



CONFERENCE *CIRCUIT*

The West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church

Issue # 3 • Sunday, June 16, 2019



Delegates and alternates elected to the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences are: (l-r) Mike Estep, Judy Raines, Joe Kenaston, Lauren Godwin, Bree Moll, Jeff Taylor, Royce Lyden, Amy Shanholtzer, Mary Ellen Finegan, Judi Kenaston, Rich Shaffer, and Kristi Wilkerson. Not pictured are Erin Sears, Rachel Flynn Fulton, Joe Hill, and Sharletta Green.

Ken Willard: 'Our mission is to make disciples'

By Kerry Bart

Ken Willard, the conference's director of discipleship, leadership and congregational vitality, shared with the conference on Saturday that he's directionally challenged: he uses a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system that tells him where he is and shows him where he's going.

So is it with the church's mission and vision, he said.

The mission of the West Virginia United Methodist Church – that is, what we do – is make disciples. "Not hamburgers, airplanes, or automobiles," Willard said. "We make disciples." Every church's mission statement must trace back to the commission of Jesus in Matthew 28, he said. Jesus said to his disciples and says to us today, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations..."

The conference's mission is "to discover, develop, and deploy passionate, spiritual leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."



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Sunday Schedule

8:15am Sunday School

9:30am Service of Licensing,
Commissioning,
and Ordination

Fixing of Appointments

Adjournment

More on the web!

You can read much more about the stories featured in the Conference Circuit by visiting our award-winning website, wvumc.org/news. Use your smartphone camera to scan the code at left to go directly to our news page!



Five elders, one deacon to be ordained as full members

This morning we celebrate the ordination of six new members in full connection of the West Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church during our Service of Licensing, Commissioning, and Ordination.

James Burrough, Elder

I am 50 years old. I am married to Jani Burrough. My older brother Kenneth Jr. and I are sons of Kenneth Sr. and Lydia Burrough.



I have three children, three stepchildren, eight grandchildren, and one grand-dog.

I graduated from Lewis County High School in 1987. After receiving the call to ministry, I became a lay speaker in 2001 and a licensed local pastor in 2005.

I attended West Virginia Wesleyan College from 2007 to 2011, earning my bachelor's degree. I attended United Theological Seminary from 2011 to 2015, earning my master's degree.

A spiritual discipline I have embraced over the past two years is learning to play the guitar and pickin'-n-grinnin' in our church's praise band.

I feel blessed to have been called by the Lord to serve as an Ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church. I look forward to working with my sisters and brothers of the faith in fulfilling the mission of making mature disciples of Jesus Christ in order to transform hearts, minds and souls for the glory of God.

Lisa Fox, Elder

Lisa Fox received her call to ministry when she was a member of Sistersville UMC.



She attended lay speaking classes and became a certified lay speaker. On July 1, 2010, after attending licensing school, she was appointed to serve the Lazear's Chapel and Wick UMC charge. During that appointment Lisa continued to grow as a pastoral minister.

Eventually she attended United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH. She was appointed to the Dallas and Sand Hill UMC charge as a seminary student. Lisa graduated from United in 2016 with a Master of Divinity degree.

She continues to serve with the people of Dallas and Sand Hill, two wonderful county churches. Lisa loves the space where she serves and the people she serves with. Together, they strive to make the church the center of Jesus' grace & love in the community and beyond.

Though ministry is messy, Dallas & Sand Hill UMC are committed to doing life together and becoming the kind of people God is calling them to be.

Lisa and her husband, David, have been married since 2000. Together they have four children, Haley, Josie, Morgan, and David Jr. They also have three grandchildren: Adeline, David, and Ellis.

Mike Loudermilk, Elder

I grew up on a farm in Clintonville, Greenbrier County. Being reared in a Christian home, my parents were a huge influence in my life.



After graduating from Greenbrier East High School in 1987, I attended Fairmont State College for three semesters. Upon returning to the farm I became active in my home church, James Chapel United Methodist.

My call to ministry began in 1991 and I preached my first sermon March of 1993. I was appointed to the Nallen Charge in 1995 where I spent 21 years.

I married Cynthia "Jamie" in 1995. We have two daughters, Leah and Rachel.

While serving in the Nallen charge I received my bachelor's degree from Bluefield State on Dec. 14, 2009, and my Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary on Dec. 11, 2015. I entered provisional membership in June 2016 and was appointed to Mountain Top Ministries in Franklin on July 1.

