



## Opening Worship: The Possibility of Humanity

Conference opened Wednesday morning with worship and communion. The congregation raised their voices with the Charles Wesley hymn, *O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing*. After a prayer, a mass choir of laity and clergy set the tone for worship with the anthem — *The Majesty and Glory of Your Name*. Rev. Dr. Donna Thompson presented a cross to the Annual Conference made of debris from Hurricane Florence.

In her sermon, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward also referenced the Annual Conference's year of struggle following the hurricane. Bishop Ward shared that she did not go looking for the scripture for the morning. Instead, Psalm 8 came looking for her.

She noted that reading this text and reflecting on creation, attention is often drawn to the "fall" of humanity rather than the "possibility" of humanity. Yet when God speaks while creating the world, God said creation is good. Why is it then, she asked, that we remember criticism and not compliments?

Bishop Ward said that God's intent is for humanity to live to high aspirations. When we think of the human family as people created beautifully, preaching and teaching



*The cross used in the opening worship service was made out of debris from homes and churches devastated by Hurricane Florence.*

take on a different tone. Christians are for goodness, love, welcome, hospitality, and to be more like God. She suggested that Methodists, aspire to have people ask, "What is it about those Methodists? They are welcoming, loving, compassionate, and worshipful. How can I be more like that?"

As Bishop Ward and Conference Lay Leader Gary Locklear gathered at the communion table, Bishop Ward reminded all to give thanks for the diversity in the community. She used comments taken from the profiles submitted by General Conference delegate nominees to remind all of the gifts given to each by God.

Rev. Ben Roberts, closed communion with prayer, and the Rev. Dr. Ken Locklear, Gateway District Superintendent, presented the benediction.



## Disaster Response and Generosity: Have You Earned a Green Shirt?

Al Miller, Director of Disaster Ministries, challenged conference attendees to be united in response to natural disasters. The North Carolina United Methodist Disaster Response Ministry consists of eight disaster response centers and five satellite housing centers. Through training programs and partnerships, the Disaster Response Ministry has completed 847 homes needing repairs since Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

Disaster Response training programs aim to prepare and rebuild communities affected by natural disasters. Early Response Teams (ERT) work to repair structural damages in homes. In the last three years, 50 churches have held ERT training, certifying 914 people. The Connecting Neighbors program prepares congregation members, churches, and communities for natural disasters.

Teams have come to North Carolina from 35 other states to help. 18,000 volunteers have volunteered 599,000 hours equating to \$14M worth of

*Continued on next page*

**Youth Storm Fund Offering**  
**\$32,853.93**

This offering is being doubled with a matching gift from the NC Conference



*Students from First UMC: Hartselle, Alabama, were recognized for making time during their summer vacation to serve in North Carolina and help people get back in their homes.*

## Disaster Response *from page 1*

labor. 13,000 homeowners are still waiting for assistance after Hurricane Florence. The communities' needs for help has grown and so has the need for volunteers.

Becoming united in disaster response will help repair the homes on the waitlist. Over 200 North Carolina churches have responded with the assistance of 332 teams across the country.

We are so thankful for the partnerships we have developed with other relief groups, particularly with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and state organizations. UMCOR has contributed \$7.8M to NC Conference disaster recovery ministry, the largest grant given across the connection. Through the funding and volunteer efforts, the Disaster Response Ministry restores hope to families who thought they were abandoned. How will you use your gifts to restore hope in others? Will you earn a green NCC disaster response shirt?

## Clergy Executive Session

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward called the 2019 NCC Clergy Session to order for the presentation of the report from the Board of Ordained Ministry.

She, along with Board of Ordained Ministry Chairperson, Rev. Ned Hill, recommended five persons for ordination as Deacon in Full Connection and eleven for ordination as Elder in Full Connection. In addition, five persons were recommended as Provisional Elders.

In addition to those being ordained, Bishop Ward gave thanks for the vital ministry of full-time and part-time local pastors that make ministry possible across the North Carolina Conference.

Recognition and thanksgiving was expressed for those retiring this year. The session ended with a reading of the list of clergy who have died since our last annual conference. Upon completion of business, Bishop Ward dismissed the Clergy Session.

## Laity Executive Session

Gary Locklear, NCC Lay Leader, welcomed the laity to 2019 Annual Conference by sharing that every chair, doorpost, microphone, and table were anointed and prayed over on Tuesday.

Offering a devotional focused on Jairus and his daughter, Home Missioner Steve Taylor shared Jesus' perspective, "Who stands with me stands with her, because this is where I'm standing." Taylor said the woman's disease "was held in place by those around her and that once a person has been touched by love you cannot be unworthy again."

Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, oriented those gathered to the 2019 AC Workbook and explained a few things about Robert's Rules of Order and about the voting process. She also warned that if it is needed, voting may extend the session hours on Friday night. All of those voting must be present inside the convention center main meeting space to be able to vote.

All of the laity candidates for delegate to the 2020 General Conference were given the opportunity to introduce themselves, state their ID number, church, and district.

