

## VIII. DAILY PROCEEDINGS

### SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING

June 7, 2015

#### Laity Session

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

The laity session of The North Texas Conference was held at First United Methodist Church of Carrollton. Conference Lay Leader, Linda Parks, explained the theme of “Ignite” in connection to Acts 3. The memorial service was led by youth who read off names of laity who had died during the past year. A bell was sounded for each and a candle was lit followed by scripture and prayer.

The 2014 Harry Denman Evangelism Awards for Laity and Youth were celebrated with video tributes. The youth recipient was Heather Howard from Wylie UMC. The adult award was presented to Susan Grant from Community UMC.

Will Murphy was the guest speaker. He redefined each “group” of people as current and vital parts of a church with a wide embrace. The rest of the session was dedicated to dividing into small groups to talk about how each church is helping people and how that has helped those doing the helping and those receiving the help. Murphy highlighted the witness of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, emphasizing the importance of a strong core of prayer, study, and sharing. He concluded by defining the church as an assembly rather than a building.

Parks closed the session.

#### Clergy Session

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

The North Texas Conference clergy gathered at Christ United Methodist Church, Plano, and Bishop McKee called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. Vic Casad moved that local pastors be included throughout the business session. Kevin Strempeke seconded and the body approved. Host pastor Don Underwood welcomed the clergy and opened with prayer.

Bishop McKee addressed the session, referencing Hebrews 11:1-4. He said that we are always looking toward the future. He noted that American Pharoah had just won the triple crown and noted that the work of the clergy is to cross that finish line and not look backward, but to the future, looking to Jesus.

He acknowledged the decision that would be forthcoming from the Supreme Court on same-sex marriage and called for respect among all clergy for one another. He gave a special thanks to those on the BOM and to Jan Davis, chair.

In her opening remarks, Jan Davis said she was humbled by looking at the names on the report. She called attention to question 17, which asks, “Are all the clergy members of the conference blameless in their life and official administration?” and answered “Yes, except for those who know their name is on file in the Bishop’s office.” The Bishop spoke to the question and explained that the answer is to protect the privacy of said clergy.

Davis then introduced Jill Jackson-Sears, Candidacy Registrar.

Jackson-Sears 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. Clergy voted to approve questions 21a and b, the list of full-time local pastors and part-time local pastors, as well as 21c, students from other annual conferences serving as local pastors and enrolled in a school of theology listed by the University Senate. Bishop McKee gave a special word of appreciation to Middleton and to local pastors.

Larry George addressed question 24a, adding Albano Tayengo, full member from West Angola Conference, and question 24b, as well as questions 25 and 26, 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. George then introduced Billy Echols-Richter, Chair of Preparation 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, and they and Echols-Richter 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, and question 30, those coming from other Christian denominations who have had their orders recognized.

Echols-Richter then read the names of those recommended to be elected as members in full connection, deacon. As she came forward, Bishop McKee asked her the historic questions for deacon. A vote was taken for conference membership. Echols-Richter 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. All new members in full connection received an extended standing ovation.

The following persons were presented for election into full membership and ordination: As deacon: Shawn Stephanie Bakker, and as elders: James David (JD) Allen, Mitchell Payne Boone, Brian Dierolf, William W. Eason, Larry James, Zachary Brian Landis, Timothy E. Marks, Carol Montgomery, Cheryl Murray, Adam Lee Spore, Cassandra Lynn Wade, and Marcus Graham Womack.

Larry George addressed question 38 concerning those who had been received by transfer from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church. They are: Michael Baughman, Michael L. Bowie, Jr., and Barry E. Hughes. George addressed question 41 as well concerning those transferred out to other annual conferences.

Stan Copeland addressed question 42a and 42b, discontinuing provisional members Michael Langdon and Alan Hitt. Bishop McKee called for a vote on question 44, those granted the status of honorable location-retired. The question passed. The body then voted on question 46a, to allow withdrawal of conference membership to unite with another denomination for Stanley F. Seat and Phil Hirsch.

The Bishop reminded the body that those who died during the year would be remembered later in the evening. He then called for a moment of silence and prayer which he offered for those elders and the local pastor who died during the year.

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

The names of those retired elders and retired local pastor 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.

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

Question 64 named those who constitute the Board of Ministry Committee on Investigation. They are: Tommy Brumett, chair; Jeremiah Booker, Linda Roby, and Ann Willett, clergy; Debbie Chapman, Lucretia Facen, and Clay Womack, alternate clergy; Linda Parks, Sharon Spratt, and Richard Stanford, Laity; Susan Anderson, Frank Jackson, and Kay Porter, Alternate Laity.

Question 65 acknowledged Linda Elms who is transferred in as diaconal minister. Question 68 named those diaconal ministers who died during the year. The Bishop offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

Question 71 returning Alan Hitt to active status from extended leave was approved by the body.

Jan Davis reported on those elders and deacons approved for less than full-time service. David made one correction. Katherine Betz should be listed as  $\frac{3}{4}$  time rather than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time.

Davis concluded her report by saying that she had great hope for our conference and denomination when she looks at the names of each of those called into the ministry. She 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 XIII. AGENCY REPORTS under the heading, Board of Ordained Ministry.

## **Worship Service**

### **St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Plano, Texas, 7:00 p.m.**

The Korean Children's Choir from Wesley Korean UMC set the tone for the opening worship. Robert Hasley welcomed everyone to St. Andrew UMC, Plano. Mark Miller and choirs from Christ UMC, Plano and Grace Avenue UMC, Frisco opened worship with "I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath." Throughout the evening, rousing music was presented as well as liturgical dance from St. Luke "Community" UMC.

Candidates for Commissioning and Ordination carried in lanterns as they accompanied the families of the saints to be remembered in the opening hymn. Bishop McKee remembered the saints that have been influential in so many lives. The names of the 22 North Texas Conference clergy and clergy spouses who died in the last year appeared on screens during a time of remembrance. Mark Miller sang "I Believe" in a musical remembrance to the saints. Those who were remembered were: Millard Fairchild, William K. McElvaney, Ray Daniel Hennigh, Douglas Lee Hoke, Henry Lawson, Kenneth McIntosh, Eduardo Castro Cajuat, John Carlyle Besse, John Wesley Tatum, Sr., George A. Lewis, Jr., David K. Switzer, Jacqueline Waiters-Lee, Lane Tunnell Minton, Ray Davidson, Billie Johnson, Dorothy Thompson, Mary Miller, Joan Zimmerman, Jean Lewis, Twila Stowe Bryan, Lorna Doone Dunson, and Janice S. Miller.

After a Reading of Calling and Promise in English, Korean, Spanish, and Swahili, liturgical dancers came down the aisle. Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, episcopal leader of the Texas Annual Conference, began "The Wail of Humanity and the Glory of God" with a history lesson on Frances Willard

whose life work was shaped by the fire of the glory of God experienced in Methodism; she visited filthy and violent tenements, pushed for the education of women, and fought against child labor. Bishop Huie posed the question to Christians, “What would that be like to stand between the wails of humanity and the glory of God?” Referring to Exodus 3:1-12, Bishop Huie proclaimed that God speaks and says, “I have heard the wails, so I am sending you.” The hopes and fears are all gathered up and reshaped in the crucible of God. The same fire that danced on the heads of the disciples and on the heart of Francis Willard is the same fire that will be born in each of the ordinands.

Bishop Huie quoted from Robert Putnam’s book *Our Kid*, emphasizing that American children are in crisis. She observed that the years following Francis Willard provided ever-expanding opportunities for children. The last two decades, however, have been rapidly deteriorating, and the dividing line between upper and lower classes is education, more so than race or wealth. Having googled Dallas’ population of poor, she noted that it has exploded in the past 12 years, having risen by 40%, making Dallas the highest child poverty rate in cities more than one million. “Can you hear the wails of humanity?” asked Bishop Huie. Citing sex trafficking in Houston and single moms across the state of Texas, she said that there is a problem for any child who does not learn to read. Wherever there is a problem, God prepares a person or persons to go out and live as kingdom people. Creation is standing on tiptoe to see God’s glory. “Don’t be afraid,” she counseled the ordinands. “Get involved. God’s glory is present.”

Near the end of the service, North Texas Bishop Mike McKee led a commissioning ceremony for young people participating this summer in outreach ministries around the state, including Project Transformation, Connect to the Kingdom, Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center, Lydia Patterson Institute, and Summer Interns in Ministry.

The offering was dedicated to Project Transformation and Conference Camp Scholarships. A reception hosted by Bishop and Mrs. McKee honored Bishop Huie and the families of those being remembered.

