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UMConnection

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • To inspire and equip local faith communities to develop disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world • www.bwcumc.org • Volume 29, Issue 8 • September 2018



BWC's summer camps offer life-changing experiences for all ages, and this year was no exception. Read more in a reflection from Chris Schlieckert, Director of BWC's Retreat and Camping Ministries, on page 8. Above, two campers practice canoe safety in the pool at Manidokan Camp and Retreat Center before hitting the river.

With reading, new mission reaches youth

BY ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

WHAT DO YOU call it when 90+ elementary-aged children spend four days a week for eight weeks during the summer, reading more than 1,450 books and maintaining or improving their reading skills?

In Washington, D.C., this summer, it was called Project Transformation. And it wasn't only the young children who were transformed; young adult leaders and congregations had that experience, too.

Coming together in early August at a banquet to celebrate the program's success, leaders, staff and children all shared stories of what Project Transformation meant to them.

Rachel Luna, Executive Director of Project Transformation DC since last November, hatched the idea as part of a school project while enrolled as a Fellow at Wesley Theological Seminary's Institute for Community Engagement (ICE).

"I was kind of lost with what I was supposed to do in that fellowship," Luna said. "This evolved out of an asset mapping project of looking at education in DC and seeing these huge holes. Hopefully, being able to use the power and the physical space of the church provides a patch for one of those holes, which is the fact that so many kids lose reading levels during the summer."

Combine the local church resources with kids needing to read and young adults who want to serve, Luna said, and coming alongside Project Transformation was easy.

According to its website, "Project Transformation was founded in 1998 by Sarah Wilke and Dr. Leighton K. Farrell, two visionary leaders in the North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church." Project Transformation formed a separate, national nonprofit organization in 2015 through an investment from the Young Clergy Initiative of the United Methodist Church's General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Project Transformation Washington, D.C., is part of this nationwide effort.

Luna was hired full time in November 2017, but "this has been a project since early 2016" for Washington, she said.

Project Transformation is a "ministry that focuses on what we call 'The Three Cs,'" said Luna: children, college students, and churches. "We engage young adults in meaningful leadership and discernment opportunities while serving children in a holistic manner, and opening churches up

Camp promises hope

BY TIM WARNER*

Editor's Note: This summer, tears mixed with the baptismal water as the Rev. Tim Warner began to understand hope in new ways. As one of the founders of the BWC's Camp Hope, he celebrated the 13th year of this weeklong gathering at West River of children whose parents have been incarcerated. In this experience he's learned to never cease to be amazed at God's grace and power. Warner shares his thoughts:

"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you." Isaiah 43:2, NLT

IN 2005, BEFORE the phrase "school to prison pipeline" was mainstream, I heard a statistic that made the hair on the back of my neck stand up: 70 percent of the children of people who have been incarcerated have negative contact with the penal justice system, most becoming incarcerated themselves.

Seventy percent. Let that one sit with you for a moment.

Nearly all these kids come from communities like the one in which I was raised. I knew we needed to do something — anything — to take a shot at getting them into a setting where the power of God could change some of their despicable reality.

Theirs is a reality of economic deprivation, families broken by addiction and hardship, and schools that don't have the resources students need. There is hunger, stigma, and anger. What other outcome is possible for these kids? In some prisons it's not surprising to

encounter three generations from the same family. What do we imagine lies ahead for these children?

West River has proven to be a place of transformation for kids. I experienced it first-hand working at its Basketball Camp for years.

I wondered, could a week with young mentors with whom they could build positive, lasting relationships and hear authentic testimonies about God in their lives really help break the cycle? Could a week of building community and having good old-fashioned, unstigmatized fun without the daunting responsibilities and troubles of their everyday lives help them break free? Could adults who understood their plight expose them every day to enough about the Jesus who could transform them to make any difference?

I delighted to share that, for years now, the answer has been, "Yes."

While I went there woefully unprepared, this summer's camp was full of proof of the possibilities.

Five of the original campers (all but one of whom are now enrolled in 4-year universities) were scheduled to be counselors. Three, who are siblings, could not attend at the last minute because of the untimely death of one of their infant children. We will see them next summer back at West River, which has become their old stomping ground.

I was delighted that another of them was actually serving for the summer on camp staff. Having her there as our liaison brought tears to my eyes every day.

See Camp Hope, page 3

The Commission on a Way Forward's final report is now available in four languages: English, French, Portuguese and Swahili.

Visit: bwcumc.org/wayforward



See Transformation, page 3



BY MANDY SAYERS
LEAD Pastor, Glen Mar UMC, Ellicott City

IT SEEMS I came out of the womb driven: six weeks premature back in 19-something-something, determined to arrive early, get moving, survive and achieve. I tried very hard to excel at everything, and of course, failed a lot in the process. I found Vince Lombardi to be not far off the mark, though, in his words, "We are going to pursue perfection and in so doing, we will catch excellence."

I threw my whole mind into schooling and getting good grades. The more difficult a subject was, the more I enjoyed it. And the times the grades were not what I wanted, I knew I had tried my very best to excel. I went to a good college and I got into law school. I passed bar exams. I practiced law. Ah yes, dear ones, I wanted to excel.

Here's the rub, though. Jesus' notion of greatness and achievement looks a little different than how I thought of it as a kid. Jesus said if you would excel, be a servant. If you would excel in the kingdom, get humble.

Greatness is measured not so much in being better than the other person, but in putting their needs first, lifting them up, and showing them love. Excellence is putting forgiveness over "being right" sometimes. Jesus' picture of "excellence" and Paul's picture of "excellence" look like bearing with one another in love and washing one another's feet.

