

Rejoice

IN THE LORD: DWELL IN JOY

241st Session of the Baltimore-Washington
Conference of The United Methodist Church • 2025

Welcome!

Welcome to Baltimore City and the 241st session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church!

Our theme this year comes from Philippians 4:4-9. As United Methodists from 563 churches across Maryland, Washington, D.C., and the panhandle of West Virginia, we connect with disciplined joy, confident that God is present among us.

This week, as we gather for holy conferencing and help engage our churches in growing in discipleship and vitality, we claim joy and the fullness of the Spirit as we think on all that is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, and worthy of praise. We gather as a people called to be sent out, confident that “transformed lives transform lives.” Welcome, Let us rejoice in the Lord!



OFFERINGS

As part of the worship experience at Annual Conference, we will be taking electronic offerings to support two important ministries.



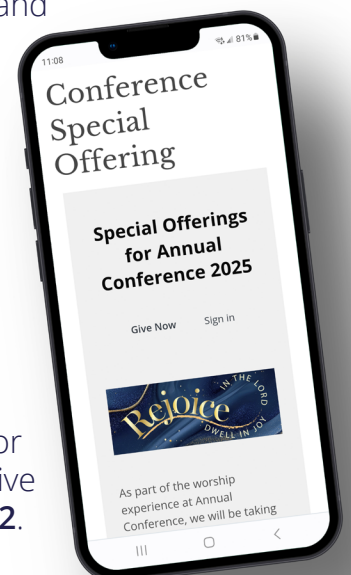
Just Neighbors

At the opening worship service, we will take an offering for Just Neighbors, which provides high-quality immigration legal services to low-income immigrants, asylees and refugees in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia; and, builds community through education, advocacy, and volunteerism. Learn more at <https://www.justneighbors.org/>

Board of Ordained Ministry's Clergy Renewal Leave Fund

As pastors continue to face ever-changing challenges with adaptability, resilience and faith, the BWC's Center for Vital Leadership and the Board of Ordained Ministry are working to ensure that clergy are cared for. An offering at the Ordination Service, on May 15, will go to healing and wellness opportunities for pastors in need.

To give on our conference special offering page visit bwcumc.org/offering/ or text **AC2025** to **410-220-2402**. Alternatively, you can give directly via text-to-give by texting the amount of your donation and **JUST** or **CLERGY** to **410-220-2402**.



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CONSENT CALENDAR

In parliamentary procedure, a consent calendar gathers routine discussion points into a single agenda item. Within the BWC, the annual reports from committees and agencies that do not include recommendations are put on the consent calendar and voted upon as one item.

The ministry agencies' reports on the consent calendar can be found on the BWC website, in the sidebar of bwcumc.org/events/2025-annual-conference.

Individual reports may be removed from the consent calendar by sending 10 requests (from different people at unique email addresses) to the Conference Secretary, Kevin Silberzahn, bwcsecretary@bwcumc.org before noon, on Wednesday, May 14. The consent calendar will be voted on at the afternoon plenary session on May 14.

CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT'S 'IN ORDER'?

The [rules of the session](#) are online, in the sidebar of the 2025 Annual Conference page at bwcumc.org/events/2025-annual-conference.

NEW TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

See all the information you need to know, including, what is an Annual Conference, who are the members, what is the business of Annual Conference, who can vote, and more in our [Annual Conference Primer](#).

AC 2025 AGENDA

*Annual Conference Agenda
is subject to change.

Tuesday, May 13	
9:30 a.m.	Ordination and Commissioning Rehearsal in Key Ballroom
8:30 a.m.	Registration opens. Clergy (Key Ballroom Level) & Laity (Holiday Ballroom Level)
10-11 a.m.	Pre-Conference Workshop – New Member Orientation (Holiday 4, 5 & 6)
10:30 a.m. -1 p.m.	Celebration of Retirees -by invitation only (Tubman A & B – 3rd floor)
12:30 - 1 p.m.	UMM and UWif Prayer Time for AC (Key & Holiday Ballrooms)
1 - 2:45 p.m.	Dialogue Session: Restructuring for Vitality
3 p.m.	Clergy Executive Sessions (Key Ballroom) & Laity Session (Holiday 4-6)
5:30 p.m.	General Dinner (Holiday 6), BWARM/MFSA Dinner (Holiday 4-5), Appointment Beyond the Local Church Dinner (Tubman A&B)
7 p.m.	Opening of Annual Conference in Worship (Key Ballroom) Remembrance of Baptism and an Offering to support Just Neighbors (ILJN)

Wednesday, May 14	
6:45am - 8:15am	General Breakfast (Holiday 6), Wesley/Nexus Buffet Breakfast (Tubman A - 3rd floor)
8:15 a.m.	Gathering Music begins in Key Ballroom
8:30 - 9:25 a.m.	Bible Study with Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi (Key Ballroom)
9:30 a.m.	Holy Conferencing – Plenary Session in Key Ballroom Call to Order by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, Presiding Greetings by Host DS and Special Guests Voting Devices Instructions/Demo by GNTV Organizational Motion – Mr. Kevin Silberzahn, Conference Secretary Rules Review - Rev. Dr. Mark Gorman, Rules Committee Chairperson Presentation Of Constitutional Amendments And Voting Rev. Ianther Mills and Cynthia Taylor, delegation chairs Presentation Of Resolutions
12 - 1:30 p.m.	General Lunch (Holiday 6), Service of Remembrance Meal with Families (Tubman A & B – 3rd floor), Wesley Seminary Alumni Lunch (Holiday 4)
1:45 p.m.	Service of Remembrance – with Guest Preacher, Rev. Herbert A. Brisbon, III
3:30 p.m.	Holy Conferencing – Plenary Session in Key Ballroom Approval Of The Consent Calendar (Order Of The Day) BOOM Report by Revs. Paul Johnson and Amanda McMurtrey, Co-Chairs Historical Questions Examination Resolutions
5:30 - 6:45 p.m.	General Dinner (Holiday 6), BMCR Dinner (Holiday 4-5)
7 p.m.	Holy Conferencing – Plenary Session in Key Ballroom Reports of Missional Action Plan Discipleship Council Report by Kristal Neale, Chairperson
7:30 p.m.	Celebration of Ministries Worship Service

Thursday, May 15	
6 a.m.	Blueprint for Wellness Screening (Diamond Restaurant - Holiday side 1st floor)
6:45 - 8:15 a.m.	General Breakfast (Holiday 6), CRC Breakfast with Retiring Clergy (Poe A) Hispanic-Latino Ministry Breakfast (Tubman B)
8:15 a.m.	Gathering Music (Key Ballroom)
8:30 - 9:25 a.m.	Bible Study with Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi (Key Ballroom)
9:30 a.m.	Holy Conferencing – Plenary Session in Key Ballroom Laity Address Stewardship Reports • Wespeth Presentation on Compass • Council on Finance and Administration • Board of Pensions • Equitable Compensation Commission Reports on Closed Church Resolutions by District Superintendents
12 - 1:30 p.m.	General Lunch (Holiday 6), Order of Deacons Luncheon (Tubman B), UMM and UMF Luncheon (Holiday 4-5), Living Well Alumni Luncheon (Tubman A)
1:30 p.m.	Holy Conferencing – Plenary Session in Key Ballroom Fixing of Appointments Motion To Receive All Reports Prior To Closing – (Order Of The Day) Closing Motion by Kevin Silberzahn, Conference Secretary
3 p.m.	Clergy Robing (Holiday 5), Ordinand & Commissioner Robing (Holiday 4)
4 p.m.	Ordination and Commissioning Worship Service with Guest Preacher, Bishop Moore-Koikoi (Key Ballroom), Offering to support Clergy Renewal Fund
7 p.m.	Adjourn



COMMUNICATIONS
Baltimore-Washington Conference

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Annual Conference webpage will maintain the most up-to-date information including any updates to the agenda. Scan the QR code to access all things Annual Conference via your device.



ARE YOU FOLLOWING US ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



YouTube



Facebook: facebook.com/BWCUMC

Instagram: instagram.com/BWCUMC

YouTube: youtube.com/@baltimorewashingtonconference

Flickr: flickr.com/photos/bwcumc/albums

New structure offers opportunities for Vital Change

To learn more about your Hub, connecting churches, our new districts and how your church can thrive, visit:



2025 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION

To be Ordained as Deacons

Kristin Weschler
Marjorie Hurder Buhrman

To be Ordained as Elders

Dawn Brooks-Tharps
Jonathan Brown
Dionne Hall
YouJung Jung
Raphael Koikoi, Jr.
Daein Park
Tommy Murray
Anna Schwartz
Dane Wood, Jr.

To be Commissioned as Provisional Deacons

Shaw Brewer
Sharee Wharton

To be Commissioned as Provisional Elders

Bisi Adebesin
Emily Farnell
Shelley Hawkins

We invite you to learn more about and celebrate the gifts of those who will be commissioned and ordained with these short video introductions, and to be in prayer for them.



RETIREES CELEBRATE 572 YEARS OF SERVICE

Dauba D. Adams	14	Gladman Kapfumvuti	22
Carletta D. Allen	29	Ann R. Laprade	42
Erik J. Alsgaard	41	Stephen L. Larsen	37
John Ampiah-Addison	11	Kenneth A. McDonald	39
Phillip R. Ayers	41	Jeanne A. Parr	14
Miguel A. Balderas	25	Elizabeth J. Richards	25
Jerry M. Cline	40	Charles F. Riggleman	28
Gregory A. Coates	37	Philip R. Roberson	43
Wanda B. Duckett	17	Gwendolyn F. Rodriguez	2
Michael P. Fauconnet	40	William G. Thomas	26

PRAYER ROOM

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." - Martin Luther

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at God's disposition, and listening to God's voice in the depth of our hearts." - Mother Teresa

The United Methodist Men of the Baltimore-Washington Conference is offering a prayer room, in "Blake" on the second floor, for those interested in a quiet place for reflection and devotion. Everyone is welcome. Learn more about the United Methodist Men at bwcumm.org.

UMCOR **COLLECTION** *Competition*

On July 1, the spirit of mission and competition will combine when the BWC's six new districts begin a contest to collect and assemble **10,000 hygiene kits** for the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

The kits are distributed worldwide following catastrophes and can serve as a lifeline for those whose lives are shaken and torn by natural and man-made disasters.

Details about the collection, which will culminate in November, will be announced in each district.

Learn more about
hygiene kit assembly:



umcmmission.org/umcor



SPEAKER BIOS

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling is the episcopal leader of the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences. She will preside over this Annual Conference session, preach at the opening worship service

Bishop Easterling was assigned to serve the BWC in September 2016, becoming the first woman to lead this historic conference. She became bishop of Pen-Del in September 2021, and in 2024, the two conferences became an Area. Her focus for the Area is to ensure that 100 percent of the churches become 100 percent vital.

Bishop Easterling is committed to homiletical excellence, servant leadership and transformative justice. Prior to being elected, she served as superintendent of The Boston Metro District, the most diverse and inclusive district within the New England Annual Conference. She was also selected to serve as Dean of the Cabinet. She has a bachelor's degree in Telecommunications and Political Science from Indiana University and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Indiana University School of Law. She graduated summa cum laude in 2004 with a Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology. Prior to entering full-time ministry, Bishop Easterling served as an associate attorney in a leading law firm, a prosecuting attorney for a municipality and a human resources executive.

She is married to the Rev. Marion Easterling, Jr., pastor of Locust UMC in Columbia. They have two sons, Garrett and Miles.



Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi

Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi will deliver the sermon at the Ordination and Commissioning Service and will also lead the daily Bible study. A daughter of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, she serves as the episcopal leader of the Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey Area. She was elected as a bishop of The United Methodist Church in 2016.

Moore Koikoi served as bishop of the Western Pennsylvania Conference, and before becoming a bishop as a district superintendent in the BWC and as associate pastor of Calvary UMC in Annapolis. A graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C., she answered that call while a member of Sharp Street Memorial UMC in Baltimore, her great-grandfather's church and the church that sent her father into ministry. Prior to answering her call, she served as a school psychologist in Anne Arundel County for 17 years.

She is married to the Rev. Raphael Koikoi, who will be ordained at this session of the Annual Conference.



GUEST PREACHERS

Rev. Herbert Brisbon III

The Rev. Herbert A. Brisbon III, who serves as the chaplain at Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana, will preach at the Service of Remembrance on Wednesday.

A native of Bishopville, South Carolina, and an Elder in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, Brisbon answered his call to ordained ministry more than 20 years ago as a student at Spartanburg Methodist College.

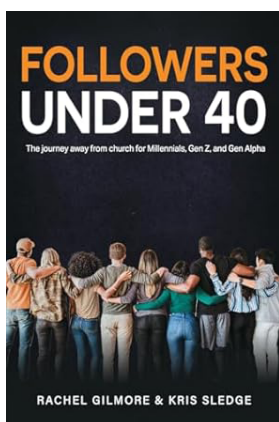
He attended Wesley Seminary and has served on the General Board of Higher Education, the Summit for Young Clergy and the Shared Mission Focus on Young People. He has also served as the chair of the National Steering Committee and a member of the National United Methodist Collegiate Student Movement.



