

## Discipleship Council

*"In the Baltimore Washington Conference, we are becoming more fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever changing world" (The Vision of the BWC)*

The purpose of the Discipleship Council is to "a) function, as necessary, on behalf of the Annual Conference in between sessions; b) ensure the Conference resources align to our vision, mission and critical issues; and c) discern, develop, review and evaluate the strategic direction of the Conference toward its vision and goals."

This has been a year of transition for the Discipleship Council. We are grateful for the opportunity to engage in dialogue with our Bishop, Latrelle Easterling, concerning the direction of the BWC and the Discipleship Council. In this time, we have reaffirmed our mission as that of making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We discussed what makes a Disciple of Jesus Christ and noted that a Disciple is one who not only practices the spiritual disciplines, but who is dedicated and committed to making disciples. Disciple-making is not a quick process but involves time and commitment. In order to make disciples, we must begin with a willingness to share how Jesus Christ has touched and changed our lives. We celebrated our diversity and our effective partnership between Laity and Clergy. We celebrated our commitment to creating partnerships both locally and globally. The BWC is willing and ready to reach across "hallways, aisles, rivers and even oceans to help others" in experiencing the wonder of God's amazing grace.

In our discussion with our Bishop, it was noted that the BWC has many layers and that streamlining may be needed. Such streamlining should include an evaluation of the purpose and meaning of the Discipleship Council and its standing Committees, like the Ministry Oversight Relationship Committee. This committee, established by the 2014 Annual Conference, is to oversee and guide the Discipleship Council and the Annual Conference in establishing relationship with outside organizations and agencies.

We encouraged our Bishop to be her authentic self. We welcome her leadership in helping us more clearly understand who we are as followers of Jesus and how we are called to live out this faith as United Methodists in the BWC.

The 2016 AC requested that the BWC update and perfect our Conference Policy Manual. Our discussions have centered on the role of this manual. We felt it would helpful to separate this into a Personnel Policy Manual that would be perfected and utilized by The Conference Personnel Committee, and a Manual listing the Rules of the BWC. This process has begun.

The Discipleship Council is committed to assisting the various boards and committees of the BWC to more effectively live out our Vision. To that end, we hope to create a forum for dialogue between the Boards, Committees and staff of the BWC with the Discipleship Council and with one another.

We would like to thank the staff of the BWC and Bishop Easterling for their support and guidance through this year of transition.

Your Brother in Christ,  
Robert T. Clipp, Chairperson