

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MESSENGER

October 2022



Greetings, beloved St. Paul family! The season changed, and the month of October is at our hands. I want to share helpful information about discerning or defining ourselves as we continue to move on. As you know or have heard, the United Methodist Church has been dealing with homosexuality issues since 1972.

We human beings have had different perspectives and interpretations of the Scripture, and those differences have often helped us find a new way to follow God's will together. God allowed us to be different as we see people have different gifts, characters, and tendencies. Of course, they can be distorted by our sinful nature, but we are God's children, and God's authentic image is still inside us. Therefore, we must admit our differences and work together to use this diversity for good.

Rev. Tom Lambrecht, vice president and business manager of Good News group, started the idea of basic categories on the homosexuality issue in the UMC: Progressive, Centrist, and Conservative. Rev. Tom Berlin, pastor at Virginia Conference, developed it into four categories: Progressive Non-Compatibilists, Progressive Compatibilists, Traditionalist compatibilists, and Traditionalist Non-Compatibilists. Below is Rev. Tom Berlin's definition of those categories: (<https://revtomberlin.com/church-vitality/#sthash.xvr5PUak.dpbs>)

- **Traditionalist Non-Compatibilists:** People in this zone are satisfied with the current restrictive wording of the Book of Discipline on same-sex marriage and the ordination of people who are practicing homosexuals. They want to see the church live out what they feel are obvious prohibitions in Scripture regarding homosexual acts. For them it is an issue of personal holiness. They are concerned that if these passages are compromised, all passages related to practices of sexual ethics and personal holiness will be compromised. Their concerns about change are of such importance to them that they would rather be in a church where all agree on these matters than feel personally compromised by a church with a diverse view on human sexuality.

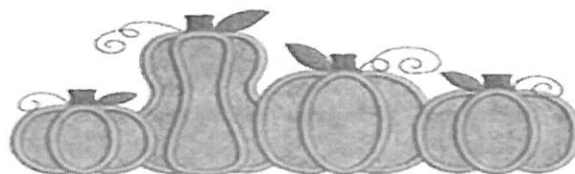
Continued on page 2

- **Traditionalist Compatibilists**: These people hold traditional views on human sexuality but understand that other pastors or churches would like to have the option of offering marriage ceremonies to same-sex couples. Some Annual Conferences want to have the ability to ordain people who are practicing homosexuals. While they do not want to be forced into performing such a marriage, they can live in a denomination where this occurs, understanding that there are many issues beyond this where they find unity in our connection.
- **Progressive Compatibilists**: Many of these people have moved from Traditionalist Compatibilists into this area in more recent years. They would like to see the church offer ordination to all people and same-sex marriage to committed Christian couples. They understand that their friends on the right are not where they are and believe that the unity Christ prayed for the church can be upheld despite this difference. They respect the right of their traditionalist friends and do not want them to be forced into situations that would violate their personal beliefs. Most United Methodists are compatibilists. I would guess that 70% or more of us fall into one of these two areas.
- **Progressive Non-Compatibilists**: People in this space have deep concerns for the call of Scripture for justice to all people and Jesus' deferential care of the marginalized. These two points of biblical interpretation, among others, lead them to work for full inclusion in the life of the church. This is such a high value for them that they only want to be in a church that reflects this belief and will work for change as long as the church does not.

Can you define where you are according to these categories? You may disagree with the details, but please consider the categories' main points, and I hope it helps to understand yourself and others. I don't know about you, but I have seen that two non-compatibilist groups want to leave the UMC, and two Compatibilist groups want to stay with the UMC. Let us continue to work together, and please keep the people in the UMC in your prayers. Lord, Have mercy on us!

As the St. Paul UMC's pastor, I want to urge you to please take your time and get to know the information that St. Paul UMC has shared, and in the meantime, let us continue to focus and work on God's calling: Loving God and others. In other words, as we heard from Luke 17:1-10, serving God and others more. It will help us to grow also. God is with us and leads us with God's grace and truth.

