



**COMMUNICATIONS**  
United Methodist Communications  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# 2024 Evaluation Report



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

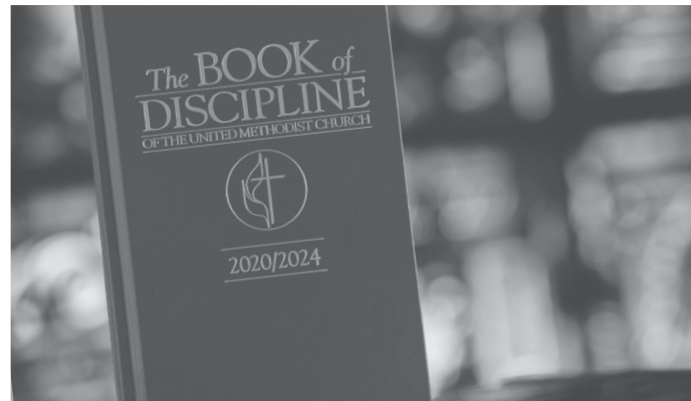
Who We Are & What We Do	3
2020/2024 General Conference UCom Highlights	5
Website Performance	8
Newsletter Performance	8
Social Media Channel Performance	9
Advertising & Promotion	10
Denominational Content	11
Local Church Services & Training	12
Public Information	13
UM News	14
Ask The UMC	14
Global Communications Technology	15
U.S. Conference Relations	17
Creative Strategy	18
Video Production	18
Technology	19
Connectional Giving	20
UCom Foundation	20
Infrastructure, Facilities & Net-Zero Efforts	21
Human Resources	21



# COMMUNICATIONS

United Methodist Communications

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## WHO WE ARE

### Our Vision

Changing the world by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Our Mission

Communicating all the good we can, in all the ways we can, to all the people we can, in all the places we can.

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*Based on 2024's vision and mission and not reflective of changes as part of strategic planning for the new quadrennium.*

## WHAT WE DO

**Engage** people with the story of God's work in the world through The United Methodist Church.

**Equip** The United Methodist Church at all levels to become effective communicators, as together we seek to grow the Church in the 21st century.

**Claim** our role as the strategic communications and marketing agency for the global United Methodist Church by building communication infrastructure and networks.

**Nurture** our people and demonstrate good stewardship.



# 2020/2024

## General Conference

### UMCom Highlights



## 2020/2024 GENERAL CONFERENCE UMCOM HIGHLIGHTS

United Methodist Communications played an integral role in fostering the success of the 2020/2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Staff across the agency contributed to meet the myriad of communications needs of the event and its participants in multiple formats and delivery methods. Highlights include:

### Creative

- Created **interactive, denominational** booth that incorporated the 13 UMC agencies and boards
- Handled GC logo/branding, the official, multi-language worship and welcome signage/ads
- Designed booths for Africa University and GCAH and marketing materials for GCSRW

### Production and Tech

- Livestreamed the plenary sessions and garnered:
  - **450,000 English language views**
  - 6,500 French language views
  - 3,000 Spanish language views
  - 1,901 Korean language views

- Handled the livestream prep, event/plenary production and post production needs
- Assisted fellow agencies, communicators and church entities with video needs and file sharing
- Supported the overall technical needs of the event
- Provided for communicators' physical space, connection and electronic needs
- Supported GC's volunteer tech team
- Ensured **100% stability** of the denominational websites during the event

### News

- Hosted **online pre-General Conference orientation and briefing** available via livestream and recordings, to inform and equip delegates in advance of General Conference
- Produced **80+ English-language stories**, including a daily wrap-up story
- Created 15 additional original content pieces provided in Korean and Spanish
- **Translated 150 stories** into French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Kiswahili
- Welcomed **1.2 million total page views** to UMNews.org through the run of GC
- Captured, edited and captioned **941 photographs**



