

UMConnection DAILY

235th Session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Transformed lives, transform lives • Wednesday, May 29, 2019

United to Love in holy conferencing

BY ERIK ALSGAARD

WITH THE SHADOW of the 2019 Special Session of General Conference

looming large, the 235th Annual Conference Session of the Baltimore-Washington

Conference will be like no other. United Methodists are wrestling with what's next in a multinational denomination still deeply divided over the role of LGBTQ Christians.

That, of course, includes the BWC. Amid the 19 resolutions conference members will debate and vote on are at least 11 with direct ties to the result of the Special Session. That February conference passed legislation that maintains the policy that the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching" and reinforces bans on same-gender weddings and "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy.

Holy Conferencing is as old as our denomination. The first such conference on these shores happened a short walking difference from the site of our Session. In 1784, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury called together lay preachers in the new United States for what is now known as "The Christmas Conference" at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore.

"It was 10 days of debates and struggles and accusations and reconciliations, and the kinds of things that we do as Methodists, which is beautiful in its own way," said John Strawbridge, a lay member of Lovely Lane UMC who also serves as its historian, in a 2017 video. "To realize that... those people all came together as



adults for various ministries.

Central to the work of our session will be

lay people. It's so important that the laity realize that they are not the audience, that they are the church."

"We are One: United to Love" is the theme set by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling that will guide us this week, using Ephesians 4:1-16 as the foundational Scripture.

The ordination service will be held Friday evening, May 31. Bishop Easterling will preach. This year, the Rev. Ianther Mills, pastor of Asbury UMC in Washington, will preach at the Memorial Service, which will be held Thursday evening. Marcia McFee, a worship expert and consultant, will speak at the laity session, and the Rev. Marvin McMickle, president of the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in New York, will lead Bible study. All the sessions, except the Clergy Session, will be live streamed at www.bwcumc.org.

On Saturday, our attention will focus on young people. A new strategic plan for youth will be presented. Confirmands from across the BWC will also gather Saturday afternoon for a celebration, including a commissioning of youth and young

the election of delegates to the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Six lay and six clergy will be elected to both conferences, along with alternates.

Conference members will adopt a budget and other stewardship recommendations, hear reports of various ministries, pray, sing, worship, and simply love one another.



wi-fi password:
ac2019

Noteworthy speakers to take stage

Bishop Easterling to preside & preach

BISHOP LATRELLE MILLER Easterling is the episcopal leader of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

She began this ministry as a “servant leader” in 2016 and is the first woman to serve as leader of the 235-year-old conference.

Before coming to the Washington Area, she served as a superintendent and pastor in Boston. She is a native of

Indianapolis. Before entering the ministry, she worked as a human resources manager and director, and as a prosecuting attorney.

Easterling possesses the soul of a poet and is celebrated as one of the denomination’s best preachers. She is known for the authenticity of her leadership. Over the years, she said, she has learned, “you cannot lead where you have not been, preach what you have not experienced, nor

teach what you do not know.”

As the Church stands on the precipice of schism, she asks the people of the BCW to engage in a time of sacred relationship building and listening with convicted humility to one another and the still small voice of God.



LaTrelle Easterling

McFee illuminates drama of worship

MARCIA MCFEE, KNOWN as one of the most innovative worship designers in the Church today, will speak at the Laity Session Wednesday afternoon.

McFee is an author, worship designer, professor, preacher, artist, and teacher (see story, page 5). From her home town of Lake

Tahoe, she leads worship retreats and oversees the creative Worship Design Studio website. (<http://marciamcfee.com>) She has a doctorate in liturgical studies.

She also has a passion for performing and teaching. Earlier in her life, she experienced an epiphany moment when she encountered a quote from Cecil

Williams: “If your doin’ doesn’t dance with your sayin’, you haven’t chosen life.”

McFee has chosen and created an extraordinary life.



