

**DAILY PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION
OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GREATER NEW JERSEY**

**May 22-24, 2016
WILDWOOD, NJ**

**Sunday, May 22, 2016
4:00 p.m.**

CLERGY SESSION

Bishop John Schol opened the clergy session with a word of prayer and then turned the session over to Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty and Rev. Shawn Callender Hogan to present the **Clergy Report**.

REPORT

Rev. Brendler Naulty and Rev. Hogan presented each section of the **Clergy Report** to its completion. Approvals and editorial corrections were given where needed.

The candidates for commissioning were introduced. Bishop Schol invited the clergy to ask them any questions. No questions were asked. The candidates were led out of the room. Bishop Schol asked for a vote to approve the candidates. They were approved unanimously.

Candidates for ordination were introduced. Bishop Schol asked the historical questions and then invited the clergy to ask any questions. No questions were asked. The candidates were led out of the room. Bishop Schol asked for a vote to approve the candidates. They were approved unanimously.

Bishop Schol acknowledged all the retirees.

The report was presented for approval. It was approved.

CHAIRPERSONS OF ORDERS:

Rev. Shawn Callender Hogan presented the following persons for the position chairperson for their respective orders for the next quadrennium: Douglas A. Goldsborough, Sr. for the order of local pastors; Kyu Tae Pak for the order of elders and Rev. Brenda Wheeler Ehlers for the order of deacons. All were elected.

RECOGNITION

Bishop Schol recognized the General Conference delegates and praised them for their hard work and leadership at General Conference. Bishop Schol referenced the legislation presented during General Conference and our life together as the United Methodist Church,

Bishop Schol thanked all the clergy for their leadership and ministry in the Greater NJ Conference.

MOMENT BY DEACONS

Rev. Brenda Wheeler Ehlers introduced several deacons and they briefly spoke on their ministry. Rev. Tom Lank spoke about being the Northeastern Jurisdictional Mission Coordinator; Rev. Maylis de la Fe Amores-Rodriguez spoke about how she assisting six church music programs and various other music lessons; Rev. Gary Frieze told the body how his work as a pharmacist is helping those with addiction problems.

Rev. Wheeler Ehlers thanked the deacons for their ministries and thanked the body for their support.

ADJORN

The clergy session was adjourned.

**Sunday, May 22, 2016
4:00 p.m.**

LAITY SESSION

Conference Lay Leader, Rosa Williams, opened the laity session with words of welcome. She then introduced Bishop Schol, who also offered a warm welcome and asked that everyone bring themselves fully to Conference by being open to God's leading and loving the person next to them.

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Ms. Williams extended her welcome again and opened the meeting with a prayer. She expressed the hope that all were building relationships with their clergy and their community. She went on to inform the body of the events and accomplishments since last year's Annual Conference. She encouraged all laity to consider Lay Servanthood and Certified Lay Servant Ministry. Ms. Williams also spoke of the importance of taking the church outside the walls of church buildings and reaching out to the local community.

Ms. Williams shared the main point of the laity address given at General Conference, which stressed the importance of going out and making disciples of Jesus Christ -- not just sitting on the sidelines but stepping out of comfort zones. She reminded the body that they are called to be the church through acts of piety and mission, offering welcome to the stranger and the poor. She encouraged each person to listen for God's call on their lives and imagine what they could do.

Ms. Williams introduced the District Lay Leaders: Gail Robins (Cape Atlantic); Judy Dicecco (Capital); Michael Dziuba (Delaware Bay); Judy Colorado (Gateway North); Ellen Cusack (Gateway South); Marilyn Kinelski (Northern Shore); Palisades, Sam Noah (Palisades); Arthur Harrell (Raritan Valley); and Skylands, John Hartman (Skylands). Ms. Williams went on to mention the people who held positions on district groups.

Ms. Williams introduced the new Conference Director of Lay Servant ministry, George Lagos. Mr. Lagos told the body of his three goals in this position:

1. to get to know all the district leaders
2. to automate the system to make this ministry work better
3. to help improve pastor-laity relationships.

Ms. Williams introduced Harriett Jane Olson, General Director of the UMW. Ms. Olson spoke of how the UMW has been active in missions for almost one hundred and fifty years. She encouraged the body to look at the UMW's seven minute video on YouTube which celebrates these years of mission. She explained that new focuses are on climate issues and mass incarceration, especially the disproportionate number of people of color. UMW continues to keep issues concerning women, children and youth in the forefront. She encouraged everyone to attend the Cooperative School of Christian Mission (Mission U) this summer.

Ms. Williams welcomed the young people who were in the audience. She recognized Bethany Amey, one of the General Conference delegates and introduced Judy Colorado, another delegate, and asked her to share her experience from General Conference. She praised all the delegates from our Conference for their exemplary witness.

