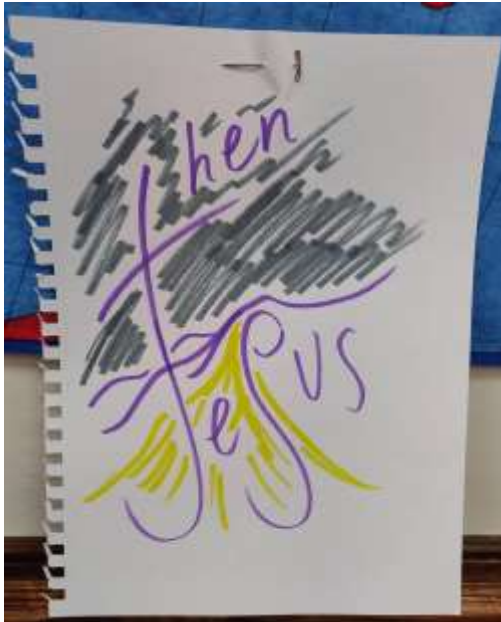


Saturday Morning



Left in the Prayer Room...

5K Walk, Run, Bike, and Yoga event

To live out the vision of Bishop Sharma D. Lewis and support the Annual Conference theme, Moving Forward in God's Mission, clergy, laity and guests were invited to participate in the 2019 Annual Conference 5K Walk, Run, Bike, and Yoga event on Saturday, June 22 at 6:15 a.m. The Moving Forward in God's Mission 5K was an opportunity for fitness, fellowship and fundraising in the Roanoke City community. The Moving Forward in God's Mission 5K raised funds for KIDS SOAR (formerly Community Outreach Program of Roanoke). Kids Soar is a Virginia Conference Advance Special and a direct

service provider for children, youth and families of

poverty in inner-city Roanoke. For over 30 years, this UM mission has addressed the basic needs of poverty by teaching skills, and providing opportunities for growth and education for a successful future. Kids Soar received 1,324 books at Annual Conference and the 5K! According to the Roanoke District, "They were overwhelmed, with joy, as the heart of their program is literacy!!" One annual conference member brought 12 boxes from the school where she teaches, as her fellow teachers donated books.

Dr. Kevin Watson shared another **Bible study**. He cited John Wesley's three rules, "Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God." This is a specific vision of how the Christian life should be. "It's not an aspiration. It's specific," he said.

Watson talked about the class meetings in early Methodism. "Methodists were required to be in a weekly class meeting, even in the United States. From 1776 to 1850 Methodism grew like a weed. It was one of the most explosive growths in Christianity with this requirement."

"I would not be here today if I was not a part of something like the class meeting," he said. "It's risky letting someone really know you. Being full know and fully loved changed my life." Do not go it alone.

The Rev. Stan Thompson reported for the **Minutes Committee**. The minutes were found to be in order and were approved.

Mary Dadisman gave the report for the **Commission on the Status and Rule of Women**.

"Monitoring is 'intentional noticing,'" she said. COSROW works with CEMCA (Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy) in its monitoring.

David Dommissé, conference **treasurer** and **statistician**, brought this report to the gathering. He reported there are 318,000 members with an average of 101,000 in attendance. Some 90,000 are engaged in small groups. The conference saw 3,000 professions of faith. Some \$2 million was received in tithes. Dommissé took a moment of personal privilege and recognized the work of Janet Davis who gave 35 years of service to his office and retired at the age of 80.

Betty Forbes, president of the **Council on Finance and Administration** presented a report. The proposed budget is \$31,450,000, which is a reduction of the 2019 budget. She thanked Marc Brown for his service in his work with CFA. She concluded to the gathering, "We want you to know that we take our responsibilities seriously and that we hear your concerns," she said. "We understand the situations that you face each day and we will continue to do our very best to help resolve as many of those issues as possible."

Mary Jane Rawley came to the stage to talk about the 150th anniversary of **United Methodist Women**. It started on March 23, 1869, when women gathered in Boston to hear about the plight of women in India. That small group was so moved that they formed the Methodist Women's Foreign Missionary Society. They were able to send a teacher and doctor to India within eight months. UMW work today supports almost 100 national mission institutions as well as international projects in 110 countries.

Dr. John Peters of the **Association of Educational Institutions** introduced Dr. David Johns, president of Ferrum College, who brought the report on behalf of the United Methodist-related school presidents. Dr. Scott Miller, president of Virginia Wesleyan University, and Dr. Robert Lindgren of Randolph-Macon College were also in attendance.

