



**2024 HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS RETREAT AND
INTERSECTIONS OF FAITH & HEALTH CONFERENCE**

RETREAT SCHEDULE

Thursday, April 18th – Healthy Congregations Retreat

- 11:15 - Registration opens
- 11:30 - Healthy Congregations Certification Training option, part 1
- 1:00 - Workshop: Leaving a Legacy of Abundance in a Culture of Scarcity - Adam Barlow-Thompson
- 2:35 - Break
- 5:00 - Workshop concludes
- 5:05 - Healthy Congregations Certification Training option, part 2
- 5:05 - Healthy Congregations Planning and Grant Renewal assistance
- 6:30 - Dinner

Friday, April 19th – Intersections of Faith & Health Conference

- 8:15 - Registration opens
- 9:00 - Welcome and opening remarks
- 9:15 - Healthier Communities Through Voter and Civic Engagement
Lindsay Ford, Anne Gahn, Rachael Pryor
- 10:45 - Break
- 11:00 - Hot Topics (Medicaid Expansion, Child Care, Maternal and Child Health)
April Holman, John Wilson, Brenda Bandy

Friday, April 19th - Continued

11:45 - Hot Topics Round Table Discussions

12:30 - Lunch

1:15 - Awards Presentation

1:45 - Break

2:00 - How Congregations and Communities can Improve Local Food Security
Haley Kottler, Miranda Miller-Klugesherz, Sabrina Rosario

3:00 - Closing Remarks

Session Descriptions: Healthy Congregations Retreat - April 18

Workshop: Leaving a Legacy of Abundance in a Culture of Scarcity

Adam Barlow-Thompson, Executive Director & Co-Founder, The Neighboring Movement

During this interactive workshop, participants will practice moving from scarcity to abundance. The activities and tools in the workshop will be available for use in local settings and will help churches see the power of becoming community connectors. The workshop will focus on reducing the sense of isolation and loneliness that is created when doing ministry in a culture of scarcity.

Optional: Healthy Congregations New Member Orientation and Certification

Judy Johnston, Research Instructor, Dept. of Population Health, KU School of Medicine - Wichita

Dashinika Poindexter, Program Coordinator, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

This 2-part session provides an opportunity for participants to complete Healthy Congregations Orientation/Certification training (for new teams, new members of existing teams, and Great Plains United Methodists wanting to learn more and get a head start on program participation). For new teams or those not yet certified, this is an opportunity to get off to a great start with the program. This offering is also valuable for new members of existing teams.

In less than two hours, team members can complete their certification training during the retreat and leave equipped for success in achieving desired congregational and community health goals.

Optional: Live Assistance - Healthy Congregations Program Planning and Grant Renewal

This optional after-hours session provides an opportunity for Healthy Congregations teams to brainstorm and explore fresh ideas with fellow team members, other teams and with our trained staff, who can assist with development of customized program plans to help teams advance their vision and improve congregational and community health in the coming year.

New teams, those renewing their grants for the first time, and teams considering changes or different program directions will find the session especially valuable as an opportunity to talk through possible approaches. Staff can also offer guidance on breaking down often complex congregational and community health challenges into manageable and approachable action steps. Teams with prior renewal experience and/or a firm sense of desired 2024-2025 plans can share and learn with others, or just take advantage of live help with completing their renewal applications. Staff are also often able to help teams connect with resources (including special grant opportunities) and partners they may not otherwise be aware of or know how to access.

Teams participating in this opportunity will have the option (with in-person assistance as needed) to complete their annual grant renewals/approvals early during the event and receive their grant funds early in May to get a head start on programs.

Healthier Communities Through Increased Voter and Civic Engagement

Lindsay Ford, Executive Director, [The Voter Network](#)

Anne Gahn, Chair, Mercy and Justice Committee, [Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church](#)

Rachael Pryor, Director of Engagement, [Kansas Interfaith Action](#)

The level of voter and civic engagement within a community is directly correlated with the health of the community and its members. This session will explore how congregations and communities can help develop robust civic and voter engagement and ensure local voices are heard by officials making decisions impacting health. We will explore relational organizing, community and voter engagement strategies in rural communities, and how to build leadership within congregations to support these efforts.