Maybe as we turn our eyes again toward the start of a school year, you too are hoping for "all A's" or at least "a gentleman's C." As we start another academic year, and churches across the conference bless backpacks and donate school supplies, of course it is God's desire for us to learn all we can (love the Lord your God with your whole... MIND...). But maybe excelling in God's eyes involves using that learning to bless somebody, to resist an Empire, to share God's hope, to embody God's love. Maybe excelling isn't about who finishes first in the kingdom (I hear the last shall be first, anyway). Maybe it's about all finishing together, and hearing, "Well done, good and faithful servant" because we invested everything we had in God's Project for the world.

Now that would be....excellent.

EXCEL

I
S,

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

I LOVE THE TIME that I get to spend with the youth in my church. They are always so enthusiastic, joyful, energetic and talkative, at least until they become teenagers. I love hearing them talk about their hopes and dreams for the future and especially what they want to be when they grow up.

I have one youth who wants to be the best point guard the Washington Wizards have ever had. I have another who wants to be the best doctor in the world.

Not to be out done, I have another young person who, because her school bus driver is so bad, wants to grow up to be the best bus driver in the universe.

Over and over these youth amaze me with their ability to think big, aim high and want to be the best at whatever they do.

We are all hard-wired to want to excel. The only problem is sometimes life intervenes and conspires to lower our expectations of ourselves and the world. It happens the day you forget that you are fearfully and wonderfully made and start comparing yourself to others.

When you start comparing yourself to others, you forget that you are gifted and prepared to excel just the way you are. All you have to do is remember that you, the way you are, are made to excel.

So, from this day forward, pledge to yourself that you will excel with the gifts that you have; that you will remember that little voice in you that wanted to be the best ever.

We can't all be the best at everything that we do, but we can try to excel and be the best that we can be.

Commit each day to work as unto the Lord, doing your best, being your best, and giving your best.

If you put your talents to use every day, you will be the best and you will excel.

EVENTS

Pre-retirement seminar

Oct. 18, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Mt. Zion UMC, Highland

The BWC's Pension and Benefits team will hold a Pre-Retirement Session for any clergy considering retirement. Spouses are also encouraged to attend. Registration opens soon.

reCall Summit

Oct. 26-27
BWI Double Tree Hotel
The reCall Summit is a time of courageous conversations as the church explores racial justice and reconciliation at the DoubleTree Hotel by the BWI Airport. Featured speakers will include Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Marvin McMickle of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. Learn more and register at www.bwcumc.org/event/1147368-2018-10-26-recall-summit.

Strawbridge Shrine meeting

Oct. 27, 9:30 a.m. through lunch
New Hope (Old Bethel) UMC

The Strawbridge Shrine Association's annual gathering will feature a panel discussion with Delores Martin, Rev. Doug Tzan and John Strawbridge. The trio will share their thoughts on how the legacy of Robert and Elizabeth Strawbridge shape the church's way forward. You will need to register if you plan to stay for the luncheon. For more

information, contact the Rev. Lou Piel at 410-751-9049.

Stepping up to Staffing and Supervision training

Nov. 6-7
Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.
With ground-breaking consultant, author and coach, Susan Beaumont. \$550. Learn more at www.bwcumc.org/event/1174899-2018-11-06-stepping-up-to-staffing-and-supervision.

Bishop's Advent Day Apart

Nov. 13, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Epworth UMC, Gaithersburg
A time apart for clergy with guest preacher, the Rev. Kirk Byron Jones. Learn more at www.bwcumc.org/event/1184253-2018-11-13-bishops-pre-advent-day-apart.

ROCK 2019

Feb. 8-10, 2019
Convention Center, Ocean City, Md.
Registration opens Sept. 15 for ROCK 2019, a retreat for youth. The featured speaker this year will be Ben Glenn, the Chalk Guy. Salvador will provide the music and Egypt Speaks is the weekend's spoken word artist. ROCK is designed as a God-encountering, life-changing, high-energy retreat focusing on revival for youth and adults. Info: www.bwcumc.org/rock.



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

EXPLORING A WAY FORWARD

WITH REV. TOM BERLIN

Sept. 15, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Nichols-Bethel UMC, 1239 Murray Road, Odenton, MD

The Rev. Tom Berlin, who spoke at this year's Annual Conference Session, will help you understand the issues and options facing The United Methodist Church as it approaches the February General Conference and makes decisions on how the Church will address issues of homosexuality.

bwcumc.org.wayforward

UMConnection

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
Melissa Lauber
Erik Alsgaard
Alison Burdett
Myca Jones
Linda Worthington

Resident Bishop
Director of Communications
Managing Editor
Multimedia Producer
Webmaster / Video Producer
Communications Associate

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Camp Hope: Getting equally wet with the same water

From page 1

We don't have room for her story here, but if you knew it, you'd be crying too.

The final Camp Hope veteran joined us as a counselor — or at least that's what we thought at the beginning of the week. Midway through the week, this young woman, who had been neglectfully burned as a young child, who had been through too many skin graft surgeries to count, and who, with the God-sent help of many, had managed to survive, thrive and complete her freshman year in college.

At age 19, her foster-care checks had stopped coming and she needed to find a new place to live. So there she was, without a home at 19, but around God's people in the presence of God. And as God would have it, God had left a camp staff position open for her. God also sent her wonderful women from West River's Grandparents' Camp, who

raised a huge offering for her on the spot and who will continue to be her grandparents in every way but blood relation.

In that beginning, in her story, I was reminded, "When you go through deep waters, I will be with you..."

