

## *Commission on Status & Role of Women:* **Living Into The Pentecost Vision**

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) Co-Chair Christi Dye read from Galatians in which the Apostle Paul declared there is no male or female, but all are one in Christ Jesus. She stated at the outset of the report, "We call upon men and women to share power and control.... COSROW is here to help us all live into that Pentecost vision."

Co-Chair Carolyn Burrus shared reflections from the Seneca Falls Pilgrimage in July 2018, which served as a history lesson for the progress of women from 1848 toward winning the vote in 1920. Men and women, including bishops, clergy, and lay women toured the Seneca Falls area which included The Women's Rights National Historical Park, with the restored Wesley Chapel, the site of the first meeting to organize for women.



*Rev. Christi Dye*

Burrus noted the long journey and agreed with Bishop Ward's earlier remark that "we have not reclaimed the goodness of the Garden of Eden, where both men and women are created in God's image." Burrus asked, "How are we limiting our girls and women in our churches?"

A video capturing reactions of clergy men reading statements gathered from women pastors in the NC

*Continued on next page*



*The music of the annual memorial service included bluegrass hymns and a brass ensemble. A handbell rang after each saint's name was read, followed by the response, "Thank you, Lord, for this, your servant."*

## *Memorial Service: How Do We Say Thanks?*

"For All the Saints" rang out as the procession of those participating and leading the annual Memorial Service entered and took their places on the platform. Held annually to recall the ministry of those who have entered the Church Triumphant, the names of 18 clergy members and 23 spouses were spoken to the sound of a tolling bell.

Fairway District Superintendent Ray Broadwell preached from Matthew 5:1-16, noting that it "describes those we remember and celebrate this morning."

He continued, "The ones we remember are the Saints of God who have given themselves. How do we say thanks? By honoring their ministries, over 740 years of ministry in the NC Conference, serving in many kinds of settings. These saints of God understood that ministry is not about us; it is not about self. It's best described by words like 'service', 'sacrifice', and 'servanthood'....These saints embodied the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Broadwell continued by thanking the families, reminding the congregation that they also sacrificed, often missing their loved one at dinners, bedtimes, and other family times. Broadwell summed up the themes from their families' experiences, "Ministry is not a job, but an act of service." He continued for the good of the congregation, "Have a heart that beats on fire for Jesus and justice; believe in the value of every person. Every person is of sacred worth and value."

Referring to a story he told of a girl who counted the stars to thank God for each person in her life, he asked, "How do we say thanks to these saints of God and their families? Look at the stars; there just are not enough stars to go around." Remembering the contributions to ministry made by the families, Broadwell emphasized the depth of commitment of both pastor and family.

For each of these and their ministry, his message made more poignant the response after the reading of each name, "Thank you, Lord, for this, your servant."

## COSROW *from page 1*

Conference was played. None of the male clergy had seen the statements before reading them onscreen. The question, "How does this make you feel?" was asked. As silence fell upon the Annual Conference, many considered how they felt.



*Rev. Sangwoo Kim*

COSROW members emphasized, "We can change the culture of demeaning women and your pastors; may we all work together to live the promise of Pentecost today and every day." To make changes, COSROW provided an action list:

- Speak up when someone is demeaned
- Attend the COSROW Friday morning break-out session
- Use COSROW studies
- Identify and address salary and leadership gaps
- Male pastors were encouraged to prepare their church for open itineracy, for both female and pastors of color
- Learn and speak about the prevalence of sexual violence
- Address sexual misconduct

"Ask your female pastor about her experiences and then listen. Then ask how you can support her.... Ask yourself, 'How would I want my sister, wife, daughter, or friend to be treated in her own church?'"

The Rev. Laura Dunlap, spoke about the need for women "to raise their voices; while much is being done, we still have a long way to go." She announced a newly-formed COSROW partnership with the Center for Leadership Excellence launching in June and a November gathering of Southeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen in Jacksonville, Florida.

Dunlap closed out the presentation with the words of Joshua 1:9: 'Be strong and courageous; be strong and courageous.'"



*The class of 2020 retirees gathered for a photo at their luncheon. During the Thursday afternoon plenary session, the retirees and spouses were invited to stand before Conference to be recognized.*

## **Conference Budget, Insurance, Pension, Equitable Compensation, Trustees and Clergy Medical Leave Reports Approved**

Anne Lloyd, chair of the Conference Council on Finance Administration, expressed appreciation for the 91.58% of the apportionments that were paid in 2018. She noted that the NC Conference was one of 26 annual or missionary conferences that fully paid apportionments to the General Conference.

Celebrating a reduction in budget due to meeting funding goals for retiree pension and health care and removing funding for an Episcopal residence, annual conference members approved the request for \$16,205,448 for the 2021 annual conference budget. This budget represents a 23.13% decrease from the approved 2020 budget.

### ***Insurance***

The conference has a self-insured health plan administered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The health insurance plan approved for 2020, a 6.4% increase over 2019, adds a tele-medicine option for plan participants with no copay for the participant. One item was referred to the Insurance Committee to study the ability to change the exclusion of pre-existing conditions

for dependents up to age 26 rather than 19 as included in the Committee's report. Life insurance and wellness programs were unchanged while dental premiums increased by 6.4%.

### ***Pension***

The report of the Board of Pension was presented by Dennis Goodwin, chair of the board. Under the Pre-82 Plan for retirement, clergy will receive \$773 per service year in 2020, an increase of 2.5% over the 2019 rate. Retiree Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRA), based on the number of years of credit received toward retirement health insurance benefits, were approved to increase by 3% in 2020. In 2020, the maximum HRA for a pastor with 40 years or more in the plan will be funded at \$3,443 (90% of the maximum tier of \$3,826).

