

# WE ARE ONE: *connected in* Covenant

## UM*Connection* 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 2, 2017



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, left, charges the Rev. Mark Gorman to take authority in the church as an Elder following his Ordination Thursday night. The bishop presided at her first Ordination and Commissioning service.



Linden Linthicum UMC Handbell Choir performed at Ordination.

### Conference Celebrates Ordination and Commissioning

## 'Offer fresh bread,' Lyght tells conference leaders

BY ERIK ALSGAARD

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

The bishop commissioned one person a Deacon, nine people as provisional Elders, and ordained seven as Elders 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 provides manna to the Israelites as they wandered 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 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.

"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."

### ROCK scholarship offering

The offering during ordination went to provide scholarships for young people to attend ROCK, the annual youth retreat held in Ocean City, Md. \$3,925 was collected.

# Covenant and Unity is the theme of Bible Study

By LINDA WORTHINGTON

“THE WORD is new every time we read it,” said Bishop LaTrelle Easterling. On Thursday morning, Conference members heard the Word anew with the Rev. Steve Manskar, author of “Disciples Making Disciples.”



Rev. Steve Manskar leads Bible study Thursday morning.

Manskar focused on Ephesians 4:1-6, setting up the passage with Paul's thoughts about Christians as God's artwork and signs of hope.

“We are called to covenant,” Manskar stressed repeatedly, citing the covenant made at baptism. “We don't baptize people in private but in a congregation.” Quoting John Wesley, he explained, “to those who say I can experience God alone ... ‘holy solitaries’ is a phrase no more consistent with the Gospel than ‘holy adulterers.’”

Congregations make four promises in the baptismal covenant to love, serve and care for each other, which he urged churches to keep visible. “We are called by baptism to be a blessing, to bring the world into God's kingdom, to also love one another.

“The oneness of God is reflected in the unity of the church,” he said, noting that the covenant also believes in the three persons of the Trinity, each with a distinct mission.

Ephesians 4 says that the Trinitarian God is the Father above all; working with Christ to bring Heaven to earth; and the Holy Spirit is in all. This covenant is “to know God is God and we are not,” he said.

In conclusion, Manskar quoted from the U2 song “One,” which describes what Paul is getting at: “One love, one blood, one life, you got to do what you should. One life with each other, but we're not the same, we got to carry each other.”

Today's Bible study will continue to explore Ephesians 4:7, 11, 16.

## Focus on youth and laity

By MELISSA LAUBER

UNITED METHODISTS, YOU are “disciples in training, not disciples in waiting,” members of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries proclaimed in their presentation Thursday afternoon.

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

The CCYM has been experiencing a renaissance in ministry in recent years. Their current project is creating an online resource called “Stress Less” to help their peers manage issues that affect the physical, mental and spiritual lives of teens.

Individuals and youth groups are encouraged to use the resource at [tiny.cc/ccym-stress-less](http://tiny.cc/ccym-stress-less).

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

The CCYM youth also announced that this year, for the first time in a decade, four BWC youth will be participating in the Mission of Peace, a 15-day experience to discover God's spirit at work in Cuba.

In other ministry-related items, members heard from Delores Martin, the conference Lay Leader.



Members of the CCYM share their “Stress Less” ministry resources.

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.”

Yesterday afternoon, the conference also honored Andy Thornton, director of Camping and Retreat Ministries, who 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.”

## Conference debates resolutions and amendments

By MELISSA LAUBER

IN A ROUND of sometimes intense holy conferencing, BWC members spoke out as one on four resolutions and five amendments to the denomination's constitution Thursday afternoon.

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. 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,” said the Rev. Mark Schaefer, speaking for the resolution, “then



Rev. Shannon Sullivan presents one of her three resolutions on social action Thursday afternoon.

let that be our nudge.”

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 encouraged members to “earn all we can, so that we can save all we can, so that we can spend 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 the 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 training and services on many aspects of reproductive health.

After some questions and considerations 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.

In votes that will be taken at every United Methodist annual conference across the globe, members voted 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.

## Special guests bring greetings

By MELISSA LAUBER

SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS BROUGHT special greetings and messages to the Baltimore-Washington Conference Thursday.

Tiaara A. Anderson, a student at Philander Smith College, brought a word of appreciation for the BWC's support of the Historic Black College Fund.



Tiaara A. Anderson

Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, shared how one of the Episcopal Church's greatest sadnesses “is when we lost the Methodists.” She

celebrated a move for greater unity between the two faith traditions. “In the meantime,” she said, “there's nothing stopping us from locking arms and uniting our gaze toward Christ.”

The Commission on the Way Forward sent a video with words of hope about their work to address the issue of human sexuality within the denomination; and the Committee on Faith and Order sent a video about its new study “Wonder, Love and Praise.”

“Wonder, Love and Praise” is a study of the United Methodist understanding of what it means to be the church. More information is available at [www.umc.org/who-we-are/wonder-love-and-praise-sharing-a-vision-of-the-church-english](http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/wonder-love-and-praise-sharing-a-vision-of-the-church-english).



Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington greets Conference members.

Photos on this spread by Tony Richards

# Friday Morning Notes

*What you need to know about checking out, luggage storage and your departure:*

- District Bus Rider's luggage storage is in Delaware B and deposited on buses during the closing Session so that riders can go directly to buses.
- Limited storage space is available for other luggage, but self-pick-up at the end of Session will be required.
- Attendees are encouraged to take luggage to their cars.
- For those who stayed in the hotel overnight and who will plan to exit the garage after 5 p.m. today, please be prepared to show your hotel bill receipt upon exiting the garage to avoid a parking payment for an additional day.
- Commuters should stop at the Valet parking booth to get a discount.
- The discount is \$32 for self-parking and \$39 valet parking.

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

FRIDAY, JUNE 2

| TIME             | EVENT                           | LOCATION         |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 6:30-10:30 a.m.  | Wellness screening              | Washington 1     |
| 7 a.m. - 2 p.m.  | Exhibit Hall Open               | Exhibit Hall A   |
| 7-8:15 a.m.      | Breakfast                       |                  |
| 7:45 a.m.        | Gathering Music                 | Ballroom         |
| 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.  | Photos taken by Lifetouch       | Virginia A, B, C |
| 8 - 9 a.m.       | Bible Study                     | Ballroom         |
| 9:00 a.m.        | Plenary Session                 | Ballroom         |
| 10 a.m. - noon   | Memorial Service                | Ballroom         |
| Noon - 1:45 p.m. | Lunch                           |                  |
| 2 - 5 p.m.       | Plenary                         | Ballroom         |
| 5-6:30 p.m.      | Dinner                          |                  |
| 7-9 p.m.         | Plenary & Closing Worship       | Ballroom         |
| 9:30 p.m.        | Bus departs from hotel entrance |                  |

### Last Chance for Clergy Photos

Fewer than 350 pastors have had their portraits taken for the directory. Don't be absent. Stop by the Lifetouch studio in Virginia A, B, & C before 2 p.m.

### Support Affordable Housing

Join in the penny challenge. Contribute your coins, to support your district, in the jars at the entrance to the exhibit hall.



## Reflections of church at Annual Conference



Photos by Tony Richards and Allison Burdett