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UMC *Connection*

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BWC proclaims unity



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, center, prays with the clergy of the Baltimore-Washington Conference prior to the ordination service June 1. This was Bishop Easterling's first ordination and commissioning service as a bishop in The United Methodist Church. The service was a highlight of the 233rd session.

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff



WHEN BISHOP LATRELLE Easterling pronounced the 233rd session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference open, she made history as the first woman to lead the 159,000 members and 1,050 clergy who make up the 628 churches of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

But Easterling's actions were more focused on the future as she set an ambitious, faith-centered and Spirit-driven vision for the Conference during the three-day event, May 31-June 2, at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel.

During opening worship, the bishop stressed the theme of the session, "We are One: Connected in Covenant." She preached to a spirited gathering of more than 1,527 registered members and guests, who filled the ballroom to capacity.

"We are the body of Christ together," she said. "How we choose to live out our days is our response to this covenant. ... If we allow ourselves to be divided, we will lose our moral witness to the world."

Some of the tensions the church is experiencing arose at the very beginning of the conference, in the clergy session, when the Rev. J. Philip Wogaman handed in his clergy credentials (see story below).

His gesture, he said, was made out of a "broken heart" for T.C. Morrow, a lesbian who was not approved for ordination as a Deacon in 2016 and who was not brought forth to the clergy session this year, and for others who have been excluded "as a result of bad church law, applied legalistically and hurtfully," he said.

The 54-member Board of Ordained Ministry has created a task force to review the board's policies and practices around LGBTQI candidates, especially in light of the denomination's Commission on a Way Forward, which will deliver its report on human sexuality and The United Methodist Church in February 2019.

"We solicit your prayers for this very important work," said BoOM Chair Rev. C. Anthony Hunt, "and look with hope to the day when The United Methodist Church will reflect God's gracious expression of what it means to be Beloved Community."

During the session's times of holy conferencing, members:

- Voted on five amendments to the denomination's Constitution, including one that addresses discrimination against women and girls within the UMC. The results of these votes will be announced after all the United Methodist conferences, worldwide, cast their ballots.
- Passed a resolution to become a member of the Religious Coalition on Reproductive Choice.
- Chose to participate in a conference-wide boycott of Hewlett Packard products until the company ceases to profit from the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Rejected calls for the BWC and

Mid-Atlantic Foundation to adopt stronger socially responsible investment screens and to divest from Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, and Motorola, three companies noted by some for their financial involvement in Israel's occupation of Palestine.

- Revised the conference moving policy so that retirees have the same moving benefits as active clergy.
- Officially closed Centennial-Caroline Street UMC in Baltimore and Overlea Chapel UMC in Baltimore.
- Adopted an \$18,463,136 budget for 2018, only a 0.3 percent increase over 2017. (See story, page 3)
- Slightly lowered the benevolence factor, *See Overview, page 8*

In witness, Wogaman surrenders clergy credentials

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

J. PHILLIP WOGAMAN, who was going to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his Elder's ordination next month, unexpectedly turned in his clergy credentials to Bishop LaTrelle Easterling Wednesday afternoon during the BWC's clergy session.

Wogaman made the gesture during a moment of personal privilege. He said that his "heart breaks" for T.C. Morrow, a lesbian who was not approved for ordination as a Deacon in 2016 and who was not brought forth to the clergy session this year, and for "others like her" with the gifts and graces for ordained ministry "who have been excluded as a result of bad church law, applied legalistically and

hurtfully."

The United Methodist Church prohibits the ordination of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals, and has since 1972.

Morrow, who sought ordination again this year, had her status remain as a certified candidate after a May 2017 Judicial Council ruling stated that Boards of Ordained Ministry were required to ask about a candidate's sexual practice as part of their examination. The BWC's BoOM took that decision into account, said the Rev. C. Anthony Hunt, chair, when it reached its decision not to recommend her to the full clergy session.

In a statement, Hunt said, "In our discernment, the Board recognizes that the Judicial Council, in its recent declarative

See Wogaman, page 7



The Rev. Nancy Webb, right, and friends celebrate unity in covenant at the opening worship at the 2017 Annual Conference Session.

... well said

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

By MANDY SAYERS
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

AAAH, SUMMER. In our house, summer means we create what we call our “Summer Bucket List.” Each family member gets to add to the list specific things they’d like to experience before Labor Day rolls around. Items routinely include beach and zoo trips, baseball games, fairs, fireworks, pool time and specific roller coasters.

We have had ongoing projects like the Ice Cream Taste Test of 2013, where we sampled the ice cream of every ice cream store within a specific radius to see which one was best. (Brusters and Jimmie Cone split our household). For this summer, I’m still in prayer about it as of this writing, but I’m thinking about Never Miss a Sunset and Get Sermons Done Before Saturday...we’ll see.

Now, you should know that I am NOT a planner by nature. When my work requires it, I can plan, but my nature is to keep options open, make a list and lose it, that sort of thing. I’m a procrastinator (see sermon note, above). I’m the sort of person who buys organizers and then doesn’t use them.

One of the many things I’ve learned as a pastor is that it’s so easy to get absorbed in the work of ministry and miss out on connection with the people I love the most — spouse, children, friends. These folks are God’s gift, just as surely as my vocation is a gift, and very often they pay the price when there’s a funeral or a meeting or church events for seven Saturdays in a row. It would be easy to be so busy hurrying off to church to preach on the Good Samaritan that I pass by several folks in the ditch on the way.

Summer is a precious time where I have permission to slow down and to spend some extra time connecting with people, looking them in the eye, and really listening to them. Summer is a season where there’s just a little more space for rejoicing in God’s creation and in Sabbath rest. It’s Sabbath, writ large, wearing sunscreen and a big floppy hat. I commend it to you.

Time is precious and to live is a gift. Don’t waste your summer in a silo of work and business as usual. Fight idolatry. Be a rebel. Reconnect.

PS: What’s on YOUR summer bucket list? I’m always looking for inspiration! Email me at Pastormandy10@gmail.com.

