



*the* **POWER** *of*  
**PARTNERSHIP**

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The **United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc.**

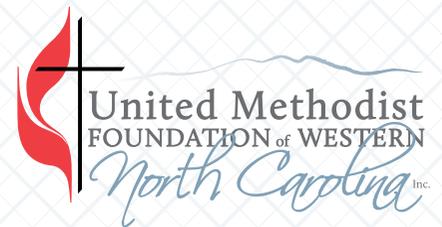
is a ministry of the Church, for the Church whose mission is to build the

Church for generations to come. We fulfill this mission by investing in

people, churches and related institutions, and innovation. We

envison a church where people live out their discipleship

through the faithful stewardship of their God-given resources.



# THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP



**DAVID SNIPES**



**CHRIS DAVIS**

**D**EAR FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION, The conclusion of another year provides the Foundation board of directors and staff the opportunity to not only report the facts as of December 31, but also to reflect on the partnerships we have with our constituents. The spirit of partnership is essential to the mission of the Foundation: to build the Church for generations to come. We are intentional in our connection to church-related institutions and to those who follow Christ. It is through these connections and partnerships that the ministry of the Foundation is fulfilled.

When we peer more deeply into the Foundation’s ministry, we see partnerships with individuals and institutions alike that are crucial to the future success of the Church. Our ultimate goal is to be part of a world where people and institutions live out their discipleship through the faithful stewardship of their God-given resources. The following stories best exemplify this goal as they demonstrate partnerships through the Foundation’s ministries of:

- Endowment Development
- Planned Giving
- Socially Responsible Fund Management
- Grants
- Leadership Education
- Loans
- Stewardship and Financial Consultation
- Hospitality

As you read these stories, we encourage you to think beyond the words. Consider asking yourself the following questions: “How

“Where there is no guidance, a nation falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”  
~ PROVERBS 11:14

has the partnership described in the story helped to build the future of the Church?” And “What gifts has God given to us that can be used in similar ways?” The disciples’ journey is not an individual experience but, rather, a partnering of those whose mission is to accomplish common goals.

We consider it an honor and privilege to be in ministry with our partners throughout United Methodism and beyond. If you have yet to experience the Foundation, we hope the stories contained herein will encourage you to consider us as a future ministry partner. If you are an existing partner, we are glad to call you “family” and look forward to being in ministry with you in new and exciting ways! ■

Most gratefully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David A. Snipes".

**President and Chief Executive Officer**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher W. Davis".

**Chairman of the Board**

# 'OUR FUTURE LIES IN THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP'

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster of the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church reflects on the power of partnership, and the work of the Foundation. We wish him every blessing as he retires on August 31 after serving 16 years as a Bishop, the last eight here in Western North Carolina. Upon his retirement, he will become Bishop-in-Residence at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in Atlanta.



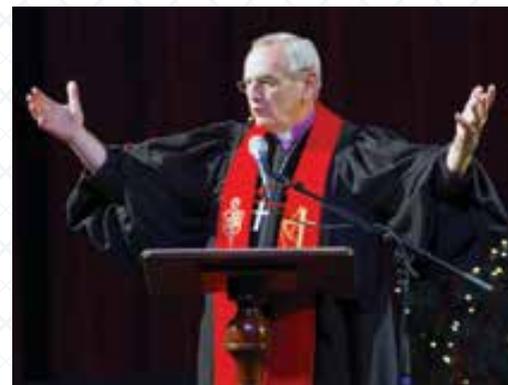
**BISHOP GOODPASTER**

**Q** The theme of the annual report is *The Power Of Partnership*. Please share what that means to you in terms of the Conference, the Foundation, and the congregations and ministries of Western North Carolina.

**A** From the beginning of the Methodist movement, our intentional way of serving God has been through the “connection.” For me, that is the cornerstone of partnerships and the power that results from individuals, churches and communities working together toward a common purpose and vision. The partnership between the conference and our foundation multiplies our impact across the area and around the world.

**Q** Please reflect on the work of the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc., to share God’s love.

**A** Since my arrival in Charlotte nearly eight years ago, I have celebrated the commitment of the Foundation. Together we have focused not only on providing sound investments and increasing resources but also on fulfilling the mission of the church to make disciples of Jesus and transform the world. The Foundation has helped create a positive atmosphere of service and ministry and has supported various ways for increasing the capacity of lay and clergy leadership across the conference.



**Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster of the Western North Carolina Conference**

**Q** What is your prayer for the future of the United Methodist Church and the people and institutions who serve the church and the world?

**A** It is my fervent prayer that the people called Methodists will once again discover, develop and deploy the many gifts for ministry given to us through God’s Spirit. I believe our future lies in the “power of partnership” between and among churches, and through dynamic relationships of our various institutions. I pray that the Western North Carolina Conference and our United Methodist Foundation will continue to model that relationship and will, together, extend God’s mission in the world through our common programs, activities, seminars and solid investments for the future. ■

# PARTNERS IN THE CAUSE

part·ner  
[pärt·nər]

**NOUN**

1. a person who takes part in an undertaking with another or others, especially in a business or company with shared risks and profits.



**KEN GARFIELD**  
Editor

Welcome to this 2015 annual report celebrating the ministry of the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc. We hope the stories on the pages that follow inspire you to appreciate the power of partnership to change the world for Christ.

But first turn back to the cover, and the photograph of boatsmen at work on the water. Savor the richly spiritual tone of the picture. Notice the shafts of light piercing the morning clouds. Most of all, appreciate the powerful symbolism: Everyone is rowing in the same direction, working as one, their speed springing from their teamwork. That's the power of partnership, and the theme around which this annual report revolves. As the Foundation's Chris Davis and David Snipes share in their message on Page 3, "The disciples' journey is not an individual experience, but, rather, a partnering of those whose mission is to accomplish common goals."

## IN THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERING...

- Turn inside and read about the Foundation and a coalition of worthy groups transforming a once-struggling Asheville church into a vibrant center of community life.
- Learn about FlameBuilders and its work (with the Foundation's help) teaching laity ages 21 to 40 how to live out their faith.
- Appreciate how the power of partnership is helping clergy escape the shackles of deep debt.

- See how a ministry with a catchy name is helping students attend the United Methodist college or university of their dreams.

There's much more inside as well, each photograph and piece of information lifting up the Foundation and its mission. Look for the financial report for 2015, a comprehensive list of Foundation leadership, and reflections on partnership from the Bible as well as from men and women of wisdom.

What a privilege it is for me to celebrate again the work of the Foundation. Thanks to the entire Foundation staff for making this publication possible, and to the churches, clergy and laity of the Western North Carolina Conference for sharing their stories. I had the privilege of writing the stories. Freelance designer Christine Long brought great creativity to the work of designing the report. Our friends at United Printing Company in Charlotte made sure the bright colors jumped off the page.

As we've been saying ... A partnership!

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*Ken Garfield served as editor of the 2015 annual report, his second year at the helm of the publication. He is in his 10th year as Director of Communications at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte. You can reach him at [ken@mpumc.org](mailto:ken@mpumc.org). ■*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Stories you'll see inside, affirming partnership in many forms

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**8-9** Engaging Young Adults Through FlameBuilders

**10-12** In Asheville: From Church to Community

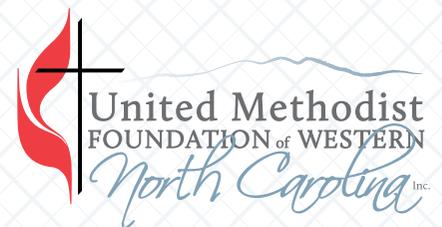
**13** Initiative Seeks a 'Cure' For Clergy Debt

**14** Financial Counsel for Those Called to Serve

**15** United Methodist Dollars for Scholars

**16-17** Foundation at a Glance: Leadership

**18** Foundation at a Glance: Assets





**Capturing the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains, part of the Western North Carolina Conference served by the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina.**

*Photo courtesy of VisitNC.com*

“As it is, there are many members, yet one body.”

~ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:20

# ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS THROUGH FLAMEBUILDERS

## IN SUMMARY

A new program, FlameBuilders, is teaching laity ages 21 to 40 to live their faith.



CINDY THOMPSON

An innovative new program is helping young adults in Western North Carolina hear God's call on their lives. "If you want to have an impact," says FlameBuilders organizer Cindy Thompson, "there's no better place to do that than in the church."

With the Foundations' help, FlameBuilders is teaching laity ages 21 to 40 to live their faith. These are "the folks the mainstream church are losing," Thompson says. FlameBuilders pushes them to find their strengths, to discover their spiritual gifts, to own their weaknesses and to listen for what God wants them to do in this world.

Thompson says FlameBuilders teaches them how to lead and inspire people of different color, socio-economic class and background. "We make the case," she says, "that the church is the best positioned institution to forge unity across our differences."

FlameBuilders launched its first class in September 2014 through the Western North Carolina Conference. It is run by Boundless Impact ([www.boundlessimpact.org](http://www.boundlessimpact.org)), a nonprofit global leadership development program formed in 2012 by Thompson. Eighteen young adults – Christians but not all Methodists – met one weekend a month for nine months. Diverse in many ways, the class intentionally rotated meeting sites so small-town students could get a taste of an urban setting, and those from traditionally white churches could experience a traditionally black church setting. Students

The inspiration for FlameBuilders: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:19

shared honestly among themselves, gained insights through "Poverty Simulation" exercises, and explored what it means to be a global citizen in this changing world. "We're all part of a much bigger world," Thompson reminds us.

A \$20,000 start-up grant from the Foundation's Reynolds Ministries Fund, followed by \$30,000 in Year 2, gave FlameBuilders the opportunity to expand on the momentum created in Year 1. Chief Operating Officer Elizabeth Coppedge-Henley helped recruit students, spread the word about FlameBuilders across the Conference and attended the launch banquet and graduation for that first class. The financial and spiritual support, Thompson says, has been critical.

Among the graduates of that first class was Zitty Nxumalo of High Point, whose journey through FlameBuilders captures the essence of the initiative.

Zitty, 35, a native of Swaziland in southern Africa, settled with her family in Greensboro when she was a child. She attends Union Memorial United Methodist Church in Greensboro, but considers herself a nondenominational Christian. She worked



FlameBuilders offers laity ages 21-40 a blend of prayer, dialogue and fellowship. As one participant puts it, FlameBuilders inspires “clarity and confidence.”



as an assistant to the executive director at the YMCA. As the FlameBuilders experience started working on her heart, she began to embrace her sensitive nature as a strength and not a weakness. She discovered whether challenges like public speaking fell into her comfort zone, stretch zone or panic ground. She had always felt called to blend her spirituality and love of leadership, but didn't quite know how. FlameBuilders gave her inspiration and opportunity to hone in on her call.

“It's given me a deeper level of clarity about myself and what my purpose is,” she says. “Clarity and confidence.”

Her job now, her call, is serving as Community Engagement Coordinator for FlameBuilders, helping other young adults find the clarity and confidence she found. The second class of 18 continues meeting through May of 2016. ■

“The secret is to work less as individuals and more as a team. As a coach, I play not my eleven best, but my best eleven.”  
- INSPIRATIONAL COLLEGE FOOTBALL COACH KNUTE ROCKNE

# IN ASHEVILLE: FROM CHURCH TO COMMUNITY

## IN SUMMARY

Foundation support is helping transform a once-struggling Asheville church into a vibrant center of community life.

A new kind of faith community is growing in Asheville.

With the Foundation's Reynolds Ministries as a partner, Bethesda United Methodist Church is evolving from a congregation into a community. No longer simply a house of worship that welcomes 20 or so worshipers each Sunday morning, this church in the Haw Creek community of east Asheville is undergoing a transformation. A quilting group associated with area churches meets there. Community Gardening Specialist Katey Rudd is revitalizing the church and parsonage grounds and creating teaching garden spaces. The parsonage is being converted into retreat space. New playground equipment and picnic tables are connecting the church and neighboring Haw Creek Elementary School. The fifth-grade graduation party? It was held in the Bethesda sanctuary. College and seminary students, who stay on site, are coming to Haw Creek for classes on how the 21st Century church can more completely live in community.

