By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. One place that is happening—a lot—is in the Baltimore-Washington Conference in the Retreat and Camping Ministries (RCM) area.

For the fifth year in a row, RCM showed an increase in both its residential camping program and Day Camp initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

And the good news continued in the number of retreat guests served. In 2015, 12,931 people attended retreats. In 2016, that number rose 22.4 percent, to 15,719. Leading guests served. In 2015, 12,931 people attended retreats. In 2016, that number rose 22.4 percent, to 15,719. Manidokan saw an increase of 20 percent.

More campers and retreat guests equals more opportunity to make disciples, said Andy Thornton, RCM Director and Director at the West River Camp and Retreat Center. “Camp gives a young person the chance to be outside and away from the many distractions they see every day,” said Thornton. “At camp, caring adult counselors and mentors come alongside campers, helping them think through decisions and experiences in a way that will prepare them for their future.”

The impact on leadership, both clergy and laity, that RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.

“When it’s working well,” Thornton said, “it’s not just camping alone that does that. It’s camping, and it’s also the local church, it’s ROCK, it’s all those pieces that come together that can provide great leadership opportunities.”

In fact, 13 former staffers are currently serving as ordained clergy or are in seminary, he said. There are another 10 who have been on summer staffs who are serving in ministry as lay people.

Thornton said that RCM has been blessed over the years to have strong partnerships with a variety of other initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

RCM has created over the years is also important to its impact on leadership, both clergy and laity, that RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.

Thornton said that RCM has been blessed over the years to have strong partnerships with a variety of other initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

RCM Director and Director at the West River Camp and Retreat Center. “Camp gives a young person the chance to be outside and away from the many distractions they see every day,” said Thornton. “At camp, caring adult counselors and mentors come alongside campers, helping them think through decisions and experiences in a way that will prepare them for their future.”

The impact on leadership, both clergy and laity, that RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.

“When it’s working well,” Thornton said, “it’s not just camping alone that does that. It’s camping, and it’s also the local church, it’s ROCK, it’s all those pieces that come together that can provide great leadership opportunities.”

In fact, 13 former staffers are currently serving as ordained clergy or are in seminary, he said. There are another 10 who have been on summer staffs who are serving in ministry as lay people.

Thornton said that RCM has been blessed over the years to have strong partnerships with a variety of other initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.

Thornton said that RCM has been blessed over the years to have strong partnerships with a variety of other initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

RCM Director and Director at the West River Camp and Retreat Center. “Camp gives a young person the chance to be outside and away from the many distractions they see every day,” said Thornton. “At camp, caring adult counselors and mentors come alongside campers, helping them think through decisions and experiences in a way that will prepare them for their future.”

The impact on leadership, both clergy and laity, that RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.

“When it’s working well,” Thornton said, “it’s not just camping alone that does that. It’s camping, and it’s also the local church, it’s ROCK, it’s all those pieces that come together that can provide great leadership opportunities.”

In fact, 13 former staffers are currently serving as ordained clergy or are in seminary, he said. There are another 10 who have been on summer staffs who are serving in ministry as lay people.

Thornton said that RCM has been blessed over the years to have strong partnerships with a variety of other initiatives in Baltimore City and West Virginia.

RCM has created over the years is also important to its success.
By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

Candice Potts offers the song, “I Can Only Imagine,” during the recent Lead Like a Woman conference near Baltimore.

blue rhinestone necklace that caught the light of the hotel ballroom. “Can we have a song?” asked Bishop LaTrelle Easterling as she prepared to preach.

Potts tilted her head back, and her voice filled the room: “I can only imagine,” she sang.

The words were a defining mantra for those gathered April 21-22 for the Lead Like a Woman Conference. The event, sponsored by the Rev. Dr. Renita Weems, and within their own church contexts. The women began to imagine.

Individually and in small groups, they explored their own styles of leadership within their own church contexts. The feminist theologian and Old Testament scholar, the Rev. Dr. Renita Weems, and corporate coach pioneer Jane Croswell, unpacked their respective wisdom.

“Women began by capturing the women’s attention. “Racism,” she said, “is a sin. But sexism is just naughty. “We’re not angry about the oppression and justice “you have to be prepared to be challenged and to challenge,” she said.

If you’re going to do the work of equality and justice “you have to be prepared to be challenged and to challenge,” she said. In order to do this, she encouraged the women to more deeply explore the divine feminine and to listen for the presence and voice of God.

“How will you know it’s God’s voice within you?” she asked. “It will sound strangely like your own.”

As Weems delivered the theological and spiritual foundation for women’s leadership, Croswell delivered practical insights into the leadership of women.

Creswell, who invented the role of Organization Coach and is the founder of IBM Coaches Network, has always seen herself as a missionary to the business world.

As a high-ranking executive at IBM, she drew upon her professional experiences to help define what it means to be a “Jesus-hearted leader,” drawing on the traits of confidence, authenticity, resilience and soul-care.

She encouraged those present to put aside their “little girl behaviors” that can limit their effectiveness. As little girls, she said, women are taught things like “everyone must be included in everything, rules must always be followed, conflict must be avoided and your work should speak for itself.”

She led the women through a process that allowed them to identify their high-performance patterns and create a plan that builds on their strengths as leaders.

After the day-and-a half of learning, Bishop Easterling asked women to imagine themselves in the gathering’s guiding passage of Scripture from Romans 10:15, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of messengers who bring good news.”

Standing before an altar that held stiletto heels, camping boots, and panther-print shoes, she called on women to embrace their uniqueness and all they were created to be, and “give their hallelujahs to God.”

“Some of us are told to reject our God-given nature,” she said. “We have been made to believe that we are the lesser sex.”

But God uses the feet of reconcilers and restorers and those whose hearts burn with passion and have the desire to “serve, and to serve, and to serve,” said Bishop Easterling, who pointed out how God called forth the feet of Miriam, Deborah, Hulda, Ruth, Esther, Elizabeth, Mary, Rachel, Hagar, Harriet, Sojourner, Anna Howard Shaw, Susanna, Joaquina, and Leonine.

“Is God using your feet?” she asked. “Do you believe that your feet are God’s feet?”

“These feet, your feet, the feet that God gave you are beautiful because you speak life, and liberty and victory and hope and promise and purpose into God’s world,” the bishop said. “And with those feet, I want you to preach like a woman; with those feet, I want you to dance like woman; with those feet, I want you to teach … baptize … minister … serve … and pray. With those feet, I want you to lead like a woman.”

EVENTS AND NOTES

2017 Annual Conference
May 31 - June 1
Wardman Park Marriott Hotel, Washington, D.C.
Clergy and lay members will gather for worship and holy conferencing at the 233rd session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. The event will be live streamed. For more information, visit www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference.

