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UMC Connection

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world • www.bwcumc.org • Volume 28, Issue 5 • May 2017



Courtesy of Chris Schickel

Campers and staff spend time in worship at Camp Manidokan, one of three retreat and camping facilities in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Retreat and Camping Ministry continues to grow in the BWC (see story below).

Retreat and Camping ministry makes disciples

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff



THE MISSION of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. One place that is happening – a lot – in the Baltimore-Washington Conference is the Retreat and Camping Ministries (RCM) area.

For the fifth year in a row, RCM showed an increase in both its residential camping program and Day Camp initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

And the good news continued in the number of retreat guests served. In 2015, 12,931 people attended retreats. In 2016, that number rose 21.5 percent, to 15,719. Leading the way was Camp Harmison, which saw its number of retreatants skyrocket 74 percent. Manidokan saw an increase of 20 percent.

More campers and retreat guests equals more opportunity to make disciples, said Andy Thornton,

RCM Director and Director at the West River Camp and Retreat Center. “Camp gives a young person the chance to be outside and away from the many distractions they see every day,” said Thornton. “At camp, caring adult counselors and mentors come alongside campers, helping them think through decisions and experiences in a way that will prepare them for their future.”

The impact on leadership, both clergy and laity, that RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.

“When it’s working well,” Thornton said, “it’s not just camping alone that does that. It’s camping, and it’s also the local church, it’s ROCK, it’s all those pieces that come together that can provide great leadership opportunities.”

In fact, 13 former staffers are currently serving as ordained clergy or are in seminary, he said. There are another 10 who have been on summer staffs who are serving in ministry as lay people.

Thornton said that RCM has been blessed over the years to have strong partnerships with a variety of other

See Camping, page 12

Consecration of gay bishop against church law

By LINDA BLOOM*

THE CONSECRATION of a gay bishop violates church law, the top court of The United Methodist Church has ruled.

However, the bishop “remains in good standing,” the Judicial Council said in Decision 1341, until an administrative or judicial process is completed.

“Under the long-standing principle of legality, no individual member or entity may violate, ignore or negate church law,” said the decision, made public April 28. “It is not lawful for the college of bishops of any jurisdictional or central conference to consecrate a self-avowed practicing homosexual bishop.”

Officials in the U.S. Western Jurisdiction consecrated the Rev.

Karen Oliveto as a bishop on July 16, 2016.

Based in the Denver area, she is the episcopal leader of the Mountain Sky Area, which encompasses Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming and one church in Idaho.

A petition from the South Central Jurisdiction to the Judicial Council raised four questions about the legality of that election. Judicial Council claimed jurisdiction to review its petition “only with respect to the consecration of an openly homosexual bishop” and said the rest of the petition, related to nomination, election and assignment, “is improper.” The vote on the decision was 6-3.

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling of the



Bishop Karen Oliveto

Courtesy Page, The Montana Standard

See Judicial Council, page 12

Pastor appears on Grammy-winning album

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

WHAT INSPIRES THE inspiring? For Chance the Rapper, it’s the preaching of a United Methodist pastor in West Virginia.

In 2016, Chancellor Johnathan Bennett, who is known professionally as Chance the Rapper, released his mixtape “Coloring Book,” which was streamed 57.3 million times the first week it was released. He went on to win three Grammy awards, including Best Rap Album.

On Coloring Book is the song “How Great.” Two minutes and 44 seconds into the song, before Bennett

begins to rap, one hears the voice of the Rev. Rudy Bropleh preaching at Asbury UMC in Shepherdstown, W.Va.

“The first is that God is better than the world’s best thing. God is better than the best things the world has to offer.”

Bropleh’s sermon from 2013, was on YouTube. He’s not sure how the rapper heard it.

It was Bropleh’s daughter Randa, who is a student at Towson University, who alerted him. She was listening to Coloring Book and recognized her father’s voice.

“I thought she was tripping,” Bropleh said.

A short while later, one of the students Bropleh teaches

See Rap, page 11

'Lead Like a Woman' challenges women to new paths

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff



CANDICE POTTS STOOD before a room of lay and clergy women from the Baltimore-Washington Conference wearing an intricate



Candice Potts offers the song, "I Can Only Imagine," during the recent Lead Like a Woman conference near Baltimore.

blue rhinestone necklace that caught the light of the hotel ballroom. "Can we have a song?" asked Bishop LaTrelle Easterling as she prepared to preach.

Potts tilted her head back, and her voice filled the room: "I can only imagine," she sang.

The words were a defining mantra for those gathered April 21-22 for the Lead Like a Woman Conference. The event, explained its organizer, Jo Chesson of the BWC Vibrant Communities Ministries, was to provide a setting, a challenge, a path for growth, an opportunity for conversations, and a time-apart for renewal and transformation.

The women began to imagine.

Individually and in small groups, they explored their own styles of leadership within their own church contexts. The feminist theologian and Old Testament scholar, the Rev. Dr. Renita Weems, and

corporate coach pioneer Jane Creswell, unpacked their respective wisdom.

Weems began by capturing the women's attention. "Racism," she said, "is a sin. But sexism is just naughty.

"We're not outraged by it," she said. "We're not angry about the oppression

of women. It's unfortunate it doesn't get our hackles up," she said. "What does it continue to cost us to live in a society that questions a woman's right to lead?" she asked.

She encouraged those present to stop going to church "to get along" and to be willing to be outraged, to put aside the luxury of fragility and complacency and confront "a church and a culture that still penalizes women for being women."

If you're going to do the work of equality and justice "you have to be prepared to be challenged and to challenge," she said.

In order to do this, she encouraged the woman to more deeply explore the divine feminine and to listen for the presence and voice of God.

"How will you know it's God's voice within you?" she asked. "It will sound strangely like your own."

As Weems delivered the theological and

spiritual foundation for women's leadership, Creswell delivered practical insights into the leadership of women

Creswell, who invented the role of Organization Coach and is the founder of IBM Coaches Network, has always seen herself as a missionary to the business world.

As a high-ranking executive at IBM, she drew upon her professional experiences to help define what it means to be a "Jesus-hearted leader," drawing on the traits of confidence, authenticity, resilience and soul-care.

She encouraged those present to put aside their "little girl behaviors" that can limit their effectiveness.

As little girls, she said, women are taught things like "everyone must be included in everything, rules must always be followed, conflict must be avoided and your work should speak for itself."

She led the women through a process that allowed them to identify their high-performance patterns and create a plan that builds on their strengths as leaders.

After the day-and-a-half of learning, Bishop Easterling asked women to imagine themselves in the gathering's guiding passage of Scripture from Romans 10:15, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of messengers who bring good news."

Standing before an altar that held stiletto heels, camping boots, and panther-print shoes, she called on women to embrace their uniqueness and all they were created to be, and "give their hallelujahs to God."

"So often we are told to reject our God-given nature," she said. "We have

been made to believe that we are the lesser sex."

But God uses the feet of reconcilers and restorers and those whose hearts burn with passion and have the desire to "serve, and to save, and to set free," said Bishop Easterling, who pointed out how God called forth the feet of Miriam, Deborah, Hulda, Ruth, Esther, Elizabeth, Mary, Rachel, Hagar, Harriet, Sojourner, Anna Howard Shaw, Susanna, Joaquina, and Leontine.

"Is God using your feet?" she asked. "Do you believe that your feet are God's feet?"

"These feet, your feet, the feet that God gave you are beautiful because you speak life, and liberty and victory and hope and promise and purpose into God's world," the bishop said. "And with those feet, I want you to preach like a woman; with those feet, I want you to dance like woman; with those feet, I want you to sing like a woman; with those feet, I want you to teach ... baptize ... minister ... serve ... and pray. With those feet, I want you to lead like a woman."



The Rev. Dawn Hand, kneeling, washes the feet of the Rev. Johnnie Cogman.

EVENTS AND NOTES

2017 Annual Conference

May 31- June 1

Wardman Park Marriott Hotel,
Washington, D.C.

Clergy and lay members will gather for worship and holy conferencing at the 233rd session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. The event will be live streamed. For more information, visit www.bwcmc.org/events/annual-conference.

Mission u

July 28-30

Bethesda Marriott Hotel

Come join the Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Women for Spiritual Growth and to expand your knowledge and concepts of mission. Studies are: Living as a Covenant Community, Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action, and Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church in the United States. Registration and refund deadline: July 11. bwcmc.org/event/945502-2017-07-28-mission-u/

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Special Session of General Conference

February 23-26

St. Louis, Mo.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops has called a Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church to be held Feb. 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Mo. The purpose of the Special Session will be limited to receiving and acting on a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.

UMConnection

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1,500 United Methodists to gather for 233rd annual session

LAY AND CLERGY members from 628 United Methodist churches will gather at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, May 31, through Friday, June 2, for the 233rd session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

As a stewardship measure, no Pre-Conference Session was held this year. The information members will be voting on is in this 8-page supplement. An online forum for questions is available at <http://www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/qa-2017-annual-conference>.

This year, BWC members will join United Methodists around the world in voting yes or no (with no revisions) on five amendments to the United Methodist Constitution. (The current Constitution is on pages 25-44 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.)

Members will also vote to adopt the BWC's 2018 proposed \$18.5 million budget. They will also consider a drop in the benevolence factor, which is used to determine apportionment payments. The Council on Finance and Administration's proposal calls for a small drop in the benevolence factor from 17.75 percent in 2017 to 17.725

percent in 2018.

