

## Beacon Center shines hope on D.C. community



Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser (behind the red bow) stands with Bishop LaTrelle Easterling and the Rev. Joe Daniels, to her right, and Hazel Broadnax (to her left) at the ribbon cutting ceremony of The Beacon Center March 13.

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMCConnection Staff

**T**HE REV. JOE Daniels, the lead pastor of Emory UMC in Washington, D.C., stood at the podium in his church's sanctuary. "Good morning, everyone!" he said.

He was greeted with a one-minute standing ovation.

That's because this morning — March 13, 2019 — was no ordinary morning for him, leaders and members of his church. This morning was the ribbon cutting ceremony and celebration of The Beacon Center, a years-long vision come to life.

Emory UMC and its nonprofit entity, the Emory Beacon of Light, Inc., in partnership with The Community Builders, Inc. — a nonprofit developer of affordable and mixed-income residential and mixed-use developments — officially opened The Beacon Center with speeches and a formal ribbon cutting ceremony for the 99-unit affordable rental housing, commercial and congregational development project.

After \$56 million and many years, tears and fears, the vision had become reality. It left Daniels wiping his eyes and his brow.

"This is the day that the Lord has made," he proclaimed after dabbing his face with a handkerchief. "It's a beautiful day for a ribbon cutting!"

It was also a day nurtured in persistence, patience and prayer "in a world too consumed with wealth, power and privilege, and too often

bereft of concern for those looking for a hand up, not a hand out," said Bishop LaTrelle Easterling in a speech before the ribbon cutting.

The Beacon Center is a direct response, Daniels said, to the growing need for affordable housing in Washington, particularly for individuals and families living below the average median income of the city. The overall median household income in DC stood at \$75,506 in 2016, according to Census data.

However, when adjusted by race, white household median income stood at \$122,369, while black household median income stood at \$37,891, or about 31 percent of white household median income. As a result, many black families are priced out of the DC market for homes or apartments.

This crisis did not go unnoticed by Daniels and the members of Emory UMC. More than 10 years ago, Daniels presented his vision of building affordable housing in the church's community. As a result, on Oct. 7, 2016, the first shovel turned dirt for the Beacon Center.

Supported by a variety of funders including the United Methodist Development Fund, DC Housing Finance Agency, DC Department of Housing and Community Development, Redstone Equity Partners, Chase, Wells Fargo, The Community Builders and the Neighborhood Reinvestment Fund, the project also includes community spaces, a restaurant/café featuring a

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## Town hall looks at immigration

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMCConnection Staff

**I**MMIGRATION MAKES HEADLINES in the United States and around the world. With more than 25.9 million refugees and asylum seekers in the world in 2017, how and if people cross borders and for what reasons have become a political football.

To help untangle some of the mess that is immigration in the United States, especially how Christians can respond, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling called together a town hall meeting March 23 in Ellicott City.

Bishop Easterling serves on the Council of Bishops Task Force on Immigration, the advocacy team on behalf of the Council that helps bishops in responding to immigration situations such as providing sanctuary to immigrants, legal counsel through Justice for our Neighbors clinics, and advocating for the rights of immigrants in communities. The event brought together church members seeking answers to how their church can be involved in ministry to immigrants, local experts and the Methodist bishop of an Annual Conference in Mexico.

"Hope is what has caused us to gather here this morning," said Bishop Easterling. "We follow a Christ who himself had to be greeted at borders."



Bishop Felipe Ruiz-Aguilar

The bishop restated her belief that all people are equal in the sight of God, and all people are of "deep sacred worth," she said.

That basic understanding lies at the root of understanding immigration from a Christian perspective, she said.

"Those who are looking for a better way of life," the bishop said, "those who are looking for safety for their family ... often get looked upon with disdain and without welcome. That's a crisis of conscience and of the heart and understanding our baptismal vow."

Philip Wingeier-Rayo, Dean at Wesley Theological Seminary, who has served as a missionary in several countries, outlined

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### SPECIAL SECTION:

Lay and Clergy nominee profiles for the 2020 General Conference.

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By MANDY SAYERS  
Lead Pastor, Glen Mar UMC, Ellicott City

I SPENT A FEW days last week with my folks in Florida. Time with my mother is always good for my soul, and when I fly down by myself to see her, it’s a sign I’ve been under some stress and I’m in need of some TLC (thanks, General Conference!).

When the writer of Ephesians calls us to pour ourselves out for others, I’m reminded of Jesus who “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil. 2: 7). I’m reminded of the woman who poured out expensive perfume to anoint Jesus, a pouring out of love.

And I’m also reminded of the way my mother loves me.

She has a way of knowing exactly the very thing I need. When I am with her, I can sit deeply in the chair and truly relax. I don’t have to be particularly brilliant or together, and I can just be myself. She brings me ice water I don’t even have to ask for, because she knows I don’t hydrate enough. She cooks healthy and delicious food. (What is it about food made for us by people who love us? It is more delicious than all the drive-thru fast food in the universe).

She and I go for walks, and swim laps, and sit in the Florida sun,

solving all the problems of our lives while applying sunscreen religiously and reading novels. She truly knows me and listens deeply and validates the “Jesus” in me. Mother has always shown me the love of Christ, the epitome of “pouring out” in love.

It’s axiomatic, I guess, that to “pour out” you have to have something inside to give, and we know that the love of God is poured into our hearts even before we know how to accept that love. We engage in a spiritual life with God so that we can give that which we have received. To love well, it helps to have been loved first.

By that standard, between God and Mama, I should be way closer to “perfection in love.” Nonetheless, it seems to me that that kind of love is hard to “pay back.” It can only be paid forward, “poured out” for others. In the name of Christ, Church, let us pour ourselves out in love.

*Ancient church mothers and fathers often greeted one another with the phrase, “Give me a word.” This greeting led to the sharing of insights and wisdom. Today we continue this tradition with this monthly column. This year, the “WORD” will be taken from Ephesians 4:1-16 .*

By DARYL WILLIAMS  
Pastor, St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill

I F YOU ARE OVER 10 years old, you have lived long enough to know what it feels like when you’re running on empty. That feeling that there is always something else to do, something more to give, someone else in need of something from you and you don’t feel like you have anything left. It is in those moments that we want to hang up a sign that says

feel like we are running on empty, inevitably someone else shows up needing us to pour out some more. We tell ourselves we will not do it again — we have nothing left to pour out — and yet we find ourselves empty yet still pouring. We find ourselves digging a little deeper, finding a little more and continuing to pour out for others.

The strange thing about the economy of God is that when you pour out for others, God pours more into you. Sometimes we forget that what God pours into us isn’t for storage; it is meant to be poured out to others with the promise that there is more to come.

Next time you feel like you are running on empty, remember there is always more supply. God will always give us what we need so that we can pour out into others. You see, God’s love is endless, so God always has enough to pour a little more into us. Since freely we have received, freely we should continue to give.

So take heart: you’re not running on empty; there is more supply on the way so that you will always have enough to continue to pour out some more love.

# POURED OUT IN LOVE

“Next Window Please” so that we can take a break and let someone else pour out while we take a break.

Unfortunately, we all know that there is no such sign, and nowhere else to send people, so we have to get up and pour out into someone else again.

The funny thing is, when we

## EVENTS

**Seeds of Security Golf Tournament and Gala**  
**Monday, April 22, noon to 5 p.m.**  
**Hobbits Glen Golf Course, Columbia**  
Proceeds from this inaugural event go to the Seeds of Security ministry to assist victims of domestic violence. A gala, on April 26 at Hobbits Glen, will also benefit this important ministry. Learn more and register at [www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=384889&](http://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=384889&)

**Camp Manidokan Open House**  
**April 28, 2 to 5 p.m.**  
**2600 Harpers Ferry Road, Knoxville**  
Learn more about the camp at [www.bwccampsandretreats.com/manidokan](http://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/manidokan). Registration for Summer Camp is now open. Learn more about being a camper or volunteer at [www.bwccampsandretreats.com/summer-camps](http://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/summer-camps).

**Peace with Justice grant deadline**  
**April 30**  
Learn more about how you can receive funding for your ministry at [www.bwcumc.org/ministries/advocacy-action/peace-with-justice](http://www.bwcumc.org/ministries/advocacy-action/peace-with-justice). Peace with Justice Sunday will be observed June 16.

**Native American Ministries Sunday**  
**Sunday, May 5**  
This Special Sunday with offering funds urban ministries with Native Americans, scholarships for Native Americans attending seminary, and Native American ministries. Learn more at [www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/native-american-ministries-sunday](http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/native-american-ministries-sunday).

**Pre-Conference Briefings**  
**Saturday, May 18**  
Morning session, at Jackson Chapel UMC, 5609 Ballenger Creek Pike in Frederick, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Afternoon session, at St. Johns United Church at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, 10431 Twin Rivers Road in Columbia, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Session**  
**May 29 - June 1**  
**Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore**  
Learn more about this session at [www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference](http://www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference). **The deadline for submitting resolutions is May 1.** Learn more at [www.bwcumc.org/event/1233650-2019-05-01-resolutions-deadline](http://www.bwcumc.org/event/1233650-2019-05-01-resolutions-deadline).




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AGAINST HUNGER

**821 MILLION**  
people in the world don't get the food they need to live a healthy life

**ONE IN NINE**  
people goes to bed hungry each night

**JOIN THE BWC FOR A MEAL PACKING EVENT**  
at Annual Conference, in the movement to end hunger by the year 2030.  
[bwcumc.org/RAH](http://bwcumc.org/RAH)



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

Resident Bishop  
Director of Communications  
Managing Editor  
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FOR MORE EVENTS, VISIT: [BWCUMC.ORG/EVENTS](http://BWCUMC.ORG/EVENTS)



# Beacon: A vision comes to reality to help hurting souls

From page 1

culinary arts training program, an indoor/outdoor jazz café, and other amenities that position it to be a community hub for culture, entertainment, jobs and other entrepreneurial ventures.

The vision, however, is more than 10 years old. In his speech, Daniels traced it back to the early 1800s and the grandmother of Elizabeth Proctor Thomas, a free black woman who owned 11 acres of land on what is now the location of the Beacon Center and Fort Stevens, next door.

She, too, provided housing, taking care of free black people and runaway slaves. Union forces eventually took the land in 1861 at the start of the Civil War, placing Thomas' belongings under a tree when government leaders realized the city had no northern defenses following the Union defeat at Manassas.

"We are here," Daniels said, "because of the vision that was

cast with her some 200-plus years ago that, at that time, also included worship space for four Methodist churches that still serve in the District of Columbia, each of which finds its origins on this hill, in this place where we are right now."

That vision was captured, Daniels said, when he was a 34-year old "skinny preacher" standing at a dry cleaner across Georgia Ave. from the church in 1994.

"I was waiting for my shirts to get cleaned," he said, "but praying that (the church's) side of the street could one day be cleaned up from homelessness, heroin distribution, drug trafficking, drunkenness, prostitution and the residence of hurting, broken souls."

Daniels extended that vision to his congregation and found people hungry to see hurting lives redeemed and housed affordably.

"I'm just grateful," said Daniels after the ceremony. "I'm just grateful for the people of Emory,

the people of this community, for all of our partners, and for the mayor, who has been so supportive."

Daniels said that the day was not just the culmination and celebration of what's been done, but a commencement; a beginning. His vision, in other words, is not yet done.

"The Lord has opened up another door for us," he said. "We need to replicate this model here in the city, and replicate it in the region, nationally and even internationally. Churches have a collective power to bring about significant change in community and we have to understand that salvation is more than just Sunday mornings. The need is 24/7."

The ministry of Emory UMC, Bishop Easterling said, showed that it would not fall prey to the "not in my backyard" mentality of many other communities.

"This is a day that stands as a primer on discipleship, leadership and partnership," said the bishop. "This triad of faith transformed the aspirational into the practical and creates a new kind of church which offers blessings for all."

The bishop also noted that it is ministry like Emory that must be the hallmark of United Methodism, rather than headlines generated by a General Conference.

"I know... what is being said about The United Methodist Church," the bishop said. "This is the heart of The United Methodist Church; this is our Wesleyan heritage, and this is our Wesleyan legacy."

Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser, speaking at the ceremony, said that she had been a supporter of this project since its start.

"One man," she said, speaking of Daniels, "decided to take back a corner. And he had an incredible church to get behind the wild and crazy ideas he had."

The mayor, who previously served as a Councilmember of Ward 4, said that the truth was, before Emory even had the appropriate space and the vision to create what they had done, they were already in ministry to the community.

"He (Daniels) made a way," Bowser said. "He decided that the church was bigger than its four walls and it had to go out into its community."



Emory UMC, center, is surrounded by The Beacon Center, a multi-purpose affordable housing complex on Georgia Ave. in Washington, D.C.



The Rev. Joe Daniels and Bishop LaTrelle Easterling praise God during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

# Immigration: What is a faithful response for UMs?

From page 1

a biblical understanding of immigration using various texts from Genesis. To start, he said, it's good to note that there is a lot of movement in the Bible and that God is constantly seen at work through migration to bless people.

It all began in Genesis 1:26-27, when the *imago dei* — the image of God — was placed in each person. After that came what is commonly called "The Fall," or the original sin of Adam and Eve. That resulted, he said, in "the first deportation" when the couple were thrust out of the Garden of Eden.

After the Genesis 11:1-9 story of the Tower of Babel, Wingeier-Rayo noted the scattering of the people by God (v.8) along with the creation of new languages.

"There is beauty in this scattering of languages and cultures, in this diversity," he said.

Noting the story of Abram and the promise of God to make his descendants as numerous as the stars, Wingeier-Rayo said that Abram had to travel to fulfill the covenant with God.

"He had to leave his homeland of Ur and pick up his wife and all of his flock, and he had to travel to the land that God had promised," he said. "Here you have this connection of being called by God and migration."

Bishop Felipe Ruiz-Aguilar of the Northwest Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Mexico brought his first-hand experience of dealing with migrants trying to cross from Mexico to the United

States. Speaking through an interpreter, Bishop Ruiz-Aguilar talked of the heartbreak he has witnessed at some of the shelters in Tijuana, Mexico, but that God has called him — and us — to be part of the solution.

