

IX. DAILY PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING June 2, 2013

Laity Session First United Methodist Church, Allen, Texas, 3:30 p.m.

The laity session of The North Texas Conference was held at First United Methodist Church of Allen. Conference Lay Leader, Linda Parks, welcomed 325 lay members of annual conference. Northwest Youth Lay Leader Hope Rouse presented a devotional, and North Central Youth Lay Leader Brooke Foster opened the session with prayer.

A video created by Northwest Lay Leader Tom Busby around Annual Conference theme “Imagine” kicked off the afternoon with two thought provoking questions: Can you imagine the church God is calling us to be? Can you dream about being a part of the world God imagines? The laity session included a memorial service that recognized those lay members who had died within the past year. Conference Lay Leader-Elect Henry Lessner arranged for two presentations from ministries started and led by lay people on the theme of “Laity Ministry Outside the 4 Walls.”

The closing prayer was offered by the outgoing chair for the Conference Council on Youth Ministries—Sara Finney.

Clergy Session Hamilton Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, 3:30 p.m.

The North Texas Conference clergy gathered at Hamilton Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, and Bishop McKee called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and noted that this was the first time he had ever sung *And Are We Yet Alive* outside the Central Texas Conference. Bishop McKee opened by encouraging clergy to dream big dreams, and to tell and live the story of Jesus so that that story will become others’ story. He said that the good news of Jesus Christ imagines more than we could ever imagine about who we can be. He stated that we are not in the religious retail business; we are in the transformation business.

Bishop McKee explained that the disciplinary requirement is for those who are not in full connection to be asked to leave later in the session. Joan LaBarr moved that the clergy session be open to local pastors. The motion was seconded and approved.

In her opening remarks, Jan Davis, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, noted that the business would go in order. She then introduced Jill Jackson-Sears, Candidacy Registrar. Jackson called attention to question 19, the list of certified candidates, and asked that any corrections be submitted in writing. Jackson-Sears then introduced Marsha Middleton for the Local Pastors’ Report. Middleton called forward those who had just completed licensing school. Bishop McKee and Davis congratulated them.

Larry George addressed questions 24, 25, and 26, applying with 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. George then introduced Marti Soper, Chair of Preparations and Qualifications.

Soper 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, including Larry James whose orders from another denomination were recognized. They were all approved as provisional members and were received with a standing ovation.

Soper then read the names of those recommended to be elected as members in full connection, deacon. As they came forward, Bishop McKee asked them the historic questions for deacon. A vote was taken on each person individually for conference membership. All were approved, introduced to the body, and greeted with an extended standing ovation by the pastors. Soper read the names of those recommended to be elected as members in full connection, elder. They came forward and Bishop McKee asked them the historic questions for elder. Each was voted into conference membership and introduced to the body. They received an extended standing ovation.

The following persons were presented for election into full membership and ordination: As deacons: Patricia Miller Froehlich, Georgia McDowell Harrison, Elizabeth Ethun Moseley, and Rebecca David Walker, and as elders: Stephen Joel Cotten, Annelda Joy Crawford, Rebecca Whittington Grogan, Cheryl A. Jones, and Sharon Clepper O'Connor.

Dennis Wilkinson, Chair of Conference Relations, reported on those who had been granted honorable location, those whose honorable location had been terminated, and those whose conference membership had been terminated. The body voted on each. Wilkinson then read the names of the deceased associate members, elders in full connection, and local pastors. Bishop McKee offered a prayer.

Wilkinson referred to those receiving appointments in other annual Conferences, those on voluntary leave of absence, those on sabbatical, and those disabled. A vote was taken on each. Wilkinson then read the names of those retiring and joined them as the body recognized them. Edgar Bazan presented the candidates in process for certification.

Bishop McKee offered a prayer for Florence Tooley, deceased diaconal minister who served the conference faithfully for many years. The body voted on those members who are serving less than full time. The names of those appointed as interim pastors were read.

Davis asked the question, "Are all clergy members of the conference blameless in their life and official administration?" She answered with, "Yes, except for those who have been notified that their names are on file in the Bishop's office."

Davis then moved passage of the entire report of the Board of Ordained Ministry and it was approved.

The full reports of the divisions of the Board of Ordained Ministry are printed in this journal in Section XI. BUSINESS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Worship Service
First United Methodist Church, Richardson, Texas, 7:00 p.m.

At opening worship, Clayton Oliphint welcomed everyone to First UMC, Richardson. Members of the 2013 Annual conference were invited to “imagine” vibrant days ahead for United Methodist mission and ministry. Then they were challenged to step out of their comfort zones and make it happen. Throughout the evening, rousing music was presented by a mass choir and a combined choir of youth from First Richardson, Custer Road UMC, and Highland Park UMC. There were several soloists and an ensemble of North Texas church music directors sang “Seasons of Love” from the Broadway musical *Rent*.

The faces of 22 North Texas Conference clergy and clergy spouses who died in the last year appeared on screens during a time of remembrance, accompanied by a moving solo from oboist Amanda Talley. Those who were remembered were: Donald E. Barnes, Linda Boufford, Debbie Campbell, Joseph Edward Cherryholmes, Betty Connatser, Sue Goodwin Cook, Evelyn Corrigan, Charles V. Denman, Francine Fairchild, John Thomas Graves, Edgar Huffstutler, Mary Jameson, Don Marcum, Dee Shipp McAdams, Emma McGee, Hilda Ramirez, Lawrence Ravert, William B. Slack, Florence Tooley, Esther Walker, Milligene Womack, and Debbie Zinser. Bishop Robert Hayes Jr., Resident Bishop of the Oklahoma Conference and speaker for opening worship, said that the highest praise is to remember.

Bishop Hayes told the crowd that one of the problems of the modern-day church is that they cannot and do not imagine anymore because they are so often stuck in the past. He asked, “What could we become if we got out of the business of yesterday?” He challenged the gathering to imagine what God has in store for everyone. In his sermon, Bishop Hayes thanked North Texas United Methodists who responded to the devastating tornadoes in Oklahoma in May with a “gracious outpouring” of prayers and financial support.

Near the end of the two hours, North Texas Bishop Michael McKee led a commissioning ceremony for young people participating this summer in outreach ministries around the state, including Project Transformation, Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center, Connect to the Kingdom, and Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso. The Bishop announced to the congregation, “One day one of these young people will be your pastor.” His question to the interns was, “Will you live the story of Jesus?” To the congregation, Bishop McKee asked, “Will you imagine what these interns can do?” In this part of the service and in closing, participants were treated to music by a Scottish marching band, the North Texas Caledonian Pipes and Drums.

The offering was dedicated to Project Transformation. A reception honoring Bishop and Mrs. McKee and Bishop and Mrs. Hayes followed the service.

MONDAY MORNING SESSION
June 3, 2013
First United Methodist Church, Richardson, Texas

Organization of the Conference

Josh Wilson led the congregation in “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” and performed three more songs. Bishop Mike McKee welcomed everyone and called on Cheryl Murphy for the opening prayer. Bishop McKee reminded the body that their primary purpose is to be in relationship with one another and to learn, spending time in covenant community. He reminded the Conference that last year they voted overwhelmingly to do Annual Conference differently.