## News (Continued)

- **2 million+ Flickr photo views**
- Ask The UMC remained a trusted resource for all things United Methodist
  - Saw a **75% increase in live chat volume**
  - Responded to questions from online viewers, journalists and annual conference and general agency staff

## Public Information

- Garnered **245 million+ potential unique impressions of media coverage**
- Secured **50+ features**
- Managed **175 communicator requests** for on-site involvement
- Developed and executed **publicity plan** with action points including:
  - Talking points and resources
  - Hosting informational meetings
  - Conducting **8 training sessions** on crisis communications and spokesperson tips with annual conferences
  - Identifying and training **topical spokespersons**
- Coordinated and hosted on-site **press conferences and online press kit**
- Served as Commission on the GC's publicity director

## Denominational Content

- Hosted and managed the 2020/2024 General Conference website — **UMCGC.org**
- Delivered **daily highlight videos**
- Provided **in-depth explanations** of passed legislation
- Offered guidance on constitutional amendments
- Helped church leaders stay informed

## Advertising

- Sponsored paid promotions via social media, search engine and YouTube
- Garnered **4.8 million impressions**



# UMCom

## Overall Highlights



## WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

Websites and newsletters managed by UCom continued to keep people informed, equipped and inspired.

WEBSITE	2024 Sessions
UMC	6,976,080
Resource UMC	3,209,303
UM News	2,381,675

## NEWSLETTER PERFORMANCE

In 2024, UCom proactively removed bad emails from the database. Although subscription numbers went down, the effort should lead to more engaged subscribers.

PUBLICATION	2024 Subscriptions	2023 Subscriptions	2024 Open Rate (% of delivered)
UM Now	102,016	130,017	33.33%
MyCom	30,277	50,930	45.83%
Friday Digest	35,839	51,855	30.54%
Daily Digest	49,124	63,508	38.65%
COMPASS*	20,430	27,420	22.30%
The Source	14,248	16,840	63.96%
UMComtigo	960	1,009	40.00%
DuruAllimi	1,794	2,420	49.54%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>254,688</b>	<b>316,579</b>	<b>39.24%</b>









\* Partial year as newsletter ceased production

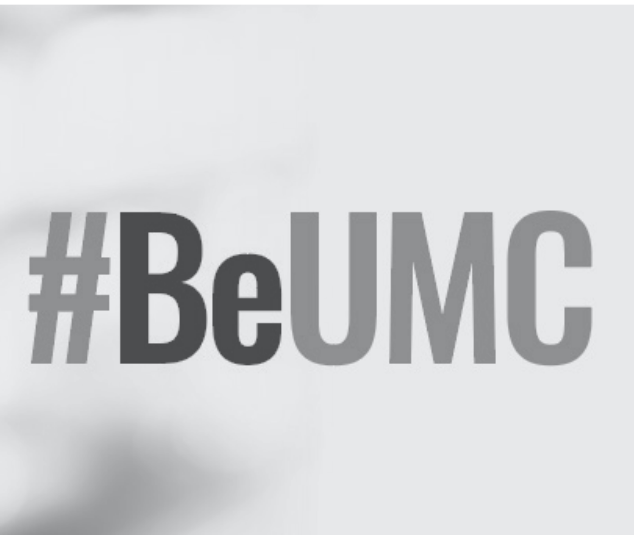




## SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNEL PERFORMANCE

The agency had **1.83 million+** social media followers across platforms and **6.20 million+** Facebook engagements in 2024.

	 Facebook Followers 2024	 Facebook Engagement 2024	 Instagram Followers 2024	 Instagram Engagement 2024	 X Followers 2024	 TikTok Followers 2024	 YouTube Views 2024
 UMC	817,995	3,053,487	72,822	264,891	N/A	7,311	23,419
UMCom	205,761	706,237	2,776	624	N/A	N/A	Included in UMC #
UM News	235,408	1,166,864	N/A	N/A	27,014	N/A	Included in UMC #
ResourceUMC	96,061	311,215	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Included in UMC #
Rethink Church	108,120	106,638	13,339	14,465	N/A	N/A	2,351
UMC Giving	113,754	599,625	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Korean Church	49,976	157,545	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Included in UMC #
Recursos Metodistas Unidos	9,625	31,656	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Included in UMC #
La Iglesia Metodista Unida / Servicio Metodista Unido de Noticias	28,604	69,551	735	470	N/A	N/A	Included in UMC #
L'Eglise Methodiste Unie	19,899	4,441	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Included in UMC #



## ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Advertising campaigns, social media and other marketing initiatives helped to spread the message of The United Methodist Church and its ministries.