Hot Topics

Brenda Bandy, Executive Director, [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#)

April Holman, Executive Director, [Alliance for a Healthy Kansas](#)

John Wilson, President, [Kansas Action for Children](#)

This session will explore three trending areas of work that impact health outcomes – Medicaid expansion, child care, and maternal and child health. We'll hear from the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas on Medicaid expansion, Kansas Action for Children on child care, and the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition on maternal and child health policy. Following key brief presentations, we'll have two rounds of round table discussions, taking a deeper dive into the issues and how you can take action.

How Congregations and Communities can Improve Local Food Security

Miranda Miller-Klugesherz, Director, [Kansas Food Action Network \(KFAN\)](#).
Haley Kottler, Thriving and Civic Engagement Director, [Kansas Appleseed](#)
Sabrina Rosario, Creation Care Minister/Community Garden Leader,
University UMC Salina and Campus Coordinator, Community Resilience Hub,
[Kansas Wesleyan University](#).

Food security is critical for the well-being of children, families, and seniors. Achieving food security is complex and involves addressing numerous challenges which do not exist in isolation. As part of the growing need to support addressing food security, a panel of speakers from faith-based organizations, local communities, and state networks will share stories and experiences regarding how they've worked within their congregations and communities to lift up the importance of food security. Panelists will provide ideas and examples of programs and opportunities to support increasing food security through familial supports, examples of successful local strategies, and actions that churches and communities can take to address this growing need. This discussion will highlight creative ways to foster relationships between churches and communities to generate thought-provoking ideas for what churches may want to do to support local food security.

Presenter Bios

Brenda Bandy, Executive Director, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Brenda Bandy is the Executive Director of the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) and oversees the KBC's programs and policy work. Brenda is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. She is passionate about bringing people together to remove barriers that prevent families from thriving in Kansas.



Adam Barlow-Thompson, Executive Director & Co-Founder, The Neighboring Movement

Adam Barlow-Thompson began his career as a local pastor in a suburban setting. In this role, he experimented with social entrepreneurship and community building and uncovered a call to express these values outside traditional church structures in a neighborhood setting. In 2015 Adam co-founded The Neighboring Movement with his wife, Ashley, and their neighbors. Together they connect neighbors in the SoCe (So-See) Neighborhood of Wichita, Kansas, and train others in Asset Based Community Development. The Neighboring Movement has grown to a national network of community builders, including faith-based and in non-religious contexts. In addition to his role as Executive Director at The Neighboring Movement, Adam continues to work bi-vocationally as a trainer, speaker, and consultant focusing on communication and healthy conflict. He has co-authored several resources, tools, and workshops, which all work to understand and connect the power of people within community. In his free time, Adam enjoys sitting on his front porch with his son Prescott, his wife Ashley, and his banjo.



Lindsay Ford, Executive Director, The Voter Network

Lindsay Ford is the Executive Director at The Voter Network, a Kansas-based nonprofit organization aiming to increase participation in the electoral process as a strategy to improve health outcomes. Prior to serving at The Voter Network Lindsay worked for the Mayor of Kansas City, Kansas where she oversaw policy and project management. She previously held roles in corporate community relations and with a number of political campaigns - at the local, state, and federal levels - including serving as Congressman Dennis Moore's Campaign Manager for his final, successful re-election bid in 2008. Lindsay believes that an empowered electorate creates responsive, transparent and inclusive governments and will likely ask you if you're registered to vote, if she hasn't already.