Ms. Colorado shared that her first impression of General Conference was the vast diversity of the global church that includes delegates from around the world speaking different languages, coming from different cultures and bringing different expectations. Her second impression was how the UMC is committed to be a witness in the world by works of justice, mercy and love to all people in their own context. She has come to realize that although the UMC has one mission, one faith and one God, we also have different theologies, voices and stances on the issues in our time. She prayed for God's spirit to guide us. She told how she has cried tears for our church to be united. She concluded with her hopes that the GNJ Annual Conference will continue to imagine a church that will move forward and that we continue to affirm our faith, traditions, and love for one another.

Ms. Williams congratulated Ms. Colorado for being elected onto the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church.

Ms. Williams showed slides from the Lay Ministries recognition celebration. She spoke on the Laity Academy and the new tracks it is offering.

A video on the mission project 'Stop Hunger Now' was shown. Ms. Williams encouraged everyone to volunteer for this mission project.

The laity session ended as Ellen Cusack gave the blessing for dinner.

Sunday, May 22, 2016

7:00 p.m.

ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING SERVICE

The Ordination and Commissioning Service began with a Native American greeting given by Christy Pierce Maisonave of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe. The ordinands, clergy, and bishops then processed in to the hymns "Forward through the Ages" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name".

Rev. Hector Burgos introduced a video, "Imagine a World" and led the congregation in the Call to Worship. Bishop Schol introduced Bishop Ernest Lyght and Bishop Solito Toquero of the Philippines. Bishop Schol and Bishop Toquero led the greeting and opening prayer. Bishop Schol and Bishop Lyght led a reaffirmation of baptism. Conference Lay Leader, Rosa Williams and Board of Ordained Ministry Chair, Rev. Shawn Callender Hogan presented the candidates to be commissioned and ordained. Bishop Schol asked the candidates the appropriate questions.

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Erika Yun read the scripture passage, Ephesians 1:17-19. Bishop Schol began his sermon by giving thanks to God for all who came this evening and for all that God is doing through the United Methodist Church. After offering a prayer, he stated he wanted to talk about a new voice, new dreams and new imagination. He asked the church to imagine with him and to look at all God has created. He called on the church to separate good from evil, noting that this takes imagination. He reminded the body that Ephesians tells us that while God provides us enough light to see the immediate future, what is assumed is that we stand in the darkness, noting that we wouldn't need more light if we were in the light. Bishop Schol named three things that get in the way of imagination: familiarity, security, and the light itself. He stated that when we become too familiar with our way of doing things, we stop listening to God for new possibilities. He spoke about security, stating that we feel comfortable with what is, or we try to make decisions that secure our future. Bishop Schol explained the third thing that stops imagination, the light itself. He challenged us to step into the darkness because we haven't seen all of God's light yet. He stated we like to keep one foot in the light and just tip our toe into the darkness. He encouraged us to abandoned security and trust God. Bishop Schol also said we need to stop asking the same old questions and ask the right new questions in the church. He concluded with asking those to be commissioned, the ordinands, and the whole body if we were willing to imagine with him a new possibility: a new church. "Are you ready to imagine a new church, a church which God is calling to step out of the light into the darkness? Won't you come and imagine with me?"

Bishop Schol introduced a video on A Future With Hope and explained that the offering taken during the service would benefit the Mission Fund Campaign which supports Imagine No Malaria Campaign and A Future With Hope.

The service moved into the time of commissioning and ordination. All the Bishops led the examination, prayers and laying on of hands for those being commissioned and ordained.

Provisional Elders

Elizabeth Jane Ealie
Blair Goold
Katelyn Nicole Hillis

Michael Anthony Howard
David Lee Ledford, III
Jongin Lee

Sarah Borgstrom Lee
Dale 'Daeil' Min
Alison VanBuskirk Philip

Richard Romero
Joshua Bernon Shuster
William B. Wilson, Jr.

Provisional Deacon

Maylis de la Fe Amores-Rodriguez

Deacon

Sharon Capron Yarger

Elders

Anna Katherine Gillette
Peter Van Ness Jamieson
Woo Min Lee

Christina Lelache
Ayn M. Masker
Cameron P. Overbey

John E. Randall Sr.
Brian David Rhea
Jessica Sara Stenstrom

Bishop Schol invited all who may have heard God's call to ministry while at the service to come forward during the closing hymn, instructing the District Superintendents to pray with them. The congregation sang "I Am Yours".

Bishop Schol gave the closing prayer and the service concluded with a recessional, followed by a reception for those commissioned and ordained.

Monday, May 23, 2016

8:30a.m.

WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Morning ceremonies opened with worship music by conference musicians led by Director of Worship, Eric Drew. A poem "Imagine a Box" was read.

CONFERENCE CALLED TO ORDER

Bishop Schol called the body of the GNJ Annual Conference to order. He asked Eric Drew to introduce the members of the band, all from different churches throughout the conference. He then offered a prayer.

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

SETTING THE BAR

Rev. David Wiley, Conference Secretary, made a motion for setting the Bar of Conference for voting and organization of Conference. The motion passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. David Wiley made the necessary announcements.

EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

Bishop Schol began his address by leading the body in singing "Sanctuary," then offered a prayer. Bishop Schol asked the body if they have ever looked through a kaleidoscope, and explained how light works with a kaleidoscope. He defined imagination as having enough light to see God's unfolding story for the church in all of its hues and shapes, stating that the light is the light of Jesus Christ, illuminating our way to a future with hope. He went on to highlight three congregations in Greater New Jersey: Morristown UMC's new Hispanic service and two new congregations, one Egyptian and one Ghanaian.

Bishop Schol informed the body that through A Future With Hope Ministry, GNJ has worked with 441 families and teamed with 11,000 volunteers, repairing and building 240 homes. He explained that instead of disbanding A Future With Hope when Sandy recovery was complete, we will build on the organization's strengths to create Hope Centers to provide community development and human services in the name of Jesus Christ. He imagines at least five Hope Centers in every county, which will create more than 100 Hope Centers throughout GNJ.

Bishop Schol announced that our Shared Ministry receipts have increased, even as our budget has not, and again proposed to decrease the Shared Ministry budget.

Bishop Schol announced that the new Mission and Resource Center is open and that the five million dollar project is paid for and is already creating mission and ministry opportunities including a partnership with Drew University. He acknowledged the new resources happening throughout the Conference and the local churches.

Bishop Schol stated that he sees hope rising across the GNJ and that he imagines a God-sized vision and ministry in which hope springs eternal out of our congregations and into our communities. He said there are deep differences among us and these differences can be painful and unsettling, creating fear and talk of division. He recognizes that at the core is the fact that we have different understandings of how to interpret the Bible. Even so, he stated that he believes we can still serve God together. He stated that the movement of God has never depended on our agreement with one another but our willingness to unite to serve God.

Bishop Schol identified the following challenges:

1. While vitality is increasing, we are decreasing in worship attendance;
2. We imagine a greater and larger mission than we have capacity, people, systems and dollars.
3. There are more injustices that we need to address.
4. We are discontinuing churches, with a study showing that 20-30% of our congregations will close within the next 20 years.

The Bishop reviewed how we are doing based on the Conference Strategic Plan Goals. He informed the body that our goal was to increase the percentage of churches growing in worship attendance from 32 percent to 51 percent. He informed us that today, 30 percent of our churches are growing. He informed the body that, towards our goal of 90 new faith communities, we have started 24. He stated that we have slipped on the goal to decrease the number of worshipers it takes to make new profession of faith as it now takes 18 instead of getting this number closer to 15. On the other hand, our goal to increase the percentage of worshipers in small groups has already exceeded the goal of 75 percent. He told the body that the number of young adults in small groups has also increased to 2900 and our increase of racial ethnic members has increased to 21 percent. We have already far exceeded the 40 percent goal of worshipers engaged in mission. He informed the body that we have exceeded our goal of increasing local church dollars spent on mission to 17 percent and we are now in the top 10 conferences in our denomination. He reminded the body that our goal was to raise 12 million dollars for through a Mission Fund campaign and informed us that we have raised 5.5 million dollars so far.

Bishop Schol concluded by stating that as United Methodists, God is giving us all the light we need to see hope, to see an engaged disciple, a vital congregation, and a transformed world. Like looking through a kaleidoscope, the disciples, the congregations and transformation will look different in different places, but he is convinced that in these places where transformation is happening there will be faithful GNJ laity and clergy leading the way.

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INTRODUCTION OF EPISCOPAL CANDIDATES AND EPISCOPAL BALLOT

Rev. Dave Wiley read the rules for balloting for the episcopal nominations.

Rev. Tom Lank, chair of the General and Jurisdictional Delegation, provided the background work completed by the Jurisdictional Delegates reviewing the qualities of bishops and core competencies required. He stated that having interviewed those nominated, the committee presented a “not yet” decision for endorsement of a candidate by the delegation at this time.

Bishop Schol introduced two candidates, Rev. Dr. Heasun Kim and Rev. Dr. Jisun Kwak who were nominated according to the process delineated in the conference Rules of Order. Rev. Kim and Rev. Kwak were given 3 minutes each to present themselves to the body of the conference.

Bishop Schol led the body through the first ballot. The tellers retired to count the ballots as the conference continued.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

Rosa Williams presented the Report of the Committee on Nominations. After making the necessary changes, she made a motion for its adoption. The motion passed.

TRUSTEE ENABLING RESOLUTION

Clifford Still presented the Trustee Enabling Recommendation and made a motion for its adoption. The motion passed.

RESOLUTION FOR CONFERENCE ADVANCE SPECIALS 2016-17

Barbara McFarquhar presented the Resolution for Conference Advance Specials 2016-2017 and made a motion for its adoption. The motion passed.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY:

Rev. Bill Wilson made a motion to adopt the Recommendations of Five Historical Church Sites. A friendly editorial historical addition to clarify the history of the Franklin St. John UMC site was made and accepted. The motion passed.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Bishop Schol, along with clergy and the families of conference members who died during the previous year, processed in “For All the Saints”. Bishop Schol introduced the Rev. Dr. Virginia Samuel Cetuk as preacher for this service. Dab Emegoakor, a youth member, read the scripture from Matthew 6:25-33.

