



UM+Connection

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Equipping Disciples to Transform the World • www.bwcumc.org • Volume 24, Issue 5 • June 12, 2013



Bishops Sandra Steiner Ball, Marcus Matthews, Violet Fisher and Joseph H. Yeakel gather before processing in for the service of Ordination at the 229th session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, which was held May 29-31 at the Waterfront Marriott Hotel in Baltimore.

Maidstone Mulenga

UMs say 'Yes' to sowing discipleship

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

MORE THAN 1,700 United Methodists from 646 area churches gathered May 29-31 to sow seeds of worship, learning, mission, stewardship and holy conferencing in their continuing efforts to grow disciples for the transformation of the world.

The 229th Session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, which was held at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore, was part family reunion and part business meeting, classroom and revival. It was led by Bishop Marcus Matthews, who once served as a pastor, district superintendent and Council of Ministries director in the conference and returned last September as its episcopal leader.

Processing with the crosier, Matthews shepherded

in the participants of the opening worship, which laid the foundation of the theme of the session: "Sowing the Seed / Be Light."

During the service, Matthews preached, challenging the church to respond to this moment in history. It's "Holy Ghost seed-sowing time, and God wants us to be a field of good soil," he said.

The bishop asked churches to do three things in the coming year: become prayer stations, bring at least one person to Christ and adopt a public school in its zip code.

"Let us say, 'yes,' to being a Conference that is cultivated on fertile ground, the bishop declared. "And let us say, 'yes,' to producing the rich soil in which disciples will be made who will turn the world right side up for Jesus Christ; today, tomorrow and always." (For more on his sermon, see page 5.)

Growth in churches, discipleship

As part of producing this rich soil, conference members learned about seven new faith communities being created. The leadership teams starting these new churches were consecrated.

The new faith communities represent the diversity of the conference, said the Rev. Andy Lunt, chair of the BWC's Vibrant Communities. Five are multicultural in vision and mission, two seek to serve the growing Korean population, two grow out of largely African-American congregations, two spring from Anglo congregations and one is multicultural from the outset, Lunt said. (See the story on page 3.)

"This is wonderful!" Bishop Matthews told the leaders of these new communities who came on stage. "This is a marvelous advancement of God's Kingdom. I praise God for all who have played a part in creating these new faith communities and for the hope they represent for our future," Bishop Matthews said.

Members also celebrated additions to God's Kingdom during the opening worship service, when,

See Overview, page 8

2014 budget wins big support

BY MAIDSTONE MULENGA
UMConnection Staff

IN A UNANIMOUS vote, the clergy and lay members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference approved the proposed \$16.8 million budget for 2014.

Without a single question or debate, the members attending the 229th Session of the Annual Conference adopted the budget as it was presented by Charlie Moore, the president of the Council on Finance and Administration.

The members also approved a recommendation to designate

33 percent of the General Church apportionments to World Service and 67 percent to benevolences.

The approved budget represents a 1.6 percent decrease in spending from 2013 and a 7 percent decrease from the 2012 budget.

The benevolence factor for local churches remains steady at 17.75 percent. In its planning, CFA is counting on the collection rate for apportionments rising from 91.5 percent in 2013 to 92.5 percent in 2014.

The 2014 budget provides funding for a new young adult/campus ministry

See Budget, page 3

Ministries 'illuminate the world'

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

// DON'T JUST SEE the light, be the light," Sandy Ferguson, the director of Connectional Ministries told annual conference members in a report May 30. "Already, United Methodists in our churches are shining, illuminating the world with the love of God.

"In the Baltimore-Washington Conference, United Methodists are focusing on developing leaders, addressing poverty, ending killer diseases around the world and creating

new faith communities as they put God's love in action," Ferguson said.

During the past year, creating new places for new people has been a focal point of conference leaders.

"In response to the Great Commission, we are called to make disciples, to reach new people and introduce them to God's love and grace in Jesus Christ. The best way to reach new people is to start new faith communities," said the Rev. Andy Lunt, director of the BWC's new Vibrant Communities ministry. "It's been quite a while since we've been able to start

See Ministries, page 3

Ancient church mothers and fathers often greeted one another with the phrase, “Give me a word.” This greeting led to the sharing of insights and wisdom. Today we continue this tradition with this monthly column.

BY AMANDA SAYERS
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

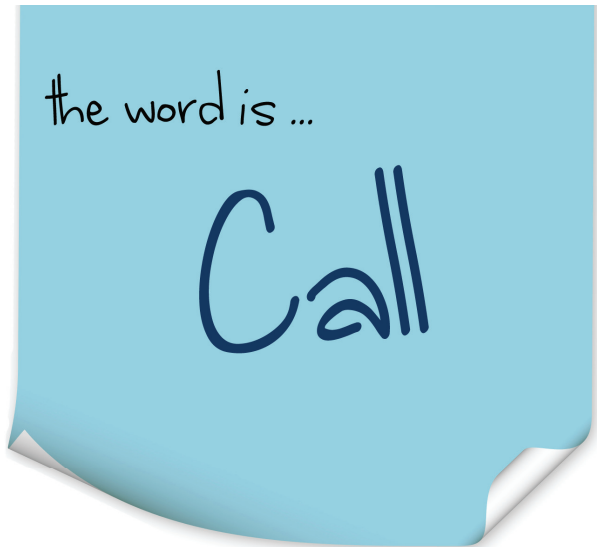
GOD HAS A long history of using ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Moses was called to lead God’s people out of bondage. Mary was called to be the mother of Jesus. Jeremiah was appointed as a prophet to the nations. I often say that Moses had it kind of easy, because, after all, he had a burning bush that was not consumed to look at. He got to hear God’s voice.

Many of us, myself included, have had to discern God’s call and God’s will without such direct divine communication.

We tend to think of “call” in terms of “call to ordained ministry,” but we are all given gifts that God wants to use to bless someone. We all have gifts and passions through which we are called to show God’s love and care.

One of the great pleasures of the work of pastoring is to “equip the saints for the work of ministry,” helping people discover their own callings, as teachers and helpers and musicians and healers and administrators.

Once I was attending a special outdoor church service. It was under a tent and it was pouring rain. I was lamenting the weather and thinking about how much work had been invested in moving folding chairs and setting up the tent, welcoming people and seeing to their needs. So I went back to thank one of the ushers, who was in his eighties, having served as an usher since Jesus was a boy. I thanked him profusely for serving on such a miserable weather day. He looked at me with surprise. “Oh, Mandy,” he said, “I get to welcome these people into the Lord’s house, or “tent” today. I get to care for them. Ushering to me is better than eating cake!”