In addition, members will consider four resolutions on:

- Revising the conference moving policy for retirees;
- Avoiding the purchase of Hewlett Packard Products;
- Expanding the BWC's socially responsible investing screens; and
- Supporting the Religious Coalition on Reproductive Choice.

Videos about these resolutions, the Constitutional Amendments and the budget are online. Visit <http://www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/session-documents>.

The Clergy Session and the Laity Session will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 31. Opening worship, which will include an address by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, the resident bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, will be that evening from 7 to 9 p.m.

Additional information on the conference session can be found at bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference or on the new BWC Session app (see page S2 for more information).

IN THIS SPECIAL SECTION

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Resolution: Support for RCRC

Conference members submitted four resolutions for consideration by the body. These resolutions will be debated on during the plenary session.

Support for the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: General Conference 2016 decided to withdraw membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) based on misinformation about and a misunderstanding of RCRC's work. The Baltimore-Washington Conference is committed to the reproductive health of women and girls, and this resolution seeks to better equip us for that work by reconnecting us to RCRC.

Submitted by: Rev. Shannon Sullivan, Presbury United Methodist Church, Edgewood, MD; The Baltimore-Washington Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action

Resolution:

The United Methodist Church was a founding member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) in 1973, and the General Board of Church and Society was a member of the Religious Coalition until General Conference 2016. Nevertheless, several United Methodist annual conferences voted on their own last year to join RCRC, choosing to continue to support RCRC's important work in spite of the misunderstandings that surfaced at General Conference 2016 leading to the vote to withdraw UMC membership. These annual conferences now join with numerous regional and national organizations as members, including the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, eleven other Protestant denominations, Unitarian Universalism, Reform and Conservative Judaism, among others.

The Coalition member organizations of RCRC hold a wide variety of views regarding policies relating to specific issues of reproductive choice such as when life and personhood begins but, nevertheless, share common religious values. Many have official pro-choice policies, and are committed to working together to ensure reproductive choice for all persons through the moral power of religious communities. The Religious Coalition supports the right of all persons to have access to a wide range of reproductive health services including sexuality education, family planning services, contraception, abortion services, affordable and quality health and child care. The Religious Coalition's All Options Clergy Counseling program trains clergy of many faiths to assist women in discerning the course of action that they believe is best in a case of unintended pregnancy. Internationally, RCRC is an accredited nongovernmental organization with the United Nations Department of Public Information which supports international family planning services in such areas as South Africa where the Coalition works with churches on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Overall, the Coalition's efforts help counter attempts to enact restrictive legislation that would impose specific religious views about abortion and reproductive health on persons of all faiths.

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church go on record in support of the work of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference become a member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Effective Date:

Co-Sponsors: Dumbarton United Methodist Church

On March 4, the Connectional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted concurrence with this resolution.

Q&A

Support for the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Q: How does the United Methodist stance on abortion differ from that of RCRC?

A: Regardless of differences of opinion on the issue of abortion, both RCRC and the UMC have the same stance (which the UMW and GBCS pointed out in their letter removing membership) on the "diminishment of high abortion rates." RCRC works to diminish the rate of abortion through comprehensive sexuality education, support for adoption, family planning, and affordable health care services. When arguing that RCRC is incompatible with a United Methodist understanding of abortion, the fact that RCRC includes "regardless of circumstance" and the Social Principles do not, is highlighted. However, even our own Social Principles do not encourage us to support laws limiting abortion access, but rather focuses on individual moral decision-making in the case of abortion. RCRC advocates for safe, legal abortion services, regardless of income or circumstance. The United Methodist Social Principles oppose abortion in the case of using it as birth control, reject it as a means of gender selection and eugenics, and late term abortion except in the case the pregnancy is not viable or the mother's life is in danger. The Social Principles recognize that in some cases the "tragic conflicts of life" justify abortion.

Q: Which groups did the General Conference say should remove their support from RCRC? Was it the entire denomination?

A: It was not the entire denomination. It was specific to GBCS and the UMW which were members of RCRC on behalf of the denomination.

Q: If we voted for this, would we be in opposition to General Conference?

A: General Conference did not prohibit annual conferences from joining RCRC individually in the above legislation.

Q: What other annual conferences have chosen to support the Religious Coalition for Reproductive choice?

A: Oregon-Idaho, California-Nevada, New England, New York, Pacific Northwest, and Rocky Mountain Annual Conferences.

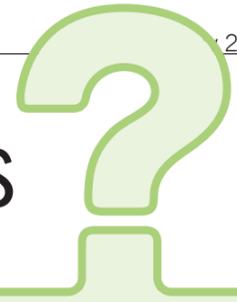
Q: Would there be a financial cost to supporting RCRC?

A: No.

Have a question, send it to mлаuber@bwcumc.org

BRING THIS SPECIAL SECTION WITH YOU TO THE SESSION

Resolution: Avoid purchase of HP products



Avoid Purchase of Hewlett Packard Products

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Budget Implications: None

Rationale: Hewlett Packard companies (HP) is complicit in human rights violations by developing systems used by the Israeli military to racially profile and control the movement of Palestinians. This resolution calls for United Methodists in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference to boycott HP until this company ends its human rights abuses.

Submitted by: Rev. Shannon Sullivan, Presbury United Methodist Church, Edgewood, MD and the Baltimore-Washington Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action

Resolution:

Palestinians are forced to use Israeli controlled checkpoints to move within their own designated homeland, also known as the West Bank. Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), one of the family of Hewlett Packard companies (HP), is responsible for developing, integrating and maintaining the biometric system used by the Israeli military to control movement, and HPE profits from developing systems to racially profile and control the movement of Palestinians, and as such is complicit in a breach of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

HP operates a development center in Beithar Illit, an illegal Israeli-only settlement city in the occupied West Bank built on land confiscated from the Palestinian villages of Wadi Fukin, Nahhalin, and Husan, and, as an employer in the settlement, HP profits from stolen land and contributes to the tax base and job opportunities that strengthen the settlement (<http://investigate.afsc.org/company/hp-inc-and-hewlett-packard-enterprise>). HP provides services and technologies to two of the other biggest Israeli-only, illegal West Bank settlements Modi'in Ilit and Ariel, and participated in the "Smart City" project in Ariel, providing a storage system for the settlement's municipality (<http://investigate.afsc.org/company/hp-inc-and-hewlett-packard-enterprise>).

Hewlett Packard Company recently split into two companies, HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), with more spin-offs projected and the various HP companies share certain logistical infrastructure, governance, supply chains, and technologies with one another, and they all draw on the HP brand's long history of close connections with the Israeli military and occupation (http://usepr.org/hp2016woa_pr/).

The United Methodist Church has specifically and repeatedly condemned both the military occupation and the construction of Israeli-only settlements in the West Bank (2016 United Methodist Book of Resolutions #6111, p. 602-606). United Methodists have participated in shareholder engagement with HP for more than eight years and have asked them to end their involvement with the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands (https://www.kairosresponse.org/uploads/UM_CorpEngagement_2004-11.pdf). There has been no meaningful progress with HP and no indication of any willingness to change their involvement in the occupation of foreign lands or the prison industrial complex, (https://www.kairosresponse.org/uploads/UM_CorpEngagement_2004-11.pdf).

More than 3,000 Palestinian Christians have implored Christians everywhere to put actions behind their words to end Israel's occupation of Palestinian land (<http://www.kairopalestine.ps/index.php/about-us/kairos-palestine-document>). The United Methodist General Conference asks all companies that profit from and/or support settlements through their business activities to examine these activities and stop any business transactions that contribute to violations of international law, promote systemic discrimination or otherwise support ongoing military occupation (2016 United Methodist Book of Resolutions #6111, p. 605).

Nonviolent tools for education and ethical consumption are central to a living expression of discipleship, with Methodists participating in boycotts as an effective moral economic tool long used by people of conscience including such boycotts as Taco Bell and Mt. Olive Pickle Company, Inc to support farm workers; Nestle to challenge marketing of infant formula; and USA Today to support newspaper workers in Detroit.

The Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, Quaker Friends Fiduciary, Alliance of Baptists and Unitarian Universalists have divested from HP (<http://www.fosna.org/free-your-church-hp>). An international coalition of organizations and groups have come together to challenge HP's complicity in human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory and to ask the company to withdraw from such contracts and stop profiting from the Israeli occupation (<https://www.afsc.org/resource/campaign-boycott-hp>).

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2017 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference calls on all boards and agencies, conference offices, local congregations, campus ministries, and individual United Methodists to refrain from purchasing HP products until this company ends its involvement with the Israeli occupation and the aforementioned human rights abuses.

Effective Date:

Co-Sponsors: Dumbarton United Methodist Church

On March 4, the Connectional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted concurrence with this resolution.

Q&A

Avoid Purchase of Hewlett Packard Products

Q: Why are Motorola and Caterpillar not included in this resolution?

A: The HP boycott came about because of an international coalition of secular and religious organizations led by the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights and the Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA). HP makes consumer products, so it makes sense to boycott where we can control how we spend our money. The other two, Caterpillar and Motorola Solutions, may be best reached through divestment.

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Q&A

Expanding Baltimore-Washington's Socially Responsible Investment Screens

Q: Why were these three companies, Motorola, Caterpillar and Hewlett Packard, singled out?

A: The United Methodist Church has a long history of corporate engagement with these three companies, which you can see in detail here: https://www.kairosresponse.org/corporate_engagement_04-11.html. One of the arguments against divestment is that we can do more at the table with these companies to change their policy than we can by leaving. However, the timeline of engagement over the past 12 years for Caterpillar, nine years for HP, and 11 for Motorola, show that engagement has failed. These companies continually decline shareholder resolutions, invitations to dialogues and direct meetings, and, when they do hold such, they often refuse to answer questions directly.