"The Bible asks the question," he said, "will you love the migrant? Will your heart be warmed with the desire to love them?"

Members of the Methodist Church of Mexico are providing food and shelter with help from nearly \$135,000 in grants provided by the United Methodist Committee on Relief, according to a December article from United Methodist News Service. A grant for \$98,243 will be used to open a fully equipped kitchen that will serve three meals a day to 200 people in Tijuana. Annually, the kitchen will feed 219,000 meals, said Jack Amick, director of Sustainable Development with UMCOR.

"Our citizenship is in heaven," said Bishop Ruiz-Aguilar. "In good Wesleyan tradition, we have to practice social holiness alongside personal piety."

Some of the legal aspects of immigration were presented by Sarah Selim Milad, Immigration Staff Attorney with Just Neighbors, part of the Justice for Our Neighbors network. She stated the obvious: working in this area right now is challenging.

The most difficult part, she said, is keeping up with changing policies and regulations and what that means for their clients. All of their

clients, she said, are eligible for immigration status.

Selim Milad offered definitions of refugee and asylee, words that are often used interchangeably. A refugee, she said, "is a person who is outside of their country of origin... but not in the United States." Asylees, she said, are the same as refugees but they are inside the United States.

The US has historically resettled more refugees than all other countries in the world combined, though in recent years, its intake has slowed, the Guardian News recently reported. In 2016, it took in 85,000 refugees. That same year, President Barack Obama committed to resettling 110,000 refugees in the 2017 fiscal year, a 57 percent increase from 2015 numbers.

Later in 2017, however, President Donald Trump slashed the cap to 45,000. In 2019, that cap number is 30,000 and Selim Milad expects only a fraction of that will be resettled.



A U.S. Border Patrol agent arrests Matt Leber, one of the organizers of a multi-faith march calling for migrant justice, at the border fence between the U.S. and Mexico in San Diego last December while United Methodists kneel in prayer.

Last November, the United Methodist Council of Bishops, the College of Bishops of the Methodist Church of Mexico, United Methodist Mission in Honduras and Iglesia Metodista de El Salvador released a statement calling for all congregations to be "agents of God's mercy toward the migrant." [umc.org/who-we-are/joint-statement-in-response-to-the-central-american-migrant-caravans](https://www.umc.org/who-we-are/joint-statement-in-response-to-the-central-american-migrant-caravans)

United Methodists are also invited to donate to UMCOR, specifically the Global Migration Advance, #3022144.



# Clergy can respond to problem gambling

By Erik Alsgaard  
UMConnection Staff

WITHIN THE BOUNDS of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, there are five casinos: four in Maryland and one in West Virginia (Charles Town). Casinos are not legal in Bermuda, but there's an effort to change that soon.

Those casinos are in addition to the well-known horse tracks, numerous bingo halls, and thousands of locations where lottery tickets are bought and sold. As if that weren't enough, a recent Supreme Court decision legalizing sports betting beyond Las Vegas means that Washington, D.C., will soon be home to massive opportunities to place legal sports bets, some from the comfort of your own seat at a Wizards or Capitals game.

"We're venturing into new territory with sports gaming," said D.C. Council member Jack Evans last December. He wrote the bill, according to WAMU, and said, "I'm very excited that the District will be out of the box with this. Let's just hope a lot of people gamble and we get a lot of money."

Dr. Deborah G. Haskins, president of the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling (MCPG), doesn't like what she sees. A licensed addictions counselor, tenured professor, and a certified international gambling counselor, she sees the downside of legalized gambling every day. Haskins is also certified in clergy gambling addiction prevention, education, awareness and spiritual outreach



"Leaders in the spiritual community need to know how to respond effectively and with compassion" when it comes to problem gambling, says one local expert.

care, and is the widow of the Rev. Bruce Haskins, a United Methodist Elder who died Jan. 21, 2016.

Current estimates are that between 1 and 3 percent of the general population engage in what Haskins called "high risk gambling behavior" and meet the criteria for having a gambling disorder. Overall, about 80 percent of the population answer "yes" when asked if they have ever gambled.

What Haskins and the MCPG know, however, is that fewer than 10 percent of individuals with gambling disorders ever seek help. To address this, a program was developed to educate people on the frontline of the effects of problem gambling: clergy and lay ministers.

"Leaders in the spiritual community need to know how to respond effectively and with compassion" when people come in with gambling problems, Haskins said, so that they

can offer support, links to treatment, and recovery options.

"Clergy and others are often brought in whenever problems exist," Haskins said, be it from gambling or other issues. "When there's trouble in the house or trouble in the community, we know that faith leaders and lay leaders are typically the ones who are contacted for help. That's why we wanted to increase awareness among clergy and faith leaders."

Part of the education program, Haskins said, is to help faith leaders respond with compassion. That's because, more often than not, faith leaders call gambling a sin even though they, too, are part of that 80 percent who have ever gambled. The IGCCB Clergy/Lay Ministers Certification is designed to provide basic knowledge about gambling addiction and treatment and recovery resources, according

to their website, "to enhance the clergy person's skills at recognizing compulsive gambling, and to provide information for the gambler's family on dealing with their loved one's addiction."

The MCPG, an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling, takes a neutral stance on the issue of gambling, Haskins said. Their advocacy and action is educating the public and lawmakers, providing support and ensuring that treatment dollars are available for those who need it. West Virginia has an affiliate group, but Washington, D.C., does not, Haskins said.

To contact Dr. Deborah G. Haskins, email her at [HaskinsD@trinitydc.edu](mailto:HaskinsD@trinitydc.edu)

**[www.mdproblemgambling.org](http://www.mdproblemgambling.org)**  
For resources and support materials from the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling

**[www.baltimoregambler.org](http://www.baltimoregambler.org)**  
Baltimore City public awareness

**[www.princegeorgesproblemgambling.org](http://www.princegeorgesproblemgambling.org)**  
Prince Georges county public awareness.

**[www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org)** is the National Council on Problem Gambling; DC residents can get assistance here as DC does not have a Problem Gambling Council.

**[www.wvcpg.org](http://www.wvcpg.org)**  
West Virginia Council on Problem Gambling

**1-800-GAMBLER:** Confidential Helpline

**[gamblersanonymous.org](http://gamblersanonymous.org)**  
Gamblers Anonymous

**[www.Gam-Anon.org](http://www.Gam-Anon.org):** GAM-ANON

**[www.helpmygamblingproblem.org](http://www.helpmygamblingproblem.org)**  
Treatment and counseling help

## New campus initiative works with, not for, students

By Melissa Lauber  
UMConnection Staff

THERE WAS A time when campus ministry consisted of pizza, frisbee, deep questions and good music. But over the years, ministry to college students has grown more nuanced and complex. And today, at the University of Maryland, a new model of campus ministry is being born — campus ministry *with*, rather than *for*, students; ministry that calls forth disciples and leaders in a way that draws on the gifts of the students themselves. Plans are underway for a July 1 start to pilot this innovative model.

"In place of a single, full-time campus minister, a three-to-four-person 'Ministry Hub' of young adult interns will provide ministry leadership. Each of these young adults will be paid to work approximately five to seven hours a week, under the guidance and coaching of an experienced ministry project manager," said Christie Latona, the BWC's director of Connectional Ministry.

A clergyperson will serve as the official university chaplain and a team of three — including Campus Ministers at Howard and American universities — will support chaplain office hours on a student-driven schedule, Latona said.

In campus ministry, "the students are at a point in their lives when they



deconstruct and reconstruct a set of beliefs and traditions for themselves, said the Rev. Brett Pinder, campus minister of The Wesley, the campus ministry at the University of Maryland. "You get to help them discover whether or not religion has a role in pointing to what is meaningful in life and how their thoughts, passions and energies will be expressed in daily living and caring for the world around them."

But in recent years, the traditional models of ministry at the 41,200-student campus was not living up to its full potential, Pinder admits.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference currently provides primary support for campus ministries at four of more than 60 colleges and universities within the bounds of the conference. The vast majority of the conference's mission shares allocated for Young People's Ministry (approximately \$350,000 of \$400,000) is being invested in these four campus ministries.

As conference leaders have more intentionally focused on young people's ministries during the past year, they worked with Ministry

Architects, a Tennessee consulting group, to develop a renewed vision for young people's ministry including campus ministries.

"The church has traditionally treated young adults almost entirely as recipients of ministry rather than agents of ministry. We are convinced this approach misses the mark," said Mark DeVries, the president and founder of Ministry Architects.

DeVries has worked with models similar to the Campus Ministry Hub and has found that the most exciting thing in experiments like these "have come as young people try on ministry for themselves, especially in the context of a well-supported, well-aligned ministry team of peers," he said.

At the University of Maryland, Margaret Brown, a campus ministry student leader and member of the Interim Young People's Ministry Board, believes The Wesley needs to be a rock that students can rely on as they seek stability and ways to grow in full and chaotic lives. She sees campus ministry as "the connective tissue" that keeps students engaged with God when they are away from

traditional church. "I know this could be a big step toward creating a more sustainable and wider-reaching campus ministry network, which we really need," she said.

The Rev. Laura Norvell, chair of the University of Maryland Campus Ministry Board, is also enthusiastic about the new Ministry Hub model.

"Many college students are leaving home for the first time, the place where they've been formed, at a critical point in their own physiological, psychological and emotional development. They arrive on campus in the active phase of becoming a new thing," she said. "We have the opportunity for that to be spiritual unfolding with good campus ministry."

In April, the process of hiring the student interns begins. For those thinking about applying, Brown wants them to know that "we are a group that likes to think and ask questions. We are very open to new ideas and experiments. I would want them to be similarly open and curious."

"We are just beginning to scratch the surface," said DeVries, "of what could be done in campus ministry if young people are invited and empowered to actually do the work of ministry."

Learn more and apply at [www.bwcumc.org/umd-campus-ministry-hub](http://www.bwcumc.org/umd-campus-ministry-hub)





SPECIAL SECTION

Six clergy and six lay delegates to the 2020 General Conference will be elected at the 2019 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Session in May. In addition, six lay and six clergy delegates, plus alternates, will be elected to the 2020 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

The 2020 General Conference will be held May 5-15 in Minneapolis, Minn. The 2020 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference will be held July 13-17 in Baltimore.

General Conference is the church’s highest legislative body and the only group that can officially “speak” for The United Methodist Church. It’s main duty is to enact legislation “over all matters distinctively connectional” (2016 Book of Discipline, ¶16). Jurisdictional Conferences are where bishops are elected and boundaries of Annual Conferences are set, among other duties.

During the electronic balloting at Annual Conference, clergy vote only for clergy and laity vote only for laity. Per the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline (¶35), all clergy in full connection are eligible to be elected as delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference. Laity candidates must be members of the Annual Conference, professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years preceding election, and have been active participants in the church for at least four years preceding election. Laity had to submit their nomination before April 1 to be considered for election; no nominations will be accepted from the floor of the Annual Conference Session.

Each nominee was asked to submit a short statement (no more than 150 words) about themselves and a photograph. Campaigning is otherwise prohibited. The nominees are listed in alphabetical order.

This special 8-page insert is also available online as a pdf and a web page. Visit: [bwcumc.org/2020nominees](http://bwcumc.org/2020nominees)

*Please bring this insert with you to Annual Conference.*

CLERGY CANDIDATES

Rev. Giovanni Arroyo

General Commission on Religion and Race, Washington, D.C.



Conference Agencies:

Past chair, Religion and Race; chair, Hispanic/Latino Ministries; Advocacy and Action team

General Church Agencies:

Staff person of the General Commission on Religion and Race, team leader for program ministries; United Methodist Interagency Immigration Task Force; Rapid Response Team on Immigration

Other Organizations:

Justice for Our Neighbors; Baltimore County Health Department Translators Editor board

The United Methodist Church and the world are more globally focused, more multi-cultural, multi-textured and complex than any point in our history. My years of experience and leadership in the denomination at all levels — local church, alongside annual conferences, jurisdictionally, nationally, central conferences, general agencies, theological schools, and racial/ethnic caucuses — enables me to offer the church multiple perspectives that would enrich dialogues and legislation as we live to be a church that seeks to be racially equitable in its practices, policies and processes. As a person of color who has served in cross-racial and cross-cultural ministries in urban and suburban settings and in my current ministry at the General Commission on Religion and Race, I have been able to build relationships across differences and encourage vital conversations of intersectionality that has birthed partnerships and ministries across the globe. I offer myself to continue in building the beloved community.

Rev. Kevin Baker

Oakdale Emory UMC, Olney



Other Organizations:

President, Baltimore-Washington Conference Wesley Covenant Association

I have served three churches in my 30 years of ordained ministry; three years as an Associate Pastor, 13 years leading Cedar Grove UMC and 13 years (and counting) leading Oakdale Church. Both Cedar Grove and Oakdale have been churches that experienced significant transitions and growth. I have experience leading both a small church and a large church. The UMC needs to launch new faith communities AND help existing churches transition for growth and discipleship. Leading existing churches into greater effectiveness requires the ability to shift methods while building momentum around the message of the Gospel. Leading change in the local church is both art and science. Far too many of our pastors and churches are not equipped for 21st century effectiveness. I believe my experience and training qualify me to speak to these issues at GC2020 so that together we can make decisions that will strengthen our discipleship effectiveness.



Rev. Valerie Barnes

Chew/Carters Charge, Owensville

Conference Agencies:

Committee on Religion and Race; Connectional Table; Order of Elders;

clergy mentor for Baltimore Metro District Committee on Ordained Ministry

Other Organizations:

Constitution and Bylaws chair for Northeastern Jurisdiction Black Methodists for Church Renewal

My reason for seeking to represent the BWC as a delegate at General Conference is to be a voice for those who oftentimes view themselves as having no voice; I am referring primarily to the black church. I believe my 20 years of experience pastoring in this context, coupled with my experience of being a business owner and rehabilitative health care provider allow me to see the opportunities for growth, renewal and revitalization for this significant constituency of the denomination. I believe that if given the opportunity to serve, I can bring a different (possibly new) perspective that could lead to greater inclusion and potential for revitalization and renewal of congregations.