I pray for all of us that we listen to God’s calling on our lives to meet the world’s deepest needs with our greatest passions. Doing what God calls us to do can be difficult and require sacrifice, but there is a fundamental joy at the base of it. As Herb said, “It’s better than cake.”

... well said

what does “call” mean to you?
“chitchat” with us on
getUMSocial.com

... well said
(a chance to express what that word means to you.)

BY DARYL WILLIAMS
Pastor, Nottingham Myers, Upper Marlboro

THE SEARCH FOR meaning has been a quest for humankind since the beginning of time. People have always wondered if they had a purpose and what it might be. The search for the answer to these questions has led some to read books, others to attend conferences, and even some to just ask people, “Why do you think I am here?”

The issue with books, conferences and other people is that none of them are sufficient to really answer the question of why you are here. So for some, when they don’t find the answer to this looming question they sometimes give up and begin to believe that life is meaningless and things simply happen at random.

The truth of the matter is, life is not random or meaningless. God has a specific purpose for you being here. When God created you, he gave you everything that you would need to accomplish a specific task that only you can accomplish. It is accomplishing this task that gives you meaning, and it is what you are called to do. God calls each of us to do something unique that only we can accomplish.

There are no big callings or little callings, there are just God callings. God calls us to make a difference with our lives by doing exactly what God calls us to do.

Your call simply is where your passion and your competence intersect with one another. When you hear God’s voice, he will call you to be exactly who he made you to be. God may call you to step out of your comfort zone, or into a new way of being, but it will be what God designed you to be in the first place.

So don’t give up, and don’t settle for less. Just listen for God’s voice and be ready to accept your call.

... well said

EVENTS

Historical Society annual meeting

June 22
Otterbein UMC in Hagerstown
Bishop Joseph Yeakel will speak on our United Brethren heritage. After the meeting, there will be a pilgrimage to United Brethren founding sites in Washington County, including Salem UMC and the site of the Geeting Meetinghouse in Keedysville. For more information, contact archives-history@bwcumc.org or call 410-889-4458.

‘The Shack’ authors to speak

July 12, 7 p.m.
Timonium UMC
William Paul Young, author of “The Shack” and “Crossroads,” and C. Baxter Kruger, author of “The Shack Revisited” will speak and sign books. Cost is \$30. For tickets, phone 410-252-5500, for questions, contact Trudy Guetler at tgruetler@verizon.net.

Baltimore County Christian Workcamp

July 21-26
Hunt’s Memorial UMC, Riderwood
This commuters’ workcamp’s daily mission is to repair homes in the county, for high school age and up. Volunteers may commit for a day or return each day for the week. Breakfast is served at Hunt’s Memorial UMC in Riderwood and bag lunches provided. Dinner is served each evening at a different church. For more information or a brochure, go to www.bcchristianworkcamp.org or email bcchristianworkcamp@comcast.net.

Mission U

July 26-28
Marriott Hotel, Bethesda
Formerly called the School of Christian Mission, the training offers classes for everyone, youth and adults, women and men, clergy and laity. Topics are “Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly,” “Roma of Europe,” and “Poverty.” For information, contact registrar: Darlynn McCrae at 443-254-2083 or darmccrae@yahoo.com.

Early Childhood Educators Conference

Aug. 15, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Calvary UMC, Mt. Airy
The theme will be F.R.O.G., “Fully Rely on God.” The speaker will be the Rev. Laurie Tingley, pastor of Mays Chapel UMC in Timonium. Cost is \$50 per person, includes lunch and all workshop materials. To register, go to www.bwcumc.org and click on the conference under “events.” Last day to register is July 15.

School of Congregational Development Satellite

Aug. 17, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill
Those who can’t attend the live event in Denver, Aug. 15-18, may wish to attend the Satellite Experience in this conference. Registrants will participate remotely through live and tape-delayed interactive live streaming. Satellite registration is \$49. To learn more go to <http://www.gbod.org/lead-your-church/school-of-congregational-development-2013>.

WEB HIGHLIGHTS

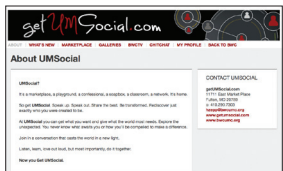


Viewers Choice a 3-way tie

At annual conference, members voted on their favorite photos in the Be Light photo contest. The result was a three-way tie. The winners included: Marie Ebersole of Grace UMC in Hagerstown, the Rev. Sandy Rector of Oak Chapel UMC in Silver Spring and Ken Myers of Milford Mill UMC in Pikesville. Congratulations!

To see all the Be Light entries, visit:
<http://getumsocial.com/bwcgallery-umsocial/BeLight+Photo+Contest>

If you take any interesting pictures at your church that you’re willing to share with others, post them in the Get Social Gallery.



Thank God BWC Got Social

An all-access social network to what’s new, the marketplace, BWCTv, chitchat, galleries and more.
www.getUMSocial.com

UMConnection

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UMConnection is the newspaper of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, whose vision is to seek to become like Christ as we call, equip, send and support spiritual leaders to make and cultivate disciples, grow vital congregations and transform the world.

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CORRECTION:

In the Making a Difference column of the May 15 UMConnection, we misplaced Pleasant Grove UMC. It is in Reisterstown, not Monrovia. Leuvene Merryman was the project coordinator. Ann Harden reported on the story.

Budget: Equitable compensation raised 2 percent

From page 1

director position to resource local churches. It also reduces the number of Guides from 2 per region to 1.5 per region.

The budget increases mission funding by 3 percent, adds \$60,000 for congregational development, increases deaf ministry funding to allow for two full-time pastors and adds \$213,000 to the Strategic Growth Initiative, which provides associate pastors to ethnic minority churches with high growth potential. The program provides diminishing funds over a five-year period as congregations incorporate fundamental changes to their ministry that make them more capable of large church ministry.

The 2014 budget reduces funds spent on conference insurance, legal expenses, information technology systems and moving expenses.

The 2014 budget also increases the budget for Deaf Ministries by almost \$24,000 to enable the conference to maintain two full-time positions.

