



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 • Wednesday, May 30, 2018

BWC gathers as ‘One Beneath the Cross’

BY MELISSA LAUBER

EVEN AS THE United Methodist Church stands at a potentially divisive crossroads over its stance on homosexuality, members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference are gathering May 30-June 1 for their annual session, grounded in the theme “We are One: Beneath the Cross.”

The 1,500 lay and clergy members come from 628 churches in Maryland, Washington, D.C., the panhandle of West Virginia and Bermuda for a time of holy conferencing, learning, mission and worship.

This is the 234th time the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference have gathered. They meet just a stone’s throw away from where the Methodist Church in America was founded in 1784. This year they also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the uniting of the Methodists with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which created The United Methodist Church.

Standing at this intersection of discerning a way forward and honoring a sacred past, members are being called upon to be firmly and boldly in the present moment, to interact as children of God in this community of faith, as we live out our calling to “make disciples for the transformation of the world.”

“The ground beneath the cross is level,” said Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, the presiding bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. “It is also a sacred space where we can encounter the Kingdom of God.”

The bishop will preach at the opening worship service tonight at 7 p.m. Tomorrow evening, Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey will preach at the Service of Ordination. The Memorial Service, at which the Rev. Craig McLaughlin will preach, will be



Conference Lay Leader Delores Martin, left, and Bishop LaTrelle Easterling go over the agenda for the 2018 Annual Conference Session.

Friday morning, and Thursday and Friday mornings, the Rev. Shively Smith of Wesley Seminary will lead the Bible Study.

An agenda of all the conference’s activities is on the new Conference app. (For download instructions, see the ad on page 8.)

During the plenary sessions, members will vote on six resolutions: a new BWC mission statement; the relationship between Africa University and the government of Zimbabwe; a change to the clergy moving policy; a call for inclusive love; adopting the Way Forward Accountability Covenant; and a call for full inclusion from the 2019 Special Session of General Conference.

Members will also vote on a proposed \$18.7 million budget for 2019, which will include a slight decrease in the benevolence factor that determines local church apportionment payments. This decrease is a result of local churches’ faithful giving, which allows for mission and ministry beyond the local church.

As part of the annual conference

experience, members are invited to a mission opportunity with some in the homeless community in Baltimore. From 5:30 to 7 a.m. the next two days, there will be four routes available for a community walk/run to benefit Back on My Feet. (Visit bwcumc.org/back-on-my-feet/.) Shoes for those in need are also being collected.

Over the next three days, the Baltimore-Washington Conference will gather for sacred and holy work — living as people worthy of the call we received from God, conducting ourselves with humility, gentleness and patience, accepting each other with love, and making an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties us together — one body, one spirit, one hope.

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Memorial Service to focus on running the race

THE REV. CRAIG McLaughlin, pastor of Mt. Zion UMC in Bel Air, will preach at the Memorial Service, Friday at 10 a.m.

Under his leadership over the past 31 years, Mt. Zion has become one the largest, fastest growing and most mission-minded congregations in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. As a pastor, he sees his role as bringing the love of Jesus to a brokenhearted world. His greatest joy, McLaughlin said, “is seeing God’s people love as they have been loved.”

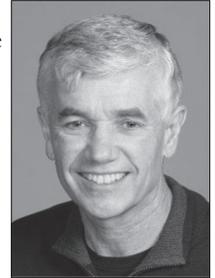
This love is expected to shine through his message on Hebrews 12:1-2 titled, “Run.”

Preaching to the conference members and the families of the 52 people who died last year, McLaughlin will share how the “loved ones who have gone before us put a calling on our lives.” He’ll tell them how “Jesus draws near to us in our seasons of grief, giving us strength, determination and courage far beyond ourselves.”

As a pastor, McLaughlin embraces a faith in Jesus that gives him confidence that “the struggles and difficulties of this life do not define our existence. Life in this world isn’t even Chapter One in the story of our lives, it’s only the prologue,” he said. “That’s why Jesus would say that those the world

considers last will, in fact, be first; while those the world considers least will, in fact, be the greatest.”