Q: Where do you set the threshold for participating in the occupation of Palestinian land? What about, for example, companies that provide the soldiers' food?

A: The UMC has declared that we not invest in companies related to alcohol, tobacco, weapons, gambling, pornography, and private prisons, which Wespath currently determines by setting a threshold of 10 percent of a company's core business. (For more information, see Wespath's explanation here: http://www.wespath.com/investment_philosophy/ethical-exclusions/.) However, major international corporations like Motorola, Caterpillar and Hewlett Packard will most likely never have more than 10 percent of their core business involved in illegal settlements. Yet, even tearing up one olive tree, crushing one house or killing one person are good enough reasons not to invest or purchase their products as Christians, particularly in light of repeated shareholder engagement that has gone nowhere (see the previous answer). There is no easy answer to this question about a threshold, but I think it comes after listening to Palestinian Christians and peace activists about particular companies and seeing if engagement as shareholders can make a difference. If it cannot, as we have seen in the case with Motorola, Caterpillar and Hewlett Packard (as well as Israeli banks and one construction company that Wespath has already divested from), then we would pursue divestment.

Q: What socially responsible screens do the Baltimore-Washington Conference and the Mid-Atlantic Foundation currently use? How are these different than the ones used by Wespath Equity Social Values Plus Fund?

A: The SRI currently used by the Mid-Atlantic Foundation is the same used by Wespath. But Wespath has additional SRIs that have even stronger "filters," like the Equity Social Values Plus Fund. See more information about ESVPV here: http://www.wespath.com/funds_services/our_funds/investment_performance/esvpv/.

Q: Would the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula Delaware annual conferences need to approve this before the Foundation acted on it?

A: No. In the past, the Mid-Atlantic Foundation has said that separating our accounts from Eastern Pennsylvania's and Peninsula Delaware's is too difficult. In addition, we do not want to take away the authority of the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to determine its SRI. This legislation seeks to request the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to make the decision to divest on its own, knowing that divestment is at least one of the conference's wishes and that they have our support.

Q: Did General Conference pass a resolution encouraging divestment from these three companies?

A: Resolution 6111 in the UM Book of Resolutions, passed at the 2012 General Conference, encourages divestment (but does not require it) by way of condemning, not Israel, but rather illegal settlement activity. Read the resolution here: <https://umc-gbcs.org/resolutions/opposition-to-israeli-settlements-in-palestinian-land>

Have a question, send it to mлаuber@bwcumc.org

Resolution: Expand SRI screens

Expanding Baltimore-Washington's Socially Responsible Investment Screens

Budget Implications: none to the 2017 conference budget, but conference investments will be realigned if this resolution is approved

Rationale: The conference Divestment Working Group's report in 2015 urged the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference to better promote the use of socially responsible investment screens. This resolution seeks to strengthen our commitment to human rights by expanding those screens to exclude companies that violate human rights in the occupation of Palestine for the Mid-Atlantic Foundation and the conference Board of Pensions.

Submitted by: Rev. Shannon Sullivan, Presbury United Methodist Church, Edgewood, MD and the Baltimore-Washington Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action

Resolution: Palestinian Christians have implored Christians everywhere to put actions behind their words and end Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. Palestinian human rights are violated by companies that sustain illegal settlements, segregated roads, checkpoints, the separation wall, home demolitions, and other realities of the occupation. In December 2016, the United Nations passed U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemns Israeli settlement expansion in Palestinian territories. The Wespath Equity Social Values Plus Fund has removed Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard because the fund uses stronger human rights screens (http://www.wespath.org/assets/1/7/investment_policy.pdf). Yet, the Baltimore-Washington Conference continues to hold stock in these companies.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church established a Divestment Working Group that reported to the Annual Conference in 2015 with recommendations concerning the promotion of socially responsible investing (SRI) in local congregations and at the conference level. Yet, their recommendations did not include any comments about specific investments in companies that profit from Israel's occupation of Palestine.

The Book of Discipline directs us to consider excluding companies from our investments if they fail to act responsibly (§ 717, The Book of Discipline). The United Methodist General Conference asks all companies that profit from and/or support settlements through their business activities to examine these activities and stop any business transactions that contribute to violations of international law, promote systemic discrimination or otherwise support ongoing military occupation (2016 United Methodist Book of Resolutions #6111, p. 605). Institutions including Wespath and individual annual conferences have engaged Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard on their involvement in Israel's occupation of Palestine for a decade (https://www.kairosresponse.org/corporate_engagement_04-11.html), but have seen little change.

In the past, one of the concerns the Mid-Atlantic Foundation shared (on the floor of annual conference and also to the working group on divestment) was that the Baltimore-Washington Conference's investments cannot easily be separated out from Eastern Pennsylvania's or Peninsula Delaware's. This resolution asks that the Mid-Atlantic Foundation make the prophetic decision to divest the funds from all three annual conferences.

Divestment, as a non-violent moral action, seeks to strengthen the Church's support of securing peace for the peoples of Israel and Palestine. The church should lead with prophetic action by publicly and promptly aligning its investments with long-standing church policies opposing the Israeli occupation.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church requests the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to end our financial involvement in Israel's occupation by divesting from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard, which are companies that sustain the occupation. with whom we have repeatedly engaged with on this issue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Baltimore-Washington Conference encourages the socially-responsible investment (SRI) screens used by the Baltimore-Washington Conference Board of Pensions and the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to use stronger human rights screens, as the Wespath Equity Social Values Plus Fund does.

Effective Date:

Co-Sponsors: Dumbarton United Methodist Church

On March 4, the Connectional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted non-concurrence with this resolution.

HOW TO: the BWC APP

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Resolution: Amend moving policy

Resolution to Amend the Conference Moving Policy

Financial Implications: Approval of this resolution will require a small increase to the Moving Expense line item in the Conference budget.

Rationale: This resolution amends the conference moving policy to cover the moving arrangements and expenses for retiring pastors in the same manner as active clergy. As the average cost for conference moves has decreased in recent years, retiring clergy have been burdened with paying increased costs as they move into retirement. This resolution also clarifies and cleans up the language of the original policy.

Submitted by: Rev. Kenneth B. Hawes (Conference Moving Coordinator)

¶5500. Moving Committee.—

1. The Moving Committee shall:
 - a. Review the Conference Moving Policy and make recommendations, as needed, to the Conference Session.
 - b. Request bids from moving companies and communicate that information, as available, to the Conference Treasurer.
 - c. Establish with the Cabinet, each January, a moving time (normally the last two weeks of June.)
 - d. Select, engage, and pay professional moving companies, and/or reimburse pastors for the Conference moves described below:
 - (1) Conference Members in full connection, Provisional Members under appointment, Associate Members under appointment, and Local Pastors under appointment.
 - (2) Pastors transferring into the Conference [see ¶5500.7]
 - (3) Conference Members in full connection returning from Honorable Location. [see ¶5500.7]
 - (4) Pastors under *1996 Discipline* ¶337.1 [¶5500.7]
 - (5) Retiring pastors moving within the conference boundaries upon retirement OR being appointed to serve a conference pastorate.
 - (i) Arrangements, limits and costs for retiring pastors moving within the conference boundaries are the same as for active clergy.
 - (ii) Retiring pastors moving beyond the conference boundaries have the option of requesting that the committee make their arrangements, or making their own arrangements as per ¶5500.10. In either case;
 - (iii) For retiring pastors moving outside the conference boundaries, the average cost of professional moves for the previous year is the limit of conference coverage for these moves.
 - (iv) Moving arrangements and costs for retired pastors are only covered for their move into the retirement.
 - (6) Conference Members in full connection, Provisional Members, Associate Members, and Local Pastors who have been granted disability status. This shall apply only to their first move within or outside the Conference boundaries. [see ¶5500.7]
 - (7) Provisional Members who are discontinued and who, at the time of discontinuance are serving a local church full-time.
 - (8) Conference Members in full connection who are placed on Administrative Location. This shall apply only to their first move.
 - (9) Conference Members who are going to an Extension Ministry, provided they are being employed by the Conference, and/or coming from Conference employment.
 - (10) Spouse and/or family of an active pastor who dies while serving in an appointment. [see ¶5500.7]
 - (11) Part Time Local Pastors enrolled in an accredited Seminary for a minimum of six semester hours, or enrolled in the Student Pastor Track Program, provided they are recommended by the Cabinet. The Conference responsibility shall not exceed the average cost of professional moves for the previous year.
 - (12) Conference members in full connection who are appointed to attend school. This shall apply only to the first move within or outside the Conference boundaries, up to the dollar limit of the Conference Moving Policy. [see ¶5500.7]
2. Upon recommendation of the Cabinet, in consideration for past service, the Committee shall be responsible for arranging and paying for the moves of:
 - a. Conference Members in full connection, Provisional Members, Associate Members, and Pastors placed on Leave Of Absence or Involuntary Location. This shall apply only to the first move. [see ¶5500.7]
 - b. Local Pastors who are discontinued. [see ¶5500.7]
 - c. Pastors who withdraw from the Conference, not to exceed \$500.00.
3. The Committee shall have no responsibility for:
 - a. Conference Members in full connection who transfer out of the Conference.
 - b. Conference Members in full connection who take Honorable Location.
 - c. Pastors and/or other clergy persons who move within the parish with no change of appointment. (Exceptions only by cabinet authorization.)
 - d. Those going to, or returning from an Extension Ministry as a non-conference employee.
4. The Policies and Procedures of the Committee are as follows:
 - a. The committee will request that the
 - (1) Cabinet provide a list of all moves.
 - (2) Conference Board of Pensions and the Cabinet provide a list of all retirements and disability leaves.
 - b. In accordance with its responsibilities as outlined in ¶5500.1.d above, the Committee shall determine the move schedule, establish the specific moving date for each move, and assign the moves to an authorized moving company.
 - c. The Committee will inform the Pastor to be moved, the moving company, the District Superintendent (where the move originates), and the PPRC chairperson (of the originating church), of the date, time and moving company.
 - d. The Committee will negotiate all unresolved damage claims with the moving company, provided such claims were presented in writing to both the moving company and the initiating District Coordinator, no later than (10) days following the move.
 - e. All moves shall originate from the primary residence with one allowable stop at the church office for unloading. Additional stops and/or storage are the responsibility and expense of the pastor.
 - f. The Committee shall receive an Evaluation report from each moving pastor concerning satisfaction with the move. This will be used in planning and fulfilling the committee's work for the next year.
5. The Conference, through the Committee, is financially responsible for:
 - a. The cost of the move up to 15,000 pounds. When a clergy couple each moves to a new appointment, the weight limit will be negotiated between the committee and the clergy spouses.
 - b. The cost of packing mirrors and large pictures only. The clergy family will obtain or arrange for all other packaging materials themselves.
 - c. Insurance coverage is set at \$3.50 per hundred pounds, for a maximum liability of \$52,500.
 - d. The expenses for the following items on two cars per family for interstate moves within the Conference boundaries:
 - (1) Excise/sales tax
 - (2) Title fee
 - (3) Inspection fee, but not repairs
 - (4) Tags
 - (5) Driver's license fee
 - (6) Personal property tax [West Virginia].—This provision shall apply to conference members in full connection under appointment, provisional members, associate members, retiring pastors, pastors going on Leave Of Absence, pastors who transfer into the conference, and the family of a pastor who dies during an appointment. This provision shall be carried out by reimbursement to the pastor(s)

