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of The United Methodist Church



“Hope and Unity in Christ”

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‘Well Done, Good and Trustworthy Servant’



Bishop Young Jin Cho (Photo Jasmine Hayes / MCUMC)

By Madeline Pillow

In a sermon titled “Well-Done, Good and Trustworthy Servant” based on the parables found in Matthew 25, Bishop Young Jin Cho of the Virginia Annual Conference preached the Service of Remembrance on Thursday morning.

The Service of Remembrance honored the six bishops and five bishop spouses who died since the last quadrennium: Bishop Mack B. Stokes, Bishop Robert C. Morgan, Bishop J. Lloyd Knox, Bishop Roy C. Clark, Bishop Charles W. Hancock, Bishop William W. Morris, Mrs. Mariam Hancock, Mrs.

Mary Ann Minnick, Mrs. Eva Eutsler, Mrs. Mildred “Tuck” Jones and Mrs. Louise Short.

Bishop Cho said there are many ways these episcopal leaders and spouses could be honored, but there was a higher honor that those gathered could give.

“The best way to honor them is to run our race faithfully as they have done,” Cho said.

Bishop Cho emphasized that running the race faithfully means doing your best, which can only be done through prayer.

“Prayer is the most important gift from God in becoming the best,” Cho said.

Episcopal Assignments

Alabama-West Florida

David Graves

Florida

Ken Carter

Holston

Mary Virginia Taylor

Kentucky and Red Bird Missionary

Leonard Fairley

Mississippi

James Swanson

Tennessee and Memphis

Bill McAlilly

North Alabama

Debra Wallace-Padgett

North Carolina

Hope Morgan Ward

North Georgia

Sue Hauptert-Johnson

South Carolina

Jonathan Holston

South Georgia

Lawson Bryan

Western North Carolina

Paul Leeland

Virginia Conference

Sharma Lewis

At the Table: Young People's Address

By Amy Hurd

Todd Cox, a student at Tennessee Wesleyan University and candidate for ministry in the Tennessee Conference, gave the Youth/Young Adult address at the 2016 SEJ Conference on Thursday morning.

Cox shared that his initial joy and excitement about his calling to ministry had turned to fear and anxiety as he watched the mistrust and anger at General Conference. And that he was disappointed when he heard about the skyrocketing divorce rates among couples in ministry.

"I began asking myself: Why would I want to do this?"

He spoke about current expectations of youth in the United Methodist Church. Far too often, youth are invited to "set up the banquet, but not to sit at the table." He expressed young people's desire to be involved, to be heard, and to be leaders in today's church.

He made an appeal to delegates to recognize that youth can invest time and talents right now, instead of having to bide their time for a future day. "We are today's church now and if given a seat at the table we will partner with you to create the way for tomorrow's church."

Cox shared two stories about how young people in Southeast Jurisdiction churches are taking the message of love and hope to others. He spoke about a young girl who asked her parents not to give her presents for her 4th

birthday, but instead to donate items to the local animal shelter for the homeless animals housed there.

The second story was about youth at Charlotte-Fagan UMC who organized a special event for an 8th grader in their community who was recovering from surgery for a brain tumor. The group threw a "prom" for Lia, who had missed this important school tradition and send-off to high school because she was recovering in the hospital.

"These stories are possible because churches saw potential in young people, and invested in them to go out and be disciples of Christ in the world."

Cox stressed that, "investing in young people doesn't just mean the occasional donation to the youth fund, or showing up once a year to the youth car wash or bake sale. Investing in young people can take the look of mentorship and guidance, specifically regarding call to ministry."

He stressed that we also need to invest in youth at the jurisdictional and the general level -- to serve on conference committees and teams and delegations -- and allow them to serve with you, not under you, on all levels of the church. He added that "Youth today are pleading for involvement in the conversation on how to move forward in the United Methodist Church."

Then, Cox added, "We look forward to sitting with you at the table."