McLaughlin is no stranger to grief. Four years ago, his 19-year-old daughter, Hannah, died of a drug overdose after struggling with addiction for years. “As I continue to think about her life,” he said, “I see more and more how very true everything Jesus ever said really is.”



Craig McLaughlin

Bible study to focus on Ephesians 4:1-16

THE REV. SHIVELY T. J. Smith joined the Wesley Theological Seminary faculty in New Testament studies in 2014 after completing her doctorate at Emory University. Smith leads the Bible study session on Thursday at 8:30 a.m. and Friday at 8 a.m.

Smith will be looking at Ephesians 4:1-16. Thursday’s Bible study is “Re-Imagining Our Connections;” Friday’s Bible Study is “Re-Imagining Our Oneness.”

Smith is author of the 2016 book, “Strangers to Family.” In it, she reads the Letter of 1 Peter through a new model of

diaspora. Smith illuminates this peculiarly Petrine understanding of diaspora by situating it among three other select perspectives from extant Hellenist Jewish writings: the Daniel court tales, the Letter of Aristeas, and Philo’s works.

Her work has been supported by organizations such as the Louisville Institute, the Ford Foundation, the Fund for Theological Education, and the Mellon Mays Fellowship Program. She has also studied abroad at Oxford University as an English-Speaking Union (ESU) Luard scholar in the Theology Department. Her research interests include: the General

Letters and Luke-Acts, Call Narratives, and biblical discourses on diaspora. Ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Smith has actively worked in ministry and academia for more than 15 years.

Smith will be departing Wesley for Boston University School of Theology, where she will be an Assistant Professor of New Testament.



Shively Smith

Louisiana Bishop Harvey preaches at Ordination

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO Harvey is the speaker for the Ordination service, scheduled for Thursday, May 31, at 7 p.m. Bishop Harvey serves as bishop of the Louisiana Annual Conference, having been assigned there in September 2012.

Bishop Harvey was elected president-designate of the Council of Bishops last November, and she began serving this two-year term earlier this month. She would, pending confirmation by the Council of Bishops in the fall of 2019, assume the office of president after General Conference 2020.

Under Bishop Harvey’s leadership, the

Louisiana Annual Conference follows a mission and vision focus to: lead others to an abundant life in Christ; engage in the community; learn, live and tell the gospel story; and reach out and draw in people from all walks of life resulting in vibrant, alive and vital congregations. The vision and mission are undergirded by Core Values: integrity, accountability, unrelenting love for all people, courage and risk, and holding nothing sacred but the mission. She continues to draw upon the vision and mission at every opportunity.

Bishop Harvey is the Vice-Chair of the Commission on United Methodist

Communications.

A native of Texas, the bishop is a graduate of Southern Methodist University, Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, where she earned a Master of Divinity.

Bishop Harvey and her husband, Dean, love to cook but can also give you recommendations for the best restaurants from Houston to Baton Rouge. Let’s add Baltimore to the list!



Cynthia Fierro Harvey

Retirees leave legacy of 695 years of service

EACH YEAR AT annual conference, it is with a mixture of sadness and gratitude that the retirees are recognized for their years of service to the church.

This year there are 24 retirees, made up of 12 women and 12 men. A luncheon in their honor was held yesterday, with Bishop Forrest Stith, retired, as the keynote speaker.

Professionally, the retirees served in dozens of ways both in and out of local churches: as district superintendent (Terri Rae Chattin); assistant to the bishop (David S. Cooney, Charlie Parker); Director of Connectional Ministry (Rod Miller); Director of Communications (James Skillington); counselors and chaplains (Marianne Grabowski); and extension ministries (Skillington, Parker).

Years of service vary from more than 45 to fewer than 10, with 29 years the average. Nearly all have also served in their districts and the conference on committees and commissions and in their communities.

Not all are ordained pastors. Some, like Paulette Jones, who came into ministry late

in life, and John Bragg, are part-time local pastors. Arthuree E. Wright is an ordained Deacon, who for 22 years has been Assistant

Director for Information at Howard University Libraries.