Rev. Kris Sledge

Kris Sledge, author of *Followers Under 40: The journey away from church for Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha*, will be the guest speaker at the Laity Session on Tuesday. Sledge serves as the lead pastor of The Journey Church, a United Methodist congregation in Harrisburg, PA.

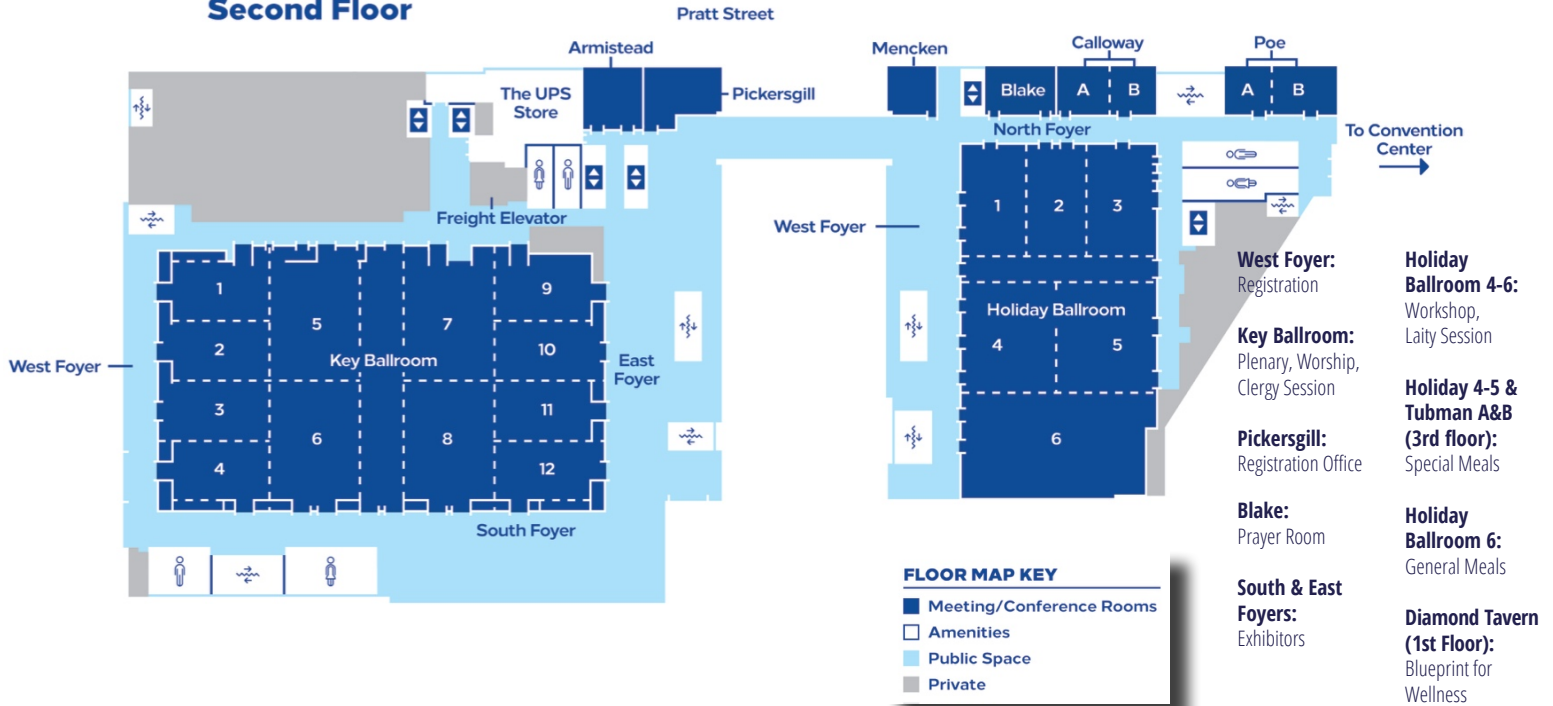
Sledge received a Bachelor's degree in Biblical and Religious Studies from Messiah University, and a Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. He is married to Hannah and they have a daughter, Lydia. Sledge says he loves to travel, read in local coffee shops, and kayaking.



Followers Under 40, an essential resource for churches seeking to be relevant in reaching young people, will be available for sale following the Laity Session. You'll want to pick up a copy of this book, which church leaders have called, "refreshingly practical guidance on how to authentically connect," and "a must-read for anyone passionate about revitalizing the church."

HOTEL MAP

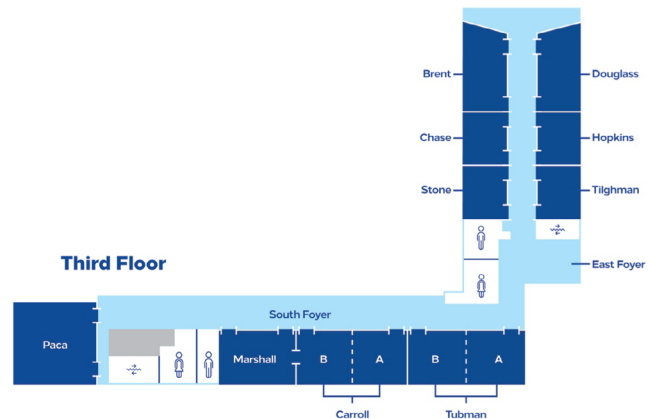
Second Floor



First Floor



Third Floor



REJOICE IN THE LORD: DWELL IN JOY!

QUALITY BUSINESS SOLUTIONS IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AT THE 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

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What Do You Need to Vote?

1. Six digit **"Voter ID"** as provided in advance.
2. **A web browser** on your computer or a second device (phone, tablet, etc.).

Practice Voting is Now Available!

1. Visit **demo.gntvmedia.com**
2. At demo.gntvmedia.com, enter the practice Voter ID: **"123456"**
3. Click the **"Submit"** button
4. The practice ballot will show on your screen
5. Make your voting selection(s)
6. Click the blue **"Submit Vote"** button
7. You will receive confirmation that your vote has been received.

That's it! Go ahead and practice again!
You can click the green **"Load Ballot"** to load the ballot again

The screenshot shows the GNTV Media Ministry online voting interface. At the top, there's a header with the GNTV logo and a hamburger menu icon. Below the header, a message states "Fields marked with an * are required". The main form has a "Voter ID *" field with a text input box and a "Submit" button. Below this are two buttons: "Load Ballot" (green) and "Get Recognized" (orange). Further down, there's a section titled "Approve the Administrative Review Committee" with two radio button options: "Yes" (selected) and "No". At the bottom of this section is a blue "Submit Vote" button.

Help Me

Need Help?

Help Me

Visit our online resources at
gntv.info/zoom/
or call our Tech Support Hotline at **(478) 245-4042**



241st Session of the Baltimore-Washington
Conference of The United Methodist Church
May 13-15, 2025

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN BRIEF EVERY SINGLE VOTE MATTERS

These amendments to The United Methodist constitution were approved by General Conference delegates in 2024. They must be supported by two-thirds of the voting members of all the Annual Conferences in order to be ratified.

Read the Constitutional Amendments in their entirety in English by scanning the QR code.

WHO CAN VOTE?

People in the following categories only are eligible to vote on constitutional amendments:

- Lay voting members seated in the bar of Annual Conference
- Deaconesses, home missionaries, active diaconal ministers, lay members by virtue of office (these are lay voting members of Annual Conference)
- Ordained clergy in full membership of the Annual Conference (except for those on honorable or administrative location)



DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS

Lay and clergy members of Annual Conferences may debate the constitutional amendments as printed. However, they may not change the wording of the proposed amendments in any way.

HOW AN AMENDMENT BECOMES CHURCH LAW

- The United Methodist General Conference 2020/2024, made up of lay and clergy delegates from across the connection, approved these amendments to the UMC constitution.
- Each amendment was submitted by a trustworthy United Methodist body.
- The next step is ratification by the voting members of all United Methodist annual conferences.
In BWC, balloting on each amendment will take place in the afternoon, May 14.
- Voting options are yes or no. No abstentions will be counted.
- All UMC annual conferences will be voting on these amendments. The vote numerical totals will be sent to the Council of Bishops. All votes are added together after all annual conferences have voted.
- The annual conferences will not report their vote tallies to their annual conference. The information is irrelevant because every single vote cast at every annual conference will be added to the others.
- Each amendment will require a two-thirds affirmative vote to be ratified and added to the church constitution.



Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN BRIEF

EVERY SINGLE VOTE MATTERS

BALLOT #1: REGIONALIZATION

THIS AMENDMENT WOULD ORGANIZE THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH INTO GEOGRAPHIC BODIES.

Right now, the church in the United States is organized into five Jurisdictions. The Baltimore-Washington Conference is part of the Northeastern Jurisdiction. One of the main tasks of Jurisdictional Conferences is electing and assigning bishops. The United Methodist Church outside of the United States is divided into eight Central Conferences. Central Conferences are those located in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines.



The Annual Conferences in both the Central Conferences and the United States send voting representatives to the quadrennial General Conference, which makes decisions on behalf of the entire denomination. These appear in the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions. The Central Conferences may adapt these rules to fit their contexts. The United States' conferences may not. Thus, Central Conference representatives vote on rules they can adapt but the United States conferences may not. Also, many legislative proposals submitted to General Conference relate to the United States context only.

*The BOOK of
DISCIPLINE*
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



2020/2024

This amendment would discontinue the phrase “Central Conference” and reorganize the worldwide church into equal regional conferences. The church in the U.S. would become a regional conference (retaining jurisdictions). The regional conferences may make rules for themselves that do not bind other regional conferences. There are parts of the Discipline that would be the same for all of the regional conferences: the constitution, those sections identified as the General Book of Discipline, “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task,” “The Ministry of All Christians,” and the Social Principles’ preface, preamble, and paragraphs 160-166. The rest may be adapted by regional conferences to fit their contexts.



Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN BRIEF

EVERY SINGLE VOTE MATTERS

BALLOT #2: INCLUSION IN MEMBERSHIP

IF ADOPTED, THIS AMENDMENT WOULD ADD “GENDER” AND “ABILITY” TO THE LIST OF CHARACTERISTICS THAT DO NOT BAR PEOPLE FROM MEMBERSHIP IN A UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATION.



The amended Paragraph 4, Article IV in the constitution would read, “All persons, without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.”

BALLOT #3: RACIAL JUSTICE

THE COMPLETE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION’S PARAGRAPH 5, ARTICLE V AIMS TO STRENGTHEN THE DENOMINATION’S LONGTIME SUPPORT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE.



The new version would read:

“The United Methodist Church proclaims that from God’s goodness and love, God created all persons as God’s unique and beloved children. Racism opposes God’s law, goodness and love and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy and colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of The United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity and undermine God’s work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.”

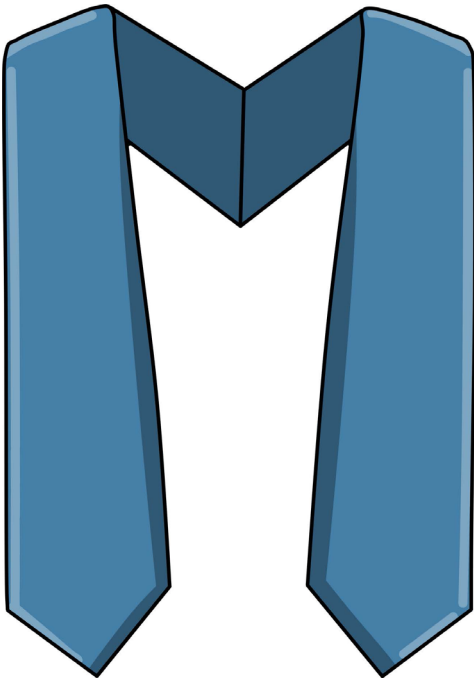


Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN BRIEF

EVERY SINGLE VOTE MATTERS

BALLOT #4: EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTING RIGHTS



THIS AMENDMENT TO PARAGRAPH 35, ARTICLE IV AIMS TO CLARIFY THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLERGY WHO MAY VOTE FOR CLERGY DELEGATES TO GENERAL CONFERENCE AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES.

An equal number of lay and clergy delegates are elected by Annual Conference voting members. Clergy elect clergy and laypeople elect laypeople. Local pastors (who are not ordained) are not eligible to vote for either lay or clergy delegates.

