



2024

IMPACT REPORT

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

— Matthew 11:29 (NIV)



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Contents

4 Connecting the Church and the Academy

Scholarships | UMC-Related Education and Associations:
University Senate, IAMSCU, NAAMSCU, Worldwide and Regional
Associations | CCTEF | Connexion Campaign | Black College Fund

10 Developing Transformational Leaders for the Ministry of the Church

Vocational Discernment | Boards of Ordained Ministry | Licensing
School and Course of Study | Chaplaincy and Endorsed Ministry |
Pastoral Training and Education | Clergy Well-Being

16 Transitions and Transformation: Aligning for a Stronger Future

19 General Conference: Charting New Directions for GBHEM's Future

A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Change and Opportunity

2024 was a year of significant change for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), and with that, a year that also offered new opportunities for service and reflection. We attended an historic and long-awaited General Conference in the spring, then celebrated General Secretary Greg Bergquist upon his retirement in June, thanking him for his years of service to the church and the agency. We deepened alignment with the General Board of Global Ministries, welcoming Roland Fernandes as general secretary on July 1. Both agencies held joint spring and fall meetings and during the fall meeting, we welcomed a new group of directors to serve the next quadrennium.

Like all United Methodist general agencies, GBHEM supports the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church and its partners. In particular, it helps the church participate in the *missio Dei*, the mission of God. Our work must be relevant to the needs of the church.

To that end, GBHEM continued a series of reflective evaluations in 2024 that began in 2022, when we adopted the Balanced Scorecard as a strategic planning tool to help the agency clearly communicate its values, mission, vision and overall strategy to employees and stakeholders; align work to its overall vision and strategy; prioritize initiatives and resources; and measure progress.

We organized our work under two main goals:

- 1. Connecting the church and the academy.**
- 2. Developing transformational leaders for the ministry of the church.**

Broadly, these two goals capture the educational side of our work and the ministry side of our work. Working into 2025, we will create a results framework that describes how groups of activities are linked together into programs by a shared theory of change that explains how they contribute to intended results. The development of these models will give us increased clarity on how to think about and communicate our programmatic work, and they will help us in evaluating impact. All our key programs will be reviewed for effectiveness and relevance to the church, and as we do this, we anticipate the need for further change.

The ministry side of GBHEM provides a great opportunity to help the church reimagine what is needed to help form transformative and moral leaders for the future. We plan to listen and collaborate closely with partners across the denomination to create space and opportunity for more effective leadership and ministry. We go forward in humbleness and gentleness, in the spirit of Christ as we undertake this important work.



Roland Fernandes
General Secretary
Higher Education and
Ministry, Global Ministries
and UMCOR



Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball
President
Board of Directors



Strengthening the United Methodist Connection Through Education and Ministry

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) embodies the United Methodist connectional system through its interagency partnerships, worldwide associations, ministerial and educational leadership support, and equitable funding strategies. Rooted in an intercultural network of United Methodist conferences and institutions of higher learning, our connections include university leaders, chaplains, religious life directors, Wesley Foundations, Boards of Ordained Ministry, and ecumenical and interreligious ministries.

GBHEM works to connect the church and academy and develops leaders for transformational ministry in the church and across the world.

The impacts of this work in 2024 were realized in many ways:

- in the lives of individual students and schools through scholarships and grants;
- in the acquisition of skills and professional growth through training;
- in networking and partnership among schools and academic leaders;
- through guidance and accompaniment in discerning God's call to ministry;
- in clergy well-being and support for Boards of Ordained Ministry.

In all these ways that people take up the yoke of Christ, GBHEM has sought to ease some of their burdens as they learn from Christ and find rest in accepting their call to serve.



CONNECTING THE CHURCH AND THE ACADEMY

Uniting knowledge and vital piety is a theological core value of The United Methodist Church and the Wesleyan tradition. GBHEM seeks to strengthen the educational mission of the church by fostering environments of intellectual development alongside spiritual growth.

GBHEM convenes and collaborates with major regional and global educational organizations and helps connect The United Methodist Church with pan-Methodist and ecumenical collaborative partners around the world.

