

Back On My Feet

They walked. They ran. They donated shoes. Thanks to everyone who participated in our Mission Initiative. You can donate shoes for several more weeks. Visit bwcumc.org/backonmyfeet to see locations.



Ordination Offering

The offering during ordination raised \$10,329 for Seeds of Security which provides assistance for victims of domestic abuse. An additional \$1,436 was raised for camperships.

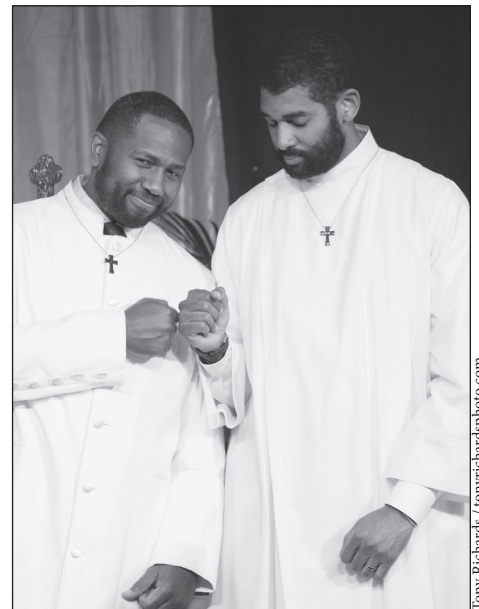
Photos by Tony Richards

UMConnection DAILY

The Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world • Friday, June 1, 2018



Bishop Easterling and others lay hands on the Rev. Leo Yates as he is ordained a Deacon. His relatives and friends look on (inset). Yates is one of 28 people commissioned and ordained in the BWC in 2018.



Sherwyn A. H. Benjamin, left, and Scott H. Bostic share a fist bump after being commissioned.

Ordinands told to create new stories for new future

BY ERIK ALSGAARD

THERE MAY BE apps for maps, but sometimes you just need one that you can hold in your hand. A big, fold-y map, that is.

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey of the Louisiana Area, preacher for the Ordination Service Thursday night, used the images of maps, map-making, the North Star, and Lewis and Clark's expedition to address the 28 women and men candidates for commissioning, ordination and readmission.

"The North Star is constant," she said. "It stays fixed in the sky." We need to remember what our center is, the bishop said: our mission. "Imagine a church constantly fixed on the mission," she said.

Noting the tale of Lewis and Clark as told in the book, "Canoeing the Mountains,"

she said that the explorers knew what was behind them but weren't prepared for the mountains they encountered. Their canoes wouldn't work there; they had to rely on others to help.

And that help, she said, came from the ones they feared the most: the indigenous people.

"It was the Native People who helped them cross the mountains," she said. "It was the indigenous people who taught them to live off the land. Who are the people we fear? They might be the ones that know the way."

Reflecting some of the anxiety the church is facing with the looming 2019 Special General Conference, Bishop Harvey told the assembly that God had called each person to bring light into a dark world.

"We don't know what The United

Methodist Church will look like in the future," she said. "But there will still be hungry people needing to be fed, sick people in need of healing, people in prison needing a visit."

She charged those about to be commissioned and ordained to keep their eyes fixed on the mission.

"Don't take your eyes off it, even for a millisecond," she said. "You might be the next Lewis and Clark; you might be the next map maker. Start telling a different kind of story so that a different kind of future might unfold."

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, assisted by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar and Bishop Harvey, laid hands on the men and women candidates, blessing and commending them for ministry in Christ's holy church.

Discovering 'connection' in Ephesians 4 study

By MELISSA LAUBEER

DIVING INTO THE poetic imagery of Ephesians 4:1-16, the Rev. Shively Smith invited the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference to discover "the landscape of meaning that the letter of Ephesians puts before us."