My understanding deepened during the trying week, during which I wanted to throw in my camping towel many times. After unexpectedly pouring out into this newly homeless young woman, after I had to intervene in a fight between campers, after poor behavior made me bring them back from a July 4th fireworks display before they had seen the fireworks, after I had preached and taught seemingly to deaf ears, and after my best efforts to get them exposed to sailing landed me and my cell phone in the bay rather than on the boat (shout out to Pastor Tim Dowell and the Sailing Camp for towing me in!), God told me why I was there.



Photo courtesy of West River

The Rev. Tim Warner, right, and in photo below left, baptizes two young boys at West River during Camp Hope.

God used three simultaneous behavior issues to put me under a pavilion with three young men for two hours, in which one of us was crying the entire time.

I realized all I had been through in my own life was, in some way, what each of those young men needed to hear. Every one of them needed the father in me in that moment. In spite of my exhaustion, I sensed I needed a fresh view of the reality of why I had answered God's call in the first place. I realized that my deep water and their deep water was not only equally as wet, but it is the same water, and that God was in there with us.

It was my spiritual delight this summer to stand in West River with those young

men and baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

While West River will always be a special place of transformation, it is the people who God sends there to be the church that he uses. We should be that church — together with people in their water — everywhere we go.

When we are a part of the body of Christ, God is in the deep waters of our lives with us. And because of God's presence with us, we are compelled to be in the deep water of others in the name of Jesus. That only comes by difficulty and sacrifice and inconvenience and the subjection of our will.

*Tim Warner is senior pastor at Mill Creek Parish UMC in Rockville.



Transformation: DC reading mission touches many lives

From page 1

to different and new ways of reaching out to their communities."

In short, United Methodist churches in D.C. opened their doors for eight weeks of literacy-based summer camp, staffed by volunteers and 14 young adult interns from around the country. Two so-called "house

as an opportunity to interact with the community," Johnson said. "It was spearheaded by our United Methodist Women, but others joined in. This was a way to do more than we ever could on our own."

As the children were engaged in structured activities during the day, Luna said the staff noted a decrease in behavioral

said. Friday's were reserved for the interns to have time for reflection, learning and connecting with each other, she said. It was also a time for them to listen to where God might be calling them in their lives.

Each young adult received a living stipend, paid for partially by the church, room and board, and dinners provided by the churches four nights a week, Luna said.

One tragic experience that transformed the young adults was gun violence. A shooting of a young girl, known to some of the campers, occurred just blocks from Hughes Memorial during camp. And another shooting took place just one block from the church while the children were in the church, Luna said.

"It's been a learning experience and an eye-opening experience for some of our interns," said Luna. "For some of them, this is the first time they've faced gun violence and poverty of this type."

Sean Gray, an incoming student at



Erik Alsgaard



Children from Project Transformation perform a dance routine at National UMC in Washington, D.C., as part of a celebration banquet.

pastors" — students at Wesley — also served.

The Rev. Paul Johnson is pastor at Hughes Memorial UMC, one of the host churches, and on the Board of Directors for Project Transformation DC. He said participating in Project Transformation helped to transform his church.

"It was a way to bring vitality to our church," he said, "while at the same time, the young adults and the children brought new life to us in this summer camp experience."

"From day one, our church saw it

problems as the summer progressed. In addition to practicing reading skills, emotional, learning and behavioral education was offered.

"Our interns showed so much love and patience with the children," Luna said.

Brighter Day Ministries (formerly A.P. Shaw and Congress Heights UMC) served as the other host church for the camp. Partner churches throughout the area assisted with money, volunteers and other resources.

A typical week of camp saw children attend Monday through Thursday, Luna

Rachel Luna, Executive Director of Project Transformation DC, speaks at the banquet Aug. 9 at National UMC in Washington, D.C.



open the eye

Contemplative Photo Retreat

Light illuminates the landscapes of our living

By Jerry Wicklein*

Light thinks it travels faster than anything, but it is wrong. No matter how fast light travels, it finds the darkness has always got there first, and is waiting for it. —Terry Pratchett, Reaper Man.

AND THIS IS the way it all begins:
God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: The first day.

"Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness." (The Message) God created light to disrupt the primaeval darkness and provide a rhythm for living.

The rhythm of light and darkness, day and night, provides a pattern for living. There is a rhythm in creation guided by light: the setting and rising of the sun, the phases of the moon, the passing of the seasons.

The light that disrupts calls us to awareness of our surroundings and of others on the journey.

How to tell night from day...

The teacher sat around a blazing fire with a small number of students late at night. Their meandering conversation was broken by periods of silence when they gazed at the stars and the moon.

The teacher asked... "How can we know when the night has ended and the day has begun?" Eagerly, one student answered: "when you can look off in the distance and distinguish your dog from the sheep." Another student offered: "When light falls on the leaves and you can tell whether it is a palm tree or a fig tree." The teacher said: "These are fine answers, but I believe that when you

look into the eyes of a human being and see a brother or sister...you know that it is morning. If you cannot see a sister or brother... it will always be night."

The light that disrupts draws our attention to the mystery and wonder of God.

As a child, I would often visit my grandmother. My favorite times were when she would take me to a little hill near her home and we would lie down under a big tree and look up at the light dancing through the leaves and limbs of the trees. This sanctuary of the trees became a place of wonder and pilgrimage through the seasons.

