

IX. DAILY PROCEEDINGS AND PHOTO ALBUM

MONDAY **May 13, 2019**

Clergy Session **Custer Road United Methodist Church, Plano, Texas, 10:00 a.m.**

The North Texas Conference clergy gathered at Custer Road United Methodist Church, Plano, and Tim Morrison welcomed all at 10:13 a.m., leading clergy in singing “Morning Has Broken,” followed by a liturgy of “In the Beginning.” Various clergy brought in candles to represent the passing of the light throughout the Old Testament and to the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, and beyond to others carrying the light. The liturgy closed with “Walk in the Light” and a prayer by Bishop McKee. Bishop McKee then opened the business session at 10:34 a.m. Vic Casad made the motion to include all part-time and full-time local pastors in the session, although without a vote, as well as lay members of the BOM. The motion passed unanimously.

Kory Knott, Senior Pastor of Custer Road UMC, welcomed all and offered a prayer. Tim Morrison led the body in singing the traditional “And Are We Yet Alive?” Bishop McKee then called on Morrison to begin the BOM report. Morrison introduced the BOM members on the chancel and asked that all alterations to the report be given to Marsha Middleton.

Morrison moved the approval of Question 18a, regarding who constitute the Administrative Review Committee, noting that Todd Harris, who will be a district superintendent on July 1, will be replaced by an appointed clergy since district superintendents cannot serve in that position. Motion passed as presented. Morrison introduced Jill Jackson-Sears.

Jackson-Sears, Candidacy Registrar, called attention to Question 19, the list of certified candidates, and encouraged all clergy who know those who are considering the call to share with them the pamphlet entitled “Five Cups of Coffee,” as well as to go online for instructions on the candidacy process. Jackson-Sears then introduced Cassie Wade for the Local Pastors’ report.

Wade noted the list of those who have been licensed and appointed as local pastors – full time and part time. Clergy voted to approve those for whom licenses are approved, including those not appointed; they then voted to approve those who will be appointed. Bishop McKee gave a special word of appreciation to local pastors and asked those local pastors to stand. The session gave them a round of applause.

Andy Lewis addressed Question 24a and b; Lewis then moved Question 25, which passed, as well as Question 26b, concerning those who have been appointed from other annual conferences or Methodist denominations and those who have been approved to serve from other Christian denominations. The body voted to approve. Lewis then introduced Billy Echols-Richter, Chair of Preparations and Qualifications.

Echols-Richter read the names of those recommended as Provisional Members, both deacons and elders. They came forward, faced the body, and each was voted on individually. They were all approved as provisional members, were received with a standing ovation, and Bishop McKee shook their hands.

Echols-Richter called attention to Question 29, those being continued as provisional members. He then recognized ordained clergy coming from other Christian denominations who have had their orders recognized and are

transferring their membership into the North Texas Annual Conference. They are Martha Patricia Valencia and Joshua Fitzpatrick.

Echols-Richter then read the name of those recommended to be elected as members in full connection, deacon, and those recommended to be elected as members in full connection, elder. They came forward, and Bishop McKee asked them the historic questions. Each was voted into conference membership and introduced to the body. All new members in full connection received an extended standing ovation.

The following persons were presented for election into full membership and ordination as deacons: Virginia Kay Ash, Michael Flynn, Pavielle Jenkins, Evan Jones, William Hower Mauldin, Margaret Proshek, Allison Hayes Shulman, Adam White, and Emma Cook Williams..

The following persons were presented for election into full membership and ordination as elders: Charles Church, James Decker, Allison Jean, Joy Gonzalez, Jane Graner, Richard Thomas Harrison, Stephen Lohoefer, Geoffrey Moore, Jon Christopher Rickwartz, Courtney Schultz, and Taylor Garrett Smith.

Lewis addressed Question 38 concerning those who had been received by transfer from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church: Ashley Anne Sipe, transferring from the Western North Carolina Conference. Sipe was approved. Lewis noted Question 39 and introduced Paul Gould.

Paul Gould moved Question 43, who has been granted honorable location; the body approved. The body then voted on Question 46b, approving the request from Martha Myre to withdraw from the ordained ministerial office.

The Bishop reminded the body that those who died during the year would be remembered in the annual conference opening service of worship on Sunday evening. He then called for a moment of silence and offered a prayer for those elders, deacon, and local pastors who died during the year.

The body then voted to approve those ordained members on personal, family, or medical leave.

The names of those retired elders, deacon, and local pastors were read. Their retirement was approved. They were invited to the front of the session where the Bishop shook their hands and they received a standing ovation. Those were Terrance Heislen, Eddie Jean Adams, L. Marvin Guier III, Janette C. Kotey, William E. La Barr, Ouida Lee, Thomas R. McKnight, Kathy McLean-Davis, Connie Lynn Millsap, James I. Minor, James Clifton Pierce, Deborah A. Riggsby, John P. Wallace, and Don H. Yeager.

Elizabeth Moseley presented Questions 58-63 regarding specialized ministry and lay ministry.

Question 72a was presented by Tim Morrison regarding those elders and deacons who have been approved for appointment to less than full-time service. The body approved. Morrison concluded his report, and the body approved the BOM report. Bishop McKee thanked all the members of the BOM. The body then sang "O For a Thousand Tongues." Bishop McKee invited everyone to break for lunch and return after lunch for his message and a message from Cammy Gaston, Director of the Center for Leadership Development.

The clergy session resumed with a hymn. Gaston said that each year as she convenes the residency covenant group experience, they read the words from *The Book of Discipline* ¶324 and live with them a while: *For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of [a pastor's] influence as a minister, [do you agree] to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, and to this end exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God?*

Gaston recalled groups struggling with what it meant to have so much influence in a community and in a church. They talk about how people watch them differently and hold them to a standard that they do not always hold themselves. They talk about the discipline needed to live a healthy life and the vulnerable moments that need strength and attention. Clergy hold a sacred trust with one another and with the community that must be upheld and maintained. That is why maintaining healthy relationships is paramount!

The Center for Leadership Development supports the ministry of the clergy and the laity by providing retreats, seminars, and support services so that our churches uphold “the highest ideals of the Christian life,” noted Gaston. The North Texas Annual Conference made available four sexual ethics seminars in 2018 and 2019, and all clergy were advised to attend and/or complete the training online before June 1, 2019. It is important to strive continually for excellent health and wellbeing in our churches.

In 2018 and 2019 six incidents of sexual ethics violations were reported to the district superintendents and the Center for Leadership Director. CART Crisis and Care teams were deployed and/or support services were provided by the Cart Coordinator. These were violations by clergy, church staff, or lay leadership of the church. The CART Crisis and Care Teams, led by Liz Greenwell, have added new members with expertise in restoring trust and dealing directly with difficult issues. They have been trained and appointed to do this important work in the Conference. All policies have been updated and placed on the Conference website.

Gaston explained that Bishop Michael McKee requested that she offer reporting information to underscore the importance of right action when there is a sexual ethics violation. She cautioned clergy to remember that they are mandatory reporters when an offense involves the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a minor in the state of Texas and must also report the incident to the district superintendent and the director of the Center for Leadership Development of the North Texas Annual Conference. If there is a crime against an adult, clergy are to offer to assist the adult in reporting. An incident between two adults should be reported to the district superintendent.

The Center for Leadership Development has also worked with the North Texas Annual Conference Committee on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) to address sexual harassment of a clergyperson from a layperson. Conference staff liaison to COSROW, Rev. Emma Williams, presented the report. The report and procedures were printed in the Conference Workbook and are now included on the website. The district superintendent and the director for the Center for Leadership Development are to be informed when an incident has occurred.

Marks of Fruitfulness

The North Texas Annual Conference adopted the *Marks of Fruitfulness* in 2013, a process created to support clergy, empower laity, and create an overall healthier Church in the connectional system. The *Marks of Fruitfulness* employ a quarterly focus on three different areas – Living, Leading, Developing, and an end-of-the-year summation. The hope was that this would change the culture of the SPRC from “Do we like and does the clergy person meet our needs?” to investment in the support, growth, and performance of clergy. This process is referred to as a *formative process* with the purpose of raising the effectiveness of clergy. A *summative evaluation* is requested by the bishop and the cabinet to identify strengths and growth areas for further investment and for potential leadership in the Church. These reports can be filed as early as October and **MUST be filed by December 15.**

Gaston reported that as the bishop and cabinet took inventory for appointments this year, they looked at the *Marks of Fruitfulness* and the *Profiles and Reviews*, and they found that many of the reporting platforms were blank. She emphasized that the bishop and cabinet expect all clergy to complete all the year-end forms and to engage in a growth process with the SPRC.

Retreat

The NTAC Clergy Retreat, coordinated by Rev. Jenna Morrison, will be “Fear-less Dialogue” by Gregory Ellison and is scheduled for October 29-30, 2019, at Tanglewood Conference Center. All clergy are requested to stay for the full retreat. The purpose of the retreat is to develop healthy relationships within the covenant, address personal spiritual needs, nurture leadership growth for the present and future church, hear from the bishop concerning vision and direction, and to receive and give support for ministry together. It also good, Gaston concluded, to worship and play together.

Following Bishop McKee’s discussion of matters relevant to the church today, the clergy session concluded at 2:30 p.m.

The full reports of the divisions of the Board of Ordained Ministry are printed in this *Journal* in Section XIV. AGENCY REPORTS under the heading, Board of Ordained Ministry.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING

June 2, 2019

Laity Session

First United Methodist Church, Plano, Texas, 3:30 p.m.

The laity session of the North Texas Conference was held at First United Methodist Church, Plano. Jeff Bouis, Conference Lay Leader, welcomed the laity to the conference. First Plano Lay Leader Tommy Lawrence recognized the Board of Laity and the Lay Servant Ministry. By a show of hands, first-time attendees, as well as multiple-time attendees, were distinguished. Music was provided by the U-Turn Youth Band and the Grace Avenue Saturday Night Band, both from Grace Avenue UMC, Frisco.

Members of the Conference Council on Youth Ministry led the gathered laity in honoring lay members of annual conference and lay leaders who died in the past year. Each was remembered with the calling of her/his name and the ringing of a bell.

The Youth and Lay Harry Denman Evangelism Awards were presented, and videos were shown of the mission work in which the winners are engaged. The Youth Award was given to Mikayla Doty from First UMC Howe for “walking the talk” while serving VBS, acting as president of her youth group, and participating in music and mission for her church. Marian Schulze from Grace Avenue UMC, Frisco, received the Lay Award for the creation of Frisco Fastpacs, which has grown from providing food for 32 hungry children on the weekend to feeding over 1,000 children at 63 Frisco schools. This mission is not only feeding Frisco’s hungry children, it is also transforming the lives of the volunteers who support it.

Jeff Bouis then explained the process for the election of lay delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Bouis presented 28 candidates who were each allotted two minutes to speak to their candidacy for the lay delegations. Those candidates were John Astle, Brayden Matthew Bishop, Kelly Carpenter, Alexis Cass, Tim Crouch, Collin Echols-Richter, Vincent Gonzales, Cynthia Harry, Dwight Harry, Laura Hudec, Katy Kiser, Shandon Klein, Jon Lannom, Roger Little, Keri Lynn Lucas, Lori Massey, Jenny Misslin, Julie Noel, Linda Parks, Kathleen Rozanne Pryor, Billy Ratcliff, Cynthia Rives, Daniel Soliz, Herman L. Totten, Jessica Vittorio, Sally Vonner, Don Wiley, and Kenneth R. Wolverton. Bouis closed the laity session with prayer.

Worship Service
Christ United Methodist Church, Plano, Texas, 7:00 p.m.

Christ United Methodist Church in Plano hosted the opening worship of the 2019 North Texas Annual Conference on Sunday, June 2, 2019. Don Underwood, Senior Pastor of Christ UMC, Plano, welcomed the congregation. Bishop Mike McKee introduced the evening's speaker, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton of the New York Annual Conference, and offered prayer.

The service began with a liturgy of Remembrance and Celebration for the lives of clergy and clergy spouses who died in the last year. Harry McCalla, Raegan Gilliland, and Marvin Guier led the Litany of the Saints during which ministers and ministers' spouses were remembered for their lives of service to others. As the names of ministers and spouses were called and their pictures shown on the sanctuary screens, those whose lives had been shaped by their faithful service stood in silent honor. Clergy members celebrated were Bishop William B. Oden, John Hans Brand, William L. Childers, Victoria Davidson Paul, David Thomas Howeth, Joe Lynn Vowell, James Richard "Dick" Wilson, Clay A. Yeager, Johnnie W. Haney, R. Bruce Weaver, Robert A. Simpson, Page Allison Thomas, Joel Nathaniel Arnold, Joyce Polk Lloyd, Charles Hahn, and Jimmy Lee McIntire. Clergy spouses were Imogene Arnold, Rose Marie Benton, Mamie L. (Tommie) Childers, Deborah Ann Crouch, Mildred Elaine Graham, John C. Lee, Alyce Blair Stephenson, Judith Eileen Tyson, Glenda Jo Vowell, Violet Juanita Wilson, and Joyce Elaine Gray Price.

Music leadership for the evening was provided by the choirs of Flower Mound UMC, Sachse First UMC, Northaven UMC, White Rock UMC, and Grace Avenue UMC, Frisco. Music during the worship service included "Adagio in Sol Minore" by Tomaso Albinoni and "O God Beyond All Praising" by Gustav Holst and Michael Perry.

