



Photos by Alison Burdett

UMConnection DAILY

The Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world • Thursday, May 31, 2018

Cross is focus of worship

BY MELISSA LAUBER

Our Refrain: "We are one beneath the cross, Christ became love for us. Called by Grace, sent to run, we stand as one at the cross."

GATHERED BENEATH THE CROSS, as one, last evening, the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference vowed to uphold Abraham James McCubbin-Dominguez as he was baptized. They claimed the promises of Ephesians 4 that were presented by the youth, took in the lessons of young mimes from St. Matthews UMC in Turner Station, gave \$11,915 to an offering to support the 200,000 hours of time young people will spend this summer at camp, and partook of



A mime troupe from St. Matthews UMC performs.



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling baptizes Abraham James McCubbin-Dominguez, the son of the Revs. Bonnie McCubbin and Lem Dominguez during opening worship Wednesday evening.

Photos by Tony Richards: tonyrichardsphoto.com

Holy Communion.

But mostly, they worshipped, ignited by the preaching of Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, the presiding bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

"In his dying, Christ taught us how to live," said the bishop. "He taught us that the ground at the foot of the cross is equal."

At the foot of the cross, there is love, said Bishop Easterling, who marveled at how "the world lost its collective mind," when Bishop Michael Curry preached on the theme of love at the recent royal wedding.

"It was a great sermon. And, it was not new." Before Bishop Curry preached it, she said, Paul wrote it, Christ lived it, and God breathed it into the very air we breathe. "Yet, the world took notice," said the bishop. "It is astounding and compelling because although there are approximately 2.2 billion Christians in the world, we are still wrestling with the notion of love – of what it means to be in love with God, in

Bishop upholds UM Discipline

BY ERIK ALSGAARD

BISHOP LATRELLE EASTERLING issued a ruling of law during the BWC's clergy session Wednesday night, stating that two individuals the Board of Ordained Ministry had approved were not eligible for ordination and commissioning because they are "self-avowed practicing homosexuals."

The Rev. Mark Gorman asked for the bishop's ruling after discussion about the Board's report which contained two names of individuals the Board had approved but which, he said, did not meet the criteria set by the church's Judicial Council for "full examination" of a candidate.

One: BWC offers praise and worship

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love with Christ and with each other. With approximately 2.2 billion Christians in the world we ought to be swimming in love,” she said.

The bishop shared her belief that “many of us are struggling to believe this message of all-encompassing love because it contradicts everything the world stands for,” including power, wealth, victory and certainty. “The message of the cross is counter-cultural and counter-intuitive, and it shakes us to our very core.

“...Beloved, to be Christ-followers, we have to be willing to immerse ourselves in love – a love that’s self-sacrificing, self-emptying” and embraces those on the opposite political, economic and theological side – those who don’t think, act, preach, pray, dance or believe like us, the bishop said.

Proclaiming the need for love and unity might seem, to some, to be hypocritical. But, said Easterling, “some things are true whether we accept them or not. ... The ‘is-ness’ of God is not threatened by the ‘ain’t-ness’ of man.”

The bishop reminded the more than 1,200 lay and clergy members, “that road God called us to travel began at the foot of the cross.”

But the question, she said, is are we capable of traveling it together? “How can we do that in our present state? We travel it with humility. We travel it understanding



ourselves as sinners saved by grace ... We travel it by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us. We travel it by embracing the meaning and message of the cross.”



Music, dramatic Scripture and praise were all part of the opening of the BWC’s 234th Session.

National leaders speak to laity

By LINDA WORTHINGTON

LAITY FILLED THE Harborside Ballroom for their session Wednesday afternoon. Delores Martin, chair of the conference Board of Laity, presided. The program was largely presentations by two national church leaders: the Rev. Barbara Lemmel, a pastor in the New England Conference and Director of Tending the Fire, a consulting group that empowers resilient leadership for changing times; and the Rev. Rick Vance, an Eastern Shore native and president of the denomination’s United Methodist Men.

Lemmel spoke passionately about “Courageous Leadership in Anxious Times,” detailing two types of anxiety: acute and chronic. She gave four responses that people make to acute anxiety: reactions, herding, blaming and quick-fix. She amply illustrated each one.

“To be good leaders in an anxious situation,” she said, one needs four attributes. These are self-differentiation, connection, vision and having a non-anxious presence in the situation.

“The only way I can be a non-anxious presence is with God,” she said.

For a congregation to move forward, it must have both laity and clergy. “Your laity are the ones that need/have those four attributes,” she said.

Hampton Conway, president of the conference United Methodist Men, introduced the Rev. Rick Vance who spoke on domestic violence and the response of The United Methodist Men to addressing the issue.

“Men are missing in action,” Vance said. “Both men and women have unique gifts that are absolutely essential.”

One of four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes and three women today will die at the hands of someone who says he loves her, he said.

Vance called attention to the 8-week program for men called Amending Through Faith, and how the church can become a participant in the program. “More than advocating for change, make changes ... to make disciples for Jesus Christ and the transformation of the world,” he said.

See: www.gcumm.org/gender-based-violence

Photos by Tony Richards: tonyrichardsphoto.com

Boom: Bishop's ruling of law addresses BOOM policy

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"The matter that was causing us to not be able to move forward was the concern that the Board had not done a full inquiry, as some believe the Book of Discipline requires, and



Phil Wogaman thanks the BWC Clergy Session for its action Wednesday.

some say that Judicial Council says is required," the bishop said. "Typically, I have 30 days to rule, but I can't wait 30 days here tonight."