### #BeUMC

The #BeUMC campaign continued to remind United Methodists of who we are at our best. As people of God called The United Methodist Church, we're faithful followers of Jesus seeking to make the world a better place. #BeUMC encouraged congregations to renew their commitment to the mission and ministry of The UMC and celebrate the core values that unite us. 2024 promotional efforts garnered:

- **18.4 million** in reach
- Nearly **12 thousand mentions**
- **52.3 thousand** interactions

### U.S. highlights:

- Combined paid social media sponsored ad campaigns garnered more than **149 million impressions**
- Easter national advertising campaign generated nearly **12 million online impressions**
- Google ad campaigns saw **3.5 million+ impressions**

### Disaster response efforts:

- Hurricane Helene and Milton
  - Partnered with the Florida, Western North Carolina and South Georgia annual conferences and UMCOR
  - Geo-targeted social media ads directing folks to conference and national level links
  - National, geo-targeted ads with lead generation for the UMCOR website
  - Advertising efforts led to more than **26 thousand link clicks, 1.2 million+ reach** and nearly **3.9 million impressions**
- Typhoon Kristine (October)
  - Partnered with the Davao and Manila Episcopal areas in the Philippines
  - Social media ad buy objective was to garner awareness of donation efforts
  - Overall efforts saw a reach of **543,516** and **1,332,623** impressions



## DENOMINATIONAL CONTENT

Beyond General Conference, the team produced content on UMC.org, ResourceUMC.org and the websites' newsletters to enhance spiritual growth and development, equip leaders for ministry via resources and assist spiritual seekers in learning more about Christ and The UMC.

ResourceUMC.org remained a vital hub for United Methodist leaders, equipping them with the resources, essential tools, timely updates and fresh inspiration to help them lead and serve confidently and effectively. Meanwhile, UMC.org brought stories to life—highlighting faith in action and the incredible ways United Methodists are making an impact.

### Across the websites collectively, the team:

- Published **305 new content pieces**
- Shared **140 UM News stories**
- Promoted **123 pieces of content from partners** in ministry such as Annual Conferences and other agencies

### UMC.org member/seeker communications content highlights:

- Ministries embracing neurodiverse communities
- Serving those experiencing housing insecurity
- Radical inclusion and unwavering compassion

- Power of prayer
- Lay-led ministries
- Ways art deepens worship experiences
- Understanding the sacredness of communion

### Leader communications via ResourceUMC.org highlights:

- Resources on the newly passed constitutional amendments, offering clear explanations and a roadmap for the ratification process. Dedicated Worldwide Regionalization resource page featuring summary flyer, two tailored slide decks (for Central Conferences and U.S. Annual Conferences) and a video showcasing worldwide support—all designed to foster deeper understanding and engagement
- Practical inspiration and tools for local churches
- Introduction of a New Places for New People page showcasing innovative ways churches are reaching their communities and sparking new ideas for ministry
- Monthly Ministry Planner helped church leaders easily and quickly find relevant resources from across the connection

# LOCAL CHURCH SERVICES & TRAINING

United Methodist Communications equipped church leaders to communicate effectively through training opportunities and marketing resources.

As part of UCom's new strategic plan for the next quadrennium, shifts in these services began mid-year as the agency realigned to meet denominational communications needs.

## Local Church Services:

The team provided marketing and communications support to over **1,200 local churches** in the areas of branding/logo development, social media strategy, websites, promotional outreach and more.