My family and I look forward to me serving as an Elder in the West Virginia Annual Conference. As United Methodists we are to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Scan this QR Code with your smartphone camera to access all the news from Annual Conference 2019



Bonnie Starkey, Elder

On Sept. 10, 1952, Nola and Elza Wilson announced the birth of their second child, Bonnie Kay Wilson. I was preceded by my brother Mickey



and followed by my sister Arnetta. I grew up in several areas of Harrison County. My family raised me in a strong Christian home and churches.

I graduated from Roosevelt-Wilson High School in 1970. In 1971 I married my high school sweetheart, Michael Starkey. We have been married for 18 years and have three children: Michael, Jr.; Christopher; and Rebecca Bolner; and one grandson, Ruben Bolner.

I began my candidacy program in 1994 and became a local pastor. I enrolled at West Virginia Wesleyan College, where I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Christian Education. I also attended a course of study at Duke Divinity School during the summer.

I completed the basic course of study and was ready to sign up for my last year of advanced course of study when I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in stage four in 2002.

After many treatments and prayers, I beat the cancer. I then attended the last year of my advanced course of study and became a provisional member in 2016.

In 2016 I suffered a mini-stroke and, in 2018, breast cancer. During this time I continued to minister in the churches and community. I give God the honor and praise that I have been able to continue to follow His call upon my life.

Nathan Weaver, Elder

This is an exciting week! From the age of five, I told my parents I was going to be a pastor one day.

I was deeply formed at Wesleyan by many experiences, but the one that set me on a path to be ordained in the UMC was an internship through the Board of Ordained Ministry at Duff Street UMC under Revs. Brian Seders and Mary Beth Chien. During that summer, I fell in love with Wesleyan understandings of grace, salvation, and the sacraments.

My journey led me to Asbury Seminary where I earned a Master of Divinity degree. During my third year of study, I met and fell in love with my wife, Lauren. Our love story includes outdoor adventures (hiking, kayaking, Ultimate Frisbee, and playing in the mud), supporting each other through difficult times, and enjoying life as best friends. We love doing ministry together, and she will be commissioned as a Deacon this week. I'm so proud of her!

While at Asbury, I was commissioned as a Provisional Elder and served under appointment as the Coordinator of Worship. This job was a blessing and helped equip me for worship planning, leadership, and strategic thinking. I am thankful for my time working with the Dean of Chapel, Rev. Jessica LaGrone.

I am finishing my first year serving as the pastor of the amazing Quiet Dell Charge in Harrison County. This week of celebration is a culmination of much hard work and careful discernment. I am thankful.



Joe Webb, Deacon

I first sensed a call to ministry while chaperoning a youth event for First UMC Williamstown in 2006, when I felt God awakening a passion for helping young people discover an experience of the living Christ.

I have always been interested in exploring the margins of church life, connecting people who have experienced hurt or harm from the church with authentic experiential knowledge of Jesus. The office of Deacon, therefore, is a perfect fit.

I participated in a Walk to Emmaus in 2007, where I received clarity to move me further into more formal channels of ministry. I became a licensed lay speaker for the Little Kanawha District in 2009 and enrolled at Asbury Theological Seminary in 2011.

I entered provisional membership in 2016 and served at Sand Hill UMC (Little Kanawha District) from 2016-2018. In 2018 I was appointed to the Conference Communications Staff, where I have served for the past year. The ministry of communications not only fits well the role of a Deacon, but also connects me to my "first career" as a journalist, marketing professional, and graphic designer.

I have a deep affinity not just for Wesleyan theology, but for our United Methodist Connection. I am grateful for all of the colleagues who have become friends over the past several years who continue to support and inspire me to continue to pursue my call as an ordained Deacon.



Licensed Local Pastors to be recognized this morning

By Judy Pysell

Licensed local pastors will be recognized at the Service of Licensing, Commissioning and Ordination this morning.

Bonnie MacDonald, director of leadership formation and ministry, said, “This will be the first time in recent memory that so many in our midst are eligible to receive a license for pastoral ministry.”

Bonnie said she is particularly excited about this service of worship because it will lead us through a full cycle of celebration of how God moves in us to bring us into community, to love us, to give us gifts for serving others, helps us to grow, and then sends us out to serve.