SEJ Reduces Budget by 60 Percent

The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference approved a budget of \$1,774,000 for the 2017-2020 quadrennium. The budget passed as recommended by the SEJ Committee on Finance and Administration and reflects a 60 percent reduction over the previous budget.

"This report reflects a faithful commitment to the ministries of the Jurisdiction and is projected to be sufficient for the ongoing operational costs of the Jurisdiction and its committees," explained Allen, chair of the SEJ Committee on Finance and Administration. It will also provide a cushion should there be a need to fund emerging ministries or a special called session of Jurisdictional Conference.

The SEJ has been trimming its budget since the restructuring approved in 2008. The 2012-2016 budget eliminated operational funds going to agencies, but continued to provide funds for debt service to Lake Junaluska and Hinton Center. Those debt service payments will end in 2016, and were not included in the 2017-2020 budget.

Collection on apportionments in the jurisdiction improved from 80 percent in the 2009-2012 quadrennium to a projected payment of at least 97 percent in the current quadrennium.

A Missional Initiative of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference From The Southeastern Jurisdictional College of Bishops

The Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdiction recognize the unique strengths, characteristics, and challenges of our Episcopal Areas. As leaders of the Church in the SEJ, we see a timely opportunity to increase our strategic thinking and action with regard to our context in the Southeast. Further, it is our hope to continue to focus on the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In Article V Paragraph 27.1 of the constitution of the 2012 Book of Discipline, the jurisdictions are given responsibility to:

Promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within their boundaries.

To that end, the Bishops of the SEJ recommend the following:

Forming a Southeastern Jurisdictional Missional Initiative for the purpose of focusing on the following:

- 1.) new forms of church beyond the walls,
- 2.) children and poverty,
- 3.) unity and human sexuality,
- 4.) making disciples,
- 5.) structure, finance and the future church.

At the 2017 College of Bishops meeting in January, we will collaborate with the Conference Lay Leaders, the Committee on Episcopacy, and Directors of Connectional Ministries on this initiative. It is our hope that our collaboration will offer input to the commission being formed by the Council of Bishops. We also will connect this work to the Four Areas of Focus for the United Methodist Church.

We will assign a bishop and appropriate lay leaders to convene and guide the work of these five initiatives. We hope to then invite every delegate here this week to a gathering which will be held within the next eighteen months where recommendations will be received from the leadership of the Initiative. Expenses will be the responsibility of individual delegates. We encourage each conference to provide scholarships as needed.

The Southeastern Jurisdictional College of Bishops

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Opening Worship

9:00 a.m.

Delegates and guests gathered in Stuart Auditorium on the campus of Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center for opening worship service of Word and Table. Bishop James King was the preacher, and Bishop Michael Watson was the celebrant. Active and retired Bishops served the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Opening Plenary Session

10:30 a.m.

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael, Jarvis Wilson, and Chuck Newman led the conference in singing as it gathered for the opening business session.

Presiding: Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Columbia Area, presided.

Call to Order: Bishop Holston called the 2016 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference session to order. Bishop Richard Looney offered the opening prayer.

Bishop Holston read a statement on behalf of the College of Bishops of the SEJ regarding recent killings in Baton Rouge, Minnesota, and Dallas.

Roll Call / Quorum Certification:

Bishop Holston called on Anne Travis, Conference Secretary, to lead the Conference through the roll call.

The Conference paused to remember the following Bishops who died since the 2012 session: Mack B. Stokes, November 12, 2012; Rob-

ert C. "Bob" Morgan, March 16, 2014; J. Lloyd Knox, April 13, 2014; Roy C. Clark, May 27, 2014; C. W. "Handy" Hancock, March 13, 2015; William W. "Bill" Morris, January 14, 2016.

The Conference also remembered the following 2012 delegates who died in the interim between their election and this Conference: Rev. Greg Wingo, Red Bird Conference; Charles Pearre, Virginia Conference.