Paul Rasmussen and Rachel Baughman introduced the new annual conference format and the Nehemiah Group.

Conference Secretary Judith Reedy then organized the conference. Reedy moved that the bar of the conference be established as the chancel area and the entire floor of the sanctuary at First Church, Richardson, and that the visitors' section be established as the balcony of said sanctuary. The motion was approved. Reedy moved the election of persons to serve the 2013 business sessions as assistant secretaries: Kenny Dickson and Marsha Middleton; head teller, Abril Goforth, and the teller group as appointed by each of the district superintendents. They were elected.

Reedy moved the approval of legislative item number one in the conference workbook, [LA 1], for the equalization of clergy and lay members. The motion was approved.

Bishop McKee then called on Don Underwood to present Legislative Item #2, [LA 2], the proposal to elect General and Jurisdictional delegates one year early. Underwood presented the pros and cons of the legislation.

The Bishop called for questions. Questions focused on delegates who might be unable to serve two years out, how other delegations are responding, and if extra alternates could be elected. There were three speeches against the legislation—Bill Lawrence, James Minor, and Mattie Chumley—and three speeches for—Jack Soper, Tim Crouch, and Charles Harrison. Speeches against addressed those who would be ineligible in the first year but not the second; those who were not yet delegates to conference in 2014; and a possibility inferred by the legislation that all petitions would come only from the delegation. Speeches for addressed the additional preparation time required to be leaders for General Conference. Ed Patterson asked for a Point of Clarification: would this legislation apply only to the election of delegates for the 2016 General Conference? Underwood answered in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Larry George presented the consent calendar and reminded the conference that any items being removed required a proposal signed by 5 voting members of the conference, submitted to the Conference Secretary within 24 hours of presenting the consent calendar.

Episcopacy Committee

Scott Smith, chair of the committee, was accompanied on the platform by the committee members. Smith introduced Joan McKee and announced that her involvement would be serving on the board of Project Transformation. A donation to Project Transformation is being made in her honor. Bishop McKee joined his wife, and a gift of stoles was presented to him.

Episcopal Address

Bishop McKee showed a picture of his grandson, Knox, taken two years ago as Bishop McKee was baptizing him. He said what he has said to all those he has baptized: "Today you have been baptized and received into the Church. God's intentional will for your life is for you to become a faithful follower of Jesus. So that you may become a follower of Jesus, you need to know the story of Jesus and make that story your story. We vow to tell and live the story of Jesus before you so that his story can become your story. That has been my calling as I live out the mission of The United Methodist Church—to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Bishop McKee stated that being with the laity and clergy of the North Texas Conference has made him more hopeful about The United Methodist Church than he was a year ago. There are thriving

small, medium, and large membership churches that are making disciples and transforming communities.

The North Texas Conference is like a laboratory—small in geography but large in United Methodist Christians and diverse in many ways. While some of the largest United Methodist churches in the nations are here, there are also medium-sized and small membership churches that are vibrant. But more and more people claim no faith tradition or claim that they are spiritual but not religious. Many of those are open to our theology, and United Methodists need to be relevant, to create that thin place where those who have no faith home can find one with us. Bishop McKee said the Christian message is not about self-help. It is about transformed lives and transformed communities. We must be willing to be bold and proclaim that message; we must reclaim central Wesleyan principles, the Wesleyan understanding of grace. The mission field is full of people who are constantly searching for what we already espouse.

Bishop McKee then asked the conference to imagine: Imagine what a culture of call looks like in each setting, both laity and clergy; be sure that includes women in ordained ministry; imagine a culture of invitation, a willingness to talk about what God does, being clear about who we are and what we believe; imagine a culture of servanthood, willing to take risks for God, making sure the community is better because the church is there.

Center for Leadership Development

Keith Payne Boone, Center Director for Leadership Development, and Aleze Fulbright, the Associate Director, reported that the Center exists to help clergy and laity recognize God's call of Living Discipleship Fruitfulness, Leading Congregational Fruitfulness and Developing Missional Fruitfulness to live out the mission of the church. A video revealed examples of this fruitfulness.

Living Discipleship Fruitfulness was seen through the campers and counselors at Bridgeport Camping and Retreat Center with 2,170 campers in 2012 and Executive Director Beau Taft leading the charge. Over 6,000 volunteers throughout North Texas congregations have been MinistrySafe trained to ensure that children, youth, and vulnerable persons are safe and cared for. Leading Congregational Fruitfulness encompasses the development and celebration of leadership throughout the North Texas Conference. Developing Missional Fruitfulness is the partnership with Lydia Patterson Institute, who had 15 students serving churches in the North Texas Conference. The upcoming year will bear more fruit with Training for Excellence, Presence, Reclaim, COSROW, Race and Religion, Code of Conduct, and other trainings.

The Clergy Fruitfulness Initiative began in 2011 for Elders and Deacons celebrating a five-year anniversary interval of Full Connection. To date, there are over 50 clergypersons who have journeyed over a 9-month period to accomplish this purpose of celebrating and recognizing each one's calling to ministry. In addition to clergy, part of the fruitfulness witnessed throughout the Conference is seen in the lives of laity. The Harry Denman youth award for evangelism was presented to Kristen Whittaker, a member of Hamilton Park UMC. The Harry Denman laity award was presented to Tom Brian, a member of FUMC, Allen, for founding and building a complex called SEND HOPE on the Mosquito Coast in Honduras, providing spiritual, medical and missional opportunities for laity and clergy to connect with the people of Honduras. Van Lazaroff, pastor of FUMC, Paris, and Kathy French, associate pastor and pastor of Connections, a new start second campus in Paris were presented the Harry Denman clergy award for phenomenal growth in reaching the 20-30 years olds and young families who have found a new place to belong and serve. The Francis Asbury recipients were Randy Adair and Kitty Williams, who transport college students to the Denton Wesley Foundation one hour each way for worship on Tuesday nights.

Boone concluded by introducing Legislative Item #7 [LA #7] which increases the minimum equitable compensation to \$44,770, an increase of 1.21%. Boone informed the Conference that the North Texas Conference is second in minimum equitable compensation. The motion was approved. Bishop McKee thanked Boone for starting and developing the Center.

Retiree Videos

Bishop McKee directed attention to the first retiree video.

Linda Marcum was called into the ministry late in life and has experienced the whole gamut of serving on the conference level and in the mission field as meaningful. Marcum said that there was no time to thank everyone responsible so she simply thanked everyone, including Mike Miller and Dr. Marvin and Kathy Guier for their loving response to her husband's death. Marcum had heard that pastors really do not retire. They just quit earning a salary. She has found a passion serving at the nursing homes in Wichita Falls, and she plans to continue that ministry.

Van Lazaroff heard the calling from God and he and colleague Danny Burnett helped one another through six years of night school in seminary. Lazaroff has loved meeting the needs of the people. He credited his mentor Vic Casad, along with Leighton Bearden and Paul Gould and his weekly meetings with Sam Caldwell, Jeff Wallace, and Jerry Jones. Lazaroff has been trained for intentional interim ministry and plans to continue his involvement as chaplain for a fire department as well as travel with his wife Pat and be involved with their grandchildren.