Q&A

Resolution to Amend the Conference Moving Policy

Q: How many bids are sought from moving companies?

A: We currently contract with six moving companies. New prices are sought each year and an open bid process is conducted every 4-5 years. The last open bid was done in 2015 with six of nine bids accepted for contracts.

Q: Approximately how much money will it cost, in an average year, to provide moving costs to retiring pastors?

A: Just to clarify, we have always covered the moving costs of pastors entering retirement. This resolution changes the calculation for retiring pastors who remain within the conference boundaries from a dollar amount to a weight limit, just as active clergy are covered. It is difficult to estimate the additional cost because the number of retiring pastors who remain within the conference boundaries varies from year to year. We do not have the data available to determine the cost, but based on anecdotal evidence we expect the additional cost to be less than \$10,000.

Q: How much does the conference currently spend on moving?

A: Moving costs in 2016 were approximately \$185,000.

Have a question, send it to mлаuber@bwcumc.org

Offerings to help Youth, Victims of Domestic Violence

Two opportunities to give will occur during the Annual Conference Session.

1. During the opening worship, May 31, the offering will go to "Seeds of Security" (S.O.S). This domestic violence initiative is in support of men and women seeking refuge from abusive relationships or marriages. The decision to leave an abusive partner or spouse comes with great risk, from physical retaliation to homelessness. A major impediment to leaving is the financial means to seek shelter and security.
2. During the Ordination Service on June 1, an offering will be taken to bring scholarship help to youth who wish to attend ROCK but are financially unable to. ROCK, the annual youth retreat, will be held in Ocean City, Jan. 26 to 28, 2018. Some 5,000 teenagers and their counselors attend the life-changing event.

We want to hear from you!
Tweet us your thoughts & pictures during Annual Conference using **#bwcumc17**



Annual Conference Live Streaming is available online at <http://bwcumc.org>.

Resolution: Moving policy, continued

From page S4

- 103 only after receipts for the paid bills have been submitted to the Conference Treasurer. An exception
 104 shall be granted to students going to an appointment who shall be paid the monies necessary for the
 105 appropriate items upon proper presentation of the unpaid bills. All aspects of this provision shall
 106 be completed within six (6) months of the appointment and/or change of status. No claims shall be
 107 honored or considered after this six-month period has expired.
- 108 6. Due to the tax liability incurred by moves of less than 50 miles, active pastors who will move less than
 109 50 miles shall be provided with a tax liability allowance equal to 30% of the Conference financial liability
 110 for the move.
- 111 7. The Conference, through the Committee, shall be responsible for *reimbursement* of move expenses
 112 originating or locating outside of Conference boundaries. The moving pastor is responsible for arranging
 113 and paying for these moves. Reimbursement shall not exceed the average cost of conference moves by
 114 moving companies in the preceding year. Retiring pastors, however, may request that the Committee
 115 arrange their move. [Anyone mentioned in this Policy whose moving expenses are not the Conference's
 116 responsibility may ask the Committee to use its contracts with authorized movers to achieve for
 117 themselves the best available estimate.]
- 118 8. All moves shall be completed within six (6) months of the fixed date of the appointment and/or change of
 119 status. No claims shall be honored or considered after this six-month period has expired. (*After 6 months*
 120 *¶5500.3d applies.*)
- 121 9. Large bulky items such as trailers, boats, autos, or any other heavy non-household/office items adding
 122 weight and time to the move are not authorized by the Conference. Clergy families shall themselves
 123 transport pets, plants, and highly valued items that would require special packing. The Committee shall
 124 arrange with the moving companies to bill the clergy family directly for those services and/or materials
 125 above and beyond those specified.
- 126 10. Any clergy making unauthorized direct arrangements with a moving company shall forfeit his or her
 127 claim on Conference funds and responsibility for that move.
- 128 11. Clergy should contact the Committee through their District Moving Coordinator, if and when they have
 129 been confirmed for a new appointment.
- 130 12. District Superintendents should refer to or explain the Conference Moving Policy and Procedures to the
 131 clergy person as soon as a new appointment is arranged. District Superintendents should also notify the
 132 District Coordinators and the Conference Coordinator about all moves that need to be arranged outside the
 133 normal calendar of the appointment process as soon as they are confirmed.
- 134 13. All funding for the above provisions shall come from the Conference budget line item assigned for
 135 Pastors Moving Expenses. Moving bills are to be identified with the name of the pastor and sent to the
 136 Conference Treasurer, and a copy also sent to the pastor. The Conference Treasurer shall be authorized
 137 to pay the individual moving company directly on behalf of the pastor up to the maximum as defined in
 138 ¶5500.5.

139
 140
 141 On March 4, the Connectional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted concurrence with this
 142 resolution.

RECOMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The Commission on Equitable Compensation is recommending that the minimum salary for 2018 be increased 2%, or \$846.06, which will make the minimum salary \$43,148.82. The Commission is recommending for minimum housing remain unchanged at \$19,866.

Submitted by:

Rev. James Johnson, Chair, Commission on Equitable Compensation



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The photos will appear in a clergy photo directory.
 The laity are also welcome to have their portraits taken.

Room: Delaware A
 Wednesday 9 a.m.-2 p.m. & 5-7 p.m.
 Thursday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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FAQ

Every year, about one-third of the Lay Members to the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Session are new. A short guide to help familiarize everyone is online at <http://www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/annual-conference-primer/>

Here are some highlights:

The Baltimore-Washington Conference is led by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, who was elected as a bishop at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2016. Our conference has 628 churches or charges and approximately 160,000 members. Bishop Easterling presides over the Annual Conference Session but, as in the General Conference, does not vote.

The BWC has four regions, and each region has two districts, presided over by a district superintendent. Each local church and charge belongs to a district.

When you register, you are given a packet of materials, a name tag and a voting card that has a color-coded ribbon attached according to various categories. Lay members vote. Clergy vote. Guests do not. Any voter may speak from the floor to a motion, but no one person may speak more than twice on any given motion. The bishop controls who speaks, establishing that there can be three for and three against the motion before debate is cut off. Robert's Rules of Order are followed.

All clergy (Elders and Deacons) hold their membership in the Annual Conference, not in a local church. Deaconesses and diaconal ministers, both retired and active, are lay members of Annual Conference. The Book of Discipline requires an equal number of laity and clergy to be members of the Annual Conference Session. To be a voting member, a lay person must be elected by his or her local church through a nomination and voting process that is held at the annual Charge Conference.

The Charge Conference is to the local church what the Annual Conference Session is to the Conference; i.e., the annual business meeting. The laity are members of Annual Conference – not delegates. There are several “at-large” members to Annual Conference, who, by virtue of their district, conference or national positions, are also voting members of the Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference Session is presided over by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling. Other officers include the Conference Secretary (Cynthia Taylor), elected for a four-year term at the beginning of the quadrennium; the Conference Treasurer (Paul Eichelberger); the Conference Lay Leader (Delores Martin); and the Chancellor (Thomas Starnes). Under our rules, during debate, the bishop recognizes each person asking to speak, and allows three minutes, with no more than three speakers allowed to speak for, or three persons allowed to speak against a motion or amendment.

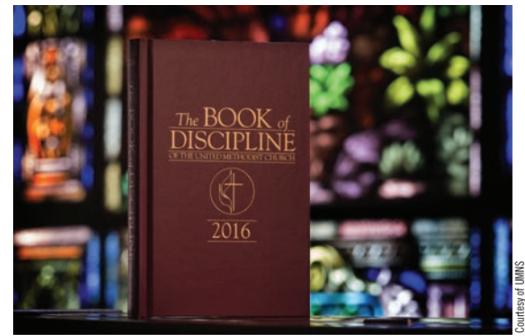
Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Members of the 2017 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Session will be voting on five constitutional amendments (see below).