The **Rev. Don Jamison** presented the **2019 Denman Awards**. The clergy award was presented to the **Rev. Robert E. Talbott**, pastor of Asbury UMC, Harrisonburg District. The laity award was presented to **Mrs. Artie Frederick** from McGaheysville UMC, Harrisonburg District. The youth award was presented to **Christopher Bryan Ganoe**, Ivey Memorial UMC, James River District.

The **One Matters Discipleship Award** was created in 2015 with the purpose of lifting up churches who have moved from 0 baptisms and 0 professions of faith into positive numbers. The church receives a plaque and \$1,000 to encourage continuation of their work. This year, **Waverly UMC** received the award.

The **Rev. Anita Mays** presented the **Green Church of the Year Award** to churches who dedicate to taking care of God's creation in five areas of church life. **Bethlehem in Moneta**, and **Oaklette in Chesapeake** were recipients of this year's awards.

Worship

Bishop Peter Weaver brought the message. "We have focused on Matthews 28 to 'go, go, go!' None of us staying put, but responding to what God has mind."

"I want to talk just briefly about what it means to go, to glow, and to grow," the bishop said. "Go out far and near. The last place I served was New England. But United Methodism in New England owes its life to Virginia. Jesse Lee was born in Prince George County. In 1784 Jesse Lee went to annual conference at Ellis Chapel in Virginia. According to the record it lasted a month. At the close of conference, Francis Asbury, about to do appointments, was short a preacher or two. Asbury spotted Lee and he yelled to everyone, 'I'm going to enlist Brother Lee.' Someone yelled out to Asbury, 'What bounty to you give?' Asbury responded, 'Grace here, and glory hereafter.' That was all Jesse Lee needed." He first went to North Carolina and then Asbury sent him to New England where he started the first Methodist circuit.

"So when you get your appointment a little later this morning, Go!"

Lee said he had to labor and suffer alone among the strange people. The Methodists were accused of being pickpockets but they went any way. Lee preached under an apple tree on the highway on, "Ye must be born again." It took six months for three women to sign up for a class. "But wasn't that where Jesus went?" asked the bishop, "the highways and the byways? Wasn't that Wesley, who went to the coalfields? Where do you and I spend most of our church time? Those old buildings. The command is 'To go!'"

The building isn't to be worshiped or developed. Souls are to be developed, the bishop shared. The bishop continued, "The word 'go' means also to travel spiritually and attitudinally. Sometimes we have to go and look at what is right in front of us. But we need to go and build relationships and stand with those who are in drugs and impoverished."

"We started to make the decisions that Jesus wanted," Bishop Weaver said after relating stories of churches that had changed their ways of ministry, even if it was "messy."

We begin to glow "when we are willing to go and God is with us," he said. "So fear not. Go with God. Christ will be with you."

He related a story about a church in New Hampshire that loved to have bean suppers. Another person talked about how friendly they were. Then another old fellow said told him about meeting a person in the diner. The old man had been a drinker and his new friend at the diner started

sharing his own story. He said he got scared this fellow was going to invite him to church, but he said there was something about that man. "He was talking about a glow," said Bishop Weaver. The old man said 'I've never been loved like this before. These people ain't no phonies.'"

Bishop Weaver said, "As we make disciples, they begin to change us."

The church the bishop served the longest was in Pittsburgh and was a "mink and manure" church. It was a wealthy church where the women wore minks and they had horses. But it had been in decline when he was appointed there. It was an old downtown church. It was predicted the church would close. They had a ways to go not in geography but in attitude and spirit. "When we began to open the doors, that congregation not only ministered to them but invited them in." He talked about baptizing Joyce who had been homeless. After the baptism she asked if she could sing something. That church had always had paid singers. "The glow in her could change the order of worship." She went to the grand piano, put her gnarled fingers on the keys, and began to sing "Because he lives, I can face tomorrow, I can face tomorrow, all fear is gone. Because I know, he holds the future and life is worth the living just because he lives." "The Gospel had never been proclaimed like that in that church," Bishop Weaver said. "We were all glowing. We were all changing."

So the question is, Bishop Weaver said, "Will you go?' And will you dare to be changed yourself even as you follow Jesus to change the world and change lives"

Communion was served following the message.

The fixing of appointments followed Communion with the distribution of the *Advocates*.