Rev. Rudy Bropleh

Asbury UMC, Shepherdstown



Conference Committees:

Stewardship; the BWC Academy; and the Board of Ordained Ministry; currently serving as chair of the Frederick District Committee on Ordained Ministry

In 21 years, I have led, developed, and grown two churches in very diverse contexts. I have attracted young adults to the church, mentored and inspired them to pursue their call to ministry. Three of those young people are now clergy in the BWC (one is a Provisional Elder and two are Elders in Full Connection). I’m currently mentoring a large group of Young Adults who are discerning their call to ministry. I have worked as a trainer and coach to leaders in our UMC in diverse settings. I have led my churches through difficult transitions while maintaining missional vitality and growth. I know how to disagree without being disrespectful; and articulating differences without damaging others. I want to help change the tenor, tune, and temperature at the General Conference. As your delegate I will represent you with decency, integrity, and commitment to Christ and our Church.



Rev. Stan G. Cardwell

Community UMC, Crofton

BWC Agencies:

Board of Congregational Life – Leadership Development; BWC Church Plant Discernment team lead; Southern Region Consultant; Interim New

Faith Expressions Board

Other Organizations:

Archway Station; Emmorton Elementary School PTA; Moveable Feast

For 27 years, I have served faithfully in various settings — rural, suburban, urban, in poverty and affluence, conservative and progressive churches, multi-campus, new church initiative . . . During these years, I have lived and journeyed with two tribes: traditional and progressive. I live in that tension which threatens to pull us apart. This grieves me. (Honestly, I have found myself wondering if I belong to either tribe within our current context — too traditional for progressives and too progressive for traditionalists.) Through many years of ministry, I have quietly served in my local church and on the conference level. I have been content to let others seek to guide our Conciliar covenant but in response to our impasse at GC2019, I can no longer remain silent. There is a way forward — a way of sacrifice and submission. I know that path as a Jesus-follower, seeking to walk in grace and truth.

BY THE NUMBERS:

862 delegates from around the world will vote at the 2020 General Conference. Of these, six clergy and six lay delegates will be from the Baltimore-Washington Conference, representing the BWC’s 1,049 clergy and 164,779 professing members.

Of the 862 delegates, 482 are from the United States; 278 are from Africa; 40 are from Europe and Eurasia, 52 are from the Philippines and 10 are concordat members. The calculations for the number of delegates to General Conference were based on the 56,055 clergy in The United Methodist Church and the denominations’ 12,557,214 professing members.



Rev. Stacey Cole-Wilson

BWC Executive Minister of Justice and Service, Fulton



**Conference Agencies:**  
Board of Ordained Ministry; Provisional Member Registrar; Advocacy and Action staff representative; Deaf Ministries Abundant Health staff representative; CONAM; Seeds of Security staff representative; BWC Black Clergywomen chaplain; UMW staff representative; COSROW staff representative; Creation Care; Committee on Religion and Race

**General Church Agency:**  
NEJ UMVIM board member

**Other Organizations:**  
Wesley Theological Seminary Board of Governors; Boys and Girls Club of Metropolitan Baltimore; Habitat for Humanity

By God’s grace, I am a part of a dynamic revolutionary people called Methodists. We vary in ability, personhood, theology, hermeneutic, pedagogy, and body. We are called to love God and all people — to pursue justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. We are imperfect yet going on to perfection. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and, in so doing, share the power and relevance of the Gospel. I have served our Church as a lay person, ordained Elder, pastor, district leader, mediator, community organizer, youth advocate, representative on several conference boards and agencies, and as the Executive Minister of Justice and Service. I am a wife, a mother, and a Baltimore native who has worked with people and organizations locally, globally and connectionally to bring about positive change. As your delegate, I will do the same.



Rev. Joseph Wayne Daniels, Jr.  
Emory UMC, Washington, D.C.

*General and Jurisdictional Conference delegate in 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 and at the Special Session in 2019*

**Conference Agencies:**  
Chairperson, Zimbabwe Partnership; chair, Communities of Shalom

**Other Organizations:**  
Co-chair, Washington Interfaith Network

I seek to represent the Baltimore-Washington Conference as a delegate at General Conference because as a bridge builder and barrier breaker, I believe my skills, experience, and love for people and the church can benefit our denomination in these uncertain times. Since 2004, I have been an active delegate to General Conference. I know the power dynamics and understand the politics of General Conference yet am always looking for the leading of the Holy Spirit guiding us to Truth. We need to find higher ground. We need to stop fighting each other and seek to find the spaces where God is leading God’s church. As a 27-year pastor and former district superintendent who has served diverse populations all my life, I know how to cross lines of difference and achieve unity in the midst of diversity. I would be honored and humbled to serve our church in 2020.

Rev. David J. Deans

Oakdale Emory UMC, Olney



**Conference Agencies:**  
BWC Committee on Parish and Community Development; Baltimore Metro District Committee on Disaster Relief during Tropical Storm Isabel; Baltimore Metro District Committee on Ordained Ministry

**Other Organizations:**  
Executive Board of the Baltimore-Washington Conference Wesley Covenant Association

As a pastor in the BWC/UMC for 16 years, I have had the privilege to pastor both a small and a large church. I have also had the chance to plant a church in a fast-growing multicultural suburb and to do extensive ministry with the homeless in an urban setting. I’m currently developing a new men’s ministry, am a leader with Celebrate Recovery, and am leading a team of young adults through the Wesley Innovation Hub program. Through these distinct experiences, and the unique training I’ve received, I’ve learned a lot about disciple-making, launching new faith communities, reaching young adults and marginalized people, and church development across varied contexts. I believe I can be an asset at General Conference in helping us mark out a faithful course for the future that sees us making disciples who make disciples, birthing new innovative churches, and spreading scriptural holiness across the land.

Rev. Malcolm L. Frazier

Asbury Methodist Village, Gaithersburg



**Conference Agencies:**  
Board of Ordained Ministry; Conference Council on Youth Ministry; Conference Higher Education and Ministry Committee; District Committee on Superintendency; Co-chair of Conference Volunteers-in-Mission

**General Agencies:**  
Executive Secretary for Mission Volunteers and U.S. Regional Representative at the General Board of Global Ministries in New York and Atlanta

**Other Organizations:**  
Board member for Beyond Borders, which provides support for Haiti. Project Transformation, the Advocacy Committee for the National Black Methodist for Church Renewal, co-chair of the United Methodist Campus Ministry Association

I have served a local church, a college campus, a general agency, and am currently serving at a continuing care community. I have engaged in study and mission on five continents, seeing God at work in diverse cultural contexts. These ministry settings and global contexts have given me exposures to diverse perspectives and world views. I am seeking to represent the BWC as a delegate because I believe in the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world. My theology is grounded in the God of justice who sent Godself in the form of Jesus Christ to be in solidarity with humankind. All differences are honored and respected, and everyone can respond to their calling to serve out of their own uniqueness. In the midst of our discord I believe that God is not done working through us yet.



Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli  
Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.

*2016, 2019 General Conference Delegate*

**Conference Agencies:**  
Discipleship Council; co-chair BWC Annual Conference Worship Team; chair, Board of Discipleship

**General Church Agencies:**  
UM-Episcopal Dialogue

**Other Organizations:**  
Interfaith Council of Suburban Maryland; Religious Partnership for the Anacostia

As a Jesus-follower and life-long United Methodist, I feel deeply called to the work of bridge building, intersectional justice-seeking, peacemaking, and reconciliation. I am committed to a biblically grounded, theologically informed, fully inclusive, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, and wholly Wesleyan vision for Methodism whatever shape the church may take in the future. My life and ministry experience across a variety of contexts — from growing up in small town Oklahoma to serving in NYC and DC — has prepared me to partner with others in service of that vision. I am blessed with positive relationships across many constituencies within the United Methodist connection. Over the past year, I’ve facilitated collaboration among and between groups that had not previously worked together. My servant leadership at Foundry testifies to my commitment to living and preaching the whole Gospel-head and heart, personal and social holiness-and reaching ALL people with God’s unconditional, unwavering, and liberating love.



Rev. Katie J. Grover

Patapsco-Lodge Forest Cooperative Parish



**Conference Agencies:**  
Path 1 team (2013) for the Baltimore Metropolitan District; work at West River Camp — 2014 director for Junior High Discovery Camp, this year will be my 5th as a counselor leading sports at the Ultimate Mid-High Camp; Spiritual Growth Study Leader at the Arkansas Conference mission u (2012 & 2015); Arkansas Conference Committee on Global Ministries; Arkansas Conference Batesville/North District Co-coordinator for the District Committee on Youth Ministries; participated in or led more than 10 mission trips

**Other Organizations:**  
Oversee comprehensive ministry to the unhoused/poor of the community;); Safe Nights Coordinator for St Paul UMC in Lusby; Board of Directors for Aldersgate Renewal Ministries; and more

I am a lifelong United Methodist, beginning my career in a vocational ministry as a US-2 Young Adult Missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries serving as the director of an ecumenical children’s and youth ministries in a small town in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. I continued in ministry as a lay person serving for nine years as the director of children’s and youth ministries in Mountain View, Arkansas. In 2008, I returned to Maryland and entered the secular workforce before succumbing to God’s call to enter seminary and work toward ordination. In 2013, I began pastoring two churches in East Baltimore County and was ordained in 2016. With my diverse background, serving as a missionary, lay person, and clergy, pastoring persons from birth to death in churches from rural towns to an urban area, I believe I offer alternative perspectives to the issues facing the local church.



Rev. C. Anthony Hunt  
Epworth Chapel UMC, Baltimore

*2000 – Jurisdictional Conference Alternate Delegate  
2008 – General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegate*

**Conference Agencies:**  
Board of Ordained Ministry (2000-2008, 2012-present), Board Chair since 2016; Commission on Finance and Administration (2008-2012)

**General Agencies:**  
Member of General Commission on Religion and Race (2008-2012), co-chair of the Strategic Planning Taskforce; member of the Inter-Ethnic Strategy Development Group (1998-2004); member of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Ministry (2016-present)

My vision continues to be for an inclusive church, which embraces the entirety of our Wesley heritage. As a fifth generation Methodist, I have appreciated and benefitted from the diversity within the church. I’ve seen the church most evident in community where love and justice are most clearly operating. Through my ordination, I have been afforded the opportunity to serve in various capacities — as pastor in four appointments (urban, suburban and rural), as a denominational executive at the Northeastern Jurisdiction’s Multi-ethnic Center for Ministry, as a military chaplain (U.S. Army), as a seminary teacher (Wesley and United Seminaries), as a district superintendent of two distinct districts in the greater Baltimore area, and as chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. I believe that this breadth of experience would benefit the Conference delegation and General Conference as I could take a broad view of the important matters facing the Church.

Rev. Travis D. Knoll

Hunt Memorial UMC, Riderwood



**Conference Agencies:**  
Chair, Board of Discipleship; Chair, District Committee on Ordained Ministry; member Board of Evangelism; member, Rules Committee

**Other Organization:**  
Volunteer Chaplain, GBMC

I believe that diversity of not only gender, sex, ethnic and national origin, and orientation, but also diversity of thought matter. As a thoughtful and listening traditionalist Christian, I believe that I would faithfully represent that perspective of this significant minority portion of our clergy here at the BWC to the General or Jurisdictional Conference in ways that others elected may not.



CLERGY CANDIDATES

Rev. Conrad O. Link

Superintendent, Cumberland Hagerstown District



2012 General Conference delegate;  
2016 first alternate to General Conference;  
2019 Special Session General Conference delegate

Conference Agencies:

Chair, Board of Ordained Ministry 2004-2008; Secretary, Board of Ordained Ministry 2000-2004; Member of the Board 1986-1996; Member BWC Board of Trustees 2008-2010; Cabinet Rep to Board of Trustees 2012-2019; Board of Pensions 2012-2018

Other Organizations:

Numerous Volunteer in Mission trips; Appalachia Service Projects; Summer Camp at Manidokan; Board member of the American Red Cross of Frederick County (9 years); President-VP-Secretary of the Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs; charter member of the Carroll Creek Rotary Club (member for 17 years)

The work to transform the UMC into a functioning, timely and effective ministry vehicle for the proclamation of the Gospel in the 21st century is not yet complete. I would like to be part of the process that helps make the UMC into the church God intends it to be as "fully catholic, fully evangelical and fully reformed," so that we can truly live into the invitation of being a place for all of God's people with Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors. While I appreciate our heritage, a fundamental element of that heritage was (and is) to meet people where they were, in the fields-mines-countryside-cities, so that the Gospel could be learned, embraced, and accepted in context. To achieve a vibrant future, certain elements of our current structure and polity need to be made flexible and contemporary.



Rev. Jerry Lesley Lowans

Washington Square UMC, Hagerstown

Since our BWC is a very diverse conference in many ways, I feel I would, as a delegate, be able to help assure that diversity would be equally represented at our General Conference. I would look forward to open fair and balanced dialogue with the future of our denomination in mind especially as it pertains to outreach and evangelism to the world. We need to focus on getting the church back to the Great Commission of making disciples for Jesus Christ and growing the church.

Rev. Bonnie McCubbin

Good Shepherd UMC, Baltimore



Conference Agencies:

Chair, Conference Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns; BWC Historical Society Board of Directors; Baltimore-Metro DCOM member; Retreat and Camping Ministries Task Force; Retreat and Camping Ministries; Baltimore Initiative Work Group

Other Organizations:

Candidacy Mentor, Summer Camp Curriculum Writer, Summer Camp Director (West River); LeadHer Ministry for Young Women Director; Young Clergy Women International Development Committee (past member)

I am a passionate, driven person with a desire to share Christ with all people. I have served rural, suburban, and urban congregations in my 10 years of pastoral ministry. A historian by training, I see the long history of where we have come from and where we need to go to move forward in the future so that we are able to share Christ with the least, the lost, the last, and the marginalized in our world, nation, and community. Furthermore, as one of 22 young adult Elders in the BWC, I hold an underrepresented view point. For the 2016 General Conference, 7 percent of delegates were under 35. Young adults are the Church here and now. We are the ones who will be the Church in the future. As such, we need to have a say in discerning the direction our denomination takes.

