

Daily Proceedings

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH
SESSION OF THE CENTRAL TEXAS CONFERENCE**

**WHITE’S CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Southlake, Texas
June 7-9, 2015**

**FIRST SESSION
SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 7, 2015
*OPENING WORSHIP & SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE***

The opening worship service of the one hundred and forty-ninth session of the Central Texas Conference was held at White’s Chapel United Methodist Church, Southlake, Texas. The 6:30 pm Pre-Service Music was provided by White’s Chapel UMC Music Ministry. The invocation was provided by Dr. Bob Holloway, with the greeting provided by Dr.’s John McKellar and Todd Renner, co-pastors of White’s Chapel UMC. The opening message was provided by Rev. Rudy Rasmus, of St. John’s UMC, Houston, TX, entitled “If My Church”. The service of Resurrection & Remembrance was presided over by Bishop Mike Lowry.

**SECOND SESSION
MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 2015
*CLERGY EXECUTIVE SESSION***

The Clergy Executive Session was held in the Bridge. It was presided over by Bishop Mike Lowry who called the session to order.

Jim Connor, Chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry along with other members of the board, presented the report to the Session. Jim introduced the Board of Ordained Ministry members and he expressed thanks for them and the work they do. “Qualifying persons for ministry is very serious business and they do their job as service to God and the annual conference.”

Those who were presented for election as full members and subsequent ordination were: (Question 32 BAC)

- a. Deacons – Sarah Elizabeth Roberts

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- b. Elders – Scott Jeffrey Goodfellow; Daniel Koos Hawkins; Cynthia Suzanne Moss; John Richard Nader; Charles Randal Tucker

Those who were presented for ordination as an Elder and transfer from deacon in full connection were: (§309.3) (Question 34.b BAC)

- i. None

Presented and elected as Provisional Members: (Question 28 BAC)

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- a. Provisional Deacons (under provisions of §324.4a.c)
 - i. Kelly Christine Anderson
 - ii. Suzanne Byrd
 - iii. Allen Charles Lutes
 - iv. Kyle Edwin Robertson
- b. Provisional Elders (under provisions of 324.4a, b? (v):
 - i. James Matthew Bailey
 - ii. Wendi Allison Bernau
 - iii. Eric Scott Douglas
 - iv. Margret Linda Fields
 - v. Jarrod Daniel Johnston
 - vi. Alex F. Latu
 - vii. Kimberly Liane Long
 - viii. Stefani Elizabeth Reed
 - ix. Jon Mark Reeves
 - x. Rezolia Johnson Roberson
 - xi. Stacy Nycole Roberts
 - xii. Dale Alan Wilbanks
 - xiii. Alison Michelle Zollinger

Those who are continued as provisional members in preparation for ordination as a deacon (PD) (§326.1): (Question 29.a BAC)

- i. David Brower
- ii. Jon Farrer
- iii. Sela Finau
- iv. John Han
- v. Clint Jones
- vi. Marilyn Jones
- vii. Casey Langley
- viii. David Medley
- ix. Jannette Miller
- x. Grant Palma
- xi. Molly K. Simpson

Those who are continued as provisional members in preparation for ordination as an elder (PE) (§326.2): (Question 29.b BAC)

- i. None

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Those who are ordained clergy, having been received from other Christian denominations, have had their orders recognized. As provisional members (¶347.3 a. b.): (Question 31.a BAC)

- i. Tomeca Richardson
- ii. Charles Robinson

The full report was submitted to the annual conference and appears in this journal in section "E" in the business questions 17-75 pages 127-148.

LAY SESSION

The session was held in Sanctuary of White's Chapel UMC under the leadership of Ms. Kim Simpson, Conference Lay Leader.

FELLOWSHIP OF LOCAL PASTOR SESSION

This session was held in Rawlins Hall of White's Chapel UMC under the leadership of Mike Kerzee.

THIRD SESSION MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 2015 CALL TO ORDER

Bishop Mike Lowry offered a prayer and then he called the Annual Conference to order. He invited Bob Holloway to come to the microphone.

WELCOME TO EAST DISTRICT

Rev. Bob Holloway, Host District Superintendent, welcomed the Central Texas Annual Conference to White's Chapel UMC.

