

# Friday Morning, June 21



Bishop Weaver welcomed clergy and lay members to annual conference Friday morning and introduced the mornings **Bible study leader, the Rev. Dr. Kevin M Watson**, assistant professor of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies at Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

Bishop Weaver recognized the **Rev. Stan Thompson**, chair of the **Minutes Committee**, who gave a report and the Minutes of the previous day's session were approved.

**Erin Geoffrion** gave a report from the **Commission on the Status and Role of Women**. They are monitoring the demographics of representation of participation at the conference session.

Bishop Weaver said "We hope we hear the numbers as representing people."

The **Rev. Kathleen Overby Webster**, dean of the Cabinet, gave the report of the **Cabinet**. Members of the Cabinet gave resolutions pertaining to closing churches in their districts. They included Epiphany, Arlington District; Bassett Memorial and Moseley Memorial, Danville District; Claremont, James River District; Stonewall, Staunton District; Aldersgate, York River District.

The **Rev. Mark Ogren**, conference director of **Congregational Excellence**, introduced the pastors and lay persons working with new faith congregations. they included the young adult fellowship of **Woodlawn-Faith**



The Rev. Marc Ogren presents new faith communities.

**UMC** represented by the Rev. Brian Brown, the Rev. Jeff Mickle (Alexandria District DS), Brian Brown II, Christopher Kennedy, and Fenio Waum. **Restoration Church** was represented by the Rev. Tim Ward the Rev. Tom Berlin (Floris UMC), and the Rev. Cathy Abbott (Arlington DS).



Conference Lay Leader Warren Harper.

Conference Lay Leader **Warren Harper** delivered the **Laity Address**.

"On your behalf I have participated in events and ministries across our conference and denomination that bear fruit for us all," Harper said.

"Networking and learning from others leads to greater understanding of the varied ministries we take to the streets."

Harper highlighted the annual Lay Servant Academy, the United Methodist

Men's annual Spiritual Advance, Jurisdictional meetings, and his participation as a delegate to General Conference. Harper's address is available in its entirety by [clicking here](#) (pdf) Bishop Weaver recognized the district and local church lay leaders.

Bishop Weaver introduced **Ms. Martha Stokes** and the **Rev. Tom Berlin** for a report on the **2019 General Conference**. Stokes took a moment of personal privilege to thank those members of the delegation elected in 2015 who attended two General Conferences and were faithful and hardworking servants through all the challenges



Tom Berlin and Martha Stokes.

they faced personally and as a delegation. She personally thanked the Rev. Tom Berlin for his leadership. Berlin reiterated that by 56 votes, the Traditional Plan topped the One Church Plan in the priority voting. Delegates also approved two petitions by WesPath Benefits and Investments, the denomination's pension agency. All agreed to care for the security of retirees and those active clergy invested in the WesPath retirement program. Stokes and Berlin stepped through the requirement for a Just Resolution of complaints brought against clergy created by the Traditional Plan. Stokes reminded the gathering that any decision made at a past General Conference can be changed at a future General Conference. Most legislation requires a simple majority for change. With that in mind, the makeup of the 2020 General Conference will be slightly different. A total of 862 delegates will be present with the number of delegates from Africa increasing by 26 and the number of delegates from the United States decreasing by 24. Betty Forbes, president of the Council of Finance and Administration, assured the conference members that we would move forward with "audacious optimism." Bishop Weaver recognized the newly-elected delegation to General and Jurisdictional Conferences and prayed his blessings over the group.

### **Motions**

Nine motions were brought to the conference and can be found at [www.vaumc.org/ncfilerepository/AC2019/AgendaMotions.pdf](http://www.vaumc.org/ncfilerepository/AC2019/AgendaMotions.pdf)

**Motion 1** - "Balancing Lay and Clergy Membership of the Annual Conference" by G. Kirk Nave: Each year, there are approximately 200 more lay members attending the Virginia Annual

Conference session than clergy members. - *The motion prevailed.*

**Motion 2** - "Motion to Delay" by Joshua Blakely: I move that we, the Virginia Annual Conference, encourage Bishop Weaver and Bishop Lewis, and other members of the Conference Leadership team to, as an act of grace, delay any inquiry of the official conduct of clergy members (§604.4) related to chargeable offenses outlined in the Discipline (§2702.1.a-b) related to LGBTQIA+ clergy, LGBTQIA+ clergy candidates, and same-gender weddings until after the General Conference 2020. - *The motion prevailed.*

**Motion 3** - "Removal of Incompatibility Language" by the Rev. Sara Keeling. *The motion prevailed.*

**Motion 4** - "Removal of Incompatibility Language for Ministry" by the Rev. Sara Keeling. - *The motion prevailed*

**Motion 5** - "Removal of Incompatibility Language for Chargeable Offenses" by the Rev. Sara Keeling. - *The motion prevailed.*

**Motion 6** - "Amicable Separation and the Multiplication of Ministries" by the Rev. H.O. 'Tom' Thomas. - *The motion failed.*

No action was taken on Motions 7, 8 and 9 due to time restraints.

**Motion 7** - "Call to Commit by be an Inclusive Church" by the Rev. C. Alan Layman

**Motion 8** - "Call to Become a Fully Inclusive Church" by Mark Elder

**Motion 9** - "Delegate Term Limits" by Martha Dodd-Slippy

**Time of Worship**

A time of worship began at 11 a.m. with guest preacher **Bishop Tracy S. Malone**, resident bishop of the Ohio East Area. She based her message on Matthew 28, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... and I will be with you to the ends of the age."

"We see a conferring of power and authority," she said. This power that God gave to Christ has also been given to everyone. "As disciples of Christ we are given a charge and commission to go and teach EVERYONE we meet in the way of Christ." She said that "God has given us everything we need to make discipleship of Christ for the transformation of the world."

Malone shared she's a preacher' kid and learned a lot of "jargon" along the way. "What does all of that really mean? What does it mean to be the church? What does it mean to move forward in God's mission?" she asked. "Our God is a missionary God. Our God is a sending God. The church is an instrument of God's mission in the world. The church does not save the world. The church does not transform the world. That's God's spirit that's at work through the church. Sometimes we get that twisted." God didn't send his only son to condemn the world, but so that the world may be saved through him, to put the world right again, she said.

"Your faith journey matters," she said. "Your testimony, your faith story matters. How are we doing in making disciples? Who are the new people among us? How are we doing in moving forward in God's mission?" It matters how we show up, she said. "Do we show up in judgment or do we show up in love?" she asked. "If we are going to create spaces in our beloved and broken church, it matters how we go and it matters how we show up. We know we are living in some anxious and desperate times in the church and the world. In the midst of this web of confusion, there is the church of Jesus Christ."

Following worship, the **Conference Offering** was taken up.

The offering goal is \$150,000 and recipients will be:



Bishop Tracy S. Malone

Africa University Student Scholarships -- \$40,000

Cambodia Pastors Leadership Training -- \$40,000

Mozambique Lay Leadership Training -- \$20,000

Brazil "Shade and Fresh Water" children's program -- \$20,000

Just Neighbors Matching Funds Grant for Immigrant Legal Counsel in four districts -- \$30,000

The **Holy Rollers**, a group of cyclists, clergy and lay, who bike to annual conference each year to bring support for the offering, approached the stage to add their contributions.