

Report of **2016** *GRATITUDE*



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A VISION and a FAITH FOOT

Executive Message

Anita B. Crisp

The Apostle Paul taught “faith is the substance [assurance] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is a principle of action and power. Whenever we work toward a worthy goal, we exercise faith. We show hope for something we cannot yet see.

Unlike our values, mission and purpose, our Foundation’s vision is dynamic. Over time it must be renewed and adapted to the cultural context of our churches and ministries we serve so that we have a “shared vision.” The core of vision—the Great Commission—does not change.

A shared vision says we’re working toward the same goals. It means we’re all part of a revolution that could change this world, to have a wonderful impact for Christ. At times it means stepping out in faith knowing the risks are great, but so is the God we serve, and the vision He has given us. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your vision.

“I had never been on my knees more than I was in 2016,” says Cindi Stewart, pastor of Columbus First United Methodist Church (CFUMC), reflecting back on when the church expanded. This was the year its Outreach Center moved from a 4,800-square-foot rented space to a 22,000-square-foot owned space. The move was not spontaneous by any means, but a result of a very long, prayerful and deliberate process.

In 2004, the members of CFUMC knew they had a problem. Space was as tight as their budget, and there was more outreach they could be doing. They had a vision for more ministries, more fellowship and new partnerships. They began talking, thinking and strategizing.

CFUMC members created a plan called **“10-Year Vision” and a motto, “Come grow with us.”** The plan included a second outreach location, as well as addressing current space issues and updates needed. Renovations started at the church in 2012 and CFUMC found space for lease near a McDonald’s in a strip mall, which would accommodate some ministries being displaced with the renovations.

While they were busy with the renovation process, the Holy Spirit was on the move. Interest grew from people frequenting the strip mall. Local teens, bored and spending time in McDonald’s parking lot, started showing curiosity in the activities in the center.

As CFUMC began seeing this new outreach potential, it also began receiving the first of a three-year Congregational Development grant, in the amount of \$25,000 annually, from the Foundation to support the new space and new initiative.





“Sometimes visions are tweaked...shifted...adapted,” Pastor Cindi points out. **“We were open to the Holy Spirit.”** What began as hope for more potential outreach, a few new partnerships, and a little more space started evolving into a more elaborate vision, one in which community outreach and youth ministry thrived in its own space or ‘center.’ CFUMC watched the second location engage new families and pique community interest.

As the true potential in the vision for a second site unfolded, CFUMC worked toward expanding it into a true community outreach center. They worked through the process as it’s laid out in the *Book of Discipline*, which helps to take an idea or vision and put it into a reality. **“We followed the process and it worked,” Pastor Cindi points out. “We did retreats, we did surveys, we formed committees, but the bottom line is, we practiced faith.”**

CFUMC continued to move ahead, relying on faith and a strategic process. The Holy Spirit also continued to move with impeccable timing. Soon enough a 22,000-square-foot building, nestled in the heart of a neighborhood and close to schools, became available as the new outreach center needed to find another space.



The facility—now named the Columbus First United Methodist Church Outreach Center—opened its doors in July 2016 with space large enough for an indoor basketball court, two kitchens, worship area and game room to name a few. It’s host to a wide array of activities, ranging from dodge ball tournaments to a quilting club. A morning ministry and coffee group, four different adult bible studies, and youth choir have flourished in the space.

The Center has also proven to be a valuable link between the church and the community. Each week the facility is abuzz with activity from several different community partnerships, including the Red Cross, Backpack Program with Columbus Public Schools, Driver’s Education, Destination Imagination and 4-H.

One of the most popular draws there is a new contemporary worship service called Ignite, which takes place each Sunday under the direction of Pastor Seong Lee. “I want to see all generations joining together to praise God, young and old, and I believe Ignite and the Outreach Center is providing an opportunity for this to happen,” Pastor Seong states.