In his report, Moore clarified the relationship between Be the Change Washington and the conference. Moore, who led a six-member Be the Change Relationship Task Force, told the Annual Conference members that there was no formal relationship between the conference and Be the Change.

Moore also reported that the task force rejected a time-sensitive proposal by Be the Change that the conference serve as the guarantor of funding on a \$25 million project to build 111 units of supportive housing on North Capitol Street in Washington.

“After extensive study and deliberation of this issue, with the help of industry experts, the task force felt that the guarantees would expose the conference to too much

risk,” he said.

The overwhelming approval of the budget was credited to information shared during district meetings and the preconference briefing.

Equitable compensation

The Commission on Equitable Compensation Commission’s recommendation that the minimum salary for clergy in the Baltimore-Washington Conference be increased by 2 percent to \$39,728 in 2014 was approved. The housing allowance was kept at \$19,534.

In presenting the recommendation, Jim Johnson, chair of the commission, told the 229th Session that a number of key factors had been taken into account for

For 2014, members adopted a \$16.4 million budget and a benevolence factor of 17.5 percent; they anticipate a 92.5 percent collection rate.

the recommendation.

He noted that the General Council on Finance and Administration’s summary of equitable compensation plans in the annual conferences of The United Methodist Church for 2012 offers opportunity to compare what other conferences are doing to remain equitable in their settings. “The Baltimore-Washington Conference remains competitive,” he said.

In keeping the allowance at the current rate, Johnson said the housing statistics showed a slight decrease in the affordability index; however, the mortgage rates remain at an all-time low of 3.34 percent. “We feel there is strong support for keeping the housing allowance steady,” he said.

Health care and pension

The Baltimore Washington Conference does not plan to introduce the marketplaces mandated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (also known as ObamaCare) into the conference healthcare coverage for some or all of the active clergy.

“Since HealthFlex is for our three-quarter and full-time churches, our clergy will not be eligible for going to the marketplace for health insurance in 2014,” the Rev. Jackson Day, chair of the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, announced at the 2013 Annual Conference Session on Thursday.

He also reported that the Conference Board of Pensions was moving toward consumer-driven health plans which place increased financial responsibility on the health consumer. “CBOP has a taskforce that is studying the options and will prepare a recommendation.”

Clergy and lay members of the conference later approved the following recommendations from CBOP:

- Post-age 65 retiree health benefits will continue to be provided via Extend Health.
- Pre-age 65 retiree health benefits continue to be provided by HealthFlex until the 65th birthday.
- Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) defined benefit is set at 12 percent plan compensation.
- CRSP defined contribution is set at 2 percent with 1 percent match.
- CRSP will be offered to 50 percent and 75 percent part-time clergy.
- The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) is set at 3 percent plan compensation.
- CRSP and CPP will be direct billed to local churches.

Ministries: Conference starts 7 new faith communities

From page 1

a new faith community in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. But this year God has blessed us with the opportunity to launch not just one, but seven, new faith communities to reach new people with the Gospel.”

Lunt introduced the leaders of the new and diverse faith communities to the conference and called for continuing prayers for their ministries.

The Rev. Dred Scott and the members of J & K Missional Community in the Dundalk area of East Baltimore recognized that Jesus was already present and working in new ways in their community and decided to connect with the Spirit’s leading. This decision led to the birth of a new missional faith community in J&K auto repair shop.

The Rev. John Wunderlich and the congregation of First Saints UMC in Leonardtown were led by God to plant a new campus in California, Md. Their concern to especially reach families with young children led them to

begin meeting in an elementary school in late January. After less than 6 months, this new faith community, under the leadership of campus pastor Jason Shank, already averages nearly 100 people in worship — more than half of whom are new believers.

The congregation of Oakdale Emory UMC in Olney, under the leadership of Rev. Kevin Baker, wrestled with their sense that God was calling them to launch a new campus even though they were in the midst of a major building effort at their main location. God has now led them to plant a new campus in western Montgomery County under the leadership of the Rev. David Deans.

In an area of West Baltimore, where the conference recently closed Wesley Memorial UMC, the Rev. William Chaney and his team are preparing to launch Infinite Grace, a new multicultural faith community. Part of their vision includes a community development corporation to serve the needs of those along the 40 West corridor

and training to equip laity and seminary students to plant churches.

In West Virginia, the Rev. Rudy Bropleh and members of Asbury UMC of Sheperdstown have felt God leading them to plant Hezekiah’s House, a new multicultural community in the Ranson, W.Va., area, where many new people are moving in.

The Rev. Sung Cho is growing a new faith community of Korean and other international young adults in downtown Washington, D.C. They have been worshipping in a UCC church, but are seeking a home that will provide a base for continued growth in mission and service.

And Dae Sung Park will be leading a team in growing a new Korean congregation in the Ellicott City area, one of the locations in the conference with the fastest growth of Korean communities. Currently, this congregation worships in the facilities of Bethany UMC in Ellicott City.

“It makes no sense for us to come up with our grand plans and then ask God to bless them,” Lunt said. “Instead, we’re seeking to discern where God is already at work and get with what God is doing.”

Bishop Marcus Matthews welcomed the new leaders. “This is a marvelous advancement of God’s Kingdom,” he said. “I praise God for all who have played a part in creating these new faith communities and for the hope they represent for our future.”

These ministries of new church starts are bolstered by numerous other outreach efforts within the conference, said Ferguson.

In 2012, she reported, more than 1,078,430 people were served by United Methodists in area community ministries for outreach, justice and mercy; and more than 11,794 United Methodists from this conference went beyond the wall of their churches to serve on mission teams.

In addition, two new conference staff people have been hired to provide resources for ministries for the poor and to expand and strengthen ministries with young adults.

Ferguson quoted Mahatma Ghandi, who said, “A small body of determined spirit, fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission, can alter the course of history.”

“We’re discovering this everyday within the Baltimore-Washington Conference as people act out their faith in astonishing ways, coming fully alive with the possibilities God presents.”



Bishop Marcus Matthews and conference members applaud the leaders of seven new faith communities, including two new Korean communities that will meet in Washington, D.C., and Ellicott City.

Mosley leads Bible study on parable of the sower

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

TWO MORNINGS OF annual conference began with Bible study, led by the Rev. Albert Mosley, president of Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. His text was the Parable of the Sower, Mark 4:1-9, 13-20, which fit the 229th Annual Conference theme, “Sowing the Seed ... Be Light.”