JoNell Lindh declared her admiration for a brilliant director of music who had announced his retirement a few weeks prior after 45 years of dedication to bringing a high standard of music to University Park UMC. That director was her husband Jody. Lindh, whose first career was a professional musician, was thankful for the family and churches in her life and for the involvement of her daughter Katrina and son Eric in the life of the North Texas Conference. Lindh has been trained for intentional interim ministry.

John Dillard said that after 42 years in the ordained ministry, he was learning something. He feels incredibly blessed to be on a journey which began with inquiry and faith and continues with inquiry and faith. He is still intrigued about how the gift of resurrection will apply to him, but for now he is grateful to explore retirement.

Mark Craig expressed his appreciation to the three churches that had helped him in so many ways—White Rock UMC, Custer Road UMC, and Highland Park UMC. He thanked his colleague Steve Matthews and professed his deep admiration for Paul Rasmussen, his successor.

Board of Ordained Ministry

Jan Davis, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, presented the Board's report. The work of the BOM encompasses the full scope of the life of ministry, for both licensed and ordained ministers: culture of call, recruiting, equipping, credentialing, encouragement for lifelong effective ministry, and celebration of retirement. The three major goals for this quadrennium are: 1) Recruit and qualify more young, diverse, called, gifted leaders to reach the future mission field; 2) Simplify the process of entering ministry and provide clarity for inquiring persons as well as improve the mentoring process; 3) Encourage effectiveness and fruitfulness through the life of ministry.

Two achievements this year have been Pathways to Ministry software. 1) The entire credentialing process is online and District Committees of Ordained Ministry have added the software this year;

and 2) The addition of a new website for people in the local church who are interested in pursuing a call to ministry.

Davis thanked the board for their rewarding but difficult work. She then introduced Marsha Middleton who introduced the local pastors. Larry Davis, chair of Local Pastors, presented each with a small gift: Yvette Blair-Lavallais, Bill Coleman, Elizabeth Glass-Turner, Jane Graner, Johnny “J.B.” Jackson, Evelyn Kelly, Susan Leddy, Bill Lewis, Greg Parr, Ross Reynolds, Sonya Shahan, Doris Smith, and James Woods.

Gretchen Toler-Debus, along with members of the Committee on Conference Relations, presented the retirees: Ann Barton, Dennis Cates, William Mark Craig, John William Dillard, Keith L. Head, Van Lewis Lazaroff, JoNell Lindh, Robin Warren Lovin, Linda Marcum, James Michael Miller, Louis Pierce, John J. Peel, James Edwin Pledger, Norma Salinas, Stan Seat, and Dennis Wilkinson. Toler-Debus said that their years of service totaled 448.

Keynote Address

An ordained UMC pastor and professor at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of numerous books on understanding and reaching young people, Dr. Kenda Creasy Dean gave expert advice on retaining and inviting young people to church. After a video on how to train fleas, Dean asked the audience to discuss, “Is the youth ministry at your church like trained fleas?”

She then demonstrated how video game players are role models for Christians. Dean said that by 21, the average game player has accumulated 10,000 hours of video game-playing, the exact number of hours a person spends in school from kindergarten through high school if they go every day and the number of hours it takes to become a virtuoso (or seven full-time years). At 10,000 hours, gamers have something the world needs: “urgent optimism, a tight social fabric, blissful productivity because they are happy together playing video games, and they tackle things that have cosmic significance.” In other words, they work from God’s side of the clock.

Dean explained that the now dominant religion is moralistic (do good), therapeutic (feel good) Deism. Having supplanted Christianity, this religion is almost Christian; it is “Christian-ish.” Dean dispelled two myths: Myth #1: Young people will save the church. Only Jesus Christ will save the church. Myth #2: Making the church to appeal to youth requires us to act like one (get a praise band). She ended the session by quoting Juergen Moltmann, “What makes us young is not our age. What makes young people young is their wide-open sense of possibility that death is not on their doorstep.” Methodist churches that are doing a good job focus on dealing with stuff that matters, on a sense of belonging, and a sense of radical hospitality. “What if the church became known for our urgent optimism, our tight social fabric, our blissful productivity, and our epic meaning? Let’s start there.”

Holly Bandel rose to introduce GBGM missionaries Nkemba and Bwizu Ndjungu from Cameroon. Dr. Ndjungu is the superintendent of the United Methodist mission in Cameroon. Currently they are visiting NTC churches to spread the good news of what God is doing through Christ in the ministry of Cameroon.

Jackye Waiters-Lee offered the following resolution:

WHEREAS, We extend special thanks to First United Methodist Richardson, First United Methodist Allen, and Hamilton Park United Methodist Churches for hosting and providing the facilities for our varied celebrations during our time together; and

WHEREAS, We as an Annual Conference welcome our new resident Bishop Michael McKee as the presiding officer for the Conference; and

WHEREAS, We welcome Bishop Robert Hayes, resident Bishop of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences, as our opening worship preacher, Sunday, June 2; and

WHEREAS, We also welcome Mrs. Joan McKee and the McKees as the “first family” of North Texas Conference and all our special guests and friends; and

WHEREAS, We have come to “*IMAGINE*” and receive the benefits that we will glean from the many hours of service and preparations given by *The Nehemiah Group* and Conference staff to reorganize and structure the site and agenda for the 2013 North Texas Annual Conference’s agenda; and

WHEREAS, We offer our prayers and support as we go forth Monday, June 3, and Tuesday, June 4, that the 2013 North Texas Annual Conference will be one that will hang high in the Conference archives; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, as the delegated covenant community of The North Texas Annual Conference, will receive and celebrate our time in praising God, holy conferencing, taking care of the concerns and needs of our conference; And when the Benediction is given for this 2013 Conference we will be rejuvenated, recommitted, and revitalized as “*TRANSFORMED*” servants of God.

Submitted,
The Committee on Courtesies and Resolutions
Jackye Waiters-Lee, Chair
Shante Buckley
Kathy McLean Davis

Paul Maletic closed the morning session in prayer.

MONDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

Opening music was provided by FUMC Richardson band. Melba Harris gave the opening prayer.

At 1:30, a video was presented on Perkins School of Theology. Bishop McKee recognized Dean Lawrence, other professors of Perkins, and other United Methodists involved in the capital campaign and advisory boards of Perkins. Bishop McKee chairs the executive board of Perkins School of Theology and enjoyed playing a role for many years. He then introduced Linda Parks to give the Laity Address.

Laity Address

Conference Lay Leader Linda Parks entitled her address “Who I Am Makes a Difference.” Parks, a former educator, noted that from her home in Wichita Falls, she has traveled to Conference events this past year, clocking 9,000 miles on her car. A cradle Methodist, Parks has continued to

lead in presenting and developing the concept of what it means to be fruitful laity. She asked the conference to imagine what a fruitful lay person looks like in the local church. She envisioned three ovals, the first being living discipleship fruitfulness, the person who lives beyond Sunday mornings and attends to Means of Grace as a priority.

The second oval's theme is leading congregational fruitfulness, in which fruitful laity are accountable to their membership vows, communicating expectations, mentoring others, and holding others accountable, partnering with clergy, and following the Holy Spirit. The final oval is developing missional fruitfulness, identifying the mission field by asking, "How do we minister to the people in this place?" Parks asked the laity to ask, "Where is my Samaria? Who are the Samaritans in my life?" and use the response to identify how the minister to the people in their community, spending time with those outside the walls of the church.