Following the reading of Philippians 1:1-30, Bishop Bickerton preached a sermon entitled, "Where Do I Stand?" He challenged the North Texas Annual Conference to remember that we, as individuals, congregations, annual conferences, and the United Methodist denomination stand on the promises of God in Jesus Christ, especially in the midst of the struggles and divisions within society and the Church.

The worship service concluded with the commissioning of the 2019 Project Transformation interns who will be serving in locations throughout the North Texas Annual Conference. More than 120 young adults were commissioned as interns. The offering for the evening was designated to support Project Transformation.

A reception followed the service, hosted by Bishop and Mrs. McKee in honor of Bishop Thomas Bickerton and the families of those remembered in the service.

MONDAY MORNING BUSINESS SESSION
June 3, 2019

Organization of the Conference

Bishop McKee called on Angela Williams to open with prayer; Don Underwood welcomed everyone to Christ United Methodist Church, Plano.

Conference Secretary Judith Reedy then organized the conference. Reedy moved that the bar of the conference be established as the chancel area, the entire floor of the sanctuary, and the center of the balcony, and that the sides of the balcony be established as the visitors' section. The motion was approved. Reedy moved the election of persons to serve the 2019 business sessions as assistant secretaries (Kenny Dickson, Adam White, Marsha Middleton), head teller (Katie Shockley), and the teller groups appointed by each of the district superintendents. They were elected.

Reedy moved the approval of Legislative Item #1 in the conference workbook, [LA 1], calling for the equalization of clergy and lay members. The motion was approved.

Standing Rules

Bishop McKee then called on Herman Totten to present the standing rules. Totten outlined a process for dividing the rules into two categories – Group I, including only Legislative Item #6 [LA 6], proposed to give greater clarity to legislative items on the floor of annual conference. It was moved and approved.

Group II, including Legislative Item #2 [LA 2], Legislative Item #3 [LA 3], Legislative Item #4 [LA 4], Legislative Item #5 [LA 5], and Legislative Item #15 [LA 15] were inter-related and thus grouped together. The proposal was to move these items out of standing rules to policy stating, “The policies shall be followed.” The only change is the location of details. The purpose was to place all conference policies into a single location for quick and easy reference. The vote to approve passed; Group II was adopted.

Andy Lewis then introduced the consent calendar. Lewis explained that the consent agenda would facilitate the business of the annual conference and that if any items needed floor debate, a written request signed by five voting members of the annual conference must be presented to the Conference Secretary within twenty-four hours.

Episcopal Address

Bishop Michael McKee presented the Episcopal Address on Monday morning, June 3, as a part of the Service of Baptismal Renewal.

Bishop McKee shared the fate of churches of which he has been a member or a pastor. The churches in which he was baptized and confirmed have been closed; others have declined, and others continue to thrive. Although all of the churches had faithful members, the culture quake and/or the seismic shift in the Christian landscape brought significant change. Those changes have become evident, not only in churches and other faith communities, but also in the areas of education, politics, and society. As changes occurred, the Church was not aware of how rapidly those changes would affect its witness. The initial and ongoing response to change was to engage in improvement. If the Church improved its signage or music or retooled Sunday school or fed more families at Thanksgiving or any other improvement one could imagine, then all would return to normal. It didn’t happen.

Bishop McKee referenced Gil Rendle’s book *Quietly Courageous: Leading the Church in a Changing World*, where Rendle has written extensively regarding the new paradigm. He outlined the distinction between the Church’s private mission and its public mission. The private mission focuses on those inside the church; the public mission focuses on the mission field. Our challenge is to engage in the public mission and see it as the purpose of the Church. The mission field is full of people who have no ongoing relationship with Christ. How do we look into the future? How do we as the Church relate with – and be in ministry with – a host of people who have no religious affiliation? The mission field can look very different than our churches.

The early Wesleyan movement, the people called Methodists, sought to reach the marginalized in 18th-century England. Whether coal miners or industrial workers or affluent elites, Methodists were committed to reaching all with the Good News of Christ. United Methodists must recover the capacity to engage with people who are more diverse than a majority of the people in our pews. A public mission focuses us on the purpose of the Church and on God’s witness through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

More Americans reject a religious affiliation today, and church attendance has declined twice as much among Anglos without a college degree. Again, what began as a movement for all God’s people, especially those who were marginalized, in 18th-century England has now forgotten how to be in ministry with a diverse population.

Bishop McKee noted there are signs of positive change emerging in our midst. Several churches in our conference are creating new ministries to engage with religiously unaffiliated persons. These include: White Rock UMC, Lakewood UMC, First UMC Allen, and First UMC Paris, to name a few. The challenge is for laity and clergy throughout the North Texas Conference to create new ministries in the community where the church is located.

Bishop McKee reported on the February, 2019, Special Session of General Conference. Some people report that nothing changed. And while the stance of The United Methodist Church regarding ministry among and with LGBTQ persons didn't change, the levels of accountability did. The only offenses in *The Book of Discipline* that have a mandated punishment are all related to the practice of ministry with LGBTQ persons. This does raise concerns for many about our polity.

The North Texas Conference, Bishop McKee said, has an opportunity to live into a new reality. A moving of the Holy Spirit is calling us to address racism in the culture and in our churches. Racism is still alive, and acknowledging the evil of racism and its presence among us is the first step toward change. Still, when a pastor speaks about race, it creates pushback in many of our congregations. Bishop McKee dreams of a day in the North Texas Conference when this will no longer be the case.

Another dream, he said, is for the North Texas Conference to create ministries with Hispanics and form people for ministry. In Dallas, 42 percent of the population is Hispanic, but only 1.6 percent of clergy in the NTC speak Spanish. Bishop McKee said we will meet these opportunities by finding new ways to credential Hispanic persons for specific ministries in Hispanic congregations in the North Texas Conference.

In conclusion, Bishop McKee said that the people called United Methodists have a unique theological understanding of the Christian witness that focuses on the breadth and depth of God's grace. Our witness – rooted and grounded in God's prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace – has the capacity to transform people and the world. He prayed that God would grant us courage to witness to that grace and to all God's people.

Renewal of Baptism

Following the episcopal address, James Minor and Patricia Froehlich led the body in a liturgy celebrating the baptismal covenant. All were invited to come forward to a station where newly commissioned deacons and elders attended and to touch the water and renew their baptism. The service ended with singing "Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters" and a blessing from Bishop McKee.

Episcopacy Committee

Clayton Oliphint was joined on the platform by other members of the Committee on Episcopacy to make their report. Oliphint recalled that as he observed his father as a bishop for twelve years, he realized how stressful the position was. He said he could only imagine how many times over the stress is currently to be a bishop in The United Methodist Church. Oliphint acknowledged how blessed the North Texas Conference is to have Bishop McKee as bishop. Oliphint noted Joan McKee's particular involvement with Project Transformation and announced that the conference would be making a gift to Project Transformation in her honor, as well as a gift of tickets for trips to California for the McKees to see grandsons Ford and Knox.

Joan McKee responded with thanks for the 125 Project Transformation interns that had just arrived, noting that they did not agree on everything but generated energy by being in the same room, respecting others and themselves, being Christ-centered, getting over themselves, and giving each other space. She encouraged the annual conference to do the same.

Bishop McKee responded with gratitude to Joan for who she is and to the North Texas Annual Conference, saying that his job was inspirational and faithful because of who they are.

Retiree Video #1

Jack Wallace loves serving the church because he gets to be with people at some of the most critical and intimate times of their lives, whether it is crisis or celebration. He is privileged to be walking alongside them. His advice to new ordinands is to “take your vacation.” It is not just advice for you but also for your church; both need a break. In addition, Wallace advised ordinands to share their pulpit and always to err on the side of grace. Wallace advised them to try to remember that they are standing on holy ground. “Take your shoes off and listen.”

Wallace’s prayer is for unity, that the church would remember that they can find their direction for everything ultimately in scripture. There is the foundation of the greatest commandments – to love God and one another – the directions to love justice and walk humbly with God, and the Great Commission.

Connie Millsap has served many churches that were in their later years, but she especially remembers getting to come alongside one and suggest a summer project called Project Transformation. She asked the parishioners, “Aren’t these our children?” That church became involved in PT, and a transformation occurred. They continued to say “yes.”

Millsap’s advice to ordinands was not to be afraid but to venture out to serve the world, knowing that the world is their parish. Her prayer is that they will be the hospitality of inclusion – the body of Christ – to the world

Marvin Guier and wife Kathy have appreciated being able to spend the first half of their ministry serving local churches. They are especially grateful to Christ UMC in Farmers Branch for the support given to their family during a time of personal tragedy. They are also grateful for having spent the last half of ministry serving in the conference, first in the ministry center and most recently as district superintendent of the Northwest District.

Guier advised ordinands to be themselves and remember, “It’s not about you; it’s about God,” and to remember the partnership with families. Guier’s hope and prayer for the church is that they focus on mission because God still needs us to be God’s hands and feet in the world.

Bill La Barr cherishes the two times he had the opportunity to baptize premature infants after they were born and before they died. The first time this happened, the father said, “Thanks. This is important.” He changed how he viewed baptism; he was never the same. La Barr’s advice to ordinands is to be a pastor first. His hope is that the church will realize that we are all good, that we are all filled with the breath of life, and that the church should be open to all.

Video of UMW 150th Anniversary

Bishop McKee asked everyone at annual conference to stand if they were a member of the United Methodist Women. He reminded them that all pastors are automatically members of the UMW.

The video showed what happens when women organize for mission, beginning in 1869 when the UMW sent a female doctor to India to treat women and children because women in India were not allowed to be treated by men. Over 100 years ago, the UMW started schools for newly freed slaves. The mission of UMW now extends to more than one hundred countries. At home in the U.S., women are involved in educational programs that are faithful, loving, and informed. As UMW continues to say “yes” to God’s call to mission, they continue to grow in faith.

Board of Ordained Ministry

Tim Morrison, Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, invited board members to join him and asked all those serving on the DCOMs to stand and be thanked for their time and ongoing ministry as stewards in the ministry process. He then called on Elizabeth Moseley, Chair of Certification in Specialized Ministry. She called on Bishop

McKee to recognize the persons seeking that certification. Moseley presented Joel Eichler, certified in youth ministry, and Jennifer Welden, certified in children's ministry and Christian education. Bishop McKee prayed a blessing over those who had achieved certification.

Cassie Wade, Director of Local Pastors Education, invited all those who had completed licensing school in 2019 and are currently serving in churches to come forward to receive a letter and gift, as well as those who had completed the Course of Study.

This year 13 people completed licensing school. Course of Study graduates were Dan Conaster, Edrue Dodd, Elizabeth Delaney Greenwell, Bill Arnold Lewis, Deniece Mason, Joel Scheller, and Phillip Lee Stobaugh. Wade invited the conference to applaud all those serving on behalf of the church in this capacity and acknowledged the ever-increasing needs they fill. Bishop McKee affirmed their service.

Wade introduced Billy Echols-Richter, Chair of Preparation and Qualifications. Echols-Richter presented 34 persons for provisional and full membership: 12 provisional members – Josh Esparza, Heather Gottas, Cottrell King, Eva Englert-Jessen, Sungmoon Lee, Joshua Manning, Payton Parker, Kyle Powell, Sandy Heard, Aaron Logan, Abbey Echols, and Chad Mogus. They were welcomed with a standing ovation; Bishop McKee pointed out that Englert-Jessen is a third-generation female clergy, a tradition that began in 1956 for their family.

Echols-Richter reported that 20 members had been elected as full members to be ordained: 9 deacons – Kay Ash, Michael Flynn, Bill Mauldin, Maggie Proshek, Pavielle Jenkins, Evan Jones, Allie Shulman, Adam White, and Emma Williams; 11 elders – Chuck Church, Jimmy Decker, Joy Gonzalez, Jane Graner, Ricky Harrison, Allison Jean, Stephen Lohoefer, Geoffrey Moore, Chris Rickwartz, Courtney Schultz, and Taylor Smith. Bishop McKee announced that this is the largest class in some time, a sure sign that The United Methodist Church is not dying. All were congratulated by Bishop McKee and were welcomed by the body with a standing ovation.

Echols-Richter recognized two persons for members of the conference to welcome: a person from another Christian denomination, elected to be a full member – Martha Valencia, and a person from another Methodist denomination, elected into full membership – Josh Fitzpatrick.

Paul Gould, Chair of Conference Relations Committee, presented the 2019 retirees, representing 556 years of service to Christ and the church in every field, serving all across the conference in many different settings. They were Terrance Heislen, Eddie Jean Adams, Laura Benson, Annelda Crawford, L. Marvin Guier III, Janette Kotey, William La Barr, Ouida Lee, Thomas McKnight, Kathy McLean-Davis, Connie Millsap, James Minor, James Pierce, Deborah Riggsby, John Wallace, Don Yeager; local pastors Pamela Clark, June Franck, Susan Gross, Billy Lewis, Debra May, Linda Mayberry, Bill Meek, Don McGarvey, and Eston Williams. The bishop thanked all of them for their service and offered a blessing. Children joined the retirees, representing all children who have been blessed by the ministry of these ministers. Children presented pins to all retirees; Emma Williams offered a blessing. The conference members and visitors expressed their gratitude with a standing ovation.