WELCOME TO WHITE'S CHAPEL UMC

Rev. John McKellar, Host Pastor, welcomed the Central Texas Annual Conference to White's Chapel UMC, Southlake. John invited everyone to attend the breakfasts and afternoon soft serve ice cream, and he gave a commercial for the coffee shop. Todd encouraged attendees to seek assistance from those in red shirts.

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ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

RANDY WILD

Dr. Randy Wild thanked those who did the work preparing for registration online and on site. He explained that the color coded badge information could be found on page 19 of the preliminary report. Randy explained that any lost and found items could be dropped off or retrieved at the main desk; he asked everyone to silence their cell phones; he explained that all forms needed could be found at the back of the preliminary report or at the district and conference tables; and encouraged use of proper forms.

Dr. Wild stated that the consent agenda items, were located on pages 13 & 14 of the preliminary report and explained the rules for removing an item from the consent agenda. He stated that the deadline would be tomorrow morning, additionally there were 3 items to be removed for discussion; bylaw changes which could be found on page 119, trustees report has accepted a friendly amendment to change date, and a second friendly amendment which could be found on page 176, line 39 of the preliminary report, pertaining to the clergy couples was being offered. Dr. Wild set the bar of the conference. (Approved)

Bishop Lowry noted that attendees should sit in their assigned areas by district. He recognized the districts; guests and visitors; and welcomed Rudy and Juanita Rasmus, inviting them to be seated on the ground level with the body of the conference.

Dr. Wild described the friendly amendment for unused parsonages. He then moved for the adoption of the agenda with necessary changes as needed. (Approved) Dr. Wild next moved to approve the tellers and secretaries as printed on page 6 of the preliminary report. (Approved)

CFA INTRODUCTION OF 2016 BUDGET

JOHN MCKELLAR

Dr. John McKellar officially put the 2016 Budget on the table for adoption on Tuesday, June 10TH. He stated that revisions made by the conference will be monitored as they affect the budget. He invited anyone who would like to discuss or ask questions regarding the 2016 budget to a special Q & A session to be held today in Evans Hall at 5:15.

NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REPORT

GEORGIA ADAMSON

Dr. Adamson presented the conference organization and procedures. She then presented the slate of nominations and leadership recommendations to the conference. There are two corrections, under Campus Ministry-Wesley

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Foundation at TCU-Class of 2016 Janna Elliott (spelling of last name) and page 2, MinistrySafe Oversight Committee-Jannette Miller (spelling of first name). If other errors are found, please contact georgia@ctcumc.org. These items will be voted on Tuesday.

Bishop Lowry informed the body that the 2012 General Conference eliminated the investigations committee, but that the Judicial Council ruled that elimination was unconstitutional, so it was reinstated for Elders. As a result, the committee is to be named by the Bishop. Bishop Lowry explained that the rules state that any nominee of the investigations committee cannot be a member of the BOM; or a relative of a BOM member; or a member or relative of dCOM. He then read the list of nominees which includes: **Clergy (4)**: Allen Gross, (RE) North District; Bryan Dalco, New Church Start District; Meg Whitmer-Faile, (FE) North District; Travis Franklin, (FE) South District; **Alternate Clergy (3)**: Wade Killough, (FE) South District; Mike Rodden, (FE) East District; Lilli Ann "Penny" Stemley, (FD) East District; **Professing Members (3)**: Steve McIver, East District; Cheryl Wilson, Central District; Lynn Gray, Central District; **Alternate Professing Members (3)**: Carolyn Little, West District; Scott Drillette, North District; Sherry Doty, East District.

Bishop Lowry then introduced Rev. Rudy Rasmus, of St. John's UMC, Houston, Texas.

TEACHING SESSION

REV. RUDY RASMUS

This first teaching session was opened by Rev. Rudy Rasmus and then a video was shown by Juanita Rasmus, which told a story about the transformation of a house and how the church is called to be different and be in the world and not of it. Juanita spoke about how important it is for everyone to be welcomed into the Church, Muslims, Buddhists, and gays, truly everyone. She spoke about how decisive the church is today, and inspires everyone to live out John 3:16. Rev. Rudy Rasmus thanked the clergy for the opportunity and thanked his wife for bringing him to Jesus. He talks about one of the biggest difficulties in Houston, which is racism. In the past five (5) years, 25,000 young white people have moved into his neighborhood. He claims that his church has not been effective in ministering to their new neighbors. Humanity is essential to open up and experience what god has for them and the only place where change is happening is where people are open to change. One of the problems they are facing is neglecting the importance of love. We love who fits into this neat and tidy box and there are many out there who are wondering if they can be loved by the church. It should be changed from LOVE? To Love.

