

General Council on Finance and Administration  
The United Methodist Church  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Members of GCFA Staff Travels to Africa**

*Nashville, TN* – Staff of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) recently traveled to Europe and Africa on a trip designed to build community and support systems that culminated in a renewed relationship focused on ministry to the people of The United Methodist Church for all parties involved.

A. Moses Rathan Kumar, general secretary and treasurer of The United Methodist Church; Richard Rettberg, General Counsel; Peggy Sewell, Assistant Deputy Secretary - Episcopal Services; and Scott Brewer, Director of Connectional Ministries were in attendance from GCFA. The meetings were proposed as a way for staff with similar responsibilities to be introduced to each other, learn together, and be able to provide support for each other to strengthen the ministries of all involved.



Together with personnel from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), Edwin Francisco and Barbara Jacobsen, staff traveled to Germany where they met with 3 bishops and 9 members of the episcopal staff. Scott Brewer, staff to the committee on Official Forms and Records of

GCFA, said that he came away from the gathering of church statisticians

with a greater understand and willingness to work on more globally inclusive language for the reporting of statistical information on standardized forms for the general church.

In Africa, staff met with 12 active bishops, 2 retired bishops, 38 staff members.

The group also visited Africa University and were impressed with the dedication of the staff, faculty and the students and their faith and hope for the future as they prepare to become leaders in Africa.

The conversations in Africa were informational and enlightening. GCFA staff returned from the Africa meetings with a renewed sense of the commitment and dedication to ministry from all with whom they met. Peggy Sewell, of GCFA's Episcopal Services comments: "We were impressed with personnel working on staff with the bishops in Africa. They were eager to learn more about The United Methodist Church and how it works both financially as well opportunities for ministry and service. Again and again they expressed their desire to be 'partners in ministry giving of their resources not being receivers only'."

At both destinations, participants agreed the dialogue has begun and there is much work to be done in subsequent gatherings. As a result of the meetings, GCFA will investigate quadrennial training outside the US; provide documents in multiple languages; and more frequent conversations about processes that will incorporate members in the connection across the globe.

One of the most outstanding revelations is that ministry to the people of The United Methodist Church is alive and well across the connection. At both locations, staff participated in worship service with their colleagues in ministry in multiple languages.

Said Peggy Sewell, "In all settings we were warmly received and immediately experienced that we were the community of faith gathered hearing the same scriptures, sharing common hymns, hopes, and prayers in different languages, coming from many lands, yet sharing a common faith and worshipping the same Lord as the children of God. Hallelujah!"

Dialogue will continue in subsequent conversations and face-to-face meetings.

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