

***Report of the 2017 Annual Meeting of The
National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors***

The National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors held their annual meeting September 12-14, 2017 at General Butler State Park and Resort, Carrollton KY. Thirty two clergy plus spouses brought our number up to almost 40 people from 23 Annual Conferences representing all 5 US jurisdictions! Several others had to cancel due to weather and forecast concerns. We were joined by supporter and GBHEM representative, Rev. Shannon Conklin-Miller, assistant general secretary for clergy formation.

This year, our annual meeting offered one continuing education credit. We were blessed to learn from Ken Willard, a Christian Leadership Coach and author. As such, the attendees of the annual meeting were the first to receive his new book co-authored with Mike Schreiner entitled *Stride*. The focus of our learning was on developing a discipleship pathway for our churches.

There are three stages to creating a discipleship pathway: preparation, implementation, and sustaining. Mr. Willard laid out for us practical processes we can use to look at our current discipleship offerings in our local congregations and ways to move our congregations to the next level in their relationship with Jesus to accomplish our mission to make more disciples of Jesus. It was a great time of learning, asking questions, sharing thoughts, and encouragement for each participant.

As the number of licensed local pastors and associate members continues to grow in the US, the executive committee of the NFAMLP, in communication with GBHEM and others, are developing a multifaceted approach to addressing the needs of both local pastors and the leadership of the Annual Conferences to benefit the United Methodist Church. We discussed these needs in 5 roundtable discussion groups over lunch.

These include:

1. Website administration. There have continued to be some concerns with E-zekiel, so effective immediately, Will Clark has been appointed by the Fellowship President to begin the transition to UMComm web hosting, with a target date of November 15. Various members of the leadership team will have access to update information to the site. This site will include the ability to register both for events and pay membership dues, connect to legislation and proposals regarding local pastors and associate members, and a communications area for leadership.
2. Social Media. With the increase of digital information and increased use of social media, the NFAMLP needs to become more intentional about its presence on Facebook, etc. Marikay Green will be added as an administrator to the page, and will play an active role in monitoring activity. We will encourage sharing of information especially between Annual Conferences of the activities of LLP and AMs.
3. Legislation. With the increase of use of Local Pastors and Associate Members, we are aware that often

the legislation regarding the Book of Discipline changes regarding us never makes it to the floor of General Conference. We are also aware that often individual conferences write and pass legislation that we as a whole never see and is often not passed on before General Conference.

Mike Davis has been appointed by the president to work with legislation. The first two issues will be legislation regarding local pastor ordination and voting rights. The legislation will come from the committee, and chairs from all Annual Conferences will be encouraged to sign it and present it at their conference. This allows us a unified front. We will be assisted in this endeavor by members of the ministry study team and legislative team in Nashville. Our goal is to be seen as partners in ministry, and an important part of the clergy group. We need to stress our abilities, including previous careers and education that we are bringing to ministry.

4. Relationship. The Fellowship will work on communication with GBHEM and other agencies. Rev. Conklin-Miller is providing some contacts at the agency for us. Also, we will be more intentional about communicating with each Annual Conference, not only to share what we are doing on a national level, but to encourage them to communicate their best practices.

5. Membership. Our current membership is at around 60. We are going to encourage all Annual Conferences to send the chairperson of their fellowship (or a representative) to future meetings, and to encourage all LLP's to attend.

As shared in many of the other areas discussed, the need for better communication is desired. The discussion group expressed desire for quarterly email communications to share news, happenings, updates on legislative proposals, and information on our annual meetings. Members look at this group as a way to earn CEUs needed especially once Course of Study has been completed and a way to foster relationships with others outside our own conference. It is a means to provide mutual support as we work together in ministry. All of these things help strengthen the United Methodist Church as we grow together and share resources.

Additionally, Rev. Conklin-Miller is encouraging us to have a voice in the ministry study as ordered by General Conference 2016. There is one local pastor representative in this study, and we hope to engage with that person.

The executive committee, including new officers, met on Sept. 15 following the meeting.

Present were:

Gwen Wolford, President

David Owsley, VP

Bev Roscoe, Secretary

Don Olm, Treasurer

Marikay Green, Membership Secretary and Social Media

Steve Riddle, Associate Member Representative

Deanne Lynch, Registrar, Local Pastor Representative
Mike Davis, Legislative Chair
By conference call, Will Clark, Webmaster.

As we look forward to the 2018 meeting, we are exploring the logistics of meeting in Nashville, TN. Vice-president Dave Owsley is working on this and will have information out by January. In an effort to cut costs, we hope to utilize our general headquarters or the Upper Room for meeting space and will be using GBHEM staff for presentations.

Also, the NFAMLP will be responsible for registration and cost of the event only. Attendees will have access to a block of hotel rooms but will be responsible for reserving their own room. Registration information will be on both the website and Facebook.

We also decided each member of the leadership team will begin to compile an accurate list of their duties, so that as their term ends, the new person stepping into their role will have a better understanding of what they do.

We look forward to next year with anticipation and excitement. Not only do we hope to meet in Nashville, we have a celebration as well. The NFAMLP was organized in 1968, which means we will be celebrating FIFTY YEARS!!

Stay tuned for news, updates and information in the coming months!

In Christian Service,
The Executive Committee

TREASURER REPORT (Don Olm)

What a great Annual Meeting we had at General Butler State Park this year. Our times of fellowship over meals and in the evenings, gave us a chance to connect with people from all over our country. Ken Willard was a wonderful presenter for our learning experience. And my personal favorite, we had great times of singing and prayer during our time together.

Financially we did okay too. It is a challenge to figure costs when you plan a meeting yet are not certain of how many people will be coming. Now that all the bills have been paid I am pleased to tell you we had a modest surplus of funds which will help provide funding for promoting the National Fellowship in all the Conferences in our United Methodist connection.

I'm looking forward to next year's meeting when each person will have the flexibility of making their own housing reservations. This will simplify the fiscal planning for the 2018 meeting.

In summary, the National Fellowship's financial records were audited during the meeting and found to be in good shape. We are on solid ground financially with our bank account currently at \$10,737.60.

END OF REPORT.