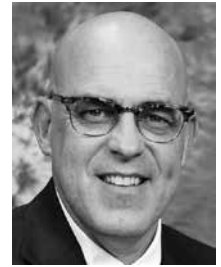


When I was re-elected in 2021, I said that during the next four years, I would direct my attention toward six initiatives:

1. Identify, train, and send church planters to take new ground by starting new United Brethren churches in new places.
2. Encourage and train ministers to walk with God, build disciple-making leadership teams, and launch missional communities that help people learn and live the way of Jesus.
3. Raise and recruit next-generation pastors and church planters.
4. Oversee and collaborate with stationing committees in the search for and appointment of senior pastors to local churches.
5. Reorganize and develop the UBNO team to effectively serve UB churches, pastors, and missionaries.
6. Renovate the United Brethren National Office building to accommodate a shared working environment for UBIC (USA), UB Global, and Huntington University.

After two years, I can point to some good steps we've taken regarding these initiatives. This report, and those of the directors, will mention various ways we have addressed the first five initiatives. The sixth was on the verge of being acted upon, but finances forced us to press pause. I'll tell more about that on page 11-9.



**Todd H. Fetters**  
**Bishop**

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## Our Churches

### Starting Churches

Over the past two years, the Lord has pointed the UBIC in the direction of planting churches in Arizona and Pennsylvania. Both plants have taken root and are making an impact in their communities, which are very different.

Through our partnership with Stadia, Mike Dittman and Andy Sikora linked up with Nate Sams to start Known Church in Surprise, Ariz. (not far from the Huntington University campus in Peoria). Andy and I flew out to Arizona to meet with Nate in January 2022. Nate took us around the area, and it was neat to see the Peoria/ Surprise region through his eyes and heart. Nate and his team met every Sunday in March at an elementary school in Surprise. Then, on April 3, Known Church held its public launch at the school. They had 65 people for that first service, and are now seeing about 50 people each Sunday.

In March 2023, I visited Nate Sams and attended the weekend service at Known Church. I also attended chapel at the Peoria campus, where Nate serves as campus pastor.

Dan Reed is planting Harvest Mill Church in Brookville, Pa. I connected with them on one of my trips. He had nearly 30 people in a core group. While they currently meet in an old mill, the Lord has opened the door for HMC to meet in the local high school. They have a core leadership team of about 25, and are seeing 40-50 attend on Sunday. Dan had been a long-term substitute teacher in Brookville, but is now focusing on the church plant.

Our team has an “all of the above” approach to church planting. In addition to the two more traditional church plants, we have three “simple church” (or micro-church) networks underway.

1. Christopher Little V is leading United House Network in Harrisburg, Pa.
2. Mike Dittman is leading Journey Communities Network in Commerce, Mich.
3. Rick Tawney is leading Renew Communities-Columbus in Ohio. There, First UB church has expanded its vision of its building to become “The Hilltop Hub.” Rick will provide leadership to a network of ministries that operate out of that building, including two churches. He was stationed as the pastor of First UB upon the retirement of Rev. Al Carter.

Our first-ever Simple Church Summit, with 28 participants, was held at the Hilltop Hub during 2022. These creative expressions of the Church are unique in their approach and reflect the UBIC’s enduring commitments to the Gospel, Unity, and Mission.

## Church Mergers

Pathway UB church in Jackson, Mich., merged with Heart O’ the Lakes UB church in Brooklyn, and is now a second campus of the Brooklyn church called Heart O’ the Lakes–Jackson. Pathway was an aging congregation and trending toward closure. Cyle Young, senior pastor of Heart O’ the Lakes, is now senior pastor of both campuses, and Todd Frederick, formerly senior pastor at Pathway, became one of two associate pastors working under Cyle Young. (Todd has since been appointed senior pastor of Shoreline UB church in Oak Harbor Ohio). I applaud this step of faith for both congregations and was present the Sunday during which we officially launched HOTL – Jackson.

There’s something about UB churches that merge that seems to work for our denomination. We seem to do it well and God typically rewards this step of faith. In the past we can point to Lake View in Camden, Mich. (three churches from Ohio and Michigan), New Horizons (two churches in Rockford, Ohio), and Praise Point (two churches in and around Wilshire, Ohio).

Now, we are looking at the possibility of two part-time churches coming together in Pennsylvania. Please pray for hearts to be open to a merger, or at least to having a conversation about coming together.

## New Models

Two churches are experimenting with unique leadership arrangements.