## Highlights included:

- **147 pastors, staff, and local church leaders** were a part of month-long coaching communities throughout the year that focused on equipping our local United Methodist churches to enhance their marketing and communication strategies
- Intentionally worked with churches who were affected by disaffiliation to provide marketing and communications support to help them reach new people in their communities
- Provided flag banners to **47 United Methodist churches** in Missouri to bring the **Love Unites** conference-level campaign to the local church to share a message of hope and love to combat hate and racism
- **220 local churches** received a You Are Loved flag banner in 2024 that requested one from the StayUMC Facebook group
- Continued providing Zoom licenses since 2020 to **over 300 local churches** to connect virtually with their members and community

## Training:

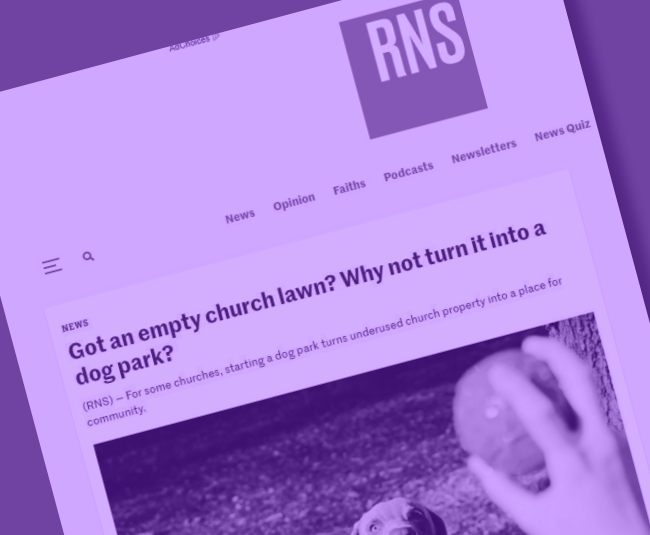
In the first seven months of the year both live and on-demand training opportunities were made available to assist church leaders in being effective communicators.

## Highlights included:

- The Training Team created several new courses including:
  - Que significa ser Metodista Unido
  - Communicating with Your Church about Change
  - It's all about the prompt: How to get what you need from AI
- The UMCTraining website saw **3,022 training sessions** and offered:
  - 6 multi-lesson eLearning courses
  - 9 eLearning microcourses
  - 1 facilitated course
  - 1 live webinar on AI
  - 96 participants in the Revitalize Your Church's Social Media cohort

# TOP 10 ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

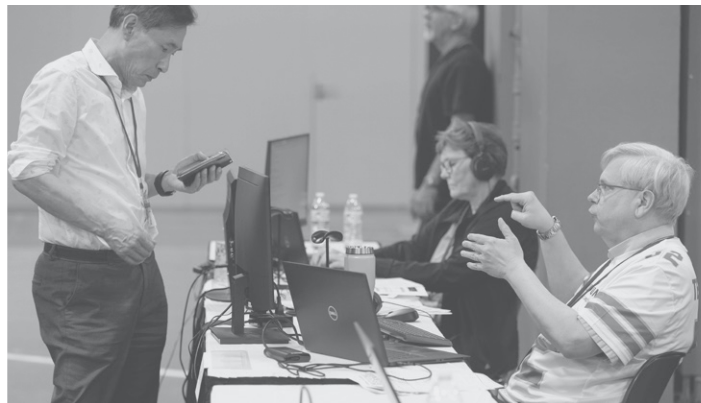
Course Name	# Trained
Communicating with Your Church about Change	741
Exploring General Conference	578
It's all about the prompt: How to get what you need from AI	395
Welcoming Ministry	186
What It Means to be United Methodist	151
Introductions to Accessible Digital Communications	107
Radicle Methodism: Back to our Roots	100
Launching Your Church Website	87
Accessible Design: Fonts & Layouts	73
Managing Page Access on Facebook	67



## PUBLIC INFORMATION

General conference lead-up, on-site support and follow-up efforts were a primary focus for the Public Information Team in 2024. Beyond that, the team helped to spread the message of The UMC and its ministries through publicity, media and public relations initiatives, working with news reporters (local, national and international) across various mediums to share our perspectives and pitch stories, and impart information within internal church channels via press releases, feature writing, social media, strategic response and media/crisis training and consultation.