## **MONDAY MORNING SESSION**

**June 8, 2015**

**St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Plano, Texas**

### **Organization of the Conference**

Mark Miller led the conference in opening music. Bishop McKee invited Cheryl Murphy to offer the opening prayer for the morning session. He welcomed everyone and thanked everyone, especially Bishop Huie, for the wonderful worship experience on Sunday night. Robert Hasley welcomed all to St. Andrew.

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 as well as the middle section of the first balcony at St. Andrew UMC, Plano, and that the visitors’ section be established as both sides of the balcony of said sanctuary. The motion was approved. Reedy moved the election of persons to serve the 2015 business sessions as assistant secretaries: Adam White 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 Larry George to introduce the consent calendar. George 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 McKee told the story of a visit to Central Market when the two men sitting behind him said that Wesleyans believe you have to work for your salvation. The ensuing conversation regarding grace was one of misunderstanding and misinformation. He recalled many conversations with peers in junior high or high school about baptism, grace, good works. He pointed out, however, that we live in a new world where we are called to have a conversation with someone we do not know—on an airplane or a random encounter at work. He observed that although United Methodists are not judged harshly, they are seen as believing almost anything. “What we have here,” said Bishop McKee, “is a failure to communicate” and a failure to be bold.

Bishop McKee has chosen not to focus on decline or division. He is, in fact, more hopeful about the future of Wesleyan faith and practice than he has ever been. Who is God calling us to be? We are not called to save the denomination; we are called to lose our lives in God’s purpose so that we may be used to save the world. The Wesleys began a movement, not a church, a movement with a heart for those who today would be called unaffiliated; they had a passion to transform the world. No wonder Wesley saw the world as his parish. And so do we.

As stewards of the Wesleyan witness, how do we begin to leverage the resources of the 305 churches, fellowships, satellites or new church starts, 6 campus ministries, and a host of related mission partnerships to clearly witness to the life-changing story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection? Bishop McKee observed that the North Texas area is becoming increasingly important nationwide. He asked what will be the role of religious and faith communities as the area becomes a cultural, commercial, economic, and governmental hub. He proposed that we think and practice ministry for the long-term, that we run the race with perseverance by looking for Jesus, pioneer and perfecter of our faith, and let Jesus set the pace!

His hope, he said, is that generations who follow will say, “They turned the world upside down.” To do so, the Christian faith must be relevant. He used the word recovery. United Methodists must recover our true identity. He proclaimed that the mission field is better described as our neighbors. He encouraged the community to fail forward, and provide a lasting legacy for generations who follow by providing new places for new people. He spoke of the need for some churches to leave a legacy at the end of their life cycle and compared it to his and Joan’s advanced directives for health care so that the decisions would not be left to their daughters, rather made by them, rationally and with compassion, not wasting resources. Legacy churches are givers of the promise of new life and resurrection so that a new faith community can be born and introduce unaffiliated persons to Christ.

In conclusion, Bishop McKee paraphrased Gil Rendle, saying that our focus will not be upon merely improving congregational forms of religion, but especially upon creating new faith communities and new forms of faith communities. To reach the diverse communities in which many of us live, some of our bold experiments must “fail forward.” What can our common narrative be? In pursuing principled Christian leaders, we are endorsing SIM, PT, Connect to the Kingdom, the Lydia Patterson Institute, and Bridgeport Camp. In our ministry with the poor, we are recovering the earliest mission of the Methodist societies in One + One ministry with people who are God’s beloved and struggling families. Bishop McKee then showed a video, showing that there is a difference between volunteering and serving. He asked that everyone do for one what we wish to do for many: “One + One:” one child, one hour per week. One + One will be our connection and signature North Texas mission.

## **Episcopacy Committee**

Scott Smith, chair of the committee, was accompanied on the platform by the committee members. Smith asked that Joan McKee be escorted to the front. She stated that she represents the clergy families of the conference, and she asked that conference members let clergy families know how much they are loved and appreciated. The committee thanked Joan for her passion for Project Transformation. Thanks were expressed to both Joan and Bishop McKee and they were presented a gift empowering them to travel and spend time with their children. Bishop McKee expressed thanks and announced a second grandson who had joined the family in January.

Bishop McKee noted that 2015 marks 125th anniversary of the Methodist Children's Home. He then introduced Kelly Lawson who stood to be recognized. A video was presented about the ministry of the Methodist Children's Home.

## **Center for Connectional Resources**

Jodi Smith came forward to present the report from the Center for Connectional Resources. She introduced Larry Womack from the Board of Pension and Health Benefits and gave the history of his family ties to the North Texas Conference, including his son Marcus, being ordained in this session of the North Texas Conference.

## **Board of Pension and Health Benefits**

Womack asked board members to stand. Womack reported that all past liability is fully funded, that we are in the midst of an in-depth actuarial study, and that the board is paying close attention to the rapidly changing health care environment, including the Affordable Care Act.

Womack then presented Legislative Item #20, [LA 20] recommending that the pre-1982 Service Year Rate for 2016 be increased by 1.7%, in accordance with the "Cost-of-Living Adjustment" as published by the Social Security Administration in October of 2014. The resolution carried.

Womack then presented legislative item #8 [LA 8] proposing a 5% reduction in the BOPHB apportionment budget. The item carried.

Bishop McKee thanked Womack and his team for the work that they do.

## **Commission on Archives and History**

Smith introduced John Dillard, chair of Commission on Archives and History, to make a special presentation. He introduced those working with him and said they are people who believe history matters and makes a difference in lives. Cultivating an appreciation of our historical heritage is the purpose of the Commission. One of the ways history is cultivated each year is with the presentation of the Kate Warnick Award to the church who presents the best written history of their church. The award is named in honor of Kate Warnick, the first librarian of Bridwell Library, in honor of her service. The award for churches in the medium-sized category was presented to Decatur UMC. Members of the church were recognized. Frances Long invited everyone to visit the archives at Bridwell Library to learn how to share each church's story.

## **Legacy Churches**

Jodi Smith introduced Legacy Churches—Shooks Chapel and Southwood. Bishop McKee recounted the history of Shooks Chapel, formed in a farming community and named after the founding pastor, Rev. Shook, and observed that it is now a legacy church and that life comes out of death. The vote to close Shooks Chapel carried. The second church was Southwood. Bishop McKee asked all who ever served or worshipped there to stand. He recalled the history and said again that out of dying and death, comes resurrection. The vote to close Southwood carried, and Bishop McKee prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for the legacy of these two churches and all who served those churches and were blessed by those churches.

## **Process of Assessment of Local Church Potential**

Marvin Guier moved the closing of Key Memorial UMC, Sherman. He acknowledged their long and rich history but explained that they were no longer able to retire their debt or manage their large facility. He introduced Chris Dowd, chairperson of task force for assessment of Key Memorial UMC. Dowd reported that the church has been in decline for over 30 years and is no longer sustainable. Grand Central Station, an ecumenical community service organization begun by First UMC, Sherman, continues to provide the majority of the church's leadership and desires to broaden and expand its mission and ministry in east Sherman. FUMC, Sherman, has offered to receive the members of Key Memorial and the Key Memorial facility is to be sold to Grand Central Station. Since the remaining members of Key Memorial UMC did not vote to close the church voluntarily, the task force voted unanimously to support the legislative action in par. 2549.2 in the *Book of Discipline*. Motion carried. Bishop McKee said that Key Memorial is now a legacy church.

## **Board of Ordained Ministry**

Jan Davis, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, presented the Board's report. She noted that the commissioning classes are getting progressively younger. The Board has been recruiting younger, diverse, passionate candidates. Local churches should be sure that they are affirming the call of those young people in the local church who are discerning what God is calling them to do. Davis recognized those serving on the BOM. Davis introduced Marsha Engle-Middleton, Director of Local Pastors Education, and Larry Davis, chair of Fellowship of Local Pastors. Middleton introduced those who have just completed Licensing School in the North Texas Conference: Lesta Anderson, Paige Christian, Mary Kathryn Corley, Roy Jerue, David Larkin, David Sprattley, and Charles W. Church.

Billy Echols-Richter, chair of Preparation and Qualifications, presented those being commissioned on the Deacon track and those being commissioned on the Elder track. They are: Phil Dieke and Benjamin Hensley, Deacon track; Yvette Blair-Lavallais, Scott Gilliland, Jonathan Grace, Donald Haywood, Julie Klossner, Amy Spaur, Pamela White, Alex Williams, and Adam Young, Elder track. Jonathan Perry was introduced as a new provisional member of the North Texas Conference, coming from another denomination and Larry James as a full member of the North Texas Conference, coming from another denomination.