Love is allowing a person to be whom or what they choose for themselves without any insistence that they meet your expectations. When someone comes to the church, they should feel loved by the church and loved by God at the same time. Liberation. Any church can give to the setting they find themselves. Times have

changed and churches have to be more than “normal”. Churches have to be more than just in the community to be relevant. The church is the one place that Liberation should literally be happening more than anywhere else in the world. A photo of a child’s face was shown, and a story was told of a young man contemplating his outlook from the time he was 8 years-old till today. He could never understand the need for two water fountains and could never understand why his mother was so worried when he got too close to the white water fountain. At the Houston Zoo, there was only one water fountain and everybody drank from that one fountain. This is what life should be like and if no one else speaks up for the injustices in the world, the church should stand up for it.

General Conference is here to remind that God loves, our job is to manifest God’s love into our communities. There is a difference in telling God what we want, and listening to what He has planned. Our prayers should be asking for God to show us that plan. God is talking to everyone and the only way that we can move to the place that God wants us to be is if we pray. There is more church happening outside of the church building than ever before. What if we build homeless shelters at the same rate? What if we found people and preached? When you open your eyes, you can see so many opportunities for the church to truly be a part of the community. If you are waiting for Sunday morning...you are doing it wrong.

Love people right where they are. I want to live my eulogy every day, remember to make your last encounter with a person, the encounter that you want that person to remember you by. Seek His face and turn from your wicked ways. “The aim of God in history is the creation of an all-inclusive Community of loving persons with God himself at the very heart of this community as its prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant.” Dallas Willard

Bishop Lowry invited Gary Lindley to come up for the presentation of awards.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

HARRY DENMAN AWARD FOR EVANGELISM

GARY LINDLEY

Gary said that one of the highest honors that a pastor can receive is the Harry Denman Award for Evangelism. Gary stated that this year’s recipient has served at 4 churches, where there has been growth, baptism and confessions of faith. He has merged two congregations, one of which is a historically black congregation and the other a predominately Anglo congregation and the new name of this church is Harvest UMC. Please help me congratulate Dr. Louis Carr.

This year’s laity award goes not to one individuals but three. I realize that this is unusual, however, you will understand as I tell the story. You see, it all begins with one lady invited a certain gentleman to her Sunday School Class. Alan had just moved to town and was looking for a church that would accept him. You see,

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he was a Vietnam War medic with a speech impediment because he was shot in his upper chest. He was also suffering from PTSD. In this Sunday School Class Alan was accepted, nurtured, and experienced the love and grace of Jesus Christ. He soon became a member of the church. He became actively involved in missions and in the Life Recovery ministry started by the church's pastor and his wife. He became a lay servant minister and was soon co-chairing the Life Recovery ministries.

Then Alan reached out to Johnny, a young man in trouble. Johnny became involved with the Life Recovery ministry and his life was recovered. Johnny professed his faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized by immersion in a horse trough in the church garden. Since that time Johnny has become a lay servant minister and helps to lead the recovery meetings. He also plays drums in the praise band along with two others who are in recovery, a local patrol officer and the chief of police. Johnny and Alan preach in the contemporary service and offer their testimony of what God has done in their lives through Jesus Christ.

As of Easter, there have been nine adult professions of faith at First Ballinger and three more are in process. All of this has come about through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through the evangelistic efforts of Peggy Fiveash reaching out to Alan Rittinger and reach out to Johnny Hernandez who is reaching out to others and counting.

Harry Denman would be proud this day as we give The Harry Denman Laity Award to Peggy Fiveash, Alan Rittinger and Johnny Hernandez.

MORRIS DELANEY WALKER AWARD

KIM SIMPSON

Kim Simpson, Conference Lay Leader, presented the Morris Walker award. Kim explained that the award is for the outstanding lay person, the nominee has held many offices at every level; has a heart for all people; ecumenical ministries; mission trips abroad; student ministry at Tarleton, and the UMW. The Morris Walker Award for outstanding lay leader goes to Cynthia Rives.