... well said

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 DARYL WILLIAMS
Pastor, St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill

As I WAS sitting in my home a few weeks ago, the worst thing in the world happened. There I was, happily plodding along doing some sermon research on the internet. Everything was fine, when all of a sudden there was a blink on the TV and then it went blank. Not only that, but as I tried to go from one site to another, I couldn’t, and I got an error message.

Yes, you guessed it: the cable and the internet went out at the same time. To say the least, I was completely at a loss about what to do. Then it got even worse: the cable company, who will remain nameless, told me it would be two days before they could get a service tech out to fix the problem. TWO WHOLE DAYS!!! What was I going to do?

That evening, a funny thing happened. My wife and I sat at the dinner table and just talked to one another. We didn’t check our devices; we didn’t watch TV; we just sat and talked. We caught up on each other’s day, we told stories, we laughed and joked and had a wonderful time.

When dinner was over, we sat in the living room, and believe it or not we kept talking. For the next two days, while our information access was disconnected, we reconnected. We got the chance to just be with each other and enjoy each other’s company. We got the chance to remember that we actually like just sitting around, being with each other and being joined together. Because we disconnected from the outside world, we reconnected with each other.

As we look back on the 233rd Session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, I want to invite you to reconnect. Annual Conference gave us the chance to reconnect. It was a time to step away from the day-to-day hustle and bustle of our ministries and spend time with our sisters and brothers in Christ, connecting around our common beliefs, our common heritage and our common goals of serving God and making disciples of Christ.

The theme for this year’s conference was “We are one.” We can only be one if we take the time to connect with each other and truly be one with one another. So this year, instead of checking how that friend is doing by looking at Facebook, call them or, better yet, go have a coffee with them. Take time this summer to be with one another. Find some time to reconnect.

... well said

EVENTS

taste & see

GATHERING FOR GOOD

Saturday, September 23, 2017
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
American University
Katzen Center for the Arts
4400 Massachusetts Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20016
\$49 for students, \$69 first 50
non-students, \$99 until Aug. 1,
\$139 until September 15
TasteAndSeeDMV.com

District penny challenge

	For	Against	Total Points	Total Dollars
Greater Washington	5529	861	4668	\$63.90
Baltimore Suburban	5810	4670	1140	\$104.80
Washington East	9460	9300	160	\$187.60
Baltimore Metro	2871	4460	-1589	\$73.31
Cumberland-Hagerstown	8515	10990	-2475	\$195.05
Annapolis	678	3375	-2697	\$40.53
Central Maryland	874	6845	-5971	\$77.19
Frederick	532	6615	-6083	\$71.47
				\$813.85

\$814 was raised to benefit the Adrienne Terry Fund for Affordable Housing. Greater Washington won the District penny challenge with 4,668 points. Washington East had the most points 'for' their district, while Cumberland-Hagerstown's most points 'against' resulted in their district's jar containing the highest dollar amount.

<http://tiny.cc/AdrienneTerryFund>

Come join the Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Women for

Mission u

The 2017 studies are:
Living as a Covenant Community
Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action
Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church in the United States

A special Mission u experience for youth is also offered. Contact the Rev. Alexis Brown at faithnfit@gmail.com

July 28-30 – Bethesda Marriott, 5151 Pooks Hill Road
For more information or to register, contact the Registrar, Zilpha Pinkney at zapinkney@yahoo.com. Registration and refund deadline is July 11.



This symbol appears with stories that show your apportionment dollars at work, making a difference in people’s lives.

UMConnection

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Conference celebrates rich, united ministries

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff



THE BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE is a leader in living out the denomination's four areas of focus, said the Rev. Stacey Cole Wilson in the Connectional Ministries report at annual conference June 2.

These four areas include developing principled Christian leaders; creating new and renewed congregations; improving global health; and engaging in ministry with the poor.

One of the BWC's newest initiatives, a Call to Action, stems from a document adopted at the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, which addresses racial justice and reconciliation.

Members at the annual conference filled out Call to Action Covenant Cards, pledging to take suggested concrete actions to address racism in their churches and communities. Pastors were also given Vital Conversation resources by the Commission on Religion and Race to use in their churches.

Information about this new initiative can be found at <http://tiny.cc/call-to-action>.

The conference's youth also presented information about an online resource they

have created, called "Stress Less," to help their peers manage issues that affect the physical, mental and spiritual lives of teens. (Visit <http://tiny.cc/CCYMStressLess> for more information.)

United Methodist youth are "disciples in training, not disciples in waiting," members of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries proclaimed in their presentation to the conference.

"Do you see us?" asked the youth. "Please see us, hear us, include us, and love us."

"Our youth are really stepping up," said Bishop LaTrelle Easterling. "They're not asking someone to give them the answers. They are the answer."

Doing similarly strong ministry is the Young Adult Council, whose members explored how they create unity within diversity. Council members encouraged everyone to attend their One Love creative worship experience this fall.

In other ministry-related items, members heard from Delores Martin, the conference lay leader.

Martin praised the covenant partnership that is growing between the laity and clergy within the Baltimore-Washington Conference. She also lifted up the work of the eight district lay leaders; Julie Flinchum, chair of the committee on certified lay

ministry; the more than 1,000 certified lay servants who serve in local churches throughout the conference; and BWC's 143 Certified Lay Ministers.

She encouraged the members to consider the old saying, "It's as easy as ABC," and suggested, for United Methodists, "it's ABCD – Always Be in

Covenant Discipleship."

One area of discipleship that is growing significantly in the Baltimore-Washington Conference is Hispanic Ministries, under the direction of the new Hispanic and Latino Ministries Coordinator Emma Escobar.

Hispanic ministries are not a caucus, it is a ministry of the entire conference, explained the Rev. Eliezer Valentin-Castañon. Everyone is invited to participate in connecting with the growing Latino populations in their communities, to develop resources and programs for Spanish-speakers and to participate in education and advocacy efforts to assist

retires this year after 30 years of ministry.

