

Asbury First United Methodist Church
Annual Charge Conference, October 26, 2025 | 12:00 PM

Presiding Elder: Rev. Richelle Goff, District Superintendent

Call to Order

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Opening Prayer

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Recording Secretary

Christy Leshner (GB secretary)

Attendance

Christy Leshner

Attendance was recorded by sign-in sheets; 81 persons signed in.

Welcome & Call to Order

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Warm welcome extended to Rev. Richelle Goff on behalf of Asbury First United Methodist Church, who was presented with flowers from the Alter Guild.

Introduction of Governing Board members where were present: Chuck Hanrahan (chair), Tim Mahan, Dawn Riedy (treasurer), Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback, Christy Lehser (secretary)

Approval of Previous Minutes

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Recommendation is before the congregation to approve the Charge Conference minutes from December 8, 2024. They are included in the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet. No questions or amendments were raised.

Motion: To approve the December 8, 2024 Annual Church Conference minutes

Moved by: Beth Wilkens

Seconded by: Tom Clemow

Motion passed with approval by majority members present

Approval of Previous Audit

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Recommendation is before the congregation to approve the 2022 Audit, included in the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet. No questions or amendments were raised.

Motion: To approve the Independent Auditor's Report of 2022

Moved by: Beth Wilkens

Seconded by: Dawn Riedy

Motion passed with approval by majority members present

Values, Dreams, and Vision

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Included in the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet on pages 11 – 15 is an excerpt

of our Dream Team report which outlines our Strategic Framework. The Dream Team reaffirmed and reimagined our value statements in the DreamScape. The DreamScape has been adopted and implemented across Asbury, helping guide the work of committees, teams, and task forces. The use of a Strategic Framework (versus Strategic Plan) allows us to continue to grow and evolve in our work for the church, where priorities are shaped by the value statements and guiding questions.

Pastor's Report

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Found on pages 16 – 19 of the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet is the Charge Conference Report of the Pastor, which includes vital statistics on who has joined and who has left Asbury First UMC in the past year, along with a narrative report on the state of the church. Pastor Michelle added that, after 16 months serving as the senior minister at Asbury First, she is loving her position and extended gratitude and appreciation to the congregation for their support and shared vision.

Kathy Thiel, Minister for Congregational Care shared what a blessed joy it is to serve at Asbury First. Congregational Care has its challenges, but none she cannot face, and she brings love, light, joy, comfort, laughter, tears, the full human experience together with the presence of God and Jesus whenever she meets with congregants of all ages and all stages of life. Kathy extended her love and appreciation to the congregation and assured all she will be there when called upon.

Rev. Patrick Dupont was occupied with work at the Community Outreach Center and Mike Mullin was occupied with the youth for a gathering.

Imagine No Racism

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Pastor Michelle noted this report is filed online, and it is complete as the time of the Charge Conference.

Pastoral Compensation for 2026

Beth Wilkens, SPRC Chair

Pastoral Compensation was outlined as follows:

Pastoral Staff	Base Compensation	Benefits	Total Compensation
Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost <i>Senior Minister</i>	130,000	43,750	173,754
Rev. Patrick Dupont <i>Minister for Outreach</i>	73,568	30,436	104,004
Rev. Kathy Thiel <i>Minister for Congregational Care</i>	71,495	30,156	101,651
Michael Mullin <i>Minister for Discipleship and Youth</i>	69,500	47,780	117,280

Some notes on compensation packages:

- Base salaries will increase by 2.5%, matching all staff; however, Pastor Michelle refused a salary increase for 2026. We are deeply grateful for her generosity.
- Total compensation decreased for 2026 over 2025 due to a decrease in pension benefits set by the Upper NY Conference.
- Rev. Patrick Dupont's benefits include reported Conference health insurance but will decrease by an amount still being reviewed as he may access alternative coverage.
- FICA/FUTA and private health insurance general staff coverage is paid for Mike Mullin because he is not ordained and not part of Upper NY Conference coverage.

Discussion and Questions Around Compensation

Q: Why are we paying Mike's benefits as if he's ordained when he is in fact not?

A: We are recommending Mike again for ordination and our hope is he will be this cycle.

Q: Hasn't he been put forward several times?

A: His ordination process was highly politicized at a time prior to the schism in the UMC, which prior leadership outlined in detail at the time for the congregation.

Q: Concerned about transparency to the congregation throughout this process, as hasn't he expressed disagreement with some of the UMC doctrine?

A: Mike does carry the same level of education as our other ordained staff, and his understanding of scripture and emphasis on inclusion is key for our youth.

A: Caution against getting caught up in credentialism – if a pastor is doing the job they should get paid for doing the job.

Q: Why is Pastor Michelle's total compensation less than in 2025?

A: Because the percent of mandatory pension contribution from the district is lower than it was last year.

Comment from Beth that it is helpful to have congregational input, and that it can be fed in to her or any of the SPRC members, and it will be considered as the SPRC performs annual pastoral reviews, which are ongoing now.

Comment from Dawn Riedy (Finance Committee Chair) that the Finance Committee fully supports the compensation packages that are in front of the congregation.

Motion: To approve the Pastoral Compensation as presented

Moved by: Joe Stankaitis

Seconded by: Mary Church

Motion passed with approval by majority members present

Local Church Leadership Interface / Nominations

& Personnel Election of Trustees

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Members in attendance in the sanctuary were asked to complete the ballot for the Governing Board members. There were two blanks present on the ballot, and the hope was that by the Charge Conference they would be filled, but answers were still pending from some individuals. At the January 2026 Town Hall we will put forth the final names for a vote. Individuals are able to write-in on ballots to put forth their own name.