Inside the church, changes are also taking place. The kitchen is being renovated to commercial grade. United Methodists understand that meals not only bring people together, they also nourish the spirit of community. The tradition of pot-luck dinners lives on in a new way! The pews have been removed from the sanctuary so the space can better host a variety of community gatherings. Three other small congregations now meet for worship on the campus. Office space is

"We believe that wherever people gather in community – wherever they learn to love each other – Christ is present and the Holy Spirit will move."

## THE VISION BEHIND HAW CREEK COMMONS



Christmas gifts for kids.

*Continued on page 12*



Scenes from an east Asheville church evolving from a congregation into a community: The new playground on the grounds of Bethesda United Methodist, for all in the community. Staffer Katey Rudd (upper right) who works in the garden ministry and more. College students (lower right) experiencing the hard work of faith.



**The ladies of “Sew In Love,” who make quilts for others, above. Halloween fun at Haw Creek. Thanks to the good folks at Haw Creek for sharing these photos, and their story.**



*Continued from page 10*

being created. Folks can worship, connect and make a living all in one place.

The legacy of Bethesda United Methodist, founded in 1844, will live on, but the Holy Spirit is moving in new ways as the church has been transformed into Haw Creek Commons. The faith behind this transformation is as old as our belief in a God who yearns for His people to live in community. “What the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina has done is encourage us to dream and look beyond what is normal and ordinary,” says Dr. Larry Duggins, a leader in this project.

Haw Creek Commons grows from a partnership involving the Foundation, Western North Carolina Conference, the Blue Ridge District, The Duke Endowment and Missional Wisdom Foundation. Based near Dallas, Tex., the MWF ([www.missionalwisdom.com](http://www.missionalwisdom.com)) is a Methodist extension ministry seeking to expand the definition of church in the 21st Century. Duggins, a former banker and Methodist elder, and Denise Crane work with the MWF in Texas. But their hearts are in Asheville, where Haw Creek Commons began in late 2014.

Haw Creek Commons embraces the principle that Christian community is built around work, food, our children’s schools and shared recreation. For many, Sunday morning worship and Wednesday evening suppers no longer strike a community chord. Instead, the idea “is to help people understand what it means to be the church outside

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.” ~ ECCLESIASTES 4:9

the church building,” Duggins remarks. A \$30,000 grant in 2012 and a \$30,000 grant in 2015 from Reynolds Ministries Fund has helped enormously. So does continuing encouragement from Foundation staff members Elizabeth Coppedge-Henley and Wanda Carpenter.

Rev. Karen Doucette, a Haw Creek native and mother of three, found her calling after working as a social worker and stay-at-home mom. She serves a two-point charge between Bethesda and the Missional Wisdom Foundation. Her passion is to bring the church into community and vice versa. Her goal for the ministry and for the community is to be the hands and feet of Jesus, whether it’s preaching on Sunday morning, coaching the girls’ tennis team at nearby A.C. Reynolds High, or opening the doors to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This burgeoning vision of church and community has Doucette at a loss for words, almost: “I can’t explain it. There’s more energy. There’s vitality and life. We’re just watching and waiting to see what happens.”

Haw Creek Commons remains part of the Western North Carolina Conference. It serves as a model faith community for small and large churches in the conference and beyond. ■

# INITIATIVE SEEKS A 'CURE' FOR CLERGY DEBT

## IN SUMMARY

The Foundation and the Western North Carolina Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits are partnering to help clergy deal with debt and other financial challenges.



**DENNIS MARSHALL**

The power of partnership will soon help clergy shed the shackles of deep debt. "Paul talks about a thorn in his flesh," says Rev. Dennis Marshall of Bethlehem United Methodist Church. "For some clergy, finances are that thorn. It breaks my heart. In a nutshell, this program is for clergy."

In 2006, Marshall conducted an informal survey of 90 clergy and found that nearly half were in serious debt. He tells of a pastor trying to share God's love and comfort with his congregation while burdened by \$160,000 in student loans and other debt. As he talks about the problem, and the partnership that addresses it, Marshall's voice rises with a passion typically reserved for a Sunday sermon. "For me," he says, "this is a mission."