During the worship service Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball will lead us in baptizing, licensing, commissioning,

ordaining, and welcoming those who will transfer their conference membership. She also will challenge us all – lay and clergy – to serve God faithfully in the mission fields of our communities and beyond in the coming year.

Gwen Wolford of the Fellowship of Associate Members and Licensed Local Pastors is excited about this new practice of recognizing licensed local pastors. She said this is something for which she has hoped, prayed and waited.

In her 23 years as a local pastor, Gwen said she has watched and listened as questions were asked of those to be ordained and commissioned and her heart cried out for this same opportunity for local pastors to be questioned by the presiding bishop and to boldly answer to their call.

Gwen said, “Yes, I am excited and praising God for those who have made this desire and prayer come true.”

Volunteers in Mission Opportunity in Puerto Rico

The Northeast Jurisdiction Volunteers in Mission (VIM) office reports that 35,000 houses across Puerto Rico remain under blue tarps because of the damage inflicted by Hurricane Maria in September 2017.

The call for volunteers is strong and the need is great.

The West Virginia Conference VIM is sending another team in February 2020. Tasks will likely include roofing, electrical, carpentry, and plumbing work.

Likely dates (yet to be confirmed) are Feb. 4-14. An early cost estimate is \$1,650 per person, though this could go up or down as plans take form. We will have seven full work days, one day with church activities, and one day for relaxing and some sightseeing. Contact Rev. Jack Lipphardt, disaster recovery director, for more information and to express an interest in participating at Jlipphardt@aol.com.



Retiring Conference Treasurer Jim Berner presents a rack of “money ties” to new Treasurer Jamion Wolford.

Conference welcomes new Treasurer Jamion Wolford

By Caitlin Ware

The West Virginia Annual Conference is pleased to welcome our new Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services, Jamion Wolford, who was elected in yesterday morning’s business session. Wolford will succeed Jim Berner, our conference treasurer for the past 25 years.

Wolford is joining us after serving as the chief financial officer at the West Virginia Attorney General’s office. He is a certified public accountant with a bachelor’s degree in accounting from West Virginia Wesleyan College and a master’s in business administration from Marshall University. We look forward to sharing ministry with him here in our Annual Conference.

To read more about Wolford, visit <https://www.wvumc.org/2019/05/jamion-wolford-named-new-treasurer/>



Chronicles of the Conference Choir

By S. Scott Mapes

Editor's note: This is part one of a three-part perspective series featuring our outstanding Conference Choir. For parts 2 and 3, please visit our website at wvumc.org/news.

Wednesday June 12, 2019:

There would be no organ for the Annual Conference this year. This news might have been enough to cause a few choir members to faint, but to my knowledge no one did. Yet it wasn't just the fact that the organ could not be played. Our beautiful West Virginia Wesleyan College keyboard and pedal instrument was physically gone from the sanctuary.

While this was fairly good news for the piano and the piano players, the extra space created by the organ's absence would be an acoustical nightmare for the choir members. Because of this vacant region on the platform, the microphones were now able to pick up every small noise in front—especially the otherwise quiet conversations of the sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses. That, in a word, is not good.

None of these non-medical organ concerns mattered, however, to the roomful of us singers who gathered for the first rehearsal under the direction of Craig Hinchman (St. Matthew's in St. Albans) and Julie Janich (St. Mark's in Charleston). As always, we first circled the music table to gather our pieces of music—17 in all—and then the practicing began in earnest. Actually, it began in Kresge and then went to the sanctuary. (I know. Quite a stretch

for a joke, right?)

So while we rehearsed in the sanctuary, the enormity of the task began to sink in. We would start singing tomorrow as a key part of the worship services. For me, it is always a humbling privilege, and this fleeting prayer often streaks through my mind: dear Lord, please help us not to make too many embarrassing mistakes!

See all 3 parts of this series at wvumc.org/news.

United Methodist Day at the Ballpark

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball invites you to come to the ballpark for a good cause!

