

Trustees Report to Annual Conference 2022

Good afternoon. My name is Nanci Snow Bockelie, I am the current President of your Board of Trustees. I am a life long United Methodist and a member of Christ United Methodist in the Salt Lake City area. I am pleased to be able to report to you today that our Conference remains strong, Christ centered and engaged in helping all of us find our full potential in Christ.

The trustees act as stewards over the property – real, personal and monetary – of the Conference. We approve and sign contracts on behalf of the Conference. We continue to oversee and maintain the Bishop's Residence. We work with the Conference Chancellor to protect the Conference legally. We work with other boards and committees on the general program of insurance protection for the Conference.

The BSA Bankruptcy court approved the settlement worked out last year between the **BSA** and the **UMC**.

In the Settlement, in addition to a monetary payment of \$30 million, the UMC agreed to do the following things:

- Review all Safe Sanctuary/Ministry Safe policies in the U.S. and update as necessary.
- Publish a series of articles in denominational and annual conference publications about sexual Abuse.
- Train leaders to hear the experiences of survivors associate with United Methodist Scout Troops and continue to support and work with the survivor working group as needed and requested.
- Support the growth of scouting for the next 10 years.

Unfortunately, this approval has been appealed which means the bankruptcy is not final. Earlier this year, the UMC and BSA agreed to a new Affiliation Agreement for churches to use with their scouting groups going forward. Many local councils are refusing to use the new agreement, including councils in the Conference. The Conference continues to advise against using a "charter-type" agreement because of future liability concerns. For churches facing this dilemma, the Conference asks you to reach out to the Board of Trustees for guidance. Please know that the Conference and the UMC remain committed to Scouting.

We continue to oversee several new faith communities. None of these has yet moved on to self-sufficiency, and over the next year we intend to work closely with these faith communities to determine the best way we can help them move toward chartering as United Methodist Churches.

We sadly report that several churches in four of our districts have closed this year. This body will vote on several closures Saturday. ~~WW~~ We lift up the final members of these churches in prayer as they go through the very difficult process of saying goodbye to a church that may have served them and their families for many years.

We recently completed the sale of the church property, in Ellicott, Colo. The funds will be shared between Trustees and Congregational and Community Vitality in accordance with the *Discipline* and the

terms of the Emerging Faith Community Endowment this body approved last year to fund new communities of faith.

We have also had several churches choose to leave the denomination this year through the process set out in Paragraph 2553 of the Book of Discipline, enacted by General Conference in 2019, for local churches who desire to disaffiliate based on issues surrounding human sexuality. This body will be voting on Petitions filed by 6 churches to disaffiliate.

We are sad to see these churches go and wish them the best.

We anticipate that additional churches will choose to disaffiliate in 2023. We continue to refine the disaffiliation process to make the process more transparent, efficient and grace-filled for those churches whose confessing members have voted to leave the denomination. A new timeline and application are now available on the Mountain Sky Conference website. In order to complete the process in time for next June's Annual Conference, we have set the application deadline at January 13, 2023.

For churches considering disaffiliation, we urge you to ask your District Superintendent for guidance. This should include a discussion on why property questions will not be resolved before the church vote to disaffiliate.

The Trustees understand that one of the frustrations about the disaffiliation process is the cost, and how late some of the amounts get communicated to churches. Unfortunately, the total amount cannot be known in advance for several reasons.

First, the numbers due to the Conference for pastor pensions and health care change depending on market circumstances. While the Conference can and does give early estimates of these amounts, the final number cannot be known until shortly before the finalization of the disaffiliation.

Second, the amount, if any, the Conference will require in exchange for the release of the trust deed against the church's property requires consideration of whether there will be remaining members who wish to remain with the Conference. As an example, let's say a church with 300 professing members enters this process, and 201 vote to disaffiliate. That leaves up to 99 that may wish to remain.

Those 99 have supported their church just as did the 201 who voted to leave; the trust clause gives the Conference a way to assist those remaining with the Conference in having a place to continue worshipping.

Because assessment of the appropriate allowance requires knowing whether and how large a group will want to remain affiliated, the Trustees cannot make a decision about the trust clause until after the formal church vote to disaffiliate is recorded.

Finally, at last year's Annual Conference, several churches presented a petition requesting that the Trustees examine and do a thorough review of our Conference wide property and liability insurance. This body established a Task Force to review the Conference wide insurance program and recommend

changes for the future with opportunity for all districts to participate. Janeen Hill, who was a member of Trustees and assisted the churches in putting the petition together, chaired that Task Force. The Insurance Task Force filed its final report with the Trustees on June 30, 2022. You have the full report in the Conference Materials.

I am now going to read the Recommendations the Task Force made in that report, along with the Trustees' responses to those recommendations. (Note: the full report with Board of Trustees response is posted to the AC 2022 website.)

Thank you all for your attention. I know trustees' work is sometimes dry, but it is vital to the connection. Our goal is that, over the next year, the Trustees will work with the District Superintendents to meet with local churches. We want to learn from you and find ways to improve our communication and processes, and by faithfully serving the Conference help continue to do God's work for many years to come.