In Christ,
Pastor Baek





Sunday School is looking for teachers for our upcoming class for 3-5 year olds. A number of families have asked for such a class to begin. We have a great curriculum and are excited about teaching these younger family members about Jesus and God's Word. Please pray about this ministry and if you would like to join what God is doing at St. Paul, contact the church office or Beth Rogers at 443 624-0037 (text or voice)

Prayer Requests



Call the Prayer Chain when you need a prayer for yourself or others. Activate it by calling anyone on the list anytime, day or night.

When called, they will pray for your concern and pass the concern on to the other prayer chain members. Do not hesitate to use the power our gracious Lord has given us. Call on Him for help and guidance.

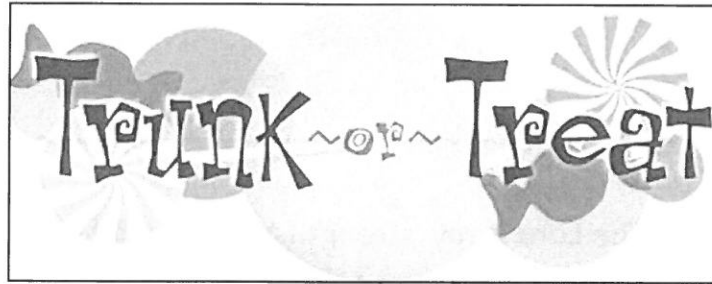
John & Sessaly Boyd	410-326-4390
Cal & Carolyn Colvin	301-862-3273
Ben & Vonnie Dansberger	410-326-2994
Ruth Humphreys	410-326-4687
John & Robin Read	443-404-8559
Andy & Beth Rogers	410-326-6346
Dave & Debby Showalter	410-326-2150
Susan Leins Baker	410-326-6234



If September had a “theme title” for St. Paul Uprising! Youth it might have been “Back to Beloved Basics.” A thread of how much God loves each of us continued to run through our gatherings as we focused on God’s love and our responses to that love. On Sunday September 11 our theme was “Lump.” Centering on a Rob Bell teaching video of the same title, we were given the opportunity to consider how our response is to sometimes try to “hide from God” like a lump of flesh under our bed covers, maybe without even knowing it!

On Sept. 18 we tackled another “big question of faith” with our topic being “Are Miracles Real?” We opened with a demo showing a “natural process being interrupted” to get in that frame of mind. We then worked together to come up with a “definition” of a miracle, followed by citing examples of what we thought were miraculous events. We then dove into how some well-known Christian scientists and researchers explained miracles. We settled in on the concept that in a miracle God intervenes in the typical and natural flow of things to do something “outside” of science and natural physical law. And that God sometimes works miracles in ways and places that aren’t so obvious!

On Sept. 25, we followed up our “miracles” Uprising gathering by taking a look at what we believe is God’s most significant miracle, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul said (well) this event is the lynchpin of the Christian faith and so we took our topic very seriously. We began with a reconstruction of our “natural process being “pieces” it takes to have a “resurrection” and then watched a video clip in which atheist-turned-Christian-teacher and best-selling author Lee Strobel (“The Case for Christ”) presented some of the immense amount of evidence that Jesus really did walk out of His tomb. Lee then gave a moving account of how realizing Jesus is the Son of God, died for his sins, and loves us immeasurably rescued not only him but his entire family. We ended the evening with the opportunity for those who hadn’t yet received Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives to do so.



St. Paul's annual **Trunk or Treat is October 29th from 3pm-5pm.**
The event is rain or shine. If it rains we will set up in the Activity Center. Please sign up to decorate a trunk and share God's love with our community. The sign up sheet is in the Activity Center on the magazine rack. Questions please contact Missy Lauber mлаuber13@gmail.com or call the church office.

WANTED

Are you looking for a meaningful way to support St. Paul UM Church yet you don't feel you have a lot of time to give? The Children's Message Team is looking for additional members to become part of our rotation to deliver God's word each week to the children of St. Paul. You will be provided the scripture in advance to give you ample time to prepare. We are very willing to work with your unique schedule and availability. Plus, you have several delivery options:

- in person for both services
- record a video to be shown during both services
- in person for one service and record a video for the other

If you feel called to contribute and assist with this ministry, please contact Carol Howard at 301-672-5129 or leave a message at the church office.

