more than any one local church or person could alone.

Within the connectional structure of The United Methodist Church, conferences provide the primary groupings of people and churches for discernment and decision-making. Wesley described Christian conferencing as a spiritual discipline through which God’s grace may be revealed.

At every level of the connection, church leaders and members come together in conversation, or conferencing, to discuss important issues and discover God’s will for the church. The word, conference, thus refers to both the assembly and organization of people as well as the process of discerning God’s call together.

As members of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, our belief is that God will make a significant difference in our world and church if we work in committed and cooperative ways around the following five areas of focus:

- Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world;
- Creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and renewing existing ones;
- Engaging in ministry with the poor;
- Promoting Abundant Health, and;
- Dismantling racism.

The Council on Finance and Administration, Connectional Leadership Table, Director of Connectional Ministries, and our Conference Treasurer hope that this narrative budget will help highlight the power of our connection, the tremendous work of our local churches and Conference in these areas, and illustrate the mission and vision behind 2020’s $8.5 million connectional budget.

“I want the whole Christ for my Savior, the whole Bible for my book, the whole Church for my fellowship, and the whole world for my mission field.”

These words of John Wesley embodies what it is to live in connection with God and with one another. The United Methodist structure and organization began as a means of accomplishing the mission of spreading scriptural holiness. Wesley recognized the need for an organized system of communication and accountability and developed what he called the “connexion,” a network of classes, societies, and annual conferences.

Our denomination continues to be organized in a “connectional” system where every local church is linked to an interconnected network of organizations that join together in mission and ministry, allowing us to accomplish far more than any one local church or person could alone.

Our denomination continues to be organized in a “connectional” system where every local church is linked to an interconnected network of organizations that join together in mission and ministry, allowing us to accomplish far more than any one local church or person could alone.
Five Areas of Focus:

Developing Principled Christian Leaders

“I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions.”

~ John Wesley

Every individual is a unique expression of God’s creativity. Endowed with a particular combination of personality, intellect, spiritual gifts, talent, and fruits of the Spirit, each of us offers a glimpse of the image of God. Through faith and the power of connection, we are able to witness the realities of God’s grace attested to in Scripture.

Through our Connectional Apportionment we are able to participate with the Spirit in developing principled Christian leaders. We recognize the critical importance of developing new leaders to guide the church through changing times. Principled, visionary, and effective ordained and lay leaders help United Methodists grow in faith and in sharing God’s love with others. The following are just a few examples of the many ministries you make possible to help form disciples and equip congregations to live out God’s mission in the world.

**Commit** confirmation tours offer an opportunity for local church confirmation classes to meet our Bishop and other Conference staff, worship together, and dig deeper into this thing we call Discipleship. After many years of hosting classes on multiple days at the United Methodist Center in Cranberry Township for a sampling of connectional ministries and a visit with the Bishop, the staff took the show on the road. Sessions were offered at each of our camps to cut down on travel time for groups, to introduce confirmands to our camps, and to allow for more active breakout sessions. Our youth were excited, engaged, and inquisitive. Today’s young people have fearless hearts, vibrant ideas, and a passion for ministry. Through **Commit**, your giving helps make it possible to nurture their talents and shape the church into the future.

**HEARING GOD’S VOICE THROUGH Prayer**

As part of the Conference focus on developing principled Christian leaders, all laity and clergy who are called to prayer, prayer groups from local churches, and those seeking to strengthen their prayer life were invited to join in a season of prayer. Participants prayed through a litany of Scriptures and prayed for the Five Areas of Focus. All were welcome and all that was needed was a heart for prayer. This initiative, made possible by **Commit**, your generosity, helped strengthen clergy and lay members who are ministering at every level of the church.