- Fowlerville UB (Fowlerville, Mich.) has been without a senior pastor since mid-2021. They are making healthy movement on a new pastoral leadership team model.
- Colwood UB (Caro, Mich.) continues to grow in their co-pastor (Kelly Ball and Randy Carpenter) and elder board model.

## Our Ministers

### Pastor Summits

During the year between national conferences, we hold a variety of summits for pastors and spouses. That included three different summits in 2022, with nearly 100 pastors and spouses attending. Each gathering had its own theme and keynote speakers.

*April 25-28: Pastor & Spouse Summit 1.* Attendees for this summit included pastors serving churches with up to 300 in average attendance. Roger Vezeau and Brian Biedenbach keynoted this summit with a focus on 3Story evangelism, which expanded on what they presented during the US National Conference business session in 2021. The key word emphasized was “abiding”—that when we are abiding in Christ, we become more effective at hearing the stories of those around us and connecting God’s story to them. Derek Thrush led worship with select songs and scriptures.

*April 25-29: Ministry Leaders’ Summit.* This summit included clergy (and some spouses) who were on staff at UB churches serving in such ministries as youth, worship, children, pastoral care, counseling, missions, and other areas. The annual Youth Workers Summit was folded into this event for 2022. The keynote speaker was Dave Rahn, former HU professor and retired YFC senior VP. He continued the theme of abiding, specifically tying our connection with Jesus to sabbath and joy. Mark Vincenti and Jay LeBlanc led in worship and prayer.

*May 2-5: Pastor & Spouse Summit 2.* Attendees for this summit included pastors (and most spouses) who serve churches with more than 300 in average attendance. A local clergy couple—Robbie and Christie O’Brien (Salty Church)—provided training in interpersonal and relational development, particularly as it applied to leading staff. Matt McKeown led the worship sessions. While I was sick with bronchitis and could only attend a couple sessions, my highlight came when the group reserved a table at a local restaurant for dinner together. It was great fellowship.

### Stationing

It is often difficult to find pastors to assign to churches. Yet, over the past two years the Lord (Jehovah Jireh) has provided when the time was right. Stationing is a process that requires churches to pray, be patient, and continue the work that the Lord has called them to do. It is encouraging to see churches come together to face the challenges they feel in light of not having a pastor. In many cases, however, they find that they do not need to be so pastor-dependent and determine the best ways to feed, lead, and tend the flock.

I am grateful that Mike Dittman is often one of our immediate catalysts to help the local church leadership understand that they have everything they need to carry a congregation through the stationing season. We ask them to embrace three spiritual disciplines...well, one: “Pray. Pray some more. Pray without ceasing.” Several times over the past two years, I was blessed to attend the service when a new pastor was present to be prayed over by the leadership after I preached the sermon, “How to Pray for Your Pastor.” Truly special.

## Human Reproduction Task Force

In 2015, the Executive Leadership Team established a Human Sexuality task force to examine and update our stands in the “Family Standards” chapter of the *Discipline*. The result was the landmark and unanimous passage of six proposals by the 2017 US National Conference.

Subsequently, I began considering the right time to do something similar on the issue of Human Reproduction. Our statements in the “Family Standards” chapter on “Abortion” and “Genetic Engineering” haven’t been revised since 1985, and the “Family Planning” statement was last revised in 1981. It was time for us to revisit these statements in light of the enormous scientific advancements that have occurred since the 1980s, and to find our voice for a new generation.

A tipping point for me came when I was asked to speak to an issue regarding “snowflake adoption.” A couple desired to adopt an embryo and asked me if our *Discipline* would allow it. According to the “Genetic Engineering” statement, the answer was no. However, with careful reflection, it seemed that a fertilized embryo met our standard for life—a fertilized egg. Therefore, in adopting an embryo, a couple was choosing adoption before birth and bringing that child to full term.

In addition, the “Family Planning” statement encouraged adoption only for parents unable to bear their own children. This seemed out of step with the missional mindedness of a new generation of parents who do not presume that adoption should only be considered if they cannot have children of their own. In our denominational family, we have many couples with both biological and adopted children.

In March 2022, the ELT appointed these six persons to a Task Force on Human Reproduction.

*Joni Michaud*, chairperson, is a lawyer and a member of the Pleasant Valley UB church in Lake Odessa, Mich. She has also served on the ELT since 2019.

*Dr. Kent Eilers* is a theology professor at Huntington University.

*Dr. Jody Bowser* was senior pastor of King Street UB church in Chambersburg, Pa.; at the end of April 2023, he accepted a pastorate on the East Coast with another denomination.

*Rev. Mark Vincenti*, an ordained UB minister from Emmanuel UB church in Fort Wayne, Ind., is now the campus pastor at Huntington University.