The amendment allows clergy (ordained or licensed) who meet certain educational requirements to qualify to vote for clergy delegates. They must have completed course of study or a master of divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school (or its equivalent as recognized in a Central Conference) and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

LEARN MORE

- **Resource UMC:** resourceumc.org/amendments
- **How the Constitution is Amended (video):**
umc.org/en/content/how-is-the-united-methodist-constitution-amended
- **Amending the United Methodist Constitution:**
umc.org/en/content/amending-the-united-methodist-constitution
- **Debunking Disinformation About Regionalization:**
umnews.org/en/news/debunking-disinformation-about-%20regionalization
- **What Is the General Conference?**
resourceumc.org/en/content/what-is-the-general-conference



Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

BOARD OF PENSIONS & HEALTH

The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits requests that the Annual Conference adopt the following recommendations:

1. That BWC continues to provide retiree medical to all eligible participants.
2. That in accordance with paragraph (e) of Supplement One (Pre-1982), the surviving spouse pension benefit shall continue to be 85% of the participant's formula.
3. **Pre-1982 Service – Past Service Rate (PSR):** That the Annual Conference shall approve the following pre-1982 prior service funding plan in compliance with the Disciplinary requirement listed in ¶1506.8: The Past Service Rate (PSR) for 2025 will be set at \$874. The PSR for 2026 will be set at \$909.
4. That the Annual Conference shall approve the following funding plans based on the receipt of a favorable opinion from Wespeth Benefits and Investments in compliance with the Disciplinary requirement listed in ¶1506.6.

Funded status and contributions are based on actuarial valuations as of January 1, 2024,

Pre-82 Plan: Baltimore-Washington Conference is fully funded, with its Pre-82 Plan assets equal to 131% of its liabilities.

Corridor Funding: Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP-DB) and Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities. The funded Ratio for this funding is the same for all Conferences.

Plan	Assets	Liabilities	Funded Ratio
CRSP-DB	\$2.957B	\$2.419B	122%
MPP Annuities	\$4.798B	\$3.695B	130%

Post-Retirement Medical: Based on the biennial actuarial report received in April 2025, the Post-Retirement Medical plan is reported to have an Accumulated Postretirement Benefit Obligation (APBO) funding ratio of 155.5%. The Expected Postretirement Benefit Obligation (EPBO) funding ratio is 132.4%. This report provides a good indication that the retiree medical benefits are properly funded for the long-term since the funding ratios are greater than 100%. The next actuarial report will be based on December 31, 2026 funding levels.

The Post-Retirement Medical funding plan as of December 31, 2024 is summarized below:

	<u>APBO</u>	<u>EPBO</u>
Discount Rate	5.50%	5.50%
Plan Liability	\$35,178,392	\$41,303,009
Plan Funding	\$54,680,000	\$54,680,000
Funded Status	\$19,501,608	\$13,376,991
Funded Ratio	155.5%	132.4%

5. That the following resolution, as required for IRS compliance, shall be approved:

TH BENEFITS RECOMMENDATIONS

Resolutions Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the Baltimore-Washington Conference

The Baltimore-Washington Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church ("Clergypersons");

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (the Discipline), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits ("GBOPHB"), during the years 2025-2026 by each active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

THAT the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, retired or disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity or fund for such active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson's pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2) and regulations there under to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year.

CHURCH CLOSURES

In following God's call for their congregations, six United Methodist Churches in the Baltimore-Washington Conference have requested to be closed. We give thanks to God for their faithful ministries and the witness they have provided to their communities and the world.

Res #	Church	Charge
1	Union Chapel UMC	Hereford
2	Unity UMC	Baltimore
3	Mount Tabor UMC	Oldtown Closing
4	Catoctin UMC	Thurmont
5	Doubs-Epworth UMC	Adamstown
6	Strawbridge UMC	New Windsor

To view the resolutions from each church, visit: bwcumc.org/events/2025-annual-conference/stewardship-budget-2025/.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

- A. The Commission on Equitable Compensation is recommending that the base salary for the 2026 Clergy Salary Table be increased 2.5%, or \$1,285, which will make the base salary \$52,692 for full-time appointments.
- B. The Commission is also proposing an increase in the recommended housing allowance of 3.0% or \$674, which will make the recommended housing allowance \$23,151. The recommended housing allowance is based on the median housing prices throughout the conference.
- C. The minimum clergy reimbursement standard will remain at \$4,100

Submitted by:
Greg Kernan, Chair, Commission on Equitable Compensation

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- 1. The proposed budget of \$18,216,765 shall be adopted for 2026, including a mission share income budget of \$11,953,825. This represents a decrease of \$269,222 or 2.2% in the mission share asking compared to the 2025 budget.
- 2. The Benevolence Factor (BF) for 2026 will be reduced from 17.40% down to 17.25%. The collection rate assumption for 2026 is set at 85.0%, which is reduced from 87.0% in the 2025 assumption.
- 3. As required by The Book of Discipline, the ratio for World Service and Conference Benevolences shall be set as follows: 33% for World Services and 67% for Conference Benevolences.
- 4. The firm of Ellin & Tucker is approved as independent auditors to audit the Conference Treasurer's financial records for 2025.
- 5. The date for closing the 2025 Conference financial books shall be set as January 13, 2026, with all payments to be received by the Treasurer's Office no later than that date.
- 6. The Baltimore-Washington Conference grants authority to the Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the Discipleship Council to act on financial matters between sessions of the Annual Conference.

Submitted by:
Rev. Daryl Williams, President
Paul J. Eichelberger, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE 2026 PROPOSED CONFERENCE BUDGET

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

Benevolence Factor – Proposed 2026: 17.250%

The benevolence factor is the percentage churches are apportioned based on their operating expenditures less exclusions. The percentage for 2026 is lower than the percentage used in 2025 (17.400%).

Mission Shares Collection Rate - Proposed 2026: 85.0%

The projected collection of the amount apportioned to churches in the 2026 Budget is 85.0%. The percentage for 2026 is lower than the budgeted Collection Rate for 2025 (87.0%).

REVENUE

Mission Shares: \$11,953,825

A church's share of the local and global mission work and operating expenses of the Annual Conference as determined by the mission shares formula.

Grants: \$216,962

This represents grants given directly to the conference for ministry and mission. For example, General Church grants to operate the Episcopal Office and residence.

Event Registration: \$2,652,714

This includes Annual Conference registration, workshop registrations, Retreat and Camping Ministries registrations (majority of line item) and other conference events.

Individual Gifts:

Gifts from individuals for specific programs. These are for the conference, specifically, rather than for ministries outside of the conference. No such gifts are anticipated in 2026.

Reimbursements: \$228,595

The conference receives reimbursements from denominational agencies for specific operating programs. The Mission Center tenant leases are also captured in this revenue category.

Other Income/Sources of Funds: \$2,941,669

Miscellaneous income or sources of funds, such as the funding from agency reserve funds. For example, Retiree Medical expenses (majority of line item) are 100% paid from the Board of Pension Reserves. The funds from the sale of closed churches are used to fund a portion of the New Faith Expressions. Starting in 2023, the Conference Center mortgage payments in the Operations budget are fully paid from the debt reserves established during the accelerated debt payoff initiative. Payoff of the mortgage will occur in Qtr 3, 2026.

Interest: \$223,000

An estimate of the interest the conference will earn on operating funds in investment vehicles.

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE: \$ 18,216,765

EXPENSES

I. DISCIPLESHIP EXPENSES

Missional Regions: \$1,612,424

Funds to operate the ministries and administrative support of the Regions. The 2026 budget reflects the restructured districts.

Region Administration: \$624,828

Funds to operate the administrative support of the Missional Regions.

Discipleship Ministries

a. Discipleship Ministries: \$1,359,027

Funds to operate the ministries and administrative aspects of the Discipleship Ministries and Congregation/Leadership Development Teams. Funds are also allocated for Discipleship Council, Connectional Table and Board of Laity.

b. General and Jurisdictional Missional Shares: \$2,502,558

The funds that the General Church and Northeast Jurisdiction request for ministry and programs from each conference. The conference celebrates its track record of paying 100% of these missional shares since 1998. General Church funds include:

World Service

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

Interdenominational Cooperation

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

Africa University

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

Black College Fund

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

Ministerial Education Fund

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

Episcopal Fund

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

General Administration

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

Jurisdictional Administration

This fund supports mission and ministry through the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

Leadership Development and New Faith Expressions: \$1,558,200

- a. *Grants to local churches and ministries to grow congregations and expand ministry in the community.*
- b. *Start new churches*
- c. *Board of Ordained Ministry*
- d. *Certified Lay Ministry*

Young People's Ministry: \$2,699,114

Ministries funded by Young People's Ministry include Children, Youth, Young Adults, Campus Ministries, and Retreat and Camping ministries.

- a. *Youth Ministries engage and support young disciples of Jesus Christ.*
- b. *Retreat and Camping Ministries provide opportunities for spiritual growth and formation for children and adults.*
- c. *Campus Ministries support staffing and programs on five area college campuses.*

Advocacy & Action; Abundant Health: \$882,320

Social Justice Ministries such as Justice for our Neighbors, NEJ Call to Action, and Hope for the City are funded through Advocacy and Action. Funds are also devoted to Deaf Ministries. Abundant Health includes funds for our partnership ministries with other conferences, such as Zimbabwe, South Korea, Latin America, and Eurasia.

Total Discipleship Ministry Teams: \$9,001,219

TOTAL DISCIPLESHP EXPENSES: \$11,238,471

II. STEWARDSHIP EXPENSES

Communications: \$469,615

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

Operations: \$2,930,759

This area is responsible for overall operations of the conference facilities, and IT systems and infrastructure.

Property Ministries

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

Archives and History

The conference provides support for the preservation of our United Methodist Church heritage.

Conference Chancellor

Provides legal resources to the Trustees and other conference leadership.

Annual Conference – Commission on Sessions

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

Finance: \$647,177

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

HR/Benefits Administration: \$2,290,841

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

TOTAL STEWARDSHIP EXPENSES: \$6,338,392

Episcopal Leadership Ministry: \$639,903

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

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: \$18,216,765

OPERATING NET: \$0

2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

SUMMARY

	2024 ACTUAL	2025 BUDGET	2026 BUDGET
Benevolence Factor	17.450%	17.400%	17.250%
Collection Rate	87.00%	87.00%	85.00%
INCOME			
MISSION SHARES***	12,197,147	12,223,047	11,953,825
NON-MISSION SHARES INCOME			
Grants	131,162	251,490	216,962
Event Income	1,969,780	2,499,055	2,652,714
Individual Gifts	14,367	0	0
Reimbursements	241,576	229,784	228,595
Other Income/Sources of Funds	2,887,335	3,062,091	2,941,669
Interest	406,289	73,000	223,000
TOTAL NON-MISSION SHARES INCOME	5,650,509	6,115,420	6,262,940
TOTAL INCOME	17,847,656	18,338,467	18,216,765
EXPENSE			
<u>DISCIPLESHIP</u>			
REGIONS			
Missional Regions (6 Districts)	0	0	1,612,424
Region Administration	0	0	624,828
Southern Region	560,570	628,404	0
Baltimore Region	554,451	627,654	0
Washington Region	312,618	342,327	0
Western Region	578,913	629,609	0
TOTAL REGIONS	2,006,552	2,227,994	2,237,252
MINISTRY TEAMS			
Discipleship Ministries	4,186,912	3,731,958	3,861,584
<i>Note: General Church Mission Shares</i>	2,867,032	2,382,873	2,405,358
Leadership Development	923,650	932,216	778,200
New Faith Expressions	340,072	660,000	780,000
Young People's Ministry	2,362,646	2,556,455	2,699,114
Advocacy and Action	462,603	655,374	595,374
Abundant Health	218,189	276,946	286,946
TOTAL MINISTRY TEAMS	8,494,072	8,812,949	9,001,219
<u>TOTAL DISCIPLESHIP</u>	10,500,624	11,040,943	11,238,471
<u>STEWARDSHIP</u>			
Operations	3,256,286	3,210,234	2,930,759
Communications	449,397	487,982	469,615
Finance	628,674	636,770	647,177
HR/Benefits	2,353,293	2,290,539	2,290,841
TOTAL STEWARDSHIP	6,687,650	6,625,525	6,338,392
<u>EPISCOPAL OFFICE</u>	568,842	671,999	639,903
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE	17,757,116	18,338,467	18,216,765
	90,540	0	0

- Denotes items funded from Non-Mission Share sources
 Indicates percent non-mission share if less than 100%

RESOLUTIONS

1 **Title:** Adopt “**The African American Creed**” as a worship resource for the Baltimore-
2 Washington Conference

3 **Budget Implications:** None

4 **Rationale:** Adopting The African American Creed for use as a private and public worship resource
5 will provide for greater equity and inclusion across the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

6 **Submitted by:**

7 Rev. Dr. Kwame Abayomi, Retired Elder, Northwood-Appold UMC

8 Rev. Dr. Kevin Slayter, Sr., Pastor, Northwood-Appold UMC

9 Officers and Members of the Northwood-Appold UMC Worship Committee

10 Officers and Members of the Northwood-Appold UMC

11 **RESOLUTION:**

12 **Whereas** The United Methodist Church has four (4) Creeds for use as private and public worship
13 resources in the *United Methodist Hymnal* and in the *United Methodist Book of Worship*. In
14 addition to “**The Apostle’s Creed**,” there are:

15 1. **The Korean Creed**

16 2. **The Canadian Creed**

17 3. **The Native American Creed**; and

18 **Whereas** the latter three (3) creeds offer the specifically titled group an option for expressing their
19 faith and belief in God, and in our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ; now

20 Therefore, be it

21 **Resolved**, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference approve and adopt “**The African American**
22 **Creed**” as a worship resource for public and private worship by our membership.

