One in Ministry to all the world

By Bethany Wood

The celebration of ministry service Friday evening centered around four themes: Different Calls, But One in Christ; Different Seasons, But One in Christ; Different Gifts, But One in Christ; and Better Together … One in Christ. Within that framework, the congregation of those gathered was invited to joyful worship with uplifting contemporary songs of praise.

Rev. Janet Durrwachter led in calling those present to a time of celebration of the various ministries which God asks us to undertake. God does not make cookie cutter Christians. God calls people in different ways. Moses, for example, was a runaway with a rap sheet. Don’t think that your mistakes from the past make you unqualified to serve. Young Samuel answered God’s call by saying, “Here am I.” Gideon was a man with serious self-esteem issues, yet he became a mighty warrior for God. And Mary, an unwed teenager, became the mother or our Savior.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Equipping Vital Congregations: Tinderboxes and toolboxes

By Ryan Krauss

Dressed in camping gear and gathered around an artificial fire (presumably for safety reasons), several Conference pastors discussed the nuances of starting a fire. Holding up a small object, Rev. Jen Williams said, “This is a tinderbox. It has everything you need to get a fire started; so, let’s get this fire started.”

The newly-rebranded Office of Equipping Vital Congregations was formerly known as the Office of Growing Effective Churches. The office’s director, Kay Kotan, posed the question, “How many of you have ever tried to build a fire and had a really difficult time doing so?” Kotan indicated that lighting fires in ministry holds the same challenges, frustrations, joys, and hopes. In a vibrant hour-long experience, Kotan and the Equipping Vital Congregation team members unveiled a series of resources — a ministry tinderbox — to set contextual ministry ablaze.

The first resource available through the office is consultation. Kotan suggested that consultation is an experience for churches to dive deeply into an analysis of its own effectiveness. She shared in brief conversation with Rev. Jan Hughes of Middlesex UMC over the process and fruit of consultation. Hughes was emphatic that consultation — having an outside, evaluative perspective — helped Middlesex to align vision, become externally focused, and grow exponentially.

The second resource offered is coaching. Kotan indicated that coaching differs from other disciplines such as consulting, mentoring, or counseling. Coaching closes the gap between intention and effective action. Equipping Vital Congregations is in the process of equipping coaches to meet various needs for conference churches. A list is made available.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
Bible Study, Commissioning, and Ordination Service speaker
Bishop Sandra L. Steiner Ball

Sandra L. Steiner Ball, the daughter of Edward J. and the late Marjorie W. Steiner, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and raised in Milford, Delaware. She is a graduate of Dickinson College (Bachelor of Arts in Religion, 1984), Duke Divinity School (Master of Divinity, 1987), and Wesley Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry, 2003).

Ball was ordained deacon and elder by Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. She has served as an associate pastor, lead pastor, district superintendent, and director of connectional ministries. During her last year as a DCM, she also served as interim pastor of Bayside Chapel, a new church start.

Ball was in this position when elected to the episcopacy by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2012, and was assigned to the West Virginia Area.

Fourty years ago I bought a Bible. It saw me through seminary and my first fifteen years of ministry. It was large enough to hold my sermon notes as I drove from church to church, and there was a personal connection: Several professors at my seminary had helped to prepare it.

That Bible was well used, and it looks it. The cover became badly worn. The spine started to fall apart. Rather than use it until I lost it, I sat it on my shelf as reminder of my journey.

A lot has changed since I bought that Bible.

In 1978 a word processor was sitting on top of a desk. These days, it’s an app on my laptop. In 1978 churches sang hymns from a book. These days, many churches project song lyrics on video screens. In 1978 stores closed one day a week on Sundays. These days, stores might close one day a year.

Some things haven’t changed.

Phones still interrupt quiet evenings. Christmas is still December 25. People still gather on Sunday morning as the church. Teachers still teach. People still sing and pray. Pastors still preach. Christ still feeds hungry souls, still heals broken hearts, still calls lives to better paths, and still makes all who are in Christ a new creation.