Thank you for your consideration.

“The Lord is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusts in Him and he helps me.
My heart leaps for joy, and with my song, I praise Him.” Psalm 28:7

Peace and Blessings to you!

Time flies! It’s been 3 months since I first came to St. Paul. I’m so happy to be here and working with all of you. I followed where HE led me and put my trust in HIM.

Calvert County has been my home for 31 years. I’m married to my best friend, Earle, and have three grown children, Jay (Meghan); Eric (soon to marry Hayley); & Emily; Three grandchildren— Keira, Sebastian and Isabella. I love watching my grandchildren grow , learn laugh and play. God Is Good!

Thank you all for your kindness, patience and support these last weeks. It means a lot!

God bless,
Kathy Matthews



Office Contacts & Information

Senior Pastor: Rev. Myungha Baek
Church Email: PastorBaek@stpaulumc-lusby.org

Youth Pastor: Rev. Dr. Dave Showalter
Church E-Mail: dave4godsteens.stpaul@comcast.net

Admin. Assistant: Kathy Matthews
Church E-Mail: kmatthews@stpaulumc-lusby.org

OFFICE PHONE: 410.326.4475



“SMILE” Food Pantry Donations

Non-perishable grocery items are collected the 1st Sunday of each month in St. Paul’s parking lot!

CHURCH CONFERENCE

NOV. 1 @ 7:00 P.M.

SPUMC Library

Church Conference is held annually.
The entire church congregation is welcome to attend.

It is a time in which church reports are presented
some of which require affirmation.

Members for various committees are also, voted in.

Our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Cogman
or her delegate will preside over the Conference.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

10:30 a.m.

SPUMC Library

Women's Circle

2nd Tuesday, Monthly

This year's study:

Growing Older & Wiser

Lead by:

Sandy Derr

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

*Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Support **St. Paul UMC** by starting your shopping going to the St. Paul website @ www.stpaul-lusby.org and clicking on the AMAZONSMILE link.*

Saint Paul UMC Missions Report 2022

How does Saint Paul reach out to those in need? – This is always the question to reflect upon each year in order to better focus on our mission and ministry efforts. During the rest of 2022 and into the year 2023, we hope to revive the missions that we currently support, and in addition, look both for new ways to increase visibility of our church and serve our community.

Pastor Baek has suggested that we meet on a more regular basis as a committee, and brainstorm ideas of how we could accomplish the above.

As in Isaiah 43:19 states:

19 “See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.”

As Fall quickly approaches, I would like to focus on this passage, looking for ways to doing this new thing! - with both new ideas and energy.

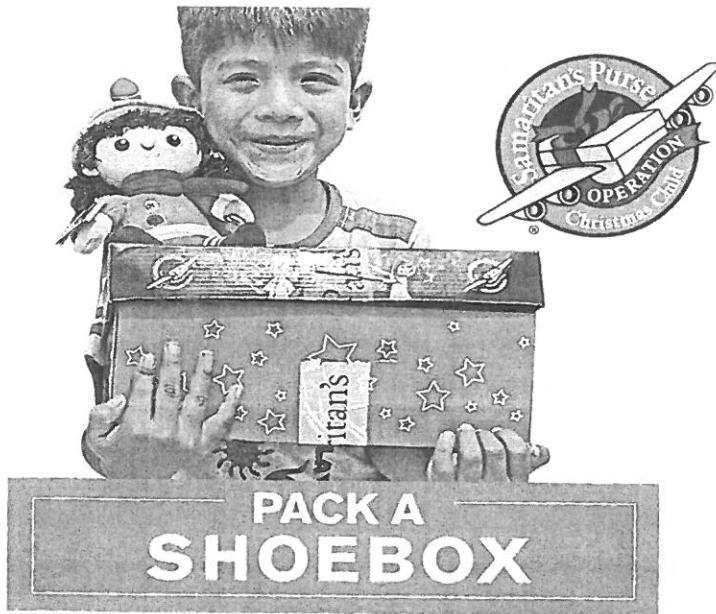
Our continuing missions that are currently in place throughout the year include:

- ◆ Heartfelt – Supplying food for the weekends for needy children and their families
- ◆ Gideons Bible Ministry – financial support
- ◆ End Hunger - Our support for this organization last year included a donation from our church towards the construction of their new facility, which will continue to serve those in Calvert County. They are set to move into their completed new warehouse facility this Fall 2022!
- ◆ Mission Aviation Fellowship
- ◆ Farming for Hunger
- ◆ Care Net Pregnancy Center
- ◆ SMILE Ministries – We are a representative support Church along with others – parishioners serve as volunteers from Saint Paul.
- ◆ Safe Nights – I would also like to mention the Lay Pastor program, who continue to train and learn how to better support others in our congregation and beyond. We need additional Lay Pastors for this Ministry currently.

We pray for expanding opportunity for Missions as a church for the upcoming year. Let us open our eyes and our hearts with God’s help and direction for discernment and insight into potential opportunities for fruitful results in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Schmidt – Missions Chair St. Paul UMC



NOV. 14-21 National Collection Week



SPUMC Advent Mission

Collection week for the shoeboxes will be November 14-21st, 2022.
Please check the link below for more information on the
Samaritan's Purse website.

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

Diane Schmidt

SPUMC COVID Statement

"COVID 19 and its variants are still with us. Health Care Professionals continue to recommend vaccinations and booster shots. St Paul believes masks are a personal choice and will continue to provide them at the entrance along with hand sanitizer. And as always, if you don't feel well, please stay home and visit us on-line!"

October 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>9am - Traditional</p> <p>10am - Adult SS- FH</p> <p>10am - Children SS</p> <p>11am - Contemporary</p> <p>6pm - Youth - The Zone</p>	<p>10am - Funeral/Ellen</p> <p>6:45pm - Bible Study @</p>	<p>9am - HeartFELT</p> <p>4:30pm - OLSS</p> <p>6:30pm - Bible Study</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop#451, FH</p>	<p>6:15pm - Praise Band, AC</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7:30pm - AA, FH</p>	<p>4:30pm - OLSS</p> <p>6pm - Trustees, Library</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop #451 FH</p>	<p>Office closes at Noon</p> <p>10am - Carol Howard @</p> <p>8pm - AA @ FH</p>	<p>BS Troop #451 Food</p>
<p>9am - Traditional</p> <p>10am - Adult SS- FH</p> <p>10am - Children SS</p> <p>11am - Contemporary</p> <p>6pm - Youth - The Zone</p>	<p>6:45pm - Bible Study @</p>	<p>9am - HeartFELT</p> <p>4:30pm - OLSS</p> <p>6:30pm - Bible Study</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop#451, FH</p>	<p>6:15pm - Praise Band, AC</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7:30pm - AA, FH</p>	<p>5pm - OLSS Basketball</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop 451 FH</p>	<p>Office closes at Noon</p> <p>4:15pm - OLSS</p> <p>8pm - AA @ FH</p>	<p>3pm - Trunk or Treat</p>
<p>10am - Laily Sunday-</p> <p>11am - Fellowship Hour</p> <p>6pm - Youth - The Zone</p>	<p>4:15pm - OLSS</p> <p>6:45pm - Bible Study @</p>	<p>9am - HeartFELT</p> <p>5pm - OLSS Basketball</p> <p>6:30pm - Bible Study</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop#451, FH</p>	<p>4pm - Newsletter Article</p> <p>6:15pm - Praise Band, AC</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7:30pm - AA, FH</p>	<p>7pm - BS Troop #451 FH</p>	<p>Office closes at Noon</p> <p>4:15pm - OLSS</p> <p>8pm - AA @ FH</p>	
<p>9am - Traditional</p> <p>10am - Adult SS- FH</p> <p>10am - Children SS</p> <p>11am - Contemporary</p> <p>6pm - Youth - The Zone</p>	<p>4:15pm - OLSS</p> <p>6:45pm - Bible Study @</p>	<p>9am - HeartFELT</p> <p>5pm - OLSS Basketball</p> <p>6:30pm - Bible Study</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop#451, FH</p>	<p>6:15pm - Praise Band, AC</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7:30pm - AA, FH</p>	<p>6pm - Trustees, Library</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop #451 FH</p>	<p>Office closes at Noon</p> <p>4:15pm - OLSS</p> <p>8pm - AA @ FH</p>	
<p>9am - Traditional</p> <p>10am - Adult SS- FH</p> <p>10am - Children SS</p> <p>11am - Contemporary</p> <p>6pm - Youth - The Zone</p>	<p>6:45pm - Bible Study @</p>	<p>9am - HeartFELT</p> <p>5pm - OLSS Basketball</p> <p>6:30pm - Bible Study</p> <p>7pm - Conference /</p>	<p>6:15pm - Praise Band, AC</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir Practice</p> <p>7:30pm - AA, FH</p>	<p>6pm - Trustees, Library</p> <p>7pm - BS Troop #451 FH</p>	<p>Office closes at Noon</p> <p>4:15pm - OLSS</p> <p>8pm - AA @ FH</p>	