“Yes, the process can be hard and scary. I believe **God calls us to put our best faith foot forward.** We are truly called to take risks and to do things in faith and sometimes we hold ourselves back. Churches are freed when they embrace their dreams...when they embrace a vision for their future,” Pastor Cindi explains. “It’s not about what God will do tomorrow, it’s about what God will do in 5 to 10 years from now... with a vision, a process and a lot of faith.”

The CFUMC Outreach Center is the product of a group of people having a dream, a wish and a vision for their future. **This center is about putting your best faith foot forward.**

To *GOD* Be the *GLORY*

Five miles south of York, 48 miles east of Grand Island, and 55 miles west of Lincoln with a population of 409 is how some describe McCool Junction. Pastor Ralph Gaines describes it as ‘awesome.’

After several years in a new start church in Omaha, Pastor Ralph was appointed to McCool Junction UMC. “It’s the friendliest church I’ve ever been with in my life. They truly show love and concern and care, and they are the hardest working people I’ve ever met...and it’s just awesome,” Pastor Ralph explains.

These hard-working, God-loving people combined with Pastor Ralph’s vision and dedication has led to great things.

- Previously 44, the average Sunday attendance now averages 95-100 people.
- 70 new members joined the church, with only one person from outside of the community.
- Two adult Sunday School groups and two youth groups are thriving.
- A new after school program called WLC (Work for Christ, Live our faith, Care for others) started and currently has 57 kids registered.
- Three new Bible studies are going strong.
- The Hope Ministry, focused on helping those in need across a wide variety of topics, started and is flourishing.



McCool Junction UMC seems to be on a trajectory path to a future full of even more growth. Pastor Ralph said, “I’ve seen growth in membership, growth in baptisms, and growth in involvement. Some Sundays we have 20 to 25 kids at the service. If they stay on this path, I see this church continuing to grow big time and to God be the Glory.”

Last fall Pastor Ralph heard Foundation Executive Director, Anita Crisp, explain the many services available to Nebraska United Methodist Churches, including financial options to help secure the future of each church. It was then he realized the vision of McCool Junction needed to incorporate the services of the Foundation. Pastor Ralph spoke with his Finance Committee Chair about the Foundation’s services, like stewardship sermons, estate planning, and help in creating and marketing an endowment fund for the church. The Chair was ecstatic at the potential.

“They were very excited to hear about these opportunities. Three small CDs at the bank weren’t making any money. They looked into the Foundation’s investment service program and realized they could do better there. **They saw the opportunity and relationship with the Foundation could help the church better than the local financial institution.** As they began learning more about the Foundation’s services, they also began seeing and understanding that **it’s not just a place where you put your money,**” explained Pastor Ralph.

A couple of months after that meeting, McCool Junction UMC moved its CDs to the Foundation and has decided to embark on a journey to grow its new endowment fund. This little church with big growth and big energy also has a big vision, and is taking the right steps in making sure this momentum continues. “I’m so proud to be the pastor of the biggest little church,” Pastor Ralph says.

Not long ago, little 7-year-old Emma said to her parents, “I want to be a preacher.” “A preacher?” they asked. “Yes, a preacher just like Pastor Ralph!” she exclaimed. Pastor Ralph responds to stories like these with a line his congregation hears often, “To God be the Glory!” **To God Be the Glory indeed.**

*A gift opens the way and ushers the giver
into the presence of the great.*

Proverbs 18:16

A Growing Vision

Genevieve Margrave, known by most as Jenny, was a simple woman. For 15 years, her happiness was a classroom of children as she fulfilled her passion for teaching. Jenny and her husband Will lived at the “Margrave Ranch” southeast of Falls City, where she retired from teaching and helped manage the farm. She continued to fulfill her passion for helping people by being involved in her church and community.

“Jenny was a kind, gentle woman. She lived her faith. She was a listener and always interested in the welfare of other people and their dreams,” explained Falls City UMC Pastor John Hogue. Perhaps this is what motivated Jenny to reach out to the Foundation. After a visit with the Executive Director, Jenny decided to make use of an old life insurance policy she no longer needed. With some simple paperwork, Jenny gifted the life insurance policy to the Foundation to benefit her church.