During a Bible study Thursday morning, which continues this morning, Smith, a professor at Wesley Theological Seminary, shared how the apostle Paul wrote letters that "focused on a vision of locally based churches, wrestling with locally based problems, needing locally informed strategies to navigate in a way that keeps



The Rev. Shively Smith leads Bible study Thursday morning.

these communities together, safe and flourishing."

But Ephesians is different, she said. It offers a broader, pervasive and persuasive force. In it, Paul redefines the local.

He uses metaphor to describe the church, calling upon images of church as different kinds of family, as the body of Christ, household of God, and temple of God.

In their meaning-making work today, the people of God are called upon to craft new images of what "connection" means, Smith said.

She invited those present to enter a world of pictures and possibilities, creating and sharing metaphors of connection, envisioning a church that has not yet been imagined.

Connection may be computer cords, social networks, isolated people in crowded coffee shops bonding with others through electronics, or generations baking together as their hands touch in the same bowl of dough.

Word pictures and visuals allow us to explore God in new ways, ways that should unsettle us. They are expansive and limiting at the same time, Smith said. The church cannot be defined by one image.

Smith left the crowd with the question: How can two groups, who are connected in Christ but opposed to each other, be connected? "Ephesians is fundamentally a conundrum of connection," she said. It "invites us into the experience of playing with what's possible."

Morning session celebrates laity & mission

By ERIK ALSGAARD

THE MINISTRY OF the laity took the spotlight Thursday morning, as the BWC heard from three District Lay Leaders on the extraordinary work being done. Opehila Brown Carter, from the Baltimore Metropolitan District; Rosalyn Pinkney, Washington East District; and Kim Carr, Annapolis District, urged the laity to work as one for the Kingdom of God.



Kim Carr

"Human descriptions don't define who we are in Christ," said Brown Carter. "When we are unified as one, we stomp the devil and slay dragons and move mountains."

"We must be one to honor God," said Carr. "We are living in dangerous and violent times. We are in spiritual warfare with Satan himself. When we are not one, our churches lose, our communities lose, we lose."

The cross of Christ, said Pinkney, reminds us that God doesn't see differences. "We are all equally included, equally nurtured, equally protected, equally loved," she said.

Members also celebrated lay ministries. Linda Flanagan, director of Lay Servant Ministries, noted that there are 115 Certified Lay Ministers in the BWC, with 24 pending recommendations. She also lifted up their important contributions to ministry.

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, from the New England Conference, chaired the morning session. Bishop LaTrelle Easterling was away to witness her son's high school graduation. Bishop Devadhar presented the history and information of the Commission on a Way Forward, a task force created by the Council of Bishops in 2016 at the request of the General Conference to work on sections in the Book of Discipline dealing with homosexuality.

The Commission recently completed its work, the bishop said, and the Council of Bishops said in May that they are recommending the One Church Plan to the 2019 Special General Conference. Bishop Devadhar said the Council of Bishops is



Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

presenting only that one plan; any others are for information only.

Members also celebrated the faithful support of Africa University. James Salley said that 600 people will graduate from Africa University next week, bringing the total to more than 7,000. He thanked the BWC for its continued support of Pastor's School, and the support for the start of the new Sports Complex.

Realignment provides opportunity to 'connect dots'

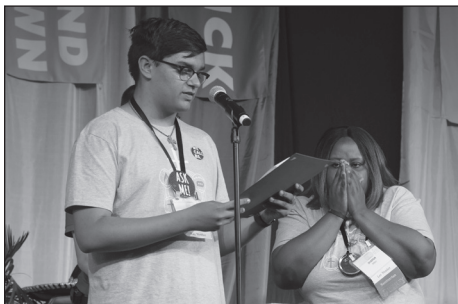
By MELISSA LAUBER

MEMBERS OF THE Baltimore-Washington Conference connected the dots during the Ministries presentation yesterday, unveiling a new structure for ministry with "Jesus at the Center of It All."

The presentation introduced five newly designed ministry networks, created to address the BWC's failing committee structure. The new structure, which will be lived into and perfected in the coming year, delivers a renewed focus on discipleship, mission over meetings, collaboration and relationship building.