Marcia McFee

Johnson to deliver laity address

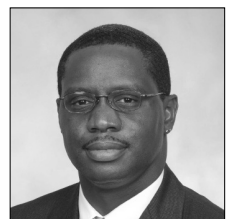
GIVING THIS YEAR’S laity address will be Scott Johnson, a former lay leader of the Upper New York Annual Conference and president of the Annual Conference

Association of Lay Leaders.

He was invited to speak by the BWC Conference Lay Leader, Delores Martin, who cited the ways Johnson’s faith illuminates his work in criminal justice and in

higher education.

Johnson is currently the lay pastor of First UMC of Buffalo.



Scott Johnson

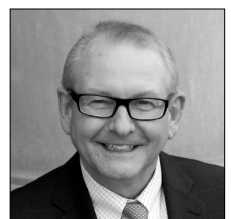
DeVries explores ministry with youth

Mark DeVries, who will deliver the keynote address on Saturday, is the president and founder of Ministry Architects, a Tennessee consulting firm that embraces both creativity and structure that builds space for innovative ministry.

He has trained youth workers from across the world, lectured at numerous colleges and universities, and is now serving as a consultant on the BWC’s strategic plan for Young People’s Ministries.

He is the author of several

books including “Sustainable Youth Ministry.”



Mark DeVries

Discipleship key to speakers' messages

Mills pays tributes to saints of the BWC

THE REV. IANTHER Marie Mills, pastor of Asbury UMC in Washington, will preach at the Memorial Service Thursday evening.

Mills, who has served at several local churches, as a district superintendent, and dean of the Cabinet, received her call to ministry in 1990 at A.P. Shaw UMC when she felt moved by the words of Ephesians 3, "to search the unsearchable riches

of Christ and share the fullness of God."

She has three master's degrees and a doctoral degree. Before becoming a pastor, she worked for 15 years as a software engineer.

Mills is known as a prophetic United Methodist voice in D.C. In an article in the Washington Post about Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., she was quoted as saying, "The beloved community is not only possible, it

is inevitable if we as Christians truly embrace who we are and seek to live as persons who are made in the image of God and sent into the world as resurrection people defeating death, despair and degradation with the love of God in Christ Jesus."



Ianther Mills

McMickle leads morning Bible studies

THE BIBLE STUDY sessions, which will be held Thursday and Friday mornings, will be led by a noted philosopher, theologian and preacher.

The Rev. Marvin McMickle is president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in Rochester, NY. He is also a professor and the author of 17 books and countless articles and lectures.

A line from his book, "An Encyclopedia of African American

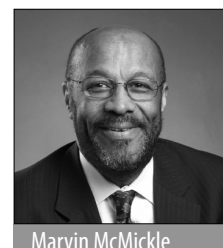
Christian Heritage," is engraved in the wall of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in D.C. It says: "Nineteenth-century black churches ministered to the needs of the soul and served a host of secular functions, which placed them squarely in the center of black social life."

McMickle recently announced that he will be stepping down as president of the school in June, but will continue to teach African American Religion Studies for one more year

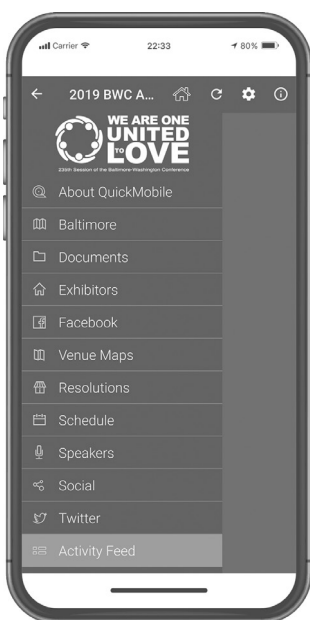
before retiring fully at age 71.

In an online interview he said, "I'm of that group of people that believes the ministry is not a choice, it's a calling.