- Expanded visibility and awareness effort highlights: **17 stories pitched** and **34 media assists** non-General Conference related
- Garnered nearly **53,000 new Facebook fans** collectively across The UMC, UMCCom, ResourceUMC and UM News Facebook pages
- **Exceeded 1 million content interactions** collectively on UMC, ResourceUMC and UMCCom Facebook profiles
- Saw a **92% increase** in ResourceUMC Facebook reach and supported other general agencies with 25%+ represented post content on the page
- **Six crisis prevention and response strategy trainings** completed, including one in Tanzania and another for the Western Jurisdiction
- Managed verbiage and publicity support needs for **17+ projects** including needs for the likes of the Commission on the General Conference, Connectional Table, JENZ coalition, GBGM and the Sand Creek Massacre Response Team



## UM NEWS

The UM News Team provided concise, accurate and up-to-date news about what's happening in the denomination around the world, along with engaging feature stories about United Methodists living their faith.

### Highlights included:

- **95 commentaries** in the various languages, representing different perspectives on issues facing the denomination
- **875 stories** in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Korean
- **3,396,355 page views** on UMNews.org
- **2 million** views to the UM News Flickr site

The News Team covered the major **breaking news** of The UMC including the Church's response to:

- Natural disasters such as Hurricane Helene
- Immigration ministry undaunted by political climate
- Climate change including flooding in the Philippines
- Mass incarceration
- Conflict in the Middle East
- Church property disputes
- Responses to General Conference decisions in places like Nigeria, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire

### UM News spotlighted:

- Evangelism efforts
- Global health initiatives
- Stories of United Methodists living out their faith in interesting ways

## ASK THE UMC

UMCom's information service consistently provided facts, clarity and direction for all things United Methodist.

In 2024, the team responded to **9,300+ queries** via email, live chat and phone.

### Highlights included:

- "Is The UMC really...?" - a series that continued to proactively address topics to help members identify and avoid misinformation
- "The UMC really is..." - a new series launched to address the new realities of The UMC after the 2020/2024 General Conference
- FAQs - ongoing insights on individual topics of interest to members



# GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The agency's staff maintained an innovative communications infrastructure, offered equipment assistance and provided training that equips United Methodists to impart life-saving and life-changing messages throughout the world.

## Training

### AFRICA

- In October 2024, UCom hosted a communications training in Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania, marking the **first time in almost 20 years** that the agency had brought together communications staff from across the African continent. The multi-day event trained:
  - **80+ communicators** participated in a two-and-a-half day training touching on subjects such as news reporting, crisis communications, social media and other communications initiatives
  - **Nearly 100 participants**, representing a mix of communicators and other church leaders, with a one-and-a-half-day in-depth training—led by UCom in collaboration with the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table—on the concept of and legislation around regionalization helping to debunk misinformation
- In-person training with district communicators in Bo, Sierra Leone
- Virtual website training with Liberia, Senegal, Cameroon and Mozambique
- In-Person training held in Burundi and Kenya
- Virtual trainings—focused on mapping, websites, branded emails and UMConnect—were conducted in **ten countries across the Africa Central Conference** including:
  - Kenya      ◦ Uganda      ◦ Mozambique
  - Ethiopia      ◦ South Sudan      ◦ Malawi
  - Rwanda      ◦ Angola      ◦ Zimbabwe



### PHILIPPINES

- Online training for **27 communicators** from the three episcopal areas
- AI opportunities and ethics training in the Manila Episcopal Area
- Creative communications trainings in both the Davao Episcopal Area and Baguio Episcopal Area
- Collaborative creation and development of social media and digital guidelines for the Philippines Central Conference



## GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (CONTINUED)

### UMConnect

Using group text messaging to quickly send important news and updates throughout the world remained an important communications tool. In 2024, UMCom:

- Sent **114,375 UMConnect messages**
- Created awareness for Mpox prevention efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo

### Church Mapping

Mapping efforts continued to ensure that all local churches were accounted for, with each added into the comprehensive Find-A-Church online directory.

