled in these degrees.
- Providing spiritual care to those who are sick or hospitalized demands a variety of specialized skills, especially given today's multicultural environment. To prepare students who feel called in this area, Perkins School of Theology—in partnership with Houston Methodist Hospital—now offers Master of Divinity students (enrolled in both Houston and Dallas) the opportunity to concentrate in Healthcare Chaplaincy.
- Beginning June 2021, Perkins School of Theology will add a Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) program in Houston, in addition to the existing D. Min. program in Dallas. The doctoral level program integrates scholarly research with the practice of ministry. Courses will be taught at Houston Methodist Hospital. With two international airports, Houston also offers the advantage of easy access by air from many cities in the U.S. Perkins's three-year D. Min. curriculum includes two years of coursework, with students traveling to Houston for two weeks of courses in person in June and January. The remainder of the program, which includes a directed study and the writing of a dissertation, can be completed remotely.
- The Rio Texas Annual Conference received a grant made possible by a \$150,000 grant by the Henry Luce Foundation. This was used to support its *Iniciativa de Impacto Comunitario*, which provides a laundry ministry (for undocumented families without home laundry facilities); a computer lab for students without internet connections; utility support, a bicycle repair workshop and food distribution.

Enrollment Update

Enrollment at Perkins for the 2020-21 academic year totaled 347 students, including 28 enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Our enrollment size puts Perkins among the “largest” schools (52nd out of 277 schools) within the Association of Theological Schools. Fall 2020 statistics reflect the following: 65% of the entire student population

are United Methodist (82% of M.Div. students) with another 23 denominations /traditions represented. 27% are ethnic minority students with an additional 6% comprising international students. The hybrid Houston-Galveston Extension Program, in its third year of providing a combination of online and residential classes leading to the M.Div. and M.A.M. degrees, totaled 103 students during the 2020-21 academic year or slightly more than half of the 200 students enrolled in these degrees.

2020-21 Highlights

- Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters included both 100% online classes along with courses offered in a Hyflex modality (in-person and online students together within the same classroom experience). Many of the usual rhythms of life at Perkins also moved into virtual spaces, including most meetings and our regular chapel services.
- Perkins School of Theology and Cox School of Business announced the creation of cooperative, sequenced degree programs between the two Southern Methodist University graduate schools. The programs, designed for students interested in either a career in ministry with a strong business focus, or for students interested in a business career with a strong theological focus, include two sequences: the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) or the Master of Arts in Ministry (M.A.M.) and the M.B.A.
- Providing spiritual care to those who are sick or hospitalized demands a variety of specialized skills, especially given today's multicultural environment. To prepare students who feel called in this area, Perkins School of Theology—in partnership with Houston Methodist Hospital—now offers Master of Divinity students (enrolled in both Houston and Dallas) the opportunity to concentrate in Healthcare Chaplaincy.
- SMU has received a grant of nearly \$1 million from the Lilly Endowment's nationwide Thriving Congregations Initiative to support Perkins' Testimony as Community Engagement program. The program will work to increase the practice of testimony as community engagement both inside and outside the church. The Rev. Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison and Bart Patton of Perkins will serve as co-principal investigators on the project.
- A new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Central Methodist University in Missouri was signed as part of the ongoing initiative to deepen relationships between Perkins and undergraduate colleges, universities and international seminaries.
- Perkins School of Theology announced the 2021 recipients of the Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award: Nancy Seay, a philanthropist and elder of Highland Park Presbyterian Church (HPPC); and Lisa Tichenor, an active community leader and lay member of Highland Park United Methodist Church (HPUMC). Along with Mary White, the 2020 Seals Award recipient, the three will be honored during the online worship service for Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning on March 19, 2021.
- The Rev. Donald W. Underwood and the Rev. Dr. Sidney G. Hall, III were announced as recipients of the 2020 Perkins Distinguished Alumnus/a Award. The Award recognizes Perkins graduates who have demonstrated effectiveness and integrity in service to the church, continuing support for the goals of Perkins and Southern Methodist University, outstanding service to the community, and exemplary character.
- Retirements: Bishop Whitfield (M. Div. '69) officially retired on August 31 as Perkins's Bishop in Residence and Director of the Center for Religious Leadership. Retirements official on May 31, 2021 include Dr. William Abraham (Albert Cook Outler Professor of Wesley Studies), Dr. Isabel Docampo (Co-Director of the Intern Program and Director, Center for the Study of Latino/a Christianity and Religions), Duane Harbin (Assistant Dean for Technology, Planning & Compliance), and Dr. Evelyn Parker (Susanna Wesley Centennial Professor of Practical Theology).