Morrison called attention to the Conference Workbook for a list of dates regarding the candidacy process. He thanked the board for their discernment of candidates hoping to live out their call. He then moved the approval of the BOM report. It was approved.

Retiree Video #2

Ouida Lee cherishes having served God's people in the "least" communities. There she learned how God will meet you wherever you are and strengthen you for the journey. Her advice to the ordinands is that it is very important for them to get to know that they are called to serve the people, that God's word is a true word, and that they should anchor themselves and hold on in faith, no matter how dark the night.

Lee's hope and prayer for The United Methodist Church is that we be a tremendous witness to a community and a world that are so broken. She loves the diversity of the North Texas Conference. She hopes that we will continue to live into the love that we proclaim in Jesus Christ.

June Franck affirmed her calling in pastoral care, especially to those who are in hospitals and who are dying; she is grateful to those families who invited her to be there in the high and holy moments. Her advice to ordinands is to give water to the thirsty, food to those who hunger, to visit the sick and the imprisoned. Be there for your family, she advised; and take care of yourself.

Franck's hope and prayer for the North Texas Conference and all of Methodism is that we will remain faithful and know that God is love. It is not our place to judge; it is our place to serve all people.

Bill Lewis treasures having been with people at some of the most difficult times in their lives. Those times have been an honor and a privilege, as have the times of great joy – weddings, baptisms. Lewis reminded the ordinands that the work can be consuming, and they should take time to refresh themselves. He recalled Bishop McKee's advice to practice due diligence in sermon preparation because your church deserves that. At the same time, understand that if you take care of your people, they will cut you some slack in your preaching.

In light of the things that are going on with The United Methodist Church at this time, Lewis's prayer is that the North Texas Conference will take leadership. And he prays that this will happen rather quickly.

Don Yeager cherishes the relationships he has formed with the people in the places he has served and with clergy with whom he has served. Saying goodbye is hard, but he would not trade it for anything. Yeager recalled one of his mentors, Dr. John Ogden, who taught him early on that Sundays come around with a relentless regularity; and if you are not prepared for that, you can quickly deplete yourself, intellectually and spiritually. Be sure, therefore, that you are always feeding yourself in order to have something to offer others.

Yeager's hope and prayer for the North Texas Conference is that we will know that there are wonderfully talented and gifted people in the church, lay and clergy. There will always be those who need to be fed and those who need to be clothed.

Janette Kotey has found the Body and Soul Ministry to be the most vital of her ministries. It has been in place for 21 years now. Her advice to ordinands is to preach the word of God, live the word of God, and trust the word of God.

Kotey's prayer is that we would strive to be one church for all people, that we would eradicate racism and provide justice for all. Kotey then sang her hope and prayer for The United Methodist Church.

Center Report – New Faces New Spaces

Center leaders Andy Lewis, Owen Ross and Cammy Gaston appeared onstage; and Gaston read John 21:1-6. "Cast your net on the right side of the boat...and you will find some fish." One year ago at the annual conference session, after a long period of discernment by the bishop and extended cabinet, the centers debuted the chief missional strategy for the North Texas Conference – New Faces New Spaces – an exciting way to heed Jesus' call to cast our nets on the other side of the boat, try new things, and experiment in new ways.

A video showed Ross kayaking with "Jeff," from St. John's UMC in Florida. Lewis then reviewed what a New Space is. A New Space meets four simple criteria: (1) gathers New Faces – without New Faces, it's not a New Space; (2) meets regularly – without regular meetings, it's not a New Space; (3) relates to a UMC entity – every New Space will have a supportive connection to a local church, campus ministry, or some other United Methodist entity, (4) forms disciples – without discipleship, it's not a New Space.

Ross explained that the centers have also been giving away money for years 2018, 2019, and 2020. \$200,000 has been set aside to seed 200 new spaces. A pastor and layperson from each micro-grant church walked onstage so that the conference members could see the 12 local churches representing all four districts that have applied for and been awarded a micro-grant.

Allison Partridge from FUMC Mabank was welcomed as one of the pioneers. Every church that has launched a New Space in the past year was invited to submit a video, tell the story of their New Space, with a prize of \$1,000 offered to the best three videos. The three video contest winners were Archer City, Jacksboro, and Grace-Sherman. Lewis presented their checks, and Ross challenged others to envision new forms of disciple-making and utilize the remaining \$180,000 allocated to New Spaces New Faces.

Liliana Rangel reported that 88 different local churches reported on the end-of-year statistical report that they had launched a grand total of 155 New Spaces. Rangel has spent the past two months following up with these local churches, hoping that all local churches can learn from one another.

Gaston pointed out that it was when the disciples listened to Jesus and tried the new thing that their nets were full of new fish. Ross said that it is in our DNA as Methodists to bring the Good News to fields and factories and prisons and to start new forms of disciple-making community, like classes and bands and societies. Lewis, quoting Jesus, asked, “Children, have you no fish? Cast your net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”

Keynote Speaker – Culture Reset

Bishop McKee introduced Junius Dotson, General Secretary of Discipleship Ministries, and launcher of “See All The People,” the highly successful, church-wide initiative that helps church leaders concentrate on intentional discipleship by learning new behaviors for engaging their surrounding community. Dotson’s first keynote was entitled “Culture Reset.” He cited the example of a recent visit he had to Tokyo, Japan, to see a niece who had just delivered a new baby. While there, he learned about the first human-made beach in Miyazaki, Japan. It opened in 1993 with a retractable Ocean Dome. The sky was always blue; the temperature, always a balmy 86 degrees. Every few minutes there were perfectly timed, simulated waves, 24 hours a day. The cost to attend was \$25; 1.25 million people visited every single year. Ironically, just a few miles down the road was a natural beach one could experience for free. The Ocean Dome was officially closed in 2007 because attendance was in decline for 12 straight years. Dotson drew the parallel to today’s faith experiences; he pointed out that people are no longer satisfied with artificial religion, only to discover at the end of the day that they are still hungry. They want the real thing, not a substitute. This reality presents the adaptive challenge we face: How do we reset the culture, create a culture in existing congregations that has a new-spaces ethos? What would happen if we stopped fixing churches and started seeing all the people that God has called us to reach?

We cannot program our way back to vitality. Quoting author Mike Green, Dotson said, “If you try to build a church, you will rarely make disciples; but if you make disciples, you will always build a church.” A culture change would mean that discipleship would be the core of a local church. Our posture would shift from coming to church, sitting there, leaving there and repeating that week after week. Resetting culture means a rearranging of priorities. Every organization could use a reset about every 7 years, maybe more.

The first key to a culture reset is identity. God’s charge to Abraham, the Great Commission, and Wesley’s witness all said “Go! Do not stay behind closed doors.” We are charged with growing and going.

Our identity determines our activity. What we do is determined by who we are. Remind people of who they are. Dotson told of having his identity stolen four years ago and said that even though it limits the victim from living as one’s self, surrendering our identity is more deadly than having it stolen. We find ourselves timid toward God’s mission because we don’t remember who we are.

How do we increase engagement with people outside the faith? His grandmother taught him to have a burden for the people. Engagement means more than inviting; it means relationship building. The temptation is to stay indoors. In his current interim appointment, Dotson focused on seeing all the people. A team of twelve met every week between January and Easter. Their goal was to build relationships that were authentic, organic, and consistent. They tried three ways to engage the people: a prayer walk, a block party, and a free gas day. Both the block party and free gas day resulted in persons coming up to Dotson with money, saying “Thank you for connecting neighbors.”

Dotson ended by calling out North Texas churches Wesley UMC, Miller Grove, and Winnsboro for their professions of faith and new members, all worshipping less than 100. In challenging times, he said, we have to call an audible, not abandoning the game plan of old, but adapting it.

Retiree Video #3

Paul McGarvey values most the relationships he has been able to establish. Being able to share himself, his real self, and the openness with which he has been able to serve has been the most meaningful. His advice to the ordinands was to commit themselves with all their heart to the community where they are sent. The other thing is to understand that every community is a sub-culture of a larger culture. Go to the local watering hole and give yourself permission to eavesdrop and discover what is important to them. It changes how you preach; it changes how you reach people.

McGarvey’s hope and prayer is that we make sure that in the future the vision and the heart of the Wesleys is maintained. “The world is my parish” is a fantastic vision that needs to be explored and followed within the conference. It will make a huge difference in this conference.

James Minor considers it a blessing to have had the opportunity to help, perhaps in some small way, to move the conference more toward embracing an anti-racism identity that understands that there is a need for power sharing, a need to have accountability to communities of color and marginalized communities. He will always cherish being part of a team that the conference saw fit to put together so that we can be more in line with who we say we are.

Minor’s advice to the ordinands was “To thine own self be true, and then it will follow, as the day follows night; thou canst not then be false to anyone.” Only God can change people, so do not get frustrated trying to make that change. Take time to pray daily. Read scripture not just for sermon preparation but for personal growth. His prayer is that we be one, as Creator God, Savior Son, and Comforter Holy Spirit are one, that the conference will grow in unity of faith and living in the love of God that we have come to profess.

Sue Gross remembers more than anything the willingness of her churches to go out into the world. One church started an ESL class. Three of those people have become U.S. citizens. One church had a highway cleanup. Gross said that if you ask your congregation to go out into the world, as their leader, you’d better be out there with them! That is important because, when you show grace and love to your congregation and times come when there is conflict, they are more likely to show you grace and love because you are an imperfect leader leading imperfect people.

John Wesley was locked out of the church of England because he felt so strongly about preaching to the marginalized in the London society. We need to remember that and not put labels or tags on people; just treat them with kindness and love. Then can we move forward.

Deborah Riggsby has found great joy in watching people’s faces light up when they realize how much God loves them or when they see God’s grace working in them. In her 32 years in ten churches in Kansas and Texas, that has been the highlight.

Riggsby's advice to ordinands was that they listen attentively to people around them, love with their whole heart, and lead with vulnerability, sensitivity and courage. Her prayer is that the conference will truly live out the profession of "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors."

Announcements were made and Sungmoon Lee closed the morning session with prayer.

MONDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

LatinX laity and clergy opened the afternoon worship with a song in Spanish, inviting all to sing along and move with the music.

New Spaces New Faces Video

A video of one of the three winners of New Faces New Spaces awards told the story of Archer City UMC's New Space for New Faces. Meeting monthly in an historic hotel in Archer City, "Grub & Grace" attracts people of all ages. The focus is on food. There are high school teachers, coaches, farmers, and more. They share in a meal and a brief, food-based devotional on faith and food. The time together teaches about how the food is made.

Keynote Address #2 – Soul Reset

Junius Dotson began Part Two of his keynote with a reference to *The Upper Room*, the United Methodist publication that deals with spiritual practices. He recalled the most embarrassing moment of his life when he was preaching a funeral, reciting the 23rd Psalm. He could feel something was off, and he passed out. The diagnosis was extreme fatigue. At that time, he was in the middle of a new church start and offered 24/7 availability. What he needed was a soul reset. He was carrying around unrealistic expectations that he should have given to God. Jesus invited us to be real. Wesley taught us to ask, "How is it with your soul?" New Spaces for New Faces and programs like this begin with attending to our own soul. We have to tell the truth to one another about where we are spiritually. Dotson invited folks to talk to another about how it is with their soul.

After the exchange, Dotson described one of his favorite movies, *Inception*, in which Leonardo DiCaprio plays Don Cobb, who is offered one last chance not to steal something but to plant something. Healthy leadership matters. Nothing is more powerful than a renewed and inspired leader with a soul reset.

Sometimes we get so caught up in opportunity for others to grow that we neglect our own growing in faith. If a hitter in baseball misses first base, said Dotson, nothing else matters. Discipleship is first base; your spiritual development is first base. He counseled the clergy to check out the air at 30,000 feet. Plan for it. It is so easy, he said, to get caught up in the urgent. An essential task of leadership is staying connected to your "why." "How do you intentionally spend time checking out your why?" he asked. Dotson then allowed time for people to talk about that with one another. How you lead yourself shapes how you lead others, he stated.

In conclusion, he said that there are really no mass movements. At the center there is always a bonafide leader, one who says, "On Christ the solid rock I stand." *Inception* complete, he concluded.

Laity Address

Jeff Bouis brought focus to the primary missional strategy for conference this year – New Spaces for New Faces. He is particularly excited because it is intended to be led primarily by the laity, lay people with ideas, initiative, vision and passion, doers who want to make a difference in the world around them. He acknowledged that clergy are a vital part of the mission as well but that there is no stopping what the Spirit might do when laity are given the tools and the permission to act.

Bouis called attention to some of the New Faces New Spaces work that is already being done. He began in the heart of Dallas with Union Coffee where folks wondered about creating a worship community for young professionals who want to be change agents for Dallas: How could they gather and empower and encourage leaders for the city? The result was Sunday Spread, a gathering that meets twice a month for brunch, blues, discussion, Jesus, and coffee. Baranda Fermin, a lay person, was central to launching this. Most who attend are folks who had long since left the church or who never attended. At least 20 are LGBTQ who had left the church because they did not feel they had a place and have now returned for worship and communion.

Their average age at Sunday Spread is late 20s, about 80% of whom are non-white. In less than a year, they already have a person starting the ordination process; another is inquiring. Eight persons are in the process of joining the church, about half by profession of faith and all under the age of 40.