The following were introduced as those being ordained and received into full connection in the North Texas Conference: Shawn Bakker, Deacon; J.D. Allen, Mitchell Boone, Brian Dierolf, Bill Eason, Zack Landis, Tim Marks, Carol Montgomery, Cheryl Murray, Adam Spore, Cassie Wade, and Marcus Womack, Elders.

Davis introduced retirement videos.

## Retiree Videos

**John Eckstein** still remembers Tommy Brumett telling him just to love the people. Eckstein thanked his Roman Catholic father for showing him the importance of going to church every Sunday and his maternal grandmother for teaching him to go at other times as well. He then credited Carl Reed, a lay person, for continuing to invite him every month to United Methodist Men. He was in pathology residency at Walter Reed and kept declining, but when he had finished, he went. Soon he was president of UMM, then on to SPRC, and Sunday School superintendent.

When he retired from the army, he moved to a ranch close to Boyd and finished his seminary degree at Brite Divinity. While there, Jim Bowden welcomed him at Boyd and shared his ministry with him.

Eckstein hopes to participate in coaching and interim ministry. He remembered a theme of a United Methodist Men's 1980's gathering: *Awaking the Sleeping Giant*. In his ministry he has tried to awaken the smoldering embers in each church he has served.

**Mel Caraway** has enjoyed helping prepare churches for their next stage, guiding their spiritual formation, and speaking out on social justice issues. His mentors were Bill McElvaney, one of his seminary professors and a lifetime friend, and Bourdon Smith, his intern pastor when Caraway was at Northaven. Caraway said that his wife holds him accountable and helps him get through questions he asks.

Caraway hopes to continue to participate in and lead in Walk to Emmaus, mission trips – here and abroad, and advocacy work in social justice areas. He hopes to have ignited a regeneration of life, blending faith and justice, integrating the importance of understanding the connection of faith and justice in people's lives.

**Gifford Long** has always found teaching Disciple Bible Study meaningful. The people who get biblically literate became the most mission-minded and evangelical, and the churches who took to Bible study grew the most. Long has enjoyed working 31 camps during his time in ministry and getting to chair the Order of Elders for 4 years. Most important to his ministry is his wife Kathy, an RN, a leader in Godly Play, bells, and many other church activities. She is the one who has always been there at the end of the day. Long credited Glen Vickers for being his back-up for years, for taking Long seriously, and doing everything he could to make Long succeed. Long also credited the various clergy support groups in which he has participated over the years.

Long is looking forward to moving into the home his parents bought in 1965, the home where he grew up and an old parsonage that is 104 years old. It is a dream to return and work on it and live there. He hopes to continue to ignite a fire for people to have a relationship with one another and with Jesus Christ.

**Elaine Bussey** appreciates most the connection that is there in the United Methodist Church. It is a connection that unites and at the same time acknowledges each individual's unique gifts for the ministry. It is a connection that unites us with one another and with others throughout the world. She appreciates the family support given her all during seminary, for their love and support all during ministry, and for their love and support as she launches out in retirement. She is now pursuing watercolor and sketching and hoping to write a book. She hopes to catch up with grandchildren and with friends who have gone neglected for far too long.



Bussey hopes that she has ignited a desire in people to be disciples of Jesus Christ. As one of the first women clergy, she hopes that she has kindled that desire authentically, and through the voice of a woman.

**Roy Spore** gave thanks for the close friends he has made across the years in various congregations and for the local pastors with whom he has worked and the small part that he has had in helping shape their path. Early in his ministry, Spore's mentors were Will Bailey and Bill McElvaney, great encouragers. By their examples, they taught him what it means to be the church. Richard Flock, a missionary in Japan on furlough here, became his mentor for a great number of years. Flock taught him what it means to be in ministry and care about all people, regardless of who they are. Later on, his district superintendent Tom Graves taught him what it means to enable people to be the best they can be.

He now realizes that you cannot quit the ministry, because ministry is not what we do; it is who we are. He has always treasured the town and country churches who have trained so many pastors through the years. He hopes to continue to stay connected with them. Spore said that we are taught to be sower of seeds, even if we do not see the harvest. Our job is to know that the seeds are planted. He hopes to ignite the laity to bring about the harvest.

**Arville McLain** spoke of the significance of the collegiality of pastors in the Conference, and the privilege of serving in small, mid-size, and huge church settings. He gave credit to his wife of 47 years. She has used her many gifts so generously. He thanked Jack Gibson who helped him transfer from another denomination. He plans to keep working part time, play more golf, and spend more time with family and with their grandson.

McLain loves Pentecost. The Lord poured out the Holy Spirit upon the people, and McLain hopes that in some small measure he has brought renewal to the churches he has served.

Chair of Conference Relations Committee Stan Copeland and committee members presented the retirees and thanked them for 259 years of service total: Elaine Bussey, Mel Caraway, John Eckstein, David Howeth, Gifford Long, Arville McLain, Charlie Pierce, Kristie Rosset, and Roy Spore.

Bishop McKee thanked the retirees and for the video which he had watched three times. He thanked all of them for their unique gifts and for what they have done for their witness in the North Texas Conference. He invited them to return every year, especially for the free meal on Monday. The retirees received a standing ovation.

### **First Ordination of a Woman in the North Texas Conference**

Bishop McKee asked all the women clergy in the North Texas Conference to stand. He then celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first ordination of a woman in the North Texas Conference and said, "You make us better. The way you practice ministry makes us better and teaches us." He then recalled those women ministers who had been valuable in his life. He said he knew that it still was not easy for women clergy, but he gave thanks for them.

### **Keynote Address**

Bishop McKee introduced the first keynote speaker, Olu Brown. He recalled that when he first came to the North Texas Conference, he began hearing Olu Brown's name. On a trip in Atlanta, after the Bishop had tried to connect with him, Olu Brown called and asked Bishop McKee to come by Impact Church, one of the fastest growing congregations in the United Methodist Church.

Bishop McKee had two young clergy with him, and they had been to Candler on a recruiting trip. He said he felt like he had two 6-year-olds getting to go to Disney World. They said to him, "Let's go by!" They went by Impact Church and Olu Brown gave them the grand tour. The Bishop welcomed Brown home to Texas.

Olu Brown opened with prayer and explained that the topic for the hour would focus on making the gospel relevant in today's world, a responsibility he believes belongs to everyone. Brown referred to commonly known Pew Research data that reports the church is declining. He asked what the church is prepared to do about that. He believes that the hope of the world is the local church but one of the reasons for its decline is that it refuses to change. He noted that the church is 50 years behind culture and that if Apple were to do business at the pace the church does business, we would no longer be a customer of Apple. He gave the example of churches who relied on desktops rather than mobile or apps. They are behind now because more Google research is now done on mobile phones. If we are going to reach people we have never reached, we have to be willing to do things we have never done, even if reaching them does not mean they will always be in church.

The fastest growing faith communities in the United States are the nones—those who claim no faith—and the dones—those who are done with faith. The world has changed, and the question is, "Will we be left behind?" Brown talked about the wonderful loyalty generation who helped develop the church, but their children are the relationship generation who is not willing to give their time and attention to things that don't capture and interest them; therefore, the church is dying because the relational generation is not willing to keep up our apportionment payments or do VBS the way we have always done it. In order for the church to grow, both must work together.

Brown listed three things that must happen. The first is worship—easy but the most difficult. Word of mouth is strong. We must understand that worship is the front door. Worship needs to be vibrant. Whatever you have, make it excellent. The people that you are reaching are used to excellence outside the church. Every Sunday should be Super Bowl Sunday. Focus on the three R's of worship: relevance (take your planning meetings to the bar, to Starbucks, to the restaurant), revelation (not tradition), rehearsal. The reason people do not come back the Sunday after Easter is because we have not planned it. Plan for summer and your attendance does not have to die.

Hospitality is important theologically and in practice. Part of the reason our churches are not growing is that we push some people out. If we are not bold enough to address the issues of the world, people will not wait until the Book of Discipline is changed. This is about any system that oppresses people. If you are going to General Conference as a delegate, ask yourself if you are bold enough to lead the church into the future, because the nones and dones are not going to wait. In Georgia, their mantra is "All people are welcome; all people are worthy; and all people have a place." On Sunday morning, you never see the busload; you only see the scout.

Finally, we must be serious about outreach. Brown commended the Annual Conference during last night's worship. He referenced Colossians 3:17 and spoke about the book *Toxic Charity*. The author speaks of religious mission trips which consume millions of dollars and seldom improve the lives of recipients. Brown believes that we need to start using a new word other than missions. Instead, we need to start using the word "ministry." Ministry says, "I go with you." Missions says, "I send something to you." The author of *Toxic Charity* says that unless we are serious about making changes where we serve, we may do more harm. The answer is Jesus Christ, who walked and talked where he ministered. Many of us want to be like Jesus from our comfort zones, from our stock value. Ask yourselves if you are doing harm or good. Are you seeking to "be with?"