“Parables are puzzles that demand careful attention,” Mosley said to the 800 members gathered in the Grand Ballroom May 30. Though on the surface the verses seem to tell “a simple little story,” it is really a form of literature, like poetry, which demands a lot from the listener, he said.

Mark 4:1-9 offers clues about Jesus’ ministry and the Kingdom of God. Mosley asked the audience to see the seed being in different places, realizing it fell on different kinds of soil. “We must ask, what kind of soil am I? Do I need to get the weeds out of my life? Am I a shallow person?” But, he said, what if this parable is not about



Rev. Dr. Albert Mosley, president of Gammon Seminary, teaches a Bible study on Mark 4:1-9, 13-20

“us” at all?

Instead, focus on the farmer/sower. What does the sower tell us about God?

The sower moves quite randomly from place to place, being wasteful with the seeds, not concerned about the type of soil they fall on. “We’re told as a church to sow our seeds where we know they’ll take root. Today the soil takes priority over the seed.”

In order to have a harvest, the sower wastes a lot of seed. “In real life and ministry, there is always more

waste than harvest,” Mosley said. By the end of Jesus’ ministry only a few seeds he sowed were productive.

“Some of us have weeds and thorns in our life, and no time for God, but God still threw a handful of seed

Soil has no choice in what type it is – fertile, rocky, poor, sandy – it is what it is. Nor does Jesus offer anything to change the soil. “So, church, we have to be careful of a moralistic attitude,” Mosley said. “We



Opportunities for learning were scattered through the annual conference session and included workshops on topics like creating “REAL Church,” older adult ministries, Safe Sanctuaries, and stewardship.

in our direction” Mosley said. “I thank God for being wonderfully wasteful with the seeds, and not mindful of the kind of soil.”

“As the church of Jesus Christ, we are called to sow seeds no matter what, to sow seeds on the just and the unjust. Grace is not ours to give. It is God’s and God’s representatives on this earth,” he said. “There is nothing about your life style that deserves God’s grace.”

On the following morning, May 31, Mosley focused on Mark 4:13-20 and urged the audience to see a new perspective on God’s word. “Lives can’t be transformed unless there is a thorough examination of God’s Word,” he said. He asked three “volunteers” to read the three parts in the story in Mark 1-9, 13-20.

can’t change the type of soil we’re in,” but God does not withhold grace. “We sow seeds and trust God to do the rest.”

Members were given fortune cookies when they arrived that morning. Mosley instructed them to open the cookie, read their fortunes and for 90 seconds to reflect on what the fortune specifically says to each person. Randomly, members shared how they would act upon their fortune, all of which included the words: hope, love, peace or joy.

“Go out and sow the seeds of love, peace, joy and hope. The soil doesn’t choose, but you can sow seeds unconditionally. Once you’ve sown, step back and trust God to cultivate that seed for harvest,” he concluded.

Lay leader calls for taking initiative in ministry

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

BEFITTING AN ANNUAL conference composed of as many lay people as clergy, the first thing on the agenda Thursday morning after Bible study, was the report of the laity.

Delores Martin, the new conference Lay Leader, is a familiar face to the hundreds of laity who attended the May 4 preconference session. Among her wide ranging portfolio of duties, she said that one is to “assist in fostering awareness among laity of their roles in their local churches (and) recognize and affirm all lay ministries.” She also represents the laity on the Bishop’s Extended Cabinet and on several committees and commissions.

She introduced the lay leaders of each of the eight districts and urged local church lay leaders to get to know them.



Lay Leader Delores Martin greets conference members with a peace sign.

where pastors hamper or stifle dreams of the parishioners,” she said. Both clergy and congregation

districts and urged local church lay leaders to get to know them.

Martin stressed the importance of bringing clergy and lay members together as partners in making disciples. “Everyone should be working toward the same vision and dreaming dreams that work for the vitality of the church,” she said. “It should no longer be an environment



District lay leaders, from left to right, include Olivia Gross, Darlyn McCrae, Marilyn Lewis, Barbara Shew, Kerri Kidwell-Slak, Peggy Ireland, Ophelia BrownCarter, and Tim Donaldson joining Conference Lay Leader Delores Martin on Stage

must work for the vitality of the church.

“The most important area we need to attend to is to bring clergy and lay members together as partners in making disciples.

“We are all spiritual leaders called to service by God,” she concluded, “empowering everyone to enjoy this wonderful connection called The United Methodist Church.”

Following the laity address, the youth took center stage.

“We make all the decisions and do all the work,” proudly said Nick Poole, president of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM), as he began the report of ROCK 2013.