To be ratified, a constitutional amendment first requires at least a two-thirds vote at General Conference, which happened in Portland, Ore., in May 2016. Then, it must win at least a two-thirds majority of the total voters at Annual Conference Sessions around the world (that means that every vote counts). The Council of Bishops will certify the results at its next meeting after the voting concludes.

During voting, there may be speeches made for or against the proposed amendment. However, no changes whatsoever may be made to the text, allowing every Annual Conference Session to vote on the same language.

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church is found on pages 25 – 44 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The Constitution was adopted in Chicago, Ill., on Nov. 11, 1966, by the General Conferences of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church.



Proposed Constitutional Amendment – I

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 746 Yes, 56 No (Calendar Item 121, DCA p. 2106). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

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 recognizes it is contrary to Scripture and to logic to say that God is male or female, as maleness and femaleness are characteristics of human bodies and cultures, not characteristics of the divine. 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.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – II

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 509 Yes, 242 No (Calendar Item 429, DCA p. 2212). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division One, ¶4, Article IV, amend by deletion and addition as follows:

After "all persons" delete "without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition". After "because of race, color, national origin," delete "status," and add "ability". At the end of the paragraph, add "nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 4 would read:

The United Methodist Church is part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, ability, or economic condition, nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – III

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 767 Yes, 22 No (Calendar Item 111, DCA pp. 2105). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, Article III, (2016 Book of Discipline, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, Article III) amend by addition as follows:

After the first sentence, add, "Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 34 would read:

The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its jurisdictional or central conference in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional or central conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the jurisdictional or central conference. The additional delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conferences may act as reserve delegates to the General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – IV

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 621 Yes, 15 No (Calendar Item 468, DCA p. 2217). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division Three, ¶ 46, Article I, amend by addition, as follows:

To the end of the paragraph, add "provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 46 would read:

The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – V

On May 17, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 715 Yes, 79 No (Calendar Item 446, DCA p. 2214). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division Three, ¶ 50, Article VI, amend by addition, as follows:

After the last paragraph, add "These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas."

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 50 would read:

The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined.

The jurisdictional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference.

These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.

District penny challenge

Bring your pennies & dollars to Annual Conference!

Jars will be placed in the Exhibit Hall for each district to collect your change & bills. Pennies are positive points and other coins & dollars are negative points. The district with the most points on Friday wins. Have some fun and put dimes and dollars in other district jars to deduct their points.



*All proceeds benefit Adrienne Terry Fund for Affordable Housing.

Narrative summary of the 2018 Proposed Budget

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

Benevolence Factor – Proposed 2018: 17.725%

The benevolence factor is the percentage churches are apportioned based on their operating expenditures less exclusions. The percentage for 2018 is .025% less than the percentage used in 2017 (17.75%).

Apportionment Collection Rate - Proposed 2018: 92.0%

The projected collection of the amount apportioned to churches in the 2018 Budget is 92.0%. There is no change from the 2017 budget.

REVENUE

Apportionments: \$14,260,361

A church's share of the local and global mission work and operating expenses of the Annual Conference as determined by the apportionment formula.

Grants: \$92,850

This represents grants given directly to the conference for ministry and mission. For example, General Church grants to operate the Episcopal Office and residence.

Event Registration: \$2,150,163

This includes Annual Conference registration, workshop registrations, Camping and Retreat Ministry registrations (majority of line item) and other conference events.

Publications: \$4,100

This includes sales or rentals of publications, DVDs, paid UMConnection subscriptions, and other materials.

Individual Gifts:

Gifts coming from individuals for specific programs. These are for the conference, specifically, rather than for ministries outside of the conference. No such gifts are anticipated in 2018.

Reimbursements: \$99,783

The conference receives reimbursements from denominational agencies for specific operating programs. The Mission Center tenant leases are also captured in this revenue category.

Other Income/Sources of Funds: \$1,826,879

Miscellaneous income or sources of funds, such as the use of funds held from previous years and funding from agency reserve funds. For example, Retiree Medical expenses (majority of line item) are 100% paid from the Board of Pension Reserves.

Interest: \$30,000

An estimate of the interest the conference will earn on operating funds in investment vehicles.

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE: \$ 18,464,136

EXPENSES

I. DISCIPLESHIP EXPENSES

Regional Ministry Teams: \$2,463,603

Funds to operate the ministries and administrative support of the Regions. The Regional Teams include:

- Southern Region (Annapolis and Washington East Districts)
- Baltimore Region (Baltimore Metro and Baltimore Suburban Districts)
- Washington Region (Greater Washington and Central Maryland Districts)
- Western Region (Frederick and Cumberland-Hagerstown Districts)

Discipleship Ministry Teams

Connectional Ministries: \$3,073,908

Funds to operate the ministries and administrative aspects of the Connectional Ministries and Congregation/Leadership Development Teams. Ministries funded by Connectional Ministries include Children, Youth, Young Adults, Campus Ministries, and Retreat and Camping ministries. Funds are also allocated for Discipleship Council and Connectional Table.

- Youth Ministries engage and support young disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Retreat and Camping Ministries provide opportunities for spiritual growth and formation for children and adults.
- Campus Ministries support staffing and programs on four area college campuses.
- Ministries funded by Congregation and Leadership Development include a focus on church growth and church leaders.

Focus on Missions & Advocacy

- Conference Mission and Social Justice Programs:** \$526,596
Through Grants to specific Social Justice Ministries such as Quality of Life Retreats, Appalachian Development, and UM Community Services the conference seeks to grow mission and ministry. This ministry area also includes funds for our advocacy partnership ministries in other conferences, such as Zimbabwe, South Korea, Latin America, and Eurasia. Funds are also devoted to the Hope for the City Initiative, Deaf Ministries, and Justice for Our Neighbors.
- General and Jurisdictional Apportionments:** \$3,571,610
The funds that the General Church and Northeast Jurisdiction request for ministry and programs from each conference. The conference celebrates its track record of paying 100% of these apportionments since 1998. General Church funds include:

World Service

To help our denomination to strengthen its evangelism efforts, stimulate church growth, expand Bible studies and enrich spiritual commitment. This fund allows us to share in a worldwide ministry, including support for missionaries.

Interdenominational Cooperation

This fund allows United Methodists to have an effective presence in the activities of ecumenical organizations.

Africa University

This fund supports the further development of the first private university for men and women in Africa.

Black College Fund

This fund represents the denomination's support of the operation and capital funding of historically black colleges and medical schools.

Ministerial Education Fund

This fund provides our church support for the recruitment and education of future pastors and bishops.

Episcopal Fund

This fund pays the salaries and benefits of active bishops in the denomination and supports retired bishops.

General Administration

This fund supports administrative areas of the church, such as the General Council on Finance and Administration, the General Conference session, and Archives and History.

Jurisdictional Administration

This fund supports mission and ministry throughout the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

Congregation & Leadership Development: \$0

Funds to operate Congregation and Leadership Development (CLD) Team can be found in Connectional Ministries.

Focus on Church Growth: \$1,190,651

- Grants to local churches and ministries to grow congregations and expand ministry in the community.
- Start new churches
- Latino/Hispanic Ministries
- Strengthening the Black Church
- Older Adult Ministry

Focus on Leaders: \$294,058

- The Discipleship Academy – Learning opportunities and training for all congregations with a focus to develop current and future leaders within the church.
- Discipleship Boards and Agencies – Includes funds for Board of Ordained Ministry and Ministerial Education Fund.

Total Discipleship Ministry Teams: \$8,656,823

TOTAL DISCIPLESHIP EXPENSES: \$11,120,426

II. STEWARDSHIP EXPENSES

Communications: \$655,114

The publications produced by this area are tools for implementing the ministries of the Conference, such as the UMConnection newspaper, the Web site and e-connection.

Operations: \$3,702,539

This area is responsible for overall operations of the conference including all conference infrastructures, facilities, IT, conference owned property, and relates to the Trustees and CFA.

Property Ministries

The Conference Trustees oversee all property owned by the conference, to include the Conference Mission Center, three Retreat and Camping facilities, the Episcopal Residence and the leased offices in Hagerstown and on Capitol Hill.

Archives and History

The conference provides support for the preservation of our United Methodist Heritage.

Conference Chancellor

Provides legal resources to the Trustees and other conference leadership.

Annual Conference – Commission on Sessions

The commission prepares all aspects of the annual conference session including program and logistics.

Finance: \$532,377

This area is responsible for maintaining and administering comprehensive fiscal and administrative policies and services. The office of the treasurer provides support and information for clergy and laity in the local churches.

HR/Benefits Administration: \$2,036,162

This office administers all active and retired benefit plans for clergy and laity. They also provide personnel and HR support for Conference staff.

TOTAL STEWARDSHIP EXPENSES: \$6,926,192

Episcopal Leadership Ministry: \$417,518

Ministries that lead our mission and develop the leadership to lead congregations, ministries and staff.