Retirement Class of 2018

| RETIREE | YEARS SERVED | RETIREE | YEARS SERVED |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Harold P. Atkins | 23 | Paulette V. Jones | 10 |
| Reg D. Barss | 48 | Charles A. Parker | 31 |
| John D. Bragg | 12 | Saroj S. Sangha | 25 |
| Marianne T. Brown | 13 | David A. Shank | 40 |
| Susan M. Brown | 24 | James E. Skillington | 36 |
| Gail L. Button | 17 | Harry Kent Tice | 43.75 |
| Robert D. Carter | 40.5 | Kenneth S. Valentine | 43.25 |
| Terri Rae Chattin | 39 | Robert T. Wellman | 35.5 |
| Lysbeth B. Cockrell | 18.25 | Arthuree R. Wright | 19 |
| David S. Cooney | 41 | Judy Smith Young | 10 |
| Frances C. Dailey | 32 | | |
| Mary Ellen Glorioso | 22 | | |
| Marianne S. Grabowski | 32.75 | | |
| Bruce A. Jones | 39 | | |
| | | TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE: | 695 |

Looking for a good read?

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling has recommended several books for the spiritual leaders of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. These titles are on sale at Cokesbury in the Exhibit Hall.

1. "Disciples Making Disciples," by Steve Manskar
2. "Canoeing the Mountains," by Tod Bolsinger
3. "Bid Our Jarring Conflicts Cease," by David N. Field
4. "Who Do We Choose to Be," by Margaret J. Wheatley
5. "Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope," by Adam Hamilton

Cokesbury will offer a series of book signings in the Exhibit Hall. They include:

Wednesday 5 to 6:45 p.m.

Rev. K. D. Weaver – "Meditate Like Jesus"

Thursday – noon to 1:45 p.m.

Anita Wamble – "Walk in Your Season"

Rev. Donna Claycomb-Sokol – "A New Day in the City"

Thursday – 5 to 6:45 p.m.

Rev. F. Douglas Powe, Jr. – "E. Stanley Jones and Sharing the Good News in a Pluralistic Society"

Rev. Joseph W. Daniels, Jr. – "Walking with Nehemiah"

Friday – noon to 1:45 p.m.

Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli – "Sacred Resistance"

Helen Fleming – "Train the Trainer"