There's a very clear sense that God has directed your life in a particular way, and that you won't be content doing anything but that."



Marvin McMickle



Your mobile assistant

NEW TO THE APP?

If you need to download the app, proceed to your designated app store and search *UMCMeet*. Once downloaded, it will take you to the UMCMeet home page where you can search *bwc2019*. Click on the plus sign and it will save to your My Events tab.

GET 2019 VERSION:

Already have UMCMeet from 2018 and need the 2019 version? Click on the three lines at the top left and click the Home icon that appears on the top bar. Then follow the steps above.



Thank you to the United Methodist Mid-Atlantic Foundation for providing this year's bags. Learn more about how you can achieve and maintain financial wellness to grow your faith.

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WHAT UNITES US TO LOVE?

As United Methodists live through this season in the life of the denomination, we encounter opportunities to reclaim our identity in Christ and renew our faith.



1

United Methodists embrace practical divinity. We enact faith.

2

We embrace the unity woven together by faith and good works.

3

Grace pervades our understanding of everything. By grace, we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit. By grace, we mean God's presence woven inside everything.

WHO WE SAY WE ARE:

OUR DOCTRINE STATES:

"We proclaim no personal gospel that fails to express itself in relevant social concerns; we proclaim no social gospel that does not include the personal transformation of sinners. ... A church that rushes to punishment is not open to God's mercy, but a church lacking the courage to act decisively on personal and social issues loses its claim to moral authority."

We say that. We also try to live it.

WE ARE ONE:

Worship draws us together into the heart of God. So does prayer. So does mission.

Our worship leader this Annual Conference Session, Marcia McFee, notes that "despite the separation that we create based on various ideologies or theologies, 'we are one' is something that science and art tell us is unavoidable. We are of the one fabric of all matter in the universe and what affects one, affects all. The question is, what we will do with the divisions that affect us? We celebrate the deep truth that we are one (in spite of ourselves) but also lament the ways we allow fear and hatred to tear at that fabric of unity."

OUR THEOLOGICAL TASK:

Our theological task is constructive in that every generation must appropriate creatively the wisdom of the past and seek God in their midst in order to think afresh about God, revelation, sin, redemption, worship, the church, freedom, justice, moral responsibility, and other significant theological concerns. Our summons is to understand and receive the Gospel promises in our troubled and uncertain times. Our theological task is both individual and communal. ... It requires the participation of all who are in our Church, lay and ordained, because the mission of the Church is to be carried out by everyone who is called to discipleship. To be persons of faith is to hunger to understand the truth given to us in Jesus Christ. ... Our interest is to incorporate the promises and demands of the Gospel into our daily lives. (From the 2016 Book of Discipline)

Worship leads us on a spiritual journey

BY ERIK ALSGAARD

MARCIA MCFEE IS a self-described “ritual artist.” That means she uses worship and preaching as a canvas, painting sensory-rich, textured, colorful experiences to bring the Word of God alive.

As a professor and consultant, McFee is a sought-after expert in these areas. She’s joining the BWC this week as worship leader and offering a workshop today from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

Helping churches enhance their worship life is McFee’s goal and ministry, no matter the style or context, she said. For the past 25 years, her work has impacted two General Conferences (2008 and 2012), several Jurisdictional Conference and agency events, numerous Annual Conference Sessions, local churches, and countless people’s lives.

A cradle United Methodist from Missouri, she credits the church for nurturing her love of the arts as an expression of her faith.

“My background is in professional dance and musical theater,” McFee said, “and I love the chance to create conference worship, whether that’s General Conference or Annual Conference. I think we can create a sense of community and intimacy, even when we’re in large spaces and large groups.”

Conference worship, McFee said, is somewhat different than worship in a local church.

“Some people think that conference worship is just local

church worship done bigger, but that’s actually not true,” McFee said. “It’s a different art form; a different sensibility, because it’s a different context with people coming from all over.”