We need to understand that just because your income is high, it does not mean your Christianity is high. Our ministry is not to the poor and the broken only but to those in gated communities. If

every summer an adolescent white male goes to be in mission outreach to people of color—if that is that person’s only association—the young male has a pre-recording in his head of who needs mission. This is important, because we are shaping young people’s world view. They need to go to the whole of the market place. This happens through partnerships, being with. As we seek to do ministry, ask yourselves, “Do we really have a zip code presence in these communities?” Do we know everything about the community where we are doing ministry?

Brown said he is a 37-year-old African American and he has never met anyone from ISIS or ISIL, but he has lived in a nation that has passed an Indian Removal Act, that in 1864 committed the Sand Creek Massacre, where women and children have been marginalized and people of color, where a man has been taken down by officers, saying, “I can’t breathe.” We have a decision to make. Will we be satisfied with the way things are, or will we be relevant?

Kathy McLean-Davis, representing Courtesies and Resolutions, welcomed a visiting Elder from Nairobi, Kenya, Rev. James Mwita. Daniel Soliz offered prayer.

## MONDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

Mark Miller opened the afternoon session with a song, and Paige Christian offered a prayer. Bishop McKee introduced Bishop Dan Solomon representing Texas United Methodist Colleges Association (TUMCA). A video was presented.

The Bishop addressed the ethnically-charged situation currently existing in McKinney, Texas. He encouraged our having continuing conversations about the situation and issues surrounding it. He asked how we talk about an issue; how do we begin to let some of the steam off? He said that any time we allow a racist remark to go unchallenged, we become willing participants in a racist act. It is a sin of omission. The Bishop prayed for the people of McKinney and its churches, as well as for deeper racial sensitivity.

### One + One

David Lessner and Kelly Oleson, a member of Creekwood UMC, spoke about their ministry with a local school. Oleson credited Holly Bandel and Diane Presley for the beginning of Creekwood’s One + One ministry with Harper Elementary. Bandel was pastor when Oleson joined Creekwood’s missions board and Presley had started a mission-focused book study at Good Shepherd UMC in Lucas where an assistant principal from Princeton High School spoke about the great need in their community. Good Shepherd took the lead by providing 11 volunteers to tutor children at Harper Elementary in the spring of 2014. Creekwood heard the stories of the children at Harper Elementary and the difficulties with teacher retention because of neighboring school districts that are able to offer high salaries. They toured the school, shadowed Good Shepherd, met with a team from FUMC, McKinney who had partnered with Caldwell Elementary for 6 years, and launched Harper’s Helpers on the first day of school in August, 2014, with 47 volunteers.

Oleson spoke to the joy that came from volunteering. Volunteers who started monthly asked to change to weekly. Lessner, himself a volunteer, speaks about it from the pulpit. Testimonies come from teachers. By year’s end, Creekwood volunteers had volunteered 1,205 hours tutoring children ages 4–11 and numbered 52. At the end of the year, Oleson discovered that their beloved principal was moving to junior high. She then introduced Oleson to next year’s principal, the guest speaker

who had inspired Oleson at the beginning. Oleson affirmed One + One and volunteered to partner with any church interested in beginning a similar program.

Lessner thanked Bandel for inspiring the ministry and Oleson for her passion about Harper's Helpers. He said it has sparked a revolution to build more partnerships in Princeton with other churches.

Bishop McKee thanked Oleson and all of those involved. He said that One + One is not only the ministry of the North Texas Conference but for one year the North Texas Conference will partner with Minerva Communications to communicate to others the One + One endeavors of churches who may not have a communications department. He then introduced the afternoon's keynote speaker Ashley Elsey, from Minerva Consulting.

### **Keynote Speaker—Afternoon Session**

Ashley Elsey, founder of Minerva Consulting, professed her admiration for the United Methodist Church's ministries, in spite of their being difficult to discover. She said she was sad to think about those in biblical days who could not hear the good news because it was not available. Now that we are in an advanced stage of media, anyone with a phone can access that information immediately. Elsey referred to Oleson's report on Creekwood's involvement with a school and said that people want to hear good news such as that; communication of a job well done is important. We want to communicate because we are trying to teach, give hope, inspire, inform, grow loyalty, and make a difference.

We need to start with the why. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." In today's world, the place where most people are going to see you is online. You grow your relationship and advocacy there. As you put together a communication strategy, you are talking about your strategy and what you are going to accomplish. Each church needs to have a specific mission, something that is unique to that church. This is the discipline that should drive your church and to which you stay attached. As you think about what you are communicating, the mission is key. People want to know what you are about. In the past, they would have to come to church; now they can get online and decide what your mission is. The mission should drive your strategy. One + One is an example. Why? We want to make a difference in the lives of the children and the volunteers. The goal is 5,000 people, and we are talking to many different audiences: those in your bucket, those who come occasionally, and those in your community, all of whom require different messages that must connect back to your mission.

Great communication requires the same thing: be authentic, state the message simply, know your audience, and deliver on your promise. The bad news is that now if you are not delivering on your promise, they know. We have to be intentional about telling these stories. Everybody is online. If Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest country in the world. Everybody is on Facebook. Twitter is now in the #2 spot. YouTube is the #1 search engine. People spend more than 490 minutes of their day with some sort of media. The millennials are changing the game. 61% of them get their news from Facebook. Churches can right now say, "I stand with you." The millennials are looking for that. If they come at all to church, they are making their decisions through this. Today you have to use all the channels of communication. If all the churches in the NT Conference were to start sharing their One + One experiences, all the millennials and all the people we are trying to reach will slowly see this. Elsey gave the example of the McKinney incident that went viral in minutes and to which the Bishop spoke early in the conference. If we could share the divine moments and make people aware of what is going on, it would make such a difference. We do live in a fallen world, but there are celebratory things happening, and we as Christians have been quiet about those. How do we look at social media as the mountaintop from

which we can shout? Write a thought down in church and tweet that after church. You are sharing. To show solidarity with others, you can like their post or retweet. It can bring awareness, even without commentary. We all have our sphere of influence offline and online.

The simple act of sharing with people is powerful. Millennials like to be invited into the conversation. They are looking for movements to be a part of, and the United Methodist Church's involvement in service to the poor will appeal to millennials. She took a picture of everyone and then invited Bishop McKee to be in a selfie with her and the entire conference behind them. She then encouraged everyone to get on their phones, like One + One on Instagram and Facebook, and follow it on Twitter.

### **Methodist Health System**

Bishop McKee introduced Steve Mansfield, CEO of Methodist Health System. Bishop McKee said that in terms of unreimbursed charity care last year in the county of Dallas, the number one hospital providing that care is Parkland. Number two is Methodist Hospital and by a very large margin. Methodist Hospital is recovering the beginnings of the very early Methodist Society. Methodists have always been concerned about people's physical health, and hospitals have been a way to live that out. Methodist Hospital of Richardson has become the hospital that will treat persons infected with the Ebola virus.

Bishop McKee talked about The Golden Cross, a program of Methodist Health System. It is a relationship based on shared values of respect, compassion, diversity, partnership and service. Some of our churches made significant contributions to Golden Cross this last year. The uncompensated charity care last year was 135.8 million dollars or 11.6% of all revenue. There are medical deserts in the city of Dallas and Methodist Hospital has served so many in need. A video followed.

Jack Wallace offered a closing prayer and Mark Miller closed the afternoon session in song, sending delegates to their respective toolbox sessions: Ashley Estes, Mark Miller, Rev. Olu Brown, Luke 4 Initiative, Partnering with Schools, Saying Goodbye, Saying Hello.

## **MONDAY EVENING**

### **Service of Ordination St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Plano**

Reverend Robert Hasley welcomed the conference to St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Plano, for the service of ordination, recognition of orders and commissioning. Music was provided by the Custer Road UMC orchestra, brass, and Custer Road UMC Chancel Choir, under the direction of Tim Morrison and the Custer Road UMC Chancel Choir and Youth Choir. "At the Name of Jesus," based on Philippians 2:5–11 set the focus for the evening message.

Bishop Michael McKee was the preacher for the service. The scripture for the evening message was Philippians 2:5–11. Bishop McKee's message was entitled "Have This Mind in You," and he guided those about to be ordained and commissioned with directions for successful ministries based on humility. "Be very clear about why you focus on the interest of others. You are called to more than just being good. We are called to live as described in Philippians 2:5–11. What is it like to humble yourself and empty yourself?"