Rev. James Martin Miller

Grace UMC, Gaithersburg



Conference Agencies:

Current Chair, Episcopal Committee; Board of Ordained Ministry; Moving Committee; District Committee on Ordained Ministry

It is my hope and prayer that by serving as an elected delegate of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, I can help the Church move forward in these challenging times. I am willing to do the work necessary to be informed as possible as a delegate. I will be open-minded in considering and prayerfully discerning all legislation. As a delegate, I would bring to the table over 30 years of pastoral ministry. Much of my experience has been in finding ways for congregations to work together in spiritual growth and in outreach to those in need. I believe there is power and guidance to be found in the work of Holy Conferencing. I humbly state that if elected as a delegate, I will contribute in a positive way to the work of the 2020 General Conference.



Rev. Ianther Mills

Asbury UMC, Washington, D.C.

General Conference Alternate Delegate (2012)  
NEJ Conference Delegate (2012)  
NEJ Conference Delegate (2008)

Conference Agencies:

Episcopacy Committee (2016 to present); vice chair, Board of Ordained Ministry (2013-2016); member, Board of Ordained Ministry (2003-2013); Discipleship Council (2008-2013); Unified Funding Task Force (2008-2013); Instructor at Zimbabwe Pastors School

General Church Agencies:

Interim President, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (2015-2016); vice president, GBHEM (2012-2015); member, GBHEM (2008-2012); The World Methodist Council (2016 to present); GCFA Apportionment Task Force (2017-2018); Africa University Governance Committee (2015-2016)

Other Organizations:

Leadership Greater Washington; Washington Interfaith Network; Downtown Cluster of Congregations; Howard University Hospital Faith Partners

The United Methodist Church is at a critical place in its identity and direction as we are challenged with making disciples for the transformation of the world and the complex work of diversity and inclusion. As a former district superintendent, former GBHEM director, form delegate to General and Jurisdictional conferences, and one who has pastored churches of various sizes and contexts, including cross-racial, I have honed gifts of discernment, leadership, conflict transformation, and working with diverse people in the U.S. and globally. I bring those unique gifts to participating in shaping our witness to the world for 2020 and beyond. Further, I am deeply committed to living out our Wesleyan understanding of grace and the biblical values of the Grant Commandment, Great Commission and Great Mandate. I offer myself because I feel called to serve in this season. I would be honored to represent the Baltimore-Washington Conference as a delegate.

Rev. Kenneth P. Moore

Zion UMC, Lexington Park



Conference Committees:

Annapolis and Washington East District Committees on Ordained Ministry; Washington East registrar for full membership; Certified Clergy Mentor; Instructor for the Annapolis District School of Faith and Life; CLM Instructor; Conference Board of Pension; currently on the Rules Committee; past BWC Hunger Coordinator; Conference Sessions Committee

Ordained a Deacon in 1998 and Elder in 2002, I have over 24 years pastoral experience as United Methodist clergy and have completed Engagement Coaching Training at Anne Arundel Community College. My diverse training in the church, community and military has shaped me into a well-rounded pastor who is able to preach, teach, lead, plan, budget, inspire, delegate and work in any environment bearing good, productive fruit. I have a love for God and all humankind. I offer my gifts and graces to our Conference and as an ambassador of Jesus Christ during a pivotal time that requires grace, compassion and cooperation without compromise. If elected as a delegate to General Conference 2020, I will seek justice for all while honoring my own theological convictions. I am fair, believe in justice for all, support the one church model and would seek change within the confines of the Book of Discipline.

Rev. Maidstone Mulenga

Director of Communications, Council of Bishops, Washington, D.C.



2008, 2012 General Conference Delegate  
from Western New York Conference

Conference Agencies:

Served as Director of Connectional Ministries and Assistant to the Bishop

General Church Agencies:

Chair of Product Services, United Methodist Publishing House  
Secretary of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision for the Book of Discipline

I would like to serve as a delegate to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences as part of my desire to make The United Methodist Church a truly global church through acceptance of all of God's people. I am the Director of Communications for the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church. In this role, I manage and direct the internal and external communications of the Council and oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy. Previously, I served as the Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. I previously served as pastor in several churches in the then Western New York Conference and as director of communications in the Upper New York Conference. I have been a delegate to the General and NEJ Conferences and I was the editor of the NEJ *Daily Christian Advocate*.



Rev. Laura Norvell

Ferndale UMC, Ferndale

Conference Agencies:

BWC Campus Ministry Task Force (2019); The Wesley @ UMD Board of Directors (2014-Present);

Chair of The Wesley (2017-present); United to Love participant

I am a cradle Methodist whose DNA is Wesleyan and Methodist. I served as a senior administrator at Wesley for more than 10 years during a season of seismic shifts. I have seen the way God calls people, and I have been a part of the work that has to be done to shape the future of a denomination with and for young leaders. I have served churches where we are called to make disciples and disciple others across major differences in formation. I have studied the future of global leadership, pursuing my D.Min. at Wesley House in Cambridge. My call is to bridge-building and specifically to bridge generations of difference as the tradition, structure and shifting global nature of our church is passed from builders to boomers to Gen X to Millennials to iGen and beyond. I would be honored to serve as delegate in this season.

Rev. Bryant M. Oskvig

Chaplain, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.



Conference Agencies:

Audit Committee; Worship Committee; Campus Ministry Task Force; Vice-President CFA

The United Methodist Church has come to a critical moment as an institution. This is a time when we have to thoughtfully consider our theology, our history, and our structure. With my educational background and my experiences, I think I have gifts to share in this moment for the good of the church. My particular work in interracial ministry and ecumenical dialogue would be informative in my representation of our conference and the work of a delegate. My ministry has been informed by my understanding and expression of the covenant I made at my ordination to the community, clergy and the congregations of the Conference. I offer myself as a delegate as an expression of that commitment. We have to chart a new path forward as a church to share the light of the Gospel in the face of the pressing darkness of this world.



CLERGY CANDIDATES

JW “Jong Woo” Park

Central Maryland Superintendent

2012, 2016, 2019 General Conference Delegate

Conference Agencies:

Trustees; Board of Ordained Ministry; Worship Committee; Personnel Committee; Discipleship Council; Connectional Table; Episcopacy Committee

General Church Agencies:

NEJ Finance Committee

Other Organizations:

President of the National Association of Korean UM pastors serving cross-racial appointments

I’d like to represent the BWC as an Asian-American clergy member. I’d like to see the BWC sending an inclusive delegation to the General Conference.



Rev. Edgardo Rivera

Superintendent, Frederick District

2016 Jurisdictional Delegate  
2019 First Alternate to Special Session

Conference Agencies:

Religion and Race; Church and Society; Hispanic/Latino Ministries

General Church Agencies:

Board Member General Board of Church and Society

Other Organizations:

Chaplain in the Maryland Air National Guard

These are critical times in the UMC. I believe I bring to the table a voice from the diverse community that we represent, both from within our BWC and the community that is around us, which we are to be in ministry with. I do not take for granted that God, through this conference, has allowed me to be present, to listen, to experience and to witness the relevant ministry that is taking place in urban and rural settings in Maryland and West Virginia. We are a church with a message of grace who seeks to be in relationship with God and neighbor for the transformation of our communities. There are significant challenges ahead as we discern how to better live our call. I commit to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit while we live into the future, trusting God and holding one another accountable in love.



Rev. Scott Dale Shumaker

Parkton Cooperative Parish

Conference Agencies:

Board of Ordained Ministry 2008 to present; Positions Held — Chair of Biblical Skills Committee 2010-2016; Provisional Member Registrar 2016 to present; Ordination Coordinator 2016 to present; Baltimore Suburban District Committee on Ministry 2012 to present; Secretary 2014 to present

Other Organizations:

Boy Scouts of America — Cub Scout Master

As a lifelong member of The United Methodist Church, the decisions of the 2019 Special General Conference were painful on many different levels and have only heightened the divisions that continue to be displayed within our churches. As an ordained Elder, I have served in small membership churches for the past 20 years. There are those who desire to leave, those who desire to resist and those who desire to find a place in-between. I am a firm believer in the Via Media {a middle way). As a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry, I have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit as we have worked together from our various perspectives and believe that this same type of collaboration is possible at General Conference. I am seeking to be a Delegate so that I might bring this sense of collaboration to the upcoming General Conference in 2020.



Rev. Frankie Allen Revell

LaVale UMC, LaVale

Conference Agencies:

United Methodist Women —Dean of Mission u (formerly School of Christian Mission); Board of Ordained Ministry

General Church Agencies:

General Board of Global Discipleship

My vision for the church is simple: it is a church in which we encounter God in worship, accept Christ, operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and love and serve our neighbors. I am particularly passionate about poverty alleviation and encouraging every person to live into their identity as a sacred child of God. My spirituality is one of deep prayer, reflection, and discernment rooted in Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. I am neither swayed by my own agenda or emotions nor those of others.

Rev. Kirkland Reynolds

Chevy Chase UMC, Chevy Chase

Conference Agencies:

Board of Ordained Ministry, Culture of Call Committee Chair (2016 – present); Greater Washington District Committee on Ministry, Vice-Chair, (2012 – present); Discipleship Council (2012-2016)

Other Organizations:

Communities United Against Hate in Montgomery County; Living Your Call Ministry Exploration Workshop Candidacy Mentor; Baltimore-Washington Area Reconciling Methodists; License to Preach School Preaching Practicum Facilitator; Baltimore-Washington & Zimbabwe Annual Conferences Partnership; Washington Leadership Days presenter; Lay Servant Ministry Facilitator

I believe in a church that holds tightly to love and justice whenever we discern our polity, values, and mission. Since 2007, I have served a two-point charge, served in ministry with youth and families, served a cooperative parish, and now serve a suburban congregation. I have been privileged to serve two appointments that each discerned joining the Reconciling movement. In these ministry settings I have witnessed God bring people together, make new ways for discipleship and transformation, and lead the church into ministries of justice, love, inclusion, mercy, and joy. I believe our Wesleyan understanding of grace, calling, and personal and social holiness speaks to new generations who want to serve with purpose and hope. We stand in a long line of Jesus followers called to the beautiful struggle of being church, and I believe this is the Wesleyan spirit needed for such a time as this.



Rev. Melissa Rudolph

North Carroll Cooperative Parish

Alternate to the 2016 Jurisdictional Conference and participated in preparation meetings for the 2016 and 2019 General Conferences

Conference Agencies:

Chair, Order of Elders; Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee; CLM registrar on the Baltimore Suburban DCOM

Other Organizations:

Teacher at the Pastors’ School in Zimbabwe in 2015 and 2017

I am led by the Holy Spirit to be a part of shaping the future of our denomination as my primary calling within ministry is to be a reformer. I am not aligned with any caucus or special interest group, so I speak out of deep prayer and discernment without any heed for strategy and the body politic. The United Methodist Church (WV in BWC) is the church of my baptism and I know no other spiritual home. I have served most of my nearly 18 years in pastoral ministry in small membership, rural churches, so I bring a concern for the geographic margins of our conference coupled with an understanding of our urban settings from studying at American University as an undergraduate and grad student before the ministry.

Rev. Sarah Andrews Schlieckert

Calvary UMC, Waldorf

2016 Jurisdictional delegate and alternate to the 2019 Special General Conference session

Conference Agencies:

Since 2012, member of the Board of Ordained Ministry, served as chair of the Frederick DCOM and now serve as chair of the Exam; Arrangements Committee (2009 to 2018); Commission on the Status and Role of Women (2008-2009); Frederick Hispanic/Latino Ministry Advisory Board (2008-2010); Annual Conference Worship Design Team (2007-2008); Co-chair of Clergywomen’s Strategy Subcommittee (2005-2007)

I have been honored to serve my entire ministry in the BWC, a community which has nurtured me and challenged me to grow both as a pastor and as a disciple of Jesus Christ. I will seek to listen earnestly and continue in open dialogue with all laity and clergy in our conference. My service on the Board of Ordained Ministry has helped me to gain a broad understanding of and experience with all the persons and ministry settings which make up our annual conference. I will continue to work for full inclusion of all persons in the life of the church, especially our LGBTQIA+ siblings, persons of color, and those of differing abilities. I would again come with a commitment to keep my mind and heart open to learn, process and lead in new ways as God guides me and the entire delegation.



Rev. Stephen Andrew Tillett

Asbury Broadneck UMC, Annapolis

Conference Agencies:

Advocacy and Action Board; Board of Ordained Ministry; Baltimore West District Committee on Ministry;

Dean of the Order of Elders

Other Organizations:

Strategy team and founding member of ACT (Anne Arundel Connecting Together); past president Anne Arundel County Branch NAACP; Author of “Stop Falling for the Okeydoke: How the Lie of ‘Race’ Continues to Undermine Our Country (2017); chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) US Air Force; past president Annapolis Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (AIMA); past member of IAF affiliates BUILD in Baltimore and WIN in Washington, D.C.

I seek to represent the BWC as a GC Delegate because I am keenly aware of the political complexities and the emotional considerations to the potential schism of our beloved UMC. While I hope for a reconciliation of the various factions, I will not approach the GC, nor the related discussions with an attitude of genuflection or fear. Either we will reconcile or we will not. But we must get back to The Main Thing: making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Every moment we take away from building and enhancing the Lord’s kingdom is time and opportunity lost to tell a dying world about our living savior. I am unafraid, either to speak hard truths or to do the hard work, of becoming/remaining truly united. I am equally unafraid of new beginnings, if I will not be welcome or respected in the current setting.

GENERAL CONFERENCE STARTED IN OUR BACKYARD

On a Friday morning, Dec. 24, 1784, about 60 of Methodism’s 81 preachers gathered in Baltimore to start a church. During the next 10 days, at this first General Conference, they named the new organization the Methodist Episcopal Church, set a liturgy and sacraments, elected a dozen Elders, most of whom were young men; and consecrated Francis Asbury as a deacon, elder and bishop. During three of those days, they also created the Book of Discipline to govern the body.

The first Discipline had 81 questions and answers and declared American Methodists would continue John Wesley’s mission to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.

The Christmas Conference ended “in great peace and unanimity.” Another General Conference was held in 1792 and every four years after.