**Mission u** offers opportunities for adults, youth, and children to learn, explore, grow spiritually, enjoy fellowship, and participate in hands-on mission work. Among options for adults are a spiritual growth study examining The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship, led by the Rev. Eric S. Park; a look at the rich 150-year history of mission by United Methodist Women with Mission Ambassadors Saundra McKee and Lynn Sibley; and a study exploring how we relate to money within the context of our faith. Youth Mission u for youth in grades 6-12 allows more time for building relationships and serving neighbors through hands-on work.
The Rev. John and Christine Zimmerman are in their sixth year of serving as General Evangelists of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference. In that time they have served as modern-day circuit riders, working toward their goal of helping churches get out of their buildings and engaged in their communities with the transforming love of Christ. “When Jesus is conversing with the church in the Scriptures, he just seems to use the word ‘Go,’” John said. “And we seem to use the word ‘Come’ in terms of evangelism.”

To help United Methodist congregations “go,” the Zimmermans stay a while. Christine said a key to what she and her husband do is help United Methodists build relationships with the people around them. They move their RV into a church’s area for three to five months. They preach a sermon series, teach Bible studies, and mentor or initiate the church’s mission outreach team. They also connect church leaders with other community groups and discern ministry opportunities.

“I think fear is one of the things that keeps churches trapped from not being able to venture out and share Jesus with others,” she said. “But I think that all of the churches we’ve been working with are finding that people are just people.” Your apportionment giving helps support the incredible work our general evangelists are doing to help the churches in our conference make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Five Areas of Focus: Creating New and Renewed Congregations

“I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.”

~ John Wesley

Persons affected by disability possess exceptional gifts and graces that are often limited by a church's physical accessibility. It is impossible to develop principled Christian leaders or create new places for new people when they cannot physically enter a space. Many of our local churches are working hard to address accessibility issues but do not have the funding to complete projects. By providing small accessibility grants, the Disability Concerns Committee is working to support local churches in their efforts to be more accessible to all people.

Your apportionment giving also helps by offering educational opportunities for laypeople and clergy in churches to better understand disability issues and find new ways to make their communities places of belonging for people affected by disability. The committee was also able to host a retreat at Olmsted Manor for persons affected by disability to be in worship and fellowship with one another. As we open our doors a little wider, each community can become a renewed place welcoming new people.

Addressing logistical concerns and providing space for people to enter into the formation of new relationships helps ensure that physical accessibility is not a barrier to being in ministry together with all of God's children.
Five Areas of Focus:
Engaging in Ministry with the Poor

“One of the principal rules of religion is to lose no occasion of serving God. And, since He is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve Him in our neighbor; which He receives as if done to Himself in person, standing visibly before us.”

~ John Wesley

Connectional Apportionment dollars allow our Poverty Team to address issues of poverty in both practical and creative ways.

The Poverty Team provides poverty simulations and funding for individuals to attend training events relating to eliminating poverty. They are also able to provide funding for start-up projects in local churches, ecumenical groups, and communities where United Methodist churches are actively involved. One example occurred last year when the Poverty Team was able to provide funding for Manorville UMC’s ministry to help youth in their local vo-tech school who did not have appropriate clothing for job interviews. These funds enabled these young people to buy needed clothing for interviews, improving their chances of securing work to help them set off on the road out of poverty. Additionally, the Poverty Team has funded after-school programs in impoverished areas of Johnstown; the Circles Program in Sharpsburg; a toiletry pantry in Bradford, funds to assist the Ruth M. Smith Center; and at EUMA’s The Refuge shelter for homeless families.

Your giving helps to stimulate poverty-related ministries in local churches and communities throughout the Annual Conference. This includes direct aid, systemic change efforts, and advocacy, as well as grounding these ministries in solid Christian witness and spiritual growth. A key focus of our ministries with the poor is building relationships. By doing so, we create opportunities to tackle poverty at its root causes for lasting change.

Our Disaster Response Ministry is an “umbrella” entity - meaning that it directs physical, monetary, and volunteer resources where they are needed. It is not a “first responder” agency such as a fire department, EMS, or even the Red Cross, but our volunteers are ready to step into a situation when requested after a disaster to provide early (short-term) response and long-term assistance as appropriate. Through your giving, our Conference also helps to coordinate teams that travel across the country and overseas to help facilitate recovery in the wake of natural disasters.