2022 Baltimore Washington Conference

Jeri Mead Report

Resolutions

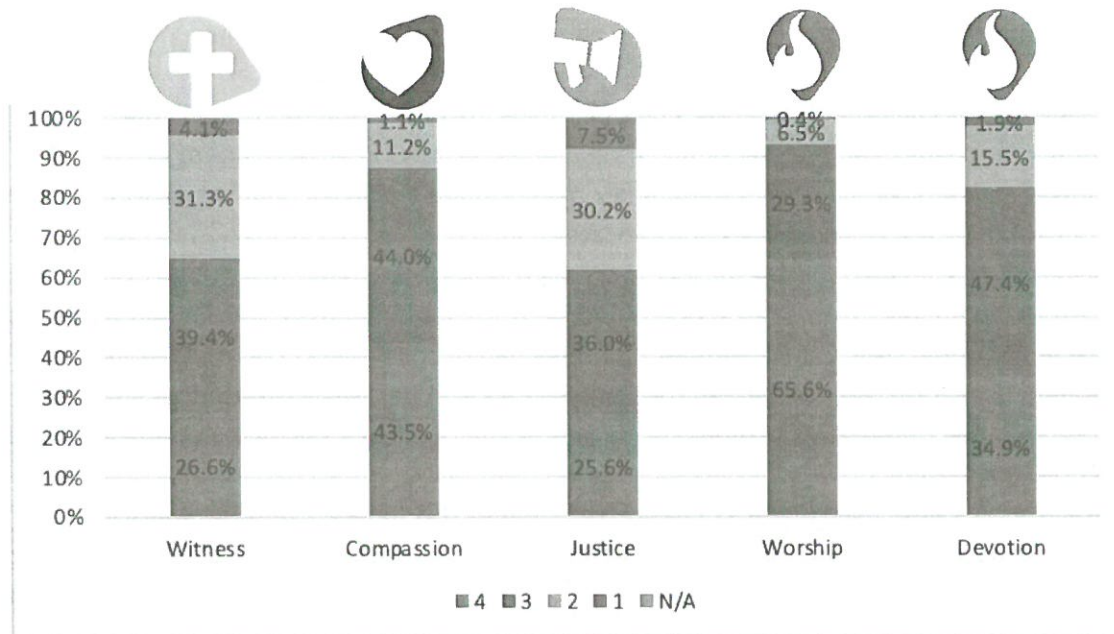
1. Changed into a Mission: Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference supports the designation of **Salem 85 Baltimore Hispanic UMC as a mission** of the annual conference and a Congregation in 86 Transformation.
2. Black churches sold monies will go to other Black churches: Resolved, that before any determination is made regarding proceeds from the sale of Black 129 church property the BWC Board of Trustees and BWC-BMCR representatives will work 130 together to formulate a plan for how the proceeds from the sale of black church property sale will 131 be allocated.
3. Racism prevented by eliminating other races to vote with USA UMC conference group: "Christmas Covenant" : BWC characterizes this resolution objective as preventing racism by eliminating the vote of other nationalities so the UMC can accomplish the objective of changing to THE NEXT UMC. Christmas Covenant would transform the existing Central Conferences into Regional Conferences and create a United States Regional Conference. It would increase the ability of each Regional Conference to adapt the Book of Discipline to fit
4. First 238 Methodist Episcopal Church year 1772 Resolved, that at this moment in time, when our denomination faces division once again, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference and all the churches of our conference congratulate Lovely Lane UMC for 250 years of continuous ministry and pray that they will continue to be a beacon of hope and promise as we all look to the future of the United Methodist Church.
5. Housing: Safe, accessible, and affordable housing. Yet, policies across our nation and this region have not made this a reality for everyone, particularly for people of color, women, poor people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ people Resolved, that the Baltimore-Washington Conference (BWC) build on the housing work of the Wealth Equity team and add a seat focused on Housing Security Justice and Advocacy to the BWC Advocacy and Action Board
6. Encouraging a More Robust Discussion and Prayer of the Science Related to Global Warming