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: \$18,464,136

OPERATING NET: \$0

For a full breakdown of the budget, visit:

tiny.cc/bwcbudget

Nominations Changes Conference Leadership 2017

Conference Officers

President: Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
 Vice President & Lay Leader: Delores Martin
 Secretary: Cynthia Taylor
 Treasurer/ CFO: Paul Eichelberger
 Statistician: Rev. Daryl L. Williams
 Director of Connectional Ministries: Open
 Chancellor: Thomas Starnes

Discipleship Council

Class of 2017

Rev. Michael Parker, Rev. Mike Bennett, Nancy Erskine, Delonta Hicks, Rev. Bonnie Scott, Jen Ihlo

Class of 2018

Hazel Jackson, Carol Travis, Rev. Wade Martin, Rev. Jenny Cannon, Rev. Jessica Hayden

Lay leader: Delores Martin

Mbr selected by Young Adult Ministries: Open
 Member selected by CCYM: Alyssa Murphy

Ex Officio (without vote)

Conf. President: Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Dean of the Cabinet: Rev. JW Park

Director of Connectional Ministries: Open

Treasurer/CFO: Paul Eichelberger

Director of Communications: Melissa Lauber

Ministry Relationship Oversight Committee

CFA Member: Rick Miller

Discipleship Council: Open

Trustees Member: Rev. Sheridan Allmond

Jamarri Bright, Leslie Hychai, Rev. Sarah

Dorrance, Rev. Mary Kay Totty

The Connectionable Table

Chairperson: Conf. Lay Leader: Delores Martin

Secretary: Cynthia Taylor

Other members of the Connectional Table are identified by Annual Conference position; *the full list of those positions is available on page 566-567 of the 2014 Baltimore Washington Conference Journal.*

Board of Church and Society ¶629

Rev. Julie Wilson, Chair, Rev. Sue Shorb-Sterling, Lavenia Calvin, Rev. Mark Groover, Rev. Irance Reddix, Rev. Tiffany Patterson, Leslie Campbell, UMW: Judy Smith

Ex-officio

Young Adults: Rev. Michael Parker

Peace & Justice Coordinator: Rev. Dr. Diane

Dixon-Proctor

Parish & Community Devel.: Rev. Eric King

Conference Representative: Rev. Edgardo Rivera

Board of Laity ¶631

Lay Leader and Chairperson: Delores Martin

Associate Lay Leader: Bill Weller

Dir. of Lay Servant Ministries: Julie Flinchum

UMM: Bill Weller, Sherman Harris

UMW: Elizabeth M. Stemley, Zilpha Pinkney

Dir. of Certified Lay Ministry: Sandra King-Shaw

President of CCYM: Alyssa Murphy

District Lay Leaders: Marilyn Lewis, Rod Fry, Richard

Willson, Peggy Ireland, Mary McCarty, Ophelia

Brown-Carter, Barbara Shew, Barbara Dickson

Past Conference Lay Leaders Ex-officio: Tom

Flinn, Calvin Williams, Delores Oden

Conference Representative: Open

Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns ¶632

Sukumar Christopher (Chair), Rev. Samuel Smith-Holbrook, Jorge Moreno, Pastor Jacques Banks, Rev. Carmen Rodriguez, Karla Adams, Rev. Iris Farabee-Lewis

Korean Ministry: Rev. Yo-Seop Shin

Strengthening the Black Church: Rev. Twanda Prioleau

Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries: Rev.

Eliezer Valentin-Castanon

Asian Ministry: Rev. DaeHwa Park, Rev. Biak Chhunga

Conference Representative: Rev. JW Park

Board of Global Ministries ¶633

Rev. Heath Wilson, Beaula Williamson, Rev. YuJung Hwang, W. Jean Jackson, Debbie Englar, Myra Fluker, Pastor John Dean

Ex-officio (identified by their group):

United Methodist Women: Elizabeth Stemley

United Methodist Men: Bill Weller

UM VIM coordinator: Rev. Joan Carter-Rimbach

Disaster Response Coordinator: Rev. David Graves

Conference Global Ministries Secretary: Jane Grays

Conference Representative: Pam Bowen

Board of Higher Ed. & Campus Ministries ¶634

Raleigh Turnage (Chair), Open, Open, Eileen

Washington, Nia Banks, Rev. Kyle Durbin, Rev. Robert Kells

Chairs (or designee) of Campus Ministry Boards:

Rev. E. Allen Stewart, Howard University

Alissa Tombaugh, American University

Rachel McNamara, University of Maryland

Rev. Rae Browning, Frostburg State University

Campus Ministers: Rev. Joseph Heath, American

University, Rev. Alexis Brown, Howard

University, Rev. Cynthia Zirlott, Frostburg State

University, Rev. Brett Pinder, UMD, College Park

Ex officio: Rev. Ianther Mills, General Board of

Higher Ed.

Conference Rep.: Rev. Stacey Cole Wilson

Commission on Christian Unity and

Interreligious Concerns ¶642

Rev. Bonnie McCubbin (Chair), Ed Hostetter, Rev.

Lou Shockley, Gloria Nurse, Pastor Gary Sieglein,

Rev. David A. Shank, Rev. Mark Schaefer

Ex-officio members of ecumenical groups: Mike

McCurry, Rev. Ed Grove, Rev. Joe Conte

Ex-officio GCCUIC Director: Darlynn McCrae

Conference Representative: Rev. Evan Young

Commission on Religion and Race ¶643

Rev. Cecil Mudede, Rev. Margaret Clemons,

Stephanie Bekhor, Darrell Taylor, Rev. Dee Ann

Dixon, Rev. Jen Fenner, Moorosi Mokuena

Ex-officio: Rev. Giovanni Arroyo, Jen Ihlo

Conference Representative: Rev. Edgardo Rivera

Commission on the Status & Role of Women ¶644

Open (Chair), Cindy Caldwell, Rev. Tori Butler,

Sheryl Morsell, Rev. Patricia Sebring, Tiara

Suarez, Rev. Marianne Brown, Conf. Rep.: Rev.

Wanda Duckett

Commission on Small Member Church ¶645

Rev. George DeFord (Chair), Rev. Shannon

Sullivan, Pastor Patricia Bittner, Rev. Rick

Oursler, Rev. Barry Hidey, Rev. R. Lorraine

Brown, Pastor Vickie Oliver

Conference Representative: Rev. Conrad Link

Commission on Disability Concerns ¶653

Rev. Leo Yates (Chair), Rev. Lisa Jordon, Pastor

Don Geller Jr., Rev. Ella M. Lawson, Rev. Kathy

Lossau, Darlene Koontz, Patrick Burk, Deaf

Ministry: LaSander Saunders. Ex-officio: Lisa

Harvey. Conference Rep.: Open

Council on Youth Ministries ¶649

President: Alyssa Murphy

Vice President: Michaela Creel

Communications: Asher Rudolph

Spiritual Leaders: Abigail Dina, Nito Slack

Treasurer: Roman Ditzzenberger

Secretary: Kaila Stagg

District Youth Leaders

Kim Walker AN, Marie Ebersole CH, Rev.

David Showalter WE, Rev. Bill Jones & Susan

Harry BS, Sharon Milton GW, Michele Parker BM,

Pastor Tammi Brantley CM, Angela Fossett FR,

Conf. Rep.: Pam Bowen

Council on Young Adult Ministries ¶650

Open (Chair), Open, Open, Open, Open, Open,

Open

Conf. Reps.: Cheryl Cook; Rev. Stacey Cole Wilson

Committee on Parish & Community Devel. ¶633.5

This committee is assigned to the Board of

Church & Society per ¶633.5.

Committee on Native American Ministries ¶654

Pastor Daniel Kutrick (Chair), Jen Kidwell,

Jack Woodford, Rev. Angela Maves, Rev. Limja

H. Gim, Rev. Mae Harrison, Michelle Propst,

Ex-officio: Olivia Schwartz, Robert Willasch,

Conference Rep.: Open

United Methodist Women ¶647

Elizabeth M. Stemley (President), Linda S. Yost,

Sherie Koob, Sabrina White, Ann Price, Judy

Smith, Daphne Hurd, Rita Green, Tangela Terry,

Gertrude White, Pamela Randall, Conference

Rep.: Rev. Stacey Cole Wilson

United Methodist Men ¶648

Bill Weller (President), Hampton Conway,

Steven Hill, Sherman Harris, Curtis Warren,

Malcolm Clory, Sr., James Williams, James

Bouldin, Rev. Ken Lyons, Jr., Joseph Vicek,

Conference Representative: Rev. Evan Young

Commission on Communications ¶646

Mittie Quinn, Rev. Terri Cofiehl, Adele Banks,

Rev. Bonnie Scott, Rev. Beth Ludlum, Brian

Nelson, Pastor Christine Kumar

Conference Rep.: Melissa Lauber

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

Council on Finance & Administration ¶611-618

Rev. Ann Laprade (Chair), Charles Myers, Charlie

Moore, Paul Hazen, Rev. Robert Slade, Rev. Marlon

Tilghman, Phil Potter, Rick Miller, Lucinda Fisher,

Gwen Morgan, David Fisher, Betty Henderson,

Ex-Offico: GCFA Board Member Ken Ow,

Conf. Rep.: Rev. Laura Easto

Board of Trustees ¶640 and 2512

Class of 2017:

Delila Parham, Tracey Neal, Rev. Robert Snyder

Class of 2018

Rev. William G Brown (Chair), Pastor Richard

Baker, Rev. Diane Dixon-Proctor

Class of 2019

Rev. Sheridan Allmond, Vince Leggett, Heidi

Agostini

Class of 2020

Pastor Bob Ruggieri, Sonia Stockton, David Robinson

Ex Officio: Bishop Easterling, Paul Eichelberger,

Pier McPayten, Conf. Rep.: Rev. Conrad Link

Board of Pensions ¶639

Class of 2017

Rev. Wayne DeHart, Donna Snyder, Rosalind

Pinkney

Class of 2018

Rev. Curtis Ehr Gott, Rev. Daniel Montague, Ed Hunt

Class of 2019

Rev. Jackson Day (Chair), Rev. Chris Serufusa,

Rev. Ken Valentine

Class of 2020

Rev. Cary James, Pastor Karen Weaver, Pastor

Patsy Baker Blackshear, Ex-officio: Frances

Tagoe, Conference Rep.: Rev. Conrad Link

Commission on Equitable Compensation ¶625.1

Rev. James Johnson (Chair), Gregory Kernan,

Rev. Lori Hays, Rev. MyungHa Baek, Rev.