The highlights listed above are reflective of the vibrant engagement of Perkins faculty, staff and students during the 2020-21 academic year.

Perkins School of Theology is committed to those called to serve so that they might be empowered to lead. We thank our many colleagues, friends and alumni/ae in the Rio Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church for your generous support, including referrals of prospective students, as we continue our vital mission of preparing women and men for faithful leadership in Christian ministry.

Grace and peace,
Craig C. Hill
Dean and Professor of New Testament

**TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES VISION TEAM / MISSION, SERVICE, AND
JUSTICE MINISTRIES**
For Information Only

Transforming Communities Vision Team

The Transforming Communities Vision Team, formed in 2015 as part of the newly established Rio Texas Conference missional structure, was charged with the responsibility to “equip, educate, and support congregations” for the sake of the Conference Mission, which is to *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*.

Our work is to learn from and support missional work areas represented on the Vision Team including Church and Society, Global Ministries, and Native American Ministries. Our work is to strengthen connections and form new partnerships with other realms and ministries at work within the Conference, including Methodist Healthcare Ministries, Justice for Our Neighbors, and Texas Impact. Our work is to create, support, and develop missional programming, including Conference Advance and Five-Star Program, Harvest Sunday, the newly formed Rio Texas Conference Rural Initiative, and the Transforming Communities Network (formerly Transformational Communities of Praxis). Our work is to partner with the Conference Office of Mission, Service, and Justice Ministries, with task teams and coordinators of Missionary support and Itineration, Immigration / Migration Responses and Border Ministries, Disaster Response Committee, and the Volunteers-In-Mission Development Team.

Now, in 2021, in part, because of heightened awareness and concern regarding persistent “isms,” socially and structurally entrenched, and in part, to lessons learned in this season of pandemic induced adaptation, the Transforming Communities Vision Team is prepared to expand our work of convening, equipping, accompaniment, and support for local congregations and communities, seeking to learn new skillsets in the mission field of community transformation.

Seeking Shalom and Justice in the Rio Texas Conference

We celebrate the various ways that the church is reaching out to the communities we are called to serve. Through the daily activities and actions of our ministries of Mission, Service, and Justice in the Rio Texas Conference, the vision of *SHALOM* and *JUSTICE* emerges as our north stars, leading us to live fully into the prophetic witness as the church in the 21st century.

In 2020, during a pandemic, 850,380 persons were served conference-wide by our local church community ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy. In 2019, nearly 1,000,000 persons were reached by these critical life-giving ministries. Likewise, conference-wide, 21,681 persons participated on behalf of the local church in ministries intended to transform people in local communities, regions, and the world. This number includes those involved in any ministry the congregation officially supports such as food programs, mission teams, disaster response, and other various efforts of outreach and mission.

District	20a Number of UMVIM teams sent from this local church	20b Number of persons sent out on UMVIM teams from this local church	21 Total Number of community ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy offered by church	21a Of the ministries counted in Line 21, how many focused on global/regional health?	21b Of the ministries counted in Line 21, how many focused on engaging in ministry with the poor/socially marginalized?	22 Number of persons from your congregation serving in mission/community ministries	23 Number of persons served by community ministries for outreach, justice, and mercy
Capital	25	76	397	113	298	5,162	226,050
Coastal Bend	4	11	243	100	189	1,503	69,177
Crossroads	0	0	140	53	111	1,009	30,116
El Valle	2	31	182	58	128	1,087	95,172
Hill Country	9	79	361	117	288	5,416	184,231
Las Misiones	6	41	404	186	266	5,776	172,359
West	16	32	142	57	170	1,728	73,275
Conference	62	270	1,869	684	1,450	21,681	850,380