A Homerun for Flood Survivors

\$4 of every ticket sold goes to Bishop's Appeal for Disaster Recovery

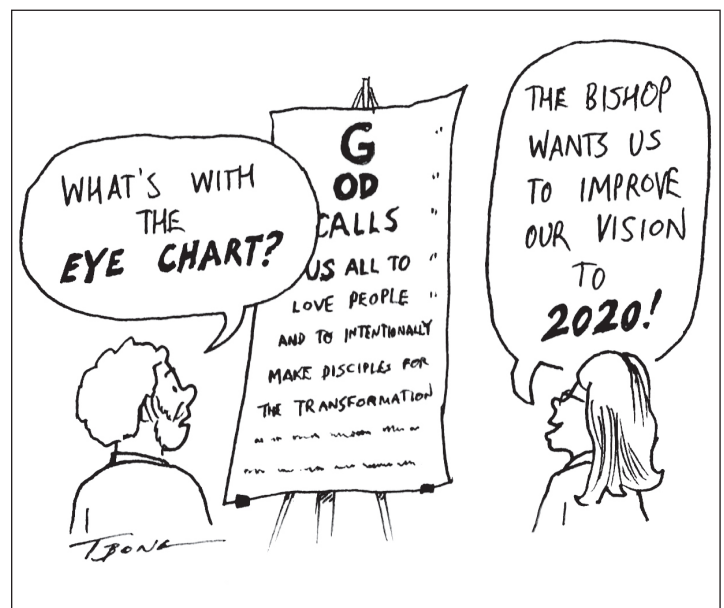
Sunday, July 21 - 2pm Ticket \$10 or Ticket + Food Bundle \$15

Appalachian Power Park, Charleston
Visit wvumc.org for more details

Saturday business session highlights

By Judi Kenaston, Conference Secretary

- Equitable Compensation report, including minimum salaries, was set by the Conference after an amendment to make changes was not supported.
- Conference approved 4 resolutions from the Board of Trustees, including one that dealt with the sale of the former GlenWood Park facility.
- Recognized the persons who will be commissioned and ordained on Sunday. The bishop asked them the historic questions for ministry.
- The Lay Denman Award was given to Helen “Sammy” Martin and Joan “Johnny” Wetherholt of Oak Grove UMC in the Potomac Highlands District for their work in starting a feeding ministry that serves over 300 people and provides an opportunity for relationship building as they share the love of Christ.
- The “One Matters” Discipleship Award was given to Rev. Tom Jeffrey and the congregation of West Hamlin UMC for their work in making disciples in their community. Rev. Jeffrey had planned to retire last year but was drawn by the Holy Spirit to remain and make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball highlighted the many places around the conference where ministry is happening in her “State of the Church” address.
- Ken Willard shared a brochure about the Congregational Vitality Initiative. The initiative includes coaching, leadership development, church self-study, church survey, mystery guests and workshops. There is also an option of on-site consultations.
- Bishop Steiner Ball’s spouse, Barry, was recognized for his ministry within the conference. A gift for the Spiritual Life Office of West Virginia Wesleyan College was given in his honor. Barry addressed the conference about the work in alleviating the opioid crisis. There is a UM Day at Appalachian Power Park in Charleston on Sunday, July 21.
- We recognized retiring superintendent Frank Shomo and his spouse, Michelle, and new conference superintendent, Loretta Isaiah, and her spouse, Ravi. Loretta will serve the Little Kanawha District. Joe Hill, who has been serving in Little Kanawha District, will continue as a conference superintendent serving the Midland South District.
- The conference adopted a budget of \$12,877,355 for 2020. This is an increase of \$441,193 or 3.55% from the 2019 budget.
- Pat Mick, Chair of Global Ministries, announced that collections for Celebration of Mission Events total almost \$95,000.
- New personnel: Kristi Wilkerson will become the new director of Upshur Parish House. Anna Troy is the new Church and Community Worker at Clarksburg Parish.
- Conference Council on Youth Ministries Chairperson Bree Moll shared the experiences of the youth during the year, including Fall Workshop. She announced that over \$900 was raised for the Youth Scholarship Fund at the ice cream social on Friday night. The Conference will sponsor the jurisdictional youth event this year.
- Shea James highlighted the work of Campus Ministry and the campus pastors were introduced.
- Interns: Caitlin Ware serving as Communication Intern, and Lawrence Rebelo is serving with Larry Buckland at LIFE UMC in Fairmont.
- Completed the election of the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conference delegations:
 - GC CLERY: Amy Shanholtzer, Jeff Taylor, Lauren Godwin
 - GC LAY: Judi Kenaston, Rich Shaffer, Erin Sears
 - JC CLERGY: Mary Ellen Finegan, Mike Estep, Joe Hill. ALTERNATES: Sharletta Green, Joe Kenaston
 - JC LAY: Rachel Flynn Fulton; Kristi Wilkerson, Royce Lyden; ALTERNATES: Bree Moll, Judy Raines



'Our mission is to make disciples'

Continued from page 1

How do we take steps towards that mission? Ken reminded us of the GPS, which tells us where to go. "Vision in the church world is where God is calling us to go," he said. "Vision always has an element of the future."