Delegation leaders reported the delegate count from each of their Annual Conferences:

Alabama-West Florida – 20

Florida – 36

Holston – 24

Kentucky – 20

Memphis – 8

Mississippi – 24

North Alabama – 16

North Carolina – 32

North Georgia – 44

Red Bird – 3

South Carolina – 32

South Georgia – 16

Tennessee – 16

Virginia – 44

Western North Carolina – 40

The Conference Secretary certified the presence of a quorum.

Secretarial Staff:

Conference Secretary Anne Travis nominated the following persons to serve as members of the secretarial staff: Rev. Sharon Austin (Minutes), Meredyth Earnest (Balloting), Rev. Dedric Cowser (Delegate Relations), Rev. Julie Hager Love (Nominations), Jasmine Haynes (Media Relations), Jennifer Davis (Monitor-

ing), Rev. Dawn Chesser (Worship), Sybil Davidson (DCA Editor), Becky Hall (Stage Manager), and David Dommissie (Treasurer). The secretarial staff was elected.

Other persons who are serving in assisting positions this week include the Delegation Pages and the Ballot Tellers.

Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order:

Rev. Ken Nelson brought the report on behalf of the committee. The committee moved suspension of Rule V.C. (Nominations Committee) because information needed for their work was not received two weeks prior to the beginning date of SEJ Conference. The motion to suspend Rule V.C. was approved. The committee moved adoption and immediate implementation of all proposed changes.

Beth LaRocca-Pitts, NGA Delegate, made a motion to delete the amendment proposed to Rule 17.1 on page 45, lines 875-879 of the ADCA. The motion was seconded. Following discussion, the amendment was defeated.

The Conference adopted the report as recommended by the committee. (See report.)

Agenda: Bishop Holston called on Anne Travis to present the agenda for adoption. The agenda was adopted by the conference.

Committee on Program and Arrangements: Rev. Nora Colmenares offered the report of the Committee on Program and Arrangements

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which summarized the work of the Committee in preparation for the 2016 SEJ Conference. The bar of the conference was approved as Sections 2, 4, 6, and 8. (See report.) The report was received.

Welcome: Dr. Jack Ewing, Chief Executive Officer of Lake Junaluska, welcomed the members of the 2016 SEJ Conference to the Lake Junaluska campus.

Nominations from College of Bishops:

Bishop William McAlilly, President of the College of Bishops, presented the slate of nominations originating from the College of Bishops, in accordance with The Book of Discipline and our Conference Plan of Organization and Rules of Order. These leaders were elected. (See report.)

Committee on Episcopacy: Rev. Jorge Acevedo, chair of the Committee on Episcopacy, presented the report on behalf of the committee. He reported the work of the Committee during this quadrennium and their emphasis on the election process and their evaluation process with the Bishops and the tool they created for that evaluation.

Balloting Instructions and Testing: Bishop Holston called on Anne Travis to prepare the conference for voting using hand-held voting devices. Anne Travis offered the orientation, including testing on several sample ballots. Josh Collier from Option Technologies was introduced to the conference.

Centering Hymn: Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson led the

conference in a centering hymn prior to the first ballot.

Ballot Prayer: Bishop Dick Wills led the conference in prayer prior to the ballot.

Ballot One: Bishop Jonathan Holston guided the conference through five intervals of 30 seconds each for voting. Upon conclusion, Bishop Holston closed the ballot.

Laity Address: Mr. Timothy Crisler, Mississippi Conference Lay Leader and President of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders in the jurisdiction, presented the laity address.

Ballot Results: Bishop Holston read the results for ballot one.

Number of ballots: 374

Number of valid ballots: 362

Needed to elect: 217

Election -- Sharma Lewis was elected with 258 ballots. She was escorted to the stage with her family.

