By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said to Peter, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” (16:18). For the last 35 years, thousands of youth and their leaders have gathered from the Baltimore-Washington Conference for a weekend retreat that’s all about experiencing God’s love and what being a “rock for Christ” means.

ROCK, held Feb. 8-10 in Ocean City, Md., saw more than 4,000 youth and adults gather for sessions of lively worship and praise, motivational speakers, fantastic art, and opportunities to grow deeper in a relationship — or make a first-time commitment — to Jesus.

“It’s an incredibly exciting time,” said event organizer, Becki Price, about ROCK. “It’s our 25th ROCK and we’re so thrilled.”

Mr. Brown shares his front seat to Black History Month

By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

Freddie A. Brown Sr. once had a front seat to black history. Literally.

Brown, 86, lives at Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg. He was born in Pineland, South Carolina, just north of Savannah, Ga. His parents owned and operated a farm with a large house. Neither had any college education. The occupants of the house included Brown and his six siblings, but also one or two teachers. Brown’s father built an extension on the house because, in those days and in that location, teachers weren’t paid enough to find a place on their own.

“If you want to get out of the country,” Brown recalls his parents saying, “you gotta go to school.”

Brown moved to Columbia, S.C., to attend Allen University. He wanted to be a research scientist and wound up with a degree in chemistry. In his last semester there, he said, he was running out of money and looking for a part-time job. A local funeral home needed someone to stay at the home and “watch 10 dead bodies,” he said. “I wanted a quiet place to study, so I took the job.”

He and the owner of the funeral home, who was blinded after a car accident, hit it off. Brown drove him to his various speaking engagements and also accompanied him to Washington, D.C., for the 1963 March on Washington.

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

The church started as a new faith community of The United Methodist Church. But when the Rev. JW Park met with four lay people and a retired pastor on Pentecost Sunday, May 26, 2013, he had only hopes and prayers of where God would lead them.

Six years later, on Jan. 20, 2019, he stood before a congregation of 100 people, in a beautiful church building, leading a chartering service to celebrate the creation of Bethany Korean United Methodist Church.

It was, he confesses, a journey of the Spirit — with unexpected high times and lows — that was grounded in the certainty that this was God’s plan.

BWC charters a new church

The Rev. JW Park, superintendent of the Central Maryland District, who saw the need for a Korean worshipping community in the Ellicott City area, remembers that seven other new faith communities began that year. He sees Bethany Korean as an affirmation of the church learning about and responding to the needs of the community.

Dae Sung Park is humbled that Bethany Korean has grown as it has. In 2012, he passed the provisional Elders exam, but was waiting for his visa status to resolve before he could be appointed to a church.

He knew there were no openings in the BWC’s three existing Korean congregations, and was waiting for an appointment to a small Anglo church, when JW Park, the superintendent, called him with the opportunity to form this new faith community.

Park, the pastor, dove into the challenge, but sometimes found himself wrestling about why God would call him to this new venture. After much prayer, Park said, God responded simply: “Because I need you.”

He re-devoted himself to the ministry.

See New Church, page 3

See Driver, page 3

See ROCK, page 12
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.

Humility is not a virtue that gets lifted up much these days. The humble, it seems, will get run over by the steamroller of partisan politics and crucial social media trends. When’s the last time humility actually got promoted as a value worth having, anyway? “Look at her...she’s so poised and confident — she’s so strong and so smart and...humble...”

However, we need and we use humility more than we might think. When our children, 26 months apart, were growing up, we insisted that they learn how to forgive after an argument. I would often pull the car over and refuse to move until reconciliation happened. I did this because 1) they will select my nursing home happened. I did this because 1) they want to be friends, because each person would always put their own needs first. There would be endlessights over who was right about every single thing — there would be the need to fight everything out and win. There would be no space for serving and caring for each other. “Sharing yourselves out for each other” requires humility. Just allowing that we might be wrong about anything, creates space for humility. Or, what if we weren’t “right” but we didn’t need to be “right”? Some of the most humble people I know are so in love with Jesus and with their brothers and sisters in Christ that they value other things even more than being “right.” Like being a family, or being friends, or being in a relationship.

Humility is a way to be like Jesus and to promote health in the family or even in the church. I enjoy being right about most anything — but it turns out, in my life and my walk with God, I’ve found “being right” isn’t nearly as good as “being together.”