BISHOP'S PREACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

BISHOP MIKE LOWRY

Bishop Lowry presented the preaching excellence award, noting that there are many that merit this recognition and it is his hope is that the award will stimulate preaching excellence. Bishop Lowry stated that this year's recipient exemplifies sharing the word in many ways. The Bishop's Preaching Excellence award goes to Rev. Estee Valendy.

Gary Lindley asked if he speak to the conference. Gary stated that unlike previous years, this year we are honoring an additional clergy. The second pastor is a

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person who exemplifies the passion that Harry Denman had to share his faith with others and to bring individuals into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Like Harry Denman, this pastor is not ashamed of the gospel nor does he miss an opportunity to share the grace of Jesus Christ. One of his previous staff persons writes that this pastor helped her to “develop the gifts that God has given me to serve Him and his church...strengths in me that I didn’t even realize I had.” She goes on to write that he, “challenged me to rely on Christ for knowledge, wisdom and strength.” A layperson shares that God used her pastor to totally change the course of their family’s life. Carol and her son attended church faithfully, however, her husband Henry, who was Jewish at the time, rarely went with them. Henry attended a service and heard this pastor preach and Christ began to work in Henry’s life. This pastor shared his faith story with Henry and invited him into a relationship with Jesus. Henry accepted that invitation and was baptized and became an active member of the church. Carol writes that her pastor, “showed her the difference in just knowing Jesus and making Him Lord of my life.” A colleague in ministry shares that when this pastor came into the district he was surprised. He thought to himself, “You know, there is hope for this conference. This man is an evangelist.” These two men meet weekly and his friend writes, “Every week I was inspired, motivated, challenged. It became very evident that he was several passions, but the main impetus was evangelism.”

This pastor moved to the Central Texas Conference in 2008. As our Episcopal leader he has shared his passion for evangelism and challenged us to be evangelist in our communities. Since he has come to the Central Texas Conference churches are reporting more professions of faith. Less churches are recording no professions of faith. Bishop Lowry not only inspires us and mentors us in evangelism, he continues to visit with individuals to share his faith and to invite others into a lifesaving relationship with Jesus Christ. Recently he participated in a Kairos and was instrumental in a prisoner professing his faith in Christ.

Dr. Billy Graham wrote, “Harry Denman was one of the great mentors for evangelism in my own life and ministry... the thing people will remember above all about Harry Denman was his love of Christ and his desire to see others come to know Him. He truly was one of those rare individuals whose impact will continue for generations to come.”

I can say today that Dr. Graham words reflect my feelings for Bishop Lowry and would express the feelings of laity and clergy throughout the Central Texas Annual Conference. It is my honor to present the 2015 Harry Denman Award to Bishop J Michael Lowry.

ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH

Bishop then explained that we would be breaking for lunch, and that we would begin promptly at 2:00 pm.

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FOURTH SESSION MONDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 9, 2014 *BUSINESS SESSION*

The session began at 2:00 p.m. with Bishop Lowry invited Ginger Bassford to lead the opening prayer. Bishop lifted up Dr. Tim Bruster and his wife's family, as they were preparing to celebrate a major anniversary, his mother-in-law (Susan's mom) died suddenly. Additionally, they found out news that his brother has advance stage cancer. Also, Bishop asked that we lift up Byrum Pratt, who lost his father on June 4th.

Bishop Lowry introduced Dr. Jim Conner, who thanked the staff of White's Chapel and presented the Board of Ordained Ministry's report.

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

JIM CONNER

Jim directed the assembly's attention to their full report on page 134 of the preliminary report and reminds everyone that the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Central Texas Annual Conference exists to enlist, evaluate, equip and sustain leadership for the current and future ministries of Jesus Christ in the United Methodist Church. Jim then introduced Chris Hayes, who introduced those who would be honored at the ceremony tonight, they are: **Deacons:** Kelley Anderson; Suzi Byrd; Allen Lutes; Kyle Robertson; **Elders:** Matt Bailey; Wendy Bernau; Eric Douglas; Margret Fields; Jarrod Johnston; Alex Latu; Kim Long; Stefani Reed; Jon Reeves; Rezolia Roberson; Stacy Roberts; Dale Wilbanks; Alison Zollinger. **Recognition of orders:** Tomeca Richardson; and Charles Robinson. **Ordinands:** *Deacons:* Sarah Roberts; *Elders:* Daniel Hawkins; Cynthia Moss; John Nader; Randy Tucker. These individuals were welcomed by the conference and Bishop Lowry.