Mission u
July 28-30
Bethesda Marriott Hotel
Come join the Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Women for Spiritual Growth and to expand your knowledge and concepts of mission. Studies are: Living as a Covenant Community: Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action, Spiritual Growth and to expand your knowledge and concepts of mission. Studies are: Living as a Covenant Community.

Special Session of General Conference
February 23-26
St. Louis, Mo.
The United Methodist Council of Bishops has called a Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church to be held Feb. 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Mo. The purpose of the Special Session will be limited to the receiving and acting on a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.
1,500 United Methodists to gather for 233rd annual session

AY AND CLERGY MEMBERS from 638 United Methodist churches will gather at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, May 30, through Friday, June 2, for the 233rd session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

As a stewardship measure, no Pre-Conference Session will be held this year. The information members will be voting on is in this 8-page supplement. An online forum for questions is available at http://www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/qa-2017-annual-conference.

This year, BWC members will join United Methodists around the world in voting yes or no (with no revisions) on five amendments to the United Methodist Constitution. (The current Constitution is on pages 25-44 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.)

Members will also vote to adopt the BWC’s 2018 proposed $18.5 million budget. They will also consider a benevolence factor from 17.75 percent in 2017 to 17.725 percent in 2018. In addition, members will consider four resolutions on:

- Revising the conference moving policy for retirees;
- Avoiding the purchase of Hewlett Packard Products;
- Expanding the BWC’s socially responsible investing screens; and
- Supporting the Religious Coalition on Reproductive Choice.

Videos about these resolutions, the Constitutional Amendments and the budget are online. Visit http://www.bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference/session-documents.

The Clergy Session and the Lay Session will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 31. Opening worship, which will include an address by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, the resident bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, will be that evening from 7 to 9 p.m.

Additional information on the conference session can be found at bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference or on the new BWC Session app (see page S2 for more information).

Q: How does the United Methodist stance on abortion differ from that of RCRC?
A: Regardless of differences of opinion on the issue of abortion, both RCRC and the UMC have the same stance (which the UMC and RCRC point out in their letter reminding membership of the “diminishment of high abortion rates.” RCRC is working to diminish the rate of abortion through comprehensive sexuality education, support for adoption, family planning, and affordable health care services. When arguing that RCRC is incompatible with a United Methodist understanding of abortion, the fact that RCRC includes “regardless of circumstances” and the Social Principles do not, is highlighted. However, even our own Social Principles do not encourage us to support laws limiting abortion access, but rather focuses on individual moral decision-making in the case of abortion. RCRC advocates for safe, legal abortion services, regardless of income or circumstance. The United Methodist Social Principles oppose abortion in the case of using it as birth control, reject it as a means of gender selection and eugenics, and late-term abortion except in the case the pregnancy is not viable or the mother’s life is in danger. The Social Principles recognize that in some cases the “tragic conflicts of life” justify abortion.

Q: Which groups did the General Conference say should remove their support from RCRC? Was it the entire denomination?
A: It was not the entire denomination. It was specific to GCBS and the UMC which were members of RCRC on behalf of the denomination.

Q: If we voted to do this, would we be in opposition to General Conference?
A: General Conference did not prohibit annual conferences from joining RCRC individually in the above legislation.

Q: What other annual conferences have chosen to support the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice?

Q: Would there be a financial cost to supporting RCRC?
A: No.

Support for the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Conference members submitted four resolutions for consideration by the body. These resolutions will be debated on during the plenary session.

Resolution: Support for RCRC

Conference members submitted four resolutions for consideration by the body. These resolutions will be debated on during the plenary session.

Support for the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

1. Budget Implications: None
2. Rationale: General Conference 2016 decided to withdraw membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) based on misinformation about and a misunderstanding of RCRC’s work. The Baltimore-Washington Conference is committed to the reproductive health of women and girls, and this resolution seeks to better equip us for that work by reconnecting us to RCRC.

3. Submitted by: Rev. Shannon Sullivan, Presbury United Methodist Church, Edgewood, MD;

4. The Baltimore-Washington Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action

5. Resolution:

The United Methodist Church was a founding member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) in 1973, and the General Board of Church and Society was a member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) in 1986. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) in 1995. The Baltimore-Washington Conference is committed to the reproductive health of women and girls, and this resolution seeks to better equip us for that work by reconnecting us to RCRC.

6. The Coalition member organizations of RCRC hold a wide variety of views regarding policies relating to specific issues of reproductive choice such as when life begins and when the baby begins, but, nevertheless, share common religious values. Many have official pro-choice policies, and are committed to working together to ensure reproductive choice for all persons through the moral power of religious communities. The Religious Coalition supports the rights of all persons to have access to a wide range of reproductive health services including sexuality education, family planning services, contraception, abortion services, affordable and quality health and child care. The Religious Coalition’s All Options Clergy Counseling program trains clergy of many faiths to assist women in discerning the course of action that they believe is best in a case of unintended pregnancy. Internationally, RCRC is an accredited nongovernmental organization with the United Nations Department of Public Information which supports international family planning services.

7. The Coalition member organizations of RCRC hold a wide variety of views regarding policies relating to specific issues of reproductive choice such as when life begins and when the baby begins, but, nevertheless, share common religious values. Many have official pro-choice policies, and are committed to working together to ensure reproductive choice for all persons through the moral power of religious communities. The Religious Coalition supports the rights of all persons to have access to a wide range of reproductive health services including sexuality education, family planning services, contraception, abortion services, affordable and quality health and child care. The Religious Coalition’s All Options Clergy Counseling program trains clergy of many faiths to assist women in discerning the course of action that they believe is best in a case of unintended pregnancy. Internationally, RCRC is an accredited nongovernmental organization with the United Nations Department of Public Information which supports international family planning services. In these areas as South Africa where the Coalition works with churches on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Overall, the Coalition’s efforts help counter attempts to enact restrictive legislation that would impose specific religious views about abortion and reproductive health on persons of all faiths.

8. Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church
go on record in support of the work of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and

9. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference become a member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

10. Effective Date:

11. Co-Sponsors:

12. On March 4, the Correctional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted concurrence with this resolution.
Resolution: Avoid purchase of HP products

Avoid Purchase of Hewlett Packard Products

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: Hewlett Packard companies (HP) is complicit in human rights violations by developing systems used by the Israeli military to racially profile and control the movement of Palestinians. This resolution calls for United Methodists in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference to boycott HP until this company ends its human rights abuses.