At Annual Conference Sessions, people come together in good United Methodist tradition to understand how – if – we’re connected, she said.

While McFee admits it can be difficult these days in The United Methodist Church to feel connected, she is a firm believer that singing together and

worshipping together “can sometimes help us to have hope that is not possible when we are disembodied from one another.”

McFee also recognizes the complexity and the complications of being a diverse body together. “If we pay close attention and we name that in the midst of worship, I believe that helps us to move forward in whatever way we can.”

As in local church worship, in conference worship, congregational participation is crucial, she said. “Because we are not a weekly community,” she said, “but an annual community that comes together in the context of doing business and understanding who we are. All of that is part of the layers of what’s present as we come to God in prayer, praise, and lament.”

People fortunate enough to attend her workshop today will come away with concepts that are foundational to any worship style and which they’ll notice as our time together unfolds. McFee will also be speaking and teaching at the Laity Session today at 2 p.m.

Rather than cobbling together various pieces for worship, McFee is presenting a flow – or story – through worship. The sense, she said, is one of a spiritual journey: living life on the road to love.

This is the first time McFee has brought her talents to the BWC for an Annual Conference Session. Any new wrinkles or surprises?

“Worship happens in the whole room,” McFee said, “not just up front. One of the things that will be new (for the BWC) is to have the communion table in the center of the room, in the center of the body. The baptismal bowl – that which is our common call to ministry and unites us in love – will be there. We will be turning to face that table so that we can literally feel ourselves, gathered around that table.”

For folks who may have missed out on her workshop or Laity Session presentation, McFee offers several worship and preaching resources through her websites, www.marciamcfee.com, www.worshipdesignstudio.com, and www.thinklikeafilmmaker.com. Her latest book, “Think Like a Filmmaker,” offers step-by-step worship planning resources, and is available on her website and on Amazon.



Exhibitors provide resources to enrich ministry

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| Africa University | Good News/WCA | Project Transformation DC |
| Anandi Chocolate | Heritage International Fashions | Quality Business Solutions |
| Appalachia Service Project | House of Ruth Maryland/B-More Bags | Resource UMC - UMCOM |
| Armbruster A/V | In Mission Together Eurasia Committee | Rise Against Hunger |
| Barrier | Lancaster Theological Seminary | St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute |
| Bethlehem Christian Family | Leonche and BB Coutures | Steps of Hope Guatemala |
| Baltimore County Christian Workcamp | Local Authors Corner | Turnkey Enterprises, LLC |
| Baltimore Washington Area Reconciling Ministries | Loudoun County Sheriff's Office | UMC Support |
| Board of Child Care | Manna House, Inc. | United Methodist Men |
| BWC Commission on Archives & History | Marcia McFee | United Methodist Motorcycle Association Ministry |
| BWC Connectional Ministries | Market USA Federal Credit Union | United Methodist Women |
| BWC UMC Climate Justice Group | The Masterpiece 415 | Waldon Studio Architects |
| Chandler Theological Seminary | Methodist Theological School in Ohio | Wesley Theological Seminary |
| Clear Connection | Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation | YBI African Botique |
| Cokesbury | NABLAA | Young Leaders in Training (Y-LIT) |
| Discipleship Ministries | Order of Deaconess Home Missioners | |
| Diva By Cindy Hair Care | Order of Deacons | Visit the Ministries Kiosk in the Grand Ballroom corridor to learn more about Abundant Health, Action and Advocacy, Hispanic-Latino Ministries, and Young People's Ministries. |
| Epiphany Studios Inc. | Prayer Quilts | |



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Embodying Jesus Christ's grace & love by working for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the UMC.

Speakers Bureau & Coaches to equip your church for important conversations at this moment in the UMC.

Annual Meeting – June 22 in Frederick

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:28



bwarm.org
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We're Glad You Asked: An FAQ

What is the password for the hotel's wireless connection?

ac2019

Is this the same password that I use in my room?