Rev. Page Hines and Dr. Chris Mesa presented this year's recipients of Board of Ordained Ministry scholarships. Those receiving scholarships were: Eddie Kahler; Carol B. Roberts; Melissa Turkett; Johnny Brower; Kevin Anderson; Kristin Warthin; Jarrod Johnston; Brian Longley; Joy Dister.

Jim noted that the 38 Clergy attended the 7 Levers seminar. He noted that there are now 14 voting members, down from the original 19 members. In addition, they have added new areas of emphasis. Jim announced the Clergy Effectiveness Statement and shared that over 100 clergy attended the preaching conference.

Bishop Lowry shared that changes in the discipline beginning in 1996 have placed more work on the dCOM. He expressed deep gratitude to the BOM and the dCOMS. OTM Summit was attended by 27 and licensing and residency continue to be revised for better performance-moving toward perfection. Bishop thanked

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Susan Craig for her assistance in keeping the clergy up to date with “Keeping our Sacred Trust”. In addition, he thanked the District Administrators for their assistance. He recognized Kathy Ezell for her work on the board of ministry.

The report was recommended for adoption and was accepted by unanimous affirmative vote.

Bishop Lowry recognizing that we were ahead of schedule invited Eileen Lindley to give the Spouses Organization report.

CTC SPOUSES ORGANIZATION & INTRODUCTION OF MRS. JOLYNN LOWRY

EILLEN LINDLEY

Eileen Lindley, president of the CTC Spouses Organization, thanked Bishop Lowry for bringing his wife, Jolynn Lowry and claims it was his greatest gift. She then introduced Ms. Lowry to the conference and presented her with a corsage.

Jolynn pointed out that she is indeed on time, and Bishop Lowry acknowledged the miracle within our presence. She said that her delight is in meeting the members of the annual conference, and having the ability to visit with local congregations. Eileen invited the clergy spouses to visit the Spouses’ Hospitality room.

Bishop asked Gary Lindley to come and give the CFE&CG report.

CENTER FOR EVANGELISM & CHURCH GROWTH

GARY LINDLEY

Gary Lindley reported that the center exists to energize, recognize and equip local congregations. It focuses on new places for new people and transforming local congregations to be the church in this new day. We are located in the “Golden Triangle” and area of rapid growth. A map was displayed to demonstrate areas of most rapid growth. The population is projected to increase by 800K people within the area of the central Texas conference. The largest planned community will be developed in the Wash Ranch area beginning in 2016. Other areas of growth will be happening nearby. The number of unchurched is also growing, according to PEW research-currently there are 56 million nones. This is the second largest number behind evangelicals. CTC must continue to provide new places for new people. Some will not look like traditional new church starts – house churches; satellites; coffee houses; churches with churches. Not all will become chartered congregations. While the strategy may be new and diverse, we know that healthy congregations will be needed to partner with the CFE&CG.

Keller West is a second campus of Keller UMC and on average 65 people attend worship. Daniel Hawkins is the pastor and focuses on meeting the needs of the community for food security. Gary shared a story of Janeen and her family who

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connected with Keller West through social media, participated in providing Thanksgiving baskets and then in worship.

7th Street Fellowship—joins FUMC Fort Worth, this community of faith is an outreach community. On average 85 attend 7th street services.

Genesis Fellowship in Killeen is a daughter church of St. James in Temple. This community dreams to provide shelter for homeless. The pastor posts the bible studies online for the deployed members of the military.

Wesley in Arlington, a church that is serving a Ghanian population, Our Manna, French speaking, new Hispanic ministry.

In March, Bracks UMC and Mt. Zion in Waco merged to become a new place for new people. One Fellowship is their new name and they meet at the former Bracks facility.

Ridglea and Thompson voted to merge. Primarily Anglo and primarily African American churches merged and will go by the name Harvest UMC. Dr. Louis Carr is appointed as the Sr. Pastor. Gary recognizes Harvest UMC and their staff.

Gary explained that launch dates for both of these churches will be provided this fall.