Over the years, said Chris Schlieckert, director of Camp Manidokan, Thornton welcomed, in love, more than 300,000 guests to West River.

In a "This is Your Life" style program, members of the conference reminisced about the role Thornton played in their lives, often citing Thornton's catch phrase, "It just doesn't get any better than this."

Camping and Retreat Ministries welcomed more than 15,000 guests last year. "While other conferences are closing their camps, the BWC's camping program is thriving," Bishop Easterling said.

The BWC has more than 37 committees



Members of the Conference Council on Youth Ministry share their 'Stress Less' initiative and resources June 1.

immigrants, he said.

Annual conference members also heard from the General Board of Church and Society about a new program that addresses places of brokenness around the world and provides the safety and shelter of sanctuary. This new ministry is explained at umcjustice.org.

In an emotional tribute, the conference also honored Andy Thornton, director of Camping and Retreat Ministries, who

involved in mission and ministry. But that ministry is not limited by conference borders. There are also active ministries in Puerto Rico, where local churches are creating unique mission partnerships; in Eurasia, especially in the south of Russia where the BWC is supporting congregations that are doing culture-changing work; in the South Conference in South Korea; and in Zimbabwe.

BWC adopts \$18.4 million budget for 2018

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff



BY UNANIMOUS VOTE, members of the 2017 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference approved the 2018 expense budget of \$18.4 million. Of that amount, \$14.3 million is budgeted to be received by apportionments, the connectional system of giving used by the church to support mission and ministry around the world.

The 2018 budget continues the focus adopted by members last year, according to the Rev. Ann Laprade, out-going chair of the BWC's Council on Finance and Administration, who gave the report June 2.

In 2018, there continues to be a strategic shift to fund retiree medical insurance from non-apportionment reserves, totaling \$1.5 million. This strategy, she said, allows a faster pay-down on long-term debt on the Mission Center and the dining hall at West River Retreat and Camp; replenishment of conference reserves; and helping to keep cost controls in place.

By paying down the long-term debt, Laprade said, it will result in paying off the debt six years early, saving about \$1 million in interest.

The budget calls for increasing the level of conference reserves from 10 percent of the apportionment budget to 15 percent. The 2018 budget identifies \$350,000 for

this objective, Laprade said. "This is a small change, but we anticipate it will have a stabilizing impact for future conference budgets," she said.

The best indication of the continued focus on cost controls within the conference budget, she said, is seen by the change in apportionment income requests over the last several budget cycles.

"As we have seen the total budget for the conference go up and down throughout the last seven budget cycles, we have been able to keep the apportionment income budget flat during that same period of time," Laprade said. "And it is also encouraging to see... that when the apportionment budget was reduced by \$1 million in the 2013 budget, the continued focus on cost control has enabled us to keep the apportionment request from local churches flat for six straight budget cycles."

Laprade highlighted several key areas of the 2018 budget. Among them:

- The budget shows a 2.5 percent increase for staff salaries. It also shifts funds from the Conference grants to fund the full-time Hispanic Ministries position. This move is budget neutral and it confirms the success of the Hispanic Ministries position that has been supported temporarily by grant funding over the past couple of budget cycles.
- The debt reduction efforts are

helping to reduce the Mission Center mortgage in 2018 by \$39,000.

- It shows a continuing forecast of good growth at our camps with a 4.2 percent increase in registrations.

Laprade also updated conference members on the continuing "Imagine No Malaria" campaign. The BWC had pledged to contribute \$2.1 million to this churchwide effort at eradicating this killer disease. To date, she said, contributions total \$1.93 million. "This puts us at 92 percent of the goal," she said. "Even though we have officially closed the campaign, we anticipate funds will continue to come in from individuals, churches and organizations who are still making donations to fulfill their pledges."

In a separate action, conference members approved a 2 percent hike in the minimum compensation for full-time clergy. The Commission on Equitable Compensation recommended that the minimum salary be \$43,149, a raise of \$846. The housing allowance recommendation remains unchanged at \$19,866.

The Rev. Jackson Day reported for the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, saying that health insurance premiums will be going up in 2018. The local church rate – the amount each church pays for health insurance – will go up \$20 per month next year, he said. Participant rates will increase \$10 to \$20 per month, depending on the plan.



Members commit themselves to a variety of ministries that address racial justice as part of the Call to Action.



The Rev. Ann Laprade, chair of the BWC's Council on Finance and Administration, delivers the CFA report June 2.

Bishop ordains and commissions 17 pastors

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff



THE IMAGE OF bread was central in the message given to those commissioned, ordained and readmitted June 1, as Bishop LaTrelle Easterling presided at her first such worship service.



Rev. William Thomas, left, is readmitted to the Order of Elders by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, right.

The bishop commissioned one person a Deacon, nine people as provisional Elder, and ordained eight as Elder with full membership into the conference. One person was readmitted to the Order of Elders.

Bishop Ernest S. Lyght, retired, preached on Luke 11:5-13, where a friend goes to a neighbor and asks for bread at midnight, and Exodus 16:1-4, where God provided manna to the Israelites while they were in the wilderness.

“What unites us?” the bishop asked. “It is Jesus Christ, who is the bread of life.”

God fed the children of Israel, Bishop Lyght said, but God did it on a daily basis. No leftovers, he said; God fed manna and even gave them water every day. That way, he said, the bread was always fresh.

“We pray, ‘Lord, give us our daily bread,’” Lyght said. When people come to the church, they are fully expecting to find fresh bread: a faith community, not a doubt community, Lyght said, that has confidence in the future and that will have confidence in everyone.

“Is that the kind of community that your church is?” the bishop asked.

Too often, however, Bishop Lyght said, people find stale bread. “They find warmed-over bread, or they find no bread at all,” he said.

Bishop Lyght, preaching just days before Pentecost – the day the church celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit – said that clergy and laity need to be touched by the Holy Spirit on a regular basis.

“Bishop Easterling is going to touch you tonight,” Bishop Lyght said to the candidates, “and maybe one more time after that. I want you to be touched by the Holy Spirit... but it isn’t enough. You need to be touched by the Holy Spirit over and over and over again. Because it doesn’t last.”