No. This password is the one you'll use in the ballroom, other meetings spaces and in the common areas of the hotel.

Are the sessions being live streamed?

Yes, your friends, family and congregation can watch the plenary sessions and worship services, at www.bwcumc.org.

Are there accommodations this year for nursing mothers?

Yes, a curtained-off area has been set up in the back, right-hand corner (as you face the stage) of the ballroom. This section, which has electricity for a pumping machine, a changing table and video monitor to watch the proceedings is, according to the Rules Committee, a part of the bar and nursing mothers may use their voting machines in that area. Those who wish to use these accommodations should check-in at the marshal and tellers' table by the stage.

Why are there dogs here at annual conference?

Two of our members are using service dogs, which allow them to fully participate in the life of the conference. Some members have expressed discomfort due to allergies. Special seating has been set up in the Ballroom and at meals for those who need to be away from the dogs. To learn more about service dogs, read an article by the Rev. Leo Yates at www.bwcumc.org/news-and-views/service-dogs-at-annual-conference/

What do this year's offerings go toward?

The offering at opening worship will be given to provide camperships – scholarships to needy children seeking to attend camp at West River or Manidokan this summer. (www.bwccampsandretreats.com/) The ordination offering will benefit Seeds of Security, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling's initiative for victims of domestic violence who are seeking to flee their abusers. (www.bwcumc.org/ministries/wellness-mission/seeds-of-security) A third offering, for youth and young adult ministries, will be taken at the Confirmation Celebration Saturday afternoon.

When are General and Jurisdictional Conference?

Before we meet in May 2020, the denomination will gather in Minneapolis May 5-15 for General Conference. Petitions to the General Conference, which can be submitted by individuals, churches or groups, are due Sept. 18 – 230 days before the Conference. The Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference is held July 13-17 outside of Baltimore at Delta Hotels, 245 Shawan Road in Hunt Valley.

What is the mission project this year?

Members will be packing 120,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger on Thursday at lunch and dinner time in the Harborside Ballroom.. The Baltimore Metropolitan District invites members to help by contributing funds: \$10 will pay for 30 meals. Learn more at www.bwcumc.org/rah.

What is that large statue in the circle outside the hotel?

It honors the Polish soldiers who were killed 80 years ago in the Katyn Forest Massacre in World War II. The chaplain of the Katyn Families noted: "When you pass this memorial, stop and briefly reflect on the mass grave of Katyn and other murder sites. Then raise up your head to God, to truth, and to love. ... Let this be a forward-looking symbol that calls on people to follow a more blessed road through life – a life free of hatred, violence and lies, a road hostile neither to God nor humanity."

What if I have more questions?

Ask a Highlighter, volunteers scattered around the hotel and dedicated to providing radical hospitality and finding you the answers you need. You'll also want to stay connected after the session with the e-connection, a weekly electronic newsletter that comes out on Monday mornings with the latest news and information from the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Please also be sure to like our Facebook page at facebook.com/bwcumc, and follow us on Twitter @bwcumc.

Because of a printing error, four lay nominees were left off the delegate list in the Conference Booklet. An insert has been added; please note the addition of the last four nominees: 021. Matt Sichel, 022. Cynthia Taylor, 023. Richard Willson and 024. Greg Witte.

235TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE • WE ARE ONE: UNITED TO LOVE

CONFERENCE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
8 a.m.	Ordination Rehearsal	Grand Ballroom
9 a.m.	Registration Opens	
9:30 a.m.	Preconference Workshops	
10:30 a.m.	Retirement Luncheon	Waterview A-D
1:30 - 5 p.m.	Clergy Session	Grand Ballroom
2 - 4 p.m.	Laity Session	Harborside Ballroom
2 p.m.	Exhibit Hall opens	
5 - 6:45 p.m.	Dinner	Lauren A&B; Kent A,B,C
5 - 6:45 p.m.	Extension Ministry Dinner	Waterview A,B,C
6:30 p.m.	Doors Open for Worship	
7 p.m.	Opening Worship <i>"Road to Love:" We remember our common need to be cleansed, our common baptism, and our common call to love.</i>	Grand Ballroom