Also read the many recommendations of BWC clergy at bwcumc.org/booklist

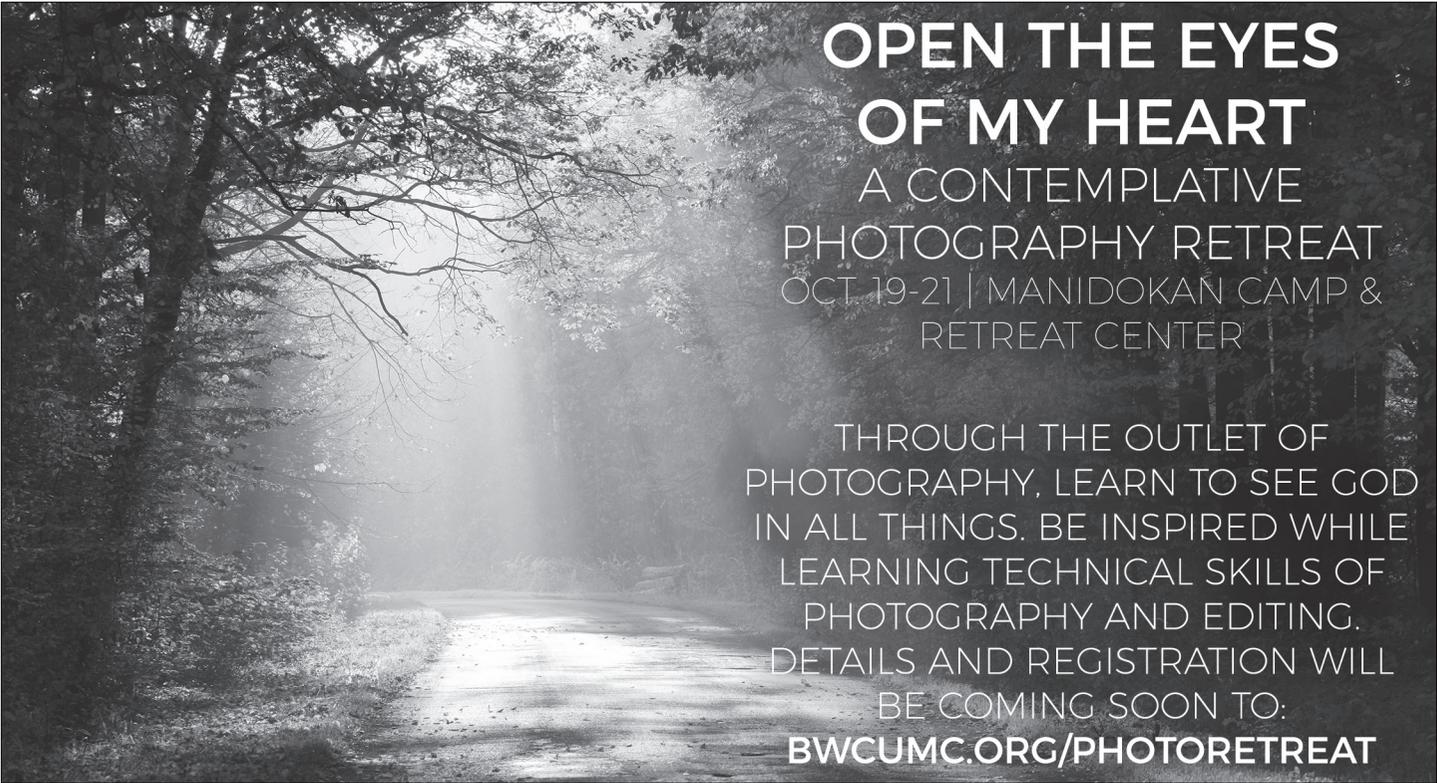
Consent Calendar forms online

PURSUANT TO THE Conference Rules, the reports from all program and administrative committees have been placed on the consent calendar.

These reports can be found on the conference website at www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/journal-reports/. (No action item, resolution or petition shall be included on the consent calendar.) These items do not require Conference action and will be received without further reference.

An item may be removed from the consent calendar by submitting a form with signatures of 10 members. A link to this downloadable form to remove an item from the consent calendar can be found at www.bwcumc.org/consent-calendar-2018/.

These completed forms must be submitted to the Conference Secretary by 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 31.



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LEARNING TECHNICAL SKILLS OF
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BE COMING SOON TO:

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\$119 for Early Bird Registration before July 1.

Featured speakers will include Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Marvin McMickle of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

For more information, contact Jo Chesson at 800-492-2525, Ext. 490.

REGISTER TODAY



The registration fee, which includes meals, is \$129. The BWI Airport Marriott hotel is offering a special group rate of \$119.00 per night, plus applicable fees/taxes. Book by Oct. 5, 2017 to get the group rate.

Everett Williams set to lead music

EVERETT PENDLETON WILLIAMS Jr. is the music leader for our Annual Conference Session. Williams is the Director of Music and Liturgical Arts at Asbury UMC in Washington, D.C. A native of Yakima, Wash., Williams began his career in music and as an actor with Voices INC. Repertoire Theater, based in Harlem. He has studied widely and served in many music ministry positions around the country.

The eldest son of the late Rev. Everett P. Williams Sr., and Blanche Graves Williams, our musical guest grew up in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He earned a B.A. in Performance and an M.M. in Teaching from Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, Ohio.

Williams shares his time and talent as a freelance musician, substitute teacher and choir accompanist with Montgomery County Public Schools; as a piano professor at Bowie State University; and as the conference organist for the Washington, D.C., Conference of the Second Episcopal District of the AME Church.

Williams loves to improvise on the great hymns of the church and gospel music. The composer of an opera on the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., he just released his first solo CD, "So Many Reasons to Rejoice: Sacred Songs of Praise." Welcome, Everett Williams!