ROCK, a three-day youth revival, each year engages

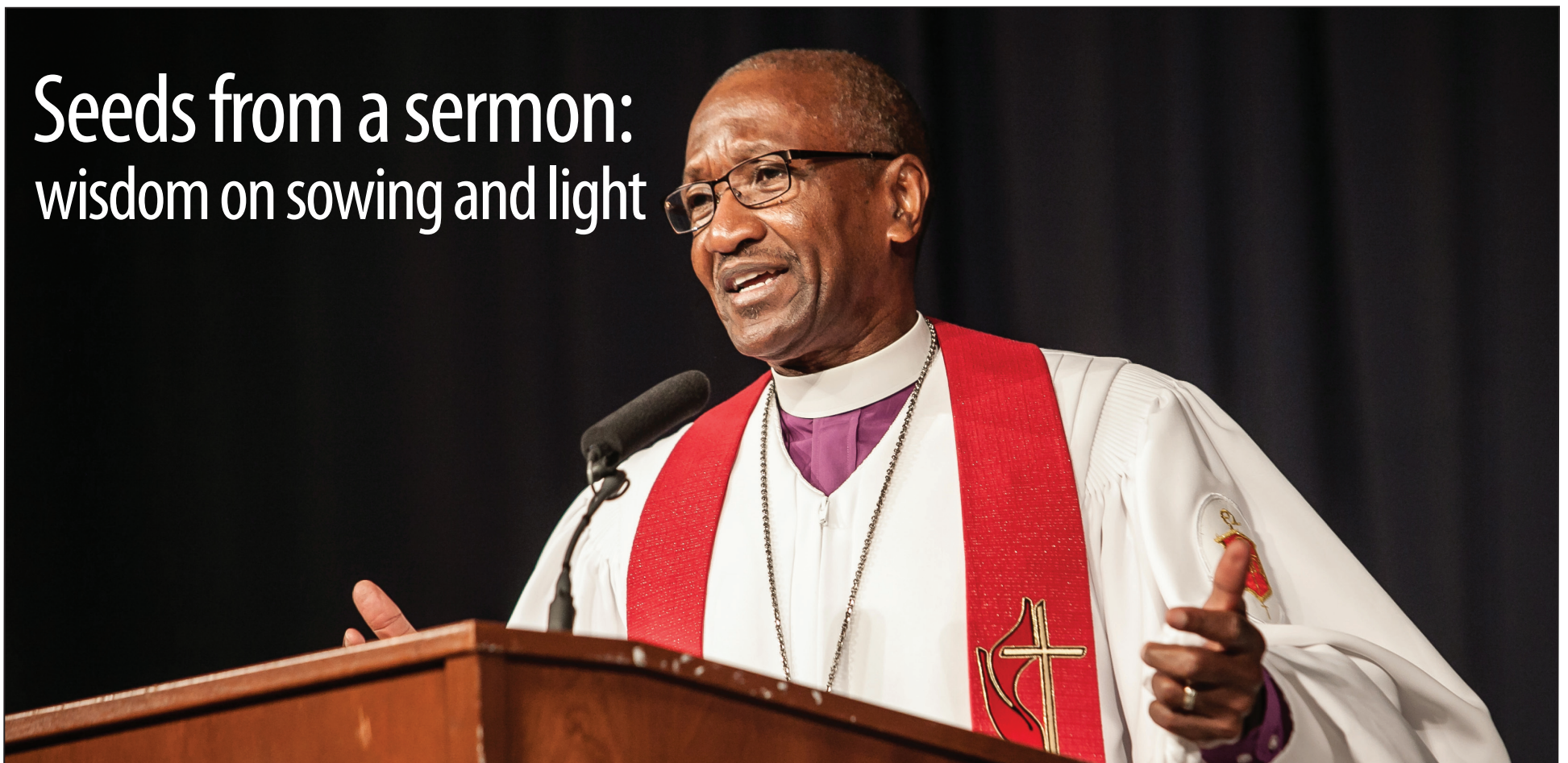
more youth than the year before. This year 6,500 youth swarmed on Ocean City in January. “Thousands of young people open their hearts to God,” said Angela Woolcott, executive vice president.

Several ROCK alumni, some already out of college or close to it, testified to what a life-changing experience ROCK had been for them, reflecting the experience of hundreds of youth. Many ROCK alumni continue to return each year, often in the role of supportive young adults.

Much of the CCYM report was shown by video, planned, directed and produced by youth.

The dates have been set and CCYM is already planning ROCK 2014 for Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2014, in Ocean City.

Seeds from a sermon: wisdom on sowing and light



Within our own Baltimore-Washington Conference, some who are coming out of our rural and suburban areas are hurting because they feel the conference does not care about those who live beyond the city gates. Others of our brothers and sisters are hurting because of the way we refuse to even have a conversation about sexual orientation. Many of our young people are hurting because we turn our heads away from those who are being bullied daily in our communities. Still others are hurting because some of our pastors and laity refuse to use inclusive language, even when they know it is offensive to others. Only hearts and minds that are changed in Christ Jesus can help us to extend God's love far and wide to all who are hurting.



So let us say, "yes" to being a Conference that is cultivated on fertile ground. And let us say, "yes" to producing the rich soil in which disciples will be made who will turn the world right side up for Jesus Christ; today, tomorrow and always.



People are hungering for truth. People hunger for a changed heart. Some people have been hurting for a long time because of their immigration status, and not feeling as if they belong any place in particular.



"It's Holy Ghost Seed Sowing Time – and God wants us – to be a field of good soil!" ... We must continue to try and reflect the light of Christ's presence in all that we say and in all that we do.



It's so easy, at times, to rush to judgment about everyone else and forget about the fact that the Lord has done some amazing and miraculous things to turn our own lives around! Sometimes we need to look back in the mirror of our own yesterday, not to stay there, but in order to remember how we ourselves got over. And sometimes we need to check the soil up under our own feet, to remember that it has not always been good soil.

And so we pray:
What seeds will you sow? How will you be light?

Ordination Service recognizes 25 new clergy members

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

BISHOP MARCUS MATTHEWS presided at the Ordination Service at the close of the 229th Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference May 31. For many people, this service is the highlight of annual conference.

Preaching at the service was Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, who leads the West Virginia Conference.

The two bishops were joined by two retired bishops for the liturgy of the Ordination Service. Bishop Joseph Yeakel, who had served the Baltimore-Washington Conference for 12 years, and Bishop Violet Fisher who has retired from the New York West Area, participated in the spiritual ceremony of laying on of hands on each of the 25 candidates being ordained or commissioned.

Seven women and one man were ordained Elders in Full Connection, and 17 candidates were commissioned as Provisional Elders. There were no Deacons either commissioned or ordained.

Bishop Ball, preaching on “Seed Versus Soil,” carried through the conference theme of “Sowing the Seed ... Be Light,” as she addressed the candidates. “Our job is to sow the seed,” she said, then cautioned that, like the parable, you won’t know what kind of soil it falls on. “You can’t know in advance where the seed will grow.”

To produce a good crop, the sower in the parable had “to scatter seed extravagantly,” she said. “We spend much time figuring out where to sow,” but in real life there’s no guarantee of always having a fruitful harvest.

“The best way to reach new people is to sow the seed in every place possible in every way and in ways you’ve not done before,” she instructed. God, the sower, “isn’t concerned about the soil, scattering seed on productive and unproductive soil alike.”

The parable teaches patience. “We may never produce what we hope for, but others will,” she said.

Bishop Ball reminded the ordinands that “it’s not about

Commissioned as Provisional Elders

Nicholas Bufano
Michael W. Bynum
Angela Marie Flanagan
Katie Jean Grover
Joseph Heath
YuJung Hwang
Robert Edward Kells Jr.
Timothy Steen Kromer
Beth Ludlum
Dae Sung Park
Katharine Ann Saari
Shannon Sullivan
Braulio Torres
Marvin R. Wamble
Jennifer Dawn Webber
Linda Susan Yarrow
Dottie Yunger

Full Member Elders and their appointments

Marianne Theresa Lonergan Brown – Brookfield
Immanuel, Brandywine
Mary Kathryn Nippard Kanahan- St. John United,
Columbia
Shari Michelle McCourt- Westminster UMC associate
Martha Pruett Meredith – Severna Park UMC associate
Elizabeth Amanda Sayers – Covenant UMC,
Gaithersburg
Harry Eugene Smith Jr.- Oxon Hill
Jennifer Stallings Eschliman – Glen Mar UMC associate
Alicia Loar Vanisko - Calvary UMC, Annapolis, associate



Bishops Marcus Matthews, Joseph H. Yeakel, Sandra Steiner Ball and the Rev. Andy Lunt lay hands on ordinand Mandy Sayers.

us,” several times. “The final word in ministry belongs to God, not us,” she said. “If God can do it for us, God can do it for anyone.”