Discipleship report: includes many avenues of ministries and goals to improve 1. Alignment of Discipleship Agency work to the output of the Discipleship Ministries report. 2. At least 60 more churches are on a pathway toward racial justice. 3. Annual Conference Leaders learn and are practicing interculturally competent behaviors for the creation of beloved community. 4. Create and share a clear dashboard of ministry vitality.

Financial Report: Changes were made to first level clergy pension, retired clergy pension and health benefits , Disaffiliation process of churches wanting to leave UMC

FULL REPORT on UMC website. View 2022 Conference directly at <https://www.bwcumc.org/events/2022-annual-conference/>

DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL REPORT



The lightest color is N/A which sits at the very top of each stack. Thankfully, there were fewer N/A responses across the discipleship dimensions, which suggests that more congregations are working to deepen discipleship through practicing the means of grace.

We have had an intentional focus on increasing the spiritual discipline of justice and celebrate an increase in the number of churches that are engaging in the discipline of justice when compared with last year.

The symbols at the top of the stack represent which of the five different Conference boards leads the work which includes analyzing and shepherding that data. Board chairs have expressed just how much overlap there is within the work of the boards and a desire to work more collaboratively.

It is difficult to deepen discipleship without an intentional discipleship process. This next chart illustrates the status of local congregations in the development of an intentional discipleship process.

2023 PROPOSED BUDGET

SUMMARY	2021 ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET
Benevolence Factor	17.550%	17.550%	17.550%
Collection Rate	87.50%	89.00%	90.00%
INCOME			
MISSION SHARES***	13,515,334	13,104,912	12,484,383
NON-MISSION SHARES INCOME			
Grants	85,470	267,300	253,470
Event Income	705,175	2,265,106	2,399,027
Publications	0	4,100	3,500
Individual Gifts	4,195	0	0
Reimbursements	77,781	210,235	229,181
Other Income/Sources of Funds	1,362,195	2,235,544	2,786,945
Interest	90,938	58,500	66,500
TOTAL NON-MISSION SHARES INCOME	2,325,754	5,040,785	5,738,623
TOTAL INCOME	15,841,088	18,145,697	18,223,006
EXPENSE			
<u>DISCIPLESHIP</u>			
REGIONS			
Southern Region	501,935	574,422	585,686
Baltimore Region	497,259	573,672	584,936
Washington Region	519,261	574,422	585,686
Western Region	517,659	575,627	586,891
TOTAL REGIONS	2,036,114	2,298,143	2,343,199
MINISTRY TEAMS			
Discipleship Ministries	4,026,339	4,231,994	4,235,363
<i>Note: General Church Mission Shares</i>	2,882,915	2,882,915	2,882,915
Leadership Development	304,016	819,753	819,753
New Faith Expressions	331,740	760,000	760,000
Young People's Ministry	1,766,277	2,344,006	2,446,427
Advocacy and Action	564,475	655,374	655,374
Abundant Health	155,943	213,446	266,946
TOTAL MINISTRY TEAMS	7,148,790	9,024,573	9,183,863
<u>TOTAL DISCIPLESHIP</u>	9,184,904	11,322,716	11,527,062
<u>STEWARDSHIP</u>			
Operations	2,773,630	3,245,944	2,987,745
Communications	478,213	468,466	469,929
Finance	574,511	561,064	572,935
HR/Benefits	1,610,481	2,018,150	2,033,595
TOTAL STEWARDSHIP	5,436,835	6,293,624	6,064,204
<u>EPISCOPAL OFFICE</u>	486,371	529,357	631,740
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE	15,108,110	18,145,697	18,223,006
	732,978	0	0