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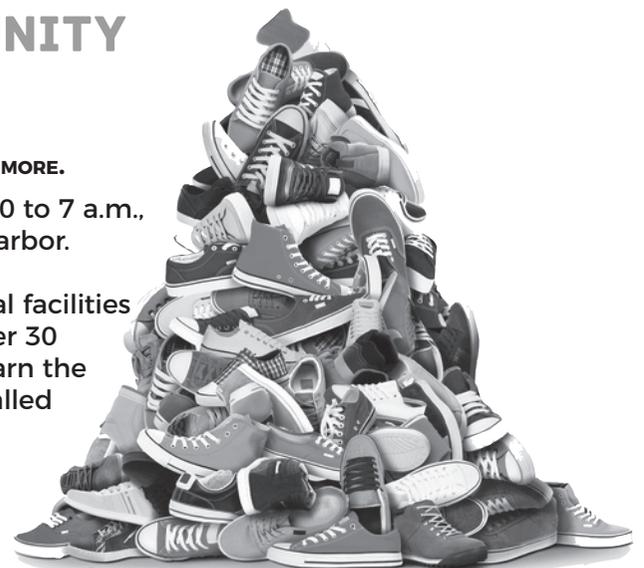
CONFERENCE MISSION OPPORTUNITY BENEFITS THE HOMELESS

COME OUT AND RUN/WALK WITH THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN BALTIMORE.

Thursday and Friday mornings of Annual Conference, from 5:30 to 7 a.m., join us for one, two, or three miles around Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

Back on My Feet recruits members at homeless and residential facilities and begins with a commitment to run three days a week. After 30 days in the program, members with 90 percent attendance earn the opportunity to move into the second phase of the program called Next Steps, which provides educational support, job training programs, employment partnership referrals and housing resources.

back on my feet!



DONATE YOUR GENTLY USED SHOES

DURING ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Bring your gently used shoes to Annual Conference to recycle to your SoleMate! Back on My Feet accepts all types of wearable pairs of men's, women's and kids shoes in all shapes, sizes and colors, including athletic shoes, cleats, work boots, dress shoes, casual shoes, sandals, heels, flats, cowboy boots.

AFTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE, LEAVE YOUR SHOES AT:

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Conference Center
North Bethesda UMC
First Saints Community Church
Oxon Hill UMC
McKendree-Simms-Brookland UMC
Mount Zion UMC

Fulton, MD
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Oxon Hill, MD
Washington, DC
Myersville, MD

*For more information visit: bwcumc.org/back-on-my-feet/

Exhibitors provide resources to enrich ministry

The exhibit hall, downstairs from the main meeting space, is open today starting at 2 p.m.; Thursday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Friday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Exhibitors include:

Africa University
 Armbruster A/V
 Baltimore County Christian Workcamp
 Bethlehem Christian Family
 Board Of Child Care of The United Methodist Church, Inc.
 Born Again Jewelry
 BWARM
 BWC Abundant Health Network
 BWC Advocacy and Action Network
 BWC Young People's Ministry
 BWCUMC Climate Justice
 BWC-UMW & Mission u
 Cokesbury
 Commission on Archives and History
 Commission on Disability Concerns
 Commission on Religion and Race
 Credit Union
 Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministry Team of the Baltimore Washington Conference

Discipleship Ministries
 Fair Trade Products
 GCFA
 General Boad of Higher Education
 General Board of Global Ministries
 Gun Violence Action Group
 Heritage international Fashions
 Hispanic-Latino Ministries
 In Mission Together Eurasia
 Manna House, Inc.
 Methodist Theological School in Ohio
 Mid Atlantic United Methodist Foundation
 Occasions by Diane
 Order of Deaconess Home Missioners & Missionaries
 Order of Deacons
 Project Transformation DC
 Quality Business Solutions
 Quality of Life Retreats
 Regional Aldersgate Renewal Fellowship
 Salem Garden Roses
 Society of St. Andrew
 Southern Maryland Walk to Emmaus

SPACES-Safe Places for the Advancement of Community & Equity
 St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute
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This year we celebrate the generous contributions of our sponsors and encourage you to investigate the remarkable services they offer. You'll want to thank:

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- Bethlehem Christian Family** <https://www.bethlehem-art.com/>
- Mid-Atlantic Foundation** <http://midatlanticfoundation.org/>

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Frequently Asked Questions about this session

What is the password for the hotel's wireless connection?