While this sounds like a bold vision, we know that God is with us in this journey. In fact, God actively and faithfully provides all we need to see His abundance and provision as we discover this vision of SHALOM and JUSTICE in our midst. These efforts are a response and testimony of living into the vision of SHALOM and seeking JUSTICE. **Do we perceive it?**

We have Biblical mandates that frame our work of community engagement for the sake of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- Jeremiah 29:7 tells us to seek the well-being of shalom of the community where the Lord sends us and by doing so, we will encounter our own well-being.
- Micah 6:8 tells us to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.
- Luke 4 invites us to journey with Christ in His mission of proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
- Luke 10, Jesus declares to us that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few... and to go out taking little with us, stay where we are welcomed, to build relationships there, and see God's SHALOM and JUSTICE emerge in that place.

So then, if the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few, this is telling us that the ministry of cultivating SHALOM and JUSTICE calls the church to walk by faith and not by sight, that we serve a God of abundance and provision, and that God mystically and mysteriously leverages what we have in hand here on earth with what He has in heaven to complete His mission in the world in and through us the Church. Our response to Hurricane Harvey from 2017 to 2020 presented a picture of tremendous response through the long-term recovery efforts, through UMCOR case management and the rebuild and repair of homes impacted by the storm. We saw millions of dollars come into our conference area to support this collaborative and coordinated response. These arriving resources connected with your offerings of money, time, and talents as part of the long-term rebuild and recovery process. This is a great picture of God's abundance! In times of disaster or need, one has the fish, one has the loaves, one has the basket, one offers the prayer, and ALL are fed.

Celebrations

We celebrate the churches who have worked diligently over this past year, in a time of pandemic responding to needs of their neighbors. We have been challenged by seeing the need of our neighbors, hearing their stories, and perhaps perplexed at seeing what was beneath the surface now readily exposed before our eyes. We celebrate all the various ways we are responding to God's mission in our communities, in the region of 74 counties, and around the globe through supporting missionaries and partnering mutually with mission projects and programs. We celebrate and are grateful for all the churches who have achieved 5-Star giving status through participation in the conference ADVANCE program. We celebrate and thank you for supporting Harvest Sunday, where these offerings go to support hunger alleviation programs. Please participate in the Harvest Sunday

offering this year on November 7th. Thank you for supporting special offerings such as Peace with Justice Sunday, One Great Hour of Sharing, UMCOR Sunday, Native American Ministries Sunday, and more.

We celebrate and are grateful for the 25 years + partnership of the Rio Texas Conference and Methodist Healthcare Ministries. Rio Texas and MHM share the same 74 county mission field and service area. Now we share a common language and vested interest in seeking the SHALOM and JUSTICE of the region we jointly serve through the ministries of our local churches and through the Wesley Nurse and Community Health worker programs. Our shared work continues to grow through the Transformational Communities Network and Thriving Together / Prosperemos program processes, all working together to see SHALOM and JUSTICE thrive.

Transforming Communities Network

Under the umbrella of the Transforming Communities Vision Team, the Transforming Communities Network, now in its fifth year, continues to train local congregations and communities for transformational work in the areas of mission, service, and justice. The year-long cohort training offers small teams from local congregations and community partners an experience rich opportunity to learn and practice the principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) grounded in a theology of SHALOM. Over the course of a year, local teams are offered a Biblical vision for community development, learn to identify “current realities” and “underlying contradictions,” for the sake of engaging systemic change in their communities. Skill sets in asset mapping, community interviews, focused and facilitated conversation, leading community wide visioning sessions and discovering innovative solution with strategic direction, are all part of the hands-on, cohort experience. Local aspirations are often realized in a series of deliberate “5% shifts,” of perception and practice. Once training is complete, cohorts are invited and encouraged to remain in connection with other cohorts, team trainers, and coaches as part of a growing network of local cohorts, effecting change, and continuing the work of community transformation.