In the suburbs is First UMC Allen in a long construction project, providing new space every Friday and a free lunch, along with a short devotional and a space to get to know others.

In Greenville, Westview UMC is reaching senior citizens who have little opportunity to socialize or engage in any activities. Every Wednesday PrimeTime Senior Center provides fellowship, activities, a good meal, and programs.

First UMC Mabank is at the other end of the age spectrum: school kids. Allison and Larry Partridge, lay persons at First Mabank, bought a small, run-down house in an impoverished subdivision and named it The Foundry House to do missions work there. They realized a need for a safe environment for the area kids, so they started “Kids Klubhouse at the Foundry House” with 4 trained high school interns and 2 adults, offering tutoring, teaching, recreation, and a complete meal. The ministry builds trust with the kids and gives them leadership skills, educational help and a commitment to family and education.

Bouis quoted Bishop McKee as saying that Wesley said we are a people going on to perfection; he reminded the conference that a plan does not need to be perfect before it is begun. NFNS is a chance to move out of the perception that church is irrelevant. It is a chance to take our story out into the communities, to connect with people where they are, and to build the kingdom outside the walls of our churches, one relationship at a time.

Center for Church Development

Owen Ross, Director of the Center for Church Development, introduced Assistant Director for the Black Church Initiative, S. Dianna Masters; Assistant Director for Church Planting, Matt Temple; and Ministry Coordinator, Liliana Rangel. Ross assured the conference that they all want to partner and create with them. They want to know what God is doing in the local church and how the Center might partner with them.

Rangel spoke to the power of the laity and their countless hours of service in churches throughout the North Texas Conference. Rangel introduced Healthy Church Essentials, taking the Healthy Church Initiative to the next level. The initiative would continue, and the next level would address the churches five major needs: (1) creating a mission and vision; (2) improving Sunday morning experience; (3) creating a discipleship pathway; (4) developing leaders, and (5) simplifying board structure. Laity know what their church needs. Rangel invited both laity and clergy to mark November 5th at Christ UMC, Plano, as the date and place to learn how to partner with the Center on addressing The Essential Five.

Rangel introduced S. Dianna Masters who referenced the Acts 2 account, expressing the need for diversity. Masters announced a webinar on building a stronger prayer ministry and another on trying to develop a spiritual formation plan for young millennials, including online access, enabling black millennials to “do church on the go.” The Black Church Initiative will host a series of seminars this fall. Even in this digital age, preaching is regarded in the black culture as premium; therefore, BCI partners with Dr. Alyce McKenzie, preaching professor at Perkins School of Theology, and Rev. Dr. Kevin Muriel of Cascade UMC, Atlanta, Georgia.

Masters introduced Matt Temple, new to Methodism. He asked the conference to respond with the mission of The United Methodist Church. The local church is where disciple-making happens, Temple affirmed. He invited friends to share some of those stories. Baranda Fermin told how something bubbling up turned out to be brunch, now called “Sunday Spread.” She was awarded a matching grant to sustain this ministry. Marcus Jones, Wesley Foundation Director in Wichita Falls, affirmed the Center which has helped him relaunch the campus ministry at Midwestern State University by providing essential tools for the job. Courtney Schulz will be focusing on planting a church along the 380 corridor. She learned through the Center and was connected to others doing the same work. Josh Esparza, serving as campus pastor at Owenwood Farm, said that partnership with the Center had provided tools and enabled him to see the long-term goals of relationship and neighborhood. Temple encouraged churches to be the centers of recognizing when and where new churches need to be planted.

Ross concluded by saying, “Ask not what you can do for the CCD but what the CCD can do for your church.” Ross said that he has been to 177 of the churches in the North Texas Conference and believes that the Spirit is being poured out upon all.

New Spaces New Faces Video – Jacksboro UMC

Jamie Flanagan from Jacksboro UMC described the blessing of the “Sacred Circle” for children on Wednesday evening, a circle that teaches children how they are blessings to their community and to themselves. Each session ends with the children blessing one another. A meal is served in this joint effort with Jacksboro’s Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian churches. Starting with 7 children in September, 2018, Sacred Circle now has 25 children. Randi Frye confirmed how well the program is working, saying that they came to Jacksboro UMC through this program for their children.

Center for Connectional Resources – Board of Pension and Insurance

Jodi Smith, Treasurer and Director of the Center for Connectional Resources, together with Todd Harris, Chair of the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, presented the Center’s report. Harris affirmed Jodi as the person who has the answers. He then presented legislative items for approval. Some of the legislation was on the consent agenda.

Legislative Item #8 [LA 8] contained the budget for 2020, as approved by the BOPHB and CFA. The total change was a 1.0% decrease, primarily due to a decrease in the amount budgeted for Retiree Health Insurance for the current year. The amount budgeted was lowered to align with actuals for the last few years. Motion passed.

Harris then presented Legislative Item #10 [LA 10] recommending that a 2.8% increase be set in the Pre-82 service rate for a total of \$802, a percentage increase known as the “Cost-of-Living Adjustment” as published by the Social Security Administration. The legislation passed. Harris and Bishop McKee urged all clergy to invest in their retirement fund now.

General Board of Global Ministries

A video of the 200-year anniversary of GBGM reminded the conference that Methodism is missional at its core and that the church was born by missionaries sent to America by John Wesley. The first cross-cultural “appointment,” however, was John Stewart, a free black man fettered by alcohol and depression. Casting aside these obstacles and led by the Holy Spirit, Stewart inspired others compelled to share the love of Christ. In the Congo, John Springer met a former slave in West Africa. Methodists have served even in the most difficult situations, as in Liberia after the revolution. Methodists go from everywhere to everywhere, but some Methodists stay. If you have ever put a dollar in the offering plate, said the narrator, you are part of our mission together.

Today that mission continues as the North Texas Annual Conference commissioned Rev. Dr. Wesley Magruder to teach theology in South Africa. Magruder and his wife Leah came before the conference for their commissioning by

the bishop and GBGM representative Hannah Hanson, Director of Young Adult Mission Services, who noted that the anchor cross which Magruder received is a reminder they are firmly grounded in Christ and connected with all other missionaries, their companions in the journey. Magruder and his wife received an extended standing ovation.

The bishop then talked about the Methodist presence in Honduras. Bishop McKee is now the episcopal leader in Honduras. Their goal is that each of the 23 Methodist congregations in Honduras will have a partner in the United States. Ten of those congregations currently have partners; they need 13 more US congregations to partner with the remaining churches. GBGM is the only United Methodist presence in Central America.

Bishop McKee reminded the conference that in 1998, 7,000 deaths resulted from the devastating tornado Mitch. He then invited everyone to go with him and his assistant, Andy Lewis, to Honduras in September. He pointed out that almost every day, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala are in the news with migrants at the southern border.

Project Transformation

A video focusing on the history of Warren UMC and its move in 2018 to the corner of Malcolm X and MLK celebrated Warren's opening as a new PT site, part of the congregation's commitment to reclaim its legacy as a gathering place and to shape change in the people's lives. The confluence of the police department, volunteers reading with children, and the community of Warren UMC coming together was a combination that has shaped change in the lives of that area's children, as well as sustained a cadre of volunteers unwilling to skip a summer without being a part of PT. At the end of the video, Lauren Richard, executive director at Project Transformation North Texas, spoke to the conference.

Richard began her tenure with the organization in January, 2019. She said that she initially applied for one reason: she had seen the change that happens at PT. She had previously worked at Momentous Institute, a decade-long partner with Project Transformation since both organizations work to prioritize the social and emotional health of children and youth. It was through the partnership that she saw firsthand the transformational change that happens at PT.

Richard said that lives of young adults and children they serve have been changed. Now she looks forward to seeing the changes in churches and communities that are served. She acknowledged the ways that churches and communities help – providing dinners, reading with the children, donating money, and blessing the young adults who work at PT.

Center for Leadership Development

Cammy Gaston, Director of the Center for Leadership Development, introduced the CLD staff: Kelly Carpenter, Associate Director; Emma Williams, Faith Formation; Joseph Bradley, Camping and Retreat Ministry at Bridgeport, Texoma and Go Camp; Liz Greenwell, the CART Crisis/Care team; Marsha Middleton, Board of Ministry Officer, and Mariel Vela, support staff. Their ecosystem begins with young, current, and future leaders through Wesleyan formation initiatives. They grow leaders in new, creative spaces in local churches, at camp, and in college. They create ways to support by providing coaches, workshops, retreats, seminars, tool kits, and partnerships with other leadership organizations. Their goal is to support ministry.

Gaston introduced Williams to talk about a leader who took one of the Wesleyan Formation programs and became a catalyst for creativity by bringing it to her church. Referring to Annual Conference 2018's presentation of "A Time for Children" and offered by the Center over the past four years, Williams introduced a video of Angela Williams at The Village United Methodist Church in Desoto and their program of "A Time for Children," a catalyst for creative ministry with children and a support for children that helps them learn about who they are in God.

Carpenter focuses on campus ministry, retreat ministry, and special events. Carpenter introduced a video of 2018 Clergy Retreat, featuring speaker Jennifer Bailey and conversations gathered around the table for People's Supper. Brian Dierolf, campus minister for the Wesley Foundation at Texas A&M Commerce, was present for that retreat and took the idea back to his campus ministry. There they began the Kin-dom Dinner, followed by a contemporary worship service. Students developed sermon ideas and learned how to plan and lead a worship service. Carpenter encouraged clergy to attend the Clergy Retreats and laity to support their clergy in this endeavor.

Greenwell introduced a video of Scott Holcomb-McLain, Senior Pastor of Van Alstyne UMC, who explained that his church was devastated by the arrest of a youth minister for misconduct with a youth. Holcomb-McLain described how everyone was in a deep state of grief and that there are some situations one never anticipates happening. When he got the call from the police, he called the CART Crisis and Care Team. It was a well-placed call and much-needed resource. The CART team was there for them.

Bradley referenced a new leadership pilot program with a handful of youth. This year it has expanded to three summer camps. They seek to create intentional spaces for youth to continue to grow, creating a culture of leadership. They use a tiered structure, from younger to older youth, in various roles. Bradley invited Genna Parr to talk about her experience as a youth counselor. Parr, 17, is still discerning a call to ministry, and her experience as youth counselor provided experience for this. Parr worked with worship and younger youth to help them prepare for worship. She encouraged all churches to consider youth who would benefit from this program.

Gaston concluded by emphasizing the Center's support for all in ministry, working alongside one another. The Center wants to support all those who seek to become a catalyst for creativity.

Center for Missional Outreach

Andy Lewis, Director of the Center for Missional Outreach, began with the prologue of John's Gospel from The Message paraphrase, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." Emphasizing that the ministry of Jesus Christ was incarnational, Lewis encouraged the conference to practice saying the mantra, "ministry with" rather than "ministry to." Lewis underscored two things about the mission of the Center for Missional Outreach: (1) their focus on the local church and (2) a distinct approach to missions as "ministry with." "Ministry with" neighbors means coming alongside neighbors in a spirit of friendship and mutuality, listening to neighbors and learning from them, building long-term relationships with neighbors, uncovering often-undervalued gifts, talents, dreams, desires, and connections of neighbors, adopting the iron rule never to take away from others the opportunity to do what they can do for themselves, addressing the systems that perpetuate suffering and inequity rather than only dealing with the symptoms of our broken world, and using a strengths-based approach that leverages the gifts and relationships of local partners.

Jurrita Williams reported that the Center has discerned five focus areas for their catalytic work: (1) equipping local churches to be successful in establishing strong, church-school partnerships or deepening already existing ones. (example: the "One + One" vision); (2) serving as a catalyst for bold local church "ministry with" initiatives; (3) facilitating meaningful conversations among local church leaders to help name and combat racial injustice in churches and communities; (4) activating people of faith to be advocates around immigration issues in ways that reflect the compassion and grace of our Wesleyan heritage, and (5) sending 300 mission teams to the Rio Texas Conference in 2018, 2019, and 2020 to aid in Hurricane Harvey recovery along the Texas Gulf Coast. She expressed the Center's eagerness to partner with any who might be interested in any of those areas of focus.

Andrew Fiser lifted up three examples of the ministry-with initiatives of the CMO, including the CitySquare Pastoral Leadership Cohort, a partnership with two people who have a proven track record of poverty alleviation: Larry James, CEO of CitySquare, and Rob Spencer, Senior Pastor of First UMC, Paris. Larry's and Rob's expertise and coaching will unleash the potential of rural congregations to build relationships in their communities that can fight poverty in creative ways.

Williams spoke to another way the CMO is serving as a catalyst for ministry-with by offering a limited number of Ministry-With grants each year, ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each. One of those recipients is Dallas Bethlehem Center. Chelsea White is the Executive Director. Accompanying White was Chavela Garrett, and together they shared the story of the ministry of DBC. They spoke to their new vision of promoting social change in South Dallas. They noted that while high-quality programs are important, people live in communities; they do not live in programs. The new strategy centers around intentional community engagement, with initiatives to empower neighbors to create their own way out of poverty.

This is a paradigm shift; and to carry this work, DBC needed to find a very special person with a specific mix of qualities: radical compassion, intimate knowledge of South Dallas, deep history with Dallas Bethlehem Center, and excellent people skills. That key person, said White, was Chavela Garrett, DBC's new community liaison.