Parks challenged the laity to use their imagination, the place where every act of kindness, discovery, and advancement starts. Parks concluded with a story about a teacher who presented each of her students with a blue ribbon imprinted with, "Who I Am Makes a Difference." The story revealed how expectations of another and recognition of the value of another can make all the difference. Her assignment was that each person honor another by sharing with them why they make a difference.

Retiree Video

Mike Miller was thankful for the opportunity to be in relationship with others. From Costa Rica and back, it has been a wonderful experience with God and with others. When asked who had influenced him the most, he said that the question was the most difficult to answer. There is no end to the list of people and churches who have been there to model God for him, in good times and in bad. All people, regardless of geographic boundaries, really are a community. He concluded by giving the thanks to God who brings us together in love and the Spirit who works in us and through us.

John Peel's call to ministry began in high school at Asbury, Denton, under the guidance of David Kittrell. For the past ten years he has worn a stole that Kittrell's wife made for him and gave to Peel upon Kittrell's death. Peel is grateful to have been able to use the gifts and graces God has given him to touch the lives of folks with mission work and to help people discover what God can be for them. For the last ten years, he has served Trinity UMC in Denton, working with the lay leadership there to enrich the ministry at Trinity.

Norma Salinas has had a wide range of experience, from the local church to pastoral counseling. She is grateful to many—to Gary Reagan, Bishop Blake, her Disciple Sunday School class, friends that include her college roommate and her clergy sisters, and for the wonderful resources available through the United Methodist Church.

Stan Seat's experience of working on the conference level, on the General Church level on the General Board of Pensions, and helping put together a healthcare plan for the General Church has been the most beneficial experience of his career. Seat credited Bill Hodges, his District Superintendent for many years, as the most influential person in his career.

Dennis Wilkinson's experience of his call reminds him of the fundamentals of faith and the fundamentals of parish ministry, the unconditional love of God, the amazing saving grace of Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit and how he and his family have experienced all of those through the saints of the churches they have served. Wilkinson is especially grateful to his wife Linda, who has been a great partner on the journey.

At the conclusion of the retiree video, Bishop McKee welcomed Bishop Max Whitfield to the conference and recognized Pam Liston who is serving the conference as Chancellor/Parliamentarian.

Center for Connectional Resources

Conference Treasurer Jodi Smith presented the statistician's report for the Center for Connectional Resources. Smith noted that there are some increases but that the more compelling story is told in the seventy-five pictures she received from local churches when she sent out a request in the spring asking for pictures that tell the stories behind the statistics. She invited the conference to enjoy the video of "The Faces Behind the Statistics."

Board of Pension and Health Benefits

Larry Womack presented the Board of Pensions report. Womack thanked his committee for a job well done. He expressed his joy at a 1.1 million dollar refund received for the conference's good health claims experience in 2010 and 2011. Womack explained that the General Conference changed the way the pension plan is going to work. Extend Health will be offered to fulfill retiree's health benefits and will offer considerable savings to retirees. The full details can be found in the conference workbook on pages 59–70. We will not have to raise apportionments to continue being fully funded by 2021 for retiree medical benefits.

For both active clergy and local churches, Womack explained that General Conference changed the way the pension plan is going to work beginning in 2014. A new incentive will take place. More information can be found on a video on the conference website and even more information will be forthcoming from Smith and the Center for Connectional Resources staff in the fall. Womack then presented Legislative Items 8–11.

Legislative Item eight [**LA 8**] is a legislative item that must be passed yearly to designate rental/housing allowances for retired or disabled clergypersons of the North Texas Conference. The item passed with a voice approval.

Legislative Item nine [**LA 9**] recommended that \$743 which is 1% of the North Texas Conference Average Compensation be the amount set for the past service annuity rate for ministerial service rendered before 1982. It was approved.

Legislative Item ten [**LA 10**] was presented from the Board of Pension and Health Benefits Apportionment Budget, reflecting a total decrease of \$5,500 or 0.3%. Tom Hudspeth called attention to a needed change on page 14 of the conference workbook, line 11 from "incapacity" to "medical" as now stated in paragraph 651 of the BOD. The change was accepted and the legislation passed.

Legislative Item eleven [**LA 11**] offers to extend CRSP participation for less than full time clergy who are serving in one-half and three-quarter time appointments. All clergy, including those serving in one-quarter time appointments, are eligible to participate in UMPIP. The legislation passed.

Board of Trustees

Paul Goodrich directed the conference members to their workbooks for the presentation of four resolutions.

Legislative Item 13 [LA 13] allowed for the merger of Rosalie UMC and Bogata UMC. The membership of the Rosalie congregation has merged with the Bogata congregation. Motion carried.

Legislative Item 14 [LA 14] allowed for the merger of Dundee UMC with Holliday UMC. The Holliday location will be the home of the merged congregation. The Conference Trustees recommends that the merged church sell the Dundee property and incorporate the proceeds of the sale with their funds and property. Motion carried.

Two additional items with no number were presented. The Trustees recommended that the Princeton UMC church property and parsonage be sold with the proceeds going to a new church start in Princeton, Texas. Bishop McKee said that this is what Jim Ozier says is a legacy church. Motion carried. The next item presented was also in regard to a legacy church. Trustees recommended that Hail UMC/Windom charge be closed and sold with proceeds designated in the future to a new church start in the East district. Motion carried.

Goodrich gave special recognition Tom Christian and his wife Linda. Christian began serving in 1967 and concludes this year after serving more than 46 years. He has served in many areas of camping and retreat and conference positions relating to property and design. Christian graciously assisted many congregations in their closing while celebrating their accomplishments during a grievous period. Goodrich presented Christian a plaque and the Bishop presented him with a baseball autographed by Joe Nathan. Christian thanked the Bishop and the Conference; thanked and introduced his family. Having served under eight Bishops, he remarked that the Conference had been his family's family. Smith announced that Christian would continue to work part-time with the Center for Connectional Resources and she announced a special retirement reception for him in the Conference Ministry Center on June 25.

A special video followed by Wesley Village, a non-profit organization providing assisted living sources, reflecting Christian values and love.

Whitfield brought an IMAGINE Mission Moment to write a card for one of the 1000 first-aid kits which will be provided to the homeless communities in McKinney and Dallas.

Courtesies and Resolutions

Jackye Waiters-Lee presented the youngest member of annual conference who was celebrating her 14th birthday. The Conference sang "Happy Birthday" to Amelia Sprayberry from Krum UMC.

Announcements were made and Bishop McKee recognized those who were to be commissioned and ordained at the evening service. Before the dismissal to go to the toolbox sessions, David Rangel closed the session in prayer at 2:54 PM.

MONDAY EVENING

Service of Ordination

First United Methodist Church, Richardson

Reverend Clayton Oliphint welcomed the conference to First United Methodist Church, Richardson for the service of ordination, recognition of orders and commissioning. Music was provided by a mass choir which included First UMC Carrollton Chancel Choir, Lovers Lane UMC Sanctuary

Choir, Spring Valley UMC Chancel Choir, and Tyler Street UMC Sanctuary Choir. The mass choir was under the direction of Jimmy Emery.