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Is this the same password that I use in my room?

No. This password is the one you'll use in the ballroom, other meeting spaces and in the common areas of the hotel.

Is this being live streamed?

Yes. Your friends, family and congregation can watch the plenary sessions and worship services at www.bwcumc.org.

Where is the Prayer Room?

The Prayer Room, operated by the United Methodist Men, is located in the Chasseur Room, on the same floor as the Grand Ballroom. For more information on how you can participate in this vital ministry during the rest of the year, contact Bryon Gould, the BWC Prayer Advocate, at 443-858-1308, or bryon.gould6@gmail.com.

Why are there dogs here at annual conference?

There are at least two service dogs assisting their owners this year. Some people have expressed discomfort with allergies around the dogs. Special seating has been set up in the Ballroom and at meals for those who need to be away from the dogs. To learn more about service dogs, read an article by the Rev. Leo Yates at <http://www.bwcumc.org/news-and-views/service-dogs-at-annual-conference/>

If we didn't get a meal plan with the hotel, where are the best places to eat?

When you exit the front door of the hotel, Inner Harbor is on your right and Little Italy is on your left. You'll find a variety of delicious dining options in either direction. You might want to also check out our UMC Meet app, which offers a Baltimore Guide to help you explore some of the best spots in the city.

This year's theme is "We Are One: Beneath the Cross." Isn't there a hymn called "Beneath the Cross?"

Yes. "Beneath the Cross of Jesus," on page 297 of the United Methodist Hymnal, was written by Elizabeth Clephane, who was born in Scotland in 1830 and died in 1869. Though frail in health her whole life, she and her sister gave all they had to charity, including selling their horse and carriage to benefit the needy in Melrose, near Edinburgh, Scotland. She was known by the townspeople as "the Sunbeam." Clephane saw the cross as a place of shelter, personal solace and a ladder up to heaven. The song was published three years after her death, under the name "Breathings on the Border." The first lines are: "Beneath the cross of Jesus, I fain would take my stand, the shadow of a mighty rock within in a weary land; A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way, from the burning of the noontime heat, and the burden of the day."

What do this year's offerings go toward?

The offering at opening worship tonight will go to camperships — scholarships for children in need to attend summer camp at West River or Camp Manidokan. The offering at ordination will be given to Seeds of Security, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling's initiative for victims of domestic violence who are seeking to flee their abusers.

Who's here?

Some interesting statistics from the registration process indicate that about 53 percent of attendees are female; 42 percent are white, 28 percent black; 2 percent Asian and 1 percent Hispanic. Forty-six percent requested that information be shared digitally and 44 percent requested printed materials and handouts.

What if I have more questions?

Ask a Highlighter, volunteers scattered around the hotel and dedicated to providing radical hospitality and finding you the answers you need. You'll also want to stay connected after the session with the e-connection, a weekly electronic newsletter that comes out on Monday mornings with the latest news and information from the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Please also be sure to like our Facebook page at facebook.com/bwcumc, and follow us on Twitter @bwcumc.



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

CONFERENCE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 9 a.m. | Registration Opens | Clergy-Grand Ballroom/ Laity - Harborside |
| 9 a.m. - noon | Preconference Workshops | Fourth Floor |
| 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Retirement Reception and Luncheon (by invitation) | Waterview A-C |
| 1:30 - 5 p.m. | Clergy Session | Ballroom |
| 2 - 5 p.m. | Laity Session | Harborside Ballroom |
| 2 p.m. | Exhibit Hall opens | Harborside Ballroom |
| 5 - 6:45 p.m. | Dinner | |
| 5 - 6:30 p.m. | Extension Ministry Dinner (by invitation) | Harborside |
| 7 p.m. | Opening Worship | Grand Ballroom |