“People do not trust us when we think of ourselves first. Go last in the line for the covered dish. Be humble, but not a doormat. Your people should say, ‘Our pastor has integrity and loves us.’” In the transition to the laying of hands and recognition or orders, Bishop McKee told them, “Soon there will be a number of hands on your head. If it feels heavy, it is. The weight symbolizes a heavy expectation.”

Retiring elder Roy Spore placed his stole on his son, Adam Lee Spore, as he was being ordained. At the culmination of the service, each worshipper was handed a candle and held aloft a flame in the darkened sanctuary as they sang, “This Little Light of Mine.” The lights in the darkness reminded all of their role in the world.

In the commissioning and ordination rituals, Bishop McKee presided and was accompanied by Bishop Whitfield. Nine elders were commissioned. Those commissioned for the work of an elder were Yvette Blair-Lavallais, Scott Gilliland, Jonathan Grace, Donald Haywood, Julie Klossner, Amy Spaur, Pam White, Alex Williams, and Adam Young. Commissioned for the work of deacon were Phil Dicke and Ben David Hensley.

One deacon and eleven elders were received into membership in full connection. J.D. Allen, Mitch Boone, Brian Dierolf, Bill Eason, Zack Landis, Tim Marks, Carol Montgomery, Cheryl Murray, Adam Spore, CassieWade, and Marcus Womack were ordained as elders. Shawn Bakker was ordained as Deacon. The orders of Jonathan Randall Perry were recognized as an elder. Larry James received recognition of orders and full conference membership.

The evening offering was dedicated to support The Zip Code Connection. A reception for the newly commissioned, recognized, and ordained followed immediately after the service in the Smith Worship Center.

## **TUESDAY MORNING BUSINESS SESSION**

### **June 9, 2015**

Mark Miller opened the morning session with singing including “There’s No One like Jesus.” Bishop McKee thanked him and remarked that he felt like the North Texas Conference was Miller’s home. Bishop McKee then asked Miller to introduce his band, which included Rev. Lydia Munoz from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, drummer Marcus Johnson, and Calvin Sellars on the bass. Tom Busby offered the morning prayer, and Munoz sang “Gracias, Amigo” with the conference joining in the refrain.

Bishop McKee said “Gracias” to Lydia and to the conference. He offered appreciation to those present last night at the Service of Ordination and Commissioning. He said that ordinand videos would be offered throughout the day.

In 2012, the Council of Bishops agreed that each annual conference would hold an Act of Repentance related to Native American peoples in our country. He spoke of the Sand Creek Massacre and said that if one wanted to understand the pain of Methodists and their relationship to Native Americans, studying the Sand Creek Massacre would open the door to that understanding. Bishop McKee announced that the Act of Repentance would take place at 11 a.m., acknowledging the pain inflicted by this country upon Native Americans.

Bishop McKee then encouraged everyone to Tweet and interview with the youth who are working on a human interest project. He introduced four ordinand reflections.

### Videos of Newly Ordained

**Adam Spore** has a passion for small towns, because he grew up in small town United Methodist churches. He has a passion for looking outside what we previously know of scripture and allowing it to be alive in us. He heard the call at age 14 and he is excited about the lifetime of ministry ahead.

**Cassie Wade's** passion revolves around a scripture about the lawyer who asks what the greatest commandment is. The more she learns to love God, the more she learns to love people. To ignite it takes oxygen, fuel and a spark. Wade equated that to God, the people and something she brings to the picture. She has a love for people and helping them expand who they are.

**Shawn Bakker** has a passion for connecting people across the world, whether it is to an orphanage or to a new church start. At Upper Room, she connects people with their passion, to their spiritual journey. Upper Room is shared in 100 different countries in 35 different languages. She is excited about being ordained in the North Texas Conference. At 23, she became director of Project Transformation and even though it has been several years since she has lived in this conference, she feels at home here.

**Carol Montgomery**, as a little girl, had a recurring dream. Today she calls it a vision. She is in the palm of Jesus' hand. He says, "You are my beloved." She hopes to help people understand that they are loved. Having served college students recently at University of North Texas, she knows what is coming up, and she believes they will set the world on fire.

Bishop McKee announced that the ordinand and retiree videos would be posted on the conference website following Annual Conference. He called on Clayton Oliphint for the report from Council on Finance and Administration.

### Council on Finance and Administration

Clayton Oliphint first thanked St. Andrew for hosting Annual Conference. Oliphint introduced Legislative Item #9 [LA 9] concerning the conference budget. Oliphint reflected on the prior evening's ordination service when everyone lifted candles and sang "This Little Light of Mine." He led the conference in singing through this song twice; then he affirmed the way the churches had let their lights shine this past year. He said that CF&A wanted to help the local churches shine their light. He reported that last year's payout was 95.9% on apportionments, our fair share of giving above and beyond the local church. The Northwest District paid 100% for the 23rd year in a row and the East district who paid 100% for the 20th year in a row.

The first item of the legislation was to approve an audit by Ratliff and Associates. The second item was a recommendation of 1.1% increase over 2015. He then moved acceptance of Legislative Item #9 [LA 9]. It was approved. He reported that last year CF&A was asked to study the possibility of a capital campaign in relation to providing more scholarships for candidates for the ministry. In consultation with Bishop McKee, CF&A decided to table this for further study, particularly in light of camping needs. Oliphint asked all the members of CF&A to stand, and he thanked them.

## **Core Leadership Team**

Linda Parks presented the Core Leadership Team report. Parks reported that the CLT had discussed and shared strategies for producing fruit and had met with several entities. A few of those were CF&A, Clergy Effectiveness, Advancing Women's Leadership, One + One, Healthy Church Initiative. One of the highlights, said Parks, was Lynn Parsons' presentation of The Zip Code Connection, when she shared their accomplishments and introduced George Battle, connections director for South Dallas/Fair Park and Melinda Waters, connections director for Red River County. They are working hard to make relational connections in the two communities. Parks introduced the CLT. Parks and Bishop McKee thanked them for serving.

## **Nominations Committee**

Linda Parks presented the report of the nominations committee. She thanked members of the nominating committee for their hard work. She noted that the report could be found on the green sheets in the canvas IGNITE bags and asked everyone to follow along with that as well as the white Nominations Profile sheet. She explained that this sheet is the primary source used to fill vacancies and requested that people submit these for future nominations as well. She also pointed out that on the conference website is a description of all committees and their purposes. New nominations and Bishop McKee's appointments were bolded on the handout. The Bishop reminded the conference that a Committee on Investigation had been elected in the clergy session and did not need to be included. The Bishop called for a vote and the report was passed as presented. Parks implored the conference members to realize the importance of completing the Nominations Profile Sheet for the coming year, as 140 vacancies would need to be filled.

## **Young Person's Address**

Bishop McKee called the young people up and they first took a selfie with a selfie stick. Audrey Chumley, from Prosper UMC, and incoming chair of CCYM, introduced the group of young adults who make up the Conference Council on Youth Ministries—enthusiastic, dedicated, imaginative, loving and full of Christ. She thanked the conference for their support and Bishop McKee for always believing in them. She told the conference that CCYM is hard at work. Last fall they held the first annual event titled One God, One Church, One Day, an event that had 200 people in attendance from around the conference worshipping together for a day of fun and fellowship. In addition, they had their mid-winter retreat with 450 youth from across the conference. The Youth Service Fund represents funds raised by youth for youth. They raised \$1,535 and split that money three ways—1/3 to The Foundry House ministries Kids Klubhouse in Mabank, Texas; 1/3 to The APEX Youth Ministry in New Orleans, Louisiana; and 1/3 to the Global Youth Service Fund. As they move forward, they realize that they are the church—the church of now, ready and excited and willing to go out into the world and be the change they want to see. She then called attention to a video of youth across the conference saying what they want to ignite this year.

The outgoing chair of CCYM, Hope Rouse, addressed the conference and encouraged the conference to see the youth not just as youth, but as equal, as laity. She encouraged everyone to think of the over 99% of youth who are not there. The youth of the conference have a vision for the church and the youth is the church of NOW. She asked the conference to let the able-bodied young laity be the gasoline to the spark that is ignited in the coming year. She concluded by inviting all members to have lunch with someone under 25 this afternoon. The CCYM members ended with a T-shirt throw. The Bishop thanked them for reminding everyone of their youth.



## Videos of Newly Ordained

**Cheryl Murray** has a passion for reaching people. Her church has chosen recently to do that on the baseball field and go beyond the walls to reach people for Christ. She hopes to ignite a revival of hope. She hopes that as we are God's beloved community we will love one another, God and our neighbor because we have God's transforming love in our lives. Surely doing no harm and all the good we can will transform lives.