When church gets hard, I sometimes remember that it’s the hard that makes church great, and that great is possible because, as the Apostle Paul said: “The real power comes from God and not from us … In times of trouble, God is with us and when we are knocked down, we get up again … Our lives show what his death was like, so that his life can also be seen in us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7-11, CEV)

Bishop Steiner Ball was a first elected delegate to the 2008 and 2012 General Conferences of The United Methodist Church and to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conferences. Prior to election, Ball served the general church in a variety of areas, including the Interjurisdictional Episcopacy Committee, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, and the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy.

For the 2016 – 2020 quadrennium, Bishop Steiner Ball was re-appointed as the episcopal leader of the West Virginia area and has responsibilities with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, serving on the agency’s Executive/personnel and Policies Committee, Global Education and Ministry Committee, Audit and Review Subcommittee, and is the chairperson of the Division on Ministry. Additionally, Bishop Steiner Ball is one of three moderators on the Commission on the Way Forward, and chairs the annual U.S. DS/DCM training. In the NEJ, Bishop Steiner Ball chairs the NEJ Vision Table. She is vice chairperson of the West Virginia Council of Churches and co-chairs a task force of the council working to address substance abuse and addiction in the West Virginia area.

Bishop Steiner Ball and her husband, The Rev. Barry D. Steiner Ball, have two daughters: Sarah Elizabeth and Sandra Rebekah.
Service of Commissioning and Ordination

Commissioning/Provisional Elder Membership

Left to right: David Keyworth, Kristopher Ray Sledge, Donald J. Smith, John Wesley Bondhus, and John Franklin Mackey.

Ordained Deacon Elder

Ruth L. Myers

Ordained Elders


SPECIAL OFFERING FOR TODAY

Service of Commissioning and Ordination, Friday, June 1, 2018

The Bishop’s PARTNERS IN MISSION

Bishop’s Partners in Mission (7090) calls us to Imagine No Malaria and Imagine No More Debt. 100 percent of the proceeds from this fund go to Imagine No Malaria (the UMC’s global campaign to fight malaria) and paying down the debt of Mission Central so they can focus on their core mission of connecting God’s resources with human need. Bishop Park is inviting individuals, congregations, and church groups to join him and be Partners in Mission, committing to $100 or more a year. Whatever you can give helps the lives of those locally and around the world. God is still calling us to imagine great things, he is calling us to Imagine What We Can Do Together!
2016 General Conference, The United Methodist Church
Corrected Ballot

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – 1

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 recorded by a recorded vote of 746 Yes, 56 No (Calendar Item 121, DCA p. 2106). The text of this amendment as distributed to the annual conferences in 2016 was found to be in error. The corrected text 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 acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten women's and girls' equality and well-being.

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, this would become the new ¶ 5, and the current ¶ 6-61 would be renumbered as ¶¶ 7-62.

Rationale for Proposed Constitutional Amendment 1

The United Methodist Church
Vote at General Conference May 16, 2016

Eligibility for Voting on Constitutional Amendments

The short answer for who is eligible to vote on constitutional amendments: The Discipline gives the right to vote on constitutional amendments to:

- Elders in Full Connection
- Deacons in Full Connection
- Persons elected Elder or Deacon in Full Connection during the clergy session of the current Annual Conference – if their election occurred prior to the vote on Constitutional Amendments
- Log members to Annual Conference

Labeled below are the paragraph numbers for all categories of clergy and what The Discipline says.

Priestly and Fulltime Local Pastors: Par. 316.6: The membership of local pastors shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments.

Retired Local Pastors: Par. 320.5: Retired local pastors may attend annual conference sessions with voice but not vote.

Associate members: Par 321.1: Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

Deacons in Full Connection: Paragraph 329.2: The Deacon in full connection shall have the rights of voice and vote in the annual conference where membership held.

Elders in Full Connection: Par. 334.1: Elders in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference. ...

Those persons voted and approved for ordination as Elder or Deacon in Full Connection can vote if they have been approved in the clergy session.

Provisional Members: Paragraph 327.2: shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments.

Clergy from other Annual Conferences: Par. 346.1: Clergy in such appointments may be granted right to vote in the Annual Conference to which they are appointed.

Elders or Ordained Clergy from other Denominations: Par. 346.2. Those persons may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: constitutional amendments...

The above is also outlined in Par. 602. a, b, c, d, & 602 f.