The vision of the conference is "to be a Christ-led spiritual breath of fresh air that changes the world." That's where we're going. That guides us in all we do.

In order to get there, Ken said, we need to know where we are. Our conference has resources for you to learn some of the statistics of your community:

People aren't looking for a friendly church...they're looking for a church where they can make friends

www.MissionInsite.com, and www.UMData.org.

Our conference mission field includes 1.67 million people, 61.7 percent of whom have no church affiliation. There are a million people in our West Virginia area that don't participate in the life of a congregation. These are people in your community. "It is not about taking somebody else's sheep," Ken said. "Jesus never said, 'Go steal their sheep.'" Remember Jesus' words: "The harvest is ready. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest."

Ken provided some numbers about the people in our conference mission field: 12 percent live below the poverty level; 59 percent have white-collar jobs; the average age is 42; 34 percent are single parents; 94 percent are white, 3 percent are African-American, 1 percent are Hispanic, 0.7 percent are Asian, and 1.6 percent are Pacific Islander/American Indian/Other.

"Every church says they're a friendly church," Ken said. But those outside the church "are not looking for a friendly church," he instructed us. "They're looking for a church where they can make friends."

It's impossible to distill Ken's presentation into a short article. His presentation will be available on the conference website, www.wvumc.org (look for "Developing Disciples").

"Our churches need hope, and it's up to us to provide that hope," Ken said. "The harvest is ready. Therefore go!"

Ken joined our conference staff in July 2018. Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball said, "I think we have a great gift in our new team member, don't you? It's a joy to work with Ken, and it's been a joy as he's helped the Cabinet really dig into where we're starting from."

Do One Thing

Ideas to be fruit-bearing disciple makers

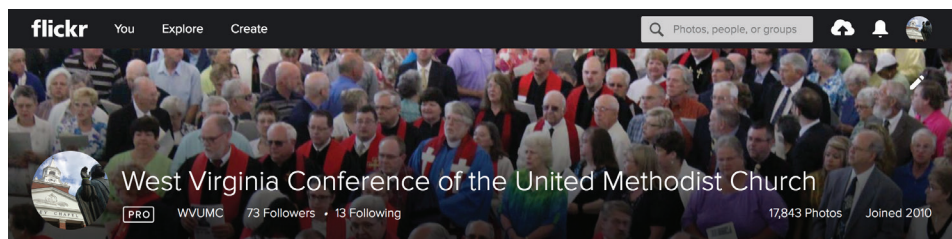
Ken invited us to be fruit-bearing disciple makers in our communities. He suggested six things and asked that we consider starting by doing one:

1. **Do a prayer walk.** What do you see in your community? Where is God nudging you to serve?
2. **Always expect guests.** Take a cue from Field of Dreams: "If you build it, they will come."
3. **Website.** Most people decide what church they're going to visit by going to a website first. Our conference has the goal that every church has a website that at least provides the church's address, worship time, and a picture or two. Our Communications Team can help your church set up and maintain a website.
4. **ICNU** ("I see in you...") Get to know the people who attend your church. Get to know their spiritual gifts. "Stop recruiting people – it doesn't work," Ken said. "Start inviting people into their calling in ministry. Every single one of us has a calling. Say, 'I see in you the spiritual gift of ...'"
5. **Reach event.** Have an event for your community. This is the beginning of reaching people. (Ken said when there's a donation bucket, church people call it a "love offering" but others see it as a fundraiser. Ken said a fundraiser is not the same thing as a reach event).
6. **One-on-one conversations.** This is where the magic happens. Don't worry about reaching all people -- have a conversation with one.

It's all online!

Stories, photos, and videos from Annual Conference 2019 are all available online! Just visit our website at wvumc.org/ac2019 to find links to all the content you need.

And remember, all the photos on our Flickr page are available for you to use in your local church, charge, or



district. Whether you need pictures for a website, newsletter, or other publication, it's all free of charge and there are no copyright restrictions.

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