Fiser introduced the third piece of the work relating to our church's and nation's ongoing challenge to combat racial injustice and dismantle white supremacy. Small groups of clergy and laity have been launched to explore a book by Robin DiAngelo called *White Fragility*. This summer the bishop and cabinet will be reading and discussing this book, as well.

DiAngelo defines white fragility as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. In turn, these behaviors function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. In our majority- white congregations, white fragility is a real phenomenon and a significant roadblock to our work in our ever-more-diversifying mission fields."

DiAngelo contends that people of color need white people to do their own homework and not rely so heavily on people of color to teach and challenge them. They will then be better equipped to come alongside people of color and work together for greater racial justice in local churches, connectional systems, and communities.

Rev. Jonathan Grace and Rev. Holly Bandel have been part of the first book discussion groups. In a video, Grace and Bandel said that racism affects every aspect of our lives. The study has really helped them come to terms with a broken world. When God says, "Love God and love your neighbor," said Grace, we think, "Of course, we will ... then we get to know our neighbor." We are particularly unaware, said Bandel, of our racism. In order to have a just world, we must confront the reality of racism.

Lewis concluded by reminding the conference that the focus of the Center for Missional Outreach is the local church. The Center wants to be a catalyst for faithful and creative work. He showed instructions on applying for a Ministry-With grant, joining a cohort or a discussion group, or exploring how else the Center might partner with the local church's ministry with the church's neighborhood.

Methodist Children's Home

A video of Methodist Children's Home shared testimonies from resident teens, all of whom spoke to the difference that MCH has made in their lives. MCH, they shared, had made them come back to life with a purpose, had shown them the true picture of life when they had had family difficulties, and had taught them how to live a good successful life. Single parents and couples with children spoke of being given parenting skills for working with their children while their children were present.

At the end of the video, Trey Oakley spoke to the conference of the 26 graduates this year from their charter school, of the ½ million dollars in scholarships that will be provided, of new state-of-the-art buildings, and of the more than 6,000 families helped. He shared the stories of those who had spent time in MCH and, as adults, witnessed to the impact that MCH had had on their lives as successful businesspeople and parents. Oakley challenged the conference to remember the they are still not scratching the surface of those in need of what MCH can offer.

Young Persons' Address

Connor Sprattley, Activities Chair of CCYM, opened with prayer. Garrett Turner, outgoing Service Fund Chair, defined CCYM, saying that it is made up of youth in grades 6-12 from diversified backgrounds and from all four districts. At this year's mid-winter retreat, they studied the liturgical calendar of the church and why it is important. They engaged in meaningful and spiritual conversations with other youth and with adults. The YSF raised money for Paper for Water, used to build water wells in countries without clean drinking water. Some of the money raised went to the national YSF as well. They raised over \$1,500.

Karissa Garcia, Communications Chair, noted that John Wesley once said, "What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace." She said when she looks at her peers, she sees them embracing each other, no matter their differences, trying to find common ground, picking each other up when the world around them is crumbling.

Morgan Randall, incoming YSF Chair, thanked Bishop McKee and the conference for their support. She noted that all around are young people living their faith and engaging one another. She asked that the conference listen to the youth and receive their ideas with open hearts. Sprattley closed with prayer. The youth then lined up on stage and threw out T-shirts and drawstring backpacks which the crowd received with great enthusiasm.

Award Presentations

Cammy Gaston, Director of the Center for Leadership Development, began the award presentations. The recipient of the Harry Denman Evangelism Award for Clergy was Rev. Stacey Piyakhun. Since her appointment at Melissa UMC in 2014, services have expanded to two worship services, increase of professing members from 85 to 206 with 51 baptisms and an additional 58 professions of faith, all this for a church whose average weekly worship attendance is around 160 people. In addition to all the success the church has experienced internally, Piyakhun is equally proud of the impact it has made in the community.

Jeff Bouis introduced the Harry Denman Evangelism Award for Adult Laity recipient, Marian Schulze of Grace Avenue UMC, Frisco. Marian has impacted lives by leading Bible studies and volunteering with other community organizations. During Lent, 2013, she recognized God was directing her attention to children experiencing hunger. She discovered that there were children in Frisco who were on reduced- or free-lunch programs, and she recognized that they might be without meals on weekends. Her response to God's call was to create "Frisco Fastpacs." Beginning with a group of 32 children at one school, Fastpacs has grown now to feed over 1,000 children in 63 Frisco schools. Teachers, counselors, and families of the children have been impacted as they witness the transforming power of this great mission. Her ministry has become a beacon to the thousands of volunteers who assist in acquiring food, setting up the warehouse, packing the meals, providing encouragement cards, delivering packs to the schools, or donating money or time in many ways. Their lives have been transformed as they put their faith into action, spreading the love of Christ to children and families in need.

Gaston presented the Harry Denman Evangelism Award for Youth to Mikayla Doty of First UMC Howe. Doty is involved in various community service events and serves the church through VBS, mission trips, music, and is currently the president of her youth group. She is outstanding in "walking the talk," being recognized as a child of God in her day-to-day attitude and willingness to spread the word of God to every situation. Doty, a 2019 graduate of Howe High School, has volunteered as pianist for the Sunday morning service for the past five years. She has stepped out of her comfort zone countless times and is part of "showing with a heart," an organization which gives students with special needs an opportunity to show livestock.

The One Matters Discipleship Award was presented by Gaston to the East District and received by District Superintendent Vic Casad. Gaston highlighted three churches in the East District, churches that have shown the greatest increase in growth: First UMC Winnsboro – Debbie Lyons, full-time local pastor, having grown to an attendance of 91 and a membership of 176, with seven new professions of faith; Miller Grove UMC – Howard

Strickland, an 80-year-old, quarter-time, bi-vocational pastor, with eight new professions of faith in 2018, plus baptisms of two teenagers and a 70-year-old woman; Wesley UMC Sulphur Springs – where a free lunch is provided every Monday and Friday for residents of the neighborhood, resulting in at least a dozen new people attending Sunday worship in the past 19 months. Rev. Steve Cook and wife Dicie Rue have created an adult confirmation class called “The Soul Journey,” resulting in four adult professions of faith and two confirmands.

Brian Dierolf presented the Bishop William B. Oden Ecumenical award on behalf of the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns to Wes Magruder, Senior Pastor of Kessler Park UMC and soon to be a Global Ministries missionary in South Africa. Magruder previously served through GBGM as Director of the Cameroon New Mission Initiative. His ecumenical and interreligious work is extensive and includes ministry related to advocating for refugees, abolishing the death penalty, and building bridges of understanding and relationship with the Muslim community.

Most recently, Magruder has served as president of the Board of Directors of Refugee Services of Texas and has become a leader in refugee resettlement efforts in the Dallas area. In February of this year, Magruder received the Founders’ Award from the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty at the group’s annual conference in Dallas. For several years, Magruder fasted for Ramadan as a sign of friendship and solidarity with the Muslim community and then wrote about his experiences. In 2016, he called on American lawmakers to push for evacuations from Syria to resume. His lifelong commitment to justice and compassion and pursuing these goals alongside friends from other faith traditions has made him a worthy recipient of the Bishop William B. Oden Ecumenical Award.

Ed Lantz closed the afternoon business session with prayer.

MONDAY EVENING

Service of Ordination Christ United Methodist Church, Plano

Reverend Don Underwood welcomed the conference to Christ United Methodist Church, Plano, for the Service of Ordination, Recognition of Orders, and Commissioning. Music was provided by Christ UMC Plano Sanctuary Choir, directed by Pat Messick. Thirty-two servants of God were presented for commissioning and ordination.

Those persons commissioned as provisional members were Abbey Hayes Echols, Eva Lorraine Englert-Jessen, Heather Leigh-Ann Gottas, Joshua Alfredo Esparza, Sandra Anne Heard, Cottrell King, Sungmoon Lee, Aaron Shockley Logan, Joshua Elijah Manning, Chad Taylor Mogus, Payton A.L. Parker, Kyle Lyndon Weston Powell.

The persons ordained as elders were Charles William Church, James Michael Decker, Joy Lynne Gonzalez, Jane Carnathan Graner, Richard Thomas Harrison IV, Allison Grace Jean, Stephen Eric Lohoefer, Geoffrey Christome Moore, Jon Christopher Rickwartz, Courtney Rose Schultz, Taylor Garrett Smith.

Ordained as deacons were Virginia Kay Ash, Michael William Flynn, Pavielle Chriss Jenkins, Evan Marshall Jones, William Hower Mauldin, Margaret Kay Proshek, Allison Hayes Shulman, Adam Gilbert White, Emma Elizabeth Williams.

Bishop McKee’s sermon for the evening was based on Luke 10:1-9. He congratulated the largest class of ordinands in the NTC in decades, telling them that what their ministry will be is up to each of them. The timeless liturgy alone says everything that needs to be said.

Bishop McKee recalled forty years ago when he was ordained in the Central Texas Conference. He challenged the ordinands not to be afraid. He was afraid to be a senior pastor until he was thirty years old, his first Sunday in

Joshua, Texas. He promised the ordinands that their lives are rich enough to find that there are not enough Sundays to preach but cautioned them not to try to do it all on the first Sunday. There are limits, he said, but it is still the most important thing clergy will do; from this moment on, they will look at the world and ask, “What will I say about Jesus Christ, regarding this issue, or this event?”

Take time, though, the Bishop counseled, to nourish your own soul, because the church can demand everything from you. Do not let it. There is a way to take care of yourself so that you will wake up loving your job.

Bishop McKee also challenged the ordinands not to let the shifting grounds in the UMC throw them off balance. There will be some sort of Wesleyan expression of the faith always, so they should stay focused on the mission. There are people right now who are dependent on this class of ordinands; and though they do not know what they need, the ordinands do know.

Finally, Bishop McKee reminded them to remember that people want them to be their pastor, to visit them in the hospital, to know their name, to be there when they sort out what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Be their pastor. It is a lot easier than it was 2,000 years ago, noted the Bishop. He then thanked each of them again for answering the call.

As Bishop Michael McKee placed his hand on the head of each person, he called upon Christ Jesus to “pour out your Holy Spirit” upon these messengers of God’s Word as we send them out to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

The evening’s offering benefited Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center in celebration of Bridgeport’s 70th Anniversary. The offertory was *Veni Creator Spiritus (Come, Holy Spirit)* with Kathy Light, soloist.

A reception honoring the newly commissioned and ordained clergy was held immediately after the service.

TUESDAY MORNING BUSINESS SESSION

June 4, 2019

Oak Worship opened Tuesday morning worship in song; Bishop McKee greeted the conference, and Courtney Schultz led with prayer.

Videos of Newly Ordained

Bishop McKee introduced the first round of ordinand videos. Ordinands answered the questions, “What do you love about the UMC?” “What is your hope for the UMC?” “How do you plan to create new spaces?”

Josh Fitzpatrick loves the church’s theological humility because folks can see differently but still worship the same Christ. He referred to “speaking with integrity in a divided world” of what lies ahead and not forgetting what has come before. His hope is that the church will seek the leading of the Holy Spirit and maybe find a new expression.

Fitzpatrick projected that the map of new spaces will be digital. The church will need to find the answer to how we engage those coming once a month or less.

Jimmy Decker loves how the church sits right in the middle of everything. He sees it in couples when one is raised evangelical; and the other, Roman Catholic. They find Methodism and have a better understanding of their faith. Decker hopes that we continue to find ways to reach out and interact with people outside the church. He would love to help redefine in their minds what church can be, as a way to help them reorient their thinking of what a Christian can be.

Decker has no idea what the new spaces that he will create will look like, but he hopes to continue having lunch with people and discerning how to grow, letting those spaces be defined by those conversations. Hopefully, they will be defined by what is going on in the world

Jane Graner said that asking what she loves about her church is like asking what she loves about her country or her family. How could she not love the place where she has come to know Christ, she posed, the place where she learned that God loves her unconditionally no matter what? She is a Wesleyan to her bones. Graner paraphrased Peter to Jesus, “Where else could I go?”

Graner’s hope is that the church can find ways to have holy spaces that will be inclusive of all people and that would include LGBTQ people so that everyone will have a place where they are loved and celebrated. In creating new spaces, she feels the need to go forward with open eyes to see who is not in our congregations and see where those holy spaces need to be.

Joy Gonzalez loves the theology of The United Methodist Church, the ability to hold in tension scripture, reason, tradition and experience. “You don’t have to leave your brain at the door to be a United Methodist,” said Gonzalez. She hopes that the church always puts its mission above its model, to be so in love with God’s vision for the world and Jesus’ intent for creation that the church will do whatever it takes to remove all barriers.

Gonzalez hopes to plant new congregations. Worship for the next generation needs to be compelling and be brought into a transcendent experience which feels like a thin space.

Chris Rickwartz loves The United Methodist Church because it is where he found the grace of God, starting in Cub Scouts. The Scouts met at the local UMC where he lived, so he and his mom started going to that church. The church taught him about discipleship and gave him the opportunity to hear the call to ministry.

Rickwartz’s hope is that the church will appropriate the ideas and knowledge discovered and practiced in the UMC’s areas of education and healthcare and use them to be present to the world. In creating new spaces for new faces, Rickwartz emphasized that the goal would be to include all people.