In 1767, near Frederick, Md., Martin Boehm and Philip William Otterbein laid the foundation of what grew into the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In 1968, this body united with the Methodists to form The United Methodist Church, which continues to meet at General Conferences, where delegates amend, clarify and perfect the Discipline in light of the current missional settings around the world.



CLERGY CANDIDATES

Rev. Eliezer Valentín Castañón

Trinity UMC, Frederick

Conference Agencies:

Board of Ordained Ministry; District Committee on Ordained Ministry (Central Maryland and Frederick districts); Committee on Church and Society; Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministry (chair 2008-2017); Advocacy and Action Ministry; New York Annual Conference Ministry to Ministers Program; conflict resolution team

General Church Agencies:

From 1994-2005, staff at the General Board of Church and Society; from 2005-2010, Associate General Secretary at the General Commission of Religion and Race

Other Organizations:

The National Council of Churches of Christ; NEJ Global Structure Task Force; chair of the Hispanic Staff Forum of the UMC; NAACP; Board of Directors of the Center for New Community; founding member and vice-president of the “Sociedad Wesleyana”; MARCHA, the UMC National Hispanic caucus

I believe that serving as delegate to the GC is an honor of great responsibility. As a man of faith who has personally experienced living in the margins of society because of both my ethnic origin and socio-economic background, I believe that I can bring a different perspective to the conversation about who we are, and where we are going as God’s people. I have spent years working to bring harmony and connectivity everywhere I serve. Notwithstanding our present challenges, I believe that the unity of the Church is central to our identity as an expression of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom that is not based on sameness but in unity for the proclamation of the Good News that Jesus proclaimed. I believe that as UM’s we are called to witness and sustain the unity of the Church because it is God’s design for the Kingdom of God.



Rev. Timothy B. Warner

Mill Creek Parish UMC

2000 General and Jurisdictional Delegate

Conference Agencies:

Associate Council Director for Community and Economic Development (1998-2005); frequent workshop leader for UMW and Leadership Days; currently serve on Camping and Retreat Ministries Vision Team; co-founder Greater Gaithersburg Youth Ministry

Other Organizations:

Appalachian Service Project; Group Ministries Workcamp

Our church needs leaders who are relationally connected with others to discern a trajectory for the church that makes it relevant in communities, leaves its members whole as people and disciples of Christ, and is grounded in a theology that is not dominated by the politics of power.

Rev. Julie Marie Wilson

Calvary UMC, Frederick

Conference Agencies:

BWC Board of Church and Society (2012-2018); chair of Church and Society (2016-2018); Frederick District Hispanic Latino Advisory Board (2017); NEW Immigration Task Force (2017-present); BWC’s Climate Justice Team (2018-present); NEJ Call to Action Racial Justice team (2017-present)

General Agencies:

Employed by the General Board of Church and Society (2011-2013)

Other Organizations:

Board of Second Street and Hope, which serves Frederick’s poor (2017-present); WV/MD CREDO Community; BWARM

I find great value in the diversity of the connectional church. I appreciate the variety of viewpoints that we each approach our faith with due to the varied contexts we come from. However, we also all share certain elements of our faith and values in common. The work of the General Conference is to find the best combination of what works in the context of the global church while still preserving the essence of United Methodism and who we are as a people called Methodists. I believe that I have been called and have gifts which qualify me to be a part of the team which engages in this important work in 2020 with our siblings from around the globe.

Rev. Leo Yates

As a Deacon, serve as a licensed therapist and behavioral health specialist with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Magothy UMC of the Deaf

Conference Agencies:

Commission on Disability Concerns (2013-2018); Seeds of Security committee (2018 - present); Arrangements Committee for Annual Conference (2014- Present)

General Church Agencies:

Global Ministries’ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries Committee (2014-present); Consultant on Deaf Ministry for Global Ministries (2016-present)

Other Organizations:

Liaison member with United Methodist Congress of the Deaf, the national DisAbility Ministries Committee; BWARM; United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities caucus; appointed by Maryland Governor Hogan to the Board of Trustees for the Maryland School for the Deaf

In my work as a deacon, I have compassion and frequently advocate for persons who are marginalized or underserved. For instance: persons with disabilities (differing abilities), Deaf and hard of hearing persons, those who are blind and visually impaired, those with mobility issues, older adults, persons with mental health or substance use disorders, and others. These persons are often overlooked or neglected in many of our churches. If we do not have a disability yet, then we are temporarily abled, as we will likely develop one as we age. As a caregiver for my elderly father, I see his ailments/needs and those in the church. This vital work needs a voice/vote at both General Conference and at the NEJ Conference. We need delegates committed to these. I hope to further advocate by raising awareness, and prayerfully, encourage sensitivity to these issues among individuals, churches, annual conferences, and across our denomination.



LAITY CANDIDATES



Michelle R. Baker

Oakdale Emory UMC, Olney

Local Church Committees:

Worship, Finance Chair

I have been involved at the leadership level of the local church since 1993, as I am married to an ordained UMC pastor. I love our Wesleyan traditions and desire to help all of us stay true to our roots as we share the Gospel in new and exciting ways. I desire for our churches to be vibrant and alive as we engage all people in our varying cultures. As the leadership of our denomination meets, I want to have an impact on setting direction, culture and a paradigm that will continue to lead us into the most loving and inviting people and churches that we can be. I want to help The United Methodist Church live out the Great Commission in a way that invites all to meet our Amazing God!

Megan Blizzard

Westminster UMC, Westminster

Local Church Committees:

Lay leader; Certified Lay Speaker; chair of Staff-Parish Relations and Nominations committees; member of Board of Trustees and Finance Committee; chair worship design committees; worship leader; and organized Bible studies and other small groups

Conference Committees:

Conference Young Adult Council for three years, currently serving as chair; Young People’s Ministry Board; lay member to Annual Conference for eight years

Other Organizations:

B-WARM steering committee; through my job, I work with agencies including Human Services Project and Youth Services Bureau to connect youth with housing, job-training, employment and other services

As I watched the livestream of General Conference 2019, it struck me how few young adults I saw there. In fact, only 7 percent of the delegates were under 35. Young people are vastly under-represented in our church, and as a young adult candidate for ministry, I seek to change that. I want to give us more of a voice and make our presence known. I was disheartened by the contentiousness I watched at General Conference and how little room was left for the movement of the Holy Spirit. As I prayed for our church I felt called to participate in General Conference because I feel our church needs people who respect and love one another as children of God, understand our church polity, bring diverse voices to the table, represent a younger generation of our church leadership, and, most importantly make room for God to guide us forward.



LAITY CANDIDATES

Daniel Colbert

Silver Spring UMC, Silver Spring

Local Church Committees:

4C Exploratory Committee on church properties (2018-present); Worship Committee (2014-2015); founding member and chair of ad hoc lay committee on inclusion/welcoming (2011-2012); at the University of Virginia served on the Wesley Foundation mission trip planning committee (2007); at First UMC in Pensacola, Fla., Youth Group president (2004-2005)

As a young adult, I care deeply about the future of the UMC — a future I believe must embody the diversity and radical inclusivity of the kin-dom of God. I’ve been a member of the UMC for essentially my entire life, not only in the BWC but also in the Alabama-West Florida and North Georgia conferences. I want to raise my children in the same nurturing church environment I experienced. Young people who feel passionately that our church must become truly inclusive should be represented at General Conference. I feel called to be their voice. My profession as an attorney gives me an understanding of legislation that will help me be an effective delegate. I also believe my familiarity with diverse conferences will enable me to work with the other delegates to build a stronger future for all members of our denomination.



Tracy Collins

Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.

Church Committees:

Lay Member to Annual Conference (2013-present); Staff-Parish Relations Committee (2013-2016); Personnel

Committee (2015-present); Foundry Church Management Board; Lay Leader

Other Organizations:

Foundry Social Justice Ministry teams including Sandwich 1000; Saturday Morning Cooking Ministry, Concert for Life Planning Committee, LGBTQ Inclusion Advocacy Ministry Team; Board of Directors of Boys Town Washington D.C.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference is a paragon of diversity and inclusion in The United Methodist Church, with few peers across our Connection. As a delegate from this venerable font of Wesleyan teaching in America, I feel called by the Creator of us all to the work of building bridges, mending the hurts, atoning for all oppression, seeking justice, and creating space for all Easter people to live into God’s loving and liberating peace! As a proud gay man of color, my life involves a continuing story of reflection, strategic involvement, faithful advocacy, and dedication of my prayers, presence, gifts and service to help make the laws and operational practices exercised on our jobs, in our communities, and in our churches, fair and just for gay and straight people, regardless of age, race, gender identity, nationality, socio-economic status or any of the other factors that serve to separate us from each other and from the love of God.

Amelia Duroska

North Bethesda UMC, Bethesda

Church Committees:

Chair, Church Council (2016-2018); Board of Trustees, two terms; Sunday School teacher; altar guild; participate in mission-related work

Conference Agencies:

Connectional Table

Other Organizations:

MSI Recreation League Girls Soccer Coach for five seasons

I believe that I have a strong and achievable vision for our United Methodist Church: a vision that will attract new, committed members to our Faith, including attracting younger members and followers of Jesus Christ. All moral, social, and economic problems in our society can be addressed through our Wesleyan heritage and the abiding truths of our social justice principles. We must be bold in proclaiming our social justice truths, stated in language and structure that resonates in the minds and hearts of women, men, and young people today. People are searching for joy, hope, and connection in our times: most self-help books borrow from Christian principles and thought. Infusing the love and hope of Jesus Christ could greatly reduce self-harm and suicide that are tragically on the rise.





LAITY CANDIDATES

Sarah Ford

Sharp Street Memorial UMC,  
Baltimore

Jurisdictional delegate 2016

Local Church Committees:

Chair of Finance and Staff-Parish Relations committees; member of Board of Trustees

Conference Committees:

Chair of Nominations Committee

Other Organizations:

I serve with the Baltimore Metropolitan District Lay Servant team that renders worship service at the Keswick Multi-Care Facility. I teach with an ecumenical Bible study group in my neighborhood to persons under court order for substance abuse

After much prayer, I feel God is calling me to continue what was started in 2016 and in St. Louis. I was a jurisdictional delegate and observed the hurt that transpired. I would like to be an agency for healing as well as bringing all of God's United Methodist children together in the church. I will work diligently to ensure that I represent to the best of my ability.



John C. Hines Jr.

Mt. Zion UMC, Lothian

Church Committees:

Church Council Chairperson; Lay Leader; Lay Member to Annual Conference

Conference Agencies:

LGBT Dialogue Team (2005-2008)

As a life-long Methodist, I am sorry to see our Church suffering through these pangs of change. However, after 40+ years of Holy Conferencing, our discussions over scriptural interpretation have not resolved our differences. Both Progressives and Traditionalists hold onto differing core, fundamental beliefs that are not compromisable and, thus, irreconcilable. It is my heartfelt desire to see the pain, anguish, and constant struggles come to an end. Therefore, I will support those actions of General/Jurisdictional Conference that will create new and separate expressions of Methodism, providing better opportunities for all of my brothers and sisters in Christ to worship and serve as they feel lead by our Heavenly Father. "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." Proverbs 2:6

Chet Jechura

Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.

Other Organizations:

Bread for the World – Communications Department

In 13 hours, over 15,000 young people, including myself, signed onto a statement of unity that was presented to the 2019 General Conference. The Holy Spirit inspired me to sign the statement and share it with my friends. It is the same Spirit that has now compelled me to be considered as a delegate to the 2020 General Conference. I believe that when we answer the Spirit's call and are open to embrace the love of God that knows no limits, mighty things can happen that we never dreamt were possible. Only 7 percent of the seated delegates to the 2019 General Conference were young people under the age of 35. Young people have a lot of ideas about the future of the church. Please prayerfully elect young people to represent the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference at the 2020 General Conference and if it be me, then may it be so. Amen.



Nathan Jones

Epworth UMC, Cockeysville

Church Committees:

Youth representative on the ART Board; intergenerational mission team

Conference Agencies:

Treasurer, CCYM; ROCK Team; youth delegate to Leadership Board

Other Organizations:

Baltimore County Christian Workcamp; Goodwill Thanksgiving dinner

Over the past year, your churches, our conference and our denomination have gone through deep spiritual deliberation and meditation which culminated in the Special General Conference. As we move forward, countless decisions and changes will occur. As a youth, this applies to me more than ever as it will determine the future of the church I love. I feel God calling me to be a delegate to be able to provide a youth's voice, a voice of the future, and a voice of unity to guide our churches, our conference, and our denomination in a way that will spread the love and message of Jesus Christ to everyone.

Heather H. Kraus

Severna Park UMC, Severna Park

Church Committees:

Staff-Parish Relations Committee (2000-2002), chair of Church Council (2019-2021), member Church Council, Finance and Worship committees, Lay Member to Annual Conference (2012-2014, 2016-2018)

Conference Agencies:

Annapolis District Superintendency Committee (2017-present)

Other Organizations:

I served as a mentor to women at Ordinance Road Detention Center through the Good News Prison Ministries program in 2010 through 2013. Led Disciple Bible Study classes and taught children's Sunday School

The United Methodist Church has loved me, nurtured me and made me a better person by guiding me in an ever-evolving relationship with God and God's children. I treasure the UM values, which encourage reliance on Scripture along with intellect, tradition and experience to meet God, accept the grace of God and grow in faith. I pray that I can use my voice to protect and strengthen our church as a place where ALL of God' children are welcome, just as they are, and where we can lovingly learn from one another, even when we disagree on interpretation of Scripture. I pray that I can contribute to our Church's eventual full inclusion of all humans, in all the beautiful ways God has made them.



Christie Latona

Emory UMC, Washington, D.C.

Alternate delegate in 2016 and 2019

Church Committees:

Church Council Chair; Lay Member to Annual Conference; Communications Chair; Experience chair and small group leader; as youth sang in the choir and served as secretary and VP for UMYF

Conference Agencies:

Director of Connectional Ministries; Grow Congregations Team

General Church Agencies:

Executive Committee of Path 1's Board (2008-2016)

Other Organizations:

Northeastern Jurisdiction Vision Table (2016-present)

I am seeking to represent the BWC as a lay delegate because people asked me to do so and we are at a critical juncture in the life of the UMC. Over the past six years of serving the BWC, I have grown to understand and love the breadth, diversity, strengths and struggles of leaders, churches and faith communities in each region. I bring with me a passion for the Gospel, compassion for all God's people and 28 years of leadership and organizational development experience (including 15 years serving as a consultant for various Annual Conferences and General Church agencies). These relationships and insights about the gifts and complexity of our connectional system allow me to see the impact and implications of legislation on leaders and congregations. I believe in the Christ-centered mission, values and theology of grace of The United Methodist Church and will work to honor these as part of the BWC delegation.