Log members to Annual Conference: Par. 602.6: The lay membership of the annual conference shall participate in all deliberations and vote upon all matters granted to them by the ordained representatives of their reception into full conference membership or any question concerning the character...

Many of these were not quite ready to accept the call, but all eventually were able to respond to God. The evening offering benefited the Cup of Comfort Scholarship Fund. The offertory was the hymn, “Blessed Assurance.”

In 2019 there will be a Special Session of the General Conference. The Council of Bishops announced that they will recommend The One Church Plan, which is one of three plans that will be presented to the delegates. The One Church Plan attempts to provide unity as well as providing space in the United Methodist Church for differing understandings of human sexuality. Rev. Dr. Thomas Salsgiver, who serves as General Secretary of the Council of Bishops, said the current plan is not a discussion plan, but one that seeks to find a new way forward for the church. The morning discussion was held at the One Church Plan’s website or on Twitter. The One Church Plan was introduced to the General Conference as providing space in the United Methodist Church for differing understandings of human sexuality.

On Monday, July 10, the General Conference approved the One Church Plan, which was introduced to the General Conference as providing space in the United Methodist Church for differing understandings of human sexuality. The One Church Plan was approved by a vote of 517-362, with 86 abstentions.

By Brenda Leigey

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One church plan: Small group discussion

By Brenda Leigey

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Annual Conference Award Recipients

The Rev. Dr. Maud K. Jensen / 
Rev. Dr. Karen E. Layman Memorial Scholarship
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Pastor Gloria J. Montgomery, 
Bellwood Extended Charge, Altoona District - recipient, 
and Pastor Anna Layman Knox

Thomas K. Cartwright Scholarship
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, 
Patrick Traylor, Mapleton Parish, Altoona District - 
recipient, and Rev. Suzanne Elliott

The Earl N. Rowe Memorial Scholarship Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Pastor Brian Wallace, Friends in 
Faith Parish, Greentown, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District - 
recipient, and Rev. Nick Keeney,

J. Marlene Atanasoff Spiritual 
Formation Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Joan Harmon, 
Berwick UMC, Lewisburg District - recipient, 
and Rev. Kathy Harvey Nelson

The Marty Cox Award for Christian Unity
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Diana Hove, Rev. Michael Bealla, 
Elm Park UMC, Scranton, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District - 
recipient, Wesley Bealla, and Pastor Laura Kincaid.

The Flying Dove Church Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Grace UMC, Millersburg, 
Harrisburg District, - recipient, received by Kendra Ruisill, 
Jeanette Snell, Rev. Michelle Bodle, and Pastor Alan Atchison

The Rev. Dr. Maud K. Jensen / 
Rev. Dr. Karen E. Layman Memorial Scholarship
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recipient, Wesley Bealla, and Pastor Laura Kincaid.

The Howard and Elizabeth Brinton Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Ron Lucas, Dalton UMC, Scranton/ 
Wilkes-Barre District - recipient, Rev. Lenore Hosier, 
and Rev. Mark Messner

PHOTOS BY STACY ECKERT

The Clergy Denman Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Rev. Jennifer M. Parks-Snyder, 
Lightstreet UMC, Bloomsburg, Lewisburg District - 
recipient, and Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Saligiver

The Laity Denman Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, 
Jennifer Zack, Grace UMC, Hanover, York District - 
recipient and Rev. Dr. Charles W. Salisbury

The Thomas K. Cartwright Award
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Jennifer Zack, Grace UMC, Hanover, York District - 
recipient and Rev. Dr. Charles W. Salisbury

The Bishop D. Frederick Wertz Award
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Gerald F. Wolgemuth - recipient, Ruth 
Wolgemuth, and Rev. Dr. John Piper
Fifty years of living better together

By Ed Preston

Fifty years ago last month, the United Methodist Church was created at a Uniting Conference. Rev. Brand Eaton offered a reflection on what led up to that historic moment and how wide the implications were.

In 1968 the Evangelical and United Brethren churches joined to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. This merger was unique in that no congregations were lost in the process. The way in which our heritage affected the modern UMC is visible in places such as Simpson Street UMC in Mechanicsburg, which has three United Methodist churches within blocks of each other. Many towns and cities have similar situations.