23 **Effective Date:** Immediately upon approval.

24 *As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by*
25 *the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.*

26 *At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for non-concurrence with the original*
27 *version of this resolution. The attached African American Creed has been revised since then and*
28 *has not been reviewed by the Connectional Table.*

30

The African-American Creed

31

We believe in one God, who is the Creator and Sustainer of all life.

32

33

We believe God is the God of *all* people, that God loves and respects *all* people, and that Jesus Christ died to save *all* people.

34

35

36

We believe through the *unction* of The Holy Spirit, all humanity has the *possibility* and the *ability* to come to the fullness and knowledge of God, and of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.

37

38

39

We believe our *history* has been endowed *by*, is entwined *in*, and is combined *with* the history and heritage of all humanity: all races, tribes, clans, and ethnic-groups; and all islands, lands, and continents.

40

41

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43

We believe our *destiny* is intricately and intimately interdependent: that if one fails, we all are diminished by that failure; and, by each one's success, we all are inspired, enhanced, and empowered.

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We believe we have come from great distances, still have great distances to go, and that we are surely on our journey: we shall attain full political, social and economic freedom—even as our souls are spiritually free in Jesus Christ, today.

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We believe that the church of Jesus Christ is the strength of our life: that the pain and pathos of our past, shall not be compared to the exponential potential of our present, or to the inscrutable and inexplicable joy that is our inheritance through our faith in God.

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Our God, these words we do pray in love and in union with all who are called by the name of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

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© April 1, 2008

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Revised March 1, 2025

Title: Updating and Revising a Rule on Consent Calendars

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: The Rules Committee reviews the Rules of our Conference annually and revises them as necessary. The Committee has determined that the current paragraph on the Consent Calendar needs to be revised in order to clarify and update language about Consent Calendars in our Rules.

Submitted by: Mark Gorman, Rules Committee Chair, on behalf of the Rules Committee

Resolution:

Whereas paragraph 3009.5 of the Conference Policies and Procedures Manual reads as follows:
Provision shall be made for a Consent Calendar (hereinafter "CC"), which shall contain all reports printed in the Pre-Conference Reports Booklet, whether programmatic or administrative. Any report may be lifted from the CC by request of ten (10) members or the Conference Chancellor(s) before the CC is presented to the Conference for adoption. A list of all reports assigned to the CC shall be provided at the front of the Pre-Conference Reports Booklet, with the letters "CC" printed in bold type beside the titles of the reports. No action item, resolution or petition shall be included on the consent calendar; and

Whereas the Rules Committee has determined that this paragraph should be lightly revised; now Therefore, be it

Resolved, that paragraph 3009.5 shall be amended to read as follows (changes are in **bold**):
Provision shall be made for a Consent Calendar (hereinafter "CC"), which shall contain programmatic or administrative reports grouped together for a single simple majority vote. Any report or portion of a report may be lifted from a CC by request of either ten (10) members of the Annual Conference or the Conference Chancellor(s) before a CC is presented for adoption. A list of all reports or portions of reports assigned to a CC shall be made available to members of the Annual Conference in advance of any sessions of the Annual Conference. The time on the agenda for voting on a CC shall also be publicized in advance of any sessions of the Annual Conference and shall be announced during a meeting of the Annual Conference by the Conference Secretary at least one hour before any vote takes place. No action item, resolution, petition, or proposed constitutional amendment shall be included on a CC.

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.

At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members tabled this resolution pending review. It has since been revised and this version has not been reviewed by the Connectional Table.

Title: Equity in Appointed Clergy Vacation Standards

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: The BWC Policy and Procedure Manual currently provides for particular minimum vacation weeks for clergy under full-time appointment but says that vacation time for those appointed part-time is to be negotiated. This resolution would apply the standard for full-time clergy to part-time as well, reflecting what is often but not always the practice, and providing for equivalent vacation time for all clergy. This would not impact other provisions of the paragraph, all of which already are written in such a way as to apply to all clergy.

Submitted by: Rev. Sarah Schlieckert, Elder, Extension Ministry, sschlieckert@bwcumc.org

RESOLUTION:

Amend paragraph 4033 of the BWC Policies and Procedures Manual as follows:

The date(s) of the vacation period(s) shall be mutually agreed upon to serve both the desire of the pastor(s) and the needs of the charge. This agreement shall be worked out by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee in close consultation with the pastor(s). Although charges may grant time off in excess of, but not less than, the applicable figure, the following vacations are recommended as minimum benefits for pastors in these stated categories:

~~Full-time pastors.~~ Every full-time or part-time appointed pastor is entitled to four weeks vacation per year, including four Sundays. A pastor serving the first year of a first appointment shall negotiate the vacation schedule with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

~~Part-time or supply pastors. Vacation time as negotiated between the District Superintendent, the pastor and the charge served.~~

Exceptions

Pastors who serve as chaplains in reserve units of the armed forces and who are required to serve two weeks annually on active duty shall be granted such time off in addition to their regular vacations.

Pastors who serve on the volunteer staff in Conference camping activity shall be permitted one week of such service during each appointment year without affecting salary or vacation time.

Local pastors who attend an approved United Methodist Course of Study School shall have the requisite vacation time in addition to the time spent at school.

Pastors who serve as members of district, Conference, jurisdictional and/or general church agencies shall be granted time for such participation without impact on the vacation entitlement.

Pulpit supply for vacations, illness, emergencies or Conference professional obligations shall be paid for by the local church.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

CO-SPONSOR(S):

Pastor S. Jerry Colbert, chair of FAMLP, Licensed to Preach Ministry. Executive Member NAMLP

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell, Chairperson for the Order of Elders, Faith UMC
revlaura@faithworkshere.com

Rev. Dr. Leo Yates, Jr., LCPC, Chairperson for the Order of Deacons, Magothy UMC of the Deaf
leoyjr@gmail.com

As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.

At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for concurrence with this resolution.

Title: Create a Baltimore-Washington Conference Parental Leave Policy

Budget Implications: Yes. CFA did not respond to our requests for review prior to the legislation submission deadline.

Rationale: Global experts support the adoption of at least 3 months of paid parental leave, and clergy parents around the connection say this would help them be more effective parents and pastors. However, offering paid parental leave is often a challenge for churches with limited savings or additional staff. This resolution offers clergy and their churches/ministry settings a way toward addressing the needs of newly expanded families without exhausting the resources of the local church.

Submitted by: BWC COSROW (Gender Equity Team); Rev. Kate Mackereth Fulton, Rev. Shannon Sullivan, & Rev. Dr. Jalene Chase

RESOLUTION:

Whereas our United Methodist Social Principles affirm, “We encourage parents and other caregivers to exercise appropriate diligence and care, raising their children in ways that promote their physical, spiritual, emotional, and moral growth.”¹;

Whereas Scripture calls us to provide care for each other as members of Christ's family ("But if someone doesn't provide for their own family, and especially for a member of their household, they have denied the faith." 1 Timothy 5:8, CEB);

Whereas The World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization advocate for at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave²;

Whereas The 2020/2024 United Methodist *Book of Discipline* states, “Maternity or paternity leave, not to exceed one-fourth of a year, will be available and shall be granted by the bishop and the cabinet, and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who so requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption.”³;

Whereas the parental leave policy as written in the 2020/2024 United Methodist *Book of Discipline* only guarantees paid leave for eight weeks, has been considered open to

¹ The 2020/2024 United Methodist *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 162 The Nurturing Community A..

² Maternity Protection, Compliance with International Labor Standards.
<https://www.who.int/data/nutrition/nlis/info/maternity-protection-compliance-with-international-labour-standards>

³ The 2020/2024 United Methodist *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 356.

interpretation, and has not always applied equitably across the connection, since “one-fourth of year”⁴ is thirteen weeks;

Whereas some annual conferences have adopted policies maintaining compensation for thirteen weeks and assisting local congregations in paying for coverage during the leave;

Whereas congregations have disproportionate access to resources, and generous parental leave policies positively affect clergy well-being, recruitment, and retention throughout the annual conference; and

Whereas supporting clergy families lives up to our calling to welcome all generations as Christ welcomes children (Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:15, Luke 18:16), expressed in our baptismal covenant when we promise to “nurture these children in Christ’s holy Church” and “surround these persons with a community of love”⁵;

Therefore, be it

Resolved, the Baltimore-Washington Conference adopt the following Parental Leave Policy and Procedures (which incorporate, and would replace, the foster/resource care policies of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Effective Date: January 1, 2026.

⁴ The 2020/2024 United Methodist *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 356.

⁵ “Baptismal Covenant I,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Baltimore-Washington Conference Parental Leave Policy

Statement of Purpose

“We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity.”⁶ While recognizing that families take on different shapes and sizes, and the needs of each family are unique, we seek to love one another and enable all members of the body of Christ to grow and flourish.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference supports families and advocates for parental leave for all persons welcoming a child into their home, both clergy and lay. Further, we encourage all parents who are welcoming a child into their home to make full use of parental leave policies.

The World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization advocate for at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave,⁷ and The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* allows for up to 13 weeks of maternity and paternity leave for clergy families.⁸

The Baltimore-Washington Conference has developed this policy in order to assist clergy families, local churches, District Superintendents, and the Annual Conference in caring for family and advocating for parental leave in the church and beyond the church.

This policy applies to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who are appointed to a local congregation or annual conference-funded extension ministry, including, but not limited to, campus ministries, Wesley Foundations, camp and retreat ministries, and conference staff, hereinafter referred to as “clergy” or “clergy person”. Clergy appointed to non-conference-funded extension ministries are encouraged to adapt similar policies for their settings.

Book of Discipline Foundations

¶ **356. Parental Leave**—Parental leave, not to exceed one-fourth of a year, will be available and shall be granted by the bishop and the cabinet, and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who so requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption.

⁶ The 2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶ 162 The Nurturing Community A.

⁷ Maternity Protection, Compliance with International Labor Standards.
<https://www.who.int/data/nutrition/nlis/info/maternity-protection-compliance-with-international-labour-standards>

⁸ The 2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶ 356.

1. Persons desiring parental leave should file their request with the committee on pastor-parish relations after consulting with the district superintendent at least ninety days prior to its beginning to allow adequate pastoral care for the churches involved to be developed.
2. During the leave, the clergy member's annual conference relations will remain unchanged, and the health and welfare benefit plans will remain in force.
3. A parental leave of up to one-quarter of a year will be considered as an uninterrupted appointment for pension purposes.
4. Compensation will be maintained for no less than the first eight weeks of leave.
5. During the leave time, pastoral responsibility for the church or churches involved will be handled through consultation with the committee on pastor-parish relations of the local church(es) and the district superintendent.
6. Special arrangements shall be made for district superintendents, bishops, and those under special appointment.

Policy for Births and Adoptions

1. All clergy in the Baltimore-Washington Conference who are expecting the birth or adoption of a child are eligible for Parental Leave (*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016*, ¶ 355). This policy applies to all clergy, regardless of their part-time or full-time status. Parental leave is guaranteed to all clergy who request it within the guidelines of this policy.
2. Clergy are encouraged to begin communication with their DS as soon as they are able to publicly share the anticipation of a child's arrival. Families giving birth are encouraged to begin planning as soon as they are public about their pregnancy. Adoptive parents are encouraged to make a plan as soon as they are approved for adoption/foster parenting. Parental leave must be requested at least 90 days in advance of the anticipated beginning of the leave, in accordance with the *2016 Book of Discipline*.
3. Parental leave shall be encouraged and permitted for up to 13 weeks with full pay and will not affect the clergy person's pension, health benefits, and appointment status.
4. Churches will maintain their regular compensation for clergy on leave for the duration of the leave.
5. The DS will consult with the clergy person to arrange coverage for the duration of leave.
6. The Annual Conference will assist local churches with additional funding for pastoral coverage and compensation, in consultation with the clergy person and the SPRC, up to \$7,500 per leave. These funds will be approved by the Cabinet and will fall under a category determined by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

7. Parental leave may be taken consecutively or nonconsecutively, full or part time, according to the needs of the family. All parental leave must be taken within 9 months of the placement or birth of the child.
8. Parental leave is not vacation. The use of parental leave does not affect the clergy person's use of their annual vacation granted in the Annual Conference Rules.
9. Churches will make reasonable accommodations for breastfeeding and pumping parents, as well as for the feeding of infants. This can include private space, access to an outlet, and time/space to feed according to the infant's needs.
10. Churches and other ministry settings will also examine their personnel policies for lay staff and are encouraged to ensure adequate and equal parental leave for all.
11. Clergy in the Annual Conference will support and promote parental leave, including by providing pastoral care coverage if asked and needed, in accordance with their schedule.
12. The Annual Conference will support clergy on parental leave by excusing or making alternate arrangements for their district and conference duties. This includes the annual conference session, charge conference, district and conference committees, and residency requirements.