**808 churches** were mapped in Africa

- Liberia: 134
- Mozambique: 156
- DRC : 44
- South Africa: 7
- Burundi: 407
- Uganda: 60

Philippines Central Conference collective efforts have resulted in:

- **95% of churches mapped**
- **1,667** local UM churches across **26** annual conferences

### Conferences

The team **attended 9 events** during which they took time to listen to attendees, share insights and educate about the role of communications in The UMC and the support UMCom offers. Sessions included:

- District of Cameroon
- District of Senegal
- Special session of Nigeria Episcopal Area
- Burundi Annual Conference
- Kenya-Ethiopia Annual Conference
- Palawan Philippines Annual Conference
- Northern Philippines Annual Conference
- Rizal District, Philippines Annual Conference East
- Philippines Central Conference

### Broadcasting

Support continued to further church communications via broadcasting methods. Highlights included:

- Assessed Radio ELUM tower's project in Liberia
- Established partnership with the Office of Civil Defense in the Cordillera Administrative Region (OCD-CAR) in the Philippines to provide communications during emergencies and in the aftermath of regional disasters
- Completed emergency communication kit creation with the Baguio Episcopal Area's UM Amateur Radio Club





## U.S. ANNUAL CONFERENCE RELATIONS

United Methodist Communications worked to support, inform and equip the Annual Conferences throughout The UMC in the United States as partners in ministry. Activities surrounding these efforts included:

### Year-round efforts

- Monthly meetings with communicators
- Regular email updates
- Disaster communications support
- Event representation and sourcing
- Supplying general resources
- Sharing of stories coming from conferences

### Annual Conference events

- **12 conferences** were attended for relationship-building, observation and learnings
- 3 Epi Awards presented to communicators and one special recognition

### Agency-Wide events

- **20 events** were supported that included jurisdictional conferences, clergy gatherings and other leader and influencer events
- Involvement ranged from sponsorships, supplying of resources and other participation options



## CREATIVE STRATEGY

The Creative Strategy Team worked across the agency and the connection to assist with the creation of images and messages that compel people to take notice and take action.

- **2450+** staff hours
- **123** design projects completed
- **806** assets delivered
- External client hours **increased 23%** from 2023
- **100% satisfaction** rating on performance surveys

## VIDEO PRODUCTION

The Production Services Team produced a variety of internal and external projects in the studio and on-location, including livestream events, interviews, presentations, Bible studies, book recordings, virtual meetings, features, how-to videos, promos and more.

Though General Conference production work was a primary driver for 2024, throughout the year its state-of-the-art studios and production team, United Methodist Communications delivered stories about the church and its people, completing projects for **13+ church entities** including supporting projects for UMC Boards and Agencies, the Interagency Just and Equitable Net-Zero Coalition and several annual conferences.

- **12,280+** staff hours & equipment time
- **50+** projects completed
- Kingswood Productions generated revenue for communication ministry by providing production services to **more than a dozen outside organizations** including several creative agencies, production companies, publishers, musicians, educational institutions and individuals.



## TECHNOLOGY

The Digital and Web Development teams' initiatives resulted in regards to significant improvements across UMC.org, UMNews.org and ResourceUMC.org, in performance, accessibility and user experience enhancements to encourage increased engagement.