Because of the continued financial support from Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc., there is no cost to local congregations or community teams for training. What is required, will be a commitment of time, presence, and desire to acquire new skills and engage, with others, in the work of positive community transformation. Each year, new evolutions of the Transforming Communities Network manifest. In 2019, a county-wide Community of Shalom was planted in a remote, rural community where poverty is severe and widespread. In 2020, the Rio Texas Rural Initiative, focusing on the systemic challenges and gifts of rural communities in our Conference began taking shape in the form of a partnership between the Transforming Communities Network and the Crossroads District.

Greater diversity, equity, and inclusion are the aspirations of every cohort when engaging community transformation. There is no magic wand, but there are powerful possibilities when good people, of good faith are equipped and prepared for the work of community transformation. Over the course of 2020, the Transformational Communities Network development team and Methodist Healthcare Ministries have been in joint consultation to cultivate the sharing of the respective program process developments of Transformational Communities Network and Thriving Together / Prosperemos Juntos.

Migration and Border

In September 2019, a Border Convocation was held in San Antonio that brought together primarily Methodists from Rio Texas, other UM Conferences in Texas, and the Methodist Church of Mexico to receive updates on the church’s response of receiving and addressing the needs of arriving migrants at various border points along the 450 miles of border in our region. Stories were shared of humanitarian hospitality responses in Monterrey, Del Rio / Acuña, Laredo / Nuevo Laredo, Brownsville / Matamoros, and San Antonio. Stories were also shared regarding legal support provided by our Justice For Our Neighbors legal ministry system responding to desperate asylum-seeking pleas and the challenges of these pleas being granted due to evolving immigration policies of that time.

In 2020, dynamics shifted as policies created the emergence of migrant camps and increased need for shelters in Mexico. This necessitated coordinated bi-national the church, non-government organizations, and local governments responding to the needs of vulnerable migrant families. The Texas Border Collaboration Network was formed as a means of coalescing humanitarian response infrastructures of the responding entities on both

sides of the border, with focus on humanitarian needs, hospitality and sponsorship, legal services support, and advocacy. The emergence of the COVID-19 virus brought an added challenge to responding to the needs of migrants continuing to arrive at the border.

Now in 2021, emerging policies have shifted to respond in a more humanitarian way to the needs and challenges of asylum-seeking migrants and the realities of global migration. This shift has increased in the number of migrants arriving at our ministry border points. This in turn is increasing the needs that each of these ministries have in offering hospitality support to arriving migrants. This increase is also creating greater networking responses to align humanitarian, sponsorship, legal services, and advocacy support systems.

Mission, Service, and Justice Conversations and Networking

Moving forward, the Transforming Communities Vision Team will be working to offer learning and ministry capacity building opportunities through online conversation and networking sessions for leaders seeking to be transformational agents of facilitating Shalom and Justice in their church and communities. The hope is that this networking will be the platform for harvesting the stories of Shalom and Justice as a witness to the church and community for such as time as this.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Cynthia Engstrom – Chair, Transforming Communities Vision Team

Abel Vega – Director, Office of Mission, Service, & Justice Ministries

Errata

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY *For Information Only*

On page 31, line 14 of the 2021 Pre-Conference Report add, “Russell Philip Bowlin” and “Gricelda Betsy Careaga” at the beginning of the list of candidates for commissioning as provisional Elders

FINANCE TABLE Report II *For Conference Action*

On page 13; line 8 of the 2021 Pre-Conference Report, after “per annum” add “the same as 2021”

Report IV *For Conference Action*

On pages 14 and 15 of the 2021 Pre-Conference Report, note: the column “2021 Approved” has changed on both tables.