**Marcus Womack** has a passion that starts with God's grace. He hopes to make grace tangible. He hopes to be able to facilitate some kind of honest and authentic relational connection with folks. The church is about to join the work of God already out there and he is excited to go back to campus ministry from being that student to joining the leaders.

**J.D. Allen** wants to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and help people rediscover the prophetic element of following Christ. He wants them to hear Isaiah's prophecy calling people back to a loving community; it could fuel the ministry of working with the poor. He hopes to ignite the commitment to one another where we let everything go to serve one another. The "nones" are an incredible opportunity. We have a clean slate to teach the love of God and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**Brian Dierolf** has a passion for mission and outreach. They now serve about 200 in Grand Prairie, because they became a food distribution center of Crossroads in Dallas. Such ministries strengthen people. It is a place where we treat each other as sisters and brothers. It is a kin-dom place (without the "g"), a place where people can focus on common faith. He is hopeful for the church.

## Project Transformation

Bishop McKee introduced his wife Joan McKee. She talked of the complete circle that Project Transformation can make with children who enter PT, and then move into an after-school program, middle school, and high school. Those children then go off to college and come back as college students in that same program in the community—full circle. She explained that the national headquarters will be here in Dallas because it all began here and we will be igniting chapters throughout the United States. She then introduced a Project Transformation video explaining the vision of PT with testimonies from many in the program. Joan McKee then introduced Eric Lindh, new national director for Project Transformation. The conference applauded him as he stood. Bishop McKee remembered that Shawn Bakker, previous director of PT, had talked about PT in her ordinand video, and he quoted from another source, "What starts here changes the world."

## Center for New Church Starts and Congregational Transformation

The report began with a video highlighting the ministry. Jim Ozier then began a report on open doors and was interrupted by two singers in costume with a musical rendition of "Love is an Open Door" from "A Moment Frozen in Time." Ozier said that when we open our doors, we are inviting people to make a difference because of their faith, to open doors to the community. He introduced a new church start out of Paris – a second church start in Paris. The second off-campus church out of FUMC, Paris was featured in the video as "The Party Barn Church."

Gloria Fowler explained that the center not only starts new churches but starts the process of Healthy Church Initiative within existing churches. This consultation process helps churches to improve their ministry. A brief video was shown highlighting this important ministry.

Liliana Rangel encouraged the conference to learn more about the emphases of Healthy Church Initiative. She called attention to p. 18 of the conference workbook, listing those churches which are participating in HCI. She encouraged other churches to visit with those who are currently in the program to see how it has helped them.

Ozier then asked any churches there who are part of Small Church Initiative or Healthy Church Initiative to stand. He pointed out that there are other avenues of help as well, including Holy Conversations. Ozier encouraged all churches to make their church a “fishin’ church” rather than a “wishin’ church.” He said that all of the centers at the Conference Ministry Center are working together to help all of the churches. He then called Metro District superintendent Cammy Gaston to present an award to a church who has been a “fishin’ church.”

Gaston invited Charles Carnahan who is part of the Discipleship Ministries in Nashville, Tennessee to present an award called “One Matters” Discipleship and Ministry Award. Carnahan explained that this award would be presented to a church that is turning things around. Along with the award, the church will receive \$1,000. The church would represent what moving away from zero (baptisms, membership professions) means. Carnahan then invited Olu Brown to help present the award.

Gaston explained the when David Rangel came to Casa Linda UMC, the church reported zero new members, zero confirmands, and zero professions of faith. Rangel and his brother Caleb created an intensive discipleship program called “Route 180,” teaching people to make a 180 degree in their spiritual life. Rangel said it in Spanish and the Bishop repeated it. In 2011, they added 12 new members, in 2012, they added 16, in 2013, they added 22, and last year they added 12. The laity are empowered. This church has a Path 1 intern as well. The award celebrates that “One Matters.”

Rangel said that he had not expected this award. He thanked God for allowing him to be in the conference, to Bishop and the conference for supporting him here. Even though the building is old and they are facing some funding issues for this, he has to remind himself that “Jesus did not have to have money to make disciples.” He affirmed the Casa Linda church and its people.

As Ozier concluded the Center’s report, he was again interrupted by the costumed couple singing, “Love is an Open Door.”

Bill Gavitt, from Greenland Hills UMC was recognized. He asked how many new church starts have been planted. Ozier answered that 19 have been planted since the center was founded in 2008. Gavitt asked what was the limiting factor for more, and Ozier said that it was leadership for those who feel called to be a church planter, or a mother church, or a satellite church. He issued an invitation to those who might be so called. Bishop McKee noted that Charles Carnahan is also a member of the North Texas Conference on loan to the Board of Discipleship and Ministries. He thanked Carnahan and then called for a singing break.

After the singing break, Bishop McKee welcomed Jen Edwards to the conference. Edwards represented Cokesbury and presented the Bishop with what every Bishop needs—a John Wesley bobble-head. The bishop thanked Edwards and called on Marti Soper.

### **Center for Leadership Development**

Soper introduced Kelly Carpenter and Becky Hensley. Soper called attention to a brochure in all bags called, “I Am a Leader.” It is new information about receiving female pastors in your churches for perhaps the first time. She then moved on to the Harry Denman Evangelism Awards, honoring clergy, laity and youth, who have been extraordinary leaders in Wesleyan evangelism. The youth

award went to Heather Howard of Wylie UMC. Howard currently serves on the church's mission board, the youth activities council, sings in the youth praise band, and leads Bible studies. The laity award went to Susan Grant, director of certified lay servant ministries program for the last 15 years in the Metro District, a group that now numbers over 400 youth and adults. She organized an after-school youth tutoring group and served as lay servant for 15 years. The Harry Denman award for clergy was awarded to Chiv In, pastor of Cambodian Fellowship of FUMC, Carrollton. In came to the United States in 1978 as a refugee and bravely returned to Cambodia in 2008 in order to share the gospel. 500 Cambodians are now meeting in Cambodian villages to share the faith.

Carpenter introduced a video about Bridgeport Conference Center, representing a place where a spark of faith often starts. The video featured the Bishop's rally for middle school students and the SEEK Camps. Carpenter emphasized that volunteers are crucial to make these ministries happen.

Kendall York, FUMC Rockwall graduating senior, presented via video her call to ministry and what she has gained through ministries of the North Texas Conference, including a discernment group.

Hensley explained a new faith development program for young adults called Summer Internship in Ministry (SIM) Fellowship program. This summer there are ten. Hensley introduced a video presenting the first group of SIM Fellows. Over the last two weeks they have experienced seminary and spiritual development at Prothro. Bishop McKee remarked that the conference has received funds for this project through several sources, including GBHEM and Perkins School of Theology. He thanked everyone involved with this program which is focused on clergy recruitment.

The Clergy Fruitfulness Initiative continues to celebrate persons throughout their ministry. Names of those ordained for five through forty years of service, in five year increments, were listed on the screen and they were asked to stand.

Soper spoke of the Luke 4 Initiative which uses church-based teams to work on community projects. As she read from Luke 4, a video then featured individuals from several of these teams equipped to partner with their communities and address issues such as childhood homelessness. They addressed needs brought up in answer to the question, "What is it that breaks your heart?"

### **Clergy Spouse Organization**

Michelle Corazao, President of The Clergy Spouse Organization of the North Texas Conference, informed the conference that she had just packed boxes and then unpacked those same boxes as she and her spouse moved to another appointment. She then introduced a "Fallon" style music video featuring clergy spouses in the North Texas Conference. It was entitled "All About that Grace" and humorously pointed out all the places that clergy spouses and their families need to show grace. The video was well received by the conference.

The Bishop then announced that the stage would be set for the Act of Repentance. Mark Miller led the conference in singing "Turn Our Hearts."

### **Act of Repentance**

Bishop McKee welcomed neighbors from the Dallas Indian United Methodist Church. Silver Feathers, a group from that church, provided opening music. After the opening prayer, the congregation sang "As a Fire Is Meant for Burning." Bishop McKee introduced Dr. David Wilson of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary conference and led the Litany of Repentance. Wilson then led

the congregation in the Prayer in Four Directions, the congregation turning to the north, the south, the east and the west as they prayed.

The scripture for the day was I Corinthians 12:12–26, and the message was entitled “Stingy With Each Other’s Existence.” Wilson took the congregation on a visual ride across Oklahoma with photos of his Native American immersion class. As he talked about the Trail of Tears and the desecration and destruction of the Native American culture and people, he said, “Some of you may be asking, ‘What does this have to do with us? Why repent?’”