- Denotes items funded from Non-Mission Share sources
 Indicates percent non-mission share if less than 100%

***Used to be Apportionments

The above is a summary of the 2023 proposed budget. To view/download the entire 14-page proposed budget, visit <https://www.bwcumc.org/events/2022-annual-conference/stewardship-budget-2022/>

A journey – a pilgrimage – begins. It follows a predictable pattern, of being lost, and then found. Of being alienated from God, then finding union WITH God. Yet being sinful, again. Then receiving salvation from God. Ultimately, the journey is never really finished, but ongoing. On our journey we explore questions with others. We look to our past to find answers for the present, and the future. In the eb and flow of our lives we must PERSEVERE. This year, in addition to the usual business, annual conference focused on persevering.

A summary of the message from Bishop Easterling

To Persevere is to persist, in spite of opposition or discouragement; to pursue steadily; continue; endure. But HOW will we persevere? We will place our trust in The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 12, 1 – 3: Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

We have faced MANY obstacles:

Common personal obstacles: brain-fog, fatigue, depression; fallout from COVID 19.

National obstacles and tragedies: hate crimes and racial division; violence in churches and classrooms and other public venues.

International tragedies: War zones in Palestine and Ukraine

Censorship, and discrimination . . . The details are different, but the troubles are the same.

But we run with perseverance. We look to God. We endure in the face of opposition or hostile forces. Are we willing to “walk the talk?” We are not tested when things are easy and working right! We are tested when EVERYTHING goes wrong! When we don’t think we can take One. More. Step!

Look AWAY from the distractions and look to Jesus! Stop telling God about your problems – and start telling your problems about God! This is a CHOICE we make!

Bishop Easterling’s message was followed by prayer, music, and the sharing of some of the numerous ministries supported by the UMC, including a request for prayer and support for the Ukraine.

A Summary of the work of the morning session

The session having been called to order, began with the Native American Ministries, and a litany to “recognize, honor, and never forget. We repent and commit to work forward to truth and reconciliation.”

Further, a report was provided by the Board of Ordained Ministries. The report included information about the Living Well Program and retreats being offered for clergy. A new study "Gender, Reace and Ministry" will be (or was) offered for clergy in January.

New members of the board were recognized and new candidates for ordination were presented. The ordination ceremony was pre-recorded and shown during this session. Nominations for Elders to Episcopacy followed. The nominees will be notified at the end of the day, and are expected to respond within a time frame.

A series of resolutions were presented and voted on. The details of the resolutions and the results of the votes can be found on the BWC website. The morning session was adjourned.

Highlights from the afternoon session

The afternoon session was designated as the Laity session, Deloris Martin was the session Lay Leader. Keeping with the theme of perseverance, Former Youth President of ROCK, Kaylee Martin shared: "Jesus didn't deserve anything He endured! SURELY, we can persevere!"

The director of Lay Ministry, Linda Flanagan shared information about the ongoing work of developing lay ministers. The most recent work concluded in March with six new Lay Ministers becoming certified.