Anne Gahn, Chair of the Great Plains Conference Mercy and Justice Team

Anne Gahn is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church (UMC) specializing primarily in spiritual direction. She provides individual and team coaching and ministry consulting, workshops, and retreat leadership. Anne is the chair of the Great Plains Conference Mercy & Justice Team. Anne was born and raised in southwest Nebraska, raised her family in Lincoln, Nebraska, and served the UMC in south central Nebraska. Anne and her newly retired husband, Doug, now live and serve out of Lawrence, KS! They have three adult daughters, two bonus sons, six amazing grandkids, and a one-year-old Labradoodle to share life with!



April Holman, Executive Director, Alliance for a Healthy Kansas

April Holman is the Executive Director of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas. The Alliance was formed in 2016 to educate Kansas policy leaders and citizens about the health and economic benefits of expanding KanCare, the state's Medicaid program for low-income children and adults. April has spent the past two decades working to improve public policy in Kansas. She started her career as an analyst for the Kansas Legislative Research Department; spent 11 years in a variety of advocacy roles at Kansas Action for Children, a children's advocacy group in Topeka; and most recently served as executive director for the Kansas Adult Care Executives Association, a professional association for nursing home administrators and assisted living operators. April is a licensed attorney and holds degrees from Washburn University School of Law and Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas.



Judy Johnston, Research Instructor, Dept. of Population Health, KU School of Medicine – Wichita

Judy Johnston, M.S., R.D./L.D., holds a Master of Science degree in Adult and Occupational Education from Kansas State University. After 18 years of clinical dietetics practice in hospitals, Judy developed and led the nationally recognized Kansas LEAN (Leadership to Encourage Activity & Nutrition) initiative for 9 years. She is a 28-year cancer survivor who has provided technical assistance to the Kansas Comprehensive Cancer Control Program for over 21 years. She provides training & technical assistance to the Early Detection Works Program that provides free mammograms to uninsured women. She also works extensively in rural areas of Kansas using Community-Engaged Research Methods to assess community health and wellness needs. In 2005, Judy designed the Healthy Congregations in Action Initiative for the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund and she continues to provide technical assistance & training support to HC participants. She also developed a clergy self-care initiative and taught those classes nationally for United Methodist Clergy.



David Jordan, President & CEO, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

David Jordan is the President of the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, joining the Fund in February 2018. Before joining the Fund, David served as the executive director of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, a coalition of over 100 organizations working to improve health and access to health care in Kansas. David oversaw the Alliance's operations and the effort to expand KanCare, Kansas' Medicaid program. David joined the Alliance after spending nearly seven years at Community Catalyst, a leading national consumer health advocacy organization, as the Dental Access Project Director.



At Community Catalyst, David led a national campaign to expand access to dental care by initiating and supporting state campaigns to establish the practice of dental therapists. David has also served as chief of staff to a Massachusetts state senator and led integrated communications campaigns at Solomon McCown & Company. He also managed the successful MassACT! ballot campaign, which in part led to Massachusetts' landmark 2006 health care law.

Haley Kottler, Thriving and Civic Engagement Director, Kansas Appleseed

Haley Kottler is the Thriving Campaign Director at Kansas Appleseed, overseeing the organization's anti-hunger advocacy and economic justice work. She is a proud Kansas native who was born in Wichita. Haley engages with Kansans across the state in anti-hunger advocacy, leading grassroots campaigns, as well as making the case for change through policy and legislative action. Haley's fight for justice is rooted in a devotion to equity and fairness for all.



Miranda Miller-Klugesherz, Director, Kansas Food Action Network (KFAN)

Miranda is the director of the Kansas Food Action Network, a statewide advocacy network composed of more than 30 local food, farm and policy councils representing 76% of Kansas residents. KFAN is focused on building resilient local and state food systems in Kansas.



In her role as KFAN director, Miranda connects and supports communities as they identify and address local food system priorities from farm to table and beyond.