Rev. Dr. Samuel Cetuk spoke to the scripture, life experience, hope and our primary relationship with God. She shared part of her personal journey of grief and stated that having faith made bearable that which was unbearable. She shared with the body of having lost her twin sister four years ago and, more recently, her brother, and how she is learning to walk into a new life. She went on to tell the body how her faith held her in relationship with God with a whisper she received saying “I will send you a comforter.” She encouraged those grieving to keep faith that God is with us each day and every lonely night. Dr. Samuel Cetuk talked about how she did not believe that time heals all wounds and how she found that by working through feelings intentionally, she progressed in her faith. She shared with the body a powerful image of a cross she has on her desk. It is simple but when turned around, on the back revealed hands clinging to the cross that evoked feelings that were daunting and humbling.

Rev. David Wiley invited the body to stand in honor of those whom they have known and come to remember as the names of the saints were read: He then read the **Glory Roll**:

Laity

Elizabeth “Betty” Ricards
Donna Tintle
James R. West

Clergy Spouses

Maria Marta Aris-Paul	Caroline De Esposit	Elizabeth “Betty” Karcher	Edith Propert
Rachel Booth	Celesta Dexheimer	Dorothy Kirk	Ruth P. Shannon
Joan Bort	Elizabeth “Betty” Follansbee	Anne Layton	R. Louise Stang
Helen Carlisle	Edythe Green	Evelyn Musgrove	Mezzie Ann Thielking
Reginald Crute	Gladys Hulitt	Malcolm K. Palmer	

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Clergy

LaGretta Bjorn
Francis M. Coyle
Robert E. Davidson, Sr.
Donald F. Derse, MD

Douglas F. Dorchester
Carl G. Farrell, Sr.
Eugene & Marilyn Foote
Richard J. Herritt

James L. Hofacker, Jr.
Harold P. Johnson
William McCullough
Glenn K. Miller

George & Maxine Schlesinger
Robert D. Simpson
E. Douglas Strickland
Doris Williams

HOLY COMMUNION

The service continued with Holy Communion. The conference body was invited to receive, led by Bishop Schol and Bishop Toquero. The service was concluded with the singing of "For All the Saints".

Bishop Schol gave the Benediction.

EPISCOPAL BALLOT

Bishop Schol announced that Rev. Dr. Jisun Kwak was successfully nominated with five hundred and thirty-five votes. Rev. Dr. Heasun Kim received forty-four votes.

A second ballot was taken.

PRAYER FOR THE MEAL AND CLOSING INSTRUCTIONS

Youth member, David Geller, offered the grace and the conference recessed for lunch.

Monday, May 23, 2016

1:00 p.m.

WORSHIP AND PRAISE

The conference praise band opened with music.

VIDEO

A video about Respond, Inc., which is an organization in Camden, NJ, was shown. This ministry grew out of the Haddonfield UMC. Bishop Schol praised this ministry.

IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM

Bishop Schol opened the session with prayer. He then spoke about how he has been heard differently since he became Bishop, and how some people are not heard the same way because of their ethnicity. He admitted that he has received privilege just because he is white and a bishop. He then introduced the speaker, Dr. Robin DiAngelo, a professor at University of Washington, who has been working with different groups trying to explore and explain privilege.

Dr. DiAngelo began by talking about the issue of racism. She challenged the body to think about what it would mean to life if we gave more thought to this issue. She reminded the body that everyone has an opinion on the topic of racism and that we have a limited understanding of this issue. She went on to admit that she realizes that she goes through life as a white person with a white world perspective. This is very different than a person of color's perspective. White people often don't have an understanding of a person of color's perspective but people of color, from early on, know there are two different perspectives. She defined prejudice as being an internal prejudgment on a specific group. She defined discrimination as external actions based off of prejudice. She explained how this can be transformed into systematic oppression and group power. This is seen in different forms: sexism, racism, classism, etc. She used the issue of sexism to help understand racism by talking about how women got the right to vote. Dr. DiAngelo went on to define racism as one form of institutional oppression that works on multiple levels and results in an unequal distribution of privileges. She used the analogy of a bird cage to describe how, when looking myopically, we can't see racism but when we step back, we can see the bars that are keeping people oppressed. She also stated we have set up a binary system with racism being bad and non-racism being good, causing dominant white racial narratives. She stated that what has happened because of these narratives is that we have not gotten rid of racism but denied it. Because of this we can never rid ourselves of racism, no matter what we say or how we live. She questioned the hidden foundations of where we got our information from, suggesting it begins with the neighborhoods in which we grew up by calling them safe or good neighborhoods. She asked us: when was the first time you had a teacher of a different race than you? Then she informed the body about how most teachers are white, and schools are almost as segregated as back in the day of Brown verses Board of Ed. This is how and where institutional power begins. She went on to give examples of how so much in our lives imply that being white is ideal and gave many different statistics showing how systemic segregation is in our society, including our churches. She shared that unexamined whiteness often doesn't end up creating welcoming spaces for people of color. To encourage transformative growth, she encouraged the body to begin to challenge our own racial reality, begin to understand people of color's racial realities through authentic interaction rather than

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through the media or unequal relationships and to take action to address your internalized racism, the racism of other whites and our institutions. She then listed several questions on the screen and encouraged the body to divide into small groups and discuss them.

