

238th Session of the UMC Baltimore Washington Conference (BWC)

After Action Report

The Annual BWC met on-line from 1-3 June 2022. This year's theme was Persevering: in Hope, Faith, and Joy. A summary of the conference proceedings follows.

1. Bishop Easterling, BWC Episcopal leader, gave a wonderful sermon on this year's conference theme to open the plenary session. One quote that stood out for me was "Stop telling God about your problems and start telling your problems about GOD". It was a powerful message that speaks to how our Faith is constantly being tested in today's world full of sickness, hardship, and hostility.
2. A total of 6 resolutions were brought before the conference for debate and a vote. All passed.
 - a. : Resolution to Designate Salem Baltimore Hispanic UMC, Baltimore, MD as a Mission of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and Congregation in Transformation: Allows this small church to remain relevant to its mainly Hispanic speaking congregation as they work toward rebuilding and becoming stronger.
 - b. : Establish a Conference team to assess the disposition of proceeds from the sale of closed Black church property: Requires a closer look at how these monies are spent and consideration given to using the money toward the enrichment of black Faith communities.
 - c. Endorsing the Christmas Covenant: Replaces central conferences with regional conferences and creates a U.S. Regional Conference. Allows each regional conference to adapt the Book of Discipline to fit its missional context. If adopted, this could allow U.S. churches to become a church for all people, yet, maintain our connection with the Global United Methodist Church.
 - d. In Celebration of Lovely Lane United Methodist Church's 250th Anniversary: Officially congratulates Lovely Lane Church.
 - e. Increasing Housing Security for All: Adds a seat to the BWC Advocacy and Action Board focused on looking at ways the church can influence the creation of affordable housing.
 - f. Encouraging a More Robust Discussion of the Science Related to Global Warming: As stewards of God's creation, we are encouraged to learn more about Global Warming and have discussions on that learning.
3. 2023 Proposed Budget:
 - a. \$18.2 M which is approximately 4.7% less than the budget for 2022, mainly due to a decrease in mission shares (used to be called apportionments).
 - b. Includes a 3% increase to Clergy base salary.
 - c. All expenses stayed fairly level with slight increases to allow for inflation.
 - d. The approved budget can be found on-line at the BWC website.
4. Committee Reports can be found on-line. Nothing of significance to report to our congregation.
5. Nominations of clergy to be considered as candidates for the episcopacy. After a series of votes, Reverend Joseph Daniels of Emory UMC was nominated as a candidate for the BWC.
6. One Matters Award: Honors churches that turned zero professions of faith into at least one with a renewed focus on discipleship. Our own local Cranberry UMC was honored as one of these churches.

7. Disaffiliation Process: A report was given on the process for churches who wish to disaffiliate with UMC and the financial implications. Three churches were approved to disaffiliate including New Beginnings Fellowship in Jarrettsville. Each of these churches cited a disagreement with actions of the annual conference as their reason for leaving.
8. Boy Scouts of America Lawsuit: A settlement has been reached concerning the claims of abuse leveled at the BSA. The UMC has agreed to placing \$30M into a survivor trust. BWC will be responsible for \$1.38M of that amount which will be paid for out of reserves. In addition, the BWC will review and update their safe sanctuary policies and plan to recruit leaders to hear survivor experiences.
9. Church Vitality: On the last day of the conference a presentation was made on Church Vitality. For myself, this was the best part of the conference and, I believe, is worth learning more about.
 - a. The four pillars of Church Vitality are:
 - i. See All the People: This pillar talks to erasing boundaries and looking at people as relationships, not as transactions. What keeps us from striking a conversation with someone we don't know? More on this can be found at seeallthepeople.org.
 - ii. Discipleship: This is an intentional plan to follow Jesus.
 - iii. Live and Love like Jesus: Put other people before yourself; Take love outside the walls of the church.
 - iv. Multiply your Impact: Maximize your resources and determine where does God want us to be. Understanding that activity does NOT always equal impact. We need to connect the 'why' and 'how' of our actions.
 - b. We need to let go of being "all things for all people". Get to know our neighbors outside the walls of our church and what do they need us to be.
 - c. Recommend that GUMC look into the Church Vitality discussion and consider whether it would be beneficial for us to follow.
10. The 239th session will be held at the Hilton in Baltimore next year.

Submitted by:

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