



LOVE BOLDLY. LEAD COURAGEOUSLY.

Give the gift of leadership to faith communities around the world.

Dear Church,

I have never been to seminary, but my life and faith have been formed by my parents, my sister, and so many dear friends who were shaped by theological education. In seminary, the pastors I know and love had their certainty stretched. As they became more deeply connected to the story of God, the answers they thought they had often gave way to questions and doubts—and eventually to wisdom and wonder. Their study and preparation transformed them into pastoral leaders who impact not only their own faith, but mine, yours, and everyone else's in the communities they serve.

Their guidance became a gift shared with all of us—and it's a gift I continue to receive.

When the Council of Bishops asked churches across the United Methodist connection to take a special offering for theological education outside the United States, **I felt that call acutely.** For twelve years, I had the privilege of serving on the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. During that time, I visited theological schools and met leaders in Mozambique, Liberia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. **I witnessed firsthand the vitality of the worldwide church—and the challenges pastors face when they long to study more deeply but lack the resources to do so.**

Many of us in the United States may not realize the disparity: while U.S. seminaries benefit from significant endowments and denominational support, most theological schools outside the U.S. have little or no financial foundation. **Fewer than five percent of United Methodist clergy abroad have access to a theological master's degree,** even though hundreds of pastors are ready and eager to pursue one.

Our worldwide church also carries a complicated history shaped by colonialism and marked by deep divisions in recent years, including over the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ siblings. **These are real wounds. They are also a call to act. Supporting theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines is one way we can begin to address long-standing disparities and form leaders who embody reconciliation, justice, and hope.**

I believe education transforms leaders—and that well-formed leaders strengthen communities. My hope is that this initiative will raise up leaders who love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously. **If this vision resonates with you, I hope you will support this work. Together, we can help nurture leaders whose wisdom, courage, and compassion will bless the church and the communities they serve for generations to come—and become the same kind of gift that faithful pastors have been in each of our lives.**

With gratitude and resurrection joy,

Rachel Wright,
FUMC Austin Senior Director of Strategy



Gifts, marked "Easter Offering" may be placed in the offering basket, mailed to or brought by the church office, made online at fumcaustin.org/giving, or by using the QR code provided and following the step-by-step instructions. Be sure to select "Easter Offering" from the drop-down menu.