The 2013 class of Provisional Elders is very diverse, covering a wide scope of age and appearances. It includes nine men and eight women, two of Korean ancestry, people in their early 20s and a couple in middle age, a Hispanic and two African-Americans, a diversity reflective of church membership in this area.

Not so for the small 2013 class of Elders: one man is in the eight ordained, who is also the only black. Two of the eight are middle-aged.

The offering taken at this year’s Ordination Service will go toward providing scholarships for students at Africa University. It totaled \$7,803.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

God’s Foolish Ones honored

BALTIMORE – As is customary at each annual conference, the Methodist Federation for Social Action, an unofficial caucus of The United Methodist Church, presents an award to someone deemed extraordinary in pursuing or promoting social issues of concern to the church.

At the MFSA banquet May 30, two women were recognized for their pursuit of social justice and presented this year’s “God’s Foolish One” award.

Ann Price, the outgoing social justice coordinator for the conference United Methodist Women was honored.

The Rev. Mary Kay Totty, pastor of Dumbarton UMC, also joined the roster of social justice activists for her words, actions and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

The name for the award comes from 1 Corinthians 1:27.

Prayer on the Go a welcome activity

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For the second year, the Prayer Ministry of Asbury UMC held “Prayer on the Go,” the members taking to the streets outside the church in downtown D.C. to pray with and for passers-by. The event was held May 2, the National Day of Prayer. Some of the prayers offered were suggested by the National Day guidelines, for government, education, media, business, church and military. But most people also wanted personal prayers.

“The feedback we received last year ... tells us that we’re providing a much needed ministry,” said Thelma M.

Johnson, who chairs the committee.

Team members invited anyone into the church who would like to pray either in solitude or with a prayer team member.

By 3 p.m. when Prayer on the Go was over, more than 400 people had prayed and been prayed for and 100 lunches and bottles of water had been distributed.



A member of the community stops to pray at Asbury UMC in D.C.

Wogaman presented with interfaith award

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the packed Founders Hall at American University’s School of International Service, the Rev. Phil Wogaman received the Interfaith Conference’s Bridge Builders Award May 22.

The award was presented by United Methodist retired Bishop Joseph Yeakel, who told of how in 1992 he settled on Wogaman to fill the vacating pulpit of Foundry UMC, pulling him from Wesley Theological Seminary, where he had served for nearly 15 years as dean and professor of Christian Ethics.

The Interfaith Conference was founded 35 years ago by, among others, the late Bishop James K. Mathews, to bring faiths together in a cooperative spirit for community action on issues of mutual concern.

“I’ve learned so much about different faiths from the IFC,” Wogaman commented, “and about my own.” His newest book, “What Christians Can Learn from Other Religions,” will be out early next year.

Church distributes 6,000 pounds of food

PERRY HALL – June 1 was a big day for Perry Hall UMC, as they distributed 6,000 pounds of perishable and non-perishable food to the community. It was provided by the Maryland Food Bank and Priority Partners, part of Johns Hopkins Health Care.

The church was selected to participate in the food distribution program, “in part because of the work we and our Food Pantry do for the community,” said the Rev. Vic Harner.

Two hundred families in need of assistance benefitted in this Perry Hall Change the World event.

She’s a ‘seriously amazing volunteer’

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Geraldine Whitley of Christ UMC received The Seriously Amazing Volunteer Award from the Smithsonian Institution April 8 at a Volunteer Appreciation reception held at the Dillon Ripley Centers International Gallery. “The award acknowledged her dedication, enthusiasm, strong work ethic and willingness to help the Smithsonian accomplish its mission and enhance the visitor experience,” said her pastor, the Rev. Adrienne Terry.

Whitley is a docent at the Anacostia Community Museum, but that’s not all. She is also lay member for Christ UMC, a lay speaker and the chair of the United Methodist Women.

“I’m so proud of this wonderful woman of God,” Terry said.



Rev. Adrienne Terry and volunteer Geraldine Whitley



Asbury UMC takes prayer outside the wall of the church in their “Prayer on the Go” event.

Memorial service remembers and honors saints of the church

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

SINGING “WHEN THE Saints Come Marching In,” as she approached the podium, Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball was joined by many in the audience. “Come, Holy Spirit, continue to be in this place, with these families gathered here,” she prayed.

Thirty-eight families of clergy and clergy spouses who had died in the past year came together at the annual Service for the Saints May 30. They had a chance to reminisce and remember during dinner preceding the service.

“We pause to remember, honor give thanks and be encouraged by those who have gone on,” Bishop Ball said. “They are not forgotten.”

In keeping with the sower and seeds metaphor of the conference, she said, “They cast their seeds wherever they could sow and some here could witness that God really does do miracles.”

Some of the years they served were on rocky ground, where harvest was little, when the budget left little, when disgruntled parishioners complained, “we’ve never done it that way before.”

“They believed that God knows us, that God needed them, and that God needs us,” she said. “Those before us were faithful in their words, prayers and witness. They will be transformed in the next phase of life, those who have followed God’s Son.”

Bishop Steiner Ball didn’t stop with the words of comfort, but continued with forward-looking words of encouragement. We’re connected to those who sit at the Lord’s table in Heaven, we’re each counted with God’s holy people, she said. “Are we helping others to claim their place as part of the recognized and transformed community?”

“Are we sowing God’s seeds broadly enough or are we limiting our field work?”

As the Rev. Mary Jo Sims, the conference secretary, read the name of each person being remembered, the Cokesbury bell was struck and the attending district superintendents lit a candle on the altar as family and friends stood. The congregation prayerfully sang, “It is in our living; it is in our dying ... we belong to God.”