What the United States government and the churches did to Native American people is not a good story. During the Trail of Tears the tribal members were not even given time to bury the dead. They threw blankets over them and moved on. The Christian story is so similar to Native American story: love one another. One of the very first things that happened was that churches were built, in Tennessee, in Oklahoma.

As he told stories, Wilson explained the tradition of tying ribbons to remember to pray for one another and to be reminded of our inter-connectedness. They learned that the federal government provides only about \$450 per Native American for healthcare. They set up healthcare in a United Methodist Church. Bishop Woody White saw that money was given to start this clinic. He told of the Urban Indian Relocation Act of 1952, which encouraged Native Americans to leave their reservations, get training, get jobs and assimilate into the general population in one of seven selected cities; Dallas was one of those seven. When they got to Dallas, there was nothing – no housing, no jobs. Instead of leaving, the Native Americans stayed and created the Dallas Indian UMC. “It is about broken promises and making the best of a bad situation. Now they are the largest Native American church in any city.”

Paul says the reason we must repent is that if one part is hurt, they are all hurt. Another way to look at it is the Cherokee way. They have no word for love. Rather, they express love as being stingy with each other’s existence, holding each other’s existence as sacred. There is never a reason to let one another go.

After the benediction, there were opportunities in crossing the bridge to write a prayer and hang it and attach it to a rope. Bishop McKee encouraged everyone to take the time to do that.

## **TUESDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION**

Mark Miller opened the afternoon session with “Jesus Lifted Me.” Dan Gurley offered a prayer. Kathy McLean-Davis offered courtesies and resolution. She called attention to the new partnership of University Park UMC with Project Transformation who will have PT’s national headquarters constructed there. In addition, starting Wednesday, Matt Gaston will start the audacious goal of riding his bike 1,000 miles from University Park to Nashville, Tennessee, one of PT’s four chapters. Pedal for PT will last approximately 14 days. You are invited to participate by contributing to the goal of \$100,000 for the building of PT’s headquarters and keeping up through the website at UPUMC. She then announced that this annual conference is the 65th Annual Conference for Buist Wilson. A special thanks went out to First UMC, Carrollton for hosting the laity session and to Christ UMC, Plano for hosting the clergy session. Bishop McKee asked all from the corresponding churches to stand and be thanked.

He then introduced a video short of One + One from Vista Ridge UMC in Lewisville. Mary Beth Hardesty-Crouch introduced their Luke 4 team who worked at Rock Brook Elementary School.

She asked the leader Bill Burden to introduce the team. He introduced the team involved. Principal Sherry Betz spoke of how Vista Ridge UMC has blessed the children of her school. She told of a student who came to her and asked for a mentor because he thought he would be better if he had one.

### **Center for Missional Outreach**

Larry George, Director of the Center for Missional Outreach, introduced those working with him: Sam Martin, Chair of Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns; Marji Bishir Hill, Director of Missions for North Texas Conference; Lynn Parsons, Director of Zip Code Connection; along with George Battle, connection director for South Dallas, and Melinda Watters, connection director for Red River. Of the nine core values discerned by the Nehemiah team, number five was fun. A short and very funny video clip followed.

George then introduced Sam Martin, Chair of the Conference Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concern, as a partner to help celebrate a witness to inclusion. Martin presented the Bishop Oden Ecumenical Award to Northaven UMC for their program called Second Community, an outgrowth of interfaith programs that they have been offering since 2009. The notion is that individuals can have a second interfaith community within which they can develop an understanding and a respect for other faiths and thereby enrich their own lives and communities. Eric Folkerth, pastor of Northaven, and Bob Steward, leader of Second Community, received the award on behalf of Northaven. Folkerth commended this work to everyone.

Bishop McKee shared about reading a letter from George Washington to the members of the Jewish community of Rhode Island, to the Touro Synagogue. Different kinds of connections happen in interreligious dialog. We are better off talking with each other than to each other. Let us be Christian in our interaction with one another.

George remarked that Wesley was not content with doing all the good for all the people but also in all the places. He asked Hill how we are doing. Hill reported that the response to UMCOR Health Kits were almost double the goal of 7500. Bishop McKee gave information on One Great Hour of sharing, and the Annual Conference sang the doxology in response.

George then focused on The Zip Code Connection with a video highlighting the ministry *with* the 75426 area of Clarksville, Red River County, and *with* the 75215 area of South Dallas/Fair Park. He also highlighted UMCOR and their work for interreligious concerns. He quoted Peter Brown, “Like God, the poor were very distant. Like God, the poor were silent. Like God, the poor could all too easily be forgotten by the proud and the wealthy. God never forgot the poor.” Doing all the good we can with all the people we can in all the places we can forever as long as we can be remembering the poor. It is nothing less than a bridge to God.

### **Texas Methodist Foundation**

Bishop McKee introduced Tom Locke and said that Locke is one of the four or five people who has been instrumental in changing the conversation and inviting people into a conversation about the mission of the United Methodist Church. Locke responded by saying that the North Texas Conference appears to be reflective of a tagline that TMF has adopted this year: TMF stewarding potential. Clearly, there is a God-inspired potential within each of us. Total assets are now over five hundred million. Loans to NTC are almost ninety million and they would love to have more.

John Thornburg, Lisa Greenwood and Bob Dupuy are here to help. He introduced a highlight video. They have learned the following: There is a significant difference between vital

congregations and others, based on whether they ask the question about what God wants them to do; there is a significant difference between asking, “What is God wanting us to do?” rather than sharing self-preferences; there is a significant difference between ministry for vs. ministry with.

### **General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation**

Tim Crouch and Jan Davis reported on the work of the delegation and its work over the past year. Crouch said that they have been meeting monthly and that they are looking for ways to try to rebuild trust. They have met across the conference. Crouch said that Oliphint and Underwood have worked on the language involving restructuring; Ricky Harrison has been involved with the language around human sexuality.

Davis asked for prayers for the delegation. She called attention to the list of delegates in the conference workbook. She said that several listening sessions would be offered in the coming year and she invited all to come. She invited the congregation to be involved with General Conference, either by attending or by participating in social media.

Crouch talked about the delegation’s priorities: restructuring and sexuality, in particular. He also said that the delegation does not believe in schism.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

### **Standing Rules**

Anne Todd thanked the other members of the Standing Rules Committees, Vivian Crowson, David Rucker, Nancy DeStefano, Ed Patterson and Tom Waitschies as well as Jodi Smith. Legislative Item #2 had one change in last line. Rather than lay speakers committee, it should be lay servants committee. Legislative Item #2 [LA 2] passed.

Legislative Item #3 [LA 3] providing for the addition of non-voting members to the Lay Servant Ministries Committee passed.

Legislative Item #4 [LA 4] regarding “Connect to the Kingdom” and its oversight by Tyler Street UMC was approved.

Legislative Item #5 [LA 5] regarding the CORE Leadership Team’s transfer of responsibilities to the CART Team was approved after wording changes were noted by Vickie Pope, Justin UMC, on p. 25, line 35 which should read Congregational Assessment and Response Team rather than Core Leadership Team.

Legislative Item #6 [LA 6] which added a paragraph to the confidentiality clause of conference contact records was approved.

Legislative Item #26 [LA 26] concerning MinistrySafe wording updates to include the screening process required for policy compliance and to clarify the language regarding Nursery/Childcare as well as revisions under the Training section were approved.

The Bishop stated that Ministry Safe violations regarding background check or two-adult policy must be followed. The protection of young persons is not negotiable in the North Texas Conference. One violation at one church puts all 305 at danger.

### Keynote Address

Bishop McKee welcomed Olu Brown and thanked him for being a Joshua. Brown said that generosity and cause go together. Stewardship is the old word. The new word is generosity. Begin adjusting language. Stewardship was used with the loyalty generation. During service, the moment is called “generosity moment.” Instead of having a stewardship campaign, consider having a cause campaign. A cause-related ministry answers who, what and where. Who are we serving? Why are we serving them? Where are they? If you can tell someone about a cause, they will always be generous toward it. Tell the congregation how they can connect with the cause moment that compels them to be generous.

The next twenty years of church growth won't be large campus ministries but more boutique-style, very focused, targeting their resources toward the places to which God is calling them. There is always competition for the cause. The church is being beat to the cause by Jersey Mike's because they make you feel good about your bologna and cheese sandwich because you are supporting local initiatives. APPLE is another site that communicates their cause and keeps you posted on what they are doing regarding the cause of renewable energy.

What distinguishes your cause from every other local church that causes someone to invest in you? He went to the website of Union and remarked on how many times one sees the word cause. At first glimpse, the word cause appears at least three times. Generosity is driven by philosophy. The church needs to have faithful conversations based on scripture and on wisdom from the ages. He referenced “A Spirituality of Fundraising” by Henri Nouwen. Ask the question, “We can do it. Where are the resources?”