Through GBHEM programs such as the Central Conference Theological Education Fund, the Black College Fund and robust scholarship programs, GBHEM supports the development of Methodist scholarship and leadership around the world.

500+

Schools

51

**Annual Conferences
in the U.S.**

28

**Annual Conferences
in Africa and the
Philippines**

Represented by 2024 scholarship recipients

SCHOLARSHIPS

Empowering Dreams Through Education

GBHEM awarded scholarships to **1,895 students** in 2024. These included general scholarships, scholarships endowed by annual conferences, the International Grants and Scholarships Program (GRASP), part of the Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development (MGEFLD), and scholarships for U.S. students. Excellence in Clergy Leadership scholarships support students pursuing theological education. 2024 scholarship recipients were pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. **412 students** were pursuing seminary or theological degrees and **609 students** were from diverse racial ethnic backgrounds.



Madison Nelson **University of South Carolina**

Pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing

"Throughout my childhood years, it was hard living in a struggling family. I made a promise to myself that neither I nor my family will be in the same position when I get older, nor do I want my children to experience the same issues. I know a lot of other children who are still growing up in that community. I would like to be an advocate for those students and give them hope for their future."



David Micah **Africa University**

Divinity student from Nigeria

"With siblings in college, the struggle to manage educational expenses has been challenging. This scholarship is a much-needed relief, easing our financial burdens and allowing me to concentrate on my studies with fewer financial concerns."



Hanbin Lee **Candler School of Theology, Emory University**

2024 Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholar

"I am deeply grateful for the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship. This scholarship not only supports my education but also encourages me to continue working hard toward my goals in ministry."

\$3.7 million in scholarships

helped students from diverse ethnic, socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds pursue their dreams through higher education.



DePauw University



LaGrange College



Kentucky Wesleyan College

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

Supporting Schools, Colleges and Universities

In 2024, GBHEM assisted in the administration and convening of more than **32 regional meetings** held by international and regional educational associations who work with more than 1,000 United Methodist- and affiliated Methodist-related institutions throughout the world. In fact, The United Methodist Church is related to more schools, colleges, universities and theological schools than any other Protestant denomination.

GBHEM Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) Hubs on five continents support the **International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU)**, which works with more than a dozen other Methodist-related regional education associations worldwide. GBHEM also provides administrative and consultative support for the **North American Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (NAAMSCU)** and assists the **University Senate** in setting and maintaining the standards of United Methodist-related schools, colleges and universities in the United States.

GBHEM networks with campus ministers, religious life directors, Wesley Foundations and ecumenical and interreligious ministries to provide support and offer advocacy and resources to more than **500 college and university campuses** around the globe.

105 UMC-related schools
in the United States

1,000+ UM-related
schools throughout
the world



In 2024, the Commission on the Central Conference Theological Education Fund (CCTEF) awarded 120 grants totaling \$1.5 million.

CCTEF helps advance theological education in all central conferences by strengthening theological institutions, creating networks among these schools and increasing access. CCTEF focuses on creating impact through capacity building, development of contextual education and resources, innovative initiatives and sustainability.

GBHEM provides guidance, support and consultation to these worldwide and regional associations.

Africa Association of Methodist Institutions of Higher Education (AAMIHE)

Africa Association of United Methodist Theological Institutions (AAUMTI)

Asia Pacific Association of Methodist Educational Institutions (APAMEI)

Philippines Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, Universities and Seminaries (PAMSCUS)

Association of Methodist Educational Institutions in India (AMEII)

Methodist Theological Schools in Europe (MTSE)

Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST)

Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST)

Latin American Association of Methodist Institutions of Education (ALAIME)

Latin American Methodist Theological Network (REDIME)

Mezzo-American Methodist Network for Immigration and Education (ReMMIEd)

Association of United Methodist Theological Schools (AUMTS)

North American Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (NAAMSCU)

International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU)

Methodist International Student Exchange Network (MISEN)