Why, the bishop asked. “Because you and I are so ornery,” he said

to laughter. “We’ve run the Holy Spirit right out of us. We need to be touched one more time.”

The Holy Spirit, he said, is a force that unites us.

“What is it that unites us?” he asked. “That which unites us is Jesus Christ. Therefore, brothers and sisters, keep the bread fresh. Jesus is the real bread and the real bread comes from God who loves us. The bread of life is what people need. What do we have to offer? It’s not the preacher, it’s not the choir, it’s Jesus. Offer them Christ. Keep it fresh. Keep it fresh.”

The offering during ordination went to provide scholarships for young people to attend ROCK, the annual life-changing youth retreat held in Ocean City, Md. That offering totaled \$4,075.



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, left, shares a blessing with the Rev. Selena Johnson during the ordination service.

We’re in this together, mourners reassured

By LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff



AT EACH ANNUAL Conference Session, those clergy and clergy spouses who died during the past year are remembered. Family members or friends light a candle as each one’s name is called. Those remembered this year included four bishops and four bishops’ spouses, 23 clergy and 17 clergy spouses. Eleven laity members of conference were also honored.

Opening the Memorial Service, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling said, “... We are one, connected in covenant; not even death can

separate us from God’s love.”

The Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, senior pastor of Foundry UMC, brought the words of comfort.

Remembering the death of Baltimore-Washington Conference Bishop Felton E. May in February, she said, “He modeled for me the use of hymns to pray.” She invited the congregation to pray with her the hymn, “Breathe on me, the breath of God, that I may live as thou wouldst love Breathe on us, O breath of God, that we may never die.”

“We’re here today with each other, colleagues, family, all of us. It’s good to be with others who have the same experiences,”

she said. Often families share stories of memories and experiences. Jesus did this too, shortly before his death.

In the Scripture reading for the service, John 14:1-4, Jesus told his disciples, “Don’t be troubled, trust in me, my Father’s house has rooms to spare, (and) I’m going to prepare a place for you. ... You know the way to the place I’m going.”

“One of my favorite parts of this Scripture,” Gaines-Cirelli said, “is that Thomas said, ‘We don’t know the way. Tell us.’ Thomas says what is on others’ minds: ‘How can we know the way? ... Are we to get there on our own?’”

The answer to Thomas’ question, she

said, is in the first part of the story: come and see. It is an invitation to be in relation with Jesus, because “I am the way of life in the Kingdom, in God.”

“We gather to celebrate the lives of those who ... join Jesus on the journey to walk in the way of life,” she said. “Directly or indirectly, we have shared a common life — in the church with its gifts and challenges, its weakness and courage, its pettiness and sublimity.” We also know, she said, the particular joy of being a clergy spouse, the beauty and challenge of lay ministry, engaged alongside full-time vocations.

Across our experiences of grief and struggle, she said, “We are one in God, we are God’s children, bound and blessed together because of God’s mercies.” Nothing can separate us in God’s love in Christ Jesus. “You are held there and deeply connected to each other through God.”

Has not Jesus Christ shown us the way, she asked.

“The way is of love and mercy, of humility and service, and to accept the invitation to dwell in God’s big tent,” Gaines-Cirelli said. We can’t make our way alone, but Christ will come and take us there, she concluded.

Youngsoo An, in a booming baritone voice with piano and violin, sang the Lord’s Prayer.

Following the words of comfort, Cynthia Taylor, the new conference secretary, read each name, a bell was rung, and family members lighted a candle.

Conference Lay Leader, Delores Martin, invited all in the room who had experienced the death of a loved one this past conference year to stand and sing “Just a Closer Walk with Thee.”



Friends and family of those who died during the previous year light candles for their loved ones during the Memorial Service June 2.

Bible study explores disciples making disciples

By LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff



THE BIBLE STUDY at annual conference, led each morning by the Rev. Steven Manskar, was taken from Ephesians 4.

In an overview of Ephesians 4:1-4, 7, 11-16, Manskar showed God’s vision for the church where members are “to demonstrate what reconciliation and real justice look like.”

“The church is the instrument of God’s mission in the world,” he said. “When the world looks at the church, it should get a glimpse of God’s Kingdom.”

Paul, in Ephesians, emphasized the unity of God’s church, the “oneness,” Manskar said: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God, the foundation for the church’s life and mission. This unity also provides the foundation members need to fully use the diverse gifts God gives in the life and mission of the church.

Each local church is like an embassy, Manskar noted, and “when we cross the threshold of an embassy we leave the U.S and enter another country.” He asked, “How does your church serve as an embassy of God’s Kingdom to the neighborhood (world)?”

Christ unites us in faith, hope and the Holy Spirit to go and serve God, he said. We are equipped to do so through the baptismal covenant that is God’s call and claim upon our lives.

“We are called by baptism to be a blessing, to bring the world into God’s Kingdom and to love one another,” Manskar said. The community of the church also makes promises to the newly baptized “to do all in its power to increase

our faith, confirm our hope and perfect us in love.”

“Don’t be distracted by the world’s standards of success: increasing numbers, wealth and power. Keep your eyes and your heart on Christ.”

Leadership in the church must be shared, Manskar said, as he interpreted Paul’s letter further, emphasizing that laity, like their pastors, are equipped to be leaders in the church. “Everyone who is baptized is

John Wesley’s famous quote says, “‘Holy solitariness’ is a phrase no more consistent with the Gospel than ‘holy adulterers.’”

Manskar, whose two-day Bible study looked at Ephesians 4:11-13 on June 2, examined that text about the five leaders in every church: apostles, to ensure faith is transmitted from one generation to the next; prophets, to bring correction to the culture today; evangelists, who proclaim the good news to the neighborhood and beyond

grace so they can serve God.”

Manskar, an expert on John Wesley, explained that Wesley’s training of laity was done through weekly “class meetings” led by lay people as class leaders, disciples who could disciple others.