Policy for Foster/Resource Care Placements

The Baltimore-Washington Conference recognizes the significant need for foster/resource care families. The intended temporary nature, often short notice, and government financial support of foster/resource parenting present different support needs from birth or adoption.

1. Clergy who serve as foster/resource parents should be in communication with their DS and the SPRC at the time of appointment or during the licensing process.
2. Foster/resource parents are encouraged to make an advance plan of contingencies as soon as they are approved for adoption/foster parenting.
3. Should a clergy family welcome a child into their home for foster/resource care, a specific plan will be worked out among the DS, SPRC, and the clergy family, with the goal of caring for the family.
 - a. Foster/resource parents generally anticipate taking off work for some days at the beginning of the placement, to arrange for daycare and/or school enrollment, potential medical or caseworker appointments, and to begin to establish a relationship of mutual trust with the child(ren). They typically return to a more normal work schedule more quickly than after the birth of a child.
 - b. Foster/resource parents may also need a few days at the end of a placement as well, to care for both the logistics and grief of transition.
4. Up to three weeks of paid parental leave may be given each calendar year to clergy beginning or ending foster/resource placements.

- 356 5. The Annual Conference will assist local churches with additional funding for pastoral
357 coverage and compensation, in consultation with the clergy person and the SPRC, up to
358 \$1,000 per year. These funds will be approved by the Cabinet and will fall under a
359 category determined by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

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368 **Baltimore-Washington Conference Parental Leave Procedures**

369 **Clergyperson's Responsibilities & Action Steps:**

- 370 1. Clergy are encouraged to begin planning for Parental Leave as soon as possible. Think
371 through the logistics and needs of your family, ensuring that you consider what will best
372 serve your family. Parental Leave may be taken for up to 13 weeks for birth or adoption,
373 consecutively or nonconsecutively, full or part time, and must be taken within 9 months
374 of the birth/arrival of a child.
- 375 2. Talk with your District Superintendent before sharing the news with your Local Church.
- 376 3. Share your plans for Parental Leave with your SPRC.
- 377 4. Submit a formal Parental Leave request at least 90 days in advance of the projected start
378 date of leave to the District Superintendent, Episcopal Office, and the Board of Ministry
379 Conference Relations Registrar.
- 380 5. If needed or desired, the District Superintendent will meet with the SPRC to discuss the
381 Parental Leave Policy, benefits, and needs of the congregation.
- 382 6. Work with the SPRC to determine the local church resources and needs during the leave.
383 Request funding by submitting a budget for the expenses of pastoral coverage during
384 leave to the District Superintendent.
- 385 7. Arrange pastoral coverage for the duration of your leave. The District Superintendent is
386 available to assist you if desired.
- 387 8. Communicate your Parental Leave plans to the SPRC, District Superintendent, and Local
388 Church/ministry setting.
- 389 9. As the child's arrival date nears, ensure all notes and pastoral coverage plans are in place
390 and have been communicated to all involved.
- 391 10. Set appropriate boundaries with Local Church leadership as to your needs during leave.
392 Think about if you wish to be contacted during your leave, and under what
393 circumstances. Communicate your boundaries clearly, and ensure that the Local
394 Church/ministry setting understands your availability during leave. (Think about how or

if you will respond when a parishioner calls you. What about if there is a funeral? What will happen to emails that are sent during your leave?) Ensure that communication is kind and clear so that all know what to expect.

11. As the child's arrival date nears, it may be helpful to have back up pastoral coverage and worship services ready, in case of unanticipated circumstances. Consider developing a lay-led service or two and equipping members to be prepared in the event they need to lead without you.
12. When your child arrives and your leave begins, inform your District Superintendent and SPRC.
13. Take full advantage of the Parental Leave benefits offered to you, for the benefit of your family.

District Superintendent and Conference Responsibilities & Action Steps:

1. District Superintendents will support clergy and encourage the full use of the Parental Leave Policy.
2. If desired, District Superintendents will meet with the SPRC to discuss the Parental Leave Policy, Foster Care Placement Policy, benefits, and needs of the congregation, for birth, adoption, or foster care placement.
3. District Superintendents will receive Parental Leave coverage budgets from Local Churches/ministry settings and will ensure that funding is provided in accordance with the Parental Leave policy.
4. District Superintendents will remain in consultation with the clergy as pastoral coverage is arranged. If desired, the District Superintendent will assist the clergyperson in finding appropriate coverage.
5. District Superintendents will encourage good boundaries during Parental Leave. District Superintendents will not require clergy to attend charge conference, district conference, or related duties during their parental leave.
6. District Superintendents will help interpret and support the need for space and time for grieving for clergy families experiencing pregnancy or infancy loss or at the end of a foster placement. District Superintendents will be in consultation with clergy and the SPRC to arrange this time. This time will not affect a clergy person's annual vacation.
7. The Annual Conference will support and promote Parental Leave and will advocate for paid Parental Leave in all aspects of society.
8. The BOM, Cabinet, and COSROW will review and update the Parental Leave policy at least quadrennially.

As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline. At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for concurrence with this resolution.

Title: Encouraging Awareness and Faithful Living in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: Since the launch of OpenAI’s ChatGPT in 2022, artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly emerging as one of the most transformative technological advancements of our time. Many have hailed this new stage of computer science for its potential to accelerate scientific discovery and increase productivity. At the same time, AI raises significant questions about its potential wider impact on human society. The rise of AI threatens job security for many people. The energy demands of AI servers are at odds with our need to respond to the global climate crisis. And AI developers acknowledge they lack full control over advanced AI and cannot guarantee it will not be used destructively. United Methodists need to become aware of these complex issues so that we can live faithfully in the name of Jesus Christ during the era of Artificial Intelligence.

Submitted by: Rev. David Jacobson and Rev. Dr. Mark Gorman

RESOLUTION:

Whereas Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a potent new technology that is already impacting many aspects of our world, and AI may do significant good in certain respects but also has the potential to do great harm;

Whereas the Statement on AI Risk (<https://www.safe.ai/work/statement-on-ai-risk>) from the Center for AI Safety, signed by Nobel laureates, leading AI scientists, and other notable figures, warns, "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war";

Whereas the United Methodist Church affirms:

"Global warming and climate change are already creating extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth" (§160.B);

"the dignity of work... is a way for individuals to contribute to the flourishing of their families and contribute to the common good" (§161.C);

"corporations and businesses, like all other human institutions, are charged with doing good... and making positive contributions to communal life" (§161.E); and

Whereas the rapid advancement of AI raises ethical concerns related to environmental sustainability, economic justice, and corporate responsibility and calls for a faithful and informed response from the Church; now

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference calls on its members and congregations to study the potential benefits and harms of Artificial Intelligence; to weigh those benefits and harms in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and to begin to discern through prayer and thoughtful conversation how to live faithfully in the era of Artificial Intelligence.

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

*As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.
At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for concurrence with this resolution.*

Title: "The Forgotten War": Advocating for Peace with Justice for the People in Sudan

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: The UMC includes the Uganda-South Sudan's annual conference. The BWC as part of a global connection has an opportunity to be the first United Methodist conference within the U.S jurisdictions call for a sustained peace with justice in the region. The conference and its constituencies are well situated to advocate for the human rights of well over twenty-five million people in dire need of humanitarian aid and the eighteen million people who are facing severe hunger in the war-torn Sudan.

Submitted by: Darren Fenwick, Neal Christie, Will Newton, Sherie Koob, Legislative Team with the Advocacy and Action board of the BWC

RESOLUTION:

Whereas Sudan's current turmoil traces back to the 2019 revolution that ousted long-time dictator Omar al-Bashir, which led to a fragile power-sharing government between civilians and the military. The uneasy bargain collapsed in 2021 when a military coup commanded by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the Sudanese Armed Forces, dissolved the transitional government;

Whereas The coup was supported by the Rapid Support Forces, a powerful Arab paramilitary led by Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (aka Hemedti). The RSF descended from the Janjaweed, the ethnic militias that – along with Sudan's military – were responsible for the horrific Darfur genocide two decades ago. The church is called to advocate for a just peace for the people of Sudan;

Whereas Twenty-five million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance and 18 million are facing severe hunger. (Human Rights Watch); now

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference laments the overthrow of the civilian transitional government of Sudan in October 2021, and the subsequent April 2023 outbreak of devastating civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Force militia, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of people, the displacement of nearly nine million people, the breakdown of civil society, collapse of the medical system, disruption of the banking system, extensive damage to industrial, agricultural and other infrastructure, including the oil facilities vital to the economies of both Sudan and South Sudan, and the impending onset of famine threatening even more people, with over 18 million reportedly acutely food insecure;

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference salutes the [World Methodist Council](#) meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, 18 August 2024 for expressing concern at the continued civil war in Sudan in which thousands of people were killed and more than eight million internally displaced;

Be it further Resolved, that this humanitarian crisis in Sudan resulting in the military occupation and bitter conflict call us to walk alongside those who have been persecuted and displaced, to provide a space of love and safe refuge for all people in harm's way, and to advocate for peacemakers, relief workers, and policy makers. And as United Methodists we

affirm, “Regardless of legal status or nationality, we are all connected through Christ to one another. Paul reminds us that when “one part suffers, all the parts suffer” as well (1 Corinthians 12:26). The solidarity we share through Christ eliminates the boundaries and barriers which exclude and isolate.” ([The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church](#));

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference requests the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries to advocate appropriate United States government and international efforts to bring about a cease-fire and a negotiated peace resulting in the restoration of democratically elected government for Sudan, efforts including but not limited to:

1. High level diplomatic engagement (a) to persuade countries supporting the combatants with arms, equipment, and funds to stop doing so, and (b) to mobilize the funds and equipment from many countries needed to relieve the impending famine, to restore medical care, and to reconstruct Sudan;

2. Urges all warring factions in Sudan, especially that of General Abdel Fattah al Burhan, head of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Mohamed Hamden Dagalo’s Rapid Support Forces (RSF), to work towards an immediate and unconditional ceasefire that will bring about a civilian-led democratic government;

3. Imposition of a comprehensive United Nations arms embargo to cut off the flow of military equipment into Sudan and the hands of the combatants;

3. Application of appropriate U.S. and international sanctions (including secondary sanctions on parties in third countries) and export controls to discourage private parties from financing and from providing the combatants with the means to continue the conflict;

4. As appropriate, the deployment of peacekeeping forces under the auspices of the United Nations to help stabilize the situation and separate the armed combatants from each other;

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference:

1. pray in our congregations for a just peace for the people in Sudan;

2. encourage donations to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCORR) to aid in this humanitarian effort to ease food and medical insecurity; and

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference dispatch a copy of this Resolution to the Honorable Thomas Perriello, the United States Special Envoy for Sudan, and to the Honorable Maro Rubio, Secretary of State.

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 15, 2025, following annual conference

As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.

At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for concurrence with this resolution.

Title: "Addressing and Responding to the Dangers of Religious Nationalisms"

Budget Implications: None

Rationale: The BWC has long supported the ecumenical and public witness of the NCC. The NCC in fact engages its national ministry from within the geographical bounds of this conference and is located in the UMC Building in Washington, DC. The BWC takes seriously Wesley's admonition "to do no harm." The conference in concert with the NCC has an opportunity to educate its congregations as to the harm caused by a rise in religious nationalism in our communities and to act proactively witness to a gospel that is not tied to one dominant race, ethnicity or national ideology.