Dennis Goodwin noted the funding goals of the pre-82 pension and retiree health plans have been met and, as such, the Conference Claimants budget and the Past Service Liability apportionment

*Continued on next page*

## Finance Reports *from previous page*

were removed from the Conference budget. Goodwin noted that it is important to remember our funding status is dependent on current market conditions and rate increase assumptions so drastic changes in either of those could move us to a more or less funded status and require attention to the plan in the future in order to continue offering those benefits for years and decades to come.

Changes to the Ministers Transition Fund plan design were approved to be effective at the end of the Fund plan year creating a partnership between the Transition Fund and Wespath's United Methodist Personal Investment Plan.

### *Equitable Compensation*

The minimum salary for full-time pastors for 2020 was approved to increase by 2.5% to a salary of \$46,627 for full-time pastors. The report was amended to continue minimum salary for student pastors at 65% of the full-time minimum, or \$30,308, while a study is done by the Commission on Equitable Compensation on student pastor salaries. The report was further amended with changes to language on vacation recommendations for clergy.

### *Trustees and Clergy Medical Leave*

The reports of the Conference Board of Trustees and Joint Committee on Clergy Medical Leave were approved as presented in the Conference Workbook with one change noted to the list of closed churches in the Trustees report.

### *Other Items*

- The salary for district superintendents in 2020 was approved at \$112,766, an increase of 1.56% over the current salary.
- An item allowing for mailing lists to be distributed for annual conference work was referred to CFA for consultation with the Conference Communications Committee.
- A recommendation was approved as part of the financial reports authorizing a legal trust to be established for benefit plan reserve assets.

## Episcopal Residence To Be Sold

Gray Southern opened this report with the question, "Why do we continue to budget and to maintain an Episcopal residence?" Southern explained that the present home has served 15 years as the episcopal residence. Why sell the house? It is expected to need significant maintenance and repairs. Since it has a value of over \$900,000, the proceeds of a sale will fund a housing allowance for years. Southern walked the conference through the pros and cons and concluded that providing a housing allowance would reduce the annual NCC budget. This proposal came with unanimous support by both the Committee on the Episcopacy and the Board of Trustees. The report and the motion to sell the residence was approved.

## *Statistics Report: Online Worship Attendance Rises*

Conference Statistician, George Speake, reported on membership, worship attendance, and benevolent spending.

- The total membership for the conference at the close of 2018 was 225,987, a loss of 1,184 members from 2017. There were 2,289 professions of faith reported. This includes those who returned to the church and had their membership restored.
- The reported average worship attendance was 71,276 worshipping in the pews, which represents a decline, but, there was a large increase worshipping online.
- There were 1200 fewer bodies in the pews but, 11,992 persons worshiped online for an actual increase in worship of 7200.
- Our churches were very generous in 2018 when it comes to benevolences. A total of \$18.6M was given to local and United Methodist benevolences, an increase of \$888,000.

The full statistician's report can be found on the Annual Conference website.

## Caring for LGBTQ Persons

Citing rising gay teen suicide rates, an increasing murder rate for transgender people, and many requests from clergy and church members for guidance on how to care for LGBTQIA+ persons, the Rev. Laurie Hays Coffman, proposed creating a study committee on the pastoral care and support of LGBTQIA+ persons. The motion passed, and Bishop Ward asked Conference Finance & Administration to report back on Friday regarding a funding recommendation supporting the study committee.

### *Stay Connected*

- Annual Conference app: [nccumc.org/ac2019/app](http://nccumc.org/ac2019/app)
- Livestream and links: [nccumc.org/ac2019](http://nccumc.org/ac2019)
- Official Hashtag: #nccac19
- Facebook: [facebook.com/nccumc](https://facebook.com/nccumc)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/nccumc](https://instagram.com/nccumc)
- Twitter: [twitter.com/nccumc](https://twitter.com/nccumc)

# 2020 NC Conference Delegation

General Conference delegates also participate in the 2020 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference (SEJC).

The first five clergy and the first five laity elected to SEJC also serve as reserve/alternate delegates to 2020 General Conference and openings are filled in the order of election. Five additional alternates are elected for SEJC. A total of 21 clergy and 21 laity are being elected at the 2019 Annual Conference.

## Elected Lay Delegates

### General Conference Delegates

1. Christine Dodson
2. Ellen Beasley
3. LaNella Smith
4. Steve Taylor
5. Emily Lain
6. Susan Graebe
7. Caleb Parker
8. Mark Schneider

### Jurisdictional Delegates

9. Jin Lee
10. Danny Peck
11. Claire Cox-Woodlief
12. Cathy Thompson
13. Catherine Stallsmith
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_

### Jurisdictional Alternates

17. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_
21. \_\_\_\_\_

## Elected Clergy Delegates

### General Conference Delegates

1. Belton Joyner
2. Lisa Yebuah
3. Edgardo Colón-Emeric
4. Amie Stewart
5. Edie Gleaves
6. Sara Beth Pannell
7. Liz Roberts
8. Ben Williams

### Jurisdictional Delegates

9. Kevin Baker
10. Ismael Ruiz-Millán
11. Laura Wacker Stern
12. Doug Lain
13. Chris Brady
14. Laura Wittman
15. Harriet "Tuck" Taylor
16. Tim Catlett

### Jurisdictional Alternates

17. Sangwoo Kim
18. Ben Roberts
19. Donna Banks
20. Nathan Arledge
21. David Beam