“Class meetings were the community where most people came to Christ,” Manskar said. “(They) were also where the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were formed, identified and sent to serve.”

He summed up Ephesians 4:1-16 with a verse from a Charles Wesley hymn, p. 561 in the hymnal, “Jesus, United by thy Grace”:

“Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.”



During a Bible study by the Rev. Steven Manskar, members were asked to share images of church with one another.

ordained to ministry,” he said.

“It’s crazy that the pastor should be the (only) one to disciple them,” he said. “Look at Jesus. He disciplined maybe 24 people in his three years.” And yet the church spread throughout the world.

There are no lone-ranger members in the church, he said, and the church’s leadership and mission must be shared. As

and are bearers of good news to the world; teachers, to instruct in the way of Jesus and keep the congregation centered on Christ; and pastors to care for the community, shepherd the congregation, and tend to pastoral needs.

Who are these five in your congregation? Manskar asked. “Our task as leaders is to identify them and remove blockages to

The Rev. Steven Manskar is director of Wesleyan Leadership with the Board of Discipleship in Nashville. He is the author of several books, the most recent “Disciples Making Disciples.” He said that staff from GBOD are available for consulting and the Board has many resources to help churches “make disciples for the transformation of the world.” A John Wesley scholar, he leads trips to Wesleyan England each year; in 2018, there will be two, in April and July, for which there are scholarships available. Go to <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/> for information.

BWC debates resolutions and amendments

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff



A N IMPORTANT PART of the annual session is holy conferencing, in which United Methodists join in conversation and debate to shape the nature and policies of the church.

On June 1, Baltimore-Washington Conference members joined in holy conferencing around four resolutions, submitted by members, and five amendments to the denomination’s constitution.

In previous years, conference sessions have run out of time before considering resolutions on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This year, members debated two resolutions that suggested a potential response by the BWC to the conflict.

The first, a resolution to boycott Hewlett Packard products, passed 396 to 318. Boycotting HP products, said the resolution’s maker, the Rev. Shannon Sullivan, would be a witness to peace against a company that manufactured products used by the Israeli military.

“If it’s just a nudge, then let that be our nudge,” said the Rev. Mark Schaefer, speaking for the resolution.

The second resolution suggested “aspirational language” to encourage the conference’s Board of Pensions and the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to consider expanding their socially responsible investment screens and refraining from investment in Hewlett Packard, Caterpillar and Motorola because of these corporations’ involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

This resolution was defeated in a close vote of 361 to 350.

During the debate on the complex, decades-old conflict in the Middle East,

members spoke out about the need to uphold the United Methodist Social Principles, while not taking fiduciary responsibility out of the hands of investors.

Citing John Wesley, the Rev. Daryl Williams of the Conference’s Council on Finance and Administration, encouraged members to “earn all we can, so that we can save all we can, so that we can give all we can.”

Members also voted 383 to 304 for the Baltimore-Washington Conference to rejoin the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

In May, the General Conference instructed the General Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Women to withdraw United Methodist membership in this organization.

The vote followed a debate on the church’s “nuanced stance” on abortion and the value of RCRC, a pro-choice organization that also offers medical counseling and training on many aspects of reproductive health.

There are no financial implications to the Baltimore-Washington Conference belonging to the RCRC, said Sullivan, who was also the maker of this resolution.

On a more administrative matter, after some questions and consideration about cost, members voted 634 to 44 to adopt a moving policy which will give retirees

who are moving similar financial support to that received by active clergy.

The policy will be implemented with this year’s class of retirees.

In other action, BWC members are joining United Methodists from across the globe in voting on amendments to the denomination’s Constitution.

The amendments covered such topics as

- “men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God;”
- adding gender, ability, age and marital status to the list of characteristics that do not bar people from membership;
- ensuring that the election of Central Conference delegates to General Conference will be held only at annual conference sessions;

- making sure the election of bishops in Central Conferences are held at regular sessions; and
- allowing General Conference to adopt provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold individual bishops accountable.

While members debated the merits of the amendments, they could not revise them in any way.

The results of the worldwide vote will be announced by the Council of Bishops when all the voting is complete.

The complete text of these resolutions and Constitutional amendments, along with the approved Nominations Report, can be found at www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/session-documents.



The Rev. Shannon Sullivan speaks to one of three resolutions she brought to the 2017 Annual Conference Session.

Laity explore HOPE and certified ministries

By SHEILA GEORGE
Special to the UMConnection



BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE Lay Leader Delores Martin promised a “fact-packed, real facts afternoon” during the laity session May 31. With a standing-room-only crowd paying close attention, Martin celebrated the ministry of the laity and challenged them to fulfill their rightful role.

Martin invited Jodi Cataldo, Director of Laity in Leadership at Discipleship Ministries in Nashville, to be the keynote speaker. Cataldo’s speech helped to clarify some of the new categories for lay service in the church. Her presentation outlined the roles, requirements and renewal requirements for those called to be Certified Lay Servants, Certified Lay Speakers and Certified Lay Ministers.

A Certified Lay Servant, Cataldo said, serves the local church or charge (and/or beyond) and provides program leadership, assistance and support; leads meetings for prayer, training, study and discussion; conducts, or assists in conducting, services of worship, preaches the Word, or gives addresses; provides congregational and community leadership and fosters caring ministries; assists in the distribution of the elements of Holy Communion; and teaches the Scriptures, doctrine, organization and ministries of the church.

A Certified Lay Speaker serves by preaching the Word when requested by the pastor, district superintendent, or committee on lay servant ministries in accordance and compliance with ¶341.1 of The Book of Discipline. The role of a certified lay speaker is a specific calling for

the ministry of pulpit supply, she said.

And a Certified Lay Minister serves as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergyperson. He or she conducts public worship, cares for the congregation, develops new faith communities, preaches the Word, leads small groups and more.

Cataldo presented the core process of discipleship as H.O.P.E. – Hospitality (reaching out and receiving new people); Offering Christ (offering opportunities to make a commitment to Christ); Purpose (growing in faith through participation in the means of grace); and Engagement (helping transform the surrounding community).