John Hall, Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries, reminded the laity that every person who receives God's call is always a lay person. He invited the laity to consider attending the variety of classes exploring Lay Servant Ministries and attend any class offered, regardless of the district in which it is held. There is a one-day Day of Discernment, Prayer, and Study scheduled at the NC Conference building in Garner on Saturday, July 27. More information about this event is available on the conference website at [nccumc.org/laity/lay-servant-ministries](http://nccumc.org/laity/lay-servant-ministries).

JoAnn Barbour, Conference UM Women's President, noted that this is the 150th anniversary of UMW and shared many ways that UM Women work together to improve the lives of women, children, and youth. She invited participants to attend the Annual Meeting on October 12 and visit the Mission-U display. "UMW is not just an organization, it is a movement, often going against the grain. We must not underestimate the power given to us," she said.

UM Men President Wally Mills shared that UMM made a sizable donation to the Youth Storm Fund campaign. He invited those gathered to Duke Day on Oct. 12 and an upcoming power breakfast on Friday morning, June 14 at Jarvis Memorial UMC. He invited those interested in helping with UMM communications to contact him.

## *Report of the Cabinet:* **Hospitality, Prayer, Generosity, Faith, Celebrations**

The Cabinet Report highlighted the ministries of the Annual Conference through what Bishop Ward called their “collegial leadership.” The Rev. Ken Locklear, as host district superintendent, spoke about the ministry of hospitality in the welcoming of Annual Conference participants, “Enter these doors as you would enter into a church, with God’s gracious welcome.” He charged lay and clergy members to take home the lessons of hospitality to grow their own congregations.

The Rev. Ray Broadwell, Fairway district superintendent and Dean of the Cabinet, spoke of the immersion of their work in prayer, seeking God’s will and God’s way for pastors and churches. As individuals’ names are lifted by the cabinet, he pointed out that appointment-making is a process infused in prayer. Broadwell said, “be assured of our continuing prayers for you.”

The Rev. Linda Taylor, Sound district superintendent, speaking of the devastation of Hurricane Florence, pointed to God’s presence and the generosity of all God’s people as meeting the challenges of rebuilding. She lifted up the contributions of UMC agencies and volunteers.

The Rev. Randy Innes, Heritage district superintendent, celebrated the conference priority of addressing racism, noting that scripture defines it as both evil and unjust. He spoke of Dismantling Racism teams which help folks to wade in the water and learn and envision new ways to connect. He issued an invitation to attend the Second Crossroads Retreat, “Prophetic Living in a Broken World” in September in Whitakers, NC.

The Rev. Edith Gleaves, Harbor district superintendent, reported the success of the C4C program, launched in 2014 to support local public schools. “This children’s initiative has made a huge impact on children living in poverty in North Carolina,” as she reported, “...over 83% of North Carolina United Methodist Churches, both large and small, have embraced C4C and are reflecting the love of Christ by partnering with schools for three purposes: to improve K-3 literacy rates, provide basic needs, and to increase parent involvement.”

The Rev. Carol Goehring, Corridor district superintendent, pointed out that over 5,000 people have scheduled to help with rebuilding lives and structures following the “wallop” of Hurricane Florence. The participation and challenge of the youth to help raise \$500,000 is well-served by the morning offering (\$32,853.93) and its match by the NC Conference. Further, she announced a reduction of apportionments and the completion of the payment of conference liability for pre-1982 retirement benefits.

Beacon district superintendent, the Rev. Gil Wise, described the ministry of Church Transformation as one in which congregations engage in a journey to find the best

path forward so that they may become healthy. He noted that healthy churches “build the kingdom of Christ and strengthen their community.” He spoke of the success of three congregations that entered into a year’s process of discernment and redevelopment, coming to use their building for community outreach or closing and investing the proceeds in new ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Gray Southern, Capital district superintendent, spoke of the ministry formed in new church starts in terms of “the marks of a faithful Methodist Christian” as regularly planning and re-launching new churches. He pointed out that every person in the room is a member of a church that was once new, either in the past or the present. He noted that 18 new churches are being planned with 17 new church planters, as he encouraged specific actions by Conference members: pray for the extension of the church, work with lay and clergy leaders to plan or relaunch the new faith communities, to remember that when you give through the apportionment system, you pay for these new communities. He proudly announced that NC Conference is the denomination’s leader in planting new faith communities.



*The Rev. Francis Kinyua and the Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath*

## **Mission Endowment**

There was much to celebrate in the Mission Endowment report. Rev. Jaye White presented \$50,000 to the Youth Storm Fund which will be equally matched, providing \$100,000 to Disaster Ministries for hurricane recovery. White then presented \$15,000 to the Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath and the Rev. Francis Kinyua on behalf of The Community at Spring Forest. The Community at Spring Forest is a 23-acre organic farm and forest in Hillsborough which will also be home to a rural church and the Neighborhood Seminary for laity.

# 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. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

### Jurisdictional Delegates

9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
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. \_\_\_\_\_

### Jurisdictional Delegates

9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_

### Jurisdictional Alternates

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