Without humility, it would be impossible to be married, or even to be friends, because each person would always put their own needs first. “There would be endlessights over who was right about every single thing — there would be the need to fight everything out and win. There would be no space for serving and caring for each other.”

After “sharing yourselves out for each other” requires humility. Just allowing that we might be wrong about anything, creates space for humility. Or, what if we weren’t “right” but we didn’t need to be “right”? Some of the most humble people I know are so in love with Jesus and with their brothers and sisters in Christ that they value other things even more than being “right.” Like being a family, or being friends, or being in a relationship.

Humility is a way to be like Jesus and to promote health in the family or even in the church. I enjoy being right about most anything — but it turns out, in my life and my walk with God, I’ve found “being right” isn’t nearly as good as “being together.”

By Daryl Williams
Pastor, St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill

Newness of life (1 Cor 5:17) has a lot to do with humility. I like to think of humility as a logical place to start. We will see that by not thinking so much about ourselves, we can find time to think of and extend ourselves to others. So, take a little time to stop saying look at me, and have the humility to let yourself be seen.

For more events, visit: https://bwcumc.org/events

BY MANDY SAYERS
Pastor, Glen Mar UMC, Ellicott City

“And mark that you do this with humility and discipline — not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love...” Ephesians 4:3 (The Message)

Advocacy Days
March 7, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Asbury UMC, Annapolis
The event will include advocacy training, a discussion of issues, and visits with Maryland legislators.

Opioid Epidemic Town Hall
March 9, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Harmony UMC, Falling Waters, W.Va.
A frank and informational discussion on the opioid epidemic and how the UMC might respond.

Leadership Days
2019
Regional training opportunities for local church leaders are being planned. Save the dates:

Asbury Region - March 30
Washington Region - March 16
Baltimore Region - April 6
Southern Region - April 13

Youth Workers Training
March 22-24
Wesley Freedom UMC, Eldersburg
A weekend of training and renewal for new and experienced youth workers.

Immigration Town Hall
March 23, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Emmanuel UMC, Laurel
Explore the subject of immigration, reform and the church’s role as an agent of justice and hope for all people.

UM Connection
Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church
February 2019

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
Resident Bishop
Directs of Conferences
Managing Editor
Webmaster / Video Producer
Director of Communications
Communications Associate

UMConnection is the newspaper of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, whose aim is to become fully alive in Christ and make a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world.

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New Church: Bethany Korean draws 100 to worship

From page 1

Along the way, Park was honored by the Korean Methodist Church for his foundational contributions to creating the new Appenzeller Museum in Seocheon, Korea. He personally donated or arranged for loans for 180 of the museum’s 1,096 artifacts.

That year, he was also awarded the Harriet Tubman Award for Evangelism by the Baltimore-Washington Conference for his efforts in producing a glimpse into history that shows how one person’s faith can transform lives and cultures, and for the work he was doing as a pastor of the new faith community, which had grown to about 35 worshippers.

But an even more important event in the church’s growth occurred at Bethany UMC Vacation Bible School when his daughter became friends with a girl she met there. Park met the girl’s family and invited them to church. “They are a very talented family,” Park said. They began participating in worship and attracted others to the church. People started coming. The church grew.

“Another engine for growing the church is prayer,” said Park.

In the Korean culture, prayer is a guiding principle of discipleship, said Park, and a traditional avenue for that prayer is the early morning prayer service.

Every morning, Park held an early morning prayer service at 5 a.m., complete with a short sermon. In the early years, only one or two people attended.

A few conference leaders shared with him how inefficient that was.

But he persisted.

Today, the church meets each morning to pray at 6 a.m. About 10 people gather during the week, and between 20 and 30 meet to pray on Saturdays.

The church grew. “Everything is God’s answer to us,” Park said.

One of these answers surprised even him.

Within the past two years, they had between 70 and 80 people attending worship and the chapel at Bethany was beginning to feel crowded.

Rockland UMC in Ellicott City, three miles from Bethany, was experiencing challenges and Superintendent Park saw an opportunity for the two faith communities to join in ministry together and share the building.

But the Rockland UMC continued to decline. The congregation, which was down to about five in worship, voted to close.

The Conference Board of Trustees made arrangements, which are expected to be finalized at the May session of Annual Conference, for Bethany Korean to take over ownership of the building.

Superintendent Park sees this as a cycle of church life, with “one church dying and another being born.” He views it as an opportunity for Rockland UMC to “create a legacy of going ministry” in Ellicott City.