Cataldo felt her call to be a lay missionary at 10 years of age, but knew “I never felt a call to be clergy.” At one point, she lifted high a bottle of yellow-colored water, which instantly turned bright green

when she added a drop of blue coloring.

“One drop transformed the whole,” she said. Cataldo noted the best way to make disciples is through our lives. “Even the smallest drops can transform the whole. So how do we transform our lives to be the drop,” she asked.

Cataldo was followed by Christine Latona, BWC regional strategist for resourcing churches. Latona, who will move into the role of Director of Connectional Ministries July 1, highlighted that it is a priority for Bishop Easterling to elevate clergy-lay partnerships in discipleship-making. One of the key areas will be advancing the NEJ Call to Action for Racial Justice and Reconciliation.

This initiative is calling Northeastern Jurisdictional conferences to face implicit biases: when someone consciously rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts, but also holds negative associations

in his/her mind unconsciously, she said. In this way, people literally do not know they have racial prejudices. BWC members will be encouraged to take the Implicit Attitude Test “to encourage people to do the deep work,” Latona said. The test may be taken at www.bwcmc.org/ministers/call-to-action-on-racial-justice.

Latona outlined some of the main strategies for dismantling racism “so we can build and be the beloved community,” she said. These initiatives include:

- naming and addressing racism personally;
- increasing awareness of systemic racism and the cultural agility of staff and leaders through relationship building, training and dialogue; and
- study and respond to the impact of structural and institutional racism.

Latona said that laity are seen to play a key role in this initiative.

She then introduced a panel of engaged BWC laity, representing a broad spectrum of how people are involved in making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Among the panelists:

- Raimon Jackson, a young adult;
- Melissa Lauber, BWC’s Director of Communications;
- Deaconess Jane Greys;
- Elizabeth Stemley, president of United Methodist Women;
- Bill Weller, president of United Methodist Men.

For more information on laity in service ministries, visit:

https://gbod-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy/Laity/2017LSM_Brochure.pdf



Jodi Cataldo, of Discipleship Ministries in Nashville, Tenn., delivers the keynote address during the laity session May 31.

Emory Grove: an analog refuge in a digital world

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

NESTLED IN A grove of old oak trees northwest of Baltimore is a place where time has seemingly stood still. Small cottages line narrow streets where cars are forbidden to go. Majestic trees tower over a large tabernacle, while a 150-year old hotel with a wrap-around porch greets both guests and residents alike.

Welcome to Emory Grove, an historic Methodist Camp Meeting Ground that has held religious services every summer since its founding by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1868. This year, Emory Grove celebrates its 150th season, and festivities are planned all summer.

In the 1800s, camp meetings were all the rage in Methodist circles. Set against the backdrop of the Second Great Awakening, camp meetings were religious revival events that, because travel was difficult and people could not come and go as easily as today, sometimes lasted for days.

And because they lasted for days, it wasn’t long before people began pitching tents for shelter. At Emory Grove, those tents transitioned into more permanent cottages in the 1920s. That’s why the cottages here are so close together: the cottages were built on the pads where the tents were pitched. To save money and space, people shared stakes on either side of the tent.

There are 47 cottages at Emory Grove, an open-air Tabernacle, and the hotel, though it is not used to house guests anymore. Weddings and special events are about the only time the hotel is used. The cottages are all privately owned, with many of them being handed down from one generation to the next. The worship services on Sundays and the Hymn Sings on Wednesdays are free and open to the public.

David and Judy Hughes’ families have owned cottages at Emory Grove for decades. David is a former president of the Emory Grove Association. His first summer at Emory Grove was in 1956; he was 8 months old. His parents, he said, first rented their cottage in 1944 and bought it in 1945.

At Emory Grove, Hughes said, the word “Association” is “an all-encompassing term.” The Association, he said, refers to both the grounds and the members who are cottage owners.

Cottage owners must adhere to certain rules when it comes to fixing their dwellings, he said, because there is a certain type of architecture they must use along with other rules to follow.

“We want to keep within the original historic appearance of the properties,” he said.

“We live in a decidedly digital age now,” Hughes said. “Emory Grove is decidedly analog, which is a double-edged sword. There are so many distractions today – Internet, smartphones, television – that Emory Grove has fallen somewhat out of vogue in that it’s a little backwoods kind of place.”

That analog feeling, he said, also works to Emory Groves’ benefit. The Grove attracts families and couples who want to get away from the digital age, Hughes said, “and spend time sitting on an analog front porch of a cottage.”

Judy Hughes traces her time at Emory Grove back to the days of her grandmother who was married to a Methodist minister. The Rev. Edward Beechum died of a burst appendix at age 43 in 1921. Suddenly, Judy’s grandmother had to move out of the parsonage with three young children. One of the parishioners rented them a cottage at Emory Grove.

Her parents bought a cottage in 1968, and that’s when she became a regular.



Ann Weller Dahl stands in front of her cottage at Emory Grove, along with a neighbor’s collie, Fred. Emory Grove celebrates 150 years in ministry in 2017.

“Emory Grove means serenity and community to me,” she said. “Even today, if I’m stressed about something, I’ll just come over here and sit on the porch and get myself together.”

Ann Weller Dahl, whose family first came to Emory Grove in 1919, is a walking history of Emory Grove. A former president

of the Board of Directors of the Association, as well as serving in the Ladies Auxiliary, she has photographs, notes and other documents going back generations that tell the story of this sacred place.

“For me, Emory Grove means three things,” she said. “A sense of history, a sense of peacefulness, and a sense of fellowship.”

Emory Grove has scheduled numerous special events this summer to observe their 150th anniversary. Among them:

- A chicken dinner and special appearance by “Billy Sunday,” July 2, 5:30 p.m.
- An Independence Day celebration, July 4, with “Sonrise” service at 7:30 a.m.; parade and worship service at 10:45 a.m.
- Cottage Tour, Car Show, and Blueberry Bake Sale, July 15, 12 noon to 3 p.m.
- 150th Anniversary Gala, “Through the Years,” Aug. 19, 6 p.m.