Melissa Lauber

National UMC, Washington, D.C.

2012 General Conference Delegate  
2008 and 2016 General Conference Alternate

Conference Agencies:

As the Conference Director of Communications, I serve on the Commission on Communications, Discipleship Council, Council on Finance and Administration, Sessions and Arrangements committees, Connectional Table and the Conference Executive Team

General Church Agencies:

General Commission on Communications – 2 quadrennia; one quadrennia as a member of the executive board

The United Methodist Church stands at a threshold. I would like to offer my 25 years of experience with the Baltimore-Washington Conference to help craft the identity of the church as it continues to unfold. As the Conference Director of Communications, I have told the stories of thousands of United Methodists living out their faith. From these narratives I have learned that the church is at its best when it rejects the tyranny of the "or" and embraces the possibilities of the "and." We are a people of social action and vital piety. I would like to serve as a delegate to ensure that this is the story United Methodists will continue to tell the world. As the church stands on this edge of possibility, I offer my hope, wisdom and profound belief in grace as we move forward, grounded in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.



Sharon Milton

Emory Fellowship UMC,  
Washington, D.C.

Church Committees:

Youth Director, Evangelism and Outreach Ministry, Worship Team, Returning Citizen Ministry, Christian Education, Mission team, Church Council, four times Lay Member to Annual Conference

Conference Agencies:

Leader for Greater Washington District on BWC Youth Ministry; taught various workshops at Leadership Days; Dean, UMW Mission u Youth School (2019); Zimbabwe Pastors' School teacher (2013, 2015, 2017)

Other Organizations:

Several VIM trips, volunteered at various prisons, shelters and community center; Anti-Gun Violence task force of Greater Washington District, March 4 Our Live Rally

After prayers and discernment, I am seeking to represent the BWC because I believe I will be a great asset to the team and help make decisions in the best interest of all. I would like to be a united voice for my conference and learn more about The United Methodist Church in the process. I'm able to commit, stay focus and complete the task. In a time when our denomination seems separated, I believe I can be a new voice at the table uniting us as one. I am able to have holy conferencing, listening and voicing my opinion and, if there is a disagreement, it will be done in love. I do believe God has equipped and is calling me to work with the team for the task and the great work to be done.



Charles E. Moore, Jr.

Community UMC, Crofton

2012 and 2016 General Conference Delegate

Church Committees:

VIM Team Leader to Zimbabwe since 2001; Currently vice chair of Finance Committee; Previous Chair of Ad Council, Finance and Stewardship committees

Conference Agencies:

Currently serving on Council of Finance and Administration (previously served as President for 5 years) and the CFA Budget Committee, and the Episcopacy Committee; previously served on several task forces relating to apportionments and the covenant relationship with The Board of Child Care, the Hope Fund Committee, the Imagine No Malaria Planning Committee, and the Love Offering Committee for Bishop Matthew's retirement

General Church Agencies:

Currently serving on the Board of Directors of Africa University (Chair of Finance Committee) and on The Board of Governors of Wesley Theological Seminary; GBHEM Investment Committee; previously served two terms on the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) where I chaired the General Agency and Episcopal Matters Committee

Other Organizations:

The Board of Trustees of McDaniel College (formerly Western Maryland College) since 1993

My passion for the United Methodist " Connection" through "mission," higher education and financial management has been evidenced by my extensive involvement in our church at all levels. Through these various roles, I have developed a deep understanding and appreciation for how our denomination funds its various ministries and how we fulfill our global mission. I am consistent in my focus on enabling our denomination to provide the leadership and financial resources for the local church to fulfill its mission to serve God, serve ourselves and serve others. I feel I have fulfilled these various roles with compassion, integrity and accountability. I have been honored and humbled to serve as a Lay Delegate for the 2012 GC, the 2016 GC and the 2019 Special Session. I welcome the opportunity to serve again in this important capacity.



LAITY CANDIDATES

Kenneth Ow

North Bethesda UMC, Bethesda

2016 General Conference Delegate

Church Committees:

Church Council, chair, SPRC chair, Trustees chair, Worship Committee chair

Conference Agencies:

Ex Officio Member, Council on Finance and Administration; CFA Budget Committee. Ex Officio Member, NEJ CFA; previously: Board of Global Ministries

General Church Agencies:

Board Member, General Council on Finance and Administration; Member, GCFA Committee on Legal Responsibilities and Corporate Governance

Other Organizations:

Montgomery County Community Emergency Response Team Volunteer (2006-present): Logistics Coordinator, 2007-2018; Federally Certified Instructor (2007-present). AARP Driver Safety Volunteer (2014-current): Instructor (2014-present); MD State Tech Advisor (2015-present); CarFit Technician (2015-present); CarFit Event Coordinator (2016-present); Smart DriverTEK Workshop Presenter (2018-present)

Our General Conference work from this quadrennium is far from finished, and much harm has been done! I feel uniquely qualified to continue through the next four years given my experience and knowledge acquired during the current four years. After the proceedings in St. Louis, we have a couple of choices — fight or flight. Stay and continue our work or leave the denomination. I choose to stay and fight! I long for the day when we no longer need to identify ourselves as Reconciling Congregations; that UMC is synonymous with Reconciled! As a parent and grandparent, I am acutely aware of how the denomination is losing youth and young adults to the category “NONE” under church affiliation. Our focus needs to grow beyond church in the 1950s to remain relevant. We need to be attuned to the ministerial needs of the 21st century, 2020 and beyond.



Lutebula Danny Pembamoto

Hiss UMC, Parkville

Church Committees:

Trustee, Church Council, SPRC, Worship, Finance, Vacation Bible School and VIM team leader

Other Organizations:

Baltimore County Disaster Relief in Catonsville

Over the years, I have attended multiple training sessions and I learned much about my church. I participated at different occasions on very important issues and decisions which have impacted my church, such as church leader elections and supporting new clergy and Conference staff. I dedicated and continue to dedicate my time to my serve my Lord in so many ways. Today, I express my interest in becoming a lay voting member for the next 2020 General Conference because I would to expend my ability to serve my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at the global, regional and local levels in the years ahead, on behalf of the BWC, where important decisions are made and actions are taken to change the course of The United Methodist Church. I would like to be part of this Body of Christ that will shape and define the future of our church.



Philip H. Potter

National UMC/Metropolitan Memorial UMC

Church Committees:

Chairman, Church Council; Finance Committee; Praising/Worship Committee; Merger Task Force/Trustees; Chair, Foundation Board of Trustees

Conference Agencies:

Chair, Council on Finance and Administration; Chair of Budget Committee; Connectional Giving Committee

Other Organizations:

President of Palisades Village, a Washington non-profit that organizes volunteers and funds efforts to assist seniors to remain in their homes and live both safely and maintain their social contacts in their neighborhood

The Special Session left our denomination polarized with dueling sets of beliefs and now risks schism. We cannot remain where we are. We must try to heal the pain and hurt caused for many of our members and not repeat it in 2020. During my career over 40 years as a lawyer and lobbyist in Washington, I worked primarily on issues so contentious that they appeared to have no solution through the government process. Resolution was often found by acting as an honest broker, listening and discerning the core beliefs and goals of each of the stakeholders and opponents, then developing an approach with them that respected those beliefs. Methodists are charged to live like Jesus, and I believe that is our path forward on this. I believe we also need a financially viable resolution. I am retired and have ample time to be an informed and active delegate.



Mittie Theobald Quinn

Dumbarton UMC, Georgetown

2016 NEJ Alternate

Church Committees:

Currently co-chair of Worship Committee and de facto member of the Church Council; Past offices include chair of: Membership, Nominating, Education, Fellowship, Church Council, Staff Parish, and lay member to Annual Conference

Conference Agencies:

Chair (formerly) and current member of BWC Commission on Communications; past – served on COSROW

General Church Agencies:

At large Member of the Northeast Jurisdictional Committee on Ministry (“NEJ BOOM”)

Other Organizations:

Member of Methodist Federation for Social Action; Past chair of Baltimore Washington Area Reconciling United Methodists (BWARM) and current Affirmation/Outreach coordinator

I am a “cradle” Methodist – and old enough to remember when we became The United Methodist Church. I have been a member to two different Annual Conferences (Upper New York and BWC) and am both proud and amazed by the work that our church does spreading the Good News and seeking to create the kindom of God on earth. I want to be part of our moving forward as the diverse and spirit-filled organization that we have been for the past 200+ years. Our denomination is at a critical juncture in its history and there is much work needed to continue our biblical charge to go and make disciples for Jesus Christ. I believe that work requires that ALL of God’s Children be welcome at the Table of Grace – and that NO ONE is “incompatible” at God’s Table.



Chris Schlieckert

Calvary UMC, Waldorf

Jurisdictional delegate in 2012 and 2016. Attended General Conference 2012, 2016, and 2019 as an alternate

Church Committees:

I do not currently serve on any local church committees, but as a clergy spouse I am actively involved in a variety of aspects of the local church

Conference Agencies:

I am the Baltimore-Washington Conference’s Director of Retreat & Camping Ministries and the Director of The West River Center. I am a member of the BWC Call to Action Steering Committee

Other Organizations:

I have served as a local church youth leader, confirmation mentor, and on contemporary worship teams doing technology. I am Red Cross trainer and teaching lifeguarding and First Aid/CPR courses. I began Mission Manidokan which has worked with numerous service organizations and raised more than \$22,000

As director of BWC Retreat & Camping Ministries and clergy spouse, I offer a unique perspective on the ministry of the church because I know the challenges of both leading a ministry and sitting in the pew. This gives me a depth of knowledge to help the UMC seize the opportunities before it and overcome obstacles which prevent us from fully living out God’s call. I was honored to serve as a delegate and alternate in 2012, 2016 and 2019. As father of two young daughters, I want to ensure the UMC is thriving and able to help them and all people develop their relationship with Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It is important to me that all God’s children are valued and included as we seek to genuinely live in Christian community. It would be an honor to continue to serve the BWC as a delegate.



Jennifer Shephard

Otterbein UMC, Hagerstown

Church Committees:

Church Council, Communications intern (summer 2018) Praise band, teach middle and high school Sunday School

General Church Agencies:

General Board of Global Ministries as a Global Justice Volunteer in Nicaragua in 2016 and Zambia in 2018

Other Organizations:

Attended the Young People’s Conference in 2018 through the Global Mission Fellow Program

The United Methodist Church, like the current world, has become polarized, especially over many issues relating to people’s core beliefs. Although I have my own set of beliefs, my experiences both in the rural areas of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and abroad allow me to have a unique perspective that allows for finding common ground and cooperatively working to find solutions that will benefit all people involved in The United Methodist Church. As a passionate young adult, I hope to not only represent the youth and young adults at General Conference but to be able to put the beliefs of the Cumberland-Hagerstown District and the Baltimore-Washington Conference into the context of the global United Methodist church.

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020: WHAT'S AT STAKE

The 2020 General Conference almost certainly will debate human sexuality, especially after the actions of the 2019 Special Session. General Conference 2019 saw passage of the Traditional Plan, which retains the church’s policy that the practice of homosexuality is “incompatible with Christian teaching” and strengthens enforcement of bans on same-sex unions and ordination of “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy. Multiple conferences and congregations have stated their intentions to not follow these Discipline-based prohibitions. Reports indicate that multiple groups, on both sides of the issue, are meeting to determine next steps; those plans are expected to be petitions to, and voted on, in 2020.

The 2020 General Conference will also set mission and ministry priorities for the church for the next four years. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the budget. A recent recommendation from the denomination’s Connectional Table slashed the four-year, 2021-2024 budget by 23 percent, to \$361.6 million. The Discipline gives the Connectional Table responsibility for allocating general church giving among five apportioned funds: Ministerial Education Fund; the Black College Fund; the Africa University Fund; the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund; and the World Service Fund, which supports the work of eight general church agencies, the Connectional Table itself and a contingency fund.

A revised version of the church’s Social Principles will be adopted in 2020. The General Board of Church and Society, based in Washington, D.C., has been working on this effort for two quadrennia. The board’s goal was to make the revised Social Principles more succinct, more theologically grounded, and more globally relevant.

This will also be the last U.S.-based General Conference for a while: the 2024 session is planned for Manilla, the Philippines; and the 2028 General Conference is scheduled for Harare, Zimbabwe.

At the 2020 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, delegates elect new bishops. Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar is expected to retire after serving eight years in New England, and eight years in New Jersey.



## LAITY CANDIDATES

### Matthew “Matt” S. Sichel

Wesley UMC, Hampstead

*Reserve Jurisdictional Conference  
Delegate 2016 and Special Session in 2019*

#### Church Committees:

Chair and Member at Large, Administrative Council; Member at Large, Outreach Committee; Church Historian; Sunday School Teacher; Member at Large, Building Committee; Certified Lay Servant since 2004

#### Other Organizations:

Eagle Scout

I consider it an honor, blessing and privilege to have served the BWC as a lay delegate in 2016 and 2019. I have learned to be a better listener, how to be more careful in constructing my opinions and views, and the value of trying to find common ground. The work before the General Conference is sacred. I would be a faithful delegate, committed to the work of finding God's future for The United Methodist Church. Those who have worked with me know that while I openly share my opinions and convictions, I am committed to listening, learning and growing in my service for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ rescued me, and my only goal in life is sharing his love and mercy with every person I know and meet. I pledge to make Christ the center of all the work I do if elected to the delegation.



