

AFRICA UNIVERSITY

Africa University ended 2016 poised to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and eager to embrace new opportunities for transformative ministry over the next 25 years.

It is a great joy to recognize and thank the Baltimore-Washington Conference for a 100 percent investment to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2016. All 10 conferences in the Northeastern Jurisdiction led by example, giving to the AUF at 100 percent or higher for the second consecutive year. In 2016, the tremendous commitment to connectional giving and participation of local churches enabled 34 of the 56 United Methodist annual conferences in the United States — up from 32 in 2015 — to invest 100 percent or more of their asking to the AUF.

The university community acknowledges, with heartfelt appreciation, the many ways in which the Baltimore-Washington Conference has been active, faithful, and generous in helping Africa University to realize its mission. In addition to its support for the AUF and gifts for scholarships, the Baltimore-Washington Conference provided \$300,000 for a capital project. This gift was a love offering in honor of Bishop Marcus Matthews' retirement in July 2016, and it has helped to jump-start efforts to build a sports complex on the Africa University campus. We are grateful to the conference, led by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling and her Cabinet, for the ongoing provision of part-time staff support and an office in Fulton, Md., for the first, church-wide Campaign for Africa University. Through Africa University, the Baltimore-Washington Conference helps young people to discover and sharpen their gifts for leadership. The dream of the global United Methodist Church is alive in the contributions of the university's 7,000+ graduates. More than 90 percent of these graduates are still in Africa, serving communities in 32 countries. Currently, more than two dozen Africa University graduates are missionaries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, under the auspices of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. People who would otherwise be on the margins are actively bringing God's grace, peace and abundance to the lives of others.

Over the past year, Africa University continued to evolve and serve by:
Restructuring its academic units in order to remain relevant and provide a broader-based education to meet new demands in the African workforce.
Providing leadership formation experiences and learning for more than 1,400 students from 26 African countries. Contrary to the norm for African higher education institutions, women represented more than half of the student body.
Generating new knowledge and capacity to support peacebuilding in Burundi, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Somalia, Nigeria and Uganda; and to improve food security, human rights, and leadership for the African continent.
The ongoing support of the Baltimore-Washington Conference is of vital importance to Africa University. On the occasion of our 25th anniversary, we invite the individual members as well congregations and districts of the Baltimore-Washington Conference to celebrate Africa University. Engage in a season of daily prayer for Africa University. Join its honorary alumni association. Consider hosting a special "AU@25" event or Africa University Sunday in your local church or area. Use your event to increase awareness of Africa University's ministry and invite attendees to each give at least \$25 each in honor of the 25th anniversary.

Thank you, Baltimore-Washington, for your unwavering witness in response to the continuing call to faith, hope, action and renewal in the world.

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