Currently, there are two worship services, and there is consideration being given to starting a third worship service for English speakers.

The congregation is active in missions — creating hot Korean meals for seniors in the area through the Meals on Wheels program, providing Bibles and hygiene items to women in prison, and hosting Gamblers Anonymous meetings. Park also leads worship and hosts a weekly meal at a nearby nursing home.

“The congregation is beginning to think about hiring a youth pastor. And, there is conversation about perhaps opening the building to another ethnic congregation,” said Park.

They are just a few miles away from Spanish speakers.

“An immigrant church is my vision. … Immigrants rely on their church and their pastor in special ways,” said Park, who himself immigrated from Korea in 2006.

Most of the members of Bethany Korean are first-generation immigrants, coming to this region because of the outstanding schools in Howard and Montgomery Counties, Park said. He is actively working to cater for these parishioners, while broadening the church’s reach to address the needs of the second and third generations.

There are about 200 Korean churches in this region, most with fewer than 50 people. How Bethany Korean UMC grows, now that it is a chartered United Methodist Church, remains to be seen.

But Park is a pastor with a church born on Pentecost, and he’s trusting in the Holy Spirit. “I want to open our church to all the community,” he said.

Choir members at the new Bethany Korean UMC in Ellicott City sing during the church’s chartering service Jan. 20.

Driver: Carrying on King’s legacy, one day at a time

From page 1

engagements which he used to market his business.

After graduating from Allen, the owner wanted to pay for Brown to go to the Atlanta College of Mortuary Science. Brown resisted, but when the owner sweetened the deal to include a limousine, he accepted.

“But he tricked me,” Brown said.

“The school was on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, just down the street from Ebenezer Baptist Church. He wanted to make a contribution to the civil rights effort by offering (them) a driver. Me.”

For two years — 1954 and 1955 — Brown would go to school during the week and drive on the weekend through a deeply segregated South. There were, for example, only a few places where they could buy gasoline. Rather than, or you let someone else get it for you, he said.

“We would all dress up in black suits and black hats,” he said, “because they would be more comfortable with us. They thought we were going to be a funeral.

They visited churches and other places in their efforts to increase voter registration.

“We had a guy in the back seat that could not see or even smell. His name was J. Edgar Hoover.

They were spying on us, all the time,” Brown remembered.

Brown’s job was to keep the car and its precious occupants safe, he said. The first time Brown should have been dead was when the car blew up. His wasn’t the only life that was spared that day. His passenger, who wasn’t yet in the car, was saved. His name was the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

King was such a powerful speaker that Brown often wanted to “ease up to the windows” of the church to listen. “You’d get so pumped up about it that you were ready to take on the world. Sometimes that would get you in trouble.”

A safety measure Brown used involved stretching clear tape around portions of the car. He was the only person who knew it was there. On that fateful day, Brown noticed that the tape had been disturbed. Stepping back, he said, about 25 feet or so, and making sure others weren’t around, he pressed the remote starter on the Cadillac.

The car exploded.

On more than one occasion, police would surround the church where King and the others were speaking. Brown’s job was to get King and the rest of them out of that situation.

In several cities, he said, he also contacted the local undertaker to borrow a hearse or an ambulance.

“On two or three occasions, I had to put King in the back of the ambulance, put a sheet over him and crack the blinds, make like I was crying, put the siren on, and they’d let you through,” he said.

“They thought someone was hurt.”

After two years, Brown finished school and moved back to Columbia. He then served in the military in Hawaii.

On Monday, Feb. 4, Brown accepted the Gaithersburg City Council’s proclamation for Black History Month. He spoke briefly of his time as King’s driver. And he also wore his hat.

Brown spoke freely, however, about how King’s life impacted his.

“I saw a lot,” he said. “It’s fine, even on Martin Luther King Day, to remember all those things that he did in his days. Now, its incumbent upon us to ask, ‘What have I done?’ or ‘What am I doing to carry on his legacy?’

“I brought in students from historically black colleges, and NIH paid for the whole thing,” he said. “They did course work, worked in the lab, and stayed at the National 4-H Center, which was all-white in those days.

Brown has folders filled with photos of some of the 1,800 students who participated in this program, which ran for 20 years.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” King once said. Brown not only believes that but lives it.

On his time with King and other founders of the Civil Rights Movement, Brown knows that he had a front row seat — sometimes literally — to history.