Bishop McKee was the preacher for the service of commissioning, recognition, and ordination. The scripture for the sermon, “Transformed and Transforming,” was Romans 12:1-8. He remembered his call as a boy and again as a college student when the Gospel message connected the head and the heart. He concluded by quoting Fred Craddock, “What you are called to do is infinitely more important than how you may feel about it.”

Bishop McKee presided in the commissioning and ordination rituals. Twelve persons were commissioned as provisional elders. Those commissioned for the work of an elder were James David Allen, Omar Hamid Al-Rikabi, Mitchell Payne Boone, William Wayne Eason, Clayton McLain Horton, Zachary Brian Landis, Timothy Edwin Marks, Carol Ellen Montgomery, Adam Lee Spore, Cassandra Lynn Wade, Marcus Graham Womack, and Allen Todd Zugelter. Larry Morris James was presented as a provisional member ordained in another denomination and approved by the bishop, the vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry and of the clergy session of the Annual Conference.

Four deacons and five elders were received into membership in full connection. Patricia Miller Froehlich, Georgia McDowell Harrison, Elizabeth Ethun Moseley, and Rebecca David Walker were ordained deacons. Stephen Joel Cotten, Annelda Joy Crawford, Rebecca Ann Grogan, Cheryl Anita Jones, and Sharon Clepper O’Connor were ordained as elders.

The evening offering was dedicated to support Camps of the North Texas Conference. A reception for the newly commissioned, recognized, and ordained followed immediately after the service in the Bartula Family Life Center.

TUESDAY MORNING BUSINESS SESSION

June 4, 2013

The Conference sang “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.” Bishop McKee called the Conference to order and asked Seong Joon Park to open the conference in prayer. Park prayed in three languages—Korean, Spanish, and English. Bishop McKee then invited the keynote speaker, Kenda Creasy Dean to address the Conference again.

Keynote Address

Dean invited the Conference to begin by watching TV. She introduced a comedian Willie CK whose sitcom flashes back to life as a young person. He and his best friend Ryan are not taking his religion class seriously so the nun calls in a creepy doctor to explain how awful death by crucifixion is. He invites Willie to drive nails into Ryan’s hand. They are shell shocked. The scene then cuts to a dream Willie has later that night. Then Willie gets in big trouble and the nun calls Willie’s mom to come pick him up to punish him. His mom then tells him that she does not believe anything the nuns are teaching him and wanted him to go to Catholic school because since she did not have religion and she thought maybe he should get it somewhere. She says that Jesus was a good guy but that Willie is not responsible for anything that happened to him. Willie then says that he does not want to go to Catholic school anymore and he asks his mother if there is a God. She responds that she does not know but that whether there is or is not, he has to be good to people. She then changes the subject. Dean invited discussion on what was real about that scene.

Dean then named what had happened. They had seen the “nones” and an example of moralistic, therapeutic deism. Dean then referred to the rich young ruler and his quest for eternal life. When he could not do what was required, he went away sad. She wondered if that applied to the church, that we just give up and let people go to the beach. She then listed qualities of faithful, young adults: had faithful parents, were highly devoted as teens, had a significant religious experience as a teen, had multiple adults of faith to turn to for support and guidance, prayed frequently and read the Bible on their own, had few doubts about their religious beliefs as teens. If teens have no parents who are religious, the church can move in. These teens need to remember how good it felt to be loved by people in the church. Their leaders need to create places for parents to share their stories. We have to show the world that when the church gets involved, things change—lives change. Dean concluded with, “That ‘love thy neighbor’ thing. I meant that. God.”

Center for New Church Development and Congregational Transformation

Jim Ozier, Center Director, introduced Gloria Fowler, Assistant Director, and Liliana Pena Rangel who helps plant new Hispanic congregation. They played a video that asked the Conference to imagine starting more churches than we are closing. The video reminded the Conference that five years ago the NTC made a renewed commitment to “create new places for new faces.” Since then, they have planted 14 new faith communities with a combined average worship attendance of over 2100 a Sunday. Testimonials came in Spanish from Christ Foundry, in Korean from Korean North Central, and from The Village and Connections.

The video then panned church starts who began in schools and shopping centers, setting up and striking each Sunday—The Village, Living Life, St. Andrew Frisco, Faith Corinth, and Grace Avenue. From there the Conference was asked to imagine what it will be like to be part of one of the three new church plants this year—Princeton, Prosper, Grand Prairie. Imagine, though, said Jim that you are NOT in a new church but in an existing church that has done great ministry over the years, but now the church is struggling. Imagine that the church is committed to turning around, to being fruitful, to reaching the surrounding mission field. That is where Transformation comes in. Through the Healthy Church Initiative, the Misionera Laica para Fundadores de Iglesias (LMPN) Initiative, and the Strengthening the Black Church 21, revitalized churches are being imaged to meet the needs of this new day.

Center for Missional Outreach

Larry George reaffirmed that the church is NOT in the religious retail business but the business of transformation. He commended the conference for their participation in “Mission Moments” to assist the chronically homeless and in their rapid response to offer assistance to West, TX and Moore, OK. Marji Bishir, Associate Director of the Center, gave an update on the Conference disaster response. George included the grassroots work of the Board of Church and Society, the Board of Global Ministries, the Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, and the Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns.

In seeking to fulfill the two focus areas of engaging in ministry WITH the poor and eliminating the physical and spiritual diseases of poverty to improve health globally, the CMO Advisory Team, led by Andy Stoker, has developed a radical vision for the elimination of extreme asset poverty in two zip codes—one urban, one rural—in the North Texas Conference by the year 2025. A script written by Alexandra Robinson invited the Conference through a video to come alongside the marginalized in the Conference and learn from them, share with them, and develop a model together with them—a model that moves our witness as disciples of Jesus Christ from occasional

acts of mercy to continuing collaborations for transformation. George invited the Conference to imagine themselves as God's flash mob of radical grace.

Bishop McKee then presented a check from his Lenten fasting to Royse City Food Bank because they asked that he consider their ministry a recipient of the funds he set aside as a result of his fasting.

Consent Agenda

Larry George presented the consent calendar. No items had been removed, and the consent calendar was adopted.

Board of Ordained Ministry

Bishop McKee called the conference to order and introduced Marti Soper as Chair of Preparation and Qualifications.

Patty Froelich, an ordained deacon, grew up in Elkhart, Indiana, is married to Robert and has three grown children. She is currently appointed to First, McKinney where she will continue her ministry.

Patty started by thanking her parents for her early life, her husband, her children, her mentors, her clergy friends, and First, McKinney, who helped her in the discernment process. She cited John 15:16 where Jesus tells his disciples that they did not choose him; he chose them. She was reminded that God chooses us.

She ran across a paraphrase of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about the Spirit that encouraged her to put herself in the path of the wind. She did just that, and though she does not know where that wind is going, she knows that we are chosen by God to share the love of Jesus where the wind goes, affirming the gifts of others and encouraging them to be open to the Spirit and help them imagine the way that God can use them.

Georgia Harrison grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, went to Mississippi College, majored in mathematics and got a masters degree in mathematics from Clemson. Before she began her pursuit of ordained ministry, she was a software developer and a vice-president of a software company. Harrison is married to Charles Harrison; they have Ricky Harrison and Marissa Harrison, and she is currently appointed to First UMC, Wichita Falls.