### Richard B. Wilson

John Wesley UMC, Hagerstown

*2016 Alternate to Jurisdictional*

#### Church Committees:

I am currently serving on Administrative Council and SPRC, serving as secretary on both bodies. Previously I have chaired Evangelism and have served on Missions, Leadership Development and Trustees

#### Conference Agencies:

I am currently serving on the Board of Ordained Ministries, serving as chair of the License to Preach School, and a member of the Residence in Ministry Committee. As the Cumberland/Hagerstown District Lay Leader, I sit on the Conference Connectional Table, the Board of Laity and Nominations. I also serve on the District Committee on Ministry and the District Lay Servant Committee

#### Other Organizations:

Board of REACH of Washington County, the Government Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Co-President of the Maryland League of Women Voters

I am looking for ways to strengthen the church by focusing on what we hold in common. To do this I will employ my training and skills as a listener and consensus builder. This has been my role in my local church and in my professional career. At the same time, I am a passionate advocate for social justice. I know the Lord is not done with me, or with our church.



### Cynthia Taylor

Mount Olive UMC,  
Randallstown

*Delegate General Conference 2016  
including 2019 Special Session*

#### Church Committees:

Currently serve on Church Leadership Council; Youth Group Leader; UMW Charity Circle and Loaves and Fishes; served on Church and Society (chair); Discipleship Ministries (chair); VBS (chair); Sunday School teacher; Church Council; Service Ministries (chair); UMW (unit officer); Bible Study leader including Discipleship I and II

#### Conference Agencies:

Currently serving as Conference Secretary. Served as Church and Society District Linking Person; District Council on Ministries; Hope in the City; Chair of the Discipleship Council; Rules Committee (as Discipleship Council Chair and Conf. Secretary); Nominations, Sessions and Arrangements Committee (part of Conference Secretary duties); member of special budget committee on CFA; UMW Conference representative to the Appalachian Ministry Network.

#### General Church Agencies:

Resources Committee of General Board of Discipleship

#### Other Organizations:

Chair, Susanna Wesley House; Vice Chair, Night of Peace Family Shelter at Salem United Methodist Church; Chair, Baltimore County Department of Social Service Advisory Committee; Board member of Baltimore County Communities for the Homeless, Girl Scout Leader and Community Director

God equipped me with the ability to work with diverse people respectfully and effectively. In 2016, my first year as a delegate, I was on the Discipleship Legislative Committee. In subcommittee, I helped facilitate listening in a deeper way. I helped our group realize that while we were all United Methodists, we came from very different cultures and experiences and that “one size did not fit all” regarding changes to the Book of Discipline. A Native American Caucus observer asked me to present an item at plenary for removal from the consent agenda because of statements I made in committee regarding one of their resolutions. My competence in working cross-culturally and my mediation skills will be an asset to our delegation. As a youth leader, I bring an awareness of young people's interests and concerns.



### Greg Witte

Cedar Grove UMC, Deale

#### Church Committees:

Currently serving as Lay Leader and previously serving two terms on SPRC, including a term as chairperson.

Much of my focus at Cedar Grove is on teaching, especially supporting the youth; also, a member of the praise team

#### Conference Agencies:

Conference, district, and local church United Methodist Men; from 2010 through 2018, was the Annapolis District UMM president

#### Other Organizations:

Volunteer leader of ISACA, a computer security membership association, which serves 140,000 professionals in 180 countries

I was raised as a Jehovah's Witness but learned of true religion when my aunt snuck me into MYF events and UMC services. That mixed upbringing taught me to never be ashamed of the Gospel — I was speaking publicly about the Bible from the day I could talk. Ironically, that history taught me to test every word like a Berean, listening to all sides and seeking to discern God's will. At work, I've served the U.S. government for 30 years, 15 at the State Department, gaining expertise in formal procedure and oral/written communications, with emphasis on diplomacy, and authorship that was commended by President Obama. As an observer at GC2019, I learned firsthand the importance of each vote. As one who feels led by the Holy Spirit, having come to love and serve every corner of the conference through UMM, I feel humbly called to serve in this important delegate capacity.



## 235th Session of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference

Wednesday, May 29-Saturday June 1

Marriott Waterfront Hotel

Inner Harbor, Baltimore

In addition to electing delegates, clergy and lay members at the Annual Conference session will participate in holy conferencing, considering several resolutions and adopting a 2020 BWC budget. This year's session has been expanded a day to feature time to celebrate and explore young people's ministries, one of the special emphases of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

A retiree luncheon will be held at the conference on May 29, followed by the Clergy Executive Session and the Laity Session. Marcia McFee, the worship design expert, will be the keynote speaker at the laity session. Opening worship begins that evening at 7 p.m.

The Rev. Martin McMickle will open May 30 with a Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. The memorial service, celebrating the saints of the church who died during the previous year, will be held that evening from 7 to 9 p.m. The Rev. Ianther Mills of Asbury UMC will preach. Ordination will be held Friday evening, May 31, from 7 to 9 p.m. Bishop LaTrelle Easterling will preside.

The theme of the conference is "We are One: United to Love." The foundational Scripture for the Conference continues to be Ephesians 4:1-16. Conference leaders and churches are encouraged to pray for the BWC, as it continues its ministry to inspire and equip faith communities to develop disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

For more information, visit

[bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference](http://bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference)



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# Opiod epidemic calls for response from church

By MELISSA LAUBER  
UMConnection Staff

*“We may not be the best qualified to do this, but we are the ones who are here and have the responsibility of doing it. We can’t wait until the best ones come along. Right now, in this place, at this time, we are the best qualified ones to do it.” – Bishop Clifton Ives, retired*

IN THE VIETNAM War, 58,250 Americans died. In 2017, more than 72,000 Americans died of opiod overdoses.

“We are losing a Vietnam War every year,” said the Rev. Barry Ball, at the Baltimore-Washington Conference Opioid Townhall meeting March 9 at Harmony UMC in Marlowe, W.Va.

“And this number is small,” said Ball. “This is just the deaths. People are being removed from participating in society in much larger numbers.”

Alarmed at the wide-spread epidemic of addiction to opioids sweeping the Baltimore-Washington Conference and the nation, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling called a townhall meeting to discuss the church’s response.

She intentionally set the meeting in the Western Region. In 2017, West Virginia had the highest rate of deaths due to drug overdose. She also chose Ball, an ordained Elder who works with the National

Drug Enforcement Administration in Hagerstown, to lead the conversation and walk participants through some of the background of opioids, addiction, and his own experiences in ministries of recovery, hope and healing.

Ball began by explaining how, since ancient times, opium has been collected from poppies; how when you take opium into the lab, it can be transformed in to morphine; and how the Bayer company made a better, less addictive painkiller when it created heroin. In recent years, he said, popular culture discovered fentanyl, a synthetic painkiller created in Belgium in the 1960s, reported to be 50 times more powerful than heroin.

While cocaine and meth get your heart going, opioids create a euphoric rush and then slow down the heart and respiratory system. An overdose causes people to stop breathing. “It’s not a violent death,” Ball said. “You lay down and die in your sleep.”

He went on to explain the science behind addiction, the workings of neurotransmitters, and the many roads into addiction and the many roads out.

“The opposite of addiction is not sobriety,” Ball said. “The opposite of addiction is connection.”

And that, he believes, is where the church comes in.

“We can let people know they

are known and loved,” he said. “If that’s not a field for the church to be in, I don’t know what is.”

Ball offered a number of words of advice for churches wanting to become involved in opiod addiction-related ministries. Including:

- Start small.
- Anything the church can do to connect with someone is a start. Knowing someone’s name is a first step.
- One of the best places to go is your drug court. Meet the judge and some social workers, they’re often desperate for help and for people to be mentors.
- Some of these people are dangerous. Don’t invite people you don’t know who are actively involved in drug use into your home. Meet at church or another location.
- Recognize this is not a United Methodist problem. The severity of the opiod epidemic is breaking down walls and silos as people feel compelled to work together. Partner.
- An empty parsonage can make a good recovery house.
- You don’t have to look outside your church to do this ministry. Start by having an open forum and letting people come and talk.

For Ball, one of the most meaningful ministries is working with drug-endangered children.

In his work, he once was on a raid where agents kicked in the door of a house in Hagerstown. There were used needles all over the floor. As they came through the door, they were met by a little girl. In that home, a dead man was sprawled in the bathtub. At about 1:30 a.m., the girl and her brother were taken to a hotel and at 7 a.m. Ball picked the children up to take them to school.

Looking back, he berates himself for expecting them to perform normally and for not fully realizing their trauma.

“We don’t know the hell some of these drug-endangered children live through,” he said. “Their fight or flight reflex is on at all times. What if we went out of the sanctuary and into classrooms and mentored them?”

Churches, Ball warned, want a successful program within a year. But ministry takes time and realistic expectations need to be set.

“Think of yourselves as missionaries in your own community,” he said. “Help birth one of these programs. Take baby steps to be the hand and feet of Christ. Take an initial step into making a concrete difference. ... We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

## New pastor appointed at National UMC

By ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

NATIONAL UMC, LOCATED across the street from American University in Washington, D.C., wasn’t always located there. Originally situated at 4th and C Streets near the U.S. Capitol, the church was called Metropolitan Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church. It was created with support from General Conference and hundreds of Methodist Episcopal churches across the country.

Abraham Lincoln even helped, giving \$100.

Presidents (Grant and McKinley were regular attendees) and paupers, Supreme Court judges and scoundrels have all made their way to the church since then. The church moved to its present spot in the early 1930s, opening its gothic sanctuary on Feb. 7, 1932. The church became a reconciling congregation in 2008 and is today a merger of two congregations: Metropolitan Memorial and Wesley UMCs.

It’s with this history in mind, then, that it’s fitting that the new pastor of National comes from a part of the country outside the bounds of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and is someone who has lived and worked across a great portion of the US.

The Rev. Doug Robinson-Johnson, an Elder from Massachusetts, has been appointed by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling to serve National UMC effective July 1.

Robinson-Johnson currently serves the United Parish of



The Rev. Doug Robinson-Johnson

Auburndale, located in Newton, Mass., just down the street from Boston College in the New England Conference. The church is a federation of United Methodist and United Church of Christ congregations. He’s served there since 2012.

Ordained as a Probationary Deacon in 1995 in Louisiana and an Elder in 1997 in the Northern Illinois Conference, Robinson-Johnson was actually born in California but moved at a young age to Louisiana.

“I’ve spent just about equal chunks of my life in Louisiana, Northern Illinois, and now the New England Conference,” Robinson-Johnson said in a phone interview.

He landed in Northern Illinois, he said, to attend Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1995. It was in those days, he said, that a key part of his ministry took shape through the ministry and person of the Rev. Greg Dell.

Dell served the LGBTQ community at Broadway UMC in Chicago. But he is better known as the first United Methodist pastor to be convicted of violating the 1996 prohibition of performing same-gender weddings. Robinson-Johnson’s “very public” support of

Dell’s ministry, he said, led to his appointment to serve the Parish of the Holy Covenant UMC in 1999, only a few blocks from Broadway.

“We served the same neighborhood,” he said, “known for its significant gay, lesbian and transgender community, so our churches were at least one-third LGBTQ. This is where my ministry took root just as he was forced to surrender his.”

In 2004, Robinson-Johnson and his wife, the Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson, were appointed co-pastors of Grace UMC of Lynn, Mass. This 900-member church was created when four congregations merged into one in April 2004. Erica currently serves as the Director of Connectional Ministry and Assistant to the Bishop in the New England Conference.

“When I was called by Bishop Easterling, I think she recognized three things about me,” Robinson-Johnson said. The first was his rural, humble, southern beginning in ministry. The second piece the bishop knew about was his contextual ministry experience.

“In my current and most previous appointment,” he said, “my faith communities were composed of young adults, college professors, high-caliber, deep academic backgrounds, astute theologically people. They had high expectations for the pastor coming in.”

The third thing, Robinson-Johnson noted, is his deep affection for academia. While he was in seminary, he was an associate at Alice Millar Chapel on the campus of Northwestern University. “I’ve

always been interested in that kind of direct connection with the university, with academia,” he said. His son, Evan, is now a journalism student there.

As he looks forward to his ministry at National, he knows that his formation — especially in ministry with LGBTQ people from early on in his life — has prepared him for what’s next. And for him, it’s personal.

While he was in college at Centenary College of Louisiana, a United Methodist liberal arts school, a gay Baptist friend of his tried to commit suicide the third week of school. Another friend and Robinson-Johnson intervened and saved his life. Things like that, he said, have happened to him over and over.

“In youth ministry, I encountered gay and lesbian youth who could not come out to their families, and certainly not in their churches,” he said. “There’s a story like this in every church I’ve served, and every community I’ve been a part of, where folks are not free to come out, where it’s dangerous for them. So, for me, this is a life or death thing. It’s never an ‘issue’ thing for me; it’s always a human being in danger.”


What one thing would he want his new clergy colleagues to know about him? Robinson-Johnson, who took a year off active service for rest and reflection, said he learned during that time that he’s not in competition with anyone. “We’re all on the journey together,” he said, “and we all serve a different role in the Body of Christ.”



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Church helps rehab Habitat house

WESTMINSTER – Habitat for Humanity will soon start building a house five blocks from Westminster UMC, to which the church has contributed \$11,430. The money was raised through contributions and the sale of Habitat Discount Cards, reported the Rev. Malcolm Stranathan.

Members of the church’s missions committee and Stranathan presented the check March 5 to Stephanie Averett, Habitat Director of Development, and Bryan Lyburn, Habitat Executive Director.

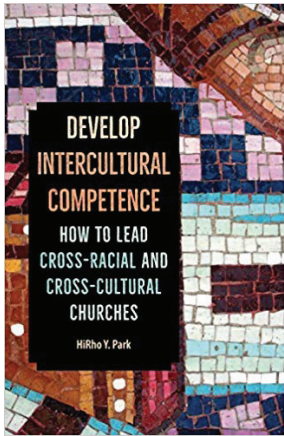
“We’re excited to participate in the build to take place in April and May of this year,” Stranathan said. The money will be used to rehab the home, slated for a mother and her three children.



**Presentation of the Westminster UMC donation to Habitat for Humanity. Pictured, left to right: Sharon Row, Missions Committee Chair; Pastor Malcolm Stranathan; Stephanie Averett, Habitat Director of Development; Bryan Lyburn, Habitat Executive Director; Carole Roberts, Missions Committee.**

Intercultural competence topic of book

FULTON – BWC clergy member, the Rev. HiRho Y. Park, has recently published a book on cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry settings for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.