Term Start	Term End	Class Year	Name	Position
1/1/25	12/31/27	2027	Chuck Hanrahan	Chair, Lay Leader
1/1/24	12/31/26	2026	Tim Mahan	Sustainability Task Force
1/1/24	12/31/26	2026	Christy Leshner	Secretary
1/1/24	12/31/26	2026	Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback	Outreach Committee
1/1/25	12/31/27	2027	Peter Owh	Investment Committee
1/1/25	12/31/27	2027	Frances Bryniarski	Vice Chair, SPRC
1/1/25	12/31/27	2027	Dawn Riedy	Treasurer, Finance Committee
1/1/26	12/31/28	2028	- -	Property Stewardship Committee
1/1/26	12/31/28	2028	- -	Social Concerns Committee

Election Results: There were 86 ballots cast and all candidates for Governing Board were approved by majority of members in attendance.

Safe Sanctuary Compliance

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

This is a report that is completed online, and a copy of it can be made available if anyone is interested in seeing it. Please contact the office for a copy. Rest assured that we have a policy and that it is being followed to the best of our ability.

Accessibility Audit

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

This audit is found in the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet, pages 21 – 23, and though this audit does not need a formal vote, we called for a show support for the audit. A majority of members in attendance showed support via a show of hands.

Declaration of Candidacy for Licensed /

Ordained Ministry

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Mike Mullin's Declaration of Candidacy for the Order of Elders is found on page 24 of the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet. Motion was passed by a majority of members in attendance.

Certified Lay Servant

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Cindy Haag's application for Certified Lay Servant is found on pages 25 – 26 of the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet. Motion was passed by majority of members in attendance.

Removal of Members from the Rolls

Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost

Annually, member lists are reviewed and an attempt is made to contact those who have not attended in the past year. If no contact method is on record, members are listed for in our Charge Conference agenda (found on pages 27 – 28 of the Town Hall Church Conference Materials packet). Members listed from the 2024 list, which is a second reading of names, will be removed from the Asbury First rolls. Names on the 2025 list, which is the first reading of names, will carry to our 2026 Charge Conference roll while continuing to try to connect with these members. A motion to remove the 2024 members without contact information from the roll was approved by majority of members in attendance.

Celebration of Ministry

All

Part of the Charge Conference is to celebrate the life and work of the church!

- Celebrate Paula Dugan, who has been an incredible Children's Ministry lead! Her work from VBS, to Bible Sunday, to children's moments, and all the other areas she touches is incredible. She represents our church so well in the community.
- Celebrate the music ministry and Carl Johengen! As a choir member I see all that goes in to brining the music ministry to life each week, and it's a big reason why I attend and I know many others do too.
- Celebrate outreach! We talk about brining justice to the world, and our amazing leaders and volunteers at the Community Outreach Center do that every week, and every day. We made this dream a reality, even in the midst of COVID, and now we greet our neighbors by name and welcome them into this amazing facility this is really theirs.
- Celebrate the Social Concerns Committee and the fact that Pastor Michelle came in and saw that there were several little groups all doing different facets of this work, and she empowered the various groups to come together.
- Celebrate the completion of the Columbarium! With a special thanks to Bob Schuman and Kathy Thiel for bringing this forward for our congregation.
- Celebrate the Governing Board, Finance Committee, and Financial Sustainability Task Force! These teams proved there is no magical thinking when it comes to a balanced budget, and they put in the hard work to get us out of a difficult financial situation.

- Celebrate the congregation! Looking back 18 months, we had a change in much-loved leadership, we've faced budget issues, and we are here today living together in community still and doing more good.
- Celebrate the DreamScape! Especially the way the leadership and Governing Board have taken it and run with it. A lot of times strategy work ends up not getting used, but that's not the case here!
- Celebrate Holly Temming, Deb Bullock-Smith, David Stith, and Johnny Colón (and staff)! They all do so much to ensure the church is running smoothly through scheduling, communications, administration, and space readiness.

Pastor Michelle drew the celebration of ministry to a close as she echoed members' sentiment and celebrated the fierce and wonderful hearts of the Asbury First members.

Question and Answer Session

All

- Online Q: What are the top 3 – 5 items we'll focus on in the next few years?
- A: The DreamScape outlines our priorities as we go forward, so invite members to review that document (Pastor Michelle). Additionally, the Governing Board is working on Three Big Questions that will drive the work of the GB and other committees and teams across the church. These will flow out of the DreamScape and once finalized in November / December and share at the January Town Hall. Congregational input for these Three Big Questions can be sent to the governance@asburyfirst.org (Chuck Hanrahan).
- Q: When we lose someone who is valuable to the ministry of the church, we need to figure out why. It's reported that one of the trainings the staff attended was on conflict resolution. What from this training was employed to try to avoid losing Paula Dugan?
- A: We had conversations among staff through the process, about personalities and finding ways to work and move forward together. The re-written Family Ministry role was written with Paula in mind with input from her own review of the role, and she was given first right of refusal to the new position. An offer was made to have deeper conversations on the matter if individuals desired to (Pastor Michelle).
- Comment: As a new member I'm sad to see division in the church based on lines drawn behind staff. I'd encourage us to not gossip, let politics of positions go, and come together for the better of the congregation.

Closing Prayer

Rev. Richelle Goff

DS Richelle closed on a note of joy at being together and in joining us in worship. She commended the members of Asbury First for coming together and doing the hard work of being in ministry together. She encouraged the congregation that discussion and discourse is healthy, and that it is clear that the members of Asbury love one another deeply and embrace the gifts that each person brings.

The Charge Conference was closed at 1:45 PM. For a video recording of the meeting, you may go to YouTube and view via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPWNOFkfhms&t=7007s>

Respectfully submitted,

Christy Leshner,
Recording Secretary