The bishop noted that members of the Board met with all 29 eligible candidates during the dinner hour Wednesday night, during a recess in the clergy session, and asked each for full disclosure. The Rev. Tony Hunt, chair of the Board, said that no persons came forward with additional information that the Board did not have already. Two individuals, he noted, had previously stated, in writing, that they were married to a person of the same gender.

The Board of Ordained Ministry, under its new policy adopted last October and disclosed this past April, had decided not to ask questions of candidates around sexuality other than if they were faithful in marriage or celibate in singleness. It was that policy that was initially called into question during the clergy session.

The Rev. John Rudisill

questioned Hunt, asking whether the Board acted in harmony with Judicial Council decision 1344. "Was the BOOM faithful to that decision," he asked. "Did BOOM ask candidates if they were practicing homosexuals?"

"No," replied Hunt. "We asked if they were faithful or celibate."

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, presiding at the clergy session, ruled in the afternoon session that the part of the Board's report dealing with ordination, consecration and commissioning of people to the clergy session was "out of order" because it failed to ask these mandated questions.

Hunt said that no candidate was asked any additional questions related to sexuality or practice during their earlier examinations. He added that the "full examination" consisted of psychological reports, credit checks, effectiveness in ministry reports, and recommendations from numerous persons. "It includes multiple facets of a person's life," he said.

The bishop issued her ruling

of law Wednesday night, she said, based on Judicial Council decision 1341, the current language of the Board of Discipline, and the rules of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

In a statement, Tara "T.C." Morrow, a candidate for Deacon's orders and full membership who is married to another woman, said that she was not going to give up her quest.

"I am convicted now as ever that God is calling me to continue to put myself forward as a candidate," she said. "I pray above all else for grace and fortitude to be faithful as a disciple of my Savior, Jesus Christ."

Morrow is a member of Foundry UMC in Washington, and that church issued a statement Wednesday night in full support of Morrow. "We affirm that T.C. is called by our Creator into ordained ministry," the church statement read in part. "We firmly stand by her as she continues to faithfully respond and serve."

Deaconess consecrated

AT TONIGHT'S ORDINATION Service, Irene DeMaris will be consecrated as a deaconess in The United Methodist Church.

Deaconesses are laywomen who have responded to the call of God to full-time ministries of love, justice and service. Their



Irene DeMaris

work provides support and dignity to those in need and helps individuals and communities

reach their full potential.

Traditionally, deaconesses and home missionaries have served in places where the church has not been, was not aware it should be or was afraid or unwilling to be. Their daily work of serving and empowering serves as a visible symbol of the link between the church and the world.

DeMaris will serve as the associate director of the Center for Public Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary.

She is one of 24 women in the denomination who are being consecrated this year into this lifetime of lay servant ministry.

Retiring clergy hear words of 'doing' and 'being'

TWENTY-FOUR RETIREES, THE class of 2018, have served the church and community 695 years. They were acknowledged and praised at the retirees' luncheon May 30, at the Annual Conference Session.

After recalling the benchmarks of measuring ministry, such as number of churches served, converts, baptisms or buildings built, retired Bishop Forrest Stith reminded the retirees that "It was not your doing that is most

significant, but your being in relationship with God's children. That, after all, was your call.

"God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God in them. If that metric is present, everything else falls in place," Bishop Stith said.

"The future of our denomination will not be determined by changing the Book of Discipline," he said, "but finding ways of being in relationship connectionally, globally and culturally."

234TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE • WE ARE ONE: BENEATH THE CROSS



Alison Burdett

THE BWC CONGRATULATES MILES EASTERLING ON HIS GRADUATION FROM ATHOLTON HIGH SCHOOL: Believing in the priority and love of family, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling will be away for part of the day attending the graduation of her youngest son, Miles. The Baltimore-Washington Conference shares in her and Rev. Marion Easterling's joy and great hope for the future as they celebrate this joyous occasion.

Today you'll see a video on the General Board of Higher Education. To share it with your congregation, visit: www.bwcumc.org/gbhem

CONFERENCE AGENDA

THURSDAY, JUNE 1

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
5:30-7:30 a.m.	Back On My Feet Run/Walk	Inner Harbor
6:30-8:15 a.m.	Breakfast	Harborside
8:15 a.m.	Gathering Music	Ballroom
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Bible Study	Ballroom
9:30 a.m.	Plenary Session	Ballroom
12-1:45 p.m.	Lunch	Harborside
2-5 p.m.	Plenary Session	Ballroom
5-6:45 p.m.	Dinner	Harborside
6:30 p.m.	Ordination & Cabinet Photos	
7:00 p.m.	Ordination/Commissioning	Ballroom

FRIDAY, JUNE 2

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
5:30-7:30 a.m.	Back On My Feet Run/Walk	Inner Harbor
6:30-7:45 a.m.	Breakfast	Harborside
7 a.m.-2p.m.	Exhibit Hall Open	
7:45 a.m.	Gathering Music	Ballroom
8-9 a.m.	Bible Study	Ballroom
9-10 a.m.	Plenary Session	Ballroom
10:00 a.m.	Memorial Service	Ballroom
Noon	Lunch	Harborside
2-4:25 p.m.	Plenary Session	Ballroom
4:25 p.m.	Service of Appointments	Ballroom
5:45 p.m.	Closing	Ballroom
6 p.m.	Adjourn	
6:30 p.m.	Buses Depart	Lobby Entrance

Clergywomen will rehearse after the morning session in the Grand Ballroom in preparation for singing at the Memorial Service Friday at 10 a.m.



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