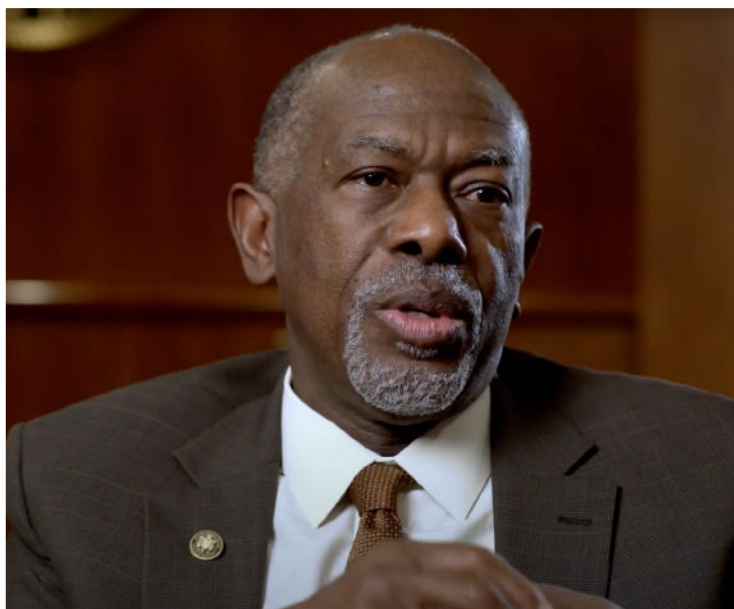
Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies (OIMTS)

Education Committee of the World Methodist Council (EduC-WMC)

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

Connexion Campaign Highlights UMC Impact

United Methodist-related schools, colleges and universities play a vital role in their communities and in society. GBHEM's Connexion initiative, launched in 2024, celebrates the way in which United Methodist-related institutions impact the lives of others, build collaborative relationships and transform the world.



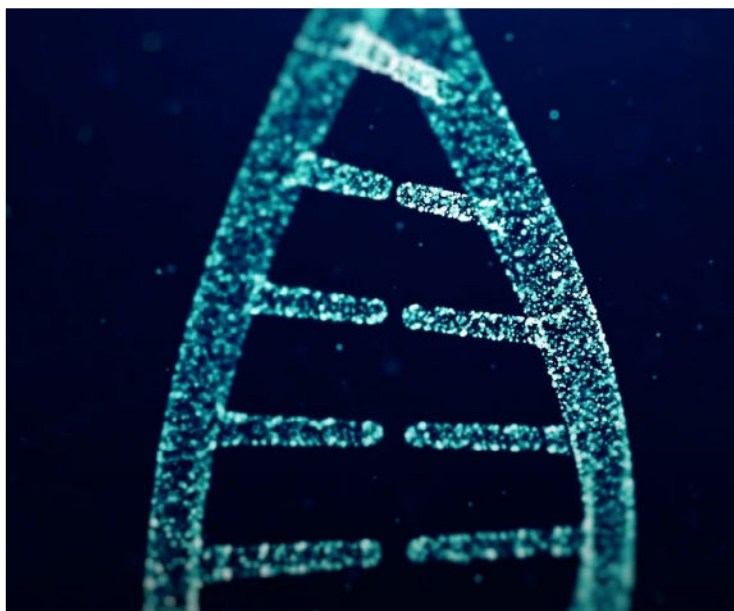
Together for Change Initiative

MeHarry Medical College
Nashville, Tennessee

GBHEM supports and advocates for schools like Meharry Medical College, which embodies the campus/community/church Connexion in exemplary ways. The Together for Change Initiative at Meharry is a step toward reducing health care inequality by closing the gap on historical inequities that have impacted Black communities since the development of modern medicine.

Currently, less than 2% of known genetic information stems from people of African ancestry. However, 25% of the global population is of African descent. This divide is what drives the <25% accuracy rate when predicting disease risk for Black Americans and has left Black communities underrepresented in health awareness, disease prevention education and treatment development.

The Together for Change Initiative seeks to recruit 500,000 people of African descent to have their genomic sequence added to the worldwide data set.



**Watch the
video here.**



Supporting HBCUs

Strengthening Education Through the Black College Fund

GBHEM advances equity and belonging in every place where it has influence. The Black College Fund provides millions of dollars in funding each year from local churches that give faithfully to this designated fund through their apportionments and from individual donors. More than 95% of all proceeds of the fund flow directly to 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) affiliated with The United Methodist Church to strengthen programs, provide vital infrastructure and keep tuition costs low.

