



2016 VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Welcome to the 234th Virginia Annual Conference, Berglund Center, Roanoke, Virginia

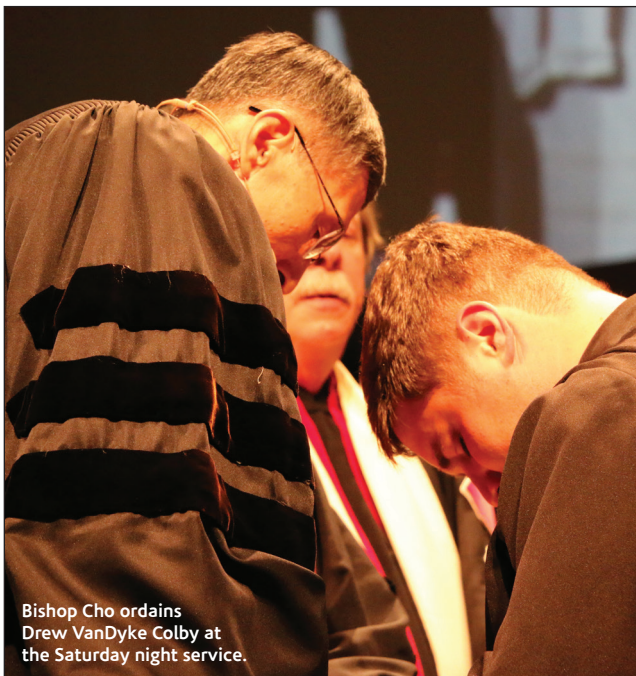
Service of Ordering of Ministry: Being ready for God's call

Twenty-one men and women were ordained elders, two were ordained deacons, 14 were commissioned as provisional elders, two were commissioned as provisional deacons, 16 were commissioned as provisional members and 31 were licensed as local pastors in the Saturday evening Ordering of Ministry service.

Bishop Mark J. Webb, Upper New York Annual Conference, delivered the sermon, "Called and Connected."

He spoke about celebrating those who have chosen to be available to God's call upon their lives and the importance of a willingness to serve.

"Commissioning and Ordination in the church, ministry in the name of Jesus Christ, is not about ability first – it's all about availability and what God can do and will do with those who are simply willing to say, 'Here I am, send me.' This worship experience today is a reminder to all of us that God calls, God equips,



Bishop Cho ordains Drew VanDyke Colby at the Saturday night service.

God empowers and God uses those who are willing to offer their lives fully and totally in every moment of every day," Webb said.

Bishop Webb talked about actions that followers of Christ can follow to live out God's call upon their lives.

These four steps included: seeking the reality of who God is, confession of

ourselves, trust in the promises of God and the willingness to constantly say, "Yes."

He emphasized that God would use followers to show the world who God is if only they would open up their lives. This step is necessary, Webb said, because "we are too often unable to claim who God is because we are

(Con't on back: "ORDINATION")

Retirees recognized

During a time of retiree recognition on Saturday afternoon, the Rev. Jim Tongue reflected on the service and journey in his ministry and his fellow retirees.

"Our conference pauses in its business to say, thank you to each of these 50 pastors for the 1,197.75 years of service leading churches both in our Virginia Conference and beyond," said Tongue.

But he emphasized that their service has been more than just a "millennium of ministry."

"We have been more than just pastors to congregations. Our appointments are to the communities of which they are a part. So we thank God for all these communi-

ties, where our children attended school and shared in activities and where we shared our lives with those of other denominations and faiths and those beyond any church doors. This is a time of great gratitude. And it is one of great hope," Tongue said.

Tongue closed by reflecting that each retiree at AC 2016 must have had a touchstone in ministry "reminding you of the One who first said, 'Go!'"

For Tongue, his touchstone was a drawing given to him by a friend just before he finished seminary. The drawing serves as a visual reminder of Psalm 23 and the feeling that though Tongue had sometimes lost sight of God, God has never lost sight of him.

(Con't on back: "RETIRES")

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

- 7:30 Morning Eucharist
 - 8:15 Singing our Faith
 - 8:30 Bible Study
 - 9:15 Minutes Committee Report of Statistician/Treasurer
 - 9:30 CFA Report
 - 10:00 Unfinished Conference Business
 - 10:45 Recess for worship
 - 11:00 Worship
- Advocate distribution
Fixing of Appointments

Snapshot of Saturday

- 21 Elders ordained
- 31 Licensed Local Pastors
- 14 Commissioned as Provisional Elders
- 2 Deacons ordained
- 2 Commissioned as Provisional Deacons
- 16 Commissioned as Provisional members
- 50 Retirees



Susan Brack, retirement class of 2016, shakes Bishop Cho's hand.

(“ORDINATION,” con’t from front.)

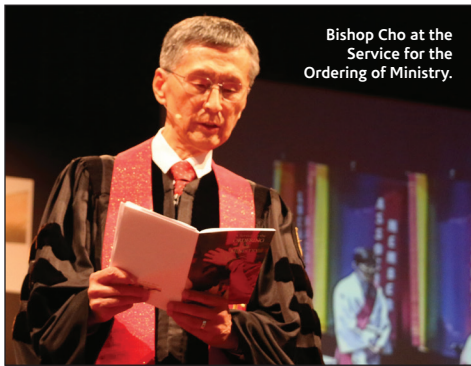
too busy proclaiming who we want God to be.”