But in other places, churches are taking steps to bring strength to strength. In York, Faith and Wesley United Methodist Churches merged to become Aldersgate UMC, still a thriving congregation. Albright and Grove Street in Avis merged to create Avis UMC. Carlisle UMC is created out of the merger of Allison (Methodist), First (Evangelical) and Grace (UB), and plans to break ground later this year on their new Spring Street Campus.

The creation of the UMC in 1968 didn’t just affect local churches. Our system of Benevolent Homes was expanded and strengthened as the combined resources were used to upgrade, replace, and create new living opportunities. Camping was also touched by the merger, with former Methodist, Evangelical, and United Brethren campsites becoming part of one larger system. Over time, changes and improvements have made the camp system of the Susquehanna Conference one of the finest in the denomination.

Eaton brought his recollection to a close with an examination of the Cross and Flame symbol that represents the UMC. He reminded us that the two equal flames are symbolic of the two denominations, while the slanted edges of the ends of the cross remind us that we are to always be a church in motion.

Conference acts on clergy compensation

By Deb Steransky

The Commission of Equitable Salaries chair, Rev. Bill Pipp, presented the commission’s report to the Annual Conference. He reported that the commission is recommending a salary raise of 3 percent across the board for pastoral compensation. He noted that most churches pay their pastors about the minimum recommended. The recommendation was approved without discussion. Referring to past requirements as outlined in the 2016 Book of Discipline, Pipp said that the commission is working to bring a final report to us for the Annual Conference in 2019.

TINDERBOXES & TOOLBOXES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

on the website.

The third resource is small groups. Equipping Vital Congregations has several small group resources available, including the “Unpack Your Faith Story” video series. Similarly, M3 (Moving from Maintenance to Missional) helps small groups recognize the stumbling blocks to ministry effectiveness. A fourth comparable resource is a fresh series of workshops and trainings. Kotan invited lay and clergy alike to events like Simplified Accountable Structure, Necessary 9, Gear Up, and Navigate. Just this past spring, 350 people attended the discipleship-focused Navigate event in Lewisburg, Pa. Upcoming events in the fall include M3, Small Church Checkup, Impact, and Communities of Practice. The office is also pleased to offer free resources such as “Journey” and “Welcome Home.” These complete sermon series media packets were produced by conference clergy and laity in collaboration with Jason Moore of Midnight Oil Productions.

The fifth tinderbox resource is New Places for New People. Kotan likened this initiative to the excitement of building a new fire for Jesus. As an expression of commitment to this initiative, Bishop Jeremiah Park formally signed a covenant relationship with Path1. Park prayed that this would be a “threshold moment” in our commitment to partnership in the gospel.

Kotan invited the Conference to save the date for numerous upcoming events. Spark Starters on July 28 at St. Paul’s UMC in Lewisburg will be a place for brainstorming and listening to the Spirit’s leading to make New Places for New People. Spark Tank on October 16 and 17 will be a chance to pitch New Places ideas for your first leaders who have a passion for reaching new people for Jesus. Information on these events and resources are available at the Equipping Vital Congregations booth.

Kotan invited the Conference to consider whether God was calling them to make New Places for New People. Words to the song, “Burning in my Soul,” resonated and reverberated through the Conference hall: “We’re calling for revival! / God let your fire fall again.”
One with Christ

**YOUNG PEOPLE’S MINISTRY**

**Young People’s Ministry report**

By Deb Stenanksy

This is an exciting summer for the Young People’s Ministry. Four of the group will be attending the quadrennial event, Global Young People’s Convocation in Johannesburg, South Africa. This event is a gathering of United Methodist young people from all over the world for the opportunity to worship in a variety of languages and expressions, and fellowship with others from different cultures and diverse backgrounds, gain leadership skills. The attendees also have the chance to talk with other young people about issues facing the church.

Those from our conference who will be making the trip to South Africa are youth delegates Alexander Clark and Hannah Carter, young adult delegate Taylor Johnston and adult chaperone Christina McDermott. Taylor Johnson will be a voting delegate for the Northeast Jurisdiction Young Adult Delegation to this event. (Johnson is also a certified candidate for ministry attending Methodist Theological Seminary of Ohio.) This is a unique discipleship opportunity for these youth. We can follow their experience on Instagram @youngpplministry.