For more information, visit <https://www.emorygrove.net/150th-anniversary>

Commentary: Where do we go from here?

By Rev. C. ANTHONY HUNT*

I AM A FIFTH-GENERATION Methodist. I was baptized, confirmed and nurtured in the Christian faith at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Oxen Hill, and Gibbons United Methodist Church in Brandywine. I sensed God's calling on my life to offer myself in service to the church in the ordained ministry as a young adult at Gibbons Church.

I am a United Methodist by birth and by choice. I was born into Methodism, and I remain a Methodist because the Methodist church has been where God has been most extant and real for me — a place of invitation, welcome and radical hospitality.

In many of the places that I have travelled and served in ministry over the years, I have experienced the face of God through such radical hospitality. I have experienced the rich diversity of the church while serving as a district superintendent of two diverse districts, as a denominational executive across the diverse expanse of the Northeastern Jurisdiction, and as a seminary professor where all of the places I have taught have been diverse culturally and in other ways.

I have served as a pastor of churches that have been diverse culturally and in other ways. The congregation that I now serve, Epworth Chapel in Baltimore, is blessed with persons who were born in at least 11 different nations, and is diverse in other ways as well. I am also blessed to now serve as the chairperson of the Baltimore-Washington Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

I choose to remain a United Methodist as an African-American, and I am fully cognizant of the fact that racial segregation persisted in the American Methodist church's structures for over 100 years. I am cognizant that the church practiced

discrimination against women for over 170 years by denying women the opportunity to serve as fully ordained ministers in the life of the Church.

Today, in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, many people in our local churches, like our denomination and our society, are not of the same mind on a number of important matters that affect persons who are a part of us, including on matters pertaining to the full inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons in the life of the Church.

At the 2017 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Executive Clergy

Conference Board of Ordained Ministry's decision to delay a prior decision to recommend one of its candidates for commissioning as a provisional member.

I am among those who grieve Wogaman's decision to relinquish his clergy credentials. I have known him since my time as a student at Wesley Theological Seminary, where he was then the academic dean, and throughout my entire 25-year career as a pastor in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. One of the highlights of my ministry was having the opportunity to sit together and engage in holy conferencing

has continued to resonate with me from the method of moral presumption are his assertions pertaining to: (1) the goodness of created existence; (2) the value of human life; (3) the unity of the human family; and (4) the equality of all persons in God.

In relinquishing his clergy credentials, Wogaman's reference to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's beckoning us to practice "costly discipleship" leads me to deeper introspection as to what it would mean and look like — what it would cost each of us — to be a part of moving the church farther along toward becoming fully inclusive of all persons.

At our Annual Conference Session, we were asked by one of the speakers to share with others what we see as an image that characterizes the church today. My response was that I see the image of a fault line that lies just below the surface. The fault line is something that might not be seen, but it is there with the potential of coming to the fore and dividing and breaking apart that which is already cracked.

With the work of our denomination's Commission on the Way Forward underway, my hope and prayer is that our denomination and its structures will see in the Commission's proposal ways that we can invite, welcome, offer radical hospitality and affirm God's gifts in each of us who are created by the same God, serve the same God, and are called into the ministries of the lay and clergy by the same God.

My hope and prayer is that we will somehow find ways to move toward becoming what the prophet Isaiah envisions as God's peaceable realm (Isa. 11:6), God's Beloved Community.

**Rev. Dr. C. Anthony Hunt is the lead pastor of Epworth Chapel UMC in Baltimore and chair of the Baltimore-Washington Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.*



Rev. C. Anthony Hunt, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, delivers the board's report to members of the 2017 Annual Conference Session.

session, one of my colleagues, Rev. Dr. Phillip Wogaman, decided to surrender his clergy credentials in protest of the United Methodist Church's current stance prohibiting the full inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons in the life of the Church, and in protest of the Baltimore-Washington

with Wogaman during the entire 2008 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, to which both of us were delegates.

Wogaman's book, "Christian Moral Judgment," and his method of positive presumption have shaped my teaching in Christian theology and social ethics. What

Wogaman: Clergy consider LGBT inclusion

From page 1

decisions, did not change, add or delete disciplinary language or requirements to the candidacy, licensing, and ordination processes, and that Boards of Ordained Ministry are not at liberty to disregard qualifications for licensed and ordained ministry in its evaluation and examination processes."

The 2016 BoOM, in bringing Morrow to the clergy session, decided that asking about any candidate's sexual practice was not part of their examination.

The Board, Hunt said in a statement after the clergy session, will form a task force to "review our policies and procedures to ensure that we appropriately examine our candidates." In the meantime, he said, the Board will follow the Book of Discipline as per the Judicial Council's ruling in making a "full examination" of people seeking local pastor licenses, commissioning and full membership.

Bishop Easterling, who repeatedly asked Wogaman to reconsider his decision,

tearfully accepted the credentials after he placed them in a sealed envelope in front of her.

After receiving the credentials, Bishop Easterling called for a moment of prayer. Dozens of clergy came forward and laid hands on Wogaman as the bishop prayed.

Wogaman, 85, who counts in his ministry resume serving as a delegate to four General Conferences, as senior pastor at Foundry UMC and as Dean of Wesley Theological Seminary, said in a statement after the session that "in the twilight years of my life and ministry, I must join with T.C. and others outside the clergy circle by surrendering my credentials today. I do this with a heavy heart. I've had to ask myself, 'How could I remain inside the association of clergy when someone like her (Morrow) must remain outside?'"

Wogaman said he began thinking about this course of action after the recent Judicial Council decisions. It was after they were announced, he said, that Morrow was informed by the BoOM that she would not

be brought forward this year.

"That really moved me," he said. "I have known her for many years. (Morrow is a member of Foundry UMC.) She is highly qualified."

Wogaman, who did not notify Morrow of his intentions beforehand, said that he did not take this decision lightly.