Stephen Lohoefer loves the UMC’s commitment to meeting people where they are and giving them the opportunity to follow Jesus in ways that are practical and accessible. That kind of opportunity does not beat people up; it opens doors and welcomes and invites them on a journey with Jesus that you do not see happening in other churches. Lohoefer’s hope is that the UMC will find a way to prioritize and get back to its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Lohoefer’s work to provide new spaces for new faces at The Grove, he has tried to remove the obstacles that prevent people from coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ. It is easy, said Lohoefer, to over-engineer, but simplicity is something The United Methodist Church does well.

Taylor Smith loves the robust connectionalism of the UMC. He likes seeing the way that people who have mentored and shaped his life have also crossed paths with other people and now they are all doing ministry together, crossing paths, and hopefully shaping people’s lives. To see the way the Holy Spirit works in all these ways is amazing.

Smith’s hope is that the church moves forward toward full inclusion. Additionally, he believes it would be great if the church could consolidate *The Book of Discipline* and make it a little smaller. In creating new spaces for new faces, Smith is drawing on one of his passions – exercise science. He participates in CrossFit and has seen the way community forms around that and will continue to explore the way the Christian community and exercise science work together.

Allie Shulman loves the way the United Methodists and Wesleyans have the best articulation of who the God is that we serve and the God we love and that this theology is beautifully articulated in our churches. She thinks that is something the UMC is doing really right. Her hope is that the church can be the mainline church that stays united despite internal arguments and be okay with disagreements as long as it is focused on the central message.

In forming new spaces, she hopes to focus on those folks already around who are nominally Christian but have not been involved in a long time. She believes growth will happen then.

Consent Agenda

Andy Lewis, Assistant to the Bishop, presented the Consent Agenda, stating that there had been no notice to the Conference Secretary of any corrections or additions. The Consent Agenda was approved by a show of hands.

Nominations

Andy Lewis and Jeff Bouis, Conference Lay Leader, presented the nominations report. Bouis and Lewis reminded the conference that this year there had been only 11 vacancies to fill because most terms run on the quadrennium. Next year, however, there will be about 100 vacancies. Bouis asked everyone to prayerfully consider where they are called and to complete a form provided by the Conference Ministry Center for a place of service. There were no other nominations from the floor, and the nominations report was approved by a show of hands.

Ordinand Videos #2

Pavielle Jenkins loves the understanding of grace that is for all and in all, a grace that is shaping and transforming all of us. She loves that the UMC is about putting faith into action. She hopes that the UMC continues to live into our Wesleyan theology and understanding of grace that is for all, that the church can be focused on mission, that it will continue to be about social justice and be passionate about making change in this world. She hopes that the church can adapt and stay relevant, as there is a great need for understanding grace and God's love.

Jenkins hopes to create new spaces by getting outside the church building, by meeting people who probably would not be willing to enter the church but who have a desire to know about God. Come, Holy Spirit.

Bill Mauldin loves the balance of the UMC – loves that the clergy and laity are both in leadership, loves that there is both personal and social piety. He hopes that we all still practice the three rules to do all the good we can, do no harm, and stay in love with God, and that even in the time of radical disagreement, the church can still live together in love that will lead to a new revival.

Mauldin currently works in an intentionally inclusive congregation in which at least half have told him that they come because the church sign says that the congregation welcomes people of all races and orientations. He would like the UMC to move from welcoming inside to going outside. In creating new spaces, he hopes to reach out to LGBTQI teens and their families; he hopes this will take the church outside.

Chuck Church loves the rich Wesleyan heritage and history. He loves that the UMC is a church that was started in order to go out and do something significant to reach people who were not being reached; he hopes that the UMC will continue the conversations. He sees the need for the church to become mapmakers, charting a course completely different from 20, 30, 40 years ago. There is a need for the church to understand conversations are going to be the most critical element moving forward.

New spaces means to churches that the UMC will understand that it is not avoiding the roads of the past but exploring new places they have not yet gone.

Geoffrey Moore loves that, from the beginning, the church was committed to transforming the world by preaching Christ and God's unmerited, unbounded, unconditional grace. Methodists preach a grace that has the power to go behind us, before us, above us, below us – all around – and that has the power to empower us as disciples to do all the good we can, in every way we can, for as long as we can.

Moore hopes that we can recapture the spirit of a movement that strove bravely and tirelessly against all kinds of resistance to revive the church, that we can once again go into the streets and alleys to bring the good news to the marginalized and those who think God has forgotten them. Describing new spaces for new faces, Moore recalled that he observed early in his time at St. Stephen UMC that over half of visitors came by invitation of a couple who live in a rural community about 30 minutes from the church. However, those visitors did not return, so Moore and the church started a house gathering in the same rural area – instead of the residents coming to the church, Moore goes to them.

Ricky Harrison said he had heard God's voice most clearly through the people in all the churches he has called on; they have named gifts they saw in him that he did not even know he had. Quoting Matthew 25, Harrison said he hopes that the church can re-center their lives on Jesus, which means focusing on their neighbors because it is there that they get to meet Jesus. When LGBTQ brothers and sisters come, we get to see the face of Jesus Christ, he said.

Harrison believes that the church should keep its vision toward the margins – toward folks who have had really terrible experiences of church in the past, people with young kids who feel anxious in the sanctuary, or those with tough questions about God, or friends of LGBTQ orientation who have not been welcomed in the church. Harrison encouraged asking the question, "Who is not here?"

Workshop Session for Laity

While clergy prepared for voting, laity were dismissed and invited to participate in a New Spaces New Faces workshop called "Fresh Expressions," led by Rev. Dr. Audrey Warren, pastor of FUMC, Miami, Florida, and a team from the Florida Conference. Warren gave the basic principles and processes around the movement characterized by a strong mission focus, innovation which might proceed quickly or slowly, and a commitment to church. The process can be described as love, relate, create; it can be thought of as being contained within the circles of (1) Listening to Community, (2) Loving and Serving, (3) Building Community, (4) Exploring Discipleship, (5) New Church Taking Shape, and (6) Starting Again.

Fresh Expressions is essentially a form of church for people who are not members of a church. Warren described it as a movement of the Holy Spirit, not a strategy for church growth. She also spoke of the Nones, Dones, Open De-Churched, Closed De-Churched, Open Un-Churched, and Closed Un-Churched population that this movement attempts to reach and how it is not a replacement for those happily, or not happily, church.

Three clergy members of the team told the stories of their particular mission. Michael Beck, author of "Deep Roots, Wild Branches," described a group of people who get together and paddle their boats/surfboards out on the bay and hold a devotional service. Heather Evans started a dinner church in the largest and poorest trailer park in her town. Gary Marcelin also started a dinner church in his community.

Instructions on Electronic Voting

After the break, clergy returned for voting. Conference Secretary Judith Reedy proposed setting the bar for the clergy on the floor. The motion was approved, and Reedy explained which clergy were eligible to vote. Reedy then explained how voting would be conducted. A sample ballot was cast. Bishop Whitfield led clergy in prayer, and voting began with Ballot 1. There was no election in ballots 1 or 2. Carole Somers-Clark moved that the reading of names receiving less than 25 votes be discontinued; motion was approved. Ballot 3 was declared invalid, as there was confusion when a voting machine had to be exchanged.

Before ballot 13, David Rucker asked for clarification on why the numbers of votes had decreased substantially. Bishop McKee explained that, as the number of places on the delegation decrease, so do the number of votes cast. After General Conference delegates were elected, Bishop McKee prayed before Jurisdictional voting began. Voting concluded at 11:10.

2020 Annual Conference

After the break, Robert Hasley extended an invitation for Annual Conference 2020 to be held at St. Andrew UMC, Plano on May 31 - June 2.

Clergy Voting Report

Conference Secretary Judith Reedy reported on clergy voting to the Annual Conference. Bishop McKee announced that the full delegation would be recognized at the conclusion of lay voting and that Clayton Oliphint will chair the General Conference delegation.

Ordinand Videos #3

Allison Jean Loves that the UMC is the family she chose. That home church was in Lindsay, Oklahoma, where she heard the entire church singing and knew that she always had a family. She hopes that folks will know that they are not alone and see the current situation and division of the UMC as a challenge to work together with the Holy Spirit.

Jean is making lots of new spaces for college-age and young adults. In those spaces, she is not using secret, churchy words; she is using language that is inclusive and familiar and welcoming.

Adam White loves that he has always been able to come with his questions and at his own pace, creating a space that aligns with Wesleyan values and social issues. His hope is that the church will align itself with the call to be in community with one another and be open to everyone.

White has been creating new spaces for young adults with a group named YALL – Young Adult Learning Lunches. They take their desires for social justice issues, watch for an opportunity to serve, and try to put into action their desires by serving. This year it will be at Bonton Farms. White’s work with the Missional Wisdom Foundation is meaningful, as well as his work in the local church. He works with leaders all over the country, thinking about what it means to be the church.

Maggie Proshek loves the people of the UMC and that it is wonderful, complicated, and sometimes messy to be in ministry with the people who stand up and speak out for justice. She hopes that the need for reconciliation and healing will be met and that the church will continue to find ways to love God.

Proshek has a deep passion and call to be in ministry with youth. She looks to find ways to create spaces where these youth can connect with the church and know that their voices matter.

Michael Flynn remembers what Wesley said, that “there is no holiness but social holiness,” and he loves that about the UMC. He hopes that we will find reconciliation and healing and that we will continue to find ways to love God.

As a deacon, Flynn has had several opportunities to serve in assisted-living centers. Some of the people in those centers have no family. We, the church, may be the only people who remind them that they are loved by God. He hopes to create spaces where he is always able to remind them.

Kay Ash loves how spirited, how full of life, the UMC is. She hopes that we turn ourselves around and ground ourselves in a love that connects us.

Ash has developed a program for telling gospel stories with children. Most recently, her church has put those children on a bus to places where people need to hear those gospel stories that the children have learned so well and can now share with others.

Martha Valencia loves the theology of the UMC. Having been reared in the Pentecostal Church, Valencia did not readily hear of God's grace. She hopes that the UMC will continue to be one and serve God.

Valencia is especially excited about creating new spaces for fellow Latina women.

Emma Williams loves the theological heritage of prevenient grace, a grace that comes before we even know we need it and tells us that God is constantly leaning toward us. Williams hopes that we can remember that we can have something new and better, even when it is different from what we know, something that will bring in the kingdom of God.

She works with children and youth in both the conference office and in the local church. She hopes that children and youth will bring Christ into new spaces where people have not heard or need to hear in a new way.

Courtesies and Resolutions

Conference Secretary Judith Reedy recognized two guests – David and Elizabeth McCormick, General Board of Global Ministries mission advocates for the South Central Jurisdiction.

Daniel Soliz closed the morning session with prayer.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

The annual conference worship team opened the afternoon session with music, and Bishop McKee thanked them for their leadership and the diversity of music throughout the conference. Linda Parks opened the afternoon session with prayer.

Don Underwood, Senior Pastor of Christ UMC, recognized the team of 300 volunteers from the congregation, led by Angie Rosowski. Conference members responded with a round of applause.

Texas Methodist Foundation

Tom Locke said the NTC feels like home to him. He grew up in Sherman and was a part of the NTC. Appearing with Locke was Clayton Oliphint, the new board chair of TMF. Locke reminded the conference that four years ago he had reported assets of 500 million dollars. This year, as TMF and the UM Fund have combined, assets are at 750 million dollars. Both churches and individuals have grown as investors. Locke gave credit to John Thornburg and Carol Montgomery, to Lisa Greenwood and Janice Huie, for their work with NTC churches, as well as other conferences.

Locke said that loans of 100 million dollars had been granted to the NTC and that no conference has more debt than the NTC. He said that is a good thing and that it allows Thornburg and Montgomery to be out among folks asking, "What is God asking of you now?" and to be conveners of conversations. Locke expressed gratitude for 30 years of leadership from the NTC and explained that as churches and individuals invest funds with TMF, TMF then has the liquidity to make these loans.

Oliphint concluded the report by thanking Tom Locke. He noted that TMF points the church toward purpose and thanked TMF for that vision.

Florida Workshop for Clergy

Andy Lewis thanked the team from the Florida Conference for their Fresh Expressions Workshop with the laity. He then reminded the clergy to attend this workshop during lay voting so that they would have the same information about successfully creating new spaces for new faces.

Clergy Spouse Address

Craig Parson, president of the clergy spouses' organization, joined by other clergy spouses on stage, extended an open invitation to all spouses of clergy, male or female, young or mature or anyone in-between. Clergy spouses meet several times throughout the year for fun and fellowship, as well as an annual retreat. At that retreat each year, the clergy spouses gather to create a report that answers some of the questions and reveals some of the challenges of being a clergy spouse. Parson then introduced a video (with the disclaimer that the identities of those featured in the video had been changed so that they could not be recognized!). This was accomplished by each spouse pictured with large sunglasses and various disguising attire. Parsons explained that each spouse had been asked nitty-gritty questions and had to answer with the lyrics of a song. He also noted that the clergy spouses call themselves "Clergy Spice." The video brought comic relief and a round of applause by the conference members.

Committee on Finance and Administration

Jodi Smith, Director, called attention to Legislative Item #7 [LA 7] from the Center for Leadership Development related to equitable compensation. She explained that Part 1 contained a requested amount of \$55,832 to subsidize minimum equitable compensation, and Part 2 reflected an adjustment in equitable compensation in order to follow the increase percentage of 2.8% used to determine salaries for district superintendents. The new minimum equitable compensation would be \$50,236, if approved. The motion carried.