Fund Name	2020 Approved	2021 Approved	2022 Proposed	2022 vs 2021 % Change	2022 vs 2021 \$ Change
A General and Jurisdictional Total	2,812,286	2,392,988	2,321,198	-3.00%	(71,790)
B Conference Ministries Total	2,375,323	2,270,042	2,279,698	0.43%	9,656
C Ministerial Support Total	1,284,085	1,334,085	1,283,601	-3.78%	(50,484)
D Administrative Ministries Total	1,345,769	1,338,929	1,315,886	-1.72%	(23,042)
E Pension and Benefits	400,000	380,000	345,000	-9.21%	(35,000)
F District Missions	700,000	700,000	700,000	0.00%	-
Grand Total	8,917,463	8,416,044	8,245,384	-2.03%	(170,660)

	2020 Approved	2021 Approved	2022 Proposed	% Change 2022 vs 2021	\$ Change 2022 vs 2021
A General and Jurisdictional					
1 GC: World Service	1,401,100	1,141,047	1,106,816	-3.00%	(34,231)
2 GC: Ministerial Educational Fund	473,227	357,378	346,657	-3.00%	(10,721)
3 GC: General Episcopal Fund	414,923	458,173	444,428	-3.00%	(13,745)
4 GC: Black College Fund	188,766	165,155	160,200	-3.00%	(4,955)
5 GC: General Administration Fund	166,369	140,519	136,303	-3.00%	(4,216)
6 GC: Africa University	42,245	37,130	36,016	-3.00%	(1,114)
7 GC: Interdenominational Cooperation	37,010	4,940	4,792	-3.00%	(148)
8 SCJ: Lydia Patterson Institute	54,849	54,849	53,204	-3.00%	(1,645)
9 SCJ: Mission and Administration Fund	29,564	29,564	28,677	-3.00%	(887)
10 SCJ: SMU Campus Ministry/Reserves	4,233	4,233	4,106	-3.00%	(127)
General and Jurisdictional Total	2,812,286	2,392,988	2,391,199	-3.00%	(71,790)
B Conference Ministries					

1	Staffing	980,573	940,542	944,865	0.46%	4,323
2	Congregational Excellence	444,250	435,000	417,000	-4.14%	(18,000)
3	Clergy and Lay Leadership	424,500	412,500	392,500	-4.85%	(20,000)
4	Connectional Ministries	273,000	282,000	330,333	17.14%	48,333
5	Transforming Communities	35,000	35,000	35,000	-	-
6	Mission Field Ministry Office Operations	118,000	115,000	110,000	-4.35%	(5,000)
7	Lydia Patterson Institute Capital Campaign	50,000	-	-	-	-
8	Contingency General	50,000	50,000	50,000	-	-
	Conference Ministries Total	2,375,323	2,270,042	2,279,698	0.43%	9,656
C	Ministerial Support					
1	District Superintendent/Cabinet Support	877,085	877,085	826,601	-5.76%	(50,484)
2	Episcopal Support/Executive Fund	45,000	95,000	95,000	-	-
3	Equitable Compensation	130,000	130,000	130,000	-	-
4	Moving Expenses	200,000	200,000	200,000	-	-
5	Golden Cross	5,000	5,000	5,000	-	-
6	Investigations/Emergency Response	7,000	7,000	7,000	-	-
7	Cabinet Emergency Response	20,000	20,000	20,000	-	-
	Ministerial Support Total	1,284,085	1,334,085	1,283,601	-3.78%	(50,484)
D	Administrative Ministries					
1	United Methodist Center Maintenance	270,000	289,000	289,000	-	-
2	Conference Reserves	100,000	100,000	50,000	-50.00	(50,000)
3	Commission on Archives & History	18,000	15,000	15,000	-	-
4	Auditing	112,000	112,000	112,000	-	-
5	Journal	2,000	2,000	2,000	-	-
6	Administrative Ministries Staffing	762,006	740,166	767,123	3.64%	26,958
7	Administrative Ministries Team Support	81,763	80,763	80,763	-	-
	Administrative Ministries Total	1,345,769	1,338,929	1,315,886	-1.72%	(23,042)
E	Pensions and Benefits	400,000	380,000	345,000	-9.21%	(35,000)
F	District Ministries	700,000	700,000	700,000	-	-
	Grand Total	8,917,463	8,416,044	8,245,384	-2.03%	(170,660)