Submitted by: Rev. Shannon Sullivan, Presbytery United Methodist Church, Edgewood, MD and the Baltimore-Washington Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action

Resolution:

Palestinians are forced to use Israeli controlled checkpoints to move within their own designated homeland, also known as the West Bank, Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), one of the family of Hewlett Packard companies (HP), is responsible for developing, integrating and maintaining the biometric system used by the Israeli military to control movement, and HP profits from developing systems to racially profile and control the movement of Palestinians, and as such is complicit in a breach of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

HP operates a development center in Beitar Illit, an illegal Israeli-only settlement city in the occupied West Bank built on land confiscated from the Palestinian villages of Wadi Fakin, Nahalin, and Husan, and, as an employer in the settlement, HP profits from stolen land and contributes to the tax base and job opportunities that strengthen the settlement (http://investigate.afsc.org/company/hp-inc-and-hewlett-packard-enterprise).

HP provides services and technologies to two of the other biggest Israeli-only, illegal West Bank settlements in Modi’in Illit and Ariel, and participated in the “Smart City” project in Ariel, providing a storage system for the settlement’s municipality (http://investigate.afsc.org/company/hp-inc-and-hewlett-packard-enterprise).

Hewlett Packard Company recently split into two companies, HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), with more spin-offs projected and the various HP companies share certain logistical infrastructure, governance, supply chains, and technologies with one another, and they all draw on the HP brand’s long history of close connections with the Israeli military and occupation (http://uscpr.org/hp2016woa_pr/).

The United Methodist Church has specifically and repeatedly condemned both the military occupation and the construction of Israeli-only settlements in the West Bank (2016 United Methodist Book of Resolutions #6111, p. 602-606). United Methodists have participated in shareholder engagement with HP for more than eight years and have asked them to end their involvement with the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands (https://www.kairosresponse.org/uploads/UM_CorpEngagement_2004-11.pdf). There has been no meaningful progress with HP and no indication of any willingness to change their involvement in the occupation of foreign lands or the prison industrial complex, (https://www.kairosresponse.org/uploads/UM_CorpEngagement_2004-11.pdf).

More than 3,000 Palestinian Christians have implored Christians everywhere to put actions behind their words to end Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land (http://www.kairosopalestine.ps/index.php/about-us-kairos-palestine-document). The United Methodist General Conference asks all companies that profit from and/or support settlements through their business activities to examine these activities and stop any business transactions that contribute to violations of international law, promote systemic discrimination or otherwise support ongoing military occupation (2016 United Methodist Book of Resolutions #6111, p. 605).

Nonviolent tools for education and ethical consumption are central to a living expression of discipleship, with Methodists participating in boycotts as an effective moral economic tool long used by people of conscience including such boycotts as Taco Bell and Mt. Olive Pickle Company, Inc to support farm workers; Nestle to challenge marketing of infant formula; and USA Today to support newspaper workers in Detroit.

The Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, Quaker Friends Fiduciary, Alliance of Baptists and Unitarian Universalists have diverse from HP (http://www.fosna.org/free-your-church-hp). An international coalition of organizations and groups have come together to challenge HP’s complicity in human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory and to ask the company to withdraw from such contracts and stop profiting from the Israeli occupation (https://www.afsc.org/resource/campaign-boycott-hp).

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2017 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference calls on all boards and agencies, conference offices, local congregations, campus ministries, and individual United Methodists to refrain from purchasing HP products until this company ends its involvement with the Israeli occupation and the aforementioned human rights abuses.

Effective Date:

On March 4, the Connectional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted concurrence with this resolution.

Co-Sponsors: Dumbarton United Methodist Church

Q & A

Avoid Purchase of Hewlett Packard Products

Q: Why are Motorola and Caterpillar not included in this resolution?

A: The HP boycott came about because of an international coalition of secular and religious organizations led by the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights and the Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA). HP makes consumer products, so it makes sense to boycott where we can control how we spend our money. The other two, Caterpillar and Motorola Solutions, may be best reached through divestment.

Have a question, send it to mlauber@bwcumc.org

Mosaics: We Are One Annual Conference Devotional

Annual Conference is an opportunity to grow in the Spirit. Discover how you can be a ‘living parable’ as creative voices from throughout the BWC explore the Gospel of John.

bwccumc.org/events/annual-conference/mosaics-2017-annual-conference-devotional/
Questions and answers about expanding Baltimore-Washington's Socially Responsible Investment Screens

Q & A

Expanding Baltimore-Washington’s Socially Responsible Investment Screens

1. Why were these three companies, Motorola, Caterpillar, and Hewlett Packard, singled out?

A. The United Methodist Church has a long history of corporate engagement with these three companies, which you can see in detail here: https://www.kairosresponse.org/corporate_engagement_04-11.html. One of the arguments against divestment is that we can do more at the table with these companies to change their policy than we can by leaving. However, the timeline of engagement over the past 12 years for Caterpillar, nine years for HP, and 11 for Motorola, show that engagement has failed. These companies continually decline shareholder resolutions, initiatives to dialogues and direct meetings, and, when they do hold such, they often refuse to answer questions directly.

2. Where do you set the threshold for participating in the occupation of Palestinian land? What about, for example, companies that provide the soldiers’ food?

A. The UMC has declared that we not invest in companies related to alcohol, tobacco, weapons, gambling, pornography, and private prisons, which Wespath currently determines by setting a threshold of 10 percent of a company’s core business involved in illegal settlements. Wespath’s explanation here: http://www.wespath.com/investment PHILOSOPHY/ethical-exclusions/. However, major international corporations like Motorola, Caterpillar and Hewlett Packard will most likely never have more than 10 percent of their core business involved in illegal settlements. Yet, even hearing up one olive tree, crushing one house or killing one person are good enough reasons to invest or purchase their products as Christians, particularly in light of repeated shareholder engagement that has gone nowhere (see the previous answer). There is no easy answer to this question about a threshold, but I think it comes after listening to Palestinian Christians and peace activists about particular companies and seeing if engagement as shareholders can make a difference. If it cannot, as we have seen is the case with Motorola, Caterpillar, and Hewlett Packard (as well as Israeli banks and one construction company that Wespath has already divested from), then we would pursue divestment.

3. What socially responsible screens does the Baltimore-Washington Conference and the Mid-Atlantic Foundation currently use? How are these different than the ones used by Wespath Equity Social Values Plus Fund?

A. The SRI currently used by the Mid-Atlantic Foundation is the same used by Wespath. But Wespath has additional SRI screens that have even stronger “filters,” like the Equity Social Values Plus Fund. See more information about ESVPF here: http://www.wespath.com/funds_services/esvp_funds/investment_performance/esvpf/

4. Would the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula Delaware annual conferences need to approve this before the Foundation acted on it?