Submitted by: Neal Christie, Sherie Koob, and Darren Fenwick, Legislative Team with the Advocacy and Action board of the BWC

RESOLUTION:

Whereas While upholding the positive role of religions in civic society, Religious Nationalism addresses the dangerous conflation of religious belief and violent or exclusionary nationalism which continues to beleaguer and undermine many societies. Religious leaders and religious communities can and do relate in positive ways with the countries or nation-states in which they are found;

Whereas Religious commitment can inspire governmental and political leaders to pay attention to the welfare of ordinary people and, in many cases, the well-being of the planet on which we all live. The effect is a more wholesome community for all. Such positive relationships of the religious and the political are affirmed by the National Council of Churches;

Whereas However, the misuse of religious traditions to exclude or harm whole segments of populations damages societies and obscures the positive contribution of religion. Religious Nationalism is here understood as any merging of a religious tradition, political outlook, and national loyalty that brings harm to those with different religious commitments;

Whereas By privileging one religious community and discriminating against others, Religious Nationalism can lead to the unjust oppression of those within different religious communities and even incite violence against them. The victims are most often those of other religious traditions or ethnicities who are portrayed as not truly belonging and ineligible for the full benefits of that society. The resulting harm can include marginalization, exclusion from public or community services, harassment, or persecution;

Whereas Christian Nationalism has provided the foundation for rewriting history, to the near exclusion of religious diversity and the experience of Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latino, Pacific Islander and other peoples. As a result, it has enabled discrimination and sanctioned violence. Nor is Christian Nationalism limited to the U.S., because transnational ramifications are part of the legacy of western colonialism; now

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference affirms the National Council of Churches: [The Problem of Religious Nationalism, in the US and Globally: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches](#) - October 18, 2024 that calls upon our Christian colleagues in the United States and around the world to join in opposing Religious Nationalisms and stand in solidarity with our ecumenical and inter-religious partners who, as much as may be possible in their particular settings, challenge Religious Nationalism: whether in self-criticism or out of concern for the wellbeing of religious minorities anywhere in the world;

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference, in solidarity with the National Council of Churches, lift up our concern with differing forms of Religious Nationalism that produce similar outcomes, including persecution and violence against religious minorities. Examples include Sinhalese Buddhist Nationalism in Sri Lanka, the Hindutva movement in India, exclusivist manifestations of Jewish Zionism in Israel, Salafi movements in various Muslim countries, and various forms of Christian Nationalism in Russia, Brazil, and elsewhere;

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference oppose all forms of Religious Nationalism that bring harm to others, firm in our belief that every religious tradition is called to move its adherents toward greater respect and care for all and that conversation and collaboration with committed partners, we can and will be more effective at countering the negative consequences of this misguided ideology; and

1. The problem of Religious Nationalism must be acknowledged, working within our various religious traditions and seeking partners across them. This means addressing the question of what constitutes a constructive voice in the political arena and how that voice is to be maintained, especially in the face of the deadly combination of religious zealotry and state power which may foster hostility, cruelty, and oppression. We believe there is much to be found in common among our religious traditions that will provide a basis for collaborative speech and action.

2. Addressing Religious Nationalism requires careful discernment and cultural sensitivity. In addressing Religious Nationalism, we recognize that the distinctiveness and relationship of religion and politics are understood differently in the various traditions. We invite conversation regarding the need to identify and address the harms of Religious Nationalism in diverse contextual settings.

3. We draw on the best of our religious traditions, working for the common good in mutually reinforcing ways. Drawing on the best of our religious traditions, we seek to work across religious and state boundaries to build healthy communities that respect and uphold the dignity of all. United Methodist Christians are called to care for our neighbors, safeguard the well-being of strangers, and build reconciled communities. Similar principles can be found in other religious traditions. Religious Nationalism will not prevent us from uniting to advocate for the just treatment across our diversity, whether racially, sexually, religiously, or nationally.

4. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and our Social Principles are helpful guides. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 18 of the UDHR specifically affirms, as in its title, the “Freedom of Religion or Belief”. The more recent Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted

by the United Nations in 1981, expands on this concern. Article 2.1 says, “No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or other belief.” Our 2024 Social Principles state, “While do not believe that churches should affiliate with particular political parties, wd do encourage churches to speak out boldly on social issues from a Gospel perspective.” We commit ourselves to strategize around ways to avoid exploitative and violent problems resulting from an inappropriate conflation of religious and national loyalties; and

Be it further Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference: Educate congregations on the local, state, and national harmful impacts of Religious Nationalisms and proactive ways to dismantle Religious Nationalisms and to dispatch a copy of this Resolution to the General Board of Church and Society and the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church.

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 15, 2025 following annual conference.

As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.

At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for concurrence with this resolution.

663 **Title:** Conference Wide Opportunity to Embrace our LGBTQ+ Siblings

664 **Budget Implications:** None

665 **Rationale:** Much harm occurred over years of discrimination in our United Methodist
666 Denomination against the LGBTQ+ community. Healing comes through intentional
667 opportunities to repair that damage.

668 **Submitted By:** Rev. Debbie Scott and Rev. Angela Wells, BWARM

669 **RESOLUTION:**

670 **Whereas** the 2020/2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church removed policies
671 in the Book of Discipline targeting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
672 (LGBTQ+) community and mandated discrimination throughout the denomination;

673 **Whereas** dismantling discrimination and harm cannot be realized through legislation alone, but
674 requires ongoing engagement in the context of relationship, including but not limited to: policy
675 change, story-sharing and dialogue, education, support, leadership development, solidarity,
676 advocacy, monitoring, accountability;

677 **Whereas** the ministry of the Baltimore Washington Area Reconciling Methodists (BWARM)
678 models the importance of having dedicated and empowered folks who focus on this specific area
679 of injustice and provide conference-wide opportunities for growth; and

680 **Whereas** the BWARM seeks to be proactive in building relationships, learning, and living into
681 all that is now possible for ministry with and for LGBTQ+ persons;now

682 Therefore, be it

683 **Resolved**, that BWARM calls on the BWC Bishop, Cabinet, Conference Staff, Conference and
684 District Boards and Committees to:

- 685 1. Actively support the LGBTQ+ laity, clergy, and candidates for licensed/ordained ministry
686 in the BWC Annual Conference with community-building, faith and leadership
687 development, solidarity, and advocacy.
- 688 2. Center and amplify the voices and experiences of the LGBTQ+ community, especially
689 those who have been marginalized by church and society, most notably, transgender and
690 Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) persons.
- 691 3. Monitor Annual Conference committees and policies, as well as the status and needs of
692 candidates and clergy under appointment to ensure justice and equity on the basis of
693 sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, and to report findings to the Annual
694 Conference.
- 695 4. Curate, create, and share resources with the help of BWARM to equip local churches for:
696 A. relationship building and continuing education

697 B. meaningful ministry with and for LGBTQ+ church and community members

698 5. Collaborate with ministry-specific areas, particularly children's ministry, youth ministry,
699 and campus ministry in the desire to safely and most effectively be in ministry with and
700 for LGBTQ+ people of all ages.

701 **Effective Date:** May 15, 2025

702

703 *As per Baltimore-Washington Conference Rule Para. 3006.2.c., this resolution was reviewed by*
704 *the Conference Secretary and found consistent with the current Book of Discipline.*

705

706 *At a Mar. 1 meeting, Connectional Table members voted for concurrence with this resolution.*

DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL REPORT

The Discipleship Council had a full year that included being involved in restructuring conversations, reviewing an MOU with Georgetown and piloting a new process for local churches to increase missional alignment and vitality.

As a reminder, the Discipleship Council:

- Functions, as necessary, on behalf of the Annual Conference in between sessions;
- Ensures that Conference resources align to our vision, mission, and critical issues;
- Discerns, develops, reviews, and evaluates the strategic direction of the Conference toward its vision and goals; and
- Coordinates and consults with the Conference Council on Finance and Administration regarding the annual budget.

The mission and vision of the Baltimore-Washington Conference (BWC) is *to inspire and equip local faith communities to develop disciples for the transformation of the world so that more transformed lives transform lives*. The goal of the BWC is for 100% of our churches to become 100% vital. Vitality is measured by the degree to which a congregation sees and respects all people (inside and outside its walls), deepens discipleship, lives and loves like Jesus and multiplies impact.

One aspect of multiplying our impact is through major church property redevelopment or adaptive re-use. This year, the Discipleship Council approved a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Georgetown University Real Estate Program and the Conference, who share a mutual goal of assisting in the development of affordable housing that benefits the community. This was coordinated through the Ministry Relationship Oversight Committee of the Discipleship Council which is a standing committee of the Discipleship Council. Its purpose is to review, recommend and oversee the process for entities seeking to establish a ministry relationship with the BWC.

A large part of our work has focused on assessing and visioning how to ensure the main thing is the main thing for local churches as aligned with the BWC mission, vision and goals. This has included developing and piloting a reflection process which grew out of our evaluation of the Discipleship Ministries Report.

The Church Mission and Vitality Reflection Process seeks to:

1. Keep churches focused on developing disciples for the transformation of the world.
2. Record progress and set intentions around measures of vitality beyond participation measurements (e.g., number of people in worship, at events, etc.).
3. Support local church annual goal setting and connect churches with district and conference resources to improve vitality.

Three congregations piloted the process, provided feedback that improved it, and affirmed the value of the process. They also all recommend an external facilitator lead the process so that the pastor can participate. Here are the trends across

1. Honest Introspection and Accountability. Across the board, congregations emphasized the importance of taking a hard, honest look at their ministries — celebrating strengths, but also confronting weaknesses. The process helped churches:

- Acknowledge where they've grown complacent or distracted.
- Set realistic, manageable goals that align with our shared mission.

2. Simplifying and Focusing Goals. One consistent discovery was that **less is more**. Churches learned that pursuing too many goals diffuses energy and focus. Limiting themselves to one or two meaningful, actionable goals provided clarity, making it easier to:

- Measure progress beyond participation numbers.
- Engage members.
- Align efforts with community needs and God's call.

3. Embracing Team Leadership. Moving beyond a pastor-centered model, congregations embraced the importance of **shared leadership**. By empowering lay leaders and involving members whose gifts had gone untapped, churches created:

- Broader participation in decision-making.
- A sense of shared ownership and teamwork.

4. Connecting Inside and Out. Healthy churches serve both their own members and the community around them. The process helped congregations balance:

- **Internal care** — ensuring members are resourced, supported, and spiritually fed.
- **External mission** — actively listening to and engaging with community partners, addressing real needs, and recognizing existing ministry work happening outside church walls.

5. Inviting New Voices. Rather than limiting conversations to familiar leadership roles, congregations opened the table to a broader cross-section of members. This led to:

- A fuller, more authentic understanding of congregational life.
- New ideas and perspectives that hadn't surfaced before.
- Stronger, more connected relationships among ministries.

When asked what they'd say to congregations considering engaging with the process, these congregations had this advice:

- **Do it.** Every congregation agreed — the process, while time-consuming and occasionally challenging, was well worth it.
- **Expect surprises.** Congregations uncovered hidden strengths, unexpected areas for growth, and new relationships within the church.
- **Repeat it.** Leaders recommended integrating this kind of reflective, strategic work regularly — not as a one-time event, but as a routine practice.
- **Focus on the who, not just the what.** The people invited into these conversations shape the outcomes. Broader participation makes for a richer, more honest reflection and a stronger, more united church.

In sum, the process opened doors for congregations to move beyond old patterns and into a more collaborative, mission-focused future. By simplifying goals, sharing leadership, and reconnecting with both community and congregational identity, churches are finding renewed energy for ministry — and creating space for God's transforming work.

We encourage congregations and hubs to learn more at bwcumc.org/reflect as we recruit a group of congregations to engage in a beta version before all congregations use this process in the 2026-27 ministry year.

We'd like to thank Bishop Easterling for her vision, leadership, and faith, that inspire us every day, and for all the ways she calls us deeper into our life together as world-transforming disciples. In addition, we give thanks to the many dynamic servant leaders across the conference who work to make it so.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kris Neale, Discipleship Council Chair

Rev. Andre Briscoe, Discipleship Council Vice Chair



pdcbwc.org/MAP

Missional Action Planning

Every congregation is on a journey.
Some are discerning what God is calling them to next.
Others are clear on the need but seek support to bring their vision to life.
No matter where you begin, iMAP meets you there.