The following balloting results were read:

Lewis, 258; Hauptert-Johnson, 188; Graves, 183; Fairley, 167; Bryan, 153; McClendon, 146; Howell, 143; McCracken, 106; Grieb, 83; Scott, 83; Smith, 68; Sparks, 60; Stuart, 56; Shelton, 16; Lewis, Sr., 13.

Introduction of New Nominees:

Harold Lewis, Sr., from Florida Conference and Connie Shelton from Mississippi Conference each addressed the conference in accordance with the SEJ Committee on Episcopacy Election Process.

Blessing of the Meal: Bishop Al Gwinn offered a prayer to close the session and bless the meal.

Lunch Recess: The conference was in recess.

Plenary Session

2:00 p.m.

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael, Jarvis Wilson, and Chuck Newman led the conference in singing as it gathered for the opening business session.

Bishop Ken Carter called the session to order.

Bishop Will Willimon offered prayer for the session.

Bishop Carter called for us to take Ballot Two.

Ballot Prayer: Rev. Jackie Slaughter, Alabama-West Florida Conference, offered a prayer as the conference prepared for ballot two.

Ballot Two: Bishop Carter guided the balloting process for four intervals. Upon conclusion, Bishop Carter closed the ballot.

Because of the need to switch the balloting system to conduct the Monitoring Report and our desire to continue with balloting, Bishop Carter announced that the Monitoring Report would be postponed until later in our agenda.

Celebration of Ministry: The conference celebrated the unique contributions of United Method-

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ist Women in the Southeastern Jurisdiction through a video presentation.

Ballot Results: Bishop Carter read the results for ballot two.

Number of ballots: 376

Number of valid ballots: 352

Needed to elect: 212

There is no election.

The following balloting results were read:

Hauptert-Johnson, 183; Graves, 182; Fairley, 155; Bryan, 145; McClendon, 142; Howell, 130; McCracken, 84; Shelton, 68; Grieb, 61; Scott, 55; Smith, 44; Sparks, 34; Stuart, 33; Lewis, Sr., 15; Frye, 10.

Introduction of New Nominees:

Randy Frye addressed the conference and thanked them for their votes but indicated he was withdrawing his name from consideration.

Ballot Prayer: Mr. Coley Hooker, Jr., Western North Carolina Conference, led the conference in a time of prayer prior to ballot three.

Ballot Three: Bishop Carter guided the conference in four balloting intervals. Upon conclusion, Bishop Carter closed the ballot.

Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson led us in singing as the ballot was tabulated.

Ballot Results: Bishop Carter read the results for ballot three.

Number of ballots: 372

Number of valid ballots: 367

Needed to elect: 221

There was no election.

The following balloting results were read:

Graves, 206; Hauptert-Johnson, 195; Fairley, 181; Bryan, 169; McClendon, 161; Howell, 126; Shelton, 83; McCracken, 77; Grieb, 54; Scott, 50; Smith, 40; Sparks, 30; Stuart, 30; Lewis, Sr., 10.

Ballot Prayer: Bishop Tom Stockton led in prayer as the conference prepared for ballot four.

Ballot Four: Bishop Carter guided the conference through four balloting intervals.

Committee on Coordination and Accountability: Steve Lyles, Lay Leader of North Alabama Conference and Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor gave the report of the Committee on Coordination and Accountability. They reported the work of the CCA for the quadrennium, including the use of Chrissy Parke Rosen as a consultant who was hired based on action of the 2012 SEJ Conference to conduct Board training and development for the six agencies and ministries of the SEJ. The SEJ is now incorporated in the State of North Carolina. Bishop Taylor and Steve Lyles moved acceptance of the report, including the Final Report of SEMAR and the Resolution of Dissolution of SEMAR. The report was approved.

Ballot Results: Bishop Carter read the results for ballot four.

Number of ballots: 375

Number of valid ballots: 345

Needed to elect: 207

Election – David Graves was elected with 221 votes. He was escorted to the stage with his family.