The Foundation and Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits have teamed up to offer low-interest loans and financial counseling to clergy. Through a \$2 million commitment from the Board of Pension, the initiative features two key components: 1) assisting ordained clergy facing up to \$80,000 in student loan debt and 2) offering clergy in ministry and second career pastors an opportunity for low interest loans, both offerings subject to certain requirements, to help with an especially difficult financial problem. This effort includes a key bonus – monthly peer counseling with Marshall, a former banker who leads his Catawba County church while also serving on the board of the Foundation and Conference's Pension and Health Benefits group.

"We don't want this to be a Band-Aid. We want this to be a cure."

**AL JONES**

Together, Marshall and pastors will talk about, and pray over, life after debt, and living within one's financial means.

The loans will be administered by the Foundation.

All of it, says Al Jones of Winston-Salem, is aimed at helping make clergy well. An actuary by profession, Jones attends Mount Tabor United Methodist Church and sits on the Conference's Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Jones' determination to help address clergy debt stems from a 2007 Clergy Health Initiative by The Duke Endowment. The study found that many clergy aren't healthy, and that a major cause of their stress are financial issues.

This new partnership and effort to help clergy get out of debt, says Jones, has at its heart a focus on the clergy's well-being, physically and spiritually, that they might feel better about themselves and their faithfulness to God.

"We don't want this to be a Band-Aid," he says. "We want this to be a cure." ■

# WITH A CALL COMES FINANCIAL COUNSEL

## IN SUMMARY

The Foundation offers financial counsel to those called to serve God through The United Methodist Church.



BRIDGET HALL

**Bridgett Hall, a graduate of FlameBuilders (page 8), has also participated in the candidacy retreat. To date, six participants in FlameBuilders are now pursuing theological studies.**

Those who hear God's call to possible ordained or licensed local pastor leadership are offered some valuable, practical words of wisdom, thanks to the Foundation.

Twice each year, the Western North Carolina Conference welcomes to its Candidacy Program those who feel called to devote their lives to God in possible vocational ministry. This call begins in an "amazing layperson," as Rev. Sally Queen puts it, and it may lead all the way to ordination. Through worship, workshops, mentoring and sharing their call stories, the men and women who immerse themselves in this six-month program gain a better understanding of a life of service that may await. Each session welcomes 30 or so students, a mix of first- and second-career men and women.

The Financial Ethics workshop offered by the Foundation at the opening retreat in Gastonia is crucial, says Queen. She oversees the Candidacy Program for the Conference. Foundation President David Snipes and Elizabeth Coppedge-Henley, Chief Operating Officer, each has taught the workshop. Building the discussion around faithful financial practices, including personal and church stewardship, they walk the class through what this will look like in real life: balancing a personal budget, adjusting to life with student loans, and becoming the sort of spiritual role model who can inspire their flock to be good stewards and tithers.

Among the candidates who heeded the message was Rev. Ashley Anne Lloyd, an associate minister at First United Methodist in

"Candidates for ministry are invited to consider their personal financial stewardship as they discern God's call.

The Foundation offers candidates solid information and theological reflection to support their discernment."

REV. SALLY QUEEN

Gastonia. "Financial ethics haven't changed since the days of John Wesley," she says. "His advice, 'Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can,' is still important. During our course, this was stressed, as was the importance of modeling faithful stewardship. As pastors, we cannot expect or even ask our congregations to give of the first fruits of their labor unless we ourselves are committed to that as well."

Real life illustrated: An hour before discussing the program for this annual report, Queen comforted a candidate for ministry concerned about his credit rating. Her message to him? "This is just a part of your life, and it's a part of your life we hope you have a plan for."

The underlying question posed to candidates, Queen says, is powerful: God calls you to a life of service and sacrifice, not a life of material gain. Are you ready for that?

The Financial Ethics workshops ask candidates to grapple with that question. ■

# PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION: UNITED METHODIST DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS

## IN SUMMARY

A unique partnership helps students attain a faith-based education at a United Methodist college or university.



**BOB FLETCHER**

A ministry with a catchy name is helping send students to the United Methodist college or university of their dreams.

United Methodist Dollars For Scholars is a program of the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation ([www.umhef.org](http://www.umhef.org)) based in Nashville, Tenn. For 18 years, it has offered financial support to students planning to attend one of 119 United Methodist-related colleges and universities. United Methodist Dollars For Scholars has grown to include several partners. The beauty of the collaboration is in the numbers: A student's home church first contributes \$1,000 to the young person's college education. That \$1,000 is matched by the Higher Education Foundation, and by the United Methodist school the recipient will attend. Finally, the last \$1,000 comes from the United Methodist Foundation in the student's home Conference. Add it all up and the scholarship can amount to \$4,000.