It is not the role of finance to guard but to tell us how to achieve the vision. Nouwen says that it is a privilege for people to be generous. We have to teach that generosity is a blessing. Generosity in motion: 1) Generosity must always be connected to vision. 2) Stories are always connected. Record stories of transformation. Alex told her story on a video. If there is not technology available, have the story told live. Go to a seven-year-old kid and have them promote a cause to which they relate. 3) Technology and generosity are connected. This includes both hardware and software. He referenced an article “Why Millennials Don't Put Money in Offering Plate.” Young adults give because of a congregational vision that aligns with their philosophy or to help the poor. An APP allows folks to give all around the world. If we only take cash, not much will happen. 35% of Impact church's income is digital. A kiosk's benefit will far outweigh the cost. It's biblical. Brown quoted Habakkuk 2:2—“The Lord answered and said, ‘Write the vision; make it plain on a TABLET.’”

Finally, Brown said that the only folks afraid to talk about money is the local church. The Dallas Cowboys are set up to take credit cards for everything going on, leading up to, and during a game. We need to do the same. Brown ended the session with prayer for those in the North Texas Conference.

### Videos of Newly Ordained

**Tim Marks** has a passion for helping people find themselves in the biblical story, for watching them realize that the bible describes the human condition that all of us have in common. He hopes that people can get excited about sharing the gospel. He said that ships and scriptures are

never safely harbored. He is excited about being on this gospel ship, pulling up anchor and saying “Anchors up!” and see what happens.

**William Eason** has a passion for people, a passion for sharing what God has done for them. He hopes to ignite that passion and excitement in people. He has a passion for meeting people whatever phase they are in, wherever they are. Matthew 9 says that Jesus looked out and said that the laborers are few. He wants to be the voice; he wants people to see that they will know we are Christians by our love.

**Zack Landis** has a passion for getting to know people and letting them know that someone loves them. That was a big part of how his ministry began. He was in the hospital and his senior pastor came to visit. He was comforted and wanted to be that comforter. He hopes to bring some new energy into churches and reach new people. The last two churches have included a golfing ministry. It is a casual way to get to know people. It is exciting to be in ministry with the people. The opposite of faith isn't doubt; it is fear. He is excited about the ways the church will let the fears dissipate.

**Mitchell Boone** is passionate about finding unique and creative ways to engage both the church and the community. When he came to White Rock, they put a community garden on their parking lot. The garden has been an invitation for the church to move outside its walls. The church has a responsibility to maintain hope. Hopefully they will understand their role is to be solely focused on the neighborhood in which they reside, to be stewards for those on the margins. It is exciting to do ministry where folks are not beholden to what has been done in the past. The possibilities are endless for the church.

### **Laity Address**

Conference Lay Leader Linda Parks reported that the response to churches featuring pictures of laity doing ministry was massive. She received over 450 photos. Only a few could be used during the 4-minute video. The video was shown, featuring laity addressing the causes of poverty, working side by side with recipients. Other photos showed involvement with causes such as fighting malaria. Others showed pictures exemplifying the development of principled Christian leaders. Parks observed that the four areas of focus had used resources well.

Parks noted that the photos showed laity demonstrating a variety of gifts and service, yet all worshipping the same God. Before sending the photos to be edited, Parks said that she clicked through all 450 photos, taking in the smiles, the efforts, the ministry of each one. The words of “We Are the Church” sum up the meaning of the video. She asked everyone to examine each verse of #558 and she invited everyone to say with her the first verse. They joined her and turned the chorus into song. The video played. Parks thanked everyone for their participation as a church together.

Bishop McKee called for the presentation of remaining Legislative Items.

### **Equitable Compensation**

Marti Soper brought Legislative Item #7 [LA 7] on equitable compensation and corrected an error in year 10 of minimum salary for clergy to read \$46,758. Bishop McKee remarked that the minimum salary in the North Texas Conference is one of the highest in the nation. Legislative Item #7 [LA 7] passed.



## General Conference Resolutions

Tom Hudspeth said that he was not the author of all the resolutions but representing the group called United Methodist Church Association of Ministers with Disabilities. The first resolution proposed a change in language to Par. 610.4 in the Book of Discipline from “Whenever possible” to “Every effort shall be made to ensure that...” This petition will be presented to the General Conference from the North Texas Conference. It passed.

Legislative Item #14 [LA 14] had to do with the requirement of health qualifications of candidates for ordination as elder. The amendment would state that one or more irremovable disabilities shall have no bearing on the question of endorsing a candidate. Karan Marshall moved that the word “Deacon” be added to “Elders” in this legislation in all the places where it is referred. This amendment motion carried and became part of the resolution. Phil Dieke moved that licensed Local Pastors be included. Ben Hensley moved to replace terms with “ordained clergy.” Scott Bontrager raised a point of order based upon language in ¶124. Bishop McKee ruled Phil’s amendment out of order. The body approved the amended resolution.

Legislative Item #13 [LA 13] would add that when a pastor wants to take a medical leave, the committee that makes the decision would include a person with disabilities, adding a fifth person to said committee. Don Wiley, Lovers Lane UMC, pointed out that the real focus was to have someone involved in the decision-making who understands.

Bishop McKee explained that in order for a person to qualify for a medical disability leave, a committee has to recommend that. They must have medical documentation so that they can be paid on that leave.

Justin Hancock, Missional Wisdom Foundation, spoke in support, saying that we get into justice issues if we do not support this.

Liz Moen has served on this committee and remarked that if there are not enough people in our churches to serve on these committees, then we are not doing our job as a church in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. The resolution carried.

Legislative Items #11 [LA 11] and #12 [LA 12] were discussed together. They have the same goal. They request that the General Board of Church and Society be an advocate for persons with mental and nervous system conditions, giving these persons the same treatment as those with other conditions, eliminating the difference in time limits between mental health conditions and other health conditions. Bishop McKee stated that this would be an issue of advocacy in ¶806. Don Wiley clarified that this has nothing to do with medical insurance. It is strictly talking about disability insurance, and the difference between the way mental health conditions are treated as opposed to other health conditions. There is now a shorter time limit for mental health conditions. This is to encourage the General Conference to encourage other countries to take the same position on mental and nervous system disorders the same as other health conditions. The motion passed.

Joan LaBarr referred to the legislation offered by the Retiree Fellowship of the North Texas Conference [LA 27]. Charles Cox rose to speak to the petition which requests that retirees’ live speeches be returned to the conference agenda.

Paul Rasmussen spoke against the petition. He explained that this body voted to address issues that had been making Annual Conference unpleasant to many. The Nehemiah group was authorized to plan agendas based on specific values. A vote for this resolution would disempower the work of the Nehemiah Project. Specifically, time limits are often not observed by retirees in live speeches.

Bill Gavitt, Greenland Hills UMC, stated that the Annual Conference should be able to authorize who gets to speak.

Joan LaBarr spoke in favor of the petition but complimented the quality of this year's videos and the work of the Nehemiah Project.

The resolution was defeated.

### **Conference Address by McKinney pastors and African-American Clergy President**

Bishop McKee referred to the McKinney incident which happened the previous day. He asked Tommy Brumett, John McClarty, and Frances Cudjoe Waters to come forward and expand on this incident. Brumett explained that last night about 80 clergy missed ordination because they called a meeting with the mayor of McKinney, pastors of many different churches, cultures, and races, and with the police chief of McKinney. Subsequently, the officer involved in the incident resigned.

Brumett invited all to pray and to expect that justice for McKinney would be done. Cudjoe Waters then addressed the conference. She expressed her appreciation to the pastors who supported them. As a mother of three sons, she said that it was also a personal issue with her. The idea that any children would be brutalized just because of the color of their skin is not just a political issue. It is a matter of life and death. She said that tonight these pastors would gather at the police station to make a peaceful statement where all can work together to live in peace. She closed with a quote by 1960's Frantz Fanon that every generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it. We will work together to show the world how we can live in peace together. Brumett invited all who wanted to attend to come tonight at 7 p.m.

The Bishop expressed his appreciation to all working on this. He thanked all the pastors involved and said that this is our work as United Methodists. It is better when we all claim it together. All lives matter. He encouraged all to be vigilant around these issues over the year. In Romans 8, Paul talks about how God can work for the good of all things. His commitment as a human being and United Methodist clergy and bishop is to work on issues of race. The McKinney incident is another reason to do so.

Michael Bowie closed the business session in prayer. The Bishop advised the clergy to stay.

### **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.