The following balloting results were read:

Graves, 221; Fairley, 190; Hauptert-Johnson, 184; Bryan, 173; McClendon, 153; Howell, 108; Shelton, 95; McCracken, 65; Scott, 43; Grieb, 37; Smith, 32; Sparks, 30; Stuart, 26.

Rev. Stephen Sparks asked to address the conference. He thanked the conference for its support and asked that his name be withdrawn from balloting.

Ballot Prayer: Kevin James, Florida Conference, led in prayer as the conference prepared for ballot five.

Ballot Five: Bishop Carter guided the conference through three balloting intervals.

Emory University Video: The conference celebrated the ministry of Emory University through a video report.

President James Wagner: Following the video, Bishop Carter invited President James Wagner of Emory University to the stage for remarks. President Wagner remarked on his 13-year tenure as the President of Emory University and the relationship between Emory and The United Methodist Church. The SEJ delegates expressed appreciation for President Wagner's service. Bishop Carter recognized those four SEJ Bishops who serve on the Emory University Board of Directors: Bishops Lindsey Davis, Bill

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McAlilly, James Swanson, and Mary Virginia Taylor.

Ballot Results: Bishop Carter read the results for ballot five.

As Bishop Carter began reading the results, he immediately recognized that the ballot could not be correct because 381 votes were cast; we have only 376 delegates. Ballot 5 was declared invalid.

Anne Travis provided additional instruction for using the hand-held voting devices and reminded delegates to turn off the wifi on their phones.

Rev. Harold Lewis thanked the conference for allowing him the opportunity to be considered and withdrew his name from balloting.

Ballot Prayer: Aimee Hong, Virginia Conference, led in prayer as the conference prepared for ballot six.

Ballot Six: Bishop Carter guided the conference through three balloting intervals.

Celebration of Ministry: The conference celebrated the ministry of Hinton Rural Life Center with a video report.

Ballot Results: Bishop Carter read the results for ballot six.

Number of ballots: 375
Number of valid ballots: 365
Needed to elect: 219
There was no election.
The following balloting results were read:

Fairley, 213; Hauptert-Johnson, 200; Bryan, 179; McClendon, 161; Shelton, 91; Howell, 84; McCracken, 44; Scott, 29; Grieb, 28; Smith, 26; Stuart, 16.

Bishop Carter turned the chair over to Bishop William McAlilly. Rev. Tom Grieb addressed the conference, thanked them for their support, and asked to be removed from consideration for the episcopacy.

Ballot Prayer: Bishop Hughes led in prayer as the conference prepared for ballot seven.

Ballot Seven: Bishop McAlilly guided the conference through three balloting intervals.

Report on the Move of Global Ministries to Atlanta and the SEJ: Bishop Hope Morgan Ward gave a report on behalf of General Secretary Thomas Kemper on the move of Global Ministries offices from New York to Atlanta. She recognized the following Global Ministries staff persons who were present: Denise Honeycutt (delegate), Paulette West (UMVIM SEJ), Jim and Bernice Keech (Mission Advocates for GM), David Mako-bo N'shikala (Missionary), Nora Colmenares (delegate), and Scott Parish.

Ballot Results: Bishop McAlilly read the results for ballot seven.
Number of ballots: 375
Number of valid ballots: 369
Needed to elect: 221
Election – Leonard Fairley was elected with 246 votes. He was

escorted to the stage.

The following balloting results were read:
Fairley, 246; Hauptert-Johnson, 209; Bryan, 188; McClendon, 168; Shelton, 87; Howell, 75; McCracken, 44; Scott, 28; Grieb, 28; Smith, 26; Stuart, 16.

Rev. Farley Stuart thanked the conference for allowing him the opportunity to be considered and withdrew his name from balloting.

Because of a significant thunderstorm outside, the conference chose to continue balloting and not take a break.

Ballot Prayer: Rev. Sandra Johnson, Holston Conference, led in prayer as the conference prepared for ballot eight.