By sending volunteers or assistance to places like Puerto Rico, Louisiana, North Carolina, the Bahamas, Fiji, and other areas, we are able to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the lives of others. By partnering with UMCOR and providing relief kits, we can meet critical needs in response to humanitarian crises.
As God’s children and participants in the gift of abundant life, we recognize the need to respond to those who know brokenness from the widespread abuse of alcohol and other drugs in our world. The experience of God’s saving grace offers wholeness to each individual. In light of the reality of alcohol and other drug abuse, the church has a responsibility to recognize brokenness and to be an instrument of education, healing, and restoration.

Your apportionment giving is making it possible for WPAUMC to invite you to an **Addiction Response Ministry Workshop** to address the addiction epidemic in our region and help save lives! The Western PA Conference offers a seminar designed to help individuals and churches learn how to support persons in addiction and/or in recovery, and their families. You’ll learn practical information about how to make connections in your own community and make a positive difference in the name of Jesus Christ. The seminar will include worship, a panel discussion, and break-out sessions. Both clergy and laity are invited! It's June 22, 2019 at First UMC in Butler.

Jesus’ mission on earth was inaugurated by healing, and his healing ministries were a central sign that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Therefore, we understand that continuing Jesus’ ministry of healing is an important part of what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Your generosity and the power of connection in our denomination allows us to **promote abundant health** in mind, body, and spirit.

**Vibrant mental health** is a vital part of a person’s holistic well-being, and congregations are a community of hope that can provide strength on their journey of healing. Helping people identify, treat, cope with, and overcome their mental health challenges will increase their quality of life.

**Bountiful physical health** comes in the form of a balanced diet, ample physical activity and access to health care. Our bodies are instruments through which God can work in our communities, the means by which we can share his message of grace and eternal love for all. By caring for the body, we fortify the mission to which God has called us: to live exuberantly as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**Resilient spiritual health** gives us purpose in our daily lives. We find strength to face our own brokenness and the fractured world around us, allowing us to rise up as disciples who speak words of hope and plant seeds of peace. As we seek to follow Christ and live as he asks us to live, our communities will become places of grace and love.
Five Areas of Focus:

Dismantling Racism

“As a very little dust will disorder a clock, and the least sand will obscure our sight, so the least grain of sin which is upon the heart will hinder its right motion towards God..”

~ John Wesley

One of the ways that our Conference tackles the challenges of racism is through the **Office of Diversity Development and Inclusion**, which empowers and prepares those in the WPAUMC with tools to respond to racism - in its most covert and overt forms.

The Office of Diversity Development and Inclusion makes it possible to support clergy in new and existing Cross-Cultural/Racial Appointments; in supporting racial-ethnic congregations (African American and Hispanic); by participating in worship services in WPA churches; by supporting committees that focus on diversity, anti-racism, and inclusion; by organizing, conducting and participating in church-wide programs and workshops; and more. Your apportionment giving makes vital programming possible throughout our Conference.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, the Office of Diversity and Development was able to implement the Call to Action: Stories and Dreams Initiative, with meetings focusing on moving from awareness to action; host an Ethnic Clergy Retreat; provide a Provisional Diversity and Inclusion Workshop; welcome Confirmation Tours, focused on empathy toward persons of color; SPARK - developing youth leaders to lead facilitations; assist transitioning new ethnic clergy of color into new appointments; and facilitation programming around Racism 101 and Equipping the Saint to Respond to Racism. Educational Moments for Connectional Leadership Table, Nominating Committee, Conference Center (Cabinet and Staff), local pastor licensing school, and Personnel Committee were also offered throughout the year. Your generosity is helping our Conference make great strides in dismantling racism.

WPAUMC District Superintendents have committed to hosting three diversity trainings per year. The **Anti-Racism Team** hosted one such event in the Erie-Meadville District, entitled Facing Up to Racism. Led by the Rev. Sarah Roncolato, participants were encouraged to identify where racism exists in our communities. Across our Conference, diversity in our communities, when present at all, is not represented within our United Methodist churches - a reality that also holds true in many of the secular social organizations and structures within those communities as well.