Jenny continued to work with the Foundation and took an interest in planned gifts, specifically Charitable Gift Annuities (CGA). A CGA allowed her to enjoy a tax deduction and a lifetime stream of annual income, most of it tax-free, while knowing after her lifetime the remainder of her gift would be endowed for her church. But Jenny’s generosity and vision didn’t end there. She began estate planning. After meetings with her financial planner, Jenny left a percentage of her estate to the Foundation to benefit Falls City UMC.

Sadly, Jenny passed away on January 14, 2016. While her gentle nature and generous soul is missed, Jenny left a great legacy that exemplifies her lifetime of thoughtfulness. Each year Jenny’s church receives a distribution from the “Genevieve Margrave Endowment Fund - Falls City UMC” at the Foundation. Jenny acted upon her vision, and the people of Falls City UMC, who she loved so dearly, will forever benefit from it.



By *My Side*...and so much more

“Look at how many answers I’m getting right. I must have slept really good last night!” proclaims Ana, a 1st grader, to her tutor Janet, from the By My Side program at Fremont First United Methodist Church. Fremont First UMC, with the help of over \$5,000 in ministry grants from the Foundation, provides free tutors to children needing a little extra academic help.

The group meets two days a week after school in their Fellowship Hall. “Time starts with small group where we have a snack, talk about our day, journal and pray,” Dianna “Dinie” Jensen, Program Director, explains. After group time is one-on-one time, where children get tutors ‘by their side’ as they work on spelling words, math facts and reading comprehension.

But math facts aren’t the only thing being taught. “The kids have started looking forward to the prayer time,” Dinie explains. “They also enjoy journaling together and sharing their thoughts on everything from jelly beans to something funny that happened at school.”

Each tutor is a volunteer and gives a lot to the program. But experience isn’t needed, according to Dinie who has over 30 years experience as a para-educator for the Fremont Public Schools. “I always say the most important thing you are giving of yourself is time. You become so special to these kids by just sitting by their side, listening, supporting and caring.”

While the children benefit academically, the tutors benefit as well. Tutor Donna explains, “As a retired elementary school teacher, By My Side gives me my ‘kid fix.’ The relationship that develops over time with my student is what keeps me coming back year after year.” Another tutor Barbara adds, “I love to see the twinkle in a child’s eye when a new idea becomes clear to them.”

Whatever the future holds for these children, one thing is clear. They will remember the days they spent with their tutors and friends at the By My Side program.

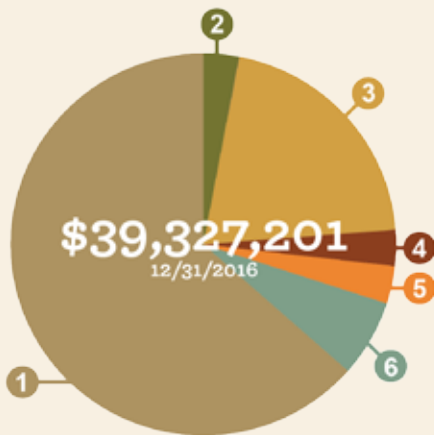


Your *Foundation*, Your *Ministry*

We reflect on 2016 with a sense of gratitude and humility. Financial performance was very good, and we're honored to be in a position to help each church further the Kingdom of God. In that way, we consider ourselves a ministry of each United Methodist Church in Nebraska. We hope our highlights reflect us in this way.