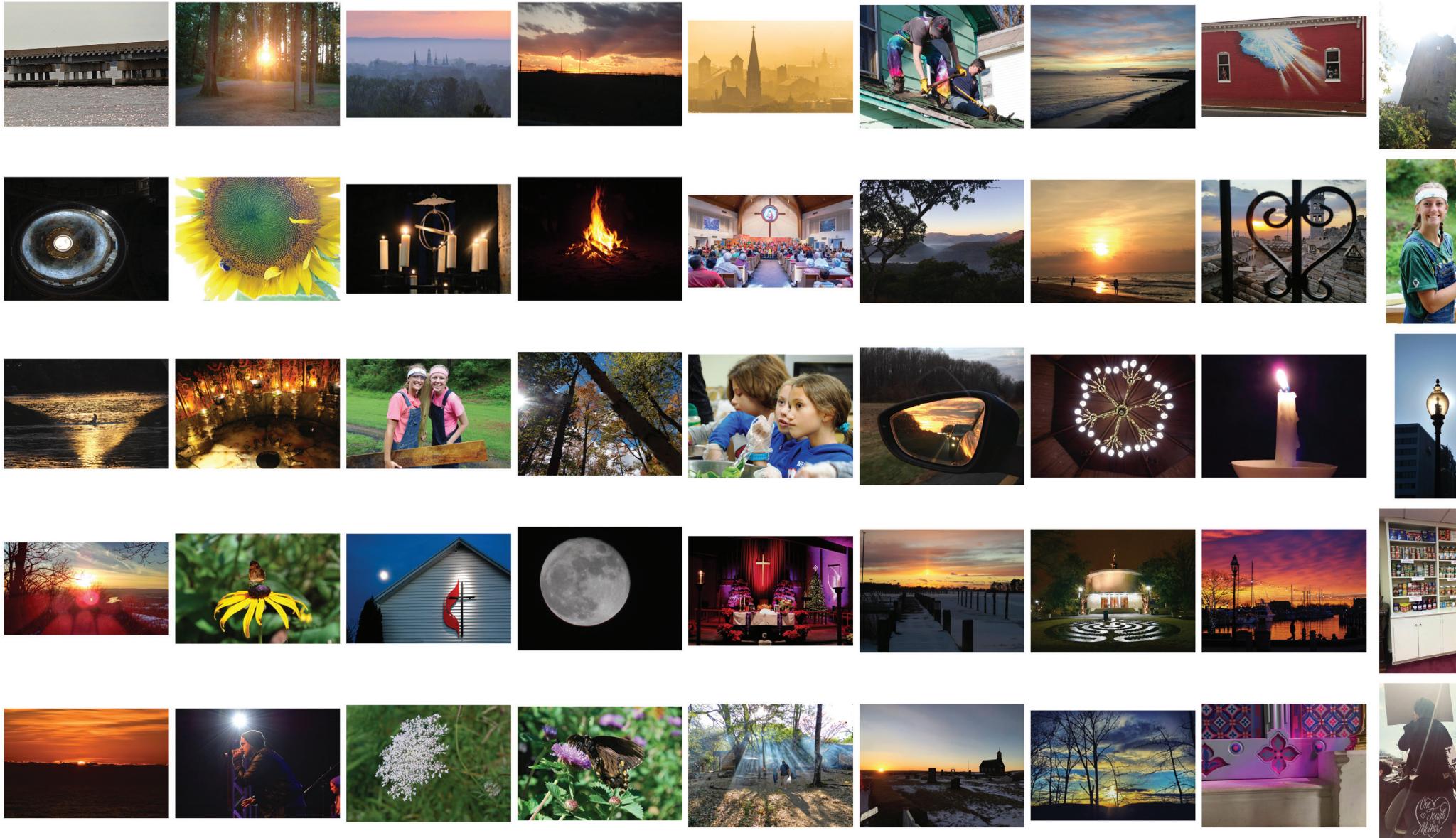
With each season, the light revealed different on the time of day, the would pass over, and e

Now almost seven d pause and take time to dance among the leave creating space and sha God for the Word that

And with the disrupt light brings gifts for us

- It is the light of allows us to explore landscapes of o
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Where do you see the light of God in your world? BWC photo



Drawing with Light: Photography intersects with Spiritual

By TERRI COFIELL*

Photography is my thing. Or at least it became my thing. Back in Junior High, I wrote "camera" on my Christmas list, expecting a plastic Instamatic with rotating flashcubes. Instead, I received a 35mm aperture-priority Yashica; in my father's words "a real camera." It was bulky. Uncool.

During college, one of my three jobs was working as a photographer's

assistant. I took a course called "Physics of Light and Color" (a.k.a. "Pseudo-Science for English Majors"), but, still, photography remained a hobby I casually pursued as time and finances allowed. After college, when no one hired me to write the Great American Novel, I accepted a job selling cameras and invested in a single lens reflex Canon, ready to pursue a new career path.

And then God called. I all but

shelved my camera during seminary except for special occasions: weddings, graduations, my niece's birth. Who could afford film, processing AND a Systematic Theology textbook? Wesley Theological Seminary, however, is blessed with an arts program. I took a course and completed an independent study in Contemplative Drawing. I read Matthew Fox and discovered "extrovert meditation," a process of becoming more deeply aware of God's presence

through artistic expression: "centering by way of creating."

My early appointment years were spent in Deaf Ministry, which included college and psychiatric chaplaincy — I barely had time to buy groceries much less open a sketch pad. Returning to the parish left little time for contemplation. I was tending everyone's soul but my own and feared burning out.