*Kim Fish* is a licensed UB minister, licensed social worker, adoptive parent, and individual/family therapist with a private practice in Fort Wayne, Ind. She grew up in the UB church as the daughter of Dr. Kent Maxwell, graduated from Huntington University, and is married to Rev. Steve Fish, a UB pastor and associate director of UB Global.

*Rev. Christopher Little V* is a UB church planter in Harrisburg, Pa. He and his wife are adoptive parents.

This team includes United Brethren individuals who bring expertise from a variety of perspectives—legal, family, adoption, therapeutic services, the pastorate, personal experience, Bible/theology, UB missions, higher education, etc. Given the highly successful work of the 2015-2017 Human Sexuality Task Force, I thought it was important to have some member continuity with the HRTF. Therefore, I’m pleased that Joni Michaud and Mark Vincenti, members of the HSTF, came on board to provide a link to the HRTF timeline, research methods, and voice.

The Church must be nimble and consider ethics for a brave new world that are biblically accurate and theologically informed. But let me stress, as we did with the Human Sexuality Task Force, that there has been no desire or appetite to liberalize our voice or practice.

The Human Reproduction Task Force held its first meeting in March 2022 via Zoom, with four of the six members present. They then met in-person at the UB National Office on June 17. They finished their work in April 2023 and presented their proposals to the Executive Leadership Team. Rather than revise current statements in the *Discipline*, they wrote entirely new statements with these headings: “The Beginning of Life,” “Family Planning,” “Adoption and Foster Care,” “Infertility,” “Assisted Reproduction,” “Abortion,” and “Human Reproduction and the Church’s Responsibility.” Joni and Mark Vincenti presented the proposals at all five national conference preview meetings. I felt they were well received.

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## Strategic Partnerships for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ

### **UB Global**

UB Global is the mission arm of United Brethren churches in the United States and Canada. Frank Yang, who became executive director in January 2021, leads a staff which includes three associate directors and an administrative assistant.

### **Huntington University**

Huntington University is our preferred partner in higher education. HU now has campuses in three locations — in Huntington and Fort Wayne, Ind., and in Peoria, Ariz. During 2022, HU celebrated its 125th anniversary, with an accompanying \$50 million capital fund drive which began several years before. Dr. Sherilyn Emberton has led the University since 2013. I appreciate the way she continually champions the close relationship between the church and college.

### **UB Association**

We have been in partnership with the UB Association since 2005, when it was created as the Mid-Atlantic Foundation. The UB Association was formed as a solution to the group health insurance challenges that our ministers and churches faced when annual conferences were officially disbanded between 2005 and 2007. The UBNO team and other UB ministers are insured through this network. Rev. Michael Mudge, a UB pastor in Maryland, is the president of the UBA. There is a membership body and a board of directors.

### **National Association of Evangelicals**

The National Association of Evangelicals represents nearly 40 denominations in the United States. The

United Brethren Church has been a member since 1953 (50 years). Currently, the NAE vice president is one of our own — Heather Gonzales, the oldest daughter of former bishop Paul Hirschy. Three United Brethren have been honored as NAE Laypersons of the Year: Drs. Orville and Ruth Merillat in 1988, and Don Duff in 1990. In years past, various UB bishops have served on the NAE executive committee. I was honored to serve on the NAE Presidential Search Committee which resulted in Dr. Walter Kim becoming the NAE president in 2019.

Since 2016, an ad hoc committee has focused on clergy financial health and help, thanks to the generous support of the National Association of Evangelicals. Rev. Gary Dilley chairs this team that includes Mrs. Janis Creason, Rev. Joe Leighton, and Rev. Tom Datema. They help us consider apparent needs or requests for funds that provide assistance in critical times.

The NAE is one way we carry out the Core Value of “We link with the larger church.” The NAE provides the gold standard for what it means to be evangelical. I appreciate their Bible-based, winsome, and wise voice in the public square.

## **Strategic Renewal**

The partnership between Strategic Renewal and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ began in 2018. It doesn't come with a contract, but does include a mutual commitment to develop praying pastors who shepherd praying churches. I value the relationship I've developed with Daniel Henderson and I trust the ministry of SR, as do many of our pastors. Over 60 pastors have participated in a cohort led by Daniel. I will continue to promote SR to our newly stationed pastors and underwrite their full participation in a cohort.