- 16 clergy remembered**
Rev. John P. Buchheister
Rev. Leon Dage
Rev. Basil Boyer Day Jr.
Rev. Orin Bill Dooley
Rev. Warren Ebinger
Rev. Bob Edgar
Rev. Jack Ewald
Rev. Khrista Ferguson
Rev. Mildred Holliday
Rev. Don Howard
Rev. Ernest F. Johnson
Rev. Kathryn Hames Letto
Rev. Ramon McDonald
Rev. Howard Nash
Rev. Ernest Twigg
Rev. Horace Wallace
- 22 Clergy spouses remembered**
Hannah Brown
Valerie Betty Burchell
Mary Ellen Dage
Tom Dols
Sylvia Frum
Alberta Gruver
Marguerite Hall
Margaret Haus
D. Allen Hetz
Iwanda Jay
Dorothea Jordan
Grace Sellars Jones
Gordia Lanman
Alice Mae Milbourne
Valerie Moser
William Rains
Evelyn Sims
Lawrence Staten
Terrellyn Taylor
Ray D. Walton
Elizabeth Washington Waters
Helen Wolfe
- 2 Bishops remembered**
Bishop Leontine Kelly
Bishop Mack Stokes
- 5 Bishops’ spouses remembered**
Jane Colaw
Marjorie Duecker
Marian Hancock
Violet Kulah
Billie Jo Sanders



The Rev. Terri Rae Chattin lights candles at the Service of the Saints in honor of those who died during the previous year.

Presenter of resolution calls for continued conversation

DEAR FRIENDS:

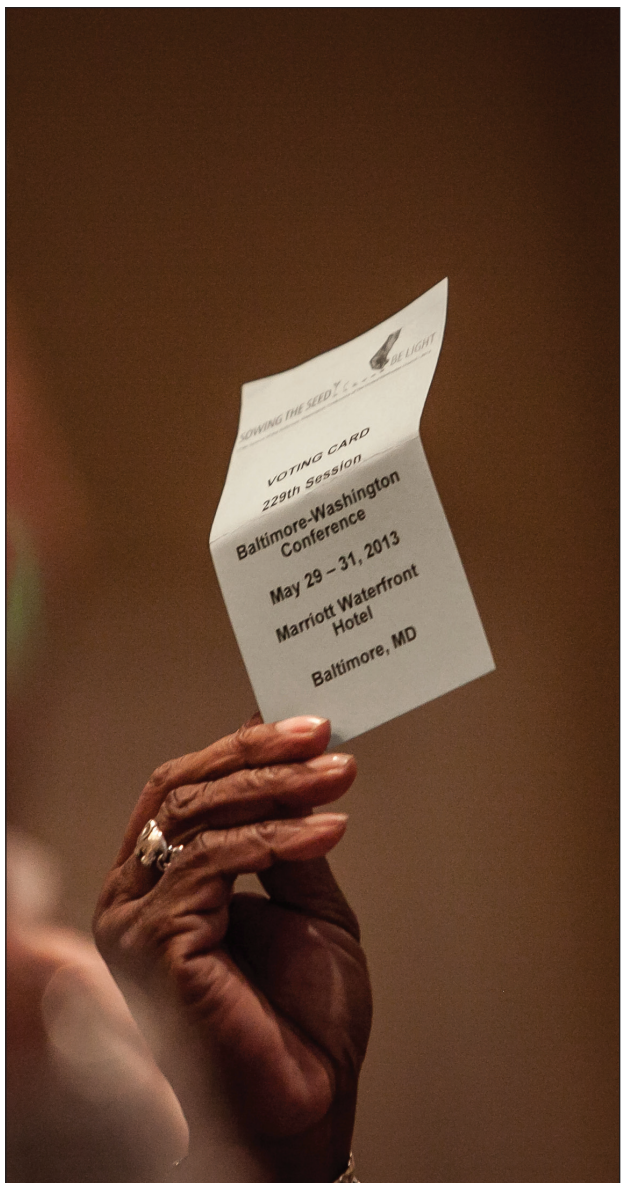
There is no gloating on our part over the divided house vote earlier today concerning Resolution # 1 on Evolutionary Scientific Thinking. While we are pleased that some 440 of the Conference members voted to support the Resolution, as written and developed by our colleague Henry F. Schwartzman (retired Elder), we regret the sense of hurt and distress on the part of those who voted against.

First a brief word of explanation: Although we on the WesleyNexus Board had no role in structuring the Resolution’s language, we felt it important that we support the Resolution which advocates a constructive discussion of sound theology and the scientific insights that inform our thinking in the 21st century, particularly when it means attracting young people into our churches.

Because the Connectional Table had voted concurrence of the Resolution, we were compelled to present it as written and to advocate its passage through the floor debate. We had prepared a shorter, substitute motion with less contentious language that was to be presented from the floor (it had already been loaded into the power-point system for display for the Conference), but there were too many people standing at the microphones for our colleagues in the house to gain recognition to speak. From where I was standing facing the lights from the podium, I could not even tell where our folks were situated, and Bishop Matthews did an admirable, totally unbiased job in recognizing alternating speakers for and against.

My intention was to answer the first question from the floor by calling for the prepared substitute Resolution, but no one asked a single question – there were only speeches for and against, so when the “debate” closed, I had only the opportunity for the closing statement.

While I am gratified that the Conference supported the Resolution, I regret that the rules of the Conference



Members at annual conference voted on several resolutions.

constrained my preferred course of action. Now I hope we can move on to build opportunities for constructive dialogue. Thus my appeal.

On our website – www.wesnex.org – (which has its main purpose in serving as a resource for dialogue between sound theology and scientific thinking) there is an opportunity for a visitor to enter an email address and become an interactive participant in the ongoing discussion. That is one way in which you can make your voice heard, and we will respond to you.

Secondly, during the coming months, we will be sponsoring several presentations and open discussions at local churches in the conference. It would be very constructive, especially those of you who felt you must vote against the Resolution of Scientific Thinking, to join us in these dialogue opportunities. It would be our sincere hope that helpful information and mutual understanding might emerge from these occasions, and we would be especially pleased if you could bring some young people into the dialogue.

Our deep gratitude is being conveyed here to all who supported the resolution, and also for all those who engaged in the floor debate this morning. Our subsequent discussions should be more open and the dialogue more fruitful. We pray God’s blessing on us all.

Sincerely,
E. Maynard Moore,
on behalf of the Board of Directors WesleyNexus, Inc.
Wesleynexus@aol.com

Overview: Conference sows seeds of faith, hope, joy & peace

From page 1

as an offering, the names of 2,341 people brought to Christ during the last year were lifted up.