Selena Johnson, Rev. Mike Henning, Kim Ayres

NEJ Representative to National Assoc. of Equitable

Compensation Committee: Deborah Tocknell

Conference Representative: Frances Tagoe

Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave ¶652

Rev. Jackson Day (Board of Pensions), Open

(Board of Pensions), Rev. Paul Papp (Board

of Ordained Ministry), Ray Moseley (Board

of Ordained Ministry), Rev. Kathy Lossau

(Commission on Disability Concerns),

Conference Representative: Open

Committee on Personnel and Policy

Rev. Zelda Childs, Laura E. Davis, Rev. Robert

Hunter, Rev. David Cooney, Theodore Garrett,

Jr., Patricia Turnage, Rev. Donna Renn,

Ex-officio: Frances Tagoe,

Conference Representative: Rev. JW Park

Mid-Atlantic Foundation ¶610

DCM: Open, Kristin Schol, Clarence White,

Jamie Waldren, George Monk, Rev. Karin

Walker; Ex-Officio: Paul Eichelberger, Bishop

Easterling

Commission on Archives & History ¶641

Rev. Cary James, Cassandra Jacob, Dorothy

Dougherty, Keenan Hudson, Rev. Dae Sung Park,

Rev. James Chance, Rev. Stephen Ricketts

Conference Historian: Rev. Emora Brannan

Conference Representative: Robert Shindle

Ex-officio: representing UMC Heritage Landmarks:

Helen Kemp, Strawbridge House, Daniel

Fisher, Old Otterbein Church, Rev. Travis Knoll,

Lovely Lane Meetinghouse Site, Rep., Geeting

Meetinghouse Site, Rep., Cokesbury College Site

Rules Committee

Open (Chair), Barbara Parrish, Rev. Kenneth

Moore, Rev. Mark Gorman, Chair of

Discipleship Council: Open, Conference

Secretary: Cynthia Taylor,

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Committee on Episcopacy ¶637

Rev. Jim Miller (Chair), Rev. Tim West, Charlie

Moore, Ella Curry, Stephanie Johnson Pettaway,

Rev. Ianther Mills, Delores Martin (NEJ Rep),

Rev. Terri Rae Chattin (NEJ Rep), Rev. Yvonne

Wallace Penn

Conference Session Committee

Chairperson: Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Vice Chair: Delores Martin, Conference Lay Leader

Secretary: Cynthia Taylor, Conference Secretary

Treasurer: Paul Eichelberger

Director of Connectional Ministries: Open

Cabinet Dean: Rev. J.W. Park

Host DS: GW Rev. Gerard Green

Assistant to the Bishop: Rev. Tony Love

Director of Communications: Melissa Lauber

Rules Chair: Open

Worship Team: Rev. Sherri Wood-Powe, Chair

Conference UMW President: Elizabeth M. Stemley

Conference UMM President: Bill Weller

Executive Assistant to Bishop: Joyce King

BOOM Chair: Rev. Anthony Hunt

BOOM Ordination Coord: Rev. Scott

Shumaker

Conference CCYM President: Alyssa Murphy

Rap: Bropleh sings out about the greatness of God

From page 1

at Shepherd University raised his hand in class. “This has nothing to do with economics, but is that you on Chance the Rapper’s song,” the student asked.

“Young people are crazy about Chance the Rapper,” said Bropleh, who has had to let his newfound notoriety “sink in a minute.”

“It’s an incredible feeling,” he said. He



Chance the Rapper performing live in November 2013.

feels like he has the rapper for a partner, if only for that one song.

While Bropleh did not receive official credit or payment for having his words featured in the song, he firmly believes “it’s the platform, not the paycheck,” that’s important.

“God’s word is going out to more and more people,” he said. It “takes the Gospel to a whole different level,” and hopefully, “advances the cause of Christ.”

Bropleh appreciates the kind of artist and man Bennett is, giving credit to God for his accomplishment, and giving a lot of money to causes he believes in.

Bennett has worked with President Barack Obama on My Brother’s Keeper Challenge, which addresses the unique challenges facing young men of color. He’s also been an active advocate combatting gun violence in his hometown of Chicago, and recently announced his intention to donate a million dollars to that city’s public schools.

Time magazine recently named Chance the Rapper as one of 100 most influential people in the world.

Bropleh intends to reach out to Bennett

to alert him to the work The United Methodist Church is doing. He also wants to share information with the rapper about the ministry he’s doing in West Africa with economic empowerment and leadership development.

Listening to Bropleh’s sermon beyond the few lines on the song, the message is amplified even greater.

“It’s hard to fully fathom the greatness of God,” he said. “God is greater than anything in human imagination and invention.”

In his childhood, Bropleh learned about the God featured in John Bunyan’s story of “Pilgrim’s Progress,” in which Christians were struggling people on a treacherous journey with many pitfalls and, in the sweet-by-and-by, were united with God and got their rest.

But that depiction is unappetizing for this generation, he said. “What excites me about what Chance the Rapper did is that we can reach a whole new generation of people to let them know that Christ is cool and the church is relevant.”

He prays that young people will find a God of grace, a God of greatness and be in

a relationship that helps them be their best selves.

“How Great” demonstrates the importance of the church and the message of life that it offers to the greater society,” Bropleh said. “This confluence of hip-hop and Christian cultures speaks to the relevance of the church.”



Rev. Rudy Bropleh

How Great

Hear the song
youtu.be/rttc--GYnco
 (Rev. Rudy Bropleh speaks at 2:44)

Hear the sermon
youtube.com/watch?v=srGPh0u-9uU

Art installation links Christ with Syrian refugees

By MELISSA LAUBER
 UMConnection Staff

AT WESLEY THEOLOGICAL Seminary, they know that when significant art comes together with deep theology, God shows up.

From now through May 19, the seminary is inviting the public to encounter the sacred when they host Michael Takeo Magruder’s “Lamentation for the Forsaken,” a real-time new media installation juxtaposing Christ’s journey to the cross with the plight of refugees fleeing the Syrian Civil War. The hours for viewing the piece are Monday through Friday from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Additional hours can be heard by calling (202) 885-8600.

The installation, which will be laid out on the tomb of Bishop Bromley Oxnam in the chapel of the seminary in Washington, D.C., is the ninth station of the cross, part of an art exhibit that has been on display throughout the city of Washington during Lent.

The piece features two distinct visual elements. The first, the artist explained, is an image of Christ on a photographic negative of the Shroud of Turin that has been aesthetically transformed with the name and details of people who have died in the Syrian conflict.

The second is an underlying video stream that portrays the lives and hardships of Syrian refugees.

“The combination of these two layers generates an endlessly shifting digital tapestry that oscillates between the iconic image of Christ and the tragic stories of those affected by war,” reads an official statement about the installation. “The real miracle isn’t the Shroud itself, it’s our capacity to look into the eyes of the forsaken and see our Saviour.”

For Kiki McGrath, the curator of the Dadian Art Gallery at Wesley, Lamentation for the Forsaken “brings the Christ story into our world right now,” she said. “It’s an ancient story set in a modern context. It provides a space for contemplation and reflection that allows you to think about both of these narratives differently. That’s a gift we’ve been given by this artist.”

Wesley Seminary is one of the few seminaries in the nation that actively



The digital artwork Lamentation for the Forsaken, by Michael Takeo Magruder, was on display during Lent at the Church of the Epiphany in D.C.

combines art and theology. Students are required to take an arts course to learn the language of the arts in order to speak more fully about theology, and intentional efforts are made to display a vast array of creative works throughout the campus. Wesley’s Henry Luce III Center for Arts and Religion promotes ongoing conversations that foster creativity and an understanding of a myriad of artistic traditions.

For McGrath, the arts are a way of allowing students to more deeply understand the nature of God the Creator, and to look with curiosity and wonder at the world around us.

Growing up Roman Catholic, she said she always felt the presence of God and of Mary. Religious pictures and the Stations of the Cross gave her a landscape in which to place her feelings about her faith.

Stations of the Cross, she explained, are a series of images depicting the passion of Christ. The faithful use these images as a pathway for prayer and contemplation. They were created during the crusades when pilgrims could no longer travel to Jerusalem.

During Lent, the 14 stations were spread as a Way of Sorrows throughout Washington, D.C. This pilgrimage for art lovers was designed to provoke spiritual and

political passions, said its organizers, the London-based CoExist House.

The first station, “Jesus is condemned to death by the mob,” for example, was on display at the United Methodist

Building. Created by Ndume Olatushani, the installation “Disrupting the Cradle to Prison Pipeline,” used human-shaped orange jumpsuits to draw attention to injustices of the criminal justice system.

At the Church of the Epiphany in D.C., the ninth station in which “Jesus Falls for the Third Time,” the Lamentation for the Forsaken was featured.