A. No. In the past, the Mid-Atlantic Foundation has said that separating our accounts from Eastern Pennsylvania’s and Peninsula Delaware’s is too difficult. In addition, we do not want to take away the authority of the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to determine its SFI. This legislation seeks to request the Mid-Atlantic Foundation to make the decision to divest on its own, knowing that divestment is at least one of the conference’s wishes and that they have our support.

5. Did General Conference pass a resolution encouraging divestment from these three companies?

A. Resolution 6111 in the UM Book of Resolutions, passed at the 2012 General Conference, encourages divestment (but does not require it) by way of condemning, not against divestment, but rather illegal settlement activity. Read the resolution here: https://umc-bps.org/resolutions-opposition-to-israeli-settlements-in-palestinian-land

Expanding Baltimore-Washington’s Socially Responsible Investment Screens

1. Budget Implications: none to the 2017 conference budget, but conference investments will be realigned if this resolution is approved.

2. Rationale: The conference Divestment Working Group’s report in 2015 urged the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference to better promote the use of socially responsible investment screens. This resolution seeks to strengthen our commitment to human rights by expanding those screens to exclude companies that sustain illegal settlements and human rights violations in the occupation of Palestine for a decade. The resolution asks that the Mid-Atlantic Foundation make the prophetic decision to divest the funds from all three annual conferences.

3. Effective Date:

A. On March 4, the Connectional Table of the Baltimore-Washington Conference voted non-concurrence with this resolution.

Resolution: Expanding Baltimore-Washington’s Socially Responsible Investment Screens

Delegates are urged to expand the socially responsible investment screens used by the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church. Scholars, economists, and activists have long advocated for socially responsible investments (SRI). The United Methodist Church, through the Wesleyan Theo-Democratic Project, has produced a detailed report on why such investments are necessary and the benefits they bring. The Wesleyan Theo-Democratic Project recommends a phased approach to SRI implementation, with the first phase focusing on excluding companies tied to the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. This resolution seeks to expand the socially responsible investment screens to exclude companies that sustain illegal settlements and human rights violations in the occupation of Palestine to a decade. The resolution asks that the Mid-Atlantic Foundation make the prophetic decision to divest the funds from all three annual conferences.

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church

Submitted by: Rev. Shannon Sullivan, Presbytery United Methodist Church, Edgewood, MD

May 2017

Socially Responsible Investment

Screens
Resolution: Amend moving policy

Resolution to Amend the Conference Moving Policy

Financial Implications: Approval of this resolution will require a small increase to the Moving Expense line item in the Conference budget.

Rationale: This resolution amends the moving policy covering the moving arrangements and expenses for retiring pastors in the same manner as active clergy. As the average cost for conference moves has decreased in recent years, retiring clergy have been burdened with paying increased costs as they move into retirement. This resolution also clarifies and cleans up the language of the original policy.

Submitted by: Rev. Kenneth B. Hawes (Conference Moving Coordinator)

$5500. Moving Committee—

The Moving Committee shall:

a. Review the Conference Moving Policy and make recommendations, as needed, to the Conference Session.

b. Request bids from moving companies and communicate that information, as available, to the pastor.

c. Establish with the Cabinet, each January, a moving time (normally the last two weeks of June).

d. Select, engage, and pay professional moving companies, and/or reimburse pastors for the Conference moves described below.

1. Conference Members in full connection, Provisional Members under appointment, Associate Members under appointment, and Local Pastors under appointment.

2. Pastors transferring into the Conference (see ¶5500.2).

3. Conference Members in full connection transferring from Honorable Location. (see ¶5500.3).

4. Pastors under 1996 Discipline. (see ¶5500.4).

5. Retiring pastors moving within the Conference boundaries upon retirement OR being appointed to serve a conference position.

6. (i) Arrangements, limits and costs for retiring pastors moving within the Conference boundaries are the same as for active clergy.

(ii) Retiring pastors moving beyond the Conference boundaries have the option of requesting that the committee make their arrangements, or making their own arrangements as per ¶5500.10.

7. (iii) For retiring pastors moving outside the Conference boundaries, the average cost of professional moves for the previous year is the limit of conference coverage for these moves.

(iv) Moving arrangements and costs for retired pastors are only covered for their move into retirement.

8. (a) Conference Members in full connection, Provisional Members, Associate Members, and Local Pastors who have been granted disability status. This shall apply only to their first move within or outside the Conference boundaries. (see ¶5500.7).

(b) Conference Members who are discontinued and who, at the time of discontinuance are serving a local church full-time.

(c) Conference Members in full connection who are placed on Administrative Location. This shall apply only to their first move.

9. (a) Conference Members who are going to an Extension Ministry, provided they are being employed by the Conference, and/or coming from Conference employment.

(b) Spouse and/or family of an active pastor who dies while serving in an appointment. (see ¶5500.5).

(c) Part Time Local Pastors enrolled in an accredited Seminary for a minimum of six semester hours, or enrolled in the Student Pastor Track Program, provided they are recommended by the Cabinet. The Conference responsibility shall not exceed the average cost of professional moves for the previous year.

(d) Conference members in full connection who are appointed to attend school. This shall apply only to the first move within or outside the Conference boundaries, up to the dollar limit of the Conference Moving Policy. (see ¶5500.7).

2. Upon recommendation of the Cabinet, in consideration for past service, the Committee shall be responsible for assigning and paying for the moves of:

a. Conference Members in full connection, Provisional Members, Associate Members, and Pastors placed on Leave Of Absence or Involuntary Location. This shall apply only to the first move. (see ¶5500.7).

b. Local Pastors who are discontinued. (see ¶5500.7).

c. Pastors who withdraw from the Conference, not to exceed ¶5500.00.

3. The Committee shall have no responsibility for:

a. Conference Members in full connection who transfer out of the Conference.

b. Conference Members in full connection who take Honorable Location.

c. Pastors and/or other clergy persons who move within the parish with no change of appointment.

(d) Exceptions only by cabinet authorization.

d. Those going to, or returning from an Extension Ministry as a non-conference employee.

4. The Policies and Procedures of the Committee are as follows:

a. The committee will require that the:

(1) Cabinet provide a list of all moves.

(2) Conference Board of Pensions and the Cabinet provide a list of all retirements and disability leaves.

(3) In accordance with its responsibilities as outlined in ¶5500.1.d above, the Committee shall determine the move schedule, establish the specific moving date for each move, and assign the moves to an authorized moving company.

b. The Committee will inform the Pastor to be moved, the moving company, the District Superintendent (where the move takes place), and the PPC chairperson (of the originating church), of the date, time and moving company.

c. The Committee will negotiate all unresolved claims and agreements with the moving company, provided such claims were presented in writing to both the moving company and the initiating District Coordinator, no later than (10) days following the move.

d. The Committee will receive an Evaluation report from each moving pastor concerning satisfaction with the move. This will be used in planning and fulfilling the committee’s work for the next year.