In 1999, I took a Sabbath leave. With sketchbook and camera, I walked the

beaches of California, for discernment, yearn

God has a strange w prayer: the day I return husband. The camera w the closet, occasionally record happy moments two years later, Richard with heart disease. The that was supposed to fi didn't. After incredible expense, he was diagno

eyes of my heart

retreat set for Oct. 19-21

on, the dance of the
different things depending
on us, the clouds that
and even my mood.
Even decades later, I
have come to see the light
in leaves in other places,
and shadows. I thank
God that created light.
The disruption of the dark,
for us.
Light of creation that
we experience the
meaning of our living.
way ahead.
Meeting objects that

- creates shadows that give depth to life.
- It is the reflection of light that brings colors to life.
- Light, especially from the sun, promotes growth and life.

And it is often in the darkness of night that we yearn the most for light to break forth. It is the witness of others that can bring light into our lives in unexpected moments and events. It comes from those persons who fulfill the words from Matthew's gospel: "You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world." (The Message)

Like the first light of creation, the

first light of faith brings color, depth and clarity to life.

As faith is nurtured by those who bring light into our lives, we read again the words of Jesus: "I am the world's Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in." (John 8:12, The Message)

The always available light of the Son brings hope and vision as we consider the landscapes of our lives.

- With the light of faith, the landscape of our living takes on more definition and is transformed.

- Through the lens of faith, we can see more clearly the way ahead.
- The light of faith lets us walk through the shadows with more confidence.
- Lighted by faith the colors of life have more brightness.
- The light of faith encourages growth and action.

It is this light, the Light of Jesus, that brings new steps to the dance and with these words the dance of life takes on new meaning: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," and "Lo, I am with you always."

May the blessing of Light be on you

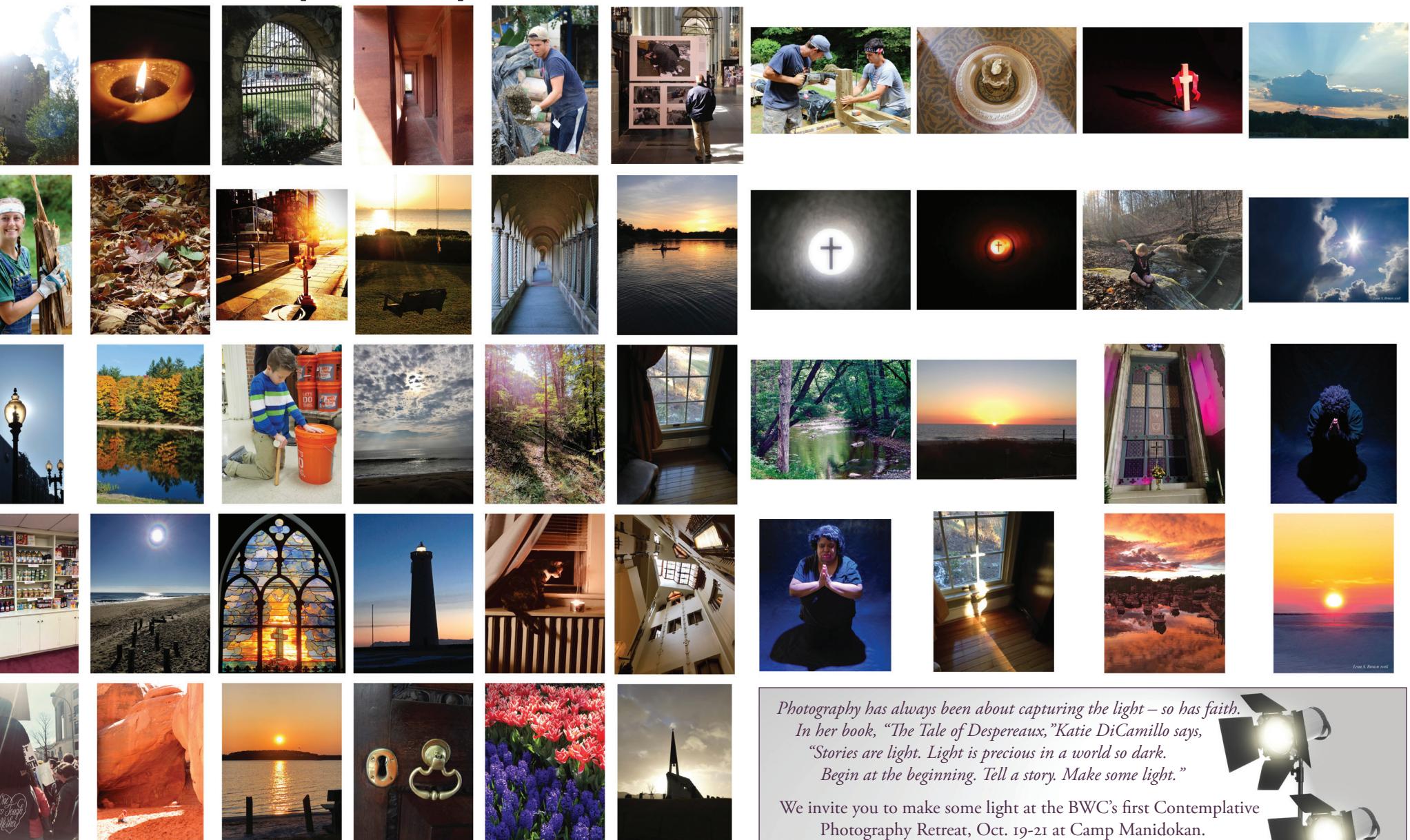
Light without and light within,
May the blessed sunlight shine on
you,

And warm your heart till it glows like
A great peat fire, so that the stranger
May come and warm himself at it.
And may the light shine out of the
two eyes of you,

Like a candle set in two windows of
a house,
Bidding the wanderer to come in out
of the storm.