Dashinika Poindexter, Program Coordinator, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

Dashinika Poindexter joined the Health Fund staff in September 2019 as Program Coordinator. Dashinika holds a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology and a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration from California State University, Bakersfield. She has interned at California Children Services, Children's Health Watch, and the Department of Veteran Affairs' Boston Healthcare System, where she completed a research project from beginning to end that focused on barriers female veterans experience in obtaining mammography screening exams. Her research interests include access to care for vulnerable populations, disparities in health and health care delivery, and health politics and policy. As a recipient of the Howard Thurman fellowship at Boston University School of Theology, Dashinika is committed to reflecting Thurman's ideals of deepening spirituality and moral leadership in service to the church and the world.



Rev. Rachael Pryor, Director of Engagement, Kansas Interfaith Action

Rev. Rachael Pryor is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and serves on the regional staff for Kansas-Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota. A native of Michigan, she has a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Michigan and an M.Div. from Princeton Seminary. Rachael has lived in Lindsborg, Kansas for the past 10 years with her partner and their four children. She brings 6 years of KIFA Board experience and Kansas legislative advocacy to this role. Rachael is passionate about building community through connecting people, sharing stories, and creating momentum for practical, meaningful change, one step at a time.



Sabrina Rosario, Creation Care Minister/Community Garden Leader, University UMC Salina and Campus Coordinator, Community Resilience Hub, Kansas Wesleyan University

Sabrina has been living in the USA for 8 years, three of those in Kansas, but she is Brazilian, born in São Paulo and raised in a not-so-small town called São José dos Campos. She has always known that she wanted to study and advocate for the environment, influenced by the exuberant wonders of the Atlantic Rain Forest, visiting beaches on São Paulo north shore and the mountains from Paraíba Valley, where she grew up. Her background is in Biological Sciences, with an M.B.A. in Environmental Management and Sustainable Development. Sabrina is a member and leader at University UMC in Salina. She is passionate about motivating people of faith to get involved in Creation Care, incorporating it into their spiritual practices, and making a positive intervention in our broken world. She was one of the founders of A Rocha Brasil, a non-profit Christian organization focused on conservation and environmental education for communities of faith, that is present in more than 20 countries around the world. In Salina, Sabrina gets busy leading the UUMC's community garden, where members and community get together to tend garden, talk creation care, and share the fresh, organic produce with those in need. Sabrina is married to Leo, a violinist, and has two children: Sarah, who is in high school, and Theo, an energetic 9-year-old boy.



Katie Schoenhoff, Director of Programs, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

Katie Schoenhoff serves as the Director of Programs for the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund. In her role she oversees the Health Fund's strategic initiatives in breastfeeding support and early childhood social emotional health.

Additionally she leads Healthy Congregations, a Health Fund program supporting targeted, outcomes-oriented wholistic health ministries in United Methodist churches throughout the Great Plains Conference.

Prior to joining the Health Fund, Katie served as Health Education and Promotion Coordinator at the Reno County Health Department where she worked with community health coalitions.

Katie also worked for McBride Physical Therapy Clinic and Deer Creek High School as an athletic trainer. Katie graduated from Sterling College with a double major in Health/Physical Education and Athletic Training.



John Wilson, President, Kansas Action for Children

With a mission to shape health, education, and economic policy that will improve the lives of Kansas children and families, Kansas Action for Children works across the political spectrum through bipartisan advocacy, partnership, and information-sharing on key issues. KAC works with policymakers, local organizations, and fellow advocates to inform sound policy, foster collaboration, and promote and equitable tax system.

John Wilson joined Kansas Action for Children in 2017 and serves as President & CEO, working closely with the Board of Directors to set long-range goals, strategies, plans, and policies that allow the organization to fulfill its mission. John serves on the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund and has been a member of the Governor's Council on Education, Tax Council, and Census Complete Count Committee. As a former Kansas State Representative, John has a unique understanding of the legislative process and the people who shape policy in the Statehouse. John's education and experience in design guides the way he approaches policy change — focusing on making ideas clear, relatable, actionable, and focused on people.