THURSDAY, MAY 30

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
6 a.m.	Wellness Screening & Pre-Retirement Counseling	Laurel C&D
6:45 - 8:15 a.m.	Breakfast	Harborside Ballroom
8:15 a.m.	Gathering Music begins	Grand Ballroom
8:30 a.m.	Bible Study	Grand Ballroom
9:30 a.m.	Call to Order	Grand Ballroom
9:35 a.m.	Organizational Motion & Rules	Grand Ballroom
9:45 a.m.	Greetings	
10 a.m.	United Methodist Communications Presentation	
10:10 a.m.	Holy Conferencing: Samoan Circle Process	
12:15 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch	
2:00 p.m.	Plenary Session Begins Greetings from Baltimore City Mayor	
2:10 p.m.	Voting Device Instructions	
2:20 p.m.	Presentation of Resolutions and Delegate Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Table • Supporting Deliberations for New Expressions of Methodism • Rotating Venue & Accommodation • Purchase a New Episcopal Residence • Unrestricted Bequest – Centre St. UMC • Amending the Rules • Consultations before Restructuring • Provide Nursing and Pumping Accommodations • Attending Meetings for General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates • Called Back to Our Methodist Roots • Call for an Adjourned/Special Session of AC • Representation of LGBTQIA+ Persons on Conf. Commissions, Committees & Agencies • Conservation of Conf. Ministry Funding • Use of Conf. Funds to Support LGBTQIA+ • Do No Harm through the Ordination Process • Do No Harm Through Marriage Prohibition • Do No Harm Across the NEJ • Affiliate with the Western Jurisdiction • Constitutionality of Discipline Para 304.3 	
4:55 p.m.	Approval of Consent Calendar (Order of the day)	
5 - 6:45 p.m.	Dinner	
6:30 p.m.	Doors open for worship	
7 p.m.	Memorial Service <i>"Pouring Out Love:" Through our remembrances of how the saints faithfully walked a purposeful path, we vow once again to make our journey steady, humble, and sure.</i>	

CONSENT CALENDAR

Pursuant to the Conference Rules, the reports from all program and administrative committees have been placed on the Consent Calendar. These reports can be found on the conference website at www.bwcumc.org/consentcalendar. These items do not require Conference action and will be received without further reference.

An item may be removed from the Consent Calendar by submitting a form with the signatures of 10 members. A link to this downloadable form can be found at bwcumc.org/consentcalendar. These forms must be submitted to the Conference Secretary by 4:50 p.m. on Thursday, May 30.

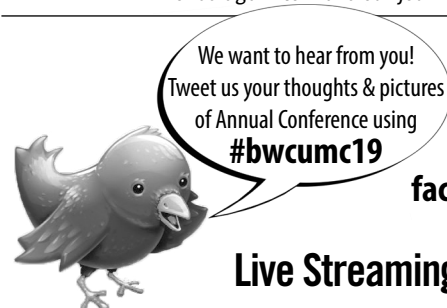
VISIT THE CHASSEUR ROOM FOR PRAYER

For more than 30 years, members of the BWC's United Methodist Men have shared a ministry of prayer at the Annual Conference Session. This year is no different. Located in the Chasseur room, on the third floor behind the bank of elevators, the prayer room is a place to spend a quiet moment connecting to God, said Bryon Gould, Prayer Advocate for the UMM.

"God wants us to connect with him," said Gould. "We need to have prayer while we're doing this business of the Lord."

The prayer room opens at 7 a.m. Thursday. More than 30 volunteers assist in the ministry.

Prayer Warriors are also scattered throughout the plenary session to pray with you if you feel the need.



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