"That \$4,000 is a significant piece that goes in the bucket," says Rev. Bob Fletcher, President/CEO of the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation. "It's a big enough number to open the door and allow a family to send a child to the school that he or she wants to go to."

More impressive numbers: In the academic year 2015-16, a total of 700 students received some level of support from United Methodist Dollars For Scholars. Of those 700 recipients, 22 from the Western North Carolina Conference received financial support from the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc. ■

In the 2015-16 academic year, United Methodist Dollars For Scholars supported 22 students from the Western North Carolina Conference with financial assistance. United Methodist Dollars For Scholars is available to all United Methodist-related colleges and institutions, including the five institutions of higher learning in the Western North Carolina Conference:

**BENNETT COLLEGE**  
**BREVARD COLLEGE**  
**GREENSBORO COLLEGE**  
**HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY**  
**PFEIFFER UNIVERSITY**

# FOUNDATION AT A GLANCE: LEADERSHIP

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

**Address** 13816 Professional Center Drive,  
Suite 100, Huntersville, NC 28078

**Phone** 704.817.3990

**Toll free** 888.450.1956

**Fax** 980.422.0390

**Web** [www.umfwnc.org](http://www.umfwnc.org)

## Foundation Staff

**David Snipes** *Chief Executive Officer*

x1503 | [dsnipes@umfwnc.org](mailto:dsnipes@umfwnc.org)

**Christian Burns** *Executive Director,  
Client Relations & Cultivation*

x1507 | [cburns@umfwnc.org](mailto:cburns@umfwnc.org)

**Wanda Carpenter** *Assistant Director*

x1501 | [wcarpenter@umfwnc.org](mailto:wcarpenter@umfwnc.org)

**Elizabeth Coppedge-Henley**

*Chief Operating Officer*

x1505 | [elizabethch@umfwnc.org](mailto:elizabethch@umfwnc.org)

**Caroline Cox** *Executive Assistant*

x1511 | [ccox@umfwnc.org](mailto:ccox@umfwnc.org)

**Tammy Lehman** *Chief Financial Officer*

x1509 | [tlehman@umfwnc.org](mailto:tlehman@umfwnc.org)

**Scott Lucas** *Assistant Director, Financial Services*

x1504 | [slucas@umfwnc.org](mailto:slucas@umfwnc.org)

**Brandi Turner** *Director, Financial Services*

x1502 | [btturner@umfwnc.org](mailto:btturner@umfwnc.org)

**Janey Wooliever** *Receptionist/  
Administrative Assistant*

x1500 | [jwooliever@umfwnc.org](mailto:jwooliever@umfwnc.org)

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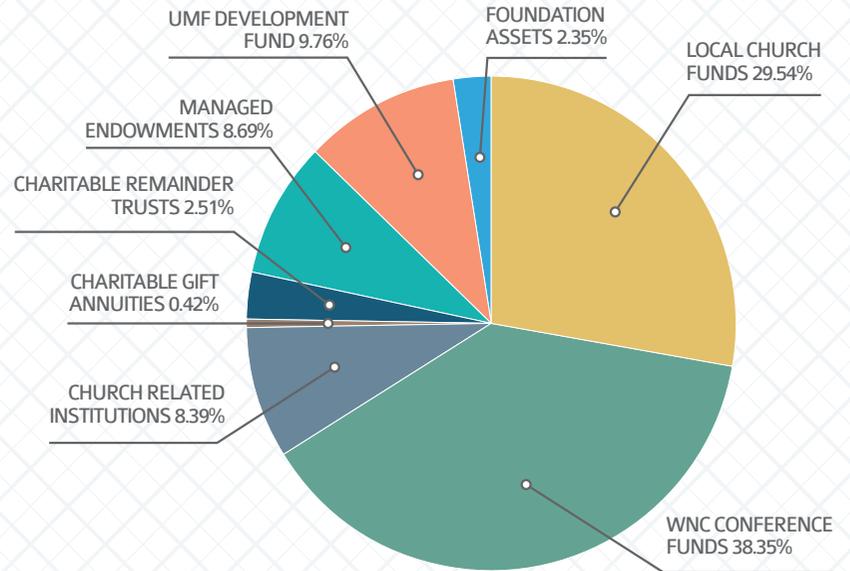
Christian Burns  
Elizabeth Coppedge-Henley  
David Snipes