Takeo is known as one of the most influential digital artists working

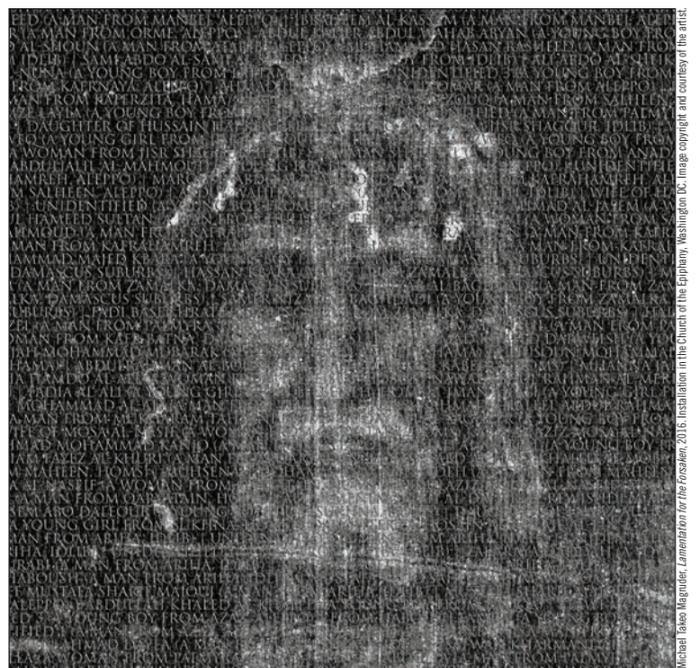
today. Located in London, his projects in new media have been showcased in more than 350 exhibitions in 34 countries.

Through his work being displayed at Wesley, McGrath said, we become witnesses in Christ’s story and the story of the Syrian refugees becomes our own. “We bring our own experiences to it.”

The video panels are aligned with the body of Christ. At the feet are images of the refugee’s journey, at Christ’s hands are images of people helping one another, the Body of Christ holds images of the bodies of the dead and the face shows the face of Christ blended with actual faces of men, women and children in Syria.

The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria and the U.S. bombing in retaliation, makes the persecution, suffering and sacrifice of Christ and of the refugees all the more compelling, McGrath said.

Photos: Michael Takeo Magruder, Lamentation for the Forsaken, 2016. Installation in the Church of the Epiphany, Washington, D.C. Image copyright and courtesy of the artist.



Takeo’s art juxtaposes the image from the Shroud of Turin with names of the Syrian dead.

Ruling: BOOM's required to consider candidate's sexuality

From page 1

Baltimore-Washington Conference issued a statement on the Judicial Council's decision hours after it was released. In it, she called for United Methodists to be in a time of "deep prayer." (Full statement at <http://www.bwcumc.org/news-and-views/statement-from-bishop-latrell-easterling-april-29-2017/>)

The court rejected the argument made during the April 25 oral hearing by Richard Marsh, Western Jurisdiction counsel, that Oliveto's same-sex marriage to Robin Ridenour in 2014 was not a public statement about her sexual practices.

"A same-sex marriage license issued by competent civil authorities together with the clergy person's status in a same-sex relationship is a public declaration that the person is a self-avowed practicing homosexual" for purposes of the prohibitive language in the United Methodist Book of Discipline, Paragraphs 304.3 and 2702.1(b), the council ruled.

Church law requires all clergy persons to dedicate themselves to "the highest ideals of Christian life," the decision said, including "their commitment to abide by and uphold the church's definition of marriage and stance on homosexuality. An openly homosexual and partnered bishop is in violation of those minimum standards."

The decision further found that an openly homosexual and partnered bishop may be charged with disobedience to church law, along with other bishops and clergy persons who actively participate in the consecration of a bishop who has been found to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual through a judicial or administrative process.

"Self-avowal does not nullify the consecration and cause removal from episcopal office but is a sufficient declaration to subject the bishop's

ministerial office to review," the decision said.

Judicial Council spelled out the process required by The Discipline for such a review, which begins with the filing of a complaint against the bishop. If action is not initiated by the jurisdictional or central conference, the president or secretary of that body's college of bishops must take action.

Pending the supervisory response process to review episcopal membership and office, the college of bishops, in consultation with the committee on episcopacy, "may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed 60 days."

The process allows for a bishop to be placed in the retired relationship "regardless of age" if it is "found to be in the best



Bishop Karen Oliveto (left) and Dixie Brewster (right) meet for the first time prior to the opening of oral arguments before the Judicial Council meeting in Newark, N.J. Brewster petitioned whether a gay pastor can serve as a bishop.

interests of the bishop and/or the church."

If there is no resolution, "the president or secretary of the college of bishops may refer the matter as an administrative or judicial complaint," the ruling concluded.

In a joint dissenting opinion to Decision 1341, Judicial Council members N. Oswald Tweh and Deanell Reece Tacha "respectfully" argued that the council did not have jurisdiction for the petition from the South Central Jurisdiction.

"Our difference with the majority revolves simply around which are the proper body or bodies for making these decisions," they said. "This Judicial Council, like all judicial bodies, is restricted to deciding those matters over which we clearly have jurisdiction."

The opinion from Tweh and Tacha argues that the majority decision "relies on consecration of bishops as the jurisdictional 'hook' ... because consecration of bishops is an act on behalf of the whole church. We

or General Conference have the authority to petition the Judicial Council "for declaratory decisions on behalf of the entire church," they wrote.

In a concurring and dissenting opinion, W. Warren Plowden Jr. — the first lay alternate, who was sitting for council member Beth Capen — said the Judicial Council does have jurisdiction and further concluded that the Western Jurisdiction "knew full well that it was acting unlawfully when it elected a self-avowed practicing homosexual as a bishop of the church."

Plowden said the Western Jurisdiction's action "negated, ignored and violated provisions of The Discipline and is null, void and of no effect resulting in the invalidation of Karen Oliveto's episcopal office."

In his own concurring and dissenting opinion, council member Ruben T. Reyes agreed with Plowden's opinion regarding the bishop's election "but noted that fair process must be observed."

In a separate ruling, the Judicial Council said that boards of ordained ministry must look at all qualifications to determine whether a ministerial candidate is a fitting applicant — including adherence to the church's position on homosexuality.

The ruling was related to petitions related to the New York and Northern Illinois conferences, where those boards had publicly declared they would not consider issues of sexuality when evaluating a candidate.

One of the qualifications for candidacy and ordained ministry in the UMC is "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness."

"The board of ordained ministry is mandated by the Book of Discipline 2012 to examine all applicants as to their fitness for the ordained ministry...", the council declared.

**Bloom is the assistant news editor for United Methodist News Service.*

Camping: Success with focus on fun, faith and friends

From page 1

organizations, not the least of which is the Baltimore-Washington Conference itself. Through the BWC Trustees and the Council on Finance and Administration, RCM has cultivated a good working relationship that keeps sites insured, up to date and running well, he said.

"All that enables the staff and volunteers to create a place for wonderful Christian hospitality," Thornton said.

The uptick in enrollment resulted in RCM running in the black for the fourth year in a row in 2016, showing a surplus of about \$64,000. That money is plowed right back into the RCM program: \$24,906 for camperships this year, helping kids who might not otherwise afford camp the opportunity to attend; \$25,000 for a Campership Investment Fund; \$5,000 for new online training programs for volunteers; and \$9,000 to subsidize new outreach initiatives.

Thornton, who is retiring at the end of this summer after 30 years, added that retreat ministry is also growing, with upgrades being done to facilities that host groups year-round.

Another growing aspect is the Day Camp experience offered by RCM, Thornton said. In Baltimore City last year, three churches partnered with RCM, each church doing two weeks. In 2017, six churches are partnering, he said, with each church doing one week. The Board of Child Care, Reisterstown UMC and Grace UMC in Baltimore have also provided funding to

support this ministry.

And in West Virginia, at Camp Harmison, Thornton said that the Day Camp program is expanding to two weeks with opportunities for both elementary and middle school students.

Chris Schlieckert, Director at Camp Manidokan near Harpers Ferry, said the success of RCM is all about the people and the relationships.

"I think the reason why we're doing well is that we have good staff at the sites and amazing volunteers," Schlieckert said. "It's been exciting for us."

Schlieckert, who grew up in the church in Minnesota and who met Jesus in a powerful way at camp, said that RCM uses "fun, friends and faith" as guiding principles in the camping ministries, making sure the youth feel safe in what, for many, is a first-time experience of the great outdoors.

"We want to make sure that when the kids come that they have a good time," he said. "They're in a safe space where they can be comfortable and we can create that Christian community."

Because of that, Schlieckert said, they are able to add in the spiritual component of the program which impacts the campers' lives. This includes what he calls an "altar call-like

experience" at the end of camp, which he said changed his own life years ago.

"I want to make sure I'm creating and setting an environment that opens up for the Holy Spirit to do that kind of work at camp," he said.

The success of the recent past is translating into great numbers for 2017, Schlieckert said. As of mid-April, registrations for summer camp at Manidokan were about four weeks ahead of last year's pace.

Thornton said that one of the key partnerships within RCM are those who contribute to camperships. "Most people can afford a week at camp," he said, "but there are those who truly can't."

Campership dollars — scholarships that help pay for kids to go to camp — are set at \$80,000 this year, Thornton said, an increase over previous years.

Learn more about the BWC's Camping and Retreat Ministries at www.bwccampsandretreats.com.



A camper at Manidokan reflects on nature at summer camp. Camping opportunities are provided at three facilities throughout the BWC. Visit www.bwccampsandretreats.com.