*Jerry Wicklein is a retired Elder in the
Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Photo contest participants share their vision



Photography has always been about capturing the light – so has faith. In her book, "The Tale of Despereaux," Katie DiCamillo says, "Stories are light. Light is precious in a world so dark. Begin at the beginning. Tell a story. Make some light."

We invite you to make some light at the BWC's first Contemplative Photography Retreat, Oct. 19-21 at Camp Manidokan.

From beginners playing with pictures on their phones to artists delving deeply into photography, we'll explore the connections between faith and photographs and unleash your creative spirit.

Learn more and register at www.bwcumc.org/photoretreat/



I Yearning

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dible anxiety and
diagnosed with

Multiple System Atrophy, a degenerative neurological disorder. So what did he buy me for Christmas that year? A \$25, reconditioned, point-and-shoot digital camera. "You're sitting here watching me die," he said. "Now you have no excuse; there's no film, so there's no expense. Go take pictures."

Perhaps this is a long (and excruciatingly personal) introduction to photography as a spiritual endeavor, but I'm guessing there are others who are

yearning to feel more fully connected to God. Others who are seeking creative expression. Others who, in the face of life's painful realities, crave centering.

The word photography means, in its Greek roots, "drawing with light." Scripture affirms Christ as the Light of the World; Christ, in turn, calls us to be the same for others. Contemplative Photography is not about producing beautiful images; it is the spiritual process of learning to see in a new

way that allows us to experience God's presence in all things.

It was hard to pick up my camera again after my husband died, but I knew that photography can be a form of prayer, praise, and healing.

In the words of Dorthea Lange, who recorded perhaps the most iconic photographic images of the Depression Era, "The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera."

Whether your camera is your phone or you own a DSLR or a Hasselblad with all the fixin's, I invite you to join us at Manidokan as we, in community, pursue a new way of seeking and seeing God that will empower you to see the world, and all that fills it, in a new Light. And who knows? Perhaps you will find your thing.

*Terry Cofield is pastor of Harmony UMC in Falling Waters, W.Va.

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Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi
The United Methodist Church
Western Pennsylvania Conference
D. Min. Anticipated 2019



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

While building, church keeps growing

WILLIAMSPORT – Rehoboth UMC broke ground earlier this year for a \$4 million building program with the theme “Room to Grow.” They’re now ready to pour the foundation slab.

Being built on a 105-acre plot purchased 20 years ago, the multi-purpose, 13,500 square feet gathering space (plus 5,600 square feet for classrooms) isn’t waiting for the final brick to be laid. The congregation is holding monthly worship services on the site in a newly constructed pavilion.

“Many people have reflected on how present the Spirit is when we gather to worship,” said the Rev. Mike Bennett. The services “have been full of energy and contribute to the excitement of the changes to come.” They’ve also been a draw for new families, he said.

Bob Harsh, a life-time member, commented, “This land here is such a peaceful place, I can’t wait ‘til we’re out here again.”

They have listed the “old church,” still in use until the move is complete, for a realtor to sell, and if not, they will likely repurpose it to serve impoverished people in Washington County, Bennett said.

Chabadza partnership builds new clinic

BEL AIR – Thanks to a Chabadza* partnership between Bel Air UMC and the Zimbabwe East Conference, construction of a modern health clinic at Munyari Mission is well underway, according to a story from United Methodist News Service. The clinic will replace a teacher’s house converted to a six-room clinic in 2009 that can no longer cope with the demand for services. The new location is on a campus with a primary and secondary school and a church sanctuary.

Villagers provided the bricks, stones, sand and labor while the partners, such as Bel Air UMC, contributed roofing, windows, cement and payments for the contractor.

The completed clinic is expected to cost about \$349,000.



“I’ve been quite overwhelmed with the love and support that Bel Air UMC has been able to show to our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe,” said the Rev. Byron E. Brought, lead pastor. “We are absolutely committed, with God’s help and help from friends in Zimbabwe, to completing it.”

*Chabadsa is a local concept where farmers take extra hoes to the field and passers-by can take up the spare hoes and assist.

Churches helped by UM grants

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Using funds provided by the 2018 Peace with Justice Sunday, sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society, several BWC ministries were able to initiate or fulfill specific missions.

Each year, the Peace with Justice special Sunday with offering returns to the Conference half of the funds raised. It is these monies that made the grants possible.

The grants supported:

- Centennial Advocates (Centennial Memorial UMC, Frederick), where a core group of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will be trained for advocating for both their own needs and those of their peers.
- Furnishings for DC-MD Justice For Our Neighbors’ (JFON) new office.
- The Community Anti-Violence Program at Hughes Memorial UMC. C.A.P. provides after-school tutoring

and mentoring for children and youth who are vulnerable to the trauma of poverty and violence in their community.

- Shower Ministry and HOPE4ALL at Mt. Vernon Place UMC in Washington, D.C. These ministries provide opportunities to authentically engage with those who are experiencing homelessness.

The Peace with Justice special Sunday is observed the Sunday after Pentecost, which is June 16, 2019.

Webb receives “unsung hero” award

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Rev. Nancy Webb, a blind retired Elder from the Baltimore-Washington Conference and a past co-chairperson of the United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities (UMAMD), received “The Unsung Hero Award” at the caucus’s conference, Aug. 1-3, “for all of her years of service and advocacy work” on behalf of people with disabilities.

Twenty-nine people attended the “Taking Our Place at the Table: Disability Leadership Academy,” led by the Lewis Leadership Center of Wesley Theological Seminary at Gallaudet University, a school for the Deaf founded in 1864.



