Let God’s blessing shine

By Ryan Krauss

Under trumpet fanfare and bright organ keystrokes, robed clergy processed into Hershey Lodge’s Blue and White Rooms. This act ushered in the penultimate celebration of the 2018 session of the Susquehanna Annual Conference — the Service of Commissioning and Ordination. The Annual Conference theme, Better Together — One with Christ, was accentuated by the processional hymn, “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” Resident Bishop Jeremiah Park greeted the assembly in the grace of Jesus Christ and led a prayer affirming the common ministry of all believers through the Holy Spirit.

The following persons were presented to the body for ordination as provisional elders: John Bondhus, David Keyworth, John Mackey, Kristopher Sledge, and Donald Smith. Ruth Myers was presented for ordination into the Order of Deacons. Ron Baker, Audrey Brousous, Richard Hamlon Jr., Rebecca Holland, Rebecca McGee, and Jonathan Morningstar were presented for ordination into the Order of Elders. Bishop Park asked the worshipping body for its assent and trust in God’s grace over all who are being ordained and commissioned.

Park introduced both Bishop Neil L. Irons and Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball to the body. Bishop Steiner Ball, the guest preacher for this service of commissioning and ordination, is the resident bishop of the West Virginia Episcopal Area. She is a graduate of Dickinson College with a Bachelor of Arts in Religion, Duke Divinity School with a Masters of Divinity, and Wesley Theological Seminary with a Doctor of Ministry. Park commended her as a gifted preacher and well-respected voice on Wesley’s understanding of prevenient grace — a grace that assures us that God goes before us and God chases us, woos us, pursues us, even though we are still yet sinners.

Our response to the letter written to the Romans is that we are to turn the entirety of our lives to God, so that daily, we are transformed by Christ. A process that involves heart, mind, will, and actions as we become new persons who want what God wants. It is a process of becoming one in Christ, which is a matter of heart, mind, and spirit.

Beginning with Romans 12:1-2, Ball invited those who gathered to listen for the words that come to their mind from the passage: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (NRSV)

Ball then pointed out the first word of the passage, CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Living as the Body of Christ

By Brenda Leigey

The Annual Conference was blessed to begin their Saturday morning with a Bible study lead by Bishop Sandra L. Stein Ball, Episcopal leader of the Virginia Conference.

Drawing her message from Romans 12:1-8 and selected verses from 1 Corinthians 12, Ball said, “The purpose of Bible study is to examine and help us to see what it means to be one in Christ.” Ball then led those gathered in prayerfully singing, “O Lord, open our lips and we shall declare your praise.”

Ball, in preparing to read from Romans 12, said, “The Bible tells us about us and tells us about God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

This is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (NRSV)

Ball said the letter of Romans is to be a letter of love that reaches out and encompasses all people. It fits well with our Wesleyan understanding of prevenient grace — a grace that assures us that God goes before us and God chases us, woos us, pursues us, even though we are still yet sinners.

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“Today is a celebration of God, of call, of commissioning and ordination,” claimed Steiner Ball as she greeted the ordinands, commissioners, and the worshipping body. “This is a celebration of the believers. We are called to remember where we came from, where we are going, and to whom we belong. We are called to
Service of Commissioning and Ordination

Commissioning/Provisional Elder Membership

Ordained Elders
Left to right:
Ronald Baker
Audrey M. Brosious
Richard P. Hanlon
Jonathan D. Morningstar
Rebecca L. Holland
Rebecca J. (Woomer) McGee

Ordained Deacon Elder

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

Ruth L. Myers

Connect with the Susquehanna Conference through Social Media
**Young People’s Ministry Council**

*By Ed Preston*

“Youth leadership is more than just a pie in the face. Youth leadership brings a necessary perspective, is the hope for future leadership, and a way to bring young people to Christ. We are leaders in the church now, as middle and high schoolers, because we know that one day we will be in your position helping our own children become church leaders.”

With this important observation, Julia, Jacob, Lydia, and Hannah offered the report of the Young People’s Ministry Council.

Julia shared that while impacted by the surrounding culture and having ways to connect and share Christ, “My faith puts me in the minority. I’m the only Christian on campus.”