# FOUNDATION AT A GLANCE: ASSETS

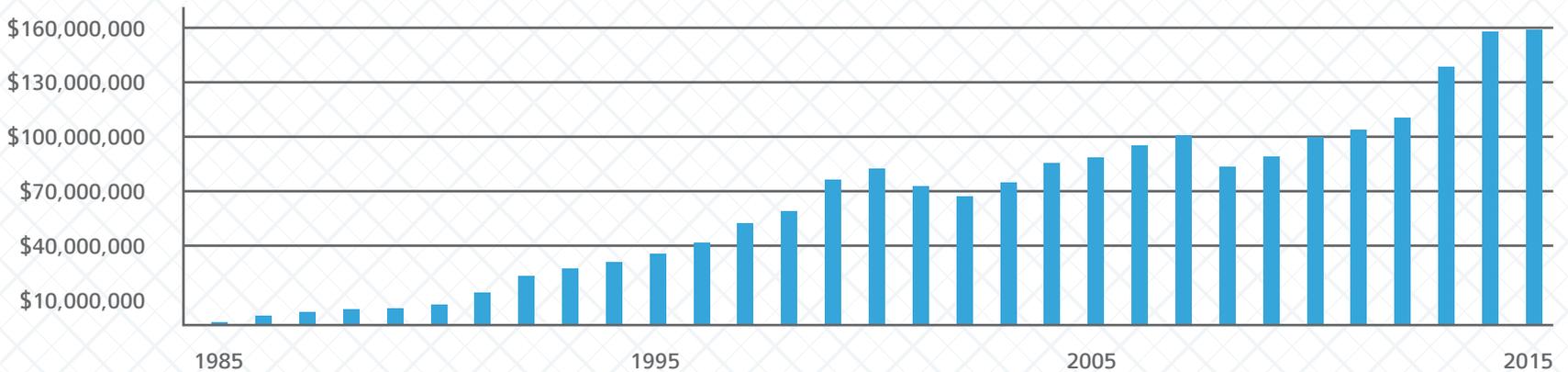
## MANAGED ASSETS IN 2015

LOCAL CHURCH FUNDS	\$46,902,394
WNC CONFERENCE FUNDS	\$60,891,157
CHURCH RELATED INSTITUTIONS	\$13,317,688
CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES	\$662,956
CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS	\$3,990,797
MANAGED ENDOWMENTS	\$13,803,161
UMF DEVELOPMENT FUND	\$15,495,342
FOUNDATION ASSETS	\$3,726,509