THURSDAY, MAY 31

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|----------------------|--|------------|
| 7 - 8:15 a.m. | Breakfast | Harborside |
| 8:15 a.m. | Gathering Music begins | Ballroom |
| 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. | Bible Study | Ballroom |
| 9:30 a.m. | Plenary Session | Ballroom |
| Noon - 1:45 p.m. | Lunch | Harborside |
| 2 - 5 p.m. | Plenary Session | Ballroom |
| 7 p.m. | Ordination | Ballroom |
| Following Ordination | Informal conversation on Constitutional Amendments | Ballroom |

Constitutional Amendment

An error in the text of a proposed Constitutional Amendment, dealing with women's equality, has led to a call to redo the vote, originally taken in the BWC in 2017.

At the 2016 General Conference, the Independent Commissions Committee deleted the sentence in Amendment 1, which said, "The United Methodist Church recognizes it is contrary to Scripture and to logic to say that God is male or female, as maleness or femaleness are characteristics of human bodies and cultures, not characteristics of the divine."

However, this passage was included in the text on the ballot. Amendment 1 failed to win at least 66.7 percent of the total votes required at annual conferences around the world.

The Council of Bishops announced the results of the voting on May 7. The first amendment, the one with the error, failed by 67 votes with a 66.5 percent tally — 31,304 yes and 15,753 no. The second amendment, which also addressed discrimination against women and others, received 61.3 percent, shy by 2,525 votes to ratify with 29,049 yes votes and 18,317 no.

Since some annual and central conferences have already held their sessions this year, their voting will take place next year.

Amendment 1, which is expected to be voted on Thursday, says:

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division One, add a new paragraph between current ¶¶ 5 and 6:

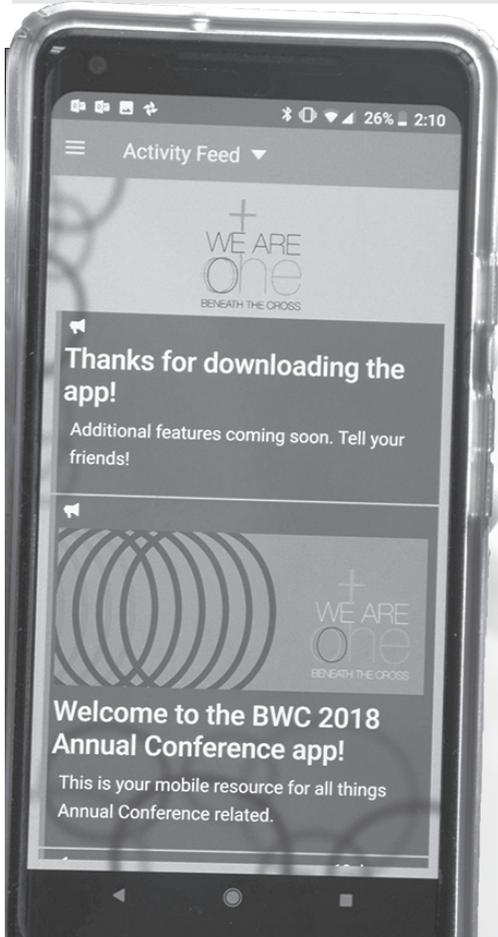
As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women's and girl's equality and well-being.

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, this would become the new ¶6, and the current ¶¶ 6-61 would be renumbered as ¶¶ 7-62.

The BWC has teamed up with GCFA to bring you an exciting new app for the Annual Conference Session. Before you arrive at the session, you'll want to download it.



- Search the App or Google Play stores for UMCMeet.
- Click "Get" or "Install," then click open.
- Click "Allow Notifications." (We promise not to annoy you.)
- Select BWC 2018 Annual Conference
- Enter the password: bwc2018
- The three lines in the top left corner (the "hamburger") hold your menu
- Explore, share, learn, and app-solutely let us know if there's any information you don't see that would be helpful (see what we did there?).



We want to hear from you!
Tweet us your thoughts & pictures
of Annual Conference using
#bwcumc18



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