She later shared that, “Leadership as youth in the church helps me bridge this gap.”

The youth lifted up the new, fresh voice they can bring to the table of local church leadership. They offered the ability of the youth voice to help bring change in motives, opinions, and ministry options. “In 20 years I will be 36,” said one youth. Where do you want me to be in church leadership?”

But youth leadership isn’t just about the church, but also the individual relationship with God. One story shared was of a church camp experience during a time of grief over the loss of a friend to cancer.

“It wasn’t until church camp that I realized that the Holy Spirit has been working in his life for the future of youth. When he passed away, it was known that we were not alone. As brothers and sisters we need to make sure that the youth know they are never alone.

Three levels of assistance are needed in helping youth affect change as leaders: personal, local church, and conference. On the personal level mentoring, intentional messages of support and personal openness to their perspectives. At the local church level, having voices on committees, sharing meaningfully in worship, and being given resources to advance their faith journey through service would help youth grow. Giving youth the ability of the youth voice to help the youth “need to know what they can bring to the table of local church leadership.”

At the conference and jurisdictional level, the youth “need to know that you really care about us being here.” They seek conversation about examples of their impact and the difference they make. Finding new ways to increase youth attendance at Annual Conference is a challenging conversation which they desire to have. We were left with these words: “I encourage you all to go back to your home church and empower your youth to be leaders for the kingdom of God.”
The Council of Bishops, in partnership with The Upper Room, is launching Phase 3 of Praying our Way Forward.

“Now we are ready to launch Phase 3, which begins June 3 and continues through the Special Session of General Conference in February 2019. In this phase, we are encouraging every United Methodist to fast weekly and to pray daily with the Council of Bishops,” said Bishop Al Gwinn, the prayer team coordinator.

In Phase 3, all United Methodists are invited to:

1. Engage in a weekly Wesleyan 24-hour fast from Thursday after dinner to Friday mid-afternoon. Those who have health situations causing food fasts to be unadvisable might consider fasting from social media, emails, or another daily activity.

2. Pause and pray for our church’s mission and way forward daily for four minutes from 2:23 through 2:26 a.m. or p.m. in their own time zone OR at another time. This is because the Special Session of General Conference will be held February 23 through February 26, 2019.

3. Pray using a weekly prayer calendar that will be posted on the UMCPrays.org website from June 2, 2018, through the end of February 2019. The calendar will list a unique cluster of names each week. The names will balance United States bishops and delegates with Central Conference bishops and delegates. It will also include General Secretaries, Commission on a Way Forward members, the Commission of the General Conference, and the staff of the General Conference.

There is a local church media kit with downloadable resources including logos, social media posts, and bulletin inserts available at UMCPrays.org.

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**BIBLE STUDY**

_Continued from Page One_

“Therefore” “Therefore” lets us know that the verses are connected back to something else; something that has come before. Referring back to Romans 6:1-2, Ball shared that Paul did not want people to know that simply believing is not enough, because that will cause us to live in a way that is not what we are called to do. True faith should result in something more – the living of holy lives.

Paul in writing to the Roman Christian community instructed them about the connection of body and spirit which is essential in our lives. Our bodies are part of our whole being; sacred and beloved of God. Paul also shares with the Roman Christians that we are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, a holy sacrifice. We are to live as one with Christ, saying yes to Christ and making a decision to dedicate our lives to following the example of Christ.

Going back to Romans 12:1-2, Ball talked about what it means to “not to be conformed.” Conform means like fitting in, following the crowd, moving from one thing to the next. We instead, we are to be transformed. We are to be moulded and shaped by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to be one in Christ. It is by the grace of God that we are being transformed to be something different than the world. This involves the physical and the mind, for behavior follows belief. We become what our minds consume.

Paul calls for us to let God transform our minds, be transformed of the stuff that leads to a change in us; to think with sober judgment, yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith. We are not all the same, but one in the body of Christ. Paul also shares with the Roman church that the verses are connected back to Romans 12:1-2. Ball then moved on to verses 3-4 of Romans 12.