VITALITY

See and Value All People | Deepen Discipleship | Live & Love Like Jesus | Multiply Impact

PASTORS SERVING IN CROSS-RACIAL/CROSS-CULTURAL APPOINTMENTS

Ferndale, Glen Burnie – Cynthia Belt
 Messiah, Glen Burnie – Cynthia Belt
 Community, Laurel – Caprice Brown
 Community, Pasadena – John Warren
 Harwood Park, Elkridge – Cynthia Belt
 Friendship United Methodist Church – Rudolph White
 Towson, Towson – Natiya Pringle-Bennett
 Patapsco, Finksburg – Barbara Allen
 Mays Chapel, Timonium – Dong Eun Lee
 Darlington, Darlington – Trevor Liburd
 Dublin, Street – Trevor Liburd
 Centre, Forest Hill – Bernardo Lourenco
 William Watters Memorial, Jarrettsville – Bernardo Lourenco
 Mount Gilead, Reisterstown – Eileen Washington
 Wards Chapel, Randallstown – Steven Cho
 Epworth, Cockeysville – Lemuel Dominguez
 Texas, Cockeysville – Dong Eun Lee
 Bel Air, Bel Air – Lillian Boyd
 Pleasant Hill, Owings Mills – Michael Ritt
 Grace, Aberdeen – Braulio Torres
 Milford Mill, Pikesville – Terri Williams
 Grace, Hagerstown – Dionne Hall
 McKendree of Potomac Park, Cumberland – Ralph Reinhart
 St Andrews, Hagerstown – Christopher Serufusa
 Marvin Chapel, Mount Airy – Keystone Lee
 Prospect, Mount Airy – Keystone Lee
 Jennings Chapel, Woodbine – David Norton
 Poplar Springs, Mount Airy – David Norton
 Pleasant Grove, Ijamsville – Rochelle Andrews
 Bethany, Ellicott City – Dawn Brooks-Tharps
 Washington Grove, Washington Grove – Margie Matthews
 Fairhaven, Gaithersburg – Ken Hawes
 Mount Zion, Highland – Daniel Mejia
 St Paul, Laytonsville – LaRay Williams
 Pikeside, Martinsburg – William Ball
 Lewistown, Thurmont – Mark Claiborne
 Middleburg, Westminster – Darrell Davis
 Uniontown, Westminster – Darrell Davis
 Buckeystown Rt 85, Buckeystown – Ariel Ferrari
 Catocin, Thurmont – Louise Harrison
 Stone Chapel New Windsor – Yujung Hwang
 Darkesville, Inwood – Stephon Knox
 Bethesda, Sykesville – Richard Lindsay

Trinity, Martinsburg – John Mayden
 Sandy Hook, Knoxville – Nathan Payton
 Shenandoah Memorial, Harpers Ferry – Nathan Payton
 Sandy Mount, Finksburg – Robert Walker
 New Street, Shepherdstown – Dee-Ann Dixon
 Deer Park, Westminster – Jean Lee
 St Lukes, Martinsburg – John Mayden
 Zion, Westminster – Yujung Hwang
 Otterbein, Martinsburg – John Mayden
 Albright Memorial, Washington – Richard Hall
 Brightwood Park, Washington – Richard Hall
 College Park/Hyattsville Hispanic/Latino – Evelyn Romero
 Mowatt Memorial, Greenbelt – Evelyn Romero
 Oak Chapel, Silver Spring – Kimberly Brown
 Rockville, Rockville – YouJung Jung
 St Paul's, Kensington – Sheridan Allmond
 Cheverly, Cheverly – Miguel Balderas
 Millian Memorial, Rockville – Ty Blackwell
 Silver Spring, Silver Spring – Daniel Cho
 Christ, Washington – Keisha Dukes
 Glenmont, Silver Spring – Kelly Grimes
 Good Shepherd, Silver Spring – DaeHwa Park
 Bethesda, Bethesda – HiRho Park
 College Park, College Park – Evelyn Romero
 Hughes, Wheaton – Diana Wingeier-Rayo
 St Paul, Lusby – Myungha Baek
 Olivet, Lusby – Chania Dillard
 Waters Memorial, Saint Leonard – Sherry Emerson
 Calvary, Waldorf – Loretta Johnson
 Bowie, Bowie – Angela Kittrell
 Bethel, Upper Marlboro – Thomas Long
 Cheltenham, Cheltenham – Daein Park
 Providence-Fort Washington, Ft Washington – Darryl Mason
 Savage, Savage – DaeHwa Park
 Faith, Accokeek – Judith Bennett
 Oxon Hill, Oxon Hill – Mi Ja Cho
 Lanham, Lanham – Nona Colbert
 First Saints Community Church, Leonardtown – Cheryl Goins
 Emmanuel, Beltsville – Andrea King
 St Matthews, Bowie – JW Park
 Covenant, Gaithersburg – Sherri Wood-Powe
 Arbutus, Baltimore – Yo Rhie

RESOURCES TO START A HEALTH MINISTRY

If interested in starting a health ministry, contact Abundant Health Coordinator – Robin Stokes: abundanthealth@bwcumc.org

1 START CONVERSATIONS

Discuss how your local church can address the needs of your congregation and community.

Talk with your pastor or church members involved in health care.

Gather a group of supporters.

2 FIND OUT WHAT PEOPLE NEED

Think outside of your church walls.



- HOSPITAL FAIRS
- HOSPITAL VISITS
- PRAYER CHAIN
- SUPPORT GROUPS
- BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

3 USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Reach out to local health care providers and clinics for possible partnerships with your church.



Team up with existing ministries that are already involved in health programs.

4 CONNECT THE DOTS

A health ministry needs spiritual support to succeed.

Recognize the relationship between physical well-being and spiritual health.

Look for ways to incorporate health into worship and other church activities.

5 GET STARTED

Start small!

Look for ways to include physical, mental, and spiritual health into church life.

While keeping available resources in mind, find 2-3 health projects to try out for a year.



LEARN MORE:
umcabundanthealth.org



Robin Stokes
Abundant Health Coordinator



5 TIPS ON STARTING A
HEALTH MINISTRY

ARE YOU A
CONNECTOR?

LOVE IN *Action*

Praise be to God for Nan McCurdy and Julie Wilson for their faithful service as GBGM Missionaries.

Each has completed their service.

Will you be next?



Missionary
NAN MCCURDY



Church & Community
Worker
JULIE WILSON

Missionaries connect the church to God's mission. Interested persons should contact our Conference Secretary of Global Missions, Mikele Haskins Delmore, at mhaskinsdelmore@gmail.com.



IGNITE

June 21: Planning and Pool Party at Pecometh

September 28: Campfire at West River

October 11: Campfire at Manidokan

October 19: Campfire at Pecometh

March 20-22, 2026: IGNITE Conference in Ocean City

***Registration opens on September 8.**

IGNITEforYouth.com



Safer Sanctuaries

is a new and comprehensive resource that continues the tradition of Safe Sanctuaries. This resource enables faith communities to be empowered and flourish as they develop and implement policies and procedures that make everyone safer.

safesanctuaries@bwcumc.org



**SAFER
SANCTUARIES**

Nurturing Trust within Faith Communities





CREATION CARE

The Creation Care Team works to mobilize and advance the care of God's good creation in the context of environmental justice and the climate emergency.

Sharee Wharton, Chairperson
swharton0607@gmail.com

IMMIGRATION RIGHTS

The Immigration Rights Team advocates and organizes for just immigration reform and resources communities of faith to serve migrants through direct services.

Cassandra Nunez, Chairperson
cassy.nunez.89@gmail.com

RACIAL JUSTICE (CCORR)

The Racial Justice Team challenges and equips the church to complete its unfinished agenda of dismantling racial discrimination in all forms.

Melaina Trice, revmelainatrice@gmail.com, Co-chair
Steven Cho, peaceleader@hotmail.com, Co-chair

GENDER EQUITY (COSROW)

The Gender Equity Team advocates for gender equity and equality across our connection and for the full participation of women in the total life of the UMC.

Rev. Dr. Jalene Chase, Chairperson
revjchase@gmail.com

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Legislative Advocacy turns love into policies that "resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves." This team advocates for changes in laws, systems, and structures in accordance with UMC values.

Will Newton, Chairperson
kwillnewton91@gmail.com

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Restorative Justice Team works to support, encourage, and advocate for those incarcerated, their families and those returning to our communities, and to bring healing to those hurt or harmed.

Margie Matthews, Chairperson
margiematthews63@gmail.com

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The Gun Violence Prevention Team advocates for decreasing gun violence in all its forms and for helping to heal those dealing with related trauma.

Susan Bender, Chairperson
susanbender@comcast.net

LGBTQIA+ JUSTICE

Cared for by the Baltimore-Washington Area Reconciling United Methodists (B-WARM). This team seeks to affirm LGBTQIA+ people and ensure the full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the UMC.

B-WARM
bwarm@bwarm.org

WEALTH EQUITY

The Wealth Equity Team works to ensure that all people have equitable resources to thrive in their lives and communities, including efforts to improve affordable housing and health.

Kathleen King, Chairperson
kathleen.king@uwalumni.com

GRANTS & AWARDS



PEACE WITH JUSTICE GRANTS

Grants of up to \$2,000 are awarded to applicants that show their commitment to Social Justice Advocacy. This includes advocacy for voting rights, immigration reform, gun violence prevention, legislation reforms, human trafficking, and other justice-related concerns.

Applications are due May 16.

MISSIONAL INNOVATION GRANTS FOR ADVOCACY & ACTION

Grants of up to \$5,000 are awarded to a team of persons (at least one of whom is connected to a UM faith community) that has addressed a form of systematic oppression and/or injustice in collaboration with impacted persons.

Applications are due Oct 1.

QUESTIONS?

Email
advocacy@bwcumc.org





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**VOLUNTEER
THIS
SUMMER!**

Retreat & Camping Ministries



CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

"FUNDING MINISTRY IDEAS THAT MOVE US TO CAPTURE A CONTAGIOUS FAITH."

Strategic Growth Initiatives Grant:

This grant is for existing churches/faith communities who want to accomplish one or more of the following:

1. Create a ministry that reaches new people
2. Create a ministry that develops new & existing leaders
3. Create a ministry at that identifies, nurtures and trains the next generation of leaders
4. Create a ministry that multiplies the congregation's impact beyond the walls of the Church
5. Create a ministry that includes strategic partnerships with other Congregations (i.e.. Cooperative Parishes, Clusters, etc.)

Micro-Grant to Reach New People:

The Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church is committed to reaching New People in New Places through new faith expressions. These new people already live around our local churches and in our communities and we seek to reach them where they are, either in physical or digital places. To this end, we are offering a non-renewable grant for up to \$5,000 for you to launch your new faith expression.



BWCUMC.ORG/UFTF

02.07.26
Save the Date!

 **Connect**
leadership summit

If you liked Leadership Days, you'll love Connect Leadership Summit!

BWARM

EMPOWERS PEOPLE WITHIN THE BWC TO INCLUDE, AFFIRM AND CELEBRATE GOD'S CHILDREN OF ALL SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS AND GENDER IDENTITIES IN THE LIFE, MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES OF THE CHURCH AND BEYOND.



bwarm.org



An Integrative Approach

**FRAZIER ALZHEIMER'S
& DEMENTIA CONSULTING**

Rev. Dr. Malcolm Frazier, CADDCT, CDP

(240)-690-5815 malcolm@frazieradc.com www.frazieradc.com

Where Injustice Ceases and Love Prevails

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY



A community of faith, the Beloved Community is an attainable state where injustice ceases and love prevails. It is inclusive, diverse, equitable, and embodies antiracism. It affirms our interrelated and interconnected humanity, is rooted in the love of God, neighbor and self, and is impacted by and concerned about the well-being of the other.

For more information & resources,
scan the QR code or visit:
bwcumc.org/beloved-community



LIVING WELL Clergy Renewal Retreats



A year-long program designed by clergy for clergy with the goal of growing in love for God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

- Learn more: pdcbbc.org/living-well
- CEU's = 3.3
- Open to all clergy - licensed & ordained

bomstaff@bwcumc.org

Growing in love for God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul.

Celebrating Service

Clarifying Call

Cultivating Growth



LIVING WELL
Heart, Soul, Strength, Mind



BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY
Baltimore-Washington Conference
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



The Baltimore-Washington Conference offers a number of opportunities for learning and growing in faith and discipleship.

Visit the discipleship opportunities page to see the offerings to put your faith into action.



save the Date(s)

choose
joy

James 1:2

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

Thursday, August 7, 2025

Saint Andrews UMC and Day School

48 Wallace Manor Road, Edgewater, MD 21037

Be sure to share with your staff! Vendors will be in attendance.

6 CLOCK HOURS FROM MSDE WILL BE AWARDED PLUS 2 P.A.U. FOR ATTENDING

Online Registration begins May 1 at bwcumc.org

All workshops are required to be 2 hours in length.

Sponsored and directed by The Directors' Roundtable of the BWCUMC





FROM INSPIRATION TO INNOVATION

Learn how to take Jesus beyond the walls
of the church.

For more information, contact
Bill Brown, Director of Innovative
Evangelism
bbrown@bwcumc.org

Lauren Jones, Congregational
Development Coordinator
ljones@bwcumc.org



FRESH EXPRESSIONS

DEEPENING DISCIPLESHIP



Devotion:

Reading, meditating,
and studying the
scriptures; prayer;
fasting; regularly attending worship;
sharing our faith with others

Compassion:

Doing good works,
visiting the sick,
visiting those in prison,
feeding the hungry, and
giving generously to the needs of others



Worship:

Regularly share
in the sacraments,
Christian conferencing,
(accountability to one another),
and Bible study

Justice:

Seeking justice,
ending oppression and
discrimination (e.g. ending slavery),
and addressing the needs of the poor



*"To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow His teachings through acts of
compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."*

*-The General Rule of Discipleship,
Book of Discipline. ¶ 1117.2a*

Peninsula-Delaware Conference
Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

PDCBWC.ORG/DEEPEN-DISCIPLESHIP



Exploring Your Call: CANDIDACY FOR MINISTRY

The candidacy process of BWC is
designed to be a vocational
discernment experience, as well as a
professional credentialing process.