## **Chemistry Staffing**

Finding pastors for and assigning them to long-term placement is challenging. I've come to realize that “bigger waters” are necessary for some of our churches, especially our larger ones and those that are in strategic locations. Chemistry Staffing is a search firm built four-and-a-half years ago to find a particular pastor who will fit a particular congregation. CS is comprehensive in their search (broad database of 5000 ministers), incisive in their approach (use of analytics), and thorough in their vetting (assessments and interviews). The Stationing Committee will still be the lead actor in the stationing process when employing such services.

## **Stadia**

Stadia has been a leader in church planting processes for decades. Two years ago they decided to make their processes free to both church planters and denominational/network partners. This process can include assessment, training, project management, coaching, and more. They have a true Kingdom mindset, and are willing to leverage years of study and experience to help groups like ours move the ball forward in preparing church planters. Andy Sikora and Mike Dittman have been catalysts for this partnership.

## Pure Desire

A recent addition to our strategic partnerships is Pure Desire, an organization which is a resource for sexual addiction and trauma.

## Huntington University Ownership

During the fall of 2022, we did a deep dive into our archives and our documents to clarify the relationship between the University and the denomination when it comes to the ownership of the latter. In short: in the 1960s, the denomination gave the university ownership of all property. Here is a full explanation we wrote up:

### Relationship Between the Church and College

The United Brethren denomination views its relationship to Huntington University not in terms of ownership, but as an affiliation, a partnership. The HU Bylaws speak of “a strong historic and ongoing relationship with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.” This is consistent with how the denomination views the relationship.

Huntington University was founded by the United Brethren Church, and until 1965 was owned by the United Brethren Church. In 1965, the United Brethren General Conference passed a resolution transferring “the title to all tracts of land held by and intended for the use of...Huntington College” to the College itself and “under the control and management of the Board of Trustees of Huntington College.”

There has been some confusion, some conflicting language, regarding the relationship between Church and College. In various places, including on the current United Brethren website, language said the University was “owned and operated” by the denomination. This was inaccurate and has been changed.

Additional misleading language can be found in the United Brethren *Discipline*, which states, “The Higher Education Leadership Team is responsible for the oversight of Huntington University in Huntington, Indiana.” This, too, is inaccurate and will need to be revised. In reality, the HELT, as members of the Board of Trustees, join in providing oversight of Huntington University.

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# The International Church

## The Core Values

In 2001, United Brethren from around the world locked arms around eight core values. These core values unite us...or so they should. They are not merely aspirational, expressing what we'd like to become, but represent who we've actually been as a denomination throughout our history.

The *Discipline* obligates the bishop to “promote the Core Values of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International, and the *Discipline* of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.” Over the past several years, as I've considered what adhesives can secure the unity within our denomination, I've embraced our eight Core Values and dedicated myself to knowing them and helping others know them, too.

In early 2023, Brian Beidenbach and I launched a new podcast for the denomination called, “For the

Neighborhoods and the Nations.” We devoted Season 1 to the Core Values, and produced nine podcasts—one on each Core Value, plus an introductory podcast. I enjoyed this project, as it gave me the opportunity to think about what truly makes us United Brethren in Christ.

The Core Values are catching on. Jim Bolich and the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team are proposing changes to the UB History course that feature the Core Values, as well as a Pastoral Development Pathway that takes them into full consideration. Bishop Brian Magnus convened the 2023 General Conference in Jamaica with a focus on the Core Values as an International glue that holds national conferences and missions districts together.

## General Conference 2023

National Leaders from around the world gathered in Jamaica on March 18-22 for the triennial General Conference. Leaders from Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Jamaica, Canada, and the United States met to report on God’s activity in their nations and to consider ways in which we could encourage one another in our leadership tasks.

It was a blessing to join Bishop Daren Larmond and our Jamaican brothers and sisters for the final day of their National Conference. Nearly 1000 worshippers gathered for a full day of services at Camp Kendall.

Joining me were three members of the UB Global staff: Frank Yang, David Kline, and Courtney Waterman. All delegates and guests stayed at Regent College of the Caribbean, where our daily meetings were held. Rev. Douglas Birdsall, our workshop presenter, focused on topics related to leadership and integrity.

Brian Magnus has served as the chairperson for the General Conference since 2001. Given his upcoming transition from the office of bishop of the UB Church in Canada during the next two years, the General Conference delegates elected a new president. I’m honored to share with you that I was elected to that position. I look forward to working more closely with our international leaders in the years ahead. I’m excited to consider how to promote our Core Values in this role.

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## UB National Office

### Team Transitions

Ten people work out of the United Brethren National Office in Huntington, Ind., and another four persons work from their homes in four different states—Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. We have seen a lot of transition among team members at the UBNO over the past two years.