On the colorful cards were written the names of new disciples. Pamela Johnson, of West Montgomery UMC, lifted up Bonnie McCoy, a dear friend who recently died of cancer. During McCoy’s last months, Johnson prayed for her. “Five days before she passed,” Johnson wrote on the offering card, “she told me she believed in God and was ready to go to heaven. It warmed my heart to know she gave her life to Christ before she died. Thanks be to God.”

Holy Conferencing on budget, resolutions

During the session, members practiced the United Methodist discipline of holy conferencing, which invites people to participate in conversation and debate while treating each other as beloved children of God and inviting the Holy Spirit to move as part of the discussion.

During the plenary session May 30, the members, in an unprecedented unanimous vote, adopted a \$16.8 million budget for 2014. The approved budget represents a 1.6 percent decrease in spending from 2013 and a 7 percent decrease from the 2012 budget. (See story page 3.)

The benevolence factor for local churches remains steady at 17.75 percent. In its planning, CFA is counting on the collection rate for apportionments rising from 91.5 percent in 2013 to 92.5 percent in 2014.

Members also voted on five resolutions related to the rules. Among the outcomes, they created a conference personnel committee, which will take over the task of equipping the human resources department from the episcopacy committee; and voted not to elect delegates to the 2016 General Conference a year earlier than usual, as they were given permission by the denomination to do.

Members also considered a number of social justice related resolutions. They voted to support advocacy efforts to end gun violence, endorse efforts to provide earned sick leave to all workers, and to work to end bullying.

Following a significant debate, the conference also voted on a resolution on scientific thinking. Opponents of the resolution, like the Rev. George Harpold, questioned if “science and evolution is trying to make a lie out of creation.” Proponents, like the resolution’s presenter, the Rev. Maynard Moore, celebrated the possibilities that arise in an ongoing conversation between faith and science. In a 447 to 286 vote, the resolution passed.

Church leaders affirmed

Through the conference, a number of leaders came forward to be recognized. During the district superintendents’ report, appointments for 117 pastors

were announced. (www.bwcmc.com/appointments.)

Included in these appointments are five new members of the Cabinet. The Rev. J.W. Park, the incoming superintendent of the Central Maryland District, will serve during the next two years as dean of the Cabinet, Bishop Matthews announced.

Members also honored 19 retirees, who together represent 565 years of ministry.

At an ordination service, Bishops Matthews, West Virginia Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball and retired Bishops Joseph H. Yeakel and Violet Fisher commissioned 17 Provisional Elders and ordained eight Elders in Full Connection. (See story, page 6.)

During the Memorial Service on Thursday evening, 16 pastors who died during the previous year were honored. Also remembered were clergy and bishops’ spouses, bishops, including Bishop Leontine Kelly, a native of Washington, D.C., and lay members, including Phyllis Butler, a former lay leader of the Baltimore Conference. (See story, page 7.)

Speakers deliver messages of light

During the three-day session, members heard from a variety of speakers. The Rev. Dr. Albert Mosley, president of Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, led a morning Bible study May 30 and 31 on the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-9. (See story, page 4.)

At the conclusion of the study, he distributed fortune cookies to the members containing messages encouraging them to sow seeds of hope, peace, love and joy.

Conference members also heard from Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who thanked them for their continued presence and social justice ministries in the city and for their care and prayers following the recent murder of her cousin, Joseph Haskins, the son of the Rev. Bruce and Deborah Haskins.

General Secretary of the General Commission on Finance and Administration Moses Kumar thanked the Baltimore-Washington Conference for paying 100 percent of its apportionments for more than 15 years. “You are a living example of giving so that others may prosper,” he said.

In ministry reports, Conference Lay Leader Delores Martin called on the laity to be empowered to claim their ministries, and Director of Connectional Ministries Sandra Ferguson, who led an hour presentation with video and storytelling, outlined the conference’s more than 27 ministries, including advocacy, camping, the Zimbabwe partnership, disaster relief, and church development. (See the videos of these ministries at <http://getumsocial.com/bwctv>.)

Ferguson also introduced to the conference Usha N. Satish, a graduate of Bennett College who thanked the conference for its full support of the Black College Fund, which provides scholarships at historically black colleges.

Other seeds sown

- In other action, the conference:
- Received an award from the General Board of Global Ministries for contributing the most in the Northeastern Jurisdiction for designated giving to mission and missionary support.
 - Raised \$7,803 in an offering at ordination to benefit the scholarship fund at Africa University.
 - Adopted 12 Advance Special ministries for second-mile giving.
 - Enjoyed music during worship from choirs from Emory UMC in Washington, Epworth Chapel UMC in Baltimore and Damascus UMC in Damascus.
 - Celebrated camping ministries at games, songs and lunch around a “campfire” in the Grand Ballroom.
 - Learned about changes to the Clergy Retirement Security Program for 2014 at a special workshop.
 - Voted on four amendments to the denomination’s constitution. The results of the denomination-wide vote will be announced later this year by the Council of Bishops.
 - Received greetings from Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt Jr. of the CME Church.

Past, present and future church

During the session, the conference recognized the Rev. Paul Jones, 95, who was attending his 74th consecutive annual conference session. His presence emphasized the continuing traditions and heritage of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, the oldest in the denomination.

During the Memorial Service, this heritage was recognized with the tolling of the Cokesbury bell. This bell is from Cokesbury College, which was established at the denomination’s founding Christmas Conference in 1784.

During the ordination service, the kneeler that was used by the ordinands is from the altar rail of Memorial Methodist Church. It was at this rail that renowned missionary E. Stanley Jones experienced his conversion to the Christian faith.

Another spiritual artifact was worn by the Rev. Sarah Dorrance of Taylorsville UMC in Mt. Airy, who donned a stole once worn by her grandfather, who was ordained 100 years ago, in May 1913.

In another special moment, the 1,700 members in attendance sang “Happy Birthday,” via live Internet streaming, to Eunice Mathews, the daughter of E. Stanley Jones and widow of Bishop James Mathews, who was celebrating her 99th birthday.

The 230th session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference is scheduled to convene Thursday, May 29 through Saturday, May 31, 2014, at the Waterfront Marriott Hotel in Baltimore.



Photos in this issue were provided by: Tony Richards, Maidstone Mulenga, Melissa Lauber & Alison Burdett