Bishop Schol called the body back together. He encouraged the body to fill out the forms that had been handed out as the GNJAC begins to put together a ten-year plan for greater cultural competency among clergy, laity and conference leadership in order to eliminate racism. He thanked Dr. Robin DiAngelo for her presentation.

VIDEO

Bishop Schol introduced a video on CUMAC/ECHO.

LAY LEADERSHIP REPORT

Bishop Schol invited Rosa Williams to give the Lay Leadership report. She began by celebrating the many ways the body is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in our communities and beyond. Focusing on the key word 'imagine' she challenged the body to imagine a new type of church. She invited several young people to tell how the church is helping them imagine new ways of growth and ministry. Four young people. Andrew Ryoo, Rev. Lakesha Groover, Rev. Charles Perez and Joy Foley, gave testimonies of how their faith has given meaning and challenges to their lives and what ministries they have been called to lead.

RECOGNITIONS

Bishop Schol thanked and recognized the church leadership that will be rotating out of leadership at the end of the current quadrennial. He thanked; Jazelis Adorno-Burgos, Rev. Vicki Miller Brendler, John Bishop, Rev. Jessica Campbell, Rev. Jennifer Cho, Rev. Frank Fowler, Millie Grey, Rev. Shawn Callender Hogan, Dr. Barbara McFarquhar, Rev. Larry Oksten, Rev. William Wilson, Sr. and Rev. Paul Zorn. The body stood and gave thanks to all these leaders.

VIDEO

A video hosted by Trey Wince, Director of New Disciples was presented. It showed what is needed to turn a visitor into a disciple of Christ.

LEGISLATION

GNJ STRATEGIC MINISTRY PLAN MIDWAY AFFIRMATION

Rev. Vicki Miller Brendler presented the GNJ Strategic Ministry Plan Midway Affirmation Recommendation. She made a motion for its adoption. The motion passed.

PROPOSED SHARED MINISTRIES PLAN RECOMMENDATION

John Bishop reported to the body that things have never been better financially. He stated that for a number of years in a row now, we have had a clean audit; our collection rate is up 2%, a substantial increase; 70% of churches paid 100% of their shared giving, and 85% paid 100% of their billings. He talked about the new Conference Mission and Resource Center that is paid for, which should save us two million dollars in the long run. He also spoke about the process that went into redirecting administrative funds to be more financially effective.

Bishop Schol then introduced Bob Dietz to present the Proposed Shared Ministries Plan Recommendation. After he explained the changes in the budget, Mr. Dietz made a motion for its approval.

DECISION OF LAW

Creed Pogue asked for a decision of law, asking if the Maintenance to Mission Process, which will eliminate district offices, bring about major staff changes and cause significant shifts in patterns of funding is a prohibited and improper delegation of authority because it constitutes a restructuring of the Annual Conference without Annual Conference action. He asked if the Maintenance to Mission process is in violation of the Book of Discipline. He continued by citing what he considered to be similar examples by other conferences and stating some issues with their actions.

Discussion followed.

Bishop Schol explained that what the body is voting on with the proposed Shared Ministries Plan is a change in the categories of the balance of the 2016 budget, not a change in the bottom line, and the adoption of the 2017 budget. He also explained the shared services model of administration, and that what has been done in preparing for these changes and the adoption of the budget is within the purview of the CFA and the committees of the Annual Conference.

AMENDMENT

Creed Pogue made a motion for an amendment to decrease the Camps and Conferences 2016 projected budget amount by \$115,000 and the projected 2017 budget by \$115,000. The motion failed.

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ADJOURNMENT

Bishop Schol informed the body that we had already gone overtime and so we would adjourn at this time, and that discussion would continue during the next legislative session. Jessica Tilton gave the closing blessing as the conference recessed, with many attending afternoon workshop sessions.

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

8:30a.m.

VIDEO

The session opened with a video about the Neighborhood Center in Camden.

BIBLE STUDY

Scripture, Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7, was read by one of the Conference youth. Bishop Schol introduced and welcomed Trey Wince as the Bible study speaker for the morning. Bishop Schol then opened with prayer.