Ballot Eight: Bishop McAlilly guided the conference through two balloting intervals.

Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson led the conference in singing as the ballots were tallied.

Ballot Results: Bishop McAlilly read the results for ballot eight.
Number of ballots: 375
Number of valid ballots: 371
Needed to elect: 223
There was no election.
The following balloting results were read:
Hauptert-Johnson, 218; Bryan, 194; McClendon, 158; Shelton, 56; Howell, 49; McCracken, 26; Scott, 15; Smith, 16.
Ballot Prayer: Rev. Stephen Handy, Tennessee Conference, led in

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prayer as the conference prepared for ballot nine.

Ballot Nine: Bishop McAlilly guided the conference through two balloting intervals.

Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson led the conference in singing as the ballots were tallied.

Rev. Sky McCracken asked to be recognized. He thanked the conference for support and withdrew his name from further consideration.

Ballot Results: Bishop McAlilly read the results for ballot nine.

Number of ballots: 375

Number of valid ballots: 374

Needed to elect: 224

There was no election.

The following balloting results were read:

Hauptert-Johnson, 223; Bryan, 220; McClendon, 155; Howell, 53; Shelton, 36; McCracken, 25; Smith, 14, Scott, 13.

Ballot Prayer: Bishop Goodpaster led in prayer as the conference prepared for ballot ten.

Ballot Ten: Bishop McAlilly guided the conference through two balloting intervals.

Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson led the conference in singing as the ballots were tallied.

Ballot Results: Bishop McAlilly read the results for ballot ten.

Number of ballots: 375

Number of valid ballots: 369

Needed to elect: 221

There were two elections – Lawson Bryan with 256 votes was elected and escorted to the stage with his family, and Sue Hauptert-Johnson with 230 votes was elected and escorted to the stage with her family. The balloting results were:

Bryan, 256; Hauptert-Johnson, 230; McClendon, 142; Howell, 46; Shelton, 24; Scott, 20; Smith, 11.

Following announcements by the Conference Secretary, Bishop McAlilly called on Bishop Mike Watson to close the session with prayer and a blessing for our meal.

Dinner recess.

Plenary Session

7:30 p.m.

Gathering Music: Robert McMichael, Jarvis Wilson, and Chuck Newman led the conference in singing as it gathered for the opening business session.

Bishop Debbie Wallace-Padgett called the session to order.

Bishop Clay Lee offered prayer for the session.

Schedule Adjustment: Bishop Wallace-Padgett announced adjustments to the agenda resulting from the completion of balloting.

Monitoring Report: Jennifer Davis, lay delegate from Western North Carolina Conference, explained our self-monitoring process and led the delegates through a guided series of questions using the hand-held voting devices for responses.

Celebration of Ministry: This after-

noon we celebrated our relationship with Emory University. Turn your attention to the screen as we celebrate the ministry of Candler School of Theology.

Celebration of Ministry: Bishop Wallace-Padgett reminded us that this morning we saw a video on the United Methodist Women, and tonight we celebrate our United Methodist Men.

Celebration of Ministry: The ministry of memory is an important part of our work together. We celebrate the work of SEJ Archives and History.

Committee on Finance and Administration: Jim Allen, chair of SEJ Committee on Finance and Administration, gave the report of the CFA. He explained how changes in the economy have influenced the SEJ budget in the past eight years. Mr. Allen presented the budget recommendation for 2017-2020 and the recommended apportionments for each Annual Conference. The report was approved. Upon recommendation of CFA, Mr. David Dommissie, Virginia Conference, was elected SEJ Treasurer for the coming quadrennium. Bishop Wallace-Padgett thanked Jim Allen for his eight years of service as chair of CFA.

Celebration of Ministry: We completed our evening celebration of ministry with a video report from the Intentional Growth Center.

Announcements: Announcements were read by Conference Secretary Anne Travis.