But confession of one’s shortcomings is also a necessary action not to be “destroyed or beaten down or to live some kind of false humility, but rather to open our lives to the power of God’s Spirit to change us.”

Bishop Webb called the gathering to trust in God’s call on their lives.

“Trust God’s promises and God’s plan to use your life in significant ways that have eternal consequences,” Webb said.

Bishop Webb urged the members of Annual Conference to continually offer their lives in deeper ways.



Bishop Cho at the Service for the Ordering of Ministry.

“God has called, God will equip, God will use us in spite of us to accomplish God’s mission – we’ve got to say, ‘Yes, Here am I, send me, over and over and over again.”

He also had a specific message for those being commissioned and ordained.

“We are delighted to share the journey that you have been on and the new chapter of that journey that begins today. We promise to pray for you, to support you, to hold you accountable and to be held accountable by you,” Webb said.

He closed by reminding everyone, “Open your life to what God might want to do – surrender, abide and experience the power of God as God’s Spirit continues amazing work in you.”

(“RETIREES,” con’t from front.)

He closed by reflecting on the image of the shepherd from Psalm 23.

“Thank God we have a shepherd, a really good shepherd: he knows we need one. A shepherd like the one in the drawing, forever young, strong and sure, head erect high above us, eyes sharp on the way ahead, voice calling out each of our names, walking barefoot the dusty ground with us, in his hand our daily bread,” Tongue said.

Bible Study: Not going ‘Back to Egypt’



Dr. Jones leads Bible Study on Saturday morning.

Dr. L. Gregory Jones, senior advisor to the President of Baylor University and to the Institute for Faith and Learning at Baylor, delivered the Bible Study on Saturday morning.

He started by reflecting on the lost nature of society.

“We’re lost, but we’re doing it at a much more rapid pace than before,” said Jones.

Speaking on the Book of Numbers, Jones discussed the sense of wilderness found in the book. The book features the Israelites in strife as they complain, have no food or water, lack leadership and fear the unknown so much that they want to return to Egypt.

“Every one of us has a ‘back to Egypt’ part of our souls. We see where God is calling us and yet we get fearful. There are obstacles up ahead and they look like giants, and we look like grasshoppers,” Jones said.

Jones related that fear causes people to shrivel into themselves and forget their mission, causing further division and brokenness.

An issue facing society, he said, is that even believers act as if there isn’t a God.

“We can gather and we can call out God’s name, but our lives are lived as if we were practicing atheists,” Jones said.

Jones then questioned the body, “How often do we live our lives as if God doesn’t exist?”

Jones said he himself is guilty of this and that it was possible because of getting caught up in activities and everyday life. This, he said, is what causes followers to “lose sight of the Promised Land, of what we’re called to be and to do. How it is to say, ‘Thy will be done.’ Because we’re so caught up in going back to Egypt.”

“Friends, we’ve got to reclaim that sense that God is active in the world. The Holy Spirit is causing all kind of revolution, are we going to be part of that?” said Jones.

By the numbers

2016 Kits 4 Conference

The total number of Kits 4 Conference collected for UMCOR was 51,935. Specifically:

- ❖ Bedding kits: 55
- ❖ Birthing kits: 2,634
- ❖ Cleaning kits: 303
- ❖ Health kits: 29,625
- ❖ Layette kits: 1,347
- ❖ School kits: 17,612
- ❖ Sewing kits: 359

2016 Cans 4 Conference

Approximately 9300 lbs. were collected!



Tweets heard ‘round the conference

@TheJLopes Bishop Cho is a different kind of awesome... Gonna miss him! [#VAUMC](#) [#vaumc16](#) [#umc](#)

@minoowkim I want Bp. CHO to say “young jin out” at some point [#please](#) [#vaumc16](#)

@LMBaynam Young people, we are the church now. [#bodyofChrist](#) [#NoAge-Requirement](#) [#embraceit](#) [#vaumc16](#)

Communications office selling DVDs of Annual Conference



The conference Communications office is selling DVDs of the 2016 Annual Conference session. Volume 1 will include the Friday evening memorial service with the Rev. Myrtle Frances Hatcher preaching and Bible study led by Dr. L. Gregory Jones, Duke University Vice President and Vice Provost for Global Strategy and Programs. Volume 2 will include the Saturday evening ordination service with preaching by Bishop Mark Webb of the Upper New York Area and a short overview video of the 2016 Annual Conference (suitable for use in making a report on Annual Conference to your local church). Cost is \$20 for Volume 1, \$20 for Volume 2 and \$30 for both volumes. Deadline to order is June 27. The overview video will also be available to view on the conference Facebook page or

YouTube channel, free of charge. DVDs may be ordered at the Communications display at Annual Conference, go to [www.vaumc.org/DVDSales](#) to order online, or call Pam Culler in the Communications office at (804) 521-1110 or 1-800-768-6040, ext. 110.