**Did you get your Better Together Polo or T-shirt yet? There’s still time**

Proceeds from the polo and T-shirt sales will be used to fund youth scholarships to Annual Conference.

**Polo Shirt**
- Adult Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large - $24
- Adult 2XL and 3XL - $27

**T-Shirt**
- Adult Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large - $16
- Adult 2XL and 3XL - $13

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**FUNDRAISING GOAL for AC 2018 = $10,000**

**Pie-in-the-Face Challenge**

Drop spare change or loose bills into the bucket of the conference leader you would like to see take a pie to the face. The competition will end at 11 a.m. today. The conference leader with the most money will receive a face full of pie before lunch today. Competitors include: Tom Salsgiver, Audrey Wilder, Kevin Witt, John Konieczny, Beth Jones, Marian Hartman, Barry Robison, and Larry Leland.

**Charging Station**

Long sessions, short battery life, or lost power cord - we’ve got you covered. Check your mobile device at the charging station in the Great American Hall and we will get you powered back up. (suggested donations $5 per phone, $10 per tablet/iPad, $20 per laptop)

**Gift Basket Silent Auction (20 Baskets)**

Bidding on gift baskets will be open until 9 a.m. today. There are over 20 baskets that will be waiting to go home with you. Place a bid on your favorite baskets at the YSF display table.

By giving generously our youth can continue to be vital in their communities and the world.

**Thank You!**
2018 Class of Retirees

By Ed Preston

Rev. Jason Mackey introduced the report of the Board of pensions by cutting straight to the question on the minds of many; will there be a new health plan in 2019? The answer is yes. For 2019, clergy will use the Health Flex Exchange to choose from six health plans to best fit their needs, with optional dental and vision plans. This fall there will be a number of trainings to help clergy better understand the process and the options available. The aggregate premium for churches will still be $14,000.00 per full-time appointment. Pastors will no longer have a percentage contribution, but if they choose a plan that exceeds the designated stipend they will be responsible for the difference. Health Accounts will be a part of several of the plans and will vary by plan and family status. These changes are designed to help control health care costs over the long term. Details of the changes will be rolling out through the LINK and QuikLink over the next few months.

Rev. Terry Shoemaker, representing WESPATH then took the podium, addressing another question on many minds: How will WESPATH invested funds be affected by the uncertain future of the church? The short answer: “Your benefits are secure.” WESPATH will adjust to the realities of our denomination as they evolve, and is well positioned to continue to care for the benefits of the United Methodist Church.

Kelly Cox, conference benefits officer noted a recommendation that the annuity rate for Pre-1982 service past be set of $630.00. She also noted the addition of Cecily Eisely to the list of retiring pastors. Rev. Michelle Bodle was introduced as the new chair Board of Pensions, and she thanked outgoing chairperson Rev. Jason Mackey for effectively leading the Board of Pensions over the past several years. The annual conference approved the report as presented.

Report of the Conference Trustees

By Ed Preston

Rev. Dick Felty convened the Corporate Session of the Annual Conference on Friday afternoon. He offered several editorial corrections to the Trustees Report. One of those on the list of churches to be closed is St. Paul’s in Scranton. A question was raised about the ongoing ministry to the Congolese community there, with hope that funding could be found to keep the church open. After discussion, it was clarified that this ministry is to be continued at another location. Rev. Marian Hartman confirmed that the proper process for voting to close a church had been followed, as the congregation could no longer afford to operate the facility.

Another speaker shared that the Congolese congregation is already looking at various churches around Scranton in the hopes of finding a new home. Felty called for and received the approval of the trustees report.

Stewardship Foundation

By Ed Preston

Rev. Phyllis Bowers offered the report of the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation. The UMSF currently serves over 800 churches and organizations and has over 44 million dollars under management. The investments work to fund ministries, help churches with their giving, and are handled in a socially responsible way.

In the past year UMSF has developed a new set of five-year strategic goals, offered their first scholarship, and partnered with the Student Loan Fund to offer a program of financial literacy to help clergy manage debt in seminary. Sixty-six on-site visits, webinars, and other educational events, along with capital campaign advisement through Rev. Ed Zeiders, have brought a message of positive stewardship to churches and individuals throughout the Susquehanna Conference.