The five major ministry areas are: leader development, new faith expressions, young people's ministry, advocacy and action, and abundant health. (For details, visit www.bwcumc.org/resources/realignment/)

"It is within these five areas that the Baltimore-Washington Conference will deepen discipleship, develop leaders,



Nito Slack announces Sharon Milton, right, as the winner of the youth worker of the year award.

promote missional innovation, and build relationships and partnerships so that more people, more diverse people and more younger people love as Jesus loves," said Christie Latona the conference director of Connectional Ministries.

During the report, each of the areas presented pieces of their vision for the future and how it will impact local churches.

Raimon Jackson, pastor of The Bridge, a new faith community in Washington, D.C., shared a spoken word piece about how, at 22, he became the foster care father of a troubled 14-year-old. He spoke about the harsh realities they lived through together and how God has been present in the storms and the sun. His son once asked Jackson why he claimed him.

Jackson remembered: "Then with tears falling down he asked, 'please tell me how come?' And I replied because God said, 'You can't lose even one.'"

"My son saw church in me. Who is seeing the church in you," Jackson asked.

Among other highlights of the presentation, Camping and Retreats Ministries announced that BWC camps have seen a 37 percent increase in campers over three years and the Volunteers in Mission initiative continues to grow with 28,881 people involved in short-term mission trips, the most of any conference in the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

BWC's covenant partners in Puerto Rico expressed gratitude for the \$56,000 that was given to the Methodist Church



Raimon Jackson shares a spoken word piece on the need for fresh expressions of church.

of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. The funds enabled the shipping and building of generators and the support of a plan to rebuild 450 communities, 39 congregations, and five health clinics by 2020.

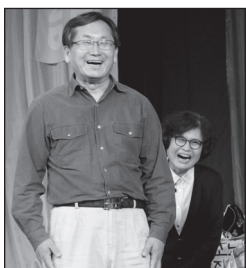
Several ministry awards were also presented to celebrate the discipleship of individuals and churches. They included:

- Harry Denman Evangelism Award – Acell Alexander Spencer, Rev. Timothy Warner and Jacob Beal;
- Youth Worker of the Year Award – Sharon Milton of Emory UMC;
- Young Adult Leader Award – Hannah Callihan and Zackary Armacost
- Advocacy and Action Award – Emory UMC in Washington, D.C.
- Abundant Health Award – Adullum Community Healthcare Center at St. John's UMC in Baltimore and Grace UMC in Fort Washington.

Afternoon session emphasizes outreach

IN ADDITION TO the Connectional Ministries report on Thursday afternoon, members learned of a variety of other ministries being lived out in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

The Call to Action on Racial Justice, created at the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference to address, confront and demand fundamental cultural change, reported that 376 BWC churches



Bishop Seug Ho Cho

have joined efforts to end racism, and 559 individuals have covenanted to take personal action for racial reconciliation.

In addition, the Conference sponsored the re-Call Summit, created a devotional and hosted a pilgrimage to Memphis on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Learn more about connecting with the Call to Action at www.bwcumc.org/resources/call-to-action-on-racial-justice.

Members also welcomed a delegation from the South Conference in South Korea, with which the BWC has a covenant partnership. "My heart is on fire when I visit the BWC," said Bishop Seug Ho Cho,

who thanked the members for sending them Korea's first missionary more than a century ago. This one man's legacy gave birth to the Korean Methodist Church with 1.5 million members, he said.

During the afternoon, members also:

- Voted on a Constitutional Amendment that seeks gender equality;
- Heard an impassioned statement about inclusion from eight provisional members and ordinands; and
- Celebrated ecumenism with the Right Reverend Eugene Sutton of the Diocese of Maryland.