5. The Conference, through the Committee, is financially responsible for:

a. The cost of the move up to 15,000 pounds. When a clergy couple each moves to a new appointment, the weight limit will be negotiated between the committee and the clergy spouses.

b. The cost of packing mirrors and large pictures only. The clergy family will obtain or arrange for all other packing materials themselves.

c. Insurance coverage is set at $3.50 per hundred pounds, for a maximum liability of ¶52,500.00.

d. The expenses for the following items on two cars per family for interstate moves within the Conference boundaries:

(1) Excise/sales tax

(2) Title fee

(3) Inspection fee, but not repairs

(4) Tags

(5) Driver’s license fee

(6) Personal property tax (West Virginia)--This provision shall apply to conference members in full connection under appointment, provisional members, associate members, retiring pastors, pastors going on Leave Of Absence, pastors who transfer into the conference, and the family of a pastor who dies during an appointment. This provision shall be carried out by reimbursement to the pastor(s)

We want to hear from you! Tweet us your thoughts & pictures during Annual Conference using #bwccumc17

Annual Conference Live Streaming is available online at http://bwccumc.org.
Resolution: Moving policy, continued

From page S4

only after receipts for the paid bills have been submitted to the Conference Treasurer. An exception
shall be granted to students going to an appointment who shall be paid the monies necessary for the
appropriate items upon proper presentation of the unpaid bills. All aspects of this provision shall
be completed within six (6) months of the appointment and/or change of status. No claims shall be
honored or considered after this six-month period has expired.
6. Due to the tax liability incurred by moves of less than 50 miles, active pastors who will move less than
50 miles shall be provided with a tax liability allowance equal to 30% of the Conference financial liability
for the move.
7. The Conference, through the Committee, shall be responsible for reimbursement of move expenses
originating or locating outside of Conference boundaries. The moving pastor is responsible for arranging
and paying for these moves. Reimbursement shall not exceed the average cost of conference moves by
moving companies in the preceding year. Retiring pastors, however, may request that the Committee
arrange their move. [Anyone mentioned in this Policy whose moving expenses are not the Conference’s
responsibility may ask the Committee to use its contracts with authorized movers to achieve for
themselves the best available estimate.]
8. All moves shall be completed within six (6) months of the fixed date of the appointment and/or change of
status. No claims shall be honored or considered after this six-month period has expired. (After 6 months

5500.5.
Conference Treasurer, and a copy also sent to the pastor. The Conference Treasurer shall be authorized
Pastors Moving Expenses. Moving bills are to be identified with the name of the pastor and sent to the
District Coordinators and the Conference Coordinator about all moves that need to be arranged outside the
Conference boundaries:

b. In accordance with its responsibilities as outlined in ¶5500.1.d above, the Committee shall determine

the move schedule, establish the specific moving date for each move, and assign the moves to an
authorized moving company.

b. Conference Members in full connection who take Honorable Location.

c. Pastors and/or other clergy persons who move within the parish with no change of appointment.

c. Pastors who withdraw from the Conference, not to exceed $500.00.

b. Conference Members in full connection who transfer out of the Conference.

c. The Committee shall inform the Pastor to be moved, the moving company, the District Superintendent

c. The Committee will inform the Pastor to be moved, the moving company, the District Superintendent

d. The expenses for the following items on two cars per family for interstate moves within the
conference:

d. (1) Tag on one car

d. (2) Title fee

d. (3) Inspection fee, but not repairs

d. (4) Tags

d. (5) Gas, oil, and any other necessary cost of moving your car

d. (6) Any food or lodging costs

d. (7) Any other out-of-pocket costs

d. (8) Any other expenses that may apply

d. (9) Any other non-reimbursable expenses

d. (10) Any other expenses that are not allowed

The BWC has four regions, and each region
has two districts, presided over by a district
superintendent. Each local church and charge
belongs to a district.

When you register, you are given a packet of
materials, a name tag and a voting card that has
either a color-coded ribbon attached according to various
categories. Lay members vote. Clergy vote. Guests
do not. Any voter may speak from the floor to a
motion, but no one person may speak more than
twice on any given motion. The bishop controls
who speaks, establishing that there can be three
for and three against the motion before debate is
cut off. Robert’s Rules of Order are followed.

All clergy (Elders and Deacons) hold their
membership in the Annual Conference, not in a
local church. Deaconesses and diaconal ministers,
both retired and active, are lay members of Annual
Conference. The Book of Discipline requires an
equal number of laity and clergy to be members
of the Annual Conference Session. To be a voting
member, a lay person must be elected by his or
her local church through a nomination and
voting process that is held at the annual Charge
Conference.

The Charge Conference is to the local church
what the Annual Conference Session is to the
Conference, i.e., the annual business meeting.
The laity are members of Annual Conference – no
delegates. There are several “at-large” members
to Annual Conference, who, by virtue of their
district, conference or national positions, are also
voting members of the Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference Session is presided over
by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling. Other officers
include the Conference Secretary (Cynthia Taylor),
elected for a four-year term at the beginning of
the quadrennium; the Conference Treasurer
(Paul Eichelberger); the Conference Lay Leader
(Delores Martin); and the Chancellor (Thomas
Starnes). Under our rules, during debate, the
bishop recognizes each person asking to speak,
and allows three minutes with no more than three
speakers allowed to speak for, or three persons
allowed to speak against a motion or amendment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION
ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

The Commission on Equitable Compensation is recommending that the minimum salary for
2018 be increased 2%, or $846.06, which will make the minimum salary $43,148.82. The
Commission is recommending for minimum housing remain unchanged at $19,866.

Submitted by:
Rev. James Johnson, Chair, Commission on Equitable Compensation

FAQ

Every year, about one-third of the Lay Members
to the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference
Session are new. A short guide to help familiarize
everyone is online at http://www.bwcumc.org/
events/annual-conference/annual-conference-
primer/

Here are some highlights:
The Baltimore-Washington Conference is led
by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, who was elected
as a bishop at the Northeastern Jurisdictional
Conference in 2016. Our conference has 628
churches or charges and approximately 160,000
members. Bishop Easterling presides over the
Annual Conference Session but, as in the General
Conference, does not vote.

The BWC has four regions, and each region
has two districts, presided over by a district
superintendent. Each local church and charge
belongs to a district.

When you register, you are given a packet of
materials, a name tag and a voting card that has
either a color-coded ribbon attached according to various
categories. Lay members vote. Clergy vote. Guests
do not. Any voter may speak from the floor to a
motion, but no one person may speak more than
twice on any given motion. The bishop controls
who speaks, establishing that there can be three
for and three against the motion before debate is
cut off. Robert’s Rules of Order are followed.

All clergy (Elders and Deacons) hold their
membership in the Annual Conference, not in a
local church. Deaconesses and diaconal ministers,
both retired and active, are lay members of Annual
Conference. The Book of Discipline requires an
equal number of laity and clergy to be members
of the Annual Conference Session. To be a voting
member, a lay person must be elected by his or
her local church through a nomination and
voting process that is held at the annual Charge
Conference.

The Charge Conference is to the local church
what the Annual Conference Session is to the
Conference, i.e., the annual business meeting.
The laity are members of Annual Conference – no
delegates. There are several “at-large” members
to Annual Conference, who, by virtue of their
district, conference or national positions, are also
voting members of the Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference Session is presided over
by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling. Other officers
include the Conference Secretary (Cynthia Taylor),
elected for a four-year term at the beginning of
the quadrennium; the Conference Treasurer
(Paul Eichelberger); the Conference Lay Leader
(Delores Martin); and the Chancellor (Thomas
Starnes). Under our rules, during debate, the
bishop recognizes each person asking to speak,
and allows three minutes with no more than three
speakers allowed to speak for, or three persons
allowed to speak against a motion or amendment.

Get your portrait taken
Sign up in advance

Avoid the lines and schedule your session ahead of time. https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/9H6qszs/
The photos will appear in a clergy photo directory.
The laity are also welcome to have their portraits taken.
Room: Delaware A
Wednesday 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. & 5-7 p.m. Thursday 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Proposed Constitutional Amendment — II

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 767 Yeas, 56 No (Calendar Item 121, DCA p. 2106). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division One, add a new paragraph between current ¶ 5 and 6:

As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The United Methodist Church recognizes it is contrary to Scripture and to logic to say that God is male or female, as maleness and femaleness are characteristics of human bodies and cultures, not characteristics of the divine. The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women's and girl's equality and well-being.

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, this would become the new ¶ 6, and the current ¶ 6-6 would be renumbered as ¶ 7-6.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment — III

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 795 Yeas, 15 No (Calendar Item 146, DCA p. 2124). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division One, add a new paragraph between current ¶ 34, Article III, (2016 Book of Discipline, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, Article III) and 35, Article IV, amend by addition as follows:

¶ 35

After “persons,” add “and” and “be elected by the jurisdictional conference.”

¶ 36

“Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 34 would read:

The United Methodist Church is part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. The United Methodist church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition. The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 35 would read:

The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment — IV

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 611 Yeas, 15 No (Calendar Item 488, DCA p. 2127). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division Three, ¶ 46, Article I, amend by addition, as follows:

¶ 46

After the first paragraph, add “provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 46 would read:

The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment — V

On May 27, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 795 Yeas, 79 No (Calendar Item 446, DCA p. 2124). It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division Three, ¶ 10, Article VI, amend by addition, as follows:

¶ 10

After the last paragraph, add “These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.”

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 10 would read:

The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictional committee with the most meeting points in a constituency elected by each central conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and ordination and administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference for final action as to the continuance of the bishop in office. These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.
Narrative summary of the 2018 Proposed Budget

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

There is no change from the 2017 budget.

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE:  $ 18,464,136

EXPENSES

I. DISCIPLESHIP EXPENSES

Regional Ministry Teams: $4,456,503

Funds to operate the ministries and administrative support of the Regional Ministry Teams include:
- Southern Region (Anapolis and Washington East Districts)
- Baltimore Region (Baltimore Metro and Baltimore Suburban Districts)
- Washington Region (Great Washington and Central Maryland Districts)
- Western Region (Frederick and Cumberland-Hagerstown Districts)

Discipleship Ministry Teams

Connectional Ministries: $3,073,608

Funds to operate the ministries and administrative aspects of the Connectional Ministries and Congregational Leadership Development Teams. Ministries funded by Connectional Ministries include Children, Youth, Young Adults, Campus Ministries, and Retreat and Camp ministries. Funds are also allocated for Discipleship Council and Connectional Table.
- Youth Ministries engage and support young disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Retreat and Camp Ministry: Provides opportunities for spiritual growth and formation for children and adults.
- Campus Ministries support staffing and programs on four area college campuses.
- Ministries funded by Congregation and Leadership Development include a focus on church growth and church leaders.

Focus on Missions & Advocacy

- Conference Mission and Social Justice Programs: $1,953,796
- General and Jurisdictional Apportionments: $3,571,810

World Service

To help our denomination to strengthen its evangelism efforts, stimulate church growth, expand Bible studies and enrich spiritual commitment. This fund allows us to share in a worldwide ministry, including support for missionaries.

Interdenominational Cooperation

This fund allows United Methodists to have an effective presence in the activities of ecumenical organizations.

Africa University

This fund supports the further development of the first private university for men and women in Africa.

Black College Fund

This fund represents the denomination’s support of the operation and capital funding of historically black colleges and medical schools.

Ministries Education Fund

This fund provides our church support for the recruitment and education of future pastors and bishops.

Regional Fund

This fund pays the salaries and benefits of active bishops in the denomination and supports retired bishops.

General Administration

This fund supports administrative areas of the church, such as the General Council on Finance and Administration, the General Conference session, and Archives and History.

Jurisdictional Administration

This fund supports missions and ministry throughout the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

Congregational & Leadership Development

- Funds to operate Congregational and Leadership Development (C&LD) Teams can be found in Congregational Ministries.

Focus on Church Growth: $1,390,583

- Gifts to local churches and ministries to grow congregations and expand ministry in the community.
- Start new churches.
- Latino/Hispanic Ministries
- Strengthening the Black Church
- Older Adult Ministry

Focus on Children: $2,584,258

- The Discipline Academy – Learning opportunities and training for all congregations within the church.
- Discipleship Board and Agencies – Includes funds for Board of Ordained Ministry and Ministerial Education Fund.

Total Discipleship Ministry Teams: $8,656,823

TOTAL DISCIPLESHIP EXPENSES: $8,112,426

II. STEWARDSHIP EXPENSES

Communications: $651,374

- The publications produced by this area are tools for implementing the ministries of the Conference, such as the UMConnection newspaper, the Web site and e-connection.

Operations: $3,703,319

- This area is responsible for overall operations of the conference including all conference infrastructures, facilities, IT, conference owned property, and relates to the Trustees and CFA.

Property Ministries

- The Conference Trustees revere all property owned by the conference, to include the Conference Mission Center, three Retreat and Camping facilities, the Episcopal Residence and the leased offices in Hagerstown and on Capitol Hill.

Archives and History

- The conference provides support for the preservation of our United Methodist Heritage.

Conference Chancellor

- Provides legal resources to the Trustees and other conference leadership.

Annual Conference – Commission on Session

- The commission prepares all aspects of the annual conference session including program and logistics.

Finance: $533,377

- This area is responsible for maintaining and administering comprehensive fiscal and administrative policies and services. The office of the treasurer provides support and information for clergy and laity in the local churches.

HR/Benefits Administration: $2,586,182

This office administers active and retired benefit plans for clergy and laity. They also provide personnel and HR support for Conference staff.

TOTAL STEWARDSHIP EXPENSES: $6,926,192

Episcopal Leadership Ministry: $4,677,608

- Ministries that lead our mission and develop the leadership to lead congregations, ministries and staff.

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: $18,464,136

OPERATING NET: $0

For a full breakdown of the budget, visit: tiny.cc/bwcbudget
From page 1

At Wesley Theological Seminary, they know that when significant art comes together with deep theology, God shows up. From now through May 19, the seminary is inviting the public to encounter the sacred when they host Michael Takeo Magruder’s “Lamentation for the Forsaken,” a real-time new media installation juxtaposing Christ’s journey to the cross with the plight of refugees fleeing the Syrian Civil War. The hours for viewing the piece are Monday through Friday from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Additional hours can be heard by calling (202) 885-8600.

The installation, which will be laid out on the tomb of Bishop Bromley Oxnam in the chapel of the seminary in Washington, D.C., is the ninth station of the cross, part of an art exhibit that has been on display throughout the city of Washington during Lent. The piece features two distinct visual elements. The first, the artist explained, is an image of Christ on a photographic negative of the Shroud of Turin that has been aesthetically transformed with the name and details of people who have died in the Syrian conflict.

“The second is an underlying video stream that portrays the lives and hardships of Syrian refugees. “The combination of these two layers generates an endlessly shifting digital tapestry that oscillates between the iconic image of Christ and the tragic stories of those affected by war,” reads an official statement about the installation. “The real miracle isn’t the Shroud itself, it’s our capacity to look into the eyes of the forseaken and see our Saviour.”

For Kiki McGrath, the curator of the Doulas Gallery at Wesley, Lamentation for the Forsaken “brings the Christ story into our world right now,” she said. “It’s an ancient story set in a modern context. It provides a space for contemplation and reflection that allows you to think about both of these narratives differently. That’s gift we’ve been given by this artist.”

Wesley Seminary is one of the few seminaries in the nation that actively combines art and theology. Students are required to take an arts course to learn the language of the arts in order to speak more fully about theology, and intentional efforts are made to display a vast array of creative works throughout the campus. Wesley’s Henry Luce III Center for Arts and Religion promotes ongoing conversations that foster creativity and an understanding of a myriad of artistic traditions.

For McGrath, the arts are a way of allowing students to more deeply understand the nature of God the Creator, and to look with curiosity and wonder at the world around us. Growing up Roman Catholic, she said she always felt the presence of God and of Mary. Religious pictures and the Stations of the Cross gave her a landscape in which to place her feelings about her faith. Stations of the Cross, she explained, are a series of images depicting the passion of Christ. The faithful use these images as a pathway for prayer and contemplation. They were created during the centuries when pilgrims could no longer travel to Jerusalem.

During Lent, the 14 stations were spread as a Way of Sorrows throughout Washington, D.C. This pilgrimage for art lovers was designed to provoke spiritual and political passions, said its organizers, the London-based CoExist House. The first station, “Jesus is condemned to death by the mob,” for example, was on display at the United Methodist Building. Created by Ndume Olushanii, the installation “Disrupting the Cradle to Prison Pipeline,” used human-shaped orange jumpsuite to draw attention to injustices of the criminal justice system.

At the Church of the Epiphany in D.C., the ninth station in which “Jesus Falls for the Forsaken” was featured in the song, he firmly believes “it’s only for that one song. But that depiction is unappetizing for this generation, he said. “What excites me about what Chance the Rapper did is that we can reach a whole new generation of people to let them know that Christ is cool and the church is relevant.”

He prays that young people will find a God of grace, a God of greatness and be in a relationship that helps them be their best selves. “We need to bring the Christ story to them. “How Great” demonstrates the importance of the church and the message of life that it offers to the greater society,” Bropleh said. “This confluence of hip-hop and Christian cultures speaks to the relevance of the church.”

Hear the song
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srGPhOu-RuU

Hear the sermon
https://youtu.be/hfctQrrt7qo

(Rev. Rudy Bropleh speaks at 2:44)

Hear the song
https://youtu.be/hfctQrrt7qo

Hear the sermon
https://youtu.be/hfctQrrt7qo

(Rev. Rudy Bropleh speaks at 2:44)

The video panels are aligned with the body of Christ. At the first are images of the refugee’s journey, at Christ’s hands are images of people helping one another, the Body of Christ holds images of the bodies of the dead and the face shows the face of Christ blended with actual faces of men, women and children in Syria.

The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria and the U.S. bombing in retaliation, makes the prosecution, suffering and sacrifice of Christ and of the refugees all the more compelling, McGrath said.


Rap: Bropleh sings out about the greatness of God

Rev. Rudy Bropleh

Chance the Rapper performing live in November 2015.

By Melissa Laurier
UMConnection Staff

The digital artwork Lamentation for the Forsaken, by Michael Takeo Magruder, was on display during Lent at the Church of the Epiphany in D.C.

Today, located in London, his projects in new media have been showcased in more than 100 exhibitions in 34 countries. Through his work being displayed at Wesley, McGrath said, we become witnesses in Christ’s story and the story of the Syrian refugees becomes our own. “We bring our own experiences to it.”

The video panels are aligned with the body of Christ. At the first are images of the refugee’s journey, at Christ’s hands are images of people helping one another, the Body of Christ holds images of the bodies of the dead and the face shows the face of Christ blended with actual faces of men, women and children in Syria.

The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria and the U.S. bombing in retaliation, makes the prosecution, suffering and sacrifice of Christ and of the refugees all the more compelling, McGrath said.


The digital artwork Lamentation for the Forsaken, by Michael Takeo Magruder, was on display during Lent at the Church of the Epiphany in D.C.

The digital artwork Lamentation for the Forsaken, by Michael Takeo Magruder, was on display during Lent at the Church of the Epiphany in D.C.