The conference included discussions of challenges some boards of ordained ministry present to provisional Deacons and Elders on the inaccessible locations where the examinations are sometimes held. The Rev. Anthony Hunt, chair of the BWC BOOM, encouraged conference leaders to

work with the conference commissions on disabilities to make them more accessible, but some said their conferences did not have such commissions, even though the Book of Discipline requires such.

Bishop Peggy Johnson, in her role as the bishop assigned to the disability ministries, said she will continue to work with her colleagues to be certain that every annual conference in the denomination has a working commission on disability concerns.

Gift stretches from 1 to 250

SMITHVILLE – The long-term effects of giving aren’t always known when they happen. But what started as help for one student in a northern Zimbabwe community now reaches more than 250 secondary-level boarding school students.

The congregation that helped to build the school provided financial support to Albert Mashambanhaka and six other students.

Mashambanhaka, 22, credits David Boone, a longtime member of Smithville UMC, with his academic success. “(He) realized my hard work (and) out of love, he decided to give me support as well as a chance to achieve my status and identity together.”

The young adult has started a ministry, “Partners for Success,” that provides mentors to the teens in the boarding school. Ten mentors work with the students in interactive group discussions. The Partners for Success team encourages students to learn by listening, questioning and sharing their life experiences. All 10 have completed studies at Bindura University of Science and Technology or the University of Zimbabwe. They tutor in business management, chemistry, law and music, peace and governance, psychology, media production (radio/film/television) and social work.

“Implied is the fact that, with the support we got from all stakeholders, our mission [of] providing an interactive platform toward the transformation of lives can be spread across the whole district, province and nation at large,” Mashambanhaka said.

UMs gather Aug. 12 to stand against hatred and for hope

In response to a white supremacist rally being held in Washington, D.C., Bishop LaTrelle Easterling called United Methodists to Unite in Love on the National Mall Aug. 12. More than a thousand people gathered to overwhelm the voices of hate, exclusion and division and live their faith out loud. "There is no one," the bishop said, "exempt from this work of repentance, healing, dismantling or working to overcome racism."

"Love is bigger than our individual interests, love is bigger than what we're comfortable with, and love is enough." – Christie Latona, BWC Director of Connectional Ministries

For the full story, visit: bwcumc.org/unitedtolove

White supremacy "was the loom upon which the fabric of our nation was woven. ... We need a new garment. We serve a God who is not afraid of unraveling." – Rev. Hannah Adair Bonner, UM pastor and advocate



"With our lips we proclaim obedience, but with our actions we demonstrate betrayal. When anyone believes themselves to be superior to others, they betray God; when anyone believes the color of their skin means God favors them over skin of a different hue, they betray God; when anyone passively benefits from racist and discriminatory policies, practices and programs, they betray God; when anyone silently witnesses the mistreatment of others created in the image and likeness of God based on racist, sexist, xenophobic and other categories of designed difference, they betray God. ... There is no race but the human race." – Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

"As they unite the right, we must unite the righteous." – David McCallister Wilson, President of Wesley Theological Seminary

Change Makers seek to answer community questions

By Beth Ludlum*

“ You just might be God’s answer to the question your community is asking.”

This sentiment, articulated by a ministry partner in London, captured one impulse that drives the Change Maker’s Project. Launched this summer, the Change Makers Project supports young adults in hearing God’s call to innovative ministry through mentoring, missional immersions, entrepreneurial community engagement, and vocational conversations.

This year, 22 diverse young adults are engaged from three geographic regions: Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Western Maryland. The Change Makers are accompanied by eight mentors, all ordained Elders in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, whose role is to foster theological reflection, spiritual growth, and vocational discernment. Each cohort had initial gatherings in May and June, and the cohorts began the learning journey with a trip together to London in July 2018.

During the London Learning Lab, the Change Makers were introduced to diverse forms of Christian social innovation in a post-Christian society. By hearing stories, interacting with social entrepreneurs, and

experiencing projects firsthand, they gained inspiration and insight on the innovative process.

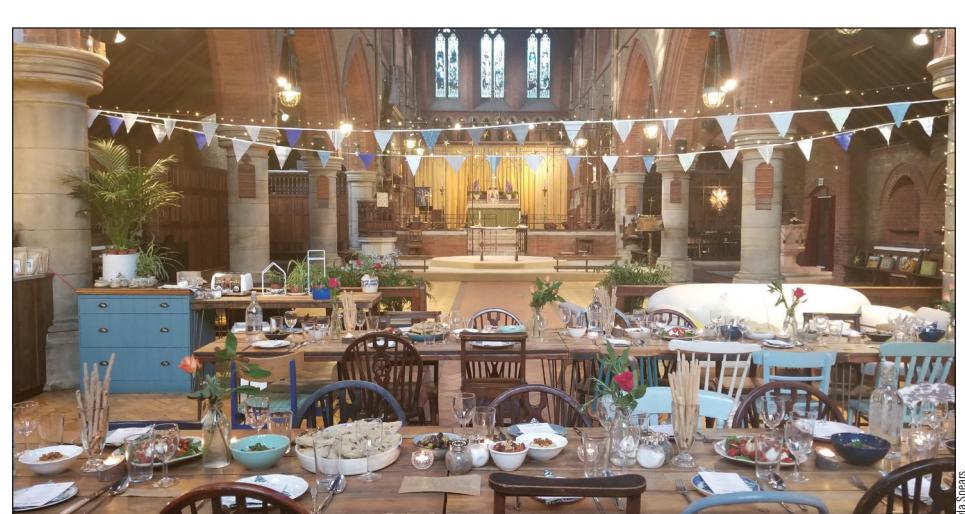
One day was spent with an intentional Christian community that has launched a café, learning garden and refugee welcome projects with their neighbors. On another day, the Change Makers heard and reflected theologically on historical spaces and artistic exhibitions throughout the city. Most important of all, however, were the conversations — with Christian social entrepreneurs at all stages of dreaming, creating and launching diverse projects and ministries, and with each other.