### Highlights include:

- Find-A-Church migration to Salesforce ensured a scalable and responsive solution for local church searches
- Launch of BeyondWords **increased content accessibility**
- Nearly **85% reduction in errors** and 59% decrease in warnings
- Measurable gains in site stability, speed and engagement ensured a seamless experience for users while optimizing internal workflows for content teams

### Local church support included:

- **63** five-page website builds
- **5** site rebuilds
- **23** security packages
- **195** new web hosting clients
- **9 sites** supported and **27** hosted for the Central Conference



## CONNECTIONAL GIVING

The Connectional Giving Team elevated awareness of and played a prominent role in securing financial gifts for The United Methodist Church's special giving structure.

In 2024, despite a 12% decline in apportionment giving, overall giving remained consistent with the previous year.

### Efforts saw that:

- Designated giving grew by **36%**, reaching **\$48 million**
- Apportionment giving totaled **\$94 million**

Looking forward, in response to the 2020/2024 General Conference's call to strengthen church vitality, work began on developing a campaign designed to mobilize United Methodists through bold generosity.

## UMCOM FOUNDATION

The Foundation raised awareness of and brought in supplemental financial support for the ministry work of United Methodist Communications.

In 2024, the foundation engaged new audiences and channels, and provided unique giving opportunities such as funding the African Communicators Gathering in Tanzania. Donor stewardship processes were revamped for increased touchpoints, personal messages and handwritten notes, regular email check ins and consistent displays of gratitude.

### Foundation fundraising resulted in a:

- **687%** increase in new gifts with **512** new donors
- **211%** increase in the number of reactivated donors
- **369%** increase in total revenue from individuals, matching gifts, local churches, annual conferences, and other related organizations
- **500%** increase in donors upgrading to a higher level of giving.
- Commitment to ongoing monthly support from **30** individuals



## INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES & NET-ZERO EFFORTS

UMCom worked to ensure high-efficiency facilities moving us closer to our just and equitable net-zero emissions goals.

- **Installed two solar panels**, generating 357KWh that's equal to 20,000 cell phone charges, **for testing for future energy needs**
- Reached **EPA ENERGY STAR rating** of 27
- Collaborated with the overall **Just & Equitable Net-Zero Coalition (JENZ)**
- Raised awareness of the climate crisis and creation care via content for members and leaders
- Encouraged staff involvement through addition of a Green Corner section of the employee newsletter
- **Reduced overall General Agency footprint** by continuing to share building space with other church agencies
- Ongoing evaluation of facilities, programming and staff resourcing to develop a baseline to holistically work towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The HR department managed employee experiences to maximize productivity and encourage overall wellness.

In 2024 extensive research, **strategic planning work** transpired to realign the agency to assist denominational communications where the worldwide United Methodist Church needs UCom most in the new quadrennium. Based on a reduction in budget, strategy with adjustments to future services also took into account available financial and staff resources.

The team started the year with **81 U.S. based and three international employees**. UCom staff continued to thrive in a **predominantly remote** working environment with 70 employees working from home with 13 of those working outside of Tennessee. Four town hall meetings, digital community meetings, weekly online chapel services, UCom@Work staff newsletters and three in-person gatherings offered opportunities for staff to stay and feel connected.

### Overall work highlights included:

- Staff honed important skills by participating in a number of **individual and group trainings**. Training included:
  - All staff received training Diversity & Inclusion, Unconscious Bias in the Workplace, Cyber Security and Data Privacy.
  - In-person AI training session
  - 16 individuals participated in continuing education
  - Two group trainings for Emeritus Digital Training and Leadership
- **Retreats for staff** continuing into 2025 included:
  - An all-staff two-day retreat focused on team building and exploring the findings of the agency's **CliftonStrengths** and NERIS Type Explorer's **16 Personalities** assessments
  - Individual teams, birthed out of the strategic planning, closed out the year gathering together for retreat work
- **53 staff participated in the wellness initiative**
- **Outreach to assist Metro Animal Care and Control and the Nashville Diaper Connection** were integrated into the agency Christmas party festivities and staff provided much-needed supplies for both organizations
- **100%** of staff completed open enrollment on time