“Develop Intercultural Competence: How to Lead Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Churches” (2018) is based on, as one excerpt said, “...pastors in cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry settings, are called to serve God, our church members, our neighbors, and the world as well. The example and model of our ministry is Jesus, who is a wounded healer.” The book is available at Cokesbury and Amazon.

Church honored on MLK Day

JESSUP – Asbury UMC was honored with the “Living the Dream” award endorsed by the Howard County Office of Human Rights on Jan. 20, in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The award is presented for outstanding achievements in the community. Asbury supports community service and unity

among diverse ethnic groups, regardless of social, economic or religious background, said the church’s pastor, the Rev. Gay Green-Carden.

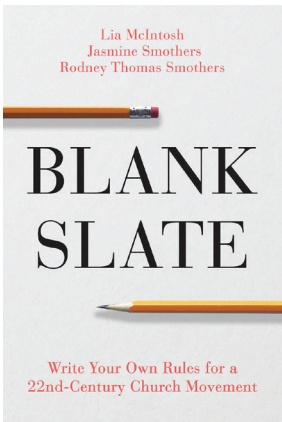
The theme for the MLK Day event was “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter,” that could “easily be the mantra for Asbury’s work,” said Lesa Lindsay, Lay Leader.

New Smothers book helps church get unstuck

FULTON - The church must get “unstuck” from its current context in order to address the context of younger generations, writes the Rev. Rodney Smothers in his new book, “Blank Slate: Write Your Own Rules for a 22nd-Century Church Movement.”

Smothers, BWC’s Director of Leadership and Congregational Development, and his co-authors, his daughter, the Rev. Jasmine Smothers, lead pastor of First UMC in Atlanta, and the Rev. Lia McIntosh of the Missouri Conference, guide leaders to envision and design the future church.

“We are in serious danger of losing this next generation. ... We need to do everything we can to keep them. Our future and their



future is at stake.”

The book includes descriptions of each generational group in the U.S., an exploration of five innovative secular organizations, and a seven-step process for ministry to engage upcoming generations. Each chapter includes questions for reflection. It is a powerful planning tool for ministry teams.

It is available from Abingdon Press and on Amazon.

Church and school form partnership

COLUMBIA – St. John United Church signed a partnership agreement with Bryan Woods Elementary School (BWES) Feb. 6. It was signed by the Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan, Debbie Parker, Chair of the Church Council, and Eric Schoch, Clerk of the Council.

In the agreement that spells out responsibilities for both parties the church has agreed to participate in the first day of school welcome back procession, provide school supplies, conduct clothing drives for students with a need as well as “adopting” school families during the holidays, and volunteer for certain activities.

The new partnership is part of Howard County Public School System’s effort to enhance the educational experience of its students.

“The St. John United Church-BWES partnership signing was the highlight of my week!” Kanahan said.



# What of the Resurrection?

An Easter Poem by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

What of the Resurrection if the hungry remain without bread?

What of the Resurrection if the prisons  
of oppression yet overflow?

What of the Resurrection if the voiceless still cry out for justice  
against a cacophony of silent indifference?

What of the Resurrection if the marginalized  
are only pushed further onto the margins?

What of the Resurrection if wars continue  
to ravage cities and souls without care of the cost?

What of the Resurrection if the blood of the innocent  
still runs warm down hot streets?

What of the Resurrection if the homeless cannot find shelter  
even under the archway of a sanctuary?

What of the Resurrection if the saved simply continue to  
color within the lines drawn by the hands of the privileged and powerful?

What of the Resurrection if the empty tomb  
simply becomes a tourist destination?

Justice rose with all power.  
Mercy rose with all power.  
Reconciliation rose with all power.

The Resurrection has power.  
That power has been imparted to us.  
Through that power, how have we been changed?  
With that power, what have we transformed?

The Resurrection  
Redeems  
Restores  
Repairs

May we live the Resurrection!

Amen!

## Youth workers gather to renew connections

By CHRISTIE HOFFMAN\*

YOUTH WORKERS FROM ACROSS the Baltimore-Washington Conference gathered at Wesley Freedom UMC for a retreat and training March 22-24. The weekend offered a time to focus on “restoration,” of both yourself and your faith. I personally cannot think of a more fitting message for a profession that requires a constant giving of yourself to the youth with whom you work.

Amazing things started to take shape over the weekend as many dedicated people came together to worship and learn how to make church a place for young people.

Youth leaders were enthusiastic to connect with others in the profession and have conversations about how to do youth ministry. Youth ministry is often an isolating field, where many youth workers feel disconnected and underprepared. Often, when someone steps into a youth ministry position, they are filling an existing hole and therefore have no one to orient them to the unique role of spiritually caring for young people. With a wide range of different churches and districts represented, as well as an experienced leadership team, there was a wealth of experience to be shared this weekend to help others grow.

Saturday morning offered a chance to grow as the attendees

broke up into Novice and Veteran groups to discuss strategies, address questions and problems they’re currently facing, and gain a sense of comradery and support. Nothing is more reassuring than hearing others’ trial-and-error stories, and there were certainly plenty to enjoy.

For me, the weekend offered an incredible balance of absolute silliness, spiritual restoration, and missional growth. Fun, quirky moments ensued when attendees were asked to shoot a Nerf-style bow and arrow or to participate in an intense match of Extreme Bingo. These ridiculous moments proved that even “the ones in charge” can enjoy a laugh as much as our youth.

Unexpected changes to the weekend, like an ill keynote speaker who couldn’t come, demonstrated the incredible flexibility that comes when serving in youth ministry. The event’s leadership team created seamless worship opportunities on the fly that offered important spiritual messages to let the Spirit sustain us through the roller coaster that comes when called to work with young people.

One of the most valuable take-aways from the weekend came in the form of the astounding training offered by those serving in youth ministry right in our own conference. Training workshops covered a variety of helpful topics

including family supportive youth ministry, how spaces affect behavior, making disciples who disciple, passion to practice, and helping hurting kids. One unique opportunity was a hands-on chance to use art as a spiritual practice. Handed a terracotta pot and a hammer, the youth workers took to the theme of creating something new from the pieces and produced beautiful pieces of art together.

Leaving the weekend equipped with numerous pieces of helpful information and strategies, the most valuable are the resources shared. From prizes like a youth ministry go-bag to free book giveaways, and notes from workshop leaders, the most exciting thing added to my tool

belt is the knowledge that you are never alone in youth ministry.

The BWC offers that amazing ability to be part of a connection greater than just your church. Connections were formed this weekend that will continue to offer support and opportunities for the youth leaders in our conference. Going forward, the community of youth workers that gathered this weekend are committed to fostering supportive connections, expanding our community, and developing new ways for us to grow as leaders of young people.

*\*Christie Hoffman is a member of Reisterstown UMC where she serves as the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Intern.*



Youth workers and ministry leaders listen to Daniel Barnett during a time of worship at a recent training event and retreat.



# Possible partnership explored in El Salvador

By Rev. Heather Olson\*

*In February, the Baltimore-Washington Conference sent a small exploratory delegation to El Salvador to explore possible partnerships for ministry. The Rev. Heather Olson, pastor of Lisbon UMC, shares her thoughts.*

IT HAD BEEN seven years since I had last been to El Salvador and worked with Bishop Juan de Dios Peña. While a lot looks the same from seven years ago, the Iglesia Evangelica Metodista de El Salvador (IEMES) has been busy. Now 25 years old, the IEMES has 13 churches (with a new church plant planned for Jan. 2020), 15 pastors, and reaches 12,000 people. There are health clinics attached to three of the churches, two of them government-run and one owned, run, and funded by the IEMES. These clinics, charging \$5 per patient and usually offering medicine for free, have seen more than 300,000 people. New since my last visit is a mission house, formerly Bishop Peña's house, renovated in 2014 to sleep 26 adults. Also new is a Methodist school with 420 students from age 4 through grade 9. Even more students applied and were turned away after they reached their enrollment capacity. In addition, land is already bought for a high school. The IEMES has one more hurdle to go before construction can begin: connecting the sewage drainage from the school with the city's sewers two blocks away. My companions on this trip were Emma Escobar (a native Salvadoran), and the Revs. Stacey Cole-Wilson and Tim Warner. These latter two were on their first visit to Central America. Two common themes we heard throughout the week were about trouble with gangs and broken families. The Spanish phrase was "familia desintegrada" — literally, "disintegrated family." The family problems lie in often having the father in the U.S., working to send money home, the mother taking on one to two jobs herself, and the children then being left



In El Salvador, Bishop Juan de Dios Peña, left, stands with the Revs. Stacey Cole-Wilson, Heather Olson, and Tim Warner.

unsupervised. Gangs are a related problem as they target children ages 11-14 and threaten, "Either join us or we'll kill you." This is why there have been so many unaccompanied minors trying to enter the U.S. — they have literally fled for their lives. (For clarification, "unaccompanied" means not with their parents; they are usually with another family member or friend, and not alone.) When the U.S. saw an increase in minors trying to enter our country, IEMES saw a corresponding decrease in the number of children in their churches. Thanks be to God, however, that there is also a correlation between IEMES becoming more involved in a community and gangs becoming less involved in that community. We visited six of the churches while we were there. One church has now become the reference point when giving directions within their community. Another church sends people out into their community to gather the children for Sunday school. Pastor Gloria is from the community where she pastors and as the church became involved in the community, so did the government. The church fasted and prayed for electricity, running water, and a paved road into the community and gradually the government provided each piece. God gave this pastor a detailed vision and slowly it is coming to pass. They have a beautiful church building, complete with an empty kitchen which awaits God to provide the \$3,000 for appliances. Once stocked, Pastor Gloria has a vision for training women in baking so that the women can be empowered economically and at the same time, care for their families. Bishop Peña also took us to two churches near the Guatemala border. One is in a town that used to be on the Pan American Highway, and thrived because of the travelers who passed through and bought their fruit and "artesanía" (art and craft work). The new highway bypasses the town and they have been in an economic slump ever since. The other church is in a quiet border town right on the river between the two countries. Bishop Peña took us there to show us how easy some border crossings are: a hanging hammock rope bridge, with fencing on each side, over the river with no check points on either side. Many Guatemalans cross here each day to work in one of the nearby factories, including

Kimberly Clark (Kleenex, Huggies, Cottonelle, etc.). We walked over the bridge to Guatemala, and then, to return, since I alone was dressed for it in short capris, I took off my sandals and waded through the water to cross back, "mojada," (wet — also the term used for those who cross illegally into the U.S.) into El Salvador. My question the entire trip was: what can we, the Baltimore-Washington Conference, do that isn't already being done? What needs can we uniquely fill? There are a few opportunities. One is that eight of the pastors will be losing their salary funding from the General Board of Global Ministries over the next couple of years. It's helpful for pastors to be fully funded, with a \$4,200 a year salary, so that they can focus on their ministry and not also on earning money. Another one is Pastor Gloria's kitchen, which Warner is spear heading. Medicine for the clinics can be sent in the suitcase of an accompanying traveler. Sponsorship for students is always welcome. And finally, one that does not necessarily involve finances, is that Bishop Peña spoke several times about creating sister churches between local congregations. This could be as simple as covenanting to pray for each other and occasionally sharing worship on Skype. Why did I go to El Salvador? I thought it was because I look for any opportunity I have to strengthen and reconnect with my ties in Central America. Before seminary, I served for over a year in Nicaragua and I'm always looking for what that part of my life has to do with my life as a UMC pastor. However, when worship began Tuesday night at Iglesia El Shaddai, tears came to my eyes. "Vengo adorar." The real reason I went to El Salvador was to worship God with God's people in Central America. \* Heather Olson is a member of the Hispanic-Latino Ministries Committee and serves Lisbon UMC.

## UMW celebrates its 150-year legacy

By Linda Worthington  
UMConnection Staff

“LEGACY” WAS THE operative word-of-the-day when the Baltimore-Washington Conference United Methodist Women gathered at the Mission Center March 25 to celebrate its 150-year anniversary. “We pray, study and march,” said Daisy Farmer, the conference UMW Legacy Liaison, as she welcomed about 60 enthusiastic women sitting at tables. She outlined “what we’ve done,” since the founding of the organization in 1869. Sending the first missionaries to India, studies on many topics including major ones on Cuba, Haiti and Israel-Palestine, holding and attending missionary conferences, dealing with issues of poverty, disabilities, clean energy and many others

the audience shouted out. It was quickly clear that these dedicated women were involved in their local churches, their districts, the Annual Conference and the world. Colleen Cates, the program moderator and a member of the national United Methodist Women Board of Directors, introduced Teresa Farmer to share her legacy story. Farmer, from Glen Burnie UMC, said that she joined because of her mother, a life-long member of the UMW and predecessor agency, the Women's Society of Christian Service, who died last year at the age of 99. “In the WSCS, women had a voice in the church,” Farmer said, as she mentioned various activities she remembered her mother doing and enlisting her help for as a child. Fundraisers to support missionaries was important, she said. “Women are the biggest asset in the church,” one of her mother's friends told her. “What is our legacy?” she asked, “Will (today's) girls be inspired by the UMW's good works?” A table held a display of legacy artifacts with which the predecessor agencies, the WSCS and the Ladies Aid Society, along with the current UMW, have been involved. The items on display included a large blow-up of the first 1-cent stamp in 1840, the Pony Express, a 1919 automobile, and up to early 21st century. The UMW has always been a supporter and promoter of the UMC Deaconesses, two of whom were introduced. Gertrude Dailey, a UMW member since before she was 30, now works with abused

women. “I finally accepted the call to be a deaconess and the UMW has helped me all along the way over a period of years,” she said of first her refusal to hear God's call on her life, then her acceptance. “It took a lot of study.” Being a deaconess is a lifetime commitment, she said. She now works at Metropolitan UMC in Annapolis as director of the food pantry and clothes closet. After a few awards, including to the oldest person in the room at age 88, the unison prayer ended with “Bless our next 150 years and beyond as we put faith, hope and love into action for women, children and youth. ...” To learn more, visit [www.bwcumc.org/ministries/united-methodist-women/](http://www.bwcumc.org/ministries/united-methodist-women/)