“I saw a lot,” he said. “It’s fine, even on Martin Luther King Day, to remember all those things that he did in his days. Now, its incumbent upon us to ask, ‘What have I done?’ or ‘What am I doing to carry on his legacy?’
Event focuses on discerning a call from God

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

Everybody hears the call of God differently. In the Bible, the child Samuel was awakened by a voice in the night; the apostle Paul was knocked off his horse. In early Methodism, John Wesley’s heart was strangely warmed, and in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, God is calling teenagers to preach who cannot drive, teachers to minister despite a terminal illness diagnosis, and “JewCathMethocostals” to serve in prisons as the “green berets” of Methodism.

It’s about discovering how God can use you and how you will offer yourself in faith.

On Feb. 2, fifty seekers and their friends gathered at the BWC Mission Center in a summit on Living Your Call. Sponsored by the Board of Ordained Ministry and Center for Clergy Excellence, the purpose of the day, explained the Rev. Kirkland Reynolds, chair of the BWC’s Culture of Call Committee, was to equip and strengthen people so that they can move forward in discerning how God is moving in their lives.

Many of those present were exploring possible calls to ordained ministry, others were wondering how they might more fully live out their sense of call to make a difference in the world with their daily actions and choices in their churches and communities.

The Rev. Tony Love, assistant to Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, shared some of his call story in a brief homily. He remembered growing up in the quietness and reverence of the Roman Catholic Church and how God also spoke in the lively and charismatic expression of The United Methodist Church.

“In both places, both faith traditions, God was shaping me, preparing me and letting me up in the quietness and reverence of God’s kingdom,” Love said. “But God was waiting for my ‘yes.’”

He encouraged everyone thinking about call to throw their excuses away. “It’s a faith statement he said, quoting Philippians 1:6: ‘Trust that what God began in you, he will bring to completion.’”

God, Love said, “just wants your yes.”

For more information on call, contact the Rev. John Nupp, Executive Minister for Call and Clergy Care at jnupp@bwcumc.org. For licensed and certified ministry see: www.bwcumc.org/ministries/board-of-ordained-ministry For Certified Lay Ministers see www.bwcumc.org/ministries/leader-development/laity-development

The Rev. Jenny Smith

Churches give generously to shared mission

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

In 2018, churches contributed $14,045,885 in mission shares, which was less than expected. In fact, giving was down by $243,000, or 1.7 percent less than last year. However, conference leaders paid apportionments by $255,000, and received more income from grants and other sources than expected, bringing 2018 to a close with a $138,000 surplus.

Mission shares, also known as apportionments, are that portion of a local church’s budget that is given to the annual conference and General Church, acknowledging that we can do any conversations people might have.

Nupp is hopeful that the people gathered and others sensing a call, “take one simple step that leads you closer to the wonder, closer to the One who takes ordinary people and transforms them into miracles.”

“In my life, on my journey, in my call, I thought I had to fix some things before I was good enough to be called,” Love said. “But God was just waiting for my ‘yes.’”

The goal, Bishop Easterling said, is to have 100 percent, paying 100 percent, in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, every dollar, every hour, should be about building bridges to support local churches to be mission centers in their communities and beyond.”
On these next four pages, you will find an alphabetical listing of every church in the Baltimore-Washington Conference and their apportionment (mission share) giving through the end of 2018. Last year, 83.6 percent, or 521 of the conference’s 623 churches, paid 100 percent of their mission shares and the overall collection rate was 90.6 percent. As a connection the Baltimore-Washington Conference contributed $14,048,684 to mission and ministry around the block and around the world. We Are One.
### CUMBERLAND-HAGERTOWN DISTRICT

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### Cumberland-Hagerstown District Summary

| Concord Link | $966,211 | $872,189 | 89.7% |
The foundation of The United Methodist Church has always been to follow God’s call of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We do that in many ways and many places. Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Learn more at umc.org/movement
Church prays to ‘cease fire’

BALTIMORE – John Wesley UMC opened its doors for 12 hours of continuous prayer Feb. 1, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., in order to “undergird with faith” the Baltimore Cease Fire.

Acknowledging that Baltimore had 30 fewer homicides in 2018 from 2017, the murder rate is still high said Latrice Gant. And there’s still a lot to do.

“It’s time to shift the atmosphere in Baltimore,” says John Wesley UMC’s website. Church members and others signed up for a “shift” to pray each hour “on behalf of our children, our families, our communities, and our beloved city,” said the church’s website.