Mr. Wince began by giving a short synopsis of the Bible up until the time of Jeremiah and set the context of the people of God in exile and how Jeremiah was trying to find words to help heal God's people by giving them vision. He encouraged the body to hear this passage as one that challenges us to help our communities by claiming them as our own and to settle in as Jeremiah told God's people to do. He had a video played about Rev. Hannah Terry who moved into the community in which she was serving. Mr. Wince made a second point as to how to improve ministry within a community by "listening well" and hearing their stories. He went on to explain how only through story does change occur. To emphasize the importance of listening to people's stories, he played a video about Trenton by Marlin Hall. His third point was to imagine and improve ministry by "trying stuff." He encouraged everyone to talk about failures as measures of success. By doing this it shows that you're trying new things, are not afraid to fail and shows that you believe you have a future worth investing in. To emphasize this, he showed a video of Mari Barenkutzi, who lived in Burundi, and how she was inspired to build an orphanage, hospital, school, cinema and pool for the children and community.

VIDEO

Bishop Schol introduced a video about the IGNITE Youth Conference held in Wildwood each year.

SERVICE OF PASSAGE

The Service of Passage opened with the song "The Church's One Foundation". Rev. Dr. Gina Hendrickson came forward and introduced the retirees.

Bishop Schol thanked them for the 892 years of ministry between them and asked the body to thank them as well. He then led the Call to Worship. After a prayer of blessing for the retirees, Bishop Schol had the District Superintendents come forward and anoint the retirees.

Rev. Kyu Tae Pak called forward the newly ordained clergy and had them stand before the retirees.

Bishop Schol explained the biblical and historical symbolism of the passing of the mantle, reminding the body that for centuries the mantle has been passed to women and men who were gifted and called to make disciples and to build up the body of Christ. Retiree, Rev. Jungrea Chung came forward and passed the mantle to the newly ordained, Rev. John Randall.

The newly commissioned class was then called to join the group. The newly ordained explained to the newly commissioned that a portion of the mantle now falls on them. Newly ordained Rev. Randall passed the mantle to newly commissioned, Rev. JongIn Lee and those commissioned were anointed by those ordained.

Rev. Dr. Varlyna Wright called forward the newly appointed Local Pastors. The newly commissioned Rev. Lee passed the mantle to newly appointed Local Pastor, Rev. Teresita Matos-Post. Those commissioned anointed the Local Pastors.

Rosa Williams passed the mantle on to Choong-Hee Lee and Halina Mui as those who have been commissioned to the Office of Deaconess and Home Missioners.

Bishop Schol thanked and recognized all those in Extension Ministry, explaining what they do through our Conference on behalf of the church. He asked them to stand.

Bishop Schol recognized and gave thanks for District Superintendent Rev. Wayne Plumstead for his ministry and congratulated him on his retirement.

READING OF APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Schol announced the first two appointments. He introduced Rev. Gina Kim as the newly appointed District Superintendent of the Palisades District. He also explained that Rev. Rich Hendrickson was being appointed to a church within his wife's district so for Rev. Hendrickson, Bishop Schol would be his Superintendent.

Each District Superintendent came forward and read the names of the new appointments within their districts.

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ORDER OF THE DAY

District Superintendent, Rev. Manuel Sardiñas, introduced Bishop Joel Ajo Fernandez so he could give us the charge for our Conference. Bishop Fernandez began by thanking Bishop Schol for allowing him to represent the 2016 retiring class. Bishop Fernandez encouraged the body to go home to our churches and communities and imagine what God has imagined for each one of us. He charged us to go and make disciples for Christ, and to work passionately for the elimination of discriminatory practices within our church and our communities. He encouraged us to continue to do our best for the transformation of the world through acts of love and hospitality. He called us to show the love of Jesus with passion and compassion in all possible and impossible ways, because God has imagined that we can do more. He encouraged the body to go in the way God has imagined us in the name of Jesus, who is with us, abiding, empowering and guiding us to the end of the age.

Bishop Schol led the body in prayer.

VIDEO

Bishop Schol announced that this is the sixtieth anniversary of the ordination of women and asked all the women clergy to stand and be recognized. He then introduced a video celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the ordination of women and the fortieth anniversary of the first women delegates to General Conference.

GENERAL CONFERENCE UPDATE

Bishop Schol invited the delegates from General Conference to give an update. A video was presented showcasing General Conference.

Rosa Williams and Rev. Varlyna Wright came forward and explained how General Conference was run. The resolutions GNJAC had sent to General Conference on human sexuality were discussed. Rosa Williams reported that the General Conference delegates had requested the Council of Bishops to do something to lead forward on the issue of human sexuality and other matters. The Council of Bishops came back the next day with a report. Their report stressed the importance of unity within the church and recommended that they would form a special commission with members named by the Council of Bishops to conduct a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph in the Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality. The commission would be made up of persons from every region of the UMC as well as differing perspectives on the debate, call a special two or three day gathering before the 2020 General Conference to act on the recommendations of the special commission, continue to explore options to help the church live in grace with one another, including ways to avoid further complaints, trials and harm as we uphold the Discipline, and defer all votes on all petitions related to human sexuality until the proposed commission has done its work. The body voted 428 to 405 to approve the Council of Bishops' proposal. Rev. Wright told of a moment at General Conference when one of the youth asked for a moment of privilege and spoke on how the youth wanted the church to stay united, reminding the body that we have always been a church with deep theological differences.

