2016-2022 Education & Clergy Development Report
Russ Gunsalus, Executive Director

It is an immense honor to report the fruit of God’s blessing, the work of our team and the results of your vision for the division of Education and Clergy Development (ECD). Through our work with Wesleyan clergy and educational institutions, ECD has endeavored to support the strategic focus of The Wesleyan Church (TWC): *Celebrating every time a disciple makes a disciple and a church multiplies itself until The Wesleyan Church has a transforming presence in every ZIP Code.*

**Thriving Clergy**

We are committed to care for and develop thriving, healthy, fit and effective pastors for a lifetime of sustainable, transformative ministry.

- **Full Strength Network Membership Program** – Full Strength Network (FSN) offers a membership program connecting pastors and their families to a national network of high quality wellbeing services such as counseling, coaching and respite care, helping them to thrive in ministry life. ECD has been a founding partner with FSN to help shape their ministry services. Over 760 Wesleyan pastors have become members. You can watch the moving testimonies of two of our pastors Tom Harding (click [here](#)) and Richard Hall (click [here](#)). For more about FSN, click [here](#).

- **Thrive Financial Initiative*/Iniciativa hacia Fianzas Exitosas** – Funded by The Lilly Endowment, TFI is designed to help pastors overcome economic challenges that limit ministry effectiveness. Offered in English and Spanish, TFI has become a transformative ministry to our clergy and church participants. In addition to our initial $1,000,000 grant, since 2016 we have successfully applied for an additional $1,000,000 grant in 2019 and December of 2021 another $500,000 grant focused on helping minority clergy and churches in the wake of the pandemic. With grants and matching funds, $1,387,733 was invested in Wesleyan pastors.

- **2019 The Gathering** – The Gathering was a powerful, three-day celebration in Orlando, Florida with nearly 2,000 Wesleyan clergy and spouses gathering together to be encouraged, inspired and engaged. For more, click [here](#).

- **Women in Ministry** We continue to express our commitment to women clergy by leading, co-sponsoring and supporting the biennial Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy Conference. For more information on the WHWC, click [here](#).

- **Common Table Collaborative** – ECD’s Flourishing in Ministry Conference has expanded into a collaboration between national clergy care researchers and practitioners providing research, webinars, resources and an annual conference. For more, click [here](#).

- **Wesleyan Clergy Wellbeing Research** – First-ever scientific research reports on Wesleyan clergy, their emotional wellbeing, clergy compensation, physical health. For more, click [here](#).

- **Reclaim Sabbath Initiative** – A yearlong emphasis in 2018, pastors focused on reclaiming Sabbath practices for themselves and their families as a foundational aspect of discipleship and God’s design for well-being.

- **Thrive in 5** – *Thrive in 5* is a bi-weekly email that addresses one of the six well-being domains with subject matter experts and links to additional resources. For more, click [here](#).

- **Covid-19 Resources for Clergy** – A number of resources for the resilience of pastors and their congregations.

- **Chaplain Ministries** – Chair USAF Chaplain Lt Col (retired) Michael Rash, associate endorser, and Associate Endorser Dr. Gary Carr lead and support initiatives for our military chaplains and institutional chaplains.
Wesleyan Higher Education

Our schools significantly extend and leverage the discipleship investment of Wesleyan families through intentional and vibrant spiritual academic community life.

Wesleyan Education Council (WEC) – Collaborates in vital conversations, initiatives and partnerships to advance Wesleyan higher education through shared services research, religious freedom risk management and marketing to Wesleyan churches. See more at www.WE-5.org

- **Wesleyan Higher Education Shared Services Task Forces** – Two strategic task forces are working to steward resource and expand the effectiveness and capacity of our colleges and universities. The Healthcare Co-operative task force with school and TWC CFOs. A task force comprised of school presidents or board chairs, investigating the creation of a shared services organization to expand the capacity and growth of our Wesleyan schools.

- **Presidential Searches** – Since 2016, the executive director has participated on presidential search committees for Oklahoma Wesleyan, Houghton, Southern Wesleyan and Indiana Wesleyan.

- **Wesleyan Board of Trustee Conference** – In 2019, Wesleyan Board of Trustee members gathered again with national Christian higher education leaders to learn, dialogue and advance Wesleyan higher education.

Ministerial Education and Formation

With quality ministerial education, the guidance of district boards of ministerial development and local churches, ECD seeks to equip pastors for the significant work of ministry.

- **Called Journey Advisory Group** guided the beta-test of a proposed middle credential, a simplified process for credentialing, improved platform technology and guidance for candidates as they pursued their Credential Pathway and Education Pathway.

- **WE5 Religion Deans’ Advisory Group** improved education requirements for credentialing, a more simple and formal permanent process for revising education requirements, and a framework for ministry education program approval and improvement.

- **Wesleyan Educational Institutions** developed new and improved education pathways for completing credentialing education requirements. SWU FLEX allows students a convenient, online, modular approach. Kingswood Expedition (formerly FLAME) offers a competency based educational pathway that capitalizes on previous learning and experience.

- **Called Journey Beta-Test** provided key insights improving the credentialing process, including a potential permanent middle credential, DBMD forms and new candidate advising.

- **Ministerial Student Support** for over 1500 ministerial students working to earn credentials.

- **Spanish Ministerial Education and Formation (SMEF) for Spanish-speaking leaders** – FLAMA is a Spanish Ministry Training Program (MTP) like Kingswood Expedition, CROSSTraining and other pastor and laity MTPs. FLAMA has provided over 200 classes to nearly 1,100 distinct students. FLAMA has begun the process to pursue accreditation with AETH that would create a pathway for FLAMA Academico students to transfer into credit bearing degree programs. SMEF supports two MTPs in N.C. East/West and Florida and launched the first FLAMA-Fest educational event to encourage and equip Spanish-speaking ministerial Students.

Special Thanks to The People Serving and Transforming

We are blessed with an amazing staff and committed leaders. Each has contributed to our mission in unique and vital ways, [https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd](https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd).

For an expanded report or to learn more about the other programs and initiatives from ECD, you can go to [https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd](https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd).