

2017 West Virginia Annual Conference Summary

The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

The 2017 West Virginia Annual Conference convened June 8, 2017 - June 11, 2017, at West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, West Virginia, under the leadership of Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, Resident Bishop of the West Virginia Conference. In worship, business and fellowship, the theme was *Hopeful*. Bishop Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop of the South Carolina Conference was invited to serve as guest preacher and joined in our Hopeful celebration of the mission and ministries of the West Virginia Conference.

Mission & Ministry

- 2341 new professions of faith were celebrated (with more being added daily as churches report confirmations and new member reception.) New goal of 2400+. This represents 2400 Professions of Faith and 2400 new people in an intentional discipleship formation experience. A piece of stained glass art was introduced that was commissioned and completed by artist Rich Shaffer. Shaffer described the elements of the West Virginia glass and walnut piece in relation to our mission of sharing the gospel and making disciples.
- Celebrated Cash total for Celebration of Ministry Events: \$117,692.87, supporting the missions of the West Virginia Annual Conference.
- Lauren Shanholtzer, Chair, Conference Committee on Youth Ministry, reported on the work of the committee in the conference, presented the revised Constitution, and announced upcoming youth events: Rally on the Mountain and Fall Workshop. During the presentation, a collection was taken for Youth Service Fund, adding \$2,279 to the Ice Cream Social giving of \$977.43 for a total of \$3,256.43.
- George Webb was selected as the new Conference Stewardship Coordinator; Stephon Reed was announced as West Virginia Annual Conference approved evangelist.
- Ivan Chetembe, a recent graduate of Living Hope High School (Advance #3021425) in Kenya, addressed the conference and thanked the conference for support of this vital educational effort in Kenya.
- Disaster Ministries reported on the work of the Annual Conference and UMCOR in the past year and on the future work that the conference is committed to complete in the West Virginia Flooding of June, 2016.
- Rev. Dr. Barry Ball, husband of Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, addressed the conference with a challenge to recognize the children who are victims of addiction in our communities.
- October 1 – 7 is the West Virginia Conference designated week of prayer for the Commission on the Way Forward
- Appointments for July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 were set.

Worship Celebrations

- The work of the WV Annual Conference in recovery of the June, 2016 flood.
- Clergy, clergy spouses and surviving spouses who have died since the last annual conference.
- The Historic Questions and retirement of 9 elders, 1 deacons, 2 associate members, 16 licensed local pastors
- The Historically African American United Methodist Churches of the West Virginia Conference
- The Ministry of All in the West Virginia Conference
- Daily Praise and Worship using the Upper Room Morning Daily Praise order.
- Ordination and Commissioning service: we commissioned 4 (1 provisional Deacon & 3 provisional Elders). We ordained 5 (1 Deacon & 4 Elders). We recognized the orders of 1 full member Elder. And 3 Elders transferred in to the Conference.

Business

Received and approved Organizational Motion from Conference Secretary, Rules as presented by Rules Committee, and Consent Calendar from Conference Secretary.

Resolutions

- Passed a resolution encouraging the conference to pray for the Commission on A Way Forward and for Our General Conference Delegation. The resolution requests that the delegation hold listening events within each district.
- Passed a resolution that the current General Conference delegation will represent the conference at the 2019 Special Called Session of General Conference.
- Passed a resolution affirming the bishop, cabinet, and clergy members of the conference.
- Passed a resolution that an *Index of Resolutions* will be provided at the beginning of Annual Conference 2018.

Referred

- To Committee on Finance & Administration a petition to eliminate any increase to Connectional Ministries budget if there is no statistical increase in the number of pledges and identified givers.
- To Committee on Pensions a motion to increase insurance premiums by \$20 per month to aid the emergency needs of pastors on medical leave.

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Finance

- Approved a budget of \$12,363,245 which is an increase of \$84,256 or .69% from the 2017 budget.
- Increased minimum compensation levels for full-time clergy in the following categories:
 - Category I: Members in full connection, Provisional Members who are seminary graduates & Commissioned Provisional Members who are seminary graduates \$37,000
 - Category II: Associate Members. \$35,000
 - Category III: Full-Time Local Pastors \$34,000
 - Category IV: Student Local Pastors \$30,000
- Received & approved reports from each of the divisions of ministry through either the Consent Calendar or presentations, including Board of Pensions, Trustees, Nominations, Committee on Finance and Administration, as well as the Cabinet.

Misc. business of the conference

- The Conference granted the House of the Carpenter approval to conduct a one time, by letter, conference-wide appeal to local churches of the Annual Conference for support of the construction of a youth center on Wheeling Island.
- Voted on five Constitutional Amendments, referred to the Annual Conference from the 2016 General Conference for a vote that will be combined with the votes of all other Annual Conferences. These amendments were debated but could not be amended. Individual Annual Conference results will not be reported. A 2/3 majority vote by qualified voting members of the all annual conferences is required to change the constitution of the United Methodist Church. Results will be reported by the Council of Bishops after the votes have been certified from all annual conferences.

Circles of Grace: Listening sessions were held with trained moderators in groups of 5-10 people focusing on conversations around the Commission on a Way Forward, diversity and white privilege.

Recognitions

- Sam Rodriguez, General Board of Discipleship, presented *One Matters Awards*:
 - Shay's Chapel UMC, Howesville Charge, MonValley District. DeLisa Riley, assigned supply.
 - Highland Ave. UMC, Fairmont, MonValley District. Pastor Micah Blanks.
 - Calvary / Mount Clare Charge, Clarksburg, Wesleyan District. Pastor Brian Plum.
- Awards were presented to the United Methodist Men for payment of 100% of the Connectional apportionments.
- Bishop's Award for Scouting was presented to Girl Scout Troop 51209 from St. Luke UMC, Craigsville.
- Denman Awards for Evangelism:
 - Clergy: Gary Nelson, pastor of Cross Lanes UMC and Bob Cole, retired pastor, Wesleyan District
 - Lay: Wayne Worth, United Methodist Temple, Clarksburg
- Global Ministries presented the Doorways of Hope Awards to volunteers with the various mission agencies.
- Recognized BA Miskowiec for a professional certification in Spiritual Formation as well as recognizing those who have completed the Course of Study.
- Recognized retiring superintendents, Greg Hayes, his wife, Diane, Rick DeQuasie and his wife, Susie; retiring assistant to the Bishop, J.F. Lacaria and his wife, Lin; and welcomed new superintendents, Joe Hill (Little Kanawha District) and Okey Harless (Western District). Recognized Ken Krimmel who will add Assistant to the Bishop to his portfolio of Director of Connectional Ministries.
- Recognized Rev. Lawrence Sherwood, the longest serving conference member, who is celebrating the 70th year of his ordination as deacon (1947).

Additional Guests who addressed the Annual Conference:

Boyd Creasman, acting president, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Clayton Childers, General Board of Church and Society, Craig Catlett, United Methodist Communications, Terry Bradfield, Wesley Theological Seminary, and Catherine Earl, UMCOR.

Thank you to the West Virginia Annual Conference Bishop's Lead Team, Develop Team, Annual Conference Program Committee, Worship Team, Communications Team, Conference Staff, Conference Secretary, Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball and host team from West Virginia Wesleyan College for another successful conference session. May we continue to be a Christ-led, spiritual breath of fresh air that changes the world.

Annual Conference 2018 will be June 7 – 10, 2018, at West Virginia Wesleyan College