The meeting was not to dissect the issue of racism or diagnose its causes, nor to attempt to find a fix or a cure. It was an opportunity to acknowledge the ways in which racism affects God’s people, which was a welcome forum to many. This event was an important step in responding to Jesus’ call to witness. The discussion identified many resources that are available through the District and our Conference to aid in better understanding racism and how to address it as it happens. To learn more, visit wpaumc.org/DiversityResources.
WORLD SERVICE FUND
This vital fund is the financial lifeline to a long list of Christ’s mission and ministry throughout the denomination. Your giving helps to build new churches, prepare clergy and lay leaders, facilitate cooperation and dialogue with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work, express the church’s commitment to God’s reign through advocacy for peace and justice, and much more.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND
At the heart of preparing people for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, the thirteen United Methodist seminaries help students discover their calling through challenging curriculum. This fund enables the church to increase financial support for the recruitment and education of ordained and diaconal ministers and to equip annual conferences to meet increased demands.

AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND
As a first, and fully accredited United Methodist-related educational institution, the university offers bachelors and masters degree programs in six very important areas of learning: Agriculture and natural resources; education; health sciences; humanities and social sciences; management and administration; and theology.

BLACK COLLEGE FUND
The historically Black colleges and universities of the United Methodist Church offer a values-centered learning environment that encourages leadership development, self-esteem building, and spiritual growth. They are responsible for educating some of the world’s most effective and popular leaders - including clergy, college professors and presidents, general agency staff, legislators and community leaders. These schools and their graduates have a rich legacy of service and are a source of great pride.

EPISCOPAL FUND
Bishops are an integral part of the spiritual and administrative leadership of the United Methodist Church. They are elected and consecrated to speak to the church and from the church. This fund pays for bishops’ salaries, office and travel expenses, and pension and health coverage.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND
This fund enables United Methodists to have a presence and a voice in the activities of the several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations; including the World Council of Churches, the World Methodist Council, Churches Uniting in Christ, and others. The fund provides the UMC’s share of the basic budgets of these organizations.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND
The General Administration Fund provides for the expenses of the sessions of the General Conference, the Judicial Council, special commissions and committees constituted by the General Conference, and other administrative agencies and activities recommended for inclusion in the budget by the General Council of Finance and Administration, and approved by the General Conference.

JURISDICTIONAL FUND
The Jurisdictional Fund supports the collective ministries of the conferences in the northeastern United States, including Western Pennsylvania. Our sister conferences in the Northeast Jurisdiction are New England, Upper New York, New York, Susquehanna, Eastern PA, Greater New Jersey, Peninsula - Delaware, Baltimore/Washington, and West Virginia. The fund covers our apportionment dollars to the jurisdiction.
Budget Legislation Overview - What’s New for 2020?

Beginning in the late summer of 2018, a review of our budgeting process was undertaken by the Council on Finance and Administration, with a specific emphasis on how much we apportion our churches (i.e., our collective ability to pay) and how we apportion our churches (i.e., apportionment formula). The results of our analysis culminated in two major proposed changes for 2020: a meaningful decrease in the total amount apportioned to conference churches, and the switch to an Income-based Apportionment Formula. Collaboration with the Conference Board of Pensions was a key element underpinning both of these proposed changes.

Proposed legislation (RS 403) will shift the apportionment calculation from the current expense-based formula to an income-based formula.

The proposed income-based Formula: \[ CA = I \times P \]

CA represents the local church’s Connectional Apportionment
I represents the operating income of the local church; the Annual Budget / Spending Plan as reported lines 52a through 52g of the Statistical Reports (EZRA)
P represents the apportionment percentage (set at 10.65% for the proposed 2020 budget)

FY 2020 Proposed Budget Breakdown

Total Proposed Budget: $8,847,347 - a decrease of over $650,000 from the approved FY 2019 CA Budget
2020 Apportionment Percentage: 10.65%

United Methodist Connection -
General and Jurisdictional Support: $2,484,696
Connectional Nurture Ministries: $1,216,451
Connectional Outreach Ministries: $626,000
Connectional Witness Ministries: $549,800
Connectional Leadership Support Teams: $526,700
Connectional Ministry Support - Leadership: $1,662,900
Connectional Ministry Support - Conference Center: $1,780,800

Western PA Conference
The United Methodist Church