Photos on this spread by Tony Richards

234TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE • WE ARE ONE: BENEATH THE CROSS

CHANGES TO PENSIONS RESOLUTION

Following the receipt of a new actuarial report, the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits has made a change to their recommendation on Post-Retirement Medical. The new information, which replaces that on page 8 of the PreCon '18 booklet, is below:

Post-Retirement Medical: Based on an actuarial report received in April 2018, the Post-Retirement Medical plan is reported to have a current view funding ratio of 107.6%. The ongoing view funding ratio is 152.1%.

The funding plan as of December 31, 2017, is summarized below.

	Current View	Ongoing View
Discount Rate	3.55%	6.50%
Plan Liability	\$36,318,611	\$25,702,423
Plan Funding	\$39,086,379	\$39,086,379
Funded Status	\$2,767,768	\$13,383,956
Funded Ratio	107.6%	152.1%

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE CENTRE STREET UMC, SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Every church has a life cycle. Currently there are four new church starts in the BWC, while this year the congregation of Centre Street UMC, after a notable history of mission in Cumberland, voted to close. It leaves a rich legacy of faith.

RESOLUTION:

Whereas, in the Cumberland-Hagerstown District, the congregation of Centre Street United Methodist Church on the Centre Street UMC Charge, located at 217 N. Centre St, Cumberland, MD 21502, has served God faithfully through the United Methodist Church for many years, and

Whereas, in recent years the congregation has experienced a decline in membership and financial stewardship, and it is no longer feasible to keep it open and operational as a church, and

Whereas, during a Church Conference on April 22, 2018, and a Church Council Meeting on May 8, 2018, between sessions of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, the leaders of Centre Street United Methodist Church voted to voluntarily transfer title to all its real and personal, tangible and intangible property to the Conference Board of Trustees following procedures set forth in paragraphs 2540 and 2541 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016);

Be it resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference does hereby declare Centre Street United Methodist Church closed as of June 30, 2018, and

Be it further resolved, that the Conference Board of Trustees are authorized to take possession of the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of Centre Street United Methodist Church and to make a determination of how the property may best be used for the Kingdom of God.

Effective Date: June 30, 2018

CONFERENCE AGENDA

FRIDAY, JUNE 1

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
5:30-7:30 a.m.	Back On My Feet Walk/Run	Inner Harbor
6:30-7:45 a.m.	Breakfast	Harborside
7 a.m.-2 p.m.	Exhibit Hall Open	Harborside
7:45 a.m.	Gathering Music	Ballroom
8-9 a.m.	Bible Study	Ballroom
9:00 a.m.	Plenary Session Commission on a Way Forward with Rev. Tom Berlin	Ballroom
10 a.m.-noon	Memorial Service	Ballroom
Noon	Lunch	Harborside
2-4:25 p.m.	Plenary BWC UMM video Stewardship Reports Vote on Consent Calendar Nominations Report Black College Fund Remaining Resolutions Centre Street UMC Resolution and DS Report	Ballroom
4:25 p.m.	Service of Appointments	Ballroom
5:45 p.m.	Closing	Ballroom
6 p.m.	Adjourn	
6:30 p.m.	Buses Depart	Lobby Entrance

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESOLUTION

Title: Unrestricted Bequest Received by Conference Board of Trustees

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: Receipt of unrestricted bequests by the Conference Board of Trustees requires Annual Conference approval for the designation of any expenditures.

Submitted by: Conference Board of Trustees

RESOLUTION:

Whereas, the Conference Board of Trustees received an unrestricted bequest from the Glassman Estate in the amount of \$546,000;

Be it resolved, that through the administrative responsibilities of the Conference Board of Trustees, the Glassman Bequest be designated by the Baltimore-Washington Conference for the following support:

1. New faith expressions and resources to help identify, teach, and deploy those who can plant and lead them,
2. Clergy taking sabbaticals and leaves for self-care and holistic well-being, and
3. Facility upgrades at the Conference Archives located at Lovely Lane United Methodist Church in Baltimore.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 4, 2018