In October 2021, *Cathy Reich* semi-retired as the Administrative Assistant to the Bishop’s Office to become our part-time Events Coordinator.

*Samantha Essig* took Cathy’s place as administrative assistant. Sam was a wonderful teammate and did an excellent job helping us to digitize our files. She left in November 2022 to begin a new job with Pathway Community Church in Fort Wayne (a Missionary Church congregation which Sam and Jake have been at-



tending for some time).

*Jamie Hoffman* was immediately brought into the administrative assistant role, having recently retired after 31 years as a schoolteacher. Jamie is helping us understand that some important changes need to be made in our technology and data systems. She adds a lot to our team, and has a deep background in the denomination.

In August 2022, *Michelle Harris* concluded six years as an associate director of UB Global. *Courtney Waterman*, a member of Emmanuel Community Church, took her place in November 2022.

At the beginning of 2022, *Steve Fish*, an associate director in UB Global, dropped to four days a week while taking on a new assignment as interim pastor of Morning Star UB church in Kokomo, Ind. That lasted for most of 2022. He has since returned to fulltime status.

*Angela Vincenti* became administrative assistant in UB Global in January 2021. She left in March 2023 to take a position at Emmanuel Community Church. She was immediately replaced by *Teresa Roberts*, a member of ECC. She and her husband, Dave, had recently concluded five years as missionaries in Honduras.

*Andy Sikora* began his part-time role with the UBNO as Associate Director for Church Planting on August 1, 2021. Andy reports directly to National Ministries director Mike Dittman. However, with our casual organizational structure, our collaborative approach affords Andy the freedom to connect directly with me as the bishop, especially as we consider new places to plant and new planters to partner with.

*Steve Dennie* will retire at the end of August 2023. He has served at the UB National Office since 1978. Under his leadership, we moved from the days of clip art into the world of the internet. *Brian Biedenbach* has been hired as the new Communications Director, starting July 17, 2023.

## Office Renovation

One objective that I shared with the 2021 US National Conference was to renovate our national office building, which is shared by three organizations: the US National Conference, UB Global, and the Huntington University Advancement Office.

The April 2022 Executive Leadership Team unanimously approved a major renovation, which would begin in July 2022 and continue until May 2023. On April 12, the staff had a walk-through of the Lifespring Counseling Center at Huntington University, a converted split-level house which would become our office space until renovations were completed. Toward that end, the UBNO staff made preparations for the move by doing a lot of purging. Samantha Essig, my administrative assistant, oversaw digitally scanning all files related to our active ministers and local churches.

However, rising costs forced us to put the project on hold indefinitely. We expected the cost to be around \$1.2 million, but the construction bid came in at \$2.4 million.

## Other Information

### United Methodist Church Conversations

The United Methodist Church is experiencing a disheartening breakup, with many of its churches engaged in the process of disaffiliation—about 6000 disaffiliations as of June 2023. I’ve had conversations with pastors of several churches which are leaving the United Methodist Church and are looking at options. We share a common heritage with former Evangelical United Brethren churches, which merged into what is now the United Methodist Church in 1968. At that time, around a dozen EUB churches joined us. Now, as the UMC is fracturing, some former EUB churches have contacted the UBNO to learn more about us.

One of these churches was Pfrimmer’s Chapel in southern Indiana. It was actually the first United Brethren church in Indiana, started in 1812 by John George Pfrimmer, a contemporary of Otterbein, Boehm, and Newcomer. Steve Dennie and I had a good visit with leaders from this church in June, as did Mike Dittman in a separate trip. We were impressed with its history, team, and vibrant ministry. They’ve definitely decided to leave, but continue exploring about five different options.

In November 2022, I met with interested congregants from Calvary United Methodist Church in Bippus, Ind., who wanted to learn more about our denomination. On February 23, 2023, I received a letter from their board chairperson notifying me of Calvary’s desire to join the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. They have voted to disaffiliate from the UMC as of July 1, 2023. The process outlined in the *US Discipline* (Chapter 9, ¶402) will be followed.

The disaffiliation process for the UMC is tedious. Therefore, I’m moving at a pace that makes sense for them. Keep praying for the Lord to open the door for more UMC churches that are looking for a place to land and that fit with the UBIC.

### Asbury Out-Pouring Reflections

On February 16, 2023, I was honored to travel to Wilmore, Kent., with nearly 50 Huntington University students, faculty, and staff. But, mostly students! It appears that this revival is for them. And, why not? The palpable presence of the Holy Spirit seemingly saw fit to be manifest at the university, not the seminary across the street.

Among the group were Sherilyn Emberton, president of Huntington University, and Mark Vincenti, the campus pastor. Frank Yang and I represented the UBNO.