Bowers acknowledged the appreciation of the UMSF for the continued support of the annual conference in helping support its operations. She also expressed her appreciation for the work of Board members both past and present.

In global mission together

By Richard DeMarre and Deb Steransky

The Global Ministries Report was given by Rev. Russell Pierce, Executive Director, Mission Engagement, and Director, the Advance, who previously served in the former Wyalusing Charge of the Susquehanna Conference. After a video from Thomas Kemper, General Secretary of Global Missions, Pierce detailed that in the past 70 years, UMCom has received over 1.6 billion dollars from the United Methodist Church (and its predecessors). Over 40 million dollars has been sent to Florida, Louisiana, and Texas for hurricane relief, and another 20 million has gone to Puerto Rico. Three hundred missionaries are active in 60 countries, with over $30,000 given for emerging and growing churches in Russia.

Pierce then presented a plaque to Bishop Jeremiah Park commemorating the Susquehanna Conference as a member of the top ten conferences in donors to the Mission Together program.

Following the report, Rev. Debbie Heisely-Cato, pastor of Fishing Creek Salem Church in the York District and member of the Center for Spiritual Foundation, announced that Rev. Russell Hart, the former director, is retiring. She introduced the center’s new director, Rev. Kathy Harvey Nelson.

The Global Ministries Report

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“A good theme, one in Christ, better together only because together is better. One is not enough for ministry, but one in Christ means everyone is in this ministry together.

“We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your name is near; Men declare your wondrous works.” Psalm 75:1 (NASB)

As you go to your home to return to your daily work, God bless the stewardship of your words and your heart. Know that the Foundation is there for you to build upon and support your effectiveness in your work. As we journey in our faith, having seen and practiced being better together through the gift of being one in Christ, let this be the prayer we tune in to now:

“God be gracious to us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us — Selah.” Psalm 67:1 (NASB)

One in Christ

“My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” Psalm 45:1 (AMP)

On this special day, we celebrate the tunes we have shared and the ways God has been tuning us for much greater work. The scale of his plan and the glory of our King are almost too much to speak of, though we are compelled to voice our praise. We are renewed with our commitment to be engaged and connected in each others lives. We are graced with this time and place to be called to make disciples which make a better world together.

One in Christ. How small the words, how incredible the grace and privilege. Everything is better because we are together with Christ, for Christ, through Christ. Look to the left and right of you as you sit, as you walk, as you take communion today. Think of the saints, that wonderful cloud of witnesses here with you too, your legacy, your cheering fellowship, your profound call to write more verses to address our King. We sing a new song overflowing with a good theme, one in Christ, better together only because together is better. One is not enough for ministry, but one in Christ means everyone is in this ministry together.

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I arrived a student
and left a scholar
By Ed Preston

I am somebody! I am somebody!
I may be poor, but I am somebody!
I may be young, but I am somebody!
I may be destitute, but I am somebody!
I may not always stand tall, but I am somebody!
I have made mistakes, but I am somebody!

My walk is different, my clothes are different, my face is different, but I am somebody!
I am black, brown, or white. I may speak a different language. But I must be respected, always protected, never rejected.
I am a child of God! I am somebody! With this declaration to the body, James Cogman offered the report of the Black College Fund. A graduate of Claflin University and a student at Yale, Mr. Cogman observed that, “Attending a historically black college funded by the United Methodist Church allowed me to view life from different perspectives.” Looking back on his experience at Claflin he shared that, “I arrived a student and left a scholar, arrived with a narrow mind but left a world traveler, came confused but left with a sense of call. I would not be the man or the minister I am today without God, my family, and Claflin University.”

Mr. Cogman thanked the Annual Conference for paying 100 percent of our apportioned support for the Black College Fund. “You can see the results of the seeds that you sowed.”

Offering his thoughts on the work of Pierre de Chardin, Mr. Cogman closed with this thought, “De Chardin said that if humanity ever captured the energies of love, it will be the second time in history that humanity would take this a step further. If humanity could harness the power of love, it would be the first time in a long time that we would have rediscovered the heart of God.”

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Finding the right pace

By Rev. Jason R. Mackey
Incoming Director of Connectional Ministry and Administrative Services

I believe stories are important. You get to know a lot about a person by listening to their stories and the details they include. To tell you a little bit about me, I want to tell you a story.