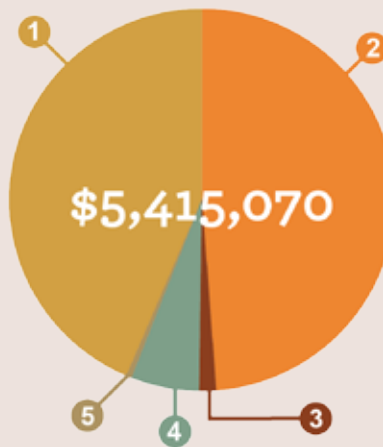
The Foundation's main goal is not to promote its own worth, but to grow yours. The Foundation strives to be a Partner in Ministry in a lot of ways, from helping you manage investments to cultivating congregational stewardship. We believe in a faith-based service and in being good stewards of the gifts God has given us. Your interests are our interests. God's interests are our interests. **We thank God every day for the blessing it is to serve you.**

Assets Held by the Foundation



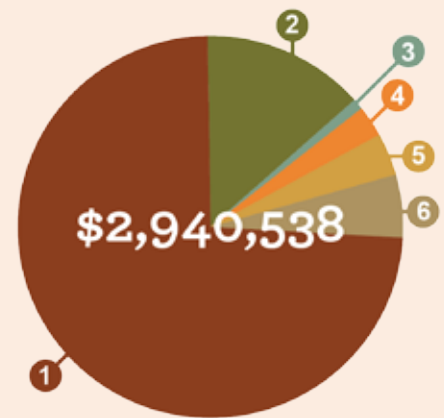
- 1) Church, Conference & Other Ministry Investments: \$24,966,114
- 2) Temporarily Restricted Funds: \$1,169,892
- 3) Endowment Funds: \$8,179,690
- 4) Trusts & Gift Annuities: \$1,200,219
- 5) Real Estate: \$1,249,318
- 6) Unrestricted & Other Funds: \$2,561,968

Contributions and Earnings



- 1) Earnings on Investments: \$2,360,280
- 2) Contributions to New & Existing Accounts: \$2,643,110
- 3) Income from Endowment Funds: \$76,581
- 4) Fund Management Fees: \$310,699
- 5) Income from Trusts: \$24,400

Funds Distributed



- 1) Church, Conference & Other Ministries: \$2,182,264
- 2) Operations: \$396,580
- 3) Scholarships: \$26,721
- 4) Donor Support of the Foundation's Mission: \$76,581
- 5) Life Income Payments to Donors: \$103,992
- 6) Grants: \$154,400

613
existing accounts

\$39,000,000
in assets

\$25,000
available in
seminary scholarship

\$2,900,000
in distributions

\$60,000
available in
ministry grants

**Figures compiled prior to 2016 audit.*

Our Mission

The mission of the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation is to support the ministries of the local church and the Great Plains United Methodist Conference through the development of gifts and the stewardship of resources entrusted to the Foundation in support of God's work.

Board of Directors & Administration

Elected Members

Lynn Ashby, Omaha
Rev. Craig Collins, Scottsbluff
Leslie Gibbens, Lincoln
Jim Girardin, Broken Bow
Doug Glenn, Auburn
Bishop Scott Jones, Great Plains Area
(appointment ended July 2016)
Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr., Great Plains Area
(as of October 2016)
Rev. Jeff Kelley, McCook
Marilyn Moore, Lincoln
Susan Wakefield, O'Neill**
Gary Warren, Aurora
Marilyn Zehring, Columbus
Ex-Officio Representatives (one year term)
R. David Wilcox, Lincoln*
Doug Skiles, McCook**

*Term Ended June 30, 2016

** Term Began July 1, 2016

Elected Officers

Doug Skiles, McCook – Chair*
Loren Lindahl, Wahoo – Chair**
Rev. Dr. Janice Japp, Omaha – Vice Chair
Loren Lindahl, Wahoo – Secretary*
Rev. Lance Clay, Grand Island – Secretary**
Larry Harvill, Cozad – Treasurer

*Office Ended June 30, 2016

**New Office as of July 1, 2016

Foundation Administration

Anita Crisp, Executive Director
Jackie Urkoski, Director of Operations
Marci Logsdon, Director of Finance

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A proud *HISTORY*

A promising *FUTURE*