"I really wanted the point to register that this is not just administrative decision making, routinely," he said. "This is very serious; it bears upon the character not just of the conference but the whole church. There's something here that transcends law."

Wogaman stressed in his statement that he hoped others who may be tempted to follow in his footsteps would not do so. "I beg all of you to remain within the circle," he said. "If you think as I do, let me be your representative (outside the circle)."

The Rev. Kara Scroggins, who was ordained an Elder June 2, spoke on the floor of conference during a moment of personal privilege. She said Wogaman's actions had affected her, but that she was staying in the system to affect change.

"I am joyful to be a part of this connection, to be recommended and ordained for servant ministry with and among you," Scroggins said. "Today, I choose to stay. If I were to walk away, it would be because there is simply too much pain, too much brokenness, to stay. And I don't know a God, I don't serve a Savior, who ever walked away from a community's pain, or shrank back and said, 'too broken.'"

Ann Brown Birkel, a member of Foundry UMC, where Wogaman served as her senior pastor, also spoke to the conference about

his actions.

Calling it a "dark day" because Wogaman surrendered his credentials and Morrow was not recommended by the Board, Birkel recounted the BWC's history of advocacy in this area.

Yes, she said, "we have taken a step backwards. The Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference has a unique role to play due to our history — our diversity — and our experience on this journey at this critical moment in the life of our church. We should model the inclusion we have endorsed for the church at large as we move toward the special called General Conference."



Clergy members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference surround J. Philip Wogaman in prayer after he surrendered his credentials May 31.



J. Philip Wogaman

Overview: BWC thrives in holy conferencing

From page 1

- used to determine apportionments, to 17.725 percent; and affirmed a projected collection rate of 92 percent.
- Increased the equitable compensation rate for clergy by 2 percent to \$43,149, with the minimum housing rate remaining the same at \$19,866.

In moments of celebration and remembrance, members:

- Rejoiced at the ordination of seven Elders and the commissioning of one provisional Deacon and nine provisional Elders during a service in which Bishop Ernest Lyght celebrated Jesus as the bread of life (see story, page 4).
- Gave thanks for the 617 total years of service of 24 clergy who retire July 1 at a luncheon where Bishop Forrest Stith spoke on the importance of passing the torch with purpose.
- Lit candles remembering the bishops, pastors, clergy spouses and lay people who died during the past year during a memorial service led by the Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli. (See story, page 4.)
- Recognized, in the laity session, eight new Certified Lay Members (CLM) who completed their two-year course of study. (See story, page 6.)
- Honored two Cabinet members: The Rev. Laura Easto, superintendent of the Baltimore-Suburban District, who has been appointed to serve Potomac UMC; and the Rev. Ed DeLong, interim superintendent of the Baltimore Metropolitan District; and welcomed two new superintendents, the Revs. Wanda Duckett and Ann Laprade.
- Welcomed new conference leaders: Christie Latona, the new Director of Connectional Ministries; the Rev. Antoine Love, who will serve as assistant to the bishop; and the Rev. Rodney Smothers, who will become the BWC's new congregational development resource specialist.
- In special offerings, collected \$10,051 for Seeds of Security, a ministry to assist people leaving situations of domestic violence and \$4,075 for scholarships for youth to attend the ROCK retreat.
- In a district-centered



Penny War, raised \$814 for the Adrienne Terry Affordable Housing Fund.

- In a new tradition, held a worship service recognizing the 75 clergy who are appointed to new churches this year and the lay people who will receive them.

During reports about a variety of ministries, members:

- Committed themselves to personally addressing racism during the Call to Action report, which outlined a new conferencewide initiative on racial justice and reconciliation. (For more information, visit: bwcumc.org/resources/call-to-action-on-racial-justice.)
- Honored Andy Thornton (left), who is retiring after 30 years as director of the conference's camping and retreat ministries.
 - Learned about a new resource for individual and youth groups created by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries called Stress Less, which addresses issues affecting young people.
 - Received information about how they can become more involved in the



- conference's Young Adult Council, especially in the One Love creative worship experience next fall, and the expanding conference Hispanic Ministries programs.
- Celebrated with BWC Lay Leader Delores Martin how the laity are active in ministry, with more than 1,000 lay servants and 143 Certified Lay Ministers working in covenant relationship with others to glorify God.
 - Heard from the Rev. Jim Miller of the Episcopacy Committee how last year, the BWC raised \$330,740 to help build a health and wellness center at Africa University.

Members also heard from several honored guests, including:

- The Rev. Steve Manskar, of the Board of Discipleship, who led a two-session Bible study on Ephesians 4:1-16, the guiding Scripture of the Conference Session. During the session, he explored how United Methodists are to be a sign, foretaste and instrument of God as they make disciples, serving as Christ's ambassadors and servants. (See story, page 5.)
- Bishop Seung Ho Choi, and a delegation of leaders from the South Conference of the Korean Methodist Church in South Korea, who are in covenant partnership with the BWC.
- Jodi Cataldo, of Discipleship Ministries, who instructed the laity on a discipleship system built on H.O.P.E. and outlined the various roles and requirements for those called to

- be certified lay servants, certified lay speakers and certified lay ministers. (See story, page 6.)
- Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, who is celebrating the move for greater unity between United Methodists and Episcopalians.
 - Tiaara A. Anderson, a student at Philander Smith College, who thanked the BWC for its support of the Historic Black College Fund.
 - Representatives from the General Board of Church and Society, who encouraged United Methodists to become active in the sanctuary movement, opening their hearts and doors to provide shelter and safety to immigrants in need.
 - The Commission on the Way Forward, which showed a video with words of hope about their work addressing issues of human sexuality in the denomination.
 - The Committee on Faith and Order which encouraged BWC members to participate in the study "Wonder, Love and Praise," that explores the United Methodist understanding of what it means to be church.

The 2018 session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference will be held May 30 - June 1 at the Waterfront Marriott Hotel in Baltimore.

Unless otherwise noted, all photos from Annual Conference by Tony Richards Photography. www.tonyrichardsphoto.com