Harrison's journey is the journey of a lifetime. She began as the youth minister of mission at First UMC, Richardson twelve years ago. When asked why she chose ordination as a deacon, she referenced Micah 6:8: "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God." At Richardson, she learned that mission work is not about changes that you make in the world but about the changes the world makes in you. She expressed her thanks to First Richardson and to the pastors there.

She learned from Holy Covenant how to do justice and be a leader in ministry, especially the youth who loved her despite her shortcomings. She thanked the staff there for teaching her how to do justice. Now she is leading adult ministries at Wichita Falls.

Those groups have taught her so much about how to walk humbly with her God. She thanked those pastors. In addition, she thanked her husband and her children for their encouragement. In closing, she imagined a church where all people are encouraged to serve as they are called.

Elizabeth Moseley grew up in Houston and received her undergraduate degree from Boston College. She is married to Neil Moseley and they have a 10-month old son Nathaniel. She is currently serving Highland Park UMC.

Elizabeth said that she was exhausted because their 10-month old did not sleep last night. Like Peter, she wanted to stay here. She thanked her family, her husband, her son, and all the people she has worked with. She thanked the people from Highland Park UMC, especially Paul Rasmussen.

She looks back on her life and it is like God was saying, “Your plan is not good enough, so we’re going to go ahead and do my plan.” We the church are really good, but we can be better. She expressed her gratitude to the church.

Rebecca Walker grew up in Bethel Acres, Oklahoma. She went to Oklahoma City University and got a degree in education. Before that, she was already a youth minister. She is currently appointed to First UMC, Dallas.

She thanked her parents for raising her in the church, the Oklahoma Conference where people are resilient, and to those who shaped her theology and to the churches who took a chance on her as a youth minister. She thanked the Perkins staff and teachers, as well as the churches in the NTC where she has served: To Holy Covenant and their staff, to Flower Mound and the staff who walked alongside her through commissioning, to Pat Beghtel-Mahle who taught her that things like bulletin boards were not kingdom issues, to First Dallas staff and John Fiedler who have taken part in her ordination journey, to her covenant group and mentors, especially Joe Stobaugh, she gave thanks.

Walker imagined that if the NTC could love all our neighbors the way the people in these congregations have loved her, the future of the church is full of possibilities which can transform the world. She confessed that she shared with the bishop a love of the Avett Brothers and she ended with a line from one of their songs, “If I live the life I’m given, I won’t be scared to die.”

Young Person’s Address

Sara Finney, outgoing chairperson of Conference Council of Youth Ministry, FUMC Denton, greeted the Conference, by announcing that the youth there represent a portion of the 8% of dedicated youth to which the keynote speaker had referred. A video was presented which Sara and other youth lifted up the district level activities and missions, including their fundraising for Project Transformation and Zoe Ministry, and spoke to the value of being involved in district and conference level youth activities. Emma Boswell announced that the YSF in-conference mission project this year is Project Daraja, a mission that allows refugees time to get back on their feet. The out of conference organization is Determined Families Moving Forward that helps develop curriculum for under-privileged young people. Finney invited Conference participants to have lunch with a youth and talk with them about their dreams and visions for the present and future church. The youth concluded by throwing out T-shirts to the crowd.

Core Leadership Team

Linda Parks presented the Core Leadership Team report by answering the questions of team members placed throughout the Conference. The questions and answers were designed to inform the Conference about what the Core Leadership Team does and who they are. The creation of the CLT was a key ingredient of the Strategic Plan approved by the North Texas Conference in June 2010. The CLT oversees the implementation of the decisions of the Annual Conference through the four Centers: Center for Leadership Development, Center for Connectional Resources, Center for Missional Outreach, and Center for New Church Starts and Congregational Transformation. The CLT engages in significant, strategic conversations about the mission and ministry of the NTC and has representation from all four districts and centers, including one District Superintendent, lay members from each district, and at-large members. The CLT continues to build on a strong beginning but recognizes the need to be more strategic in planning and to set up a strong system of accountability.

Board of Ordained Ministry

Marti Soper and April Bristow introduced more ordinands.

Stephen Cotten grew up in Dallas and received an undergraduate degree at UTD. His first profession was marketing. He has two grown daughters and is appointed at Cavanaugh UMC in Greenville, Texas.

Cotten spoke highly of his all-female newly ordained peers. He reflected on Jesus' saying that he would make the disciples fishers of people. He focused on the disciples' task—to mend their nets. Cotten said that the NTC imagines what those torn nets will look like once they are mended. He expressed his gratitude to those who have cast out their nets to include him in the United Methodist faith. He is grateful that he can be united with the Conference and cast nets for all the new people that are coming in.

Annelda Crawford grew up in Dallas and attended Dallas Baptist University with a double major in psychology and sociology. Before entering the pursuit of ordained ministry, she worked for Delta Airlines and was a social worker at Hope Cottage. Crawford is married to Wesley and they have two adult children. She is currently appointed to Pleasant Mound.

She came to the United Methodist Church through the radical hospitality of St. Luke's "Community" where someone invited her to work as a Sunday School teacher. She thanked St. Luke's for trusting her with their children. Born at Parkland Hospital, Crawford grew up in zip code 75215 where she serves today. Her parents did what they were supposed to do as parents, including taking her to church. Loving family and friends made a difference in her life, but today that community has changed. Often at the end of the day, those parents do not have the energy or time or experience to give their children the best. That is where the Conference can help.

Crawford is dedicated to bringing the best to the children in zip code 75215, the urban area of extreme asset poverty identified by the Conference. As a board member of Dallas Bethlehem Center in 75215, she dedicates her life to the children in 75215 as does her church in 75217 through Project Transformation year round. She invited the Conference to come and join in the work.

Rebecca Grogan grew up in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, did her undergraduate work at University of North Texas and received her bachelor's in fine arts. Her profession before pursuing the ordained ministry was as a professional artist and then on staff at Custer Road UMC. Rebecca and her

husband Gary have been married for 43 years. They have two grown sons, Grant and Kevin, and a grandson named Liam. She is currently the associate pastor at FUMC, The Colony. After this Conference, she will be appointed as senior pastor to Archer City UMC as an ordained elder.

Grogan said that she woke up this morning thinking of a song that is the accumulation of her feelings at this time. It is Crosby and Nash and it says, “It’s been a long time coming.” She remembers as early as a second grader having a conversation with a classmate about Jesus, but the theme “Imagine” is more important than we can imagine. Because we live in boxes, we can never imagine, or use our creativity.

Grogan imagines a Conference where churches embrace pastors regardless of their gender, race, or age; a Conference that knows that the church is not just within the walls but as much without; a Conference where the witness and theology is not determinism; a Conference that edifies and equips for the year ahead (oh, we have already had that; never mind); a Conference that exemplifies our belief of all as children of God; a Conference where relationships continue to take priority over politics. Grogan thanked her covenant group, her meeting group, OSL, her family and especially her husband Gary.