Lynn Caterson came forward and informed the body that the Judicial Council had determined that the petitions that had been approved by legislative committees requiring mandatory minimum sentencing for certain clergy offenses were ruled unconstitutional. She went on to speak about how spirited the worship services were at General Conference and spoke about how the Imagine No Malaria campaign has been effective and how it will be expanded into the Abundant Health campaign. She told of how there was a service of repentance for the responsibility the Methodist-Episcopal church's involvement in the Sand Creek massacre of 1864. She continued to speak on all the celebrations that occurred at General Conference.

Rev. Tom Lank spoke of how the delegation took time to pray for peace on the Korean peninsula and how each delegation was given a peace cross. He then invited Rev. Kwak to come forward and place the cross on the altar and offer a prayer. Rev. Lank informed the body of some of the legislative highlights from General Conference, encouraging the body to see a complete listing on the UMC website. He ended by introducing all the delegates for both General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

VIDEO

Bishop Schol introduced a video on General Conference highlighting our delegates.

BALLOT COUNT

Bishop Schol informed the body that on the latest ballot, over 60% of the votes were for "Not Yet" so there would not be any other candidate endorsed by the GNJAC for the episcopacy. He thanked Rev. Heasun Kim for stepping forward and saying 'Here I am, Lord'.

TIME OF CELEBRATION

Bishop Schol called forward and thanked all those who helped run Annual Conference.

Bishop Schol announced that it is the 150th Anniversary of the United Methodist Women and asked all the United Methodist Women to stand.

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

The Bishop then announced that it is the 20th Anniversary of the Order of Deacons. He introduced a video celebrating this ministry. He called Rev. Brenda Wheeler Ehlers forward and she gave testimony about her calling and gave the history of the Order of Deacons. She celebrated where the Deacons within our Conference are working. She asked the Deacons to stand and be recognized.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. David Wiley gave the necessary announcements.

CUBAN VISITORS

Bishop Schol introduced two visitors from Cuba, Dr. Ana Puerta and Daniel Fernandez. Bishop spoke briefly about the trip of members of the GNJAC to Cuba. Dr. Puerta gave thanks to God for this first interaction between the Council of Churches in Cuba and our Conference. She said that with this bridge we are building we can become catalyst of change. She thanked Bishop Schol and the team for all they are doing.

Bishop Schol also recognized Fletcher Anderson, a teacher at a seminary in Cuba, and thanked him for all the work that he had done with and in Cuba.

LEGISLATION

PROPOSED SHARED MINISTRY PLAN

Bishop Schol reminded the body that we were continuing on from yesterday's legislation on the budget and that there had been one speech for and one against the budget and had discussed one amendment that had been defeated. He asked Rev. Hector Burgos to explain the process of the staffing and why the budget was revised. Rev. Burgos explained how the Connectional Table Executive Committee and the Extended Cabinet came to identify a need to do administration in a different way and the efforts that took place to put together a proposal. He went on to list all the ways they have proceeded, working with many committees and groups within the conference and keeping the Conference informed of the changes being proposed.

DECISION OF LAW

Creed Pogue withdrew the call for a decision of law he previously made.

MOTION

Bishop Schol call for a vote on the budget. It was approved.

SHARED MINISTRY APPORTIONMENT FORMULA RECOMMENDATION

A motion was made for the approval of The Shared Ministry Apportionment Formula recommendation. The motion passed.

PENSION RECOMMENDATION

Rev. Paul Zorn made a motion for the adoption of the Pension Recommendation. The motion passed.

PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS: 2016 HEALTH INSURANCE GUIDELINES

Rev. Paul Zorn made a motion for the adoption of the Pension and Health Benefits 2016 Health Insurance Guidelines. The motion passed.

CLERGY EQUITABLE COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATION and STANDARDS FOR PARSONAGES RECOMMENDATION

Rev. Jennifer Cho made a motion for the adoption of both the Clergy Equitable Compensation Recommendation and the Standards for Parsonages Recommendation. The motion passed.

CLOSURES OF ALLERTON UMC, McCREA MEMORIAL UMC, ST. MATTHEW UMC, RIVERSIDE UMC AND ANDERSON UMC RECOMMENDATIONS

The District Superintendents for the churches seeking discontinuance of congregations came forward and moved for the closure of the church (es) in their districts.

Rev. Drew Dyson offered a prayer for these churches. He then made a motion for the passing of these recommendations.