A significant portion of the afternoon session allowed conference attendees to hear from Chris Wilterdink (?) about Youth Ministries. Chris calls for youth ministries to persevere by challenging them to change their programming. Historically, youth program planning focusses on WHAT are we going to do. Rather, Chris recommends to plan youth programs with a focus on WHY. Youth ministry programs have their Missions (WHY), Vision (WHAT), and strategies (more WHY) – and these should align with the church's Mission and Vision. He offered the following equation:

"raw ingredients + organized energy + intentional transformation opportunities = something new."

Three things to include:

1. Recognize Spiritual Maturity – baptisms, confirmations, graduations – what else?
2. Demonstrate a great commandment: Show love for God and neighbor
3. Create Opportunities to practice

In July of 2023 in Daytona Florida there will be a conference: Building Spiritual Muscle: A Crash Course of Youth Ministry.

Following a Q&A time with Chris, the afternoon session was concluded.

The second day of annual conference was a day dedicated to business. After opening prayers information was shared regarding the nominations for Episcopacy. A total of eight nominations were made, six of whom accepted the nomination. The nominees presented themselves and responded to questions. Conference attendees voted after the presentations. None of the nominees received the required 67% of votes. This was tabled.

Ms. Martin presented the Laity Report. Big ideas from her presentation included the importance of building a support system: the RIGHT to CHOOSE is POWER! The world is changing – and in a changing

world, CULTURE trumps! Churches can be as much as 40 years behind the progression of culture. Ms. Martin stated that those who believe that we cannot or should not be led by non-heterosexual leaders are just wrong! Some people will be left behind if we don't move on with progress.

Young Adult Lay Speaker, Jamal Oakman is on the campus of UMBC. Having been influenced by attending ROCK for several years in his youth, he works to advocate for justice on campus. The Terp HUB – “Here U Belong” - no matter what others say provides a space and place for everyone to be included and focuses on developing relationships. We serve a God that is a LOVING God, NOT a divisive God! Forward thinking young people want to be leaders NOW – when this happens, then young people will come back to the church.

Additional reports were made by the Council of Finance, the Conference Board of Pensions and Health, and for Equitable Compensation. The details of their presentations and results of items voted on can be found on the BWC website or by watching the YouTube videos of the conference.

The final day of annual conference began with a presentation titled “Living into Vitality.” This session focused on four pillars needed for being a vital church. First, that churches SEE people in their entirety – who they are, what they bring and what they need. Second, that churches work to make disciples – there is a plan to renew people's relationships with God, as love of God is ALWAYS linked to love of neighbor. The third pillar is living and loving like Jesus. To love as Jesus loves, churches must engage in compassionate service, inclusive witness, whole-hearted worship, mindful devotion, and persistent justice. The fourth pillar of being a vital church is to multiply our impact. In other words, the church should be engaged in the community, building relationships within communities and listen to the needs of the community to know where God is calling the church to be.

At the Last Super, Jesus gave us the NEW command: to Love one another just as “I have loved you!” No matter a person's race, gender, or other identifying characteristic, we are ALL loved by Jesus. He set the example of how to love and calls churches to love others just as He loved us!

The Ordination Service was held in the evening of the final day. During this service, 12 people were presented for commissioning as provisional members preparing for ordained ministry as deacons and elders. Three people were ordained as Deacons and nine more were ordained as Elders.

Below is a summary of the sermon delivered by Rev. Tony Love at the ordination ceremony.

In 2 Timothy 4:9 – 18, Paul writes to his son, Timothy, telling him of his troubles – that everyone has left him. Paul asks Timothy to come to him quickly, to bring his cloak, his scrolls and especially the parchments. Paul also warns Timothy that some are strongly opposed to our message – to be careful.

Rev. Love's take on this – that there will be times in everyone's life when things are bad; when we are desperate, tired, weary, worn – and in need of companionship. In life and faith, it's all about relationships! Our God is a God of forgiveness and reconciliation! Relationships of grace, forgiveness and faithfulness are the relationships we need to get us through.