United Methodist Communications

Jennifer Rodea from United Methodist Communications spoke about the Rethink Church campaign of the past five years, targeting 18–34 year old seeks with its messaging. A phone app dissolves like a snow globe when shaken, revealing images of a deeper meaning of Christmas, resolving from an image of children waiting to see Santa to an image of the nativity. She said that their Lenten photo-a-day challenge was more about the practice of paying attention and being intentional. This was an attempt to invite people to pause and observe their world around them and explore their faith. She invited NTC to celebrate their mission involvement in social media and referenced Acts 2:44–47, “People liked what they saw and daily their number grew.” United Methodist Communications wants to show where God is at work in the world.

Council on Finance and Administration

Jodi Smith and Clayton Oliphint presented the report from CF&A. Smith noted that the Conference accounting system has changed to GAAP and that the unaudited report could be found beginning on page 74 of the workbook. Smith thanked the Conference for a 96.8% payout of apportionments.

Oliphint discussed the importance of apportioned funds in the United Methodist Church. A pie chart (actual pie) was shown on the screen by Oliphint, who reminded the Conference that most of the pie stays in the local church. He reminded the Conference of the ways in which apportionment money is used globally as well. Oliphint said that CF&A could have presented a flat budget but could not omit at least one new Hispanic church start. The budget for 2013 represents a 1.5% increase.

Legislative item #12 [LA 12] was presented by Oliphint for approval. Bill Gavitt, Greenland Hills UMC, expressed disappointment that the budget only allowed for one new church start. Gavitt moved to amend the budget by \$200,000 for new church starts. The motion was seconded. Oliphint stated that there are serious financial challenges ahead and he urged defeat of the amendment but encouraged continued conversation about new church starts. The amended failed.

Gavitt then offered an amendment to increase the budget by \$200,000 for scholarships for certified candidates. The motion was seconded. Stan Copeland, Lovers Lane UMC, stated that it is the

responsibility of the local churches to support funding for certified candidates. There were three speeches against, including Charles Harrison and Holly Bandel. There were three speeches for the amendment: Bill Gavitt; Ray Karrer, Calvary UMC; and Bill Lawrence. Lawrence said the reality is that not many congregations have the finances to make the budgetary commitment of \$20,000 per year to support a candidate/student in seminary. Oliphint said that a capital campaign for this purpose had even been floated but that the increase of 1.5% would still be the maximum recommended at this time.

Jack Soper offered a substitute motion to charge the Core Leadership Team to explore funding for seminary scholarships and make recommendations to CF&A with recommendations for 2014 Annual Conference. The motion was seconded. Owen Ross offered a friendly amendment to the Soper amendment that would include a study on debt retirement for those who go on to be ordained. The friendly amendment was seconded. Soper did not accept the friendly amendment. Frank Rahm spoke against the Soper amendment in that it is far afield from the business of CF&A. The friendly amendment failed. Rusty Hedges spoke against the Soper amendment because it takes the BOM out of the loop. Don Wylie moved to table the motion until after lunch. By a show of hands, the motion was tabled.

Announcements were made. Ozier stated that the inclusion of only one new church start does not represent any lack of support by CF&A; they want the same thing. Bishop McKee commended the body on identifying important pieces that really do mark our future. Sherry Cherryholmes, a high school classmate of Bishop McKee, and a member of FUMC, Jacksboro, offered a closing prayer.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

The afternoon session opened with prayer. A video of Mt. Sequoyah, our jurisdictional camp, was presented. CEO Abbie Foster described the lodging and the spirituality offered there for families. What they are now doing is bold and beautiful. They host the small church and new church leadership as well as the academy for spiritual formation. Continuing education and leadership courses will be offered. By 2022, their centennial anniversary celebration, they will be a premier United Methodist destination place.

Bishop McKee then shared what would be the agenda for the afternoon.

Bill Gavitt withdrew his previous motion from the morning session. Don Wylie then made a new amendment to the CF&A report. Because we imagine North Texas to be a place where we are called to be in servant ministry in every community; and because we imagine the North Texas Conference to be a place where men and women who feel called to servant ministry can do so with adequate financial support, and because we imagine the North Texas Conference to be a place where candidates for ordination can serve out the call God has on their life without crippling financial debt, we move the Bishop appoint an interdisciplinary team composed of representatives from the Council on Finance and Administration, the Center for New Church Starts, the Center for Leadership Development, and the Board of Ministry and the Core Leadership Team to study and prepare a definite plan of action to address the following issues: increased funding for new church starts, scholarships for candidates for ministry, and debt reduction for candidates for ordained clergy. Such committee shall make a report of findings and proposals for action to the 2014 Annual Conference.

The amendment was seconded and passed. Bishop McKee will appoint a committee by July 15 and send the results to General Conference.

Janet Bell Odom questioned the intention of funds designated for Ethnic Local Church Concerns, observing that the amount expended on other ethnicities should be more similar to those funds expended on Hispanic church starts.

Don Underwood pointed out that at General Conference he and Adam Hamilton worked to craft legislation that would make more scholarship money available for seminary students through apportionments and that he hoped that the NTC would take steps to secure some of those funds. The Bishop thanked Underwood and called for a vote on the CF&A report. Though not unanimous, the report was passed by a voice vote. Oliphint thanked Jodi Smith and staff for their preparation of the report.

The Standing Rules

Anne Todd gave the report on Standing Rules and recognized the committee, Vivian Crowson, David Rucker, Nancy DeStefano, Ed Patterson, and Tom Waitschies. Todd also thanked Jodi Smith. She directed attention to Legislative Item three [LA 3] regarding the reinstatement of the Committee of Religion and Race and the Committee on the Status and Role of Women. The Judicial Council found that these two committees must be reestablished in the Annual Conference. Parks pointed out that the committee of investigation had been removed and should not be printed in the legislation. Legislative Item three was approved.

Legislative Item four [LA 4] regarding access to health insurance for clergy was approved.

Legislative Item five [LA 5] establishing the official moving day for Annual Conference moves as the Thursday after the last Sunday in June, with the first Sunday at the new appointment being the first Sunday in July was approved.

Legislative Item six [LA 6] stated that utility allowance is to be paid separately from the housing allowance and that utilities are considered part of the minimum equitable compensation package. William Herrscher, Schreiber Memorial UMC, Dallas, moved to table the item until a task force has been convened as proposed in legislative item seven, which is to bring a plan to the 2014 session for alignment of mission, money and sustainable plan for Equitable Compensation. The move to table Legislative Item 6 [LA 6] failed. Jodi Smith spoke in favor of Legislative Item six [LA6] because it clarifies the source of the utility allowance as part of base compensation. She noted this had been the wording of the Equitable Compensation Legislation for a number of years, was the intent of the standing rule, and was the general practice of the church. After receiving phone calls from churches asking for clarification on this wording, the matter was taken before the standing rules committee for consistent wording between the three different items of legislation. Gifford Long stated the rationale was because some local churches have parsonages and some do not and this was an attempt to make the situation more equitable by placing the payment of utilities within the base compensation rather than the housing allowance. David Rucker spoke for Legislative Item 6 [LA 6], stating that this does not change current practice but clarifies what we have already been doing. Legislative Item six passed.

Board of Ordained Ministry

Marti Soper and April Bristow presented more ordinances for their addresses.