Beginning the Journey

STAGE 1:
INQUIRING CANDIDATE

STAGE 2:
EXPLORING CANDIDATE

STAGE 3:
CERTIFIED CANDIDATE

STAGE 4:
CONTINUING CANDIDATE

Contact:
bomstaff@bwcumc.org



CERTIFICATE IN CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Certificate in Congregational Leadership (CCL) Program uses online learning to provide a comprehensive approach to developing leadership excellence in the local church. It is designed to accommodate the busy schedule of the bi-vocational pastor and Certified Lay Minister (CLM).

Join Jack Shitama, author of *The Non-Anxious Leader*, for an online Congregational Leadership program designed for Part-Time Local Pastors and Certified Lay Ministers.

The program consists of online courses that are structured so all the work can be done independently.

Expand your education on:
CHURCH ADMINISTRATION
SACRAMENTS
PASTORAL CARE
WESLEYAN THEOLOGY
TIME MANAGEMENT, and
UM HISTORY & DOCTRINE

PDCBWC.ORG/CCL



Seeds of Security

Intimate Partner Violence / Domestic Violence Prevention Support

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

JUNE 16, 2025 || 9:00 AT
RENDITIONS GOLF CLUB



BWCUMC.ORG/SOS

YPM WELLNESS



Many youth are afraid of acknowledging school, mental health, and life challenges. To reduce stigma and barriers, we are providing mental health topics on areas that ministry, research, youth, caregivers, educators and others identify as risk concerns. If there is a topic you are in need of more information, we hope you will reach out to a trusted adult, including faith leader/supporter, to assist you.

You are not alone.

Adolescent Mental Health

Crisis Hotlines

Relationships

Social Media

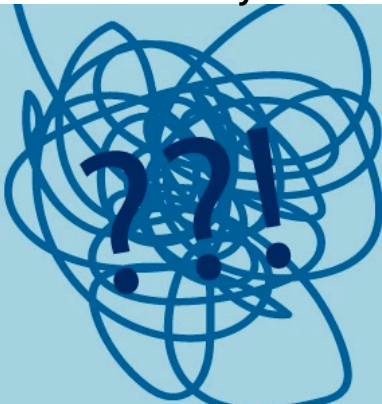


+/- Childhood Experiences

Anxiety

Self Hurt/Suicide Prevention

Substance Abuse

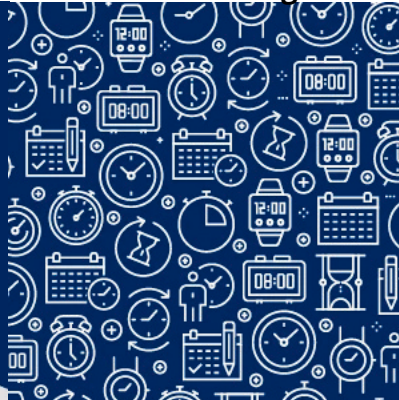


Body Image/Eating Disorders

Bullying

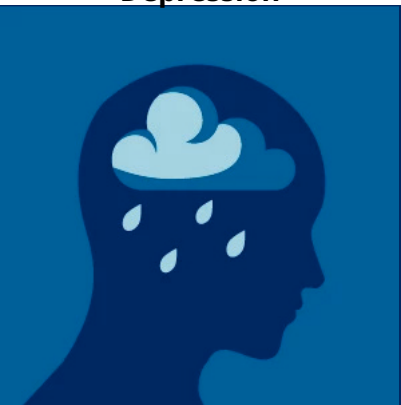
Time/Stress Management

Parent / Leader Resources



Depression

Gun Violence



Scan the QR code to
utilize the BWC's YPM
Wellness resources.



SPECIAL
EDITION

The Kairos Times

SPECIAL
EDITION

LILLY ENDOWMENT GRANT EDITION

BE A PART OF A WORSHIP REVOLUTION

NURTURING CHILDREN THROUGH WORSHIP & PRAYER

The Baltimore-Washington Conference has received a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment to help area United Methodist Churches fully integrate children ages 3–12 into weekly worship. We invite you to reimagine what it means to worship together—creating intergenerational spaces where children aren't just included, but empowered as leaders, prayer partners, and vital members of the worshipping community

SATURDAY

27

JUNE, 2026

INTERGENERATIONAL
WORSHIP FORUM



- **LEARN** creative, practical ways to engage children in worship
- **CONNECT** with others who share your heart for intergenerational ministry
- **CREATE** worship experiences where every one matters—especially the youngest
- **LEAD** a cultural shift where children are seen, heard, and valued

This is more than a program—it's a movement to build vital, inclusive congregations where all generations grow in discipleship together. In the Fall, we'll be listening to voices—especially children's—to shape what's next. Block the time on your calendar now to participate in the first Intergenerational Worship Forum on June 27, 2026.

No matter your role—pastor, leader, parent, grandparent, or lay member—you are essential in this constellation of worshippers. Let's grow together. Let's worship together.

PDCBWC.ORG/YPM

REFLECT, PRAY AND ACT ON OUR SHARED VALUES

Vitality is strongly related to living our shared values which arise from the hopes voiced by United Methodists across the area; they are rooted in Scripture and a part of our Wesleyan heritage.

Love in Action

Practicing God's love and grace, we build real, transformative relationships in our communities. Ours is not ministry "from a distance," but ministry "up close and personal"—we are the hands and feet of Christ in the world, serving those in need.

Love in
Action

Strength through Connection

Rooted in the United Methodist tradition of connection, we are united, uplifting one another, and holding each other accountable with love. We build strong bonds with one another and across our global church to do as much good as we can, because we truly are better together.

Strength
through
Connection

Unity
with
Diversity

Unity with Diversity

As God's beloved community, we each bring our unique stories and strengths to all that we do, united in purpose and committed to equity, inclusion, antiracism/anti-oppression and justice for all.

Partnering
with
Purpose

Freedom
to
Try

Partnering with Purpose

Intentional and strategic partnerships with other churches, people, and organizations enable us to share and cross-pollinate ideas, resources, and energy so that we can thrive, bear more fruit, and live according to God's call.

Freedom to Try

We prioritize empowering leaders and members to dream big, try new things, and learn from failure. We give permission for creativity and boldness and are committed to staying open to new ways of sharing God's love with all people.

As United Methodists, each of us is connected through our baptism to live out God's call in our lives, families, churches, and communities. In the coming year, we are engaging in Vital Change together to better cultivate world transforming disciples and progress toward our goal of vitality.

Vitality is strongly related to living our shared values which arise from the hopes voiced by United Methodists across the area; they are rooted in Scripture and a part of our Wesleyan heritage.

Journal or join in conversation with others in the church about the following questions:

1. Which value(s) do you most naturally embody or identify with? What testimony do you have to share about how this value is at work in your life?
2. Which value do you struggle with the most?
3. What would be different in your life – at home, with friends, at work, at church, in the community – if you lived these values 24/7? What would you have to do to live all the values?

Pray for God to:

- Open your mind and create a clean and willing heart for vital change.
- Help you to see how you can live these values.
- Help you to make needed changes so that you embody the values in the way that God wants you to embody them.
- Guide you as you seek to share these values with others in ways that are transformational, not transactional.

Share your stories, progress, feedback and questions, using the QR code or by emailing communications@bwcumc.org.

bwcumc.org/vitalchange



*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I; send me!” – Isaiah 6:8*

Is God calling you to use your gifts and talents in ways that will bless our Conference ministry together? The Baltimore-Washington Conference invites nominations and applications from all persons across the Conference as a part of our process to ensure excellence while achieving inclusiveness in geography, race, gender, culture, and congregational size.

Submit a Leadership Interest Form:

bwcumc.org/hereiam



Since 2021, we have been learning alongside **69 congregations** and **445 individuals** to prepare for and engage in the Catalyst intensive.

Those that we have followed up with a year or two later have taught us what difference the Catalyst mindset and process is making: thriving communities.

Stay tuned for Catalyst 2.0!

Made possible by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment.

6 Shifts and Results Named by Catalyst Teams After the Year-Long Intensive

1 Shift from Programs to Process

This shift resulted in including voices that are not usually at the table, to pausing existing programs to experiment, to attending to what transformation they were feeling called to midwife was liberating for many.



4 Team Based Ministry

Even people who had been working together for decades expressed that this was the first time they felt like a team. Many valued the gifts that each member brought and began using the same approach for building new teams within the congregation.



2 Shift from an Internal to External Focus

Through demographic studies, prayer walks and listening to neighbors, teams saw and embraced people in their mission zone with more and more empathy. Their hopes and God's dreams provided fuel for imagination and grit.

5 Renewed Energy

When we asked teams where they would be if they hadn't engaged with Catalyst, they say one or more of the following: "stuck," "stagnant," "struggling," and/or "on the way to closing." Many also saw that their energy and excitement was contagious as others came alive.

3 Deeper & Broader Partnerships

Once a congregation demonstrates authentic care and concern for the wellbeing of community members, partnership begins to blossom and the congregation becomes known for something that is important to the community.



6 Building Momentum & Impact

Working the process of loving, listening, experimenting, learning and evolving yields transformation within and without. 50% of Catalyst congregations have seen an increase in traditional and non-traditional measures.

[illegible]

RESOURCES FOR LIVING OUT OUR GOSPEL MANDATE



There are a variety of conference resources available to churches and hubs as they seek to deepen discipleship and be Christ in their communities. Many of the resources that were previously being offered as year round programs are being repurposed to enable hubs and churches to use them on demand. In addition to the items below, facilitation, consultation and coaching support is available.

FOR GROUPS

Missional Action Planning Resources engage churches and hubs in discovery, discernment, imagination, experimentation, implementation and evolution toward vitality. The destination isn't predetermined nor prescriptive, but an ongoing journey. Learn more at pdcbwc.org/map.

Vitality Conversations are designed to help your congregation discern and begin implementing God's next faithful step for you. The Vitality Conversation consists of a debrief of the *Readiness360 Survey* (pdcbwc.org/readiness360) and *ComparativeInsite Reports* (pdcbwc.org/missioninsite) and other available assessment data, with recommendations and discussion of next steps.

Building Beloved Community Resources focus on creating mindsets, heartsets and actions that churches and community partners can take to create equitable spaces of belonging and becoming. (bwcumc.org/beloved)

Resources for Creating Vital Change provide needed culture change resources that enable revitalization--starting with our shared values. (bwcumc.org/change-resources)

Grants are available to fund everything from innovative experiments to strategic growth initiatives. (bwcumc.org/grants)

For more information, or to request a resource that you are in need of, please contact Lauren Jones, Congregational Development Coordinator, at ljones@bwcumc.org (pdcbwc.org/congregations) or Jack Shitama, Center for Vital Leadership Director, at jack@pecometh.org (pdcbwc.org/leaders).

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Fresh Expressions Academy is designed to equip clergy and laity to innovate and take risks to engage people who are not yet part of a faith community.

Certificate in Congregational Leadership uses online learning to provide a comprehensive approach to developing leadership excellence in the local church. It is designed to accommodate the busy schedule of the bi-vocational pastor and Certified Lay Minister (CLM).

The Non-Anxious Leader: Family Systems Basics is a four-week, online course that will enable leaders to apply family systems theory so that they can be a non-anxious presence — personally and professionally.

Level Up: Lessons on Leadership offers short videos designed for church leaders to discover some of the best and most influential principles in today's secular writing about leadership. (pdcbwc.org/level-up)

Articles & Ideas: Looking for an answer to a smaller, more technical question? Search our online resources by category, author or date. (bwcumc.org/onlineresources) It includes an archive of all Training Tuesdays. (pdcbwc.org/training-tuesdays)

CONNECT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

An annual, one-day training with a keynote speaker and dozens of workshops to inspire and equip churches to connect more people to Jesus. If you liked Leadership Days, you will love Connect Leadership Summit. Mark your calendars for February 7, 2026.

CENTER FOR VITAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership training in various locations and through various means to make leadership essentials widely available to clergy, lay ministers, youth, and leaders of all ages. (pdcbwc.org/center-for-vital-leadership)

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, siblings, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.”

GUIDELINES FOR HOLY CONFERENCING

WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF US

- **Every person is a child of God. Always speak respectfully. One can disagree without being disagreeable.**
- **As you patiently listen and observe the behavior of others, be open to the possibility that God can change the views of any or all parties in the discussion.**
- **Listen patiently before formulating responses.**
- **Strive to understand the experience out of which others have arrived at their views.**
- **Be careful in how you express personal offense at differing opinions. Otherwise, dialogue may be inhibited.**
- **Accurately reflect the views of others when speaking. This is especially important when you disagree with a position.**
- **Avoid using inflammatory words, derogatory names, or an excited and angry voice.**
- **Avoid making generalizations about individuals and groups. Make your point with specific evidence and examples.**
- **Make use of facilitators and mediators.**
- **Remember that people are defined, ultimately, by their relationship with God — not by the flaws we discover, or think we discover, in their views and actions.**