“For by the grace given to me I say to every one among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many parts, and not all the members have the same function.” (New Revised Standard Version)

Grace is given to us for the renewing of our minds; to think of ourselves realistically and humbly. We have no right to feel superior to those who have different gifts. Paul wrote: “For we do not put down others or tear apart others, but lift them up. None of the gifts we receive are for our boasting but for building up individual members sharing our gifts because of the grace given us.

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**Students**

Rev Dr. Tim Baer presented the report on Council on Finance and Administration. The Benevolent Goals, Special Offering Sanctuary and General Recommendations portions of the presentation were approved without discussion. An additional section of funding was introduced based on our Wesleyan heritage of planting churches and expanding discipleship in believers to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

New church starts and new sites/ fresh expressions look to the future and will become a part of the body of Christ.

A plaque signifying 100 percent support from local congregations as part of Mission portion in the coming years. These programs have the support from our denominational boards as well as from the Cabinet. This was also approved.

Ball shared that, “Someone has said, “It is all about the money.” He added, “I beg to differ. It is all about ministry and mission in the name of Jesus. Money is just a resource to make that happen.” He noted that our outreach ministries extend from food relief in local communities to the supply of water to villages half way around the world.

Presenting the financial plan for the approval of the Annual Conference, Bishop Jeremiah Park shared that the 2019 total General Church Appointments figure increased 1.16 percent, and the 2019 Plan for Ministry funding decreased .75 percent. Discussion concerned a major rollback for an increase in the funding of Mission was discussed, and several friendly possibilities for resolving this matter were presented.

A plague signifying 100 percent participation from the Susquehanna Conference to the GCFA and a number of appreciation from support of Africa University were presented to Bishop Jeremiah Park.

**Volume 9**

Wrap Up

SUSQUEHANNA DAILY LINK is published during Annual Conference by Connectional Ministries, Susquehanna Conference, The United Methodist Church, 303 Mulberry Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-3179 Phone: 717-766-7441 or e-mail link@susumc.org

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE**

Rev. Dr. Becky Collier Doman.

“It is the eye in the Body of Christ” Ball then referred back to the first slide by artist Becky Collier Doman.

“It is the eye in the Body of Christ” to say that the eye is the heart of faith. The eyes are the entry into our hearts. The hands represented are God’s love outreaching and encompassing us.

The second slide is a painting of another aspect of the body of Christ. Paul talked about the church being the body, hands and feet of Christ. Holding up one another when we cannot stand on our own; upholding others when they cannot hold themselves up.

The third slide represented the Body of Christ as we remember Christ through the sacraments. The means of grace as we are knitted together, one with each other; intersecting the divine and the human.

The fourth slide displayed the experience of sound represented by the ears of Christ; not just the hearing but the receiving of the word that will come one with us. When Christ calls out to us, our response is to receive the word, offering it as a witness to others.

The fifth slide was a painting of a mouth and how our mouth can be a significant gift if it is used with renewed mind of Christ. The sixth slide is the receiving of the Holy Spirit through the water of baptism; the water used for foot washing or as the Holy Spirit of God reminding us of servanthood as the body of Christ.

The seventh slide depicted the body of Christ as each panel connected together to take the shape of the Cross; representing the flow of the Holy Spirit as the feet are firmly planted on the Bible and grounded in faith to allow God to move us to not be conformed but he transformed us as we renew our minds. A journey to be traveled throughout our lives, through physical and spiritual feeding. Ball emphasized, “We are One in Christ. All the panels, all the colors, the hands of the color, (the Holy Spirit) reflect that we are all unique and we have different gifts. We are not all the same, but one in the body of Christ.” The picture is not complete if not all of the colors work together. As the colors work together in harmony, so should the body of Christ.

Ball then lifted up the seven gifts of the Spirit that Paul talks about: the gifts of prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving, leadership, and compassion. All these spiritual gifts are given by God to be used on the behalf of others. This is what the body of Christ is to be: One in the Body, One in Christ. We are to be God’s blessing to others.

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Bible Study Conference about Ghosts at the Susquehanna Conference Center. You can view any of our content – with the exception of reprinted material. Graphics, and photos are available by request; please email secenk@susumc.org
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