Two years ago, I did something insane. I decided to enter a triathlon. It wasn’t an Ironman, that would be absolute suicide. It was an international, which is a one-mile swim, 25-mile bike ride, and a six-mile run. It took me just over three hours to cross the finish line, and I felt relieved and amazed. I have never considered myself to be athletic, and I had only run my first 5K one year earlier. Nonetheless, I had made a promise to myself that I was going to do this.

Back in January the bishop called me into his office and had a crazy idea (though he wouldn’t call it an “idea.” I’m pretty sure the term he used was “appointment”). When he asked me to be the director of connectional ministries, I was stunned. It was humbling. I was honored. But I was also terrified. I could think of a dozen people whom I thought were more qualified, more experienced, more deserving. And yet he was clear, “Jason, this is your appointment.” I had to do this.

Over the past few months as the shock has worn off, and I’ve slowly transitioned into this new role, working closely with Tom Salsgiver and Cabinet, meeting the staff and preparing for Annual Conference, it has reminded me of training for my triathlon. Twelve weeks before the race, I began a focused training regimen. The workouts started out short and built over time. As my stamina grows, you start to see that you really can do this, but you also discover what you have yet to learn.

For the race, I started watching YouTube videos, reading Triathlon magazine, and talking to experienced racers. Coming into the conference office, I feel blessed to have already had a good deal of training. From seminary at Evangelical, to working with the Young Pastors Network, Lewis Fellows, the Board of Pensions & Health, the Sessions Committee for Annual Conference, and having served at CrossPoint and Trinity, I have great tools at my disposal. But how do I know what I need to learn. I have a stack of 20-plus books to read by August, and I’m signed up for two conferences!

Of course, the most important thing I learned when training was the importance of setting your own pace. If you don’t, you’ll wear yourself out or get hurt. When you find your groove, there’s a peace and rhythm that allows you to run all day. This new season is no different. I have to find my pace, meeting the needs of the conference while also nurturing my relationship with God, who provides the wisdom and strength I need to lead.

So I make this promise to you. I will do this to the best of my ability, committed and focused, willing to learn and ready to find my pace. Let’s run.

Resolutions

By Ed Preston

Four resolutions were presented in the Conference Workbook. Resolution 1 was titled, “Mental Wellness,” and was amended to call upon congregations to initiate congregational and community conversations around the issue of mental wellness and addiction, raising awareness of addiction as a matter of mental health. The resolution was adopted as amended.

Resolution 2, “Form a Susquehanna Conference Conversation Care Ministry Team,” was presented and adopted without any discussion. Resolution 3, “Automated Equipment and Artificial Intelligence Within the Workplace,” which called on conference churches to initiate congregational and community conversations around the growing impact of automated equipment and Artificial Intelligence within the workplace and community. The resolution was also adopted without discussion.

Resolution 4, “Setting Policy and Procedure for the Election of Delegates to the 2020 and Subsequent General and Jurisdictional Conferences,” was presented by Rev. Larry Leland. Motions to amend “in written/electronic form,” and to call for the ballot to be the first order of business at the first plenary session, were accepted. The resolution was adopted.

Amazing Love! How Can it Be?

By Skip Spangler

In presenting the work of the Bishop’s Partners in Mission, Dilip Abayasakera asked, “What does love look like?”

In the words of St. Augustine, love has the hands to help others; it has the feet to hasten to the poor and lowly; it has the eyes to see misery and want; and it has the ears to hear the cries and sorrows of men. If St. Augustine could have seen the work of the Bishop’s Partners in Mission, Dilip said, he would say that’s love.

Churches throughout Susquehanna Conference have creatively and effectively raised thousands of dollars for the cause of reducing the debt owed on Mission Central and Imagine No Malaria. He also reported that over $52,000 was raised on Miles for Mission Walks that where held across the conference this year. These and other funds totaling $792,541 have saved thousands of lives from death to Malaria, bought more than four million bed nets, trained thousands of health workers, and reduced the debt owed on Mission Central to $890,000.

In these and other ways, the Bishop’s Partners in Mission empowers the churches of the Susquehanna Conference to demonstrate the love of God in the world.