For five hours, we sat in various places of the 100-year-old Hughes Auditorium. Here are some of my observations.

We did not attend a “service.” Rather, we participated in a continuing, Spirit-led movement that had begun over a week before. The movement was being divinely fueled and sustained by worship, singing, scripture reading, praising, testimony, prayer, and the altar. Every aspect pointed to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit was recognized (and recognizable) as the leader of this movement. There was no iden-

# 11-11

# —come together

tifiable leader, no featured speaker, no religious dignitaries, no professional worship leader/band. Inspiring. One facilitator, with his own past of woundedness, gave a bit of instruction about the source and types of wounding and the freedom the Holy Spirit can give. People went to the altar and others stood to hand over their wounds and be freed. Awesome! I handed over some of my own woundedness and experienced a resurgence of emboldened confidence and clarity.

People were diverse and expressive. Standing. Sitting. Crying. Smiling. Raising arms. Jumping. Bowing. Kneeling. Singing. Embracing. Talking. Praying. And, likely much more. All of it expressed “decently and in order.” Though not an expressive worshipper, I was perfectly at home with expressive and other non-expressive worshippers. I was true to who I am and the Holy Spirit didn’t ask me to be any different. Though, if He had wanted something different, I would’ve gladly given it.

I felt rested. In fact, that was the sense Christ gave me as soon as I got to my seat: “Todd, just rest in Me.” Even though I’m not typically expressive, emotions can run deep when I worship or read/hear scripture. Several times throughout the five hours, I was brought to tears. The past three years have been challenging to endure and navigate for my family. I found myself praying for Lisa, Quinn/Richelle, and Jordan. Also, my mom and my brothers’ families. I asked the Lord to give them “rest” too.

We witnessed three people (maybe more, as I couldn’t see everyone from my vantage point) surrender to Jesus during a time when one of HU’s students gave her testimony. Powerful!

The Asbury Out-Pouring re-energized my prayer for a Jesus-exalting, spiritual movement at Huntington University, a prayer I began ten years ago when I arrived at the UBNO. There is something special that the Lord is doing and will do through this generation of students. Given the HU students I was privileged to be with during that excursion, my confidence is soaring. Please pray with me.

## **Update on Former General Officials**

I am grateful for the lives and ministry of past denominational officials (persons elected to office). They have all impacted my life in various ways. Let me give an update on those still living, and those we lost during the past two years.

*C. Ray Miller*, now 95 years old, was bishop for 20 years, 1973-1993. Since 1997, he has served on staff at Emmanuel Community Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. His wife of 76 years, *Lanie*, passed away in April 2023.

*Ray Seilhamer*, bishop 1993-2001, is living with his wife, *Ruth*, in Roanoke, Ind. After leaving the bishopric, he served three years as associate dean of the HU Graduate School of Christian Ministries, followed by 12 years as pastor of New Hope UB church in Huntington. In July 2016 he began serving two years as interim pastor of Mount Pleasant UB church in Chambersburg, Pa. In July 2020 he was appointed senior pastor of Zanesville UB church (Zanesville, Ind.). He continued serving there until May 2023.

*Paul Hirschy* was elected five times as director of Church Services, beginning in 1981, and then served as bishop 2001-2005. Paul served on staff at College Park UB church in Huntington, Ind., starting in 2012. He had battled cancer for several decades, and finally lost that battle on December 1, 2021. His wife, *Barb*, lives in Huntington.

*Ron Ramsey*, bishop 2005-2009, is retired and living with his wife, *E. J.*, in Fort Wayne, Ind.

*Howard Anderson* was elected Secretary of Education in 1973, and then Secretary of Church Ministries in 1977. He then served seven years in pastoral ministry. Howard lives in Huntington, Ind. His wife, *Eva Nell*, passed away in 2022.

*Carlson Becker*, who was elected director of Stewardship 1977-1981, lives with his wife, *Naomi*, in Traverse City, Mich.

*Gary Dilley* was the last person to be elected to head our missions program (it became an appointed position in 2005). He was elected director of Global Ministries in 2001, and served in that position until 2007. He pastored College Park UB church (Huntington, Ind.) for 11 years, and in July 2019 joined the staff of Emmanuel Community Church (Fort Wayne, Ind.), where he is now Pastor of Spiritual Care and Missions. He and his wife, *Rhonda*, live in Fort Wayne.

*Dr. Eugene Habecker* was president of Huntington University and the elected director of Education 1981-1991. He went on to serve as president of the American Bible Society and then president of Taylor University (Upland, Ind.). He is now retired and living with his wife, *Mary Lou*, in Indianapolis, Ind.