**Nearly \$6.4 million
provided to HBCUs through the
Black College Fund in 2024.**



Demar Williams

Bethune-Cookman University

Edith Allen Scholarship and UM Allocation Award Recipient

Demar Williams is grateful for the environment at Bethune-Cookman, a United Methodist-supported Black College Fund school in Florida, where he can connect with others who share his cultural background. “This has helped me appreciate and embrace my identity while fostering an environment where I can be authentic. This has allowed me to concentrate more on my academics and achieve my best work.”



DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry strives to prepare global leaders for The United Methodist Church, seeking to support both candidates and clergy as they determine and follow their calls to ministry.

Last year, elders, deacons and licensed local pastors benefited from GBHEM training and candidacy programs, including a Board of Ordained Ministry meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia. Many young adults find help in clarifying their vocation and God's call on their lives through our leadership and discernment programs.

VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

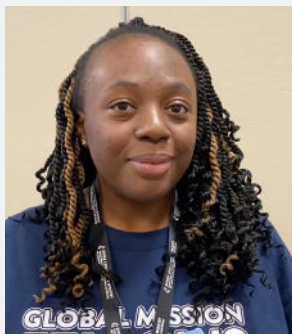
Nurturing the Call to Ministry

GBHEM supports several events and initiatives to assist people of all ages to discern their calling to various kinds of ministry. Exploration, for young adults ages 18-26, creates space for meaningful fellowship, passionate worship, theological reflection and practical workshops as they discern whether God's call on their life is to ordained ministry in the UMC. The Journey Toward Ordained Ministry is a scholarship and mentor experience for college and seminary students pursuing ordination in the UMC.

Exploration 2024 was held in February in Orlando, Florida, attended by 125 young adults. The three-day event featured keynote speakers, panels, workshops, small group interaction and worship.

“There are varieties of gifts,
but the same Spirit;
and there are varieties
of services, but the
same Lord; and there
are varieties of activities,
but it is the same God
who activates all of them
in everyone.”

– 1 Corinthians 12: 4-6 (NRSVA)



Shanquel Askew

“I truly enjoyed my time at Exploration. I gained a lot of information. Got some clarity on my next steps and some things to do ... if you're thinking about coming to the next Exploration, you are in for a treat.”



Seals Martin

“Exploration is awesome. I recommend it. I would totally go again. I feel like I've learned a lot about what it means to be a deacon. This is a community of people interested in God. I feel comfortable here. It's not what I expected, but I'm so happy to be here.”



Watch the full video of experiences
from Exploration.



BOARDS OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Guiding the Call to Ministry

GBHEM provides direct training and mentorship opportunities and resources for Boards of Ordained Ministry (BOM), including quadrennial training and the Board of Ordained Ministry Academy. Support for cross-conference clergy transfers are offered to conferences looking for candidates beyond their conference. The 2024 quadrennial meeting, held at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church in Atlanta, created space for nearly 300 new BOM leaders from five jurisdictions to engage with each other, discuss UM standards and guidelines, contextualize implementation and deepen their understanding of the roles they serve.



Photos: Adam Bowers

COURSE OF STUDY AND LICENSING SCHOOLS

Supporting Licensed Local Pastors

Course of Study is a required theological education program for licensed local pastors who have been certified for ordained ministry and those who are under appointment in the UMC. The Advanced Course of Study (ACOS) is a curriculum pathway that enables a licensed local pastor to meet the educational requirements for probationary membership, full conference membership and ordination in The United Methodist Church. GBHEM assists local pastors with official transcripts to ensure they have the necessary educational requirements.

1,547 STUDENTS
took Course of Study or
Advanced Course of Study in 2024

CHAPLAINCY & ENDORSED MINISTRIES

Empowering Those Who Serve

The United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA) endorses United Methodist clergy appointed to serve as chaplains in settings that include military services, health care institutions, prisons, retirement communities and children's homes. More than 520 United Methodist clergy are endorsed by GBHEM's United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA), answering God's call and taking their ministry beyond the church doors. They offer spiritual care in a wide range of settings, serving everywhere from military outposts to hospitals, prisons, counseling centers and truck stops.