At the Church of the Epiphany in D.C., the ninth station in which “Jesus Falls for the Forsaken” was featured in the song, he firmly believes “it’s only for that one song. But that depiction is unappetizing for this generation, he said. “What excites me about what Chance the Rapper did is that we can reach a whole new generation of people to let them know that Christ is cool and the church is relevant.”

He prays that young people will find a God of grace, a God of greatness and be in a relationship that helps them be their best selves. “How Great” demonstrates the importance of the church and the message of life that it offers to the greater society,” Bropleh said. “This confluence of hip-hop and Christian cultures speaks to the relevance of the church.”

Hear the song
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srGPhOu-RuU

Hear the sermon
https://youtu.be/hfctQrrt7qo

(Rev. Rudy Bropleh speaks at 2:44)

Hear the song
https://youtu.be/hfctQrrt7qo

Hear the sermon
https://youtu.be/hfctQrrt7qo

(Rev. Rudy Bropleh speaks at 2:44)

The video panels are aligned with the body of Christ. At the first are images of the refugee’s journey, at Christ’s hands are images of people helping one another, the Body of Christ holds images of the bodies of the dead and the face shows the face of Christ blended with actual faces of men, women and children in Syria.

The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria and the U.S. bombing in retaliation, makes the prosecution, suffering and sacrifice of Christ and of the refugees all the more compelling, McGrath said.
From page 1

Baltimore-Washington Conference issued a statement on the Judicial Council's decision hours after it was released. In it, she called for United Methodists to be in a time of "deep prayer." [Full statement at https://www.bwccumc.org/news-and-views/ statement-from-bishop-lattle-esterling- april-29-2017/]

The court rejected the argument made during the April 21 oral hearing by Richard Marsh, Western Jurisdiction counsel, that Oliveto's same-sex marriage to Robinson in 2014 was not a public statement about her sexual practices.

"A same-sex marriage license issued by competent civil authorities together with the clergy person's status in a same-sex relationship is a public declaration that the person is a self-avowed practicing homosexual" for purposes of the prohibitive language in the United Methodist Book of Discipline, Paragraphs 324.3 and 2702.1(b), the council ruled.

Church law requires all clergy persons to dedicate themselves to "the highest ideals of Christian life," the decision said, including, "their commitment to abide by and uphold the church's definition of marriage and stance on homosexuality. An openly homosexual and partnered bishop is in violation of those minimum standards." The decision further found that a openly homosexual and partnered bishop may be charged with disobedience to church law, along with other bishops and clergy persons who actively participate in the consecration of a bishop who has been found to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual through a judicial or administrative process.

"Self-avowal does not nullify the consecration and cause removal from episcopal office but is a sufficient declaration to subject the bishop's ministerial office to review," the decision said.

Judicial Council spelled out the process required by The Discipline for such a review, which begins with the filing of a complaint against the bishop. If action is not initiated by the jurisdictional or central conference, the president or secretary of that body can charge of bishops must take action.

Pending the supervisory response process to review episcopal membership and office, the college of bishops, in consultation with the committee on episcopacy, "may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed 60 days."

The process allows for a bishop to be placed in the retired relationship "regardless of age" if it is "found to be in the best interests of the bishop and/or the church."

If there is no resolution, "the president or secretary of the college of bishops may refer the matter as an administrative or judicial complaint," the ruling concluded.

In a joint dissenting opinion to Decision 2014, Judicial Council members N. Oswald Tweh and Donnell Reece Tacha "respectfully" argued that the council did not have jurisdiction for the petition from the South Central Jurisdiction.

"Our difference with the majority revolves simply around which are the proper body or bodies for making these decisions," they said. "This Judicial Council, like all judicial bodies, is restricted to deciding those matters over which we clearly have jurisdiction."

The opinion from Tweh and Tacha argues that the majority decision "relies on consecration of bishops as the jurisdictional 'hook' … because consecration of bishops is an act on behalf of the whole church. We

From page 1

organizations, not the least of which is the Baltimore-Washington Conference itself. Through the BWCC Trustees and the Council on Finance and Administration, RCM has cultivated a good working relationship that keeps sites insured, up to date and running well, he said. "All that enables the staff and volunteers to create a place for wonderful Christian hospitality," Thornton said.

The uptick in enrollment resulted in RCM running in the black for the fourth year in a row in 2016, showing a surplus of about $46,000. That money is plowed right back into the RCM program: $14,906 for camperships this year, helping kids who might not otherwise afford camp the opportunity to attend; $21,000 for a Campershippers Fund; $10,000 for new online training programs for volunteers; and $9,000 to subsidize new outreach initiatives.

Thornton, who is retiring at the end of this summer after 30 years, added that retreat ministry is also growing, with upgrades being done to facilities that host groups year-round.

Another growing aspect is the Day Camp experience offered by RCM, Thornton said. In Baltimore City last year, three churches partnered with RCM, each church doing two weeks. In 2017, six churches are partnering, he said, with each church doing one week. The Board of Child Care, Reston United UMC and Grace UMC in Baltimore have also provided funding to support this ministry.

And in West Virginia, at Camp Harmison, Thornton said that the Day Camp program is expanding to two weeks with opportunities for both elementary and middle school students.

Chris Schlieckert, Director at Camp Manidokan near Harpers Ferry, said the success of RCM is all about the people and the relationships.

"I think the reason we're doing well is that we have good staff at the sites and amazing volunteers," Schlieckert said. "It's been exciting for us."

Schlieckert, who grew up in the church in Minnesota and who met Jesus in a powerful way at camp, said that RCM uses "fun, friends and faith" as guiding principles in the camping ministries, making sure the youth feel safe in what, for many, is a first-time experience of the great outdoors.

"We want to make sure that when the kids come that they have a good time," he said. "They're in a safe space where they can be comfortable and we can create that Christian community."

Because of that, Schlieckert said, they are able to add in the spiritual component of the program which impacts the campers' lives. This includes what he calls an "altar call-like experience" at the end of camp, which he said changed his own life years ago.

"I want to make sure I'm creating and setting an environment that opens up for the Holy Spirit to do that kind of work at camp," he said.

The success of the recent past is translating into great numbers for 2017, Schlieckert said. As of mid-April, registrations for summer camp at Manidokan were about four weeks ahead of last year's pace.

Thornton said that one of the key partnerships within RCM are those who contribute to camperships. "Most people can afford a week at camp," he said, "but there are those who truly can't."

Camperships scholarships that help pay for kids to go to camp – are set at $50,000 this year, Thornton said, an increase from last year.

Learn more about the BWCC's Camping and Retreat Ministries at www.bwccampsandretreats.com.