Smith then introduced Larry Womack, President of CFA. Womack reported that the NTC had a great year in 2018. For the second year in a row, the payout of apportionments was over 96% -- 96.2% to be exact. In addition, CFA was excited to learn of the NTC's responses to the New Faces New Spaces initiatives launched last year, including the focus on stewardship training for financial resources as a vital part of raising up both clergy and congregations on the leading edge of the initiative. In the first six months of the program, more than 1/3 of NTC churches responded by creating at least one new worshipping community in their setting.

Womack called attention to the complete set of financial reports and supporting documentation for 2018 in the conference workbook. Two new reports were included this year in direct response to the first significant change made in nonprofit accounting standards in 25 years – the Statement of Functional Expenses and the Liquidity Statement.

Womack presented two items included in CFA Legislative Item #12 [LA #12.I]. The first was the recommendation of continued engagement of Ratliff Associates as auditors of all corporate entities consolidated under the leadership of the North Texas Conference, including NTC, Board of Pensions, Prothro, Bridgeport, and Go Camp. The motion was approved.

The second portion of Legislative Item #12 [LA #12.II] was the apportionment budget. The overall increase is less than 1%. The Jurisdictional and General Conference increase is 1.91%. That budget item is set every four years by General Conference. The budget for 2021 will be set by the General Conference in 2020. The Jurisdictional and General Conference portion of our budget is about 32% of the total budget.

The NTC portion of this increase is about ½ of 1% and is largely due to a request to add funding for the TUMCA scholarship support for Texas United Methodist Seminaries back into the budget. That line item is in the Center for Leadership Development.

CFA and the NTC centers worked hard to minimize the impact of the increase of the General Conference budget on the total budget. Funding almost 4 million dollars of General Conference support, plus a little over 8 million of our own support and programming, is no small feat. When each Center presented its budget to CFA, it was gratifying to see the directors focused on providing this type of empowering ministry in the local church; therefore, CFA recommends adoption of the budget.

Bill Gavin, lay member from Greenland Hills, urged the conference to think about seminaries whose support has been diminished and what we can do.

The motion for approval of Legislative Item #12 [LA #12] carried.

Following the budget approval, Bishop McKee offered a statement regarding apportionments. He said that after a long process related to sustainability, a request for reduced participation in the United States (which carries 98% of the budget for the General Church) has been received. That requested reduction is roughly 18%. General Conference 2020 will decide. This year's forecast for apportionments is 70% collection. Bishop McKee stated that we are already seeing a reduction of apportionment payments in NTC, and we are \$500,000 behind on a \$3,000,000 budget. He challenged the conference to choose another way to register dissent. There is no way to identify any particular way to withhold; there cannot be a designation within mission. We are part of the problem but also part of the solution; he encouraged churches to pay their apportionments.

Instructions on Electronic Voting

After the break, laity returned for voting. Conference Secretary Judith Reedy explained how voting would be conducted and who was eligible to vote. She then read the additional 7 names of laity eligible to be delegates whose names were not included on printed material distributed to conference members. A sample ballot was cast.

Bishop McKee addressed the body as to the importance of what they were doing – electing delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences. He opened the voting session with a prayer. At the end of the first ballot, Scott Larsen, Union-University Park, moved that only the names of delegates receiving more than 25 votes be read. The motion was approved.

New Places for New Faces – Grace Sherman

As clergy and laity returned for reporting, a video of Grace UMC, Sherman's New Places for New Spaces spotlighted Grace's new space for a worship community, a meal, study, and sharing life experiences around tables.

Final Report on Voting

Bishop McKee announced results of lay voting and presented the NTC delegation and alternates to 2020 General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference.

Legislative Matters

Ann Willet and Tommy Brumett introduced themselves as sponsors of the One Church Resolution. Brumett noted that The United Methodist Church is in turmoil over the issue of human sexuality. In order to move forward, Brumett emphasized the need to give each other time and space, which is the intent of the One Church Resolution. Willet moved that the One Church Resolution be adopted; the motion was seconded.

[The legislation is contained in the *Journal* as LA #16; ensuing debate and vote is included below in Exhibit C "Minutes" of the Report by Bishop on Decision of Law.]



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 CONSEIL JUDICIAIRE DE L'EGLISE METHODISTE UNIE
 RECHTSHOF DER EVANGELISCH-METHODISTISCHEN KIRCHE
 CONSELHO JUDICIAL DA IGREJA METODISTA UNIDA
 CONSEJO DE LA JUDICATURA DE LA IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA



Report by Bishop on Decision of Law

This form is to be used for (please check one):

- ☒ Reporting of decisions of law made by bishops in response to questions of law submitted to them in writing during the regular business of a conference session (§ 56.3 Const. and ¶ 2609.6 *The Book of Discipline* 2016).
- ☐ Reporting of episcopal decisions on questions of law when such decisions are appealed by one-fifth of the members of the conference (§ 56.2 Const. and ¶ 2609.7 *The Book of Discipline* 2016).

Name of Bishop: Michael McKee

Address: 500 Maplelawn Dr. City: Plano

State/Province: Texas ZIP/Postal Code: 75075 Country: USA

Phone: 972-526-5000 Fax: 972-526-5002 E-mail: bishop@ntcumc.org

Annual Conference: North Texas Date of session: 06/2-4/2019 (month/day/year)

Question(s) of Law: Regarding the One Church Resolution submitted to the North Texas Annual

Conference: Is that Resolution legal since it seeks to "negate, ignore or violate provisions

of the Discipline which they disagree." JCD 886

Authorities Cited (indicate paragraph or decision number where applicable):

Constitution: 56.3 Book of Discipline: 2609.6

Judicial Council Decision(s): 886, 913, 1021, 1044, 1283, 1292, 1297, 1340

Signature: Michael McKee Date: July 2, 2019
 Bishop of The United Methodist Church (month/day/year)

The following must be attached:

- Decision of Law, including facts, rationale and ruling
 - Text of the written request for decision
 - Minutes of annual conference proceedings (relevant portions only)
 - List of names and addresses of interested parties
 - Other relevant materials (e.g. conference rules, resolutions, policies, reports)
- Eight (8) hard copies must be submitted via USPS or other delivery service to:
 Clerk Price of the Judicial Council, 5556 N. Sheridan Road, #610, Chicago, IL 60640, USA
- Electronic copies in both Word and PDF (with security features disabled) must be submitted to: secretary@umcjudicialcouncil.org.

The North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
BISHOP'S DECISION OF LAW
Rendered pursuant to a Request for a Decision of Law submitted on June 4, 2019
Bishop Michael McKee

July 2, 2019

SYNOPSIS OF RULING

The Resolution adopted by the North Texas Annual Conference on June 4, 2019 is legal. The Resolution does not negate, ignore or violate of the Book of Discipline. The Resolution is aspirational.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The 2019 North Texas Annual Conference was presided over by Bishop Michael McKee. It began on June 2, 2019 and ended on June 4, 2019. On Tuesday, June 4, 2019, Rev. Ann Willet, a member of the body, moved the adoption of a resolution entitled "One Church Resolution" (referred to herein as "Resolution"). The motion was seconded, and the Resolution was adopted by the North Texas Annual Conference body by an overwhelming majority.¹ The verbiage of the Resolution is attached as Exhibit A.

After the Resolution was adopted, Rev. Fred Durham submitted a request for a Bishop's Decision of Law to determine whether the Resolution was legal. The verbiage of Rev. Durham's request for a decision of law is attached as Exhibit B.

RATIONALE

By the plain language of the Resolution, it does not violate the Book of Discipline. The Resolution is entirely comprised of statements that are aspirational. The Resolution contains no provision that negates a provision of the Book of Discipline, ignores a provision

¹ 591 voted in favor of the resolution; 144 voted against the resolution; and 11 abstained from the vote. The relevant minutes are attached as Exhibit C.

of the Book of Discipline, nor violates a provision of the Book of Discipline. The Resolution is the expression of a sentiment of how the membership of the North Texas Annual Conference wishes to respect and regard one another.

The operative portion of the Resolution is the verbiage following the words, "Therefore be it resolved," which sets forth the only actions contained in the Resolution. Those actions are the following: to pray for one another, not to impede the ministry of others, to seek common ground with others, to be in ministry with a variety of people, to refrain from speaking ill-will of one another, and to model the treatment of all people as persons of sacred worth. Each statement of action in the Resolution is consistent with the provisions of the Book of Discipline. None of the operative statements contained in the Resolution negate, ignore or violate the Book of Discipline, nor are they contrary to it in any way.

The preamble portion of the Resolution contains aspirational statements. The preamble does not contain action statements. The preamble sets forth information regarding the experience of the North Texas Annual Conference in relation to the proposed One Church Plan, which had been presented at the specially called 2019 General Conference. The preamble reflects the dream, hope, and aspiration of the members of the North Texas Annual Conference that members would regard each other with the depth of respect that had been reflected in the wished-for One Church Plan legislation. There are no operational statements or action statements in the preamble. It does not negate, ignore or violate the Book of Discipline.

The request for a decision of law cites Judicial Council Decision 886. The questions posed in JCD 886 were policy questions rightly decided by the Judicial Council. Individual

members and entities of the Church are bound by the provisions of the Book of Discipline. No individual member or entity of the Church can legally violate the Book of Discipline. These rulings are correct and fundamental to the right functioning of the United Methodist Church. I uphold these tenets by this decision and note the important implications of the policies established by JCD 886. Additionally, it is important to note the decisions that have applied JCD 886 to actual matters in controversy and the analysis of those matters in the context of those that called for actions in violation of the Book of Discipline versus the those that were aspirational. This decision recognizes and gives full faith and credit to the law, as clarified by the Judicial Council, that entities in the Church are free to adopt resolutions that are aspirational in nature and express their ideals and opinions so long as they do not negate, ignore, or contradict the Book of Discipline. This is a beautiful sentiment that embodies the sacred and revered nature of the protection of dialogue and expression within the United Methodist Church. The Resolution in the instant matter is one such statement of aspiration that is not in violation.

In Judicial Council Decision 1340, the matter in controversy was actionable, not aspirational, and the actions called forth were in opposition of the Book of Discipline. In that instance, the resolution stated that annual conference entities would make no funds available for investigations and trials of certain matters related to human sexuality. The resolution in that case called for the elimination of funding for certain processes that could not be eliminated under the Book of Discipline. In that instance, the resolution was not legal. Clearly, the resolution called for action in violation of the Book of Discipline.

In Judicial Council Decision 1297, there were four matters in controversy. The first three matters in controversy were ruled to be aspirational by the Judicial Council, namely:

prayer support for clergy brought to trial for solemnizing same gender marriage vows; urging the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Cabinet, and the Bishop to do all in their power to make the conference a place of welcome and refuge for those convicted by church trial courts for presiding over same gender Christian weddings; and urging the next General Conference to allow Annual Conferences a local option to discern matters of sexuality. The Judicial Council found that only the fourth matter contained any problematic language fearing that clergy would construe the language as encouragement to violate the prohibition regarding same gender weddings. The Judicial Council modified the fourth matter to assure clarification that same gender weddings were not encouraged, accordingly. It is important to note that the Judicial Council gave wide breadth to the Annual Conference to speak and aspire when there was no call of action contrary to the Book of Discipline.

Judicial Council Decision 1292 likewise affirmed, in part, and modified, in part, a Bishop's Decision of Law. In that instance, the Judicial Council upheld the aspirational statements of a resolution (supportive statements toward lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lay members who were married) and rendered null and void the provisions encouraging actions in violation of the Book of Discipline (mandates to withhold resources for investigations authorized by the Book of Discipline).

Judicial Council Decision 1283 perhaps provides the best guidance in addressing the instant matter. In JCD 1283, the Judicial Council upheld the Bishop's Decision of Law that the resolution adopted by the Annual Conference was aspirational. It should be noted that the resolution in JCD 1283 contained strong language explicitly in support of LGBT members. The resolution adopted by the Annual Conference was a statement toward

agreeing to disagree on issues pertaining to gender and sexual minorities. The resolution asked the conference to consider refraining from filing complaints against pastors who perform marriages between gender and sexual minorities; to consider refraining from using resources to investigate or enforce a ban on marriages between gender and sexual minorities; to consider refraining from using resources for church trials or discipline of clergy that perform same-sex marriages; to consider refraining from using resources to investigate the gender or sexual orientation of ministers or candidates for ministry; and to consider refraining from enforcement of a ban of LGBT candidates for ministry or ordination of LGBT ministers . The Bishop concluded that the resolution at issue did not have prescriptive force for actions of clergy or for those charged with supervision and examination of candidates for licensing or ordination. The Bishop noted that the resolution voiced strong encouragement for consideration of how resources would be used but held that the encouragement was aspirational, not prescriptive. The Bishop's ruling was upheld by the Judicial Council on these points. In affirming the Bishop's ruling, the Judicial Council wrote that the resolution in question

appears to offer another option to the ongoing dilemma in which the church finds itself. It encourages what might be termed a path of least harm to all parties. It encourages support for injured parties and reducing as much as possible the expenditure of church resources to adjudicate infractions of the Discipline followed by calling for the General Conference to change the Discipline. The Bishop's ruling speaks to the aspirational nature of the resolution's content, which he ruled does not negate, ignore or violate the Discipline.