*Dr. G. Blair Dowden*, president of Huntington University 1991-2013 and the elected director of Education 1991-2005, is now a senior affiliate consultant at Credo Higher Education. He and his wife, *Chris*, live in Greenfield, Ind.

Two other wives of former bishops are also still with us. *Mossie Sites*, wife of former bishop *Wilber L. Sites, Jr.*, who passed away in 2010, lives in Chambersburg, Pa. *Eleanore Datema*, wife of former bishop *Jerry Datema*, who passed away in 1994, lives with her son Tom in Dorr, Mich.

## Activity Report

### Senior Pastor Assignments

- *Ricky Hull*, Sunfield UB (Sunfield, Mich.), July 1, 2021.
- *Mark Tinsley*, Jerusalem Chapel (Churchville, Va.), August 1, 2021.
- *Tim Bell*, interim pastor at Victory Heights (Franklin, Pa.), August 1.
- *Chris Moore*, Salem (Chambersburg, Pa.), October 1, 2021.
- *Mark Ralph*, interim pastor of First UB (Van Wert, Ohio), October 1, 2021.
- *Steve Fish*, interim pastor of Morningstar (Kokomo, Ind.), November 28, 2021.
- *Matt Coppers*, Calvary (Saginaw, Mich.), January 31, 2022.
- *James Martin*, Orrstown UB (Orrstown, Pa.), February 13, 2022.
- *James Pryor*, Richfield Road (Flint, Mich.), April 10, 2022.
- *Don Baker*, interim pastor of Criders (Chambersburg, Pa.), June 5, 2022.
- *Todd Frederick*, Shoreline (Oak Harbor, Ohio), July 1, 2022.
- *Robert Rose*, First Church of the Bronx (Bronx, N.Y.), July 1, 2022
- *Rick Tawney*, First UB (Columbus, Ohio), July 1, 2022.
- *Alan Harbold*, Mt. Washington (York, Pa.) and Strinestown (Manchester, Pa.), July 1, 2022.

- *Mike Heim*, Victory Heights (Franklin, Pa.), September 1, 2022.
- *Byron Spear*, Banner of Christ (Byron Center, Mich.), September 11, 2022.
- *Ricky Hull*, Crossroads (Charlotte, Mich.), September 11, 2022.
- *Brady Howell*, Morningstar (Kokomo, Ind.), November 28, 2022.
- *Dwight Walker*, interim pastor of Fountain (Keyser, W. Va.), November 2022.
- *Darrel Bosworth*, interim pastor of Sunfield UB (Sunfield, Mich.).
- *Jim Hippensteel*, New Hope (Huntington, Ind.), January 8, 2023.
- *Stephen Eastman*, Mt. Hope (Carson City, Mich.), March 12, 2023.
- *Mark Ralph*, interim pastor of Praise Point (Wilshire, Ohio), April 3, 2023.

## Deaths in the Ministerial Family

- August 15, 2021. *Tom Tarpley*, 79, Care Pastor at Fowlerville (Fowlerville, Mich.).
- November 9, 2021. *Thomas L. Brodbeck*, 85, a UB minister 1972-1993. Included 15 years as a pastor in Indiana and Idaho, and four years as director of Camp Cotubic in Ohio.
- December 1, 2021. *Paul Hirschy*, 75, UB minister for 43 years. Pastor for ten years in Ohio and Indiana, three years managing the denominational printshop, 20 years elected as director of Church Services (1981-2001), four years as bishop (2001-2005), seven years on staff at Huntington University, and nine years as associate pastor at College Park Church in Huntington, Ind.
- November 1, 2022. *Randy Fennig*, 67, UB pastor in Ohio for ten years and missionary in Sierra Leone for three years.
- December 13, 2021. *Dean VanderVeen*, 93, pastor and church planter in Michigan 1965-1992.
- January 29, 2022. *Donald Merillat*, 80, ordained UB pastor serving in Ohio.
- April 16, 2022. *Norma Murphy*, 97, UB pastor and pastor's wife for nearly 40 years in Michigan.
- May 4, 2022. *M. E. Burkett*, 100, a UB minister since the 1940s who served as a pastor, church planter, evangelist, and missionary in Sierra Leone.
- June 11, 2022. *Keith Smith*, 89, ordained UB minister since 1965 with ministerial service in Michigan.
- October 31, 2022. *Dr. Paul R. Fetters*, 88. A UB minister since 1954 who pastored churches in Ohio and Indiana, and in 1972 founded the Graduate School of Christian Ministries at Huntington University. He served as dean for 25 years, then continued teaching at HU.
- December 29, 2022. *George D. Cole*, 96, minister for 24 years in Ohio.
- December 30, 2022. *Donald W. Dennie*, 91, UB pastor for 33 years (1973-2006) with service in California, Arizona, Indiana, and Ohio.
- January 9, 2023. *Gar Hull*, 61, former pastor in Michigan.
- April 13, 2023. *Earl Haggard*, 69, former UB minister in Kansas and Ohio.
- April 19, 2023. *Kenneth E. Graham*, 94, pastor for 41 year (1952-1993) in Pennsylvania and Ohio, in-