Ceasefire weekends are citywide observances, held in February, August and November and on Mothers’ Day weekend in May. Life-affirming events are held throughout the city with posters distributed widely to say what-where-when.

Money given by the BWC in honor of Bishop Marcus Matthews built a swimming pool at Africa University.

Many thanks for faithfulness

FULTON – Congratulate ourselves. The Baltimore-Washington Conference paid 100 percent of its apportionments in 2018, GCFA has announced. It was one of 26 annual conferences in the US to do so.

“The General Church apportionments are our message that The United Methodist connectional system is a viable way to be in ministry around the world. We praise God for the faithfulness of this commitment,” said Moses Kumar, chief executive of GCFA. “I want to thank the people . . . who have faithfully and continually supported the global ministries of the denomination through generous giving.”

MLK Day of Service prepares food for many

ELLICOTT CITY - Among the many churches that observed a Day of Service on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Jan. 21, was Glen Mar UMC. There was a wide range of activities to choose from, but all reached out to the community.

“About 1,345 enthusiastic servants (from kindergartners to grandparents) participated in the transformational Day of Service,” reported Bruce Leuthold. Among the accomplishments was the packaging of 105,360 meals for the hungry, distributed through Rise Against Hunger.

The Rise Against Hunger meal packaging program does assembly-line packaging of highly nutritious dehydrated meals comprised of rice, soy, vegetables and 23 essential vitamins and minerals.

Bethesda UMC with Chevy Chase UMC and a couple other churches also held a Rise Against Hunger packaging program. In three hours they prepared more than 43,000 food packets.

UMM feed the hungry

GLEN BURNIE – They’ve done it again. Volunteers from the conference United Methodist Men bagged and distributed 800 5 lb bags of fresh potatoes to hungry families and soup kitchens in the Annapolis District Feb. 2.

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Beloved of God,

As we look toward to Feb. 23-26 and the Special Session of General Conference, anxieties are running high, uncertainty permeates the air, and last-minute appeals are being made to influence delegates’ votes. These are, without a doubt, trying times in the life of our denomination.

During a recent conversation, a young pastor in our conference made the following observation: “We have lost the ability to love one another. The posture is, if you don’t believe as I believe, you’re against me. We’ve just lost our ability to love.” These are strong words, and yet I hear them echoed throughout the conference and denomination in one form or another. Have our differences caused us to become enemies?

As is often the case, the lectionary texts offer prescient guidance. In the text for Feb. 24, the Sunday during the Special General Conference, the Gospel lesson teaches Christ-followers how to bridge divisions. Christ calls his followers to not only bear with those who hate them, but to love them. And, he doesn’t stop there.

In the Common English Bible, the admonition is to: love, do good, bless, and pray for their enemies. If the people of the church are called to love their enemies, how much more is required for their brothers and sisters? This is a question that clergy need to ask themselves every Sunday.

As is often the case, the UMC has an official definition of sexual misconduct, found in its Book of Resolutions (2016, p. 776): “Sexual misconduct...is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid).” Child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, and inappropriate use of power are not a part of the behaviors included in the definition.

Resources for understanding more about sexual misconduct, abuse, and harassment in The United Methodist Church are available from the Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Visit http://umsexualethics.org/

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To report incidents of sexual misconduct, the Commission has a confidential toll-free number: 800-523-8390.

The third verse is especially compelling:

“Grant us Wisdom, grant us Courage” as we face life’s challenges. I invite you to read the entire hymn and meditate on its powerful witness. The third verse is especially compelling:

Clergy explore boundaries in required training

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

A s part of their job description, clergy are invited into some of the most intimate moments of people’s lives. They visit in people’s homes, hospital rooms and funeral parlors. They may offer counsel in times of crisis. They speak out on issues that sometimes make people uncomfortable, bringing biblical truth to life.

But what happens when clergy go too far, when crossing a boundary becomes a boundary violation?

Becky Posey Williams knows the answer to that question, which she shared as part of a mandatory training for BWC clergy and lay leaders in three locations in late January. Williams is on staff at the Commission’s Status and Role of Women, one of 13 general agencies of The United Methodist Church, and she’s an expert on dealing with clergy self-care and what happens when boundaries get violated.

Posey Williams is convinced that when clergy are bad at setting and keeping boundaries, it’s a set-up for bad things.