Cheryl Jones grew up in Kansas City, Missouri and went to Lincoln University and majored in Speech Pathology. Before she began her pursuit of ordained ministry, she was a speech pathologist. She is married to Odis Jones, Jr. and she is currently serving Arcadia Park UMC.

Jones said that she did not stand there alone. The word Ubuntu is an African philosophy that has the understanding that we cannot separate ourselves from God and who we are in God because who we are with and for each other. She said, "I stand here because there are those in this community who have given themselves without concern that they would decrease but in hopes and prayers that the community would increase."

Jones thanked her parents, her husband, her church family, her mentors, the Tyler Street church staff and family, the Arcadia Park church family and her residency lay teaching committee, residency mentor. She thanked Dr. Reed for believing in her when she could not understand herself. There was a time she could not have imagined herself in ordained ministry, but she now is excited to imagine what Christ has in store for all in ministry.

Sharon Clepper O'Connor grew up in Navasota, Texas, and has a degree in nursing, her first profession before she was called into the ministry. She is married to Patrick O'Connor and between the two of them, they have eight grown children, ten grandchildren and another due in September. O'Connor is now appointed at First UMC, Trenton and will be appointed as associate at Custer Road UMC after Conference.

O'Connor professed her astonishment at what God can do. She believes our God is a God of restoration and resurrection. Fourteen years ago, she lost her husband Mike to a sudden heart attack and thought life was over and all hope was gone, but God would not let her stay in that place of despair and grief. God resurrected her life and gave her a new hope and a new joy and sent her to seminary. Then after ten years of being a widow, God sent an amazing man into her life who is known as one of the best pastor's wives in the conference.

She thanked her two daughters Amanda and Hayley and the many mentors and churches who have supported her through it all, and especially her husband who makes her life complete. She ended with all thanks to the wonderful God who amazes and astonishes her each and every day.

Jan Davis then called on Aleze Fulbright to tell the Conference about the Culture of Call. Fulbright presented a video on the "Culture of Call" concept. Fulbright announced that September 29, 2013, is Call Sunday. On the video, Bishop McKee spoke about the call of God on a person's heart. Fulbright then invited all pastors to tell the story of their call and set aside Sunday, September 29, as Call Sunday so that those within the congregation, both clergy and lay, will begin considering a call for ministry.

Jill Jackson-Sears presented the new group mentoring program. This will include a presentation on the ministry tracks and assignment to a mentoring group. The first kick-off group will be held July 27, 2013 and the following event is January 25, 2014.

Bishop McKee thanked the BOM and Jill Jackson-Sears for their vision.

The Providence Place video was shown for a second time, and Bishop McKee reminded the Conference that Providence Place is the new name for Methodist Mission Home. The video explained that the original focus of the Home was unwed mothers in 1968, but in the 1970's they saw an opportunity to reach out to deaf and hard-of-hearing. That expanded to reach those with cognitive disabilities. They serve people across the state of Texas.

Constitutional Amendments

Bishop McKee explained that every four years each Conference votes on the amendments recommended at General Conference. They must be passed by an aggregate of 2/3 of the members of all conferences voting. Judith Reedy explained the Conference's voting on four constitutional amendments, including who is allowed to vote. Ballots were distributed to clergy members in full connection and to lay members.

Tim Crouch and Don Underwood presented the amendments. Crouch referenced paragraph 33 of the constitution which says that the General Conference approves the amendments but the Conferences ratify them. Constitutional Amendment #1 says that the church will pray for interreligious unity. Constitutional Amendment #2 says that the General Conference will have the ability to meet at alternate times, enabling more people to be able to attend. Constitutional Amendment #3 changes the name of Lay speaking Ministries to Lay Servant Ministries. Constitutional Amendment #4 defines the areas and boundaries of conferences. It was in response to judicial council ruling 517 and returns the power of boundary decisions to central conference committees that include laity.

On each amendment Bishop McKee asked if there was any discussion or any questions.

Crouch concluded his report on Legislative Item #15, the constitutional amendments, and ballots were passed back to tellers.

Living Life Church, whose pastor is Abe Smith, had a card which enables each NTC member to be involved in their mission of feeding people by logging on to your Facebook or Twitter account.

Nominations Committee

Linda Parks presented the report of the nominations committee, noting that the report could be found on the green sheets in the brown bags. Parks recognized the committee members—the four district superintendents and district lay representatives for their hard work on nominations to promote inclusivity and compliance with the standing rules. Additions and corrections were made by Parks to the report, including the Committee on Religion and Race and the Committee on the Status and Role of Women. She then offered the opportunity for nominations from the floor, asking that substitute nominations be in the same category of inclusivity as the nominations report. Jill Jackson-Sears stated that she thought a man should serve on COSROW and moved that Bill LaBarr serve. Rachel Baughman withdrew her name so that a man might serve. LaBarr declined. Nominations were made and Charles Reed was elected. The entire report was approved as amended and corrected.

Bishop McKee announced that next year's Annual Conference will be held June 1-3, 2014. Clayton Oliphint invited the conference to return next year to First UMC, Richardson. The invitation was received with joyful acclamation. Bishop McKee asked the members and staff of First UMC, Richardson to stand so that the Conference could thank them. He said a special word of thanks to Gloria Scott who served as "the village" for Bishop McKee. In addition, he thanked all those responsible for technology. He stated that he had observed how everyone pitched in when he had attended the Large Church Initiative there and therefore knew that having Annual Conference here would be possible and successful.

Courtesies and Resolutions

Jackye Waiters-Lee offered the Courtesies and Resolutions. She stated that First UMC, Mesquite, would celebrate their 150th anniversary this year, and are still housed in their original location. Buist Wilson, FUMC, Rowlett, is attending his 63rd Annual Conference. Waiters-Lee then recognized Mat Matthews who has been serving as the official Annual Conference photographer for thirty consecutive years at no cost to the Conference. This will be his last Conference to serve as photographer.

WHEREAS, it is with our heads not *IMAGINING* in the written resolution presented to this “*august*” body of Christians on Monday, June 3, 2013 we forgot our childhood manners in that we were not inclusive by thanking Allen First UMC for hosting the Laity session on Sunday, June 2, 2013; and

WHEREAS, we give a special shout-out and accolades at this time to First Allen UMC; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 North Texas Annual Conference has convened with adhering to the printed agenda and its adjustments; and

WHEREAS, we *IMAGINED* and enhanced our imaginary skills through spirit-filled worship, tooled our information boxes, received operational updates for transforming our lives and ministries; and

WHEREAS, the North Texas Annual Conference is most grateful to Bishop Michael McKee for his dynamic and pastoral leadership as our resident Bishop for this 2013 session; and

WHEREAS, “*Transformed and Transforming*” all not be forgotten but incorporated in the lifestyle by the newly commissioned, recognized, and ordained deacons and elders and all assembled; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, we, the members of this Annual Conference give God praise and glory for our commitment as we go forth to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Respectfully submitted.

The Committee on Courtesy and Resolutions

Jackye Waiters-Lee, Chair

Shante Buckley

Kathy McLean Davis

In closing, Bishop McKee said that being together with those in the North Texas Conference for the 2013 Annual Conference had only increased his great hopes for the church and for the Conference. He expressed his gratitude for the welcome extended to him and to Joan.

Closing Worship of Communion and Sending Forth With “Reading” of Appointments

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