cluding 33 years at Mainstreet Church in Walbridge, Ohio.

- May 25, 2023. *Gerald Gallaway*, UB minister in Michigan for 36 years (1965-2002).

## Retirements

- *Joseph Cilone* of The Heights (East Liverpool, Ohio) retired May 23, 2021.
- *Daryl Elliott* of Fountain (Keyser, W. Va.) retired June 30, 2021.
- *Denny Sites* of Jerusalem Chapel (Churchville, Va.) retired July 31, 2021.
- *Garry Culler* of Mount Pleasant (Chambersburg, Pa.) retired August 28, 2021.
- *Bill Blue* of Shoreline (Oak Harbor, Ohio) plans to retire October 31, 2021.
- *Ted Doolittle* of Calvary (Saginaw, Mich.) plans to retire December 31, 2021.
- *Greg Reed* of Morningstar (Kokomo, Ind.) retired December 31, 2021.
- *Jody Fleming* of Strinestown (Manchester, Pa.) retired May 31, 2022.
- *Ray Seilhamer* of Zanesville UB (Zanesville, Ind.), retired May 31, 2023..

## Closed Churches

- *Imagine This* (Grand Ledge, Mich.), founded in 2006, closed September 2020.
- *Iglesia Reformada Emanuel* (Jamaica Plain, Mass.), founded in 2002, closed in 2022.
- *Kilburn Avenue* (Rockford, Ill.), founded 1929, closed in January 2023.

## Disaffiliated Churches

*Hillsdale* UB Church (St. Marys, Ohio) was removed from the UBI by action of the Executive Leadership Team, effective May 1, 2022.

## Withdrawn Churches

*Pen Mar* (Cascade, Md.), founded in 1948, withdrew effective May 11, 2022.

## Church Property Owned by the US National Conference

*Bradenton, Fla.* Property continues to be used and maintained by a Haitian congregation.

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## On a Personal Note...

Since last National Conference, our family has experienced circumstances that have run the gamut of emotions from high moments of celebration to low moments of grief and many in between.

You may or may not recall that two years ago, my younger son Quinn had just undergone successful surgery to remove an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) in his brain that caused a brain bleed in July 2020. He's had a long recovery involving intense physical and occupational therapy. We are encouraged that he continues to show signs of progress.

# 11-15

# *— come together*

On March 27, 2022, Quinn proposed to Richelle Menzie, and on June 25, 2023, they were married in a ceremony in Syracuse, Ind., in front of their families and friends. All who gathered were ready to robustly and loudly celebrate this couple. Their journey to the altar required them to navigate a pandemic, an abrupt brain bleed/stroke, completion of a Master's program, brain surgery, years of occupational and physical therapy, and most recently, an automobile accident. I was thrilled to lead the celebration!

Jordan, our older son, moved from California to Indianapolis this past January. He had served on staff in the athletic department at California Baptist University since 2018. Today he is employed as an Event Manager manager for Indiana Sports Corp. We are thrilled to have Jordan living much closer to us. In fact, we find great joy every time I plug in his address on Apple Maps and read "1hr 29min" as opposed to "1day 6hr."

My father, Paul R. Fetters, was ushered into heaven on All Hallows Eve, October 31, 2022. As my brother Brooks likes to imagine, Pop showed up just in time for the All Saints Day group picture on November 1. We as a family are grateful for his legacy of love, faith, and service to Christ and his Church. Like many of you who have lost a loved one, we would savor just one more moment with Pop, but there would be no pulling him back as he has seen the glory of God, marveled at the spectacle of Heaven, and stood in the company of saints. He's living out the fullness of his life-verse: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Lisa and I are truly grateful for the encouragement we have received from our denominational family throughout our ministry in the bishop's office, but especially over the past three years. The texts, the notes, the prayers...all have been on target and on time. Thank you. Rest assured that we love the Lord, believe that he is good, and fully trust him knowing that his track-record of faithfulness is amazing!