520 Current total number
of United Methodist
endorsed clergy



CHAPLAIN TRAINING

Equipping Leaders in Pastoral Care

In late fall of 2024, GBHEM's Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) Hub in South Africa held an "Introduction to Chaplaincy" training designed to empower ministry leaders with essential chaplaincy and pastoral care skills to support people in settings beyond the walls of the church.

Participants from The United Methodist Church, The Methodist Church of Southern Africa and the Church of the Nazarene came together in Muldersdrift, South Africa, for an intensive, hands-on training conducted by the Rev. Dr. Soomee Kim, ACPE certified educator and executive director of GBHEM's Center for Integrative Pastoral Practice (CIPP), and Dr. Stanley Arumugam, psychologist, coach and spiritual director for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.



Rev. Thandeka Ntlanga

South Africa Annual Conference

"I can't wait to go back home and apply what I've learned. I just want to thank the people who took the initiative to come and educate us about helping the community and the people around us."



Motsewatile Morokane

Methodist Church of Southern Africa

"I came here to learn about chaplaincy, but what I got here was skills! They sharpened my skills in counseling, and I love it. That's what excites me and that's what we are supposed to be doing in the ministry. I love it."

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

Preparing to Serve in Difficult Times

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is an interfaith program focused on formation through self-awareness and empathy, granting the capacity for ministry leaders to engage and shepherd people with spiritual guidance during the most difficult times of their lives. In 2024, 46 students, 38 of whom were United Methodist, completed a CPE unit. Rev. MiRhang Baek, of the Virginia Annual Conference, said her participation in CPE had profoundly transformed her self-awareness, personal growth and ministry as a UMC pastor.



Rev. MiRhang Baek Virginia Annual Conference

“As an ethnic minority female immigrant pastor serving a predominantly white congregation, CPE helped me to realize and articulate specifics about myself and my surroundings. Including seeing and confronting white supremacy, which was always challenging and took a lot of nerve.

The tangible impact of my CPE journey is evident in the changes within my congregation. My ministry has become more justice-oriented, addressing systemic issues and emphasizing inclusivity.”

Addressing Clergy Well-Being

GBHEM, Wespath and UMC clergy have been working together to help address systemic problems contributing to the clergy well-being crisis in The United Methodist Church. The agencies have collaborated on identifying ways the church can eliminate challenges that foster unhealthy patterns for clergy.



Learn more.





LEADERSHIP

Transitions and Transformation: Aligning for a Stronger Future

On July 1, 2024, Roland Fernandes began his tenure as general secretary of GBHEM, in addition to his responsibilities as general secretary of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Greg Bergquist retired in 2024, after serving as general secretary from 2019 to 2024.

Speaking of his new role, Fernandes said, “I am honored to have been given the opportunity to serve God through the church at a time such as this. I look forward to working with the collaborative partners, boards and staff of both agencies to lead GBGM and GBHEM in these transformative times for The United Methodist Church and the world. We shall continue to listen to God’s call into this joint mission and respond to the church’s needs and aspirations, aligning our ministry together for more relevance and effectiveness. I am grateful to Greg for sharing this vision of greater missional alignment between our two agencies.”

In the fall of 2024, GBHEM welcomed a newly elected Board of Directors appointed to serve the agency. The 2016-2024 Board of Directors were honored for their dedicated service through an extended term caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of the 2020 General Conference.

“As I reflect on my final year as general secretary of GBHEM, I see an agency poised to achieve remarkable contributions in education and leadership formation, and I extend my gratitude to GBHEM’s constituencies, staff, Board of Directors, collaborative partners and friends. Their unwavering support, valuable insights and dedication have enabled GBHEM to fulfill its mission and uphold its values on behalf of the church and the academy.”

– The Rev. Greg Bergquist



“An integrated structure will help us best respond to and support our partners in their mission and ministry. This alignment will be owned by all involved throughout the two agencies among directors, staff and missionaries, not just me as general secretary. This is the goal toward which we will be working in the months and years to come. Your support for this work and direction is critical, and my belief is that we can, God willing, model and live into this engagement across the fullness of our church.”