“When it comes to setting healthy boundaries, the single greatest predictor of sexual misconduct is how you’re doing in taking care of yourself,” Posey Williams said. “If you’re not setting good boundaries in self-care, chances are you’re not setting good boundaries in caring for others.”

Speaking in Frederick Jan. 29, Baltimore Jan. 30, and Upper Marlboro Jan. 31, Posey Williams asked many serious questions about clergy self-care that generated no small amount of discussion.

Posey Williams hit home when she asked about the rationale, if any, for turning a boundary crossing into a boundary violation.

“What is the purpose of your boundary crossing?” she asked. “In whose interest do you cross?”

Posey Williams noted several times that her six-hour training was just enough time to scratch the surface of these important conversations. The trainings are mandatory for clergy and laity in ministerial roles, she said, because of the General Conference’s actions in the 1990s.

Posey Williams said that it is unknown exactly how prevalent clergy sexual misconduct is in The United Methodist Church; each annual conference keeps records, she said, but those are not shared to a central “clearing house.” An oft-cited 2010 doctoral paper by Sally Badgley Dolch, “Healing the Breach,” found that, on average, between 140 and 200 cases of clergy sexual misconduct occur annually in the US alone.

A large part of clergy self-care is having a spiritual director, Posey Williams said. She asked for a show of hands at the Baltimore event of who had one, and barely 10 went up among a group of about 200 people.

“You can’t be clergy without having a spiritual director,” she said. “Having someone who will look you in the eye and ask, ‘How is it with your soul?’ Without one, you could be headed for burnout or worse.”

Posey Williams spent considerable time talking about power in the ministerial role and office. As a clergyperson, she said, “you always have inherent power.”

“Always,” she continued. “For example, means that a pastor who is single should never date a person from his/her congregation; that relationship would be imbalanced. “The primary responsibility (of a pastor) is to be the spiritual leader of your flock,” she said.

What does that mean clergy can’t make friends in their own congregations?

Posey Williams said that this is where setting boundaries and practicing good self-care really becomes central. Churches, she said, will invite you to make friends and make the church your entire life. “Your best friends is someone you can say anything to,” she said. “You can’t have that same relationship with a parishioner.”

Posey Williams said the best ways to be healthy in ministry are to “get a life” (“What is your life like outside of ministry?”), “know thyself,” have a spiritual director, and find colleagues for study and support.

Using the biblical example of David and his fall from grace as the boy who slayed Goliath, and the beloved king to the man who lusted after Bathsheba and had her husband murdered, Posey Williams noted that staying connected with others who not only talk the talk spiritually, but who “walk the walk” is important.

And echoing Marie Kondo’s method of de-cluttering, Posey Williams said there was one question to bring to everything and every behavior: “Does this nurture me, or does this deplete me?”

Practicing awareness of the answer to this question, she said, every moment, is a good place to start.

A word from the bishop

Grant Us Wisdom, Grant Us Courage

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
Awards seek to identify, inspire, and encourage persons of various ages who are alleviating human suffering, boldly living by their faith and then sharing their stories with the invitation for persons to consider that they have the power to change and influence.

Freeman attends Ebenezer United Methodist Church. She won the award thanks to her serving the youth of Washington, D.C. She was nominated for the award by her pastor, the Rev. Bresen Jenkins. “I am the Youth Mayor of Washington,” Freeman said, “as well as a co-chair for Students Demand Action in Washington. I speak out for the youth... and I also speak out in protest against gun violence and for better gun legislation.”

Freeman’s uncle was killed when he was 18 years old, she said. “He was basically left to die.”

To this day, she added, no one knows who murdered him. But because his voice was silenced, Freeman is using her voice to speak up and speak out.

“In Washington, D.C. that’s what we constantly see,” she said. “Youth being killed by guns and by violence. Me, I’m a Christian, and I don’t believe in that.”

Her efforts include improving the quality of education in the city.

“I attended D.C. public schools,” she said, “and I believe that the public schools in D.C. do not prepare their youth for the next level, i.e., college or trade school. It doesn’t prepare them at all.”

Freeman trains youth on how to be an advocate for issues they care about because, she said, “everyone has a God-given voice.” All this work, she said, is God-inspired.

“There was something in me that said, ‘Get up and go,’” she said. “I believe that it was God. My friends call me crazy, but I believe that God told me. This is your calling: you are here to speak up and speak out for others who can’t.”