As one Change Maker later reflected, “I am feeling refreshed and energized by all the connections, stories and experiences. My mind is racing with the possibilities for holistic Christian community and what it means to live out faith every day in creative ways, centered in my story and the story of my community.”

The Learning Lab was designed and facilitated by Matryoshka House, a London-based group of Christian social innovators who have been intentionally inviting people from all faith backgrounds and of no faith background to try to do good together for their communities and the world.

A few Change Makers who were not able to attend the London Learning Lab will travel to San Antonio for a similar experience at the end of September.

The Change Makers will journey together for the next nine months. Individually, they are following a curriculum, designed in conjunction with the Matryoshka House team, that helps them think through the



At Earlsfield, some of the Change Makers learned about a community of people – 7 families – that work together and support each other. One family owns a café in a church which is where they met and later had a feast with locally sourced lamb, freshly harvested veggies, and more.

people, resources and ideas that will help to form and launch a social/ministry project in their communities.

The geographic cohorts meet regularly to work through ideas and with each other for support and accountability. Each Change Maker is also accompanied by a spiritual mentor, who journeys with the young adult through questions of faith and faithfulness, vocational discernment, and spiritual impact on the world.

Wesley Theological Seminary and the Baltimore-Washington Conference arrange full Change Maker Project gatherings and create resources as additional needs are identified.

The formal process will conclude with a Missional Entrepreneurship Week, May 18-25, 2019, an experience led by experienced entrepreneurs and business experts. During that week, Change Makers will work with their research, prototypes, and tested ideas to create a sustainable ministry plan that will enable them to launch their project.

The Missional Entrepreneurship Week concludes with an opportunity to pitch their idea to investors who may pledge financial support, mentoring, connections, or other resources. More information will be published in the spring about the Pitch and Pledge event; clergy and laity are encouraged to attend and support the young adult entrepreneurs.

The CMP is a collaborative project of InspireDC, Wesley Theological Seminary, and the Baltimore-Washington Conference, generously supported by a Young Clergy Initiative grant through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church.

To learn more about the Change Makers and to follow their adventure, visit [www.thechangemakersproject.com](http://thechangemakersproject.com).



While in London, Change Makers experienced a “City Hack” that involved “exegeting the city.” The activity’s goal was to help participants see how the city’s story and the Gospel story overlap.

*The Rev. Beth Ludlum is an ordained Elder in the BWC, and serves as Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at Wesley Theological Seminary.

'What we do at camp has an exponential impact'

By CHRIS SCHLIECKERT*

I HAVE BEEN TO approximately 150 weeks of summer camp as a staff person. I have been a dishwasher, a lifeguard, a counselor, a wilderness guide, an assistant director, and director. But this year I had a new role: parent of a summer camper. My oldest daughter, Anna, was finally old enough to attend her first overnight camp, a half-week Mini Camp at Manidokan.

I was able to experience camp in a whole new way: through the eyes of a parent. My wife and I got the reminder e-mails that the health form wasn't complete (until a few days before camp), helped pack her bags, talked her through her nervousness about being away from home for the first time, wondered how she would sleep without us tucking her in, worried that we hadn't heard anything from camp (even though I am the one who always tells parents "no news is good news" from camp), and refreshed the camp Facebook page constantly to look for photos.

I was also able to see the impact her three days of camp had on her. I heard her recite the story of Moses (this year's theme), sing camp songs insistently for weeks, tell me

about all the friends she had made and beg me to set up play dates with them across the state, see how proud she was to do the Flying Squirrel, and see a new level of confidence in her. Her excitement was just the same after a week of day camp at Harmison and West River.

One of the frustrating things about working at camp is that we often don't know the true impact we have on the campers because we only get to see them for a week. We hope they return for several summers and we get a better glimpse at the person they are becoming. When we are really fortunate, they become summer staff for a season or two and we journey with them as they become a young adult.

As a parent of a camper now, I was able to see in a new way how those precious weeks at summer camp change the trajectory of a child's life and faith. Camp is a sticky experience (sometimes literally). Because it is an immersive and set-apart experience, the lessons learned at camp about self, others and faith have a staying power few other settings for youth provide.

I believe what we do at camp has an exponential impact on the world. This summer, 1,400 young people came to camp. While here, they experienced the



love of God, engaged in authentic Christian community, and were called to put their faith into action to transform the world in Jesus's name. Now those campers have returned to their homes, churches, and

schools throughout our Conference, energized to spread the love, community and transformation they experienced at camp.

Anna spent her whole summer in various programs and camps, ranging from ice skating, to art, to environmental education, but I know the time she spent at Harmison, Manidokan, and West River will have the greatest and most long-term influence on her life.

I am grateful for the support the Baltimore-Washington Conference gives our Retreat and Camping Ministries. A unique oversight structure, strategic financial support, and strong ministry leadership has nurtured a relationship between us that has become the healthiest across our United Methodist connection. In addition to this support, more than 250 volunteers and 95 staff were involved in camp leadership this summer. It is because of this commitment to our young people through the Retreat and Camping Ministry that I know my daughters will be stronger, more confident, more connected to community, and more committed to their faith because of the time they spend at camp.

*Chris Schlieckert is Director of Retreat and Camping Ministries for the BWC.