AMENDMENT

Rev. Robert Costello made a motion for an amendment to be added to all the resolutions of these church closures that the lines stating the proceeds go to the Strategic Disciple Making Fund be replaced with "Be it resolved that CF&A and the Conference Trustees perform a study on ways to create a permanent fund to handle expenses related to cemeteries that

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

become the responsibility of the Conference. The CF&A and Trustees shall bring a report to next year's Annual Conference, with any action they may propose. Until next year's session, any remainder of proceeds from the sale of any churches closed by the 2016 session shall be held in escrow for potential uses for the purpose of funding cemetery responsibilities". Discussion and questions followed.

AMENDMENT

Tom O'Hearn made a motion for an amendment to Rev. Costello's amendment suggesting that half of the receipts of the sales from church closures go into escrow and the other 50% go to the Strategic Disciple Making Fund. The motion failed.

AMENDMENT

Rev. McWilliam Colón made a motion to amend Rev. Costello's amendment to delete the language that the monies go to escrow and direct them to the Strategic Disciple Making Fund but keep the language of the study by CF&A and the Trustees on cemeteries of closures. The motion passed.

MOTION

Bishop Schol called for a vote on the original motion by Rev. Dyson including the recommendations of a study. The motion passed.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE JOURNAL DIGITAL PUBLICATION RECOMMENDATION

Rev. Chris Heckert made a motion to approve the Annual Conference Journal Digital Publication Recommendation.

AMENDMENT

Jacqueline Burgess made a motion for an amendment to make one hard copy available at no cost to local churches. The motion failed.

MOTION

Bishop Schol called for a vote of the original resolution. The motion passed.

RECOMMENDATION: CHANGE RULE #55 IN GNJ RULES OF ORDER

Rev. Dan Gepford made a motion for the approval of the Recommendation to Change Rule #55 of the GNJ Rules of Order, which would allow the Nominations Committee to make nominations for the chairpersons of four groups for which the Nominations Committee previously did not make nominations of chairpersons.

Rev. Steve Bechtold spoke to the rationale of this recommendation explaining that over the past twenty to twenty-five years, 90% of the people serving as chairs of the four committees affected by this recommendation have white and when people of color have served they have often served as co-chairs. The purpose of the recommendation was to encourage diversity. Rosa Williams explained the process that occurs for the Nomination Committee. She affirmed that they use an open process, taking recommendations from all over the Conference. She stated that they always look for persons with the qualifications needed as well as diversity. She said the recommendation came out of the desire of the Nominations Committee to achieve greater diversity in its leadership and like any nominations, nominations can always come from the floor and that person would be welcomed into those organizations.

AMENDMENT

Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty made a motion to amend the recommendation so that it would not take effect for the Board of Ordained Ministry until the 2020 quadrennial because of the timely work of that committee.

AMENDMENT

Erik Ostrow made a motion to amend Rev. Brendler Naulty's amendment asking that the postponement of the change in Rule #55 extend to all four boards that this recommendation affects.

POINT OF ORDER

Rev. Bobbie Rambach stated that the Discipline states those boards are self-organizing and asked why are we overruling the Book of Discipline.

Lynn Caterson explained that these are open nominations and that the Nominations Committee will present a slate of officers, the four boards and agencies will review it and could change it. It is not mandatory for the boards to accept the nominations from the Nominations Committee. Therefore, she feels we are not overruling the Discipline.

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

AMENDMENT

Bishop Schol called for a vote on Mr. Ostrow's amendment. The motion failed.

AMENDMENT

Bishop Schol called for a vote on Rev. Brendler Naulty's amendment. The motion failed.

MOTION

Bishop Schol called for a vote on the original motion made by Rev. Gepford. Discussion followed.

AMENDMENT

Michael Howard made a motion for an amendment to line 6 to add "For the sake of empowering diverse leadership". The motion passed.

MOTION

Bishop Schol called for a vote on the original motion. Questions were asked.

CALL THE QUESTION

John Morrison called for the question. Bishop Schol asked for a vote on the call for the question. It passed with a 2/3 vote.

MOTION

Bishop Schol called for a vote on the original motion made by Rev. Gepford. The motion passed.

FINAL WORDS

Bishop Schol announced that our time together was at an end. He explained that any legislation not yet voted on would be referred to the appropriate bodies to be acted upon there, they would be. If not, the legislation would be brought to next year's Annual Conference.

POINT OF ORDER

John Bishop requested a ruling as a matter of law as to whether the recently enacted recommendation regarding the Change in Rule #55 in GNJ Rules of Order is in conformance with the church law:

"Since the Boards of Ordained Ministry (Para 635.1.c) (Para 2512.2), Pensions and Health Benefits as well as the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (Para 612.3) are authorized by the Discipline to elect their own officers, is Conference Rule 55.b., as enacted, lawful in that it allows nominations of officers by other than members of the respective bodies.

"Is the disenfranchisement of members of Boards of Ordained Ministry, Trustees, Pensions and Health Benefits and the Council on Finance and Administration lawful where, in Rule 55.b. all nominations of officers are to be made by the conference Nominations Committee?"

ADJOURNMENT:

Bishop Schol closed Annual Conference at 1:10 pm with a prayer.