JCD 1283 (*citing* Judicial Council Decisions 913, 1021, and 1044). Based on the guidance of JCD 1283, it is clear that the Resolution in the instant matter is not contrary to the provisions of the Book of Discipline.

RULING

The Resolution entitled "One Church Resolution" adopted by the North Texas Annual Conference on June 4, 2019 is legal. The contents of the preamble of the Resolution are aspirational; they do not contain items of action; and they do not negate, ignore or violate the Book of Discipline. Likewise, the operational portion of the Resolution is aspirational and contains no action that negates, ignores or violates the Book of Discipline. Each of the calls to action in the operation portion of the Resolution is consistent with the provisions of the Book of Discipline. Upholding each other in prayer, refraining from impeding the ministry of another, seeking common ground with others, being in ministry with a variety of people, refraining from speaking ill-will of one another, and modeling the treatment of all people as persons of sacred worth are appropriate calls to action under the Book of Discipline and will not be abridged.

EXHIBIT A

One Church Resolution

WHEREAS the One Church Plan provides a generous unity that gives conferences, churches, and pastors the flexibility to uniquely reach their missional context without disbanding the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church and

WHEREAS in the One Church Plan, no annual conferences, bishops, congregations, or pastors are compelled to act contrary to their convictions and

WHEREAS the plan grants space for traditionalists to continue to offer ministry as they have in the past; space for progressives to exercise freely a more complete ministry with LGBTQ persons; and space for all United Methodists to continue to coexist without disrupting their ministries and

WHEREAS the One Church Plan removes the language from The Book of Discipline used in the United States that restricts pastors and churches from conducting same-sex weddings and annual conferences from ordaining self-avowed practicing homosexual persons. It adds language that intentionally protects the religious freedom of pastors and churches who choose not to perform or host same-sex weddings and Boards of Ordained Ministry and bishops who choose not to credential or ordain self-avowed practicing homosexual persons.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that as people of the North Texas Conference we aspire to behave as One Church Congregations and Conference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

We will pray for one another

We will allow for contextual ministry and pastoral care and not impede the work of others in ministry

We will seek to find common ground and actively be in ministry with people who are different from us

We will not speak ill of one another and we will model that all people are of sacred worth.

EXHIBIT B

Request For A Decision of Law

Regarding the One Church Resolution submitted to the North Texas Annual Conference: Is that Resolution legal since it seeks to "negate, ignore or violate provisions of the Discipline with which they disagree." JCD 886.

Fred Durham
Clergy

EXHIBIT C

MINUTES

Legislative Matters

Ann Willet and Tommy Brumett introduced themselves as sponsors of the One Church Resolution. Brumett noted that The United Methodist Church is in turmoil over the issue of human sexuality, all trying in their own ways to read and interpret God's word. Everyone is in a different place, so to move forward the church needs to give each other time and space. This is what they hope the document will do. Willet said they were there to present the One Church Resolution and asked that everyone be sure they had a copy before she proceeded. Willet moved that the One Church Resolution be adopted as a Conference. The motion was seconded.

Willet explained that the resolution was aspirational and based on the one church covenant, expressing a desire to be one as a conference. Willet said that over 1300 persons in the conference had signed the covenant and that other conferences, like the Great Plains conference, had passed similar resolutions. Willet acknowledged that the conference does not have the power to change the BOD; however, they can affirm one another and let their voices be heard. The proposal is not binding or restrictive, said Willet, rather it encourages churches to find the answers that work best for them. The document is aspirational. Brummet then read the document, and Willet concluded the reading.

Bishop McKee then asked for speeches for and against. Fred Durham requested a point of information. Does the passage of the resolution mean that we would allow people to perform same sex unions and the BOM to ordain a self-avowed, practicing homosexual? Willet said that it did not mean that it would happen, rather that people would be allowed to do ministry in their context. Durham responded that it would then mean that people are being allowed to do that. Brumett said that they were not encouraging anyone to go against the BOD but to give each other the space, time and grace to work this out together over time. Durham repeated the question and asked if a church that decided to do so could do this. Brummet said that aspirational means that this is their hope, to give each other the freedom to do ministry in their own context. Durham asked if that means that if they choose to do same-sex unions, that that would be allowed. Willet said that they had answered the question. Bishop McKee said that the question had been asked and answered. Durham then attempted to raise a point of order and was told he would have to return to the mic for that.

Bishop McKee asked for the first speech against. Becky Heflin from Lakewood UMC said that she was most definitely not for the resolution although she would most likely vote for it. As the mother of a non-binary, transgender child, Heflin remembered at 10 years old the story of Jesus and the 99 who were safe in the fold but Jesus was not content until the one that had been left out had been returned to the fold. Heflin said that the church has left LGBTQ+ children standing alone on a hill. Heflin then referenced Martin Luther King's letter from the Birmingham Jail who preferred a positive peace rather than a negative peace. For 44 years, said Heflin, the church has opted for the absence of tension rather than justice for our LGBTQ+ whom we have left standing out in the cold. The One Church Plan is only a temporary solution with no plan for what comes next. Jesus did not choose the absence of tension. He rejected the negative peace that did not extend justice to all and calls us to complete that great work.

Kenneth Wolverton, Grace Avenue UMC, spoke for the resolution. He acknowledged that some were disappointed with St. Louis, others were happy. He keeps hearing the question, "What do we do?" At some point, Wolverton said, we have to move from "what" to "how?" He spoke for the One Church Resolution because it gives a road map for how to live out our hopes, learning each other's stories versus selling our own stories. Wolverton urged the body to vote "yes."

John Wesley Crenshaw, lay person from Forney UMC, noted that other groups want to be included as well as LGBTQ+, all groups classified as sinners. He noted other groups who say that rape is acceptable. He asked Brumett and Willet if they are intending to include those groups of people as well in the future. Bishop McKee asked Brumett if he would like to respond to the question. Brumett replied that he was inclined not to answer but did, saying that they are trying to work this out together, that what they are not proposing is that they have a church of no rules but that they live under the rule of love, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Eric Markinson, layleader of the Metro District and member of Grace UMC Dallas, spoke in favor of the resolution. Markinson identified as a cis-gendered man and said that it is complicated, saying that God has canonized diversity. Markinson said that as a man in a ten-year-old relationship with another man who had still joined a church which excludes him from marriage and from ordination. He joined because he loves Wesley's love of Jesus Christ, his connection of personal and social holiness, of being locked in polite conversation with people who disagree with him, but he does want to be married to Steve. He wants to be married in his church, but he would not dream of making others come who did not want to come. One thing is simple - the love of God in Jesus Christ. If we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?

Robert Royalty, lay representative from Van Alstyne UMC, spoke as a third generation Methodist. Royalty's brother David was a gay man who had HIV. The family accepted him and his partners. He said that he had cared for his brother when he had a stroke for several months. He said there are many people like him who are working and going to church but oblivious to what happened in St. Louis. He warned that if the One Church Plan comes to reality, many will leave the church because the church has left them.

Rob Spencer, pastor of FUMC Paris, said he was certain of one thing: churches in outlying areas have better cooks. He went on to say that their tables are important to them and that, having had conversations with others in outlying areas, he knows that they believe it is important to make room for all at the table. This kind of table makes a stronger family and allows for movement and deep thinking. Spencer said he was strongly in favor of the resolution.

Fred Durham spoke to a point of order on the basis that people be allowed to live in their own context. His point of order was based on Judicial Council decision #886, of May 9, 2000: "The discipline is the law of the church which regulates every phase of the life and work of the church; as such, annual conferences may not legally negate or violate provisions of the discipline with which they disagree even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections to those provisions." Durham requested that the resolution be ruled out of order.

Bishop McKee responded that he would not rule the resolution out of order in that the sponsors had made it clear that the resolution is aspirational.

Roger Little, laity from Blue Ridge UMC, rose to speak against the resolution. He asked why we would not be honoring the Holy Bible and the Holy Spirit which makes it clear that marriage is between a man and a woman. He said he wanted the church to be in the world but not of the world. He asked why we would abandon what the Bible says about marriage. Willet said that while she honored Little's longstanding membership in the United Methodist Church, she emphasized that there are other interpretations of scripture which allow more inclusion and can reach people for Christ that others cannot reach.

Stan Copeland, Lovers Lane UMC, rose to make a point of order that when it comes to a vote, paper ballots should be used. Motion was seconded. It was non-debatable. The question was called and approved.

Mark Stamm rose to a point of order and proposed an editorial amendment to the resolution's last line to include the words "we will" model that all people are of sacred worth. Amendment was accepted and passed.

Bishop McKee referred back to Brumett and Willet for a final word. Brumett said that the church is in difficult days and uncharted waters but as United Methodists we have always believed that God's love is for all and that the Holy Spirit moves in new and creative ways to reach others. Brumett said that after preaching the Sunday after General Conference on that issue, he received email after email saying, "Pastor, let me tell you about my son," and such. Brumett urged that the resolution be passed.

Bishop McKee reminded them that all lay and all clergy could vote, the only exceptions being read by the conference secretary. Paper ballots were distributed with instructions to vote "yes," "no" or "abstain." Ballots were collected for tellers to count.

An item of information was presented by Andy Lewis and Rachel Baughman. Lewis referenced Bishop McKee's statement, "I don't care if you're a Republican or a Democrat, but we need to pay attention so that children don't die in the hands of our government. In light of the response, Baughman and Lewis wanted to make the conference aware of an opportunity. Dallas is being called to join other cities to help border cities handle overwhelming influx of legal asylum-seeking persons. The North Texas Conference has a call to respond to this need and to requests from Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins and Faith Forward Dallas who have brought together the expertise to turn this narrative around. Help is needed for funding, transit assistance, and respite to help connect them with their sponsors in the United States. All families traveling to Dallas have been thoroughly vetted and released to connect with their sponsors. Each family will remain for no longer than 60 hours. Baughman said that this is an opportunity to attend to the needs of those who have been told by the world that they are not welcome. Baughman said that Oak Lawn UMC will be serving as a respite center. She invited people to contact Lewis or Baughman or go online to volunteer. Baughman emphasized the need for other faith communities to open their doors. She urged the North Texas Conference to come alongside them and do this. Bishop McKee called for a vote of affirmation. It passed.

Bishop McKee spoke to the murders of transgender persons in the metroplex area. He said he intends to issue a statement pertaining to his deep concern on this ongoing criminal activity and violence in the community.

Mike Baughman moved to add 30 minutes to the schedule to add other important legislative matters to the agenda. The motion was seconded. John Dorff asked what would happen to the legislation that had not yet been considered if there was a hard stop; the bishop responded that they would lay on the table. The bishop was unable to discern by a show of hands so he asked for tellers to count hands. The tellers counted. The motion failed - 312 against; 264 for.

Conference Secretary Judith Reedy then read the vote tally for the One Church Resolution. 591 -yes; 144-no; 11 abstained. The vote passed. The bishop then announced that he had a request for a decision of law. He said that he has 30 days to rule and that he will probably take most of those 30 days. Regarding the One Church Resolution submitted to the North Texas Annual Conference, is that resolution legal since it seeks to negate, ignore or violate provisions of the discipline with which they disagree. Judicial Council ruling #886. Fred Durham, clergy. No vote was required.

Closing Worship of Communion and Sending Forth With "Reading" of Appointments

Bishop McKee, the newly ordained, and the cabinet served Holy Communion to the Conference as the names of churches and those appointed appeared on the Conference screens.

I, Judith Reedy, Conference Secretary for the North Texas Annual Conference, do hereby sign these minutes of the Annual Conference, Tuesday afternoon session, June 4th, 2019, as a true and accurate recording of the events of annual conference.



Judith Reedy, Conference Secretary, North Texas Annual Conference

Clergy Ballot Results					
General Conference					
Ballot #	Time Taken	Time Concluded	Elected	Votes Needed	Votes Received
4	Tue 10:10		Clayton Oliphint	172	181
4			Stan Copeland		179
4			Cammy Gaston		178
7			Maria Dixon Hall	177	218
			Jurisdictional Conference		
9	10:34		Rachel Baughman	170	191
10			Ron Henderson	174	182
11			Ricky Harrison	179	181
13			Rob Spencer	177	201
			Alternates		
15	11:11		Edlen Cowley	172	238
15			Edgar Garza-Bazan		180
15			Jenna Morrison		176
17		Tue 11:18	Andy Stoker	175	214

Lay Ballot Results					
General Conference					
Ballot #	Time Taken	Time Concluded	Elected	Votes Needed	Votes Received
2	Tue 2:57		Kelly Carpenter	251	274
3			Kenneth Wolverton	248	288
3			Shandon Klein		249
5			Jessica Vittorio	256	310
			Jurisdictional Conference		
7	Tue 3:30		Tim Crouch	247	326
7			Kerri Lynn Lucas		289
8			Kathleen Rozanne Pryor	246	254
10			Collin Echols-Richter	252	275
			Alternates		
11	Tue 3:45		Linda Parks	230	280
11			Sally Vonner		254
12			Daniel Soliz	248	283
12		Tue 3:50	Laura Hudec		255

NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE DELEGATION

GENERAL CONFERENCE

LAY DELEGATES

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