**TOTAL ASSETS** **\$158,790,004**



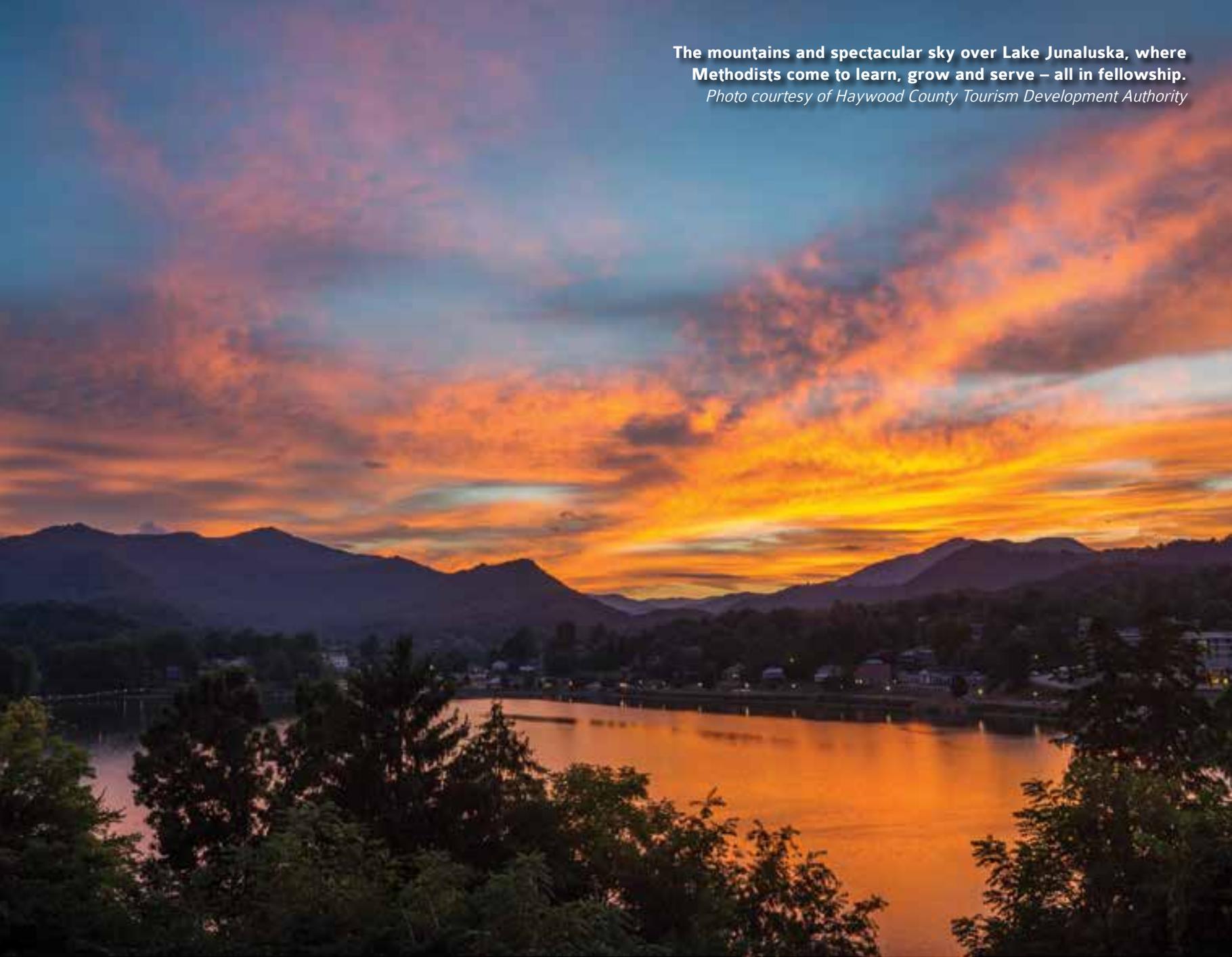
## TOTAL ASSETS BY YEAR



Advice Statement: The United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc. is a qualified 501(c)(3) incorporated in the state of North Carolina. We do not engage in taxation or legal advice. It is recommended that all clients of the Foundation seek tax and/or legal advice from their respective accountant and/or attorney prior to engaging in any contractual relationship. Past performance of the Foundation's fund options does not guarantee future returns. Investment in the Foundation's fund options and UMF Development Fund are not FDIC insured. Independent audit provided by McGladrey. Copies are available upon request, please contact the Foundation office for additional information.

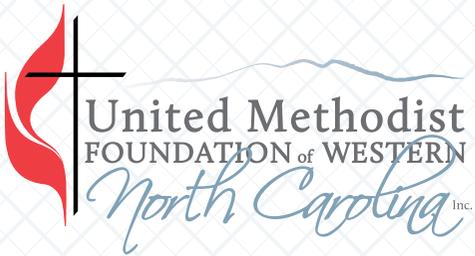
**The mountains and spectacular sky over Lake Junaluska, where  
Methodists come to learn, grow and serve – all in fellowship.**

*Photo courtesy of Haywood County Tourism Development Authority*



“Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.”

~ KENYAN PROVERB



13816 Professional Center Dr. | Ste. 100 | Huntersville, NC 28078

ph 704.817.3990 | tf 888.450.1956 | fx 980.422.0390 | web [umfwnc.org](http://umfwnc.org)

“How very good and pleasant  
it is when kindred live  
together in unity!”

~ PSALM 133:1