– Roland Fernandes



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bishop Rodel M. Acdal

Chair, Education Committee
Philippines Central Conference
Baguio Episcopal Area

Darlene Alfred

South Central Jurisdiction
Central Texas

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball

President
Northeastern Jurisdiction
Western Pennsylvania Episcopal Area

Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai

Vice-President and Chair, Committee on Ministry
North Central Jurisdiction
Illinois Great Rivers Episcopal Area
Iowa Episcopal Area

Rev. Chiyona Bourne

North Central Jurisdiction
Indiana

Rev. Jorge Domingues

Western Jurisdiction
California-Nevada

Rev. Andrew L. Foster III

Northeastern Jurisdiction
Eastern Pennsylvania

Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman

Chair, Personnel and Policies Committee
Southeastern Jurisdiction
Virginia

Rev. Chipeng Kayemb François

Congo Central Conference
South Congo

Rev. Heecheon Jeon

Chair, WIDEA Committee
(Worldwide Inclusion, Diversity,
Equity and Access)
North Central Jurisdiction
Iowa

Kathy Jewell

South Central Jurisdiction
New Mexico

Rev. Sangwoo Kim

Southeastern Jurisdiction
North Carolina

Rev. Candace Lewis

Southeastern Jurisdiction
Florida

Rev. Marcus Thompson

Southeastern Jurisdiction
Mississippi

Jessica Trahan

South Central Jurisdiction
Louisiana

Rev. Rebecca Trefz

North Central Jurisdiction
Dakotas

Derrick Scott

Secretary
Southeastern Jurisdiction
Florida

Rev. Virna Solis

Methodist Church of Puerto Rico

Abel Vega

South Central Jurisdiction
Rio Texas

Carmen Vianese

Chair, Administrative Matters Committee
Northeastern Jurisdiction
Upper New York

Christof Voigt

Germany Central Conference
Germany

Alice Williams

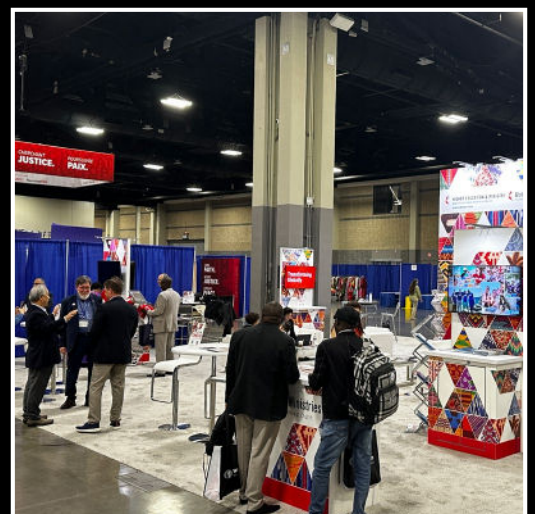
Southeastern Jurisdiction
Florida



GENERAL CONFERENCE

Charting New Directions for GBHEM's Future Work

GBHEM joined Methodists from around the world from April 23 - May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina, for a long-awaited General Conference, sharing a booth with Global Ministries. GBHEM submitted 78 petitions that were primarily considered in the Ordained Ministry and Higher Education and Superintendency legislative committees. Petitions passed focused on creating a more flexible structure for the agency, as well as clarifying processes, requirements and relationships related to conference administration, education and clergy credentialing.





VISION

A world where everyone is living fully into God's call on their lives

GOAL

Connecting the church and the academy

GOAL

Developing transformational leaders for the ministry of the church

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Increase equitable access to general education

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Support scholars educated in a United Methodist ethos

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Increase equitable access to theological education

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Equip and support capable, diverse leadership for a worldwide church

**“Let’s not get tired
of doing good,
because in time
we’ll have a harvest
if we don’t give up.”**

- Galatians 6:9 (CEB)



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

 /GBHEM

 @GBHEMLEADS

 @GBHEM.BSKY.SOCIAL



GBHEM.org