Path One – is an example of a large church impact residency – John Reeves will be the resident and will work in the Hudson Oaks Willow Bend area.

Gary introduced Todd Pick, who describes the transformation of churches. He stated that if we are to meet new people, we must help existing churches to be open to new ways of worshiping, get into the mission field of our communities. The answer is not just starting new churches, but transforming current churches. The CFE&CG encourages the church to take part in the “Healthy Church Initiative” and asks churches to create leaders. Tools are offered and this trains clergy and laity for missions. Since the beginning, 400 lay and 100 clergy have participated and this process can truly alter the future of the church. 33 consultations have been completed. They will write a report that describes worship and evangelism, the church then decides to accept the report along with the “prescription”. Support continues after the “prescription” is developed and the costs for stages 2 and 3 are borne by the conference which can be up to \$12,000 for a large church. Several churches have experienced an increase in worship and small groups; in tithing and giving; as well as moving from a consensus driven church to a mission minded church. Efforts include delivering meals; collecting cans of food; and baking cookies to invite people to church. Team based ministry that builds community faith. In addition, HCI also has a hospitality program that delivers cakes to each new member. Registration is open through the summer, and each church is encouraged to participate.

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Todd Pick introduced, Jerry Roberson, of CFE&CG, coaching and consulting. He explains that there is no reason for a struggling church to sit and struggle without reaching out for help. Being a part of this conference brings many benefits. We can help struggling churches become good and good churches become great. He encouraged attendees to see brochures available at the Center's table.

Gary introduced Tammy Lindley and thanked her for all of her hard work in the department. He then thanked the group for support, prayers and assistance as coaches and consultants. Gary moved for the adoption of the report and the report was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Bishop Lowry introduced Eric McKinney and asked him to present his report.

UNITED METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

ERIC MCKINNEY

Eric greeted the assembly and expressed gratitude for support of and suggestions for the ministry of the Publishing House. Eric explained that Cokesbury is still responding to meet the needs of the church. John Wesley pointed out "The 5 Marks of a Methodist", and this pamphlet is available in the book room, as well as a large print study bible in Common English. The Deep Blue is a children's curriculum that is now available and it includes stories to build children's faith. Covenant is a bible study that has been welcomed with open arms and is available at the back of Evans Hall in the Cokesbury store and if you tell them that Bishop Lowry sent you, they will discount the price by \$100.00. There are many ways to contact the publishing house, on the 800 number; the Cokesbury website; and/or the Cokesbury table at conference, you can speak directly to Stephen Decker, who is available to meet with local churches to discuss resources at your individual facility.

Eric named God, Grace and Gooseberries, Lord I Love the Church and I need Help, Twelve Gifts We Cannot Afford to Lose, There's a Woman in the Pulpit, Leading Churches Through Transitions. He also announced that Cokesbury offers a button to press for the CTC Annual Conference for recommended titles and free shipping. Eric stated that the publishing house is working to be good stewards as well as being creative in meeting the needs for publications.

Bishop Lowry mentioned books written by Rudy Rasmus – Touch and Love Period.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GEORGIA ADAMSON

Georgia Adamson reported for the Center for Leadership Development, and said that the CFL report could be found on pages 89-136, and the TUMCA report is on page 104 respectively in the preliminary report. Georgia encouraged everyone to visit the Center's table and she then introduced Kevin Walters, Director for the Center, specializing in lay ministry.

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Kevin Walters announced the Vital Leadership Academy, and stated that this aims to identify, inspire, train and support a new cohort of lay leaders. He explained that there would be three parts spread out over 8 months. There are three parts of this program; four 24-hour retreats, large group retreats, small group meetings which are designed with those with the greatest leadership potential. Kevin stated that applications will be due by September 1, and are available online. In addition, they will admit 5-8 from each district and the conference will cover 50% of the costs, with participants paying \$100.00 as will the churches.

Next, Dr. Mike Young, chair of the Executive Leadership Team was introduced to explain the reason to redirect funds from TUMCA. Dr. Young stated that local churches need quality leadership to effectively carry out the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In a recent major research project, it was identified that pastoral leadership was one of four key drivers of congregational vitality; however finances were the biggest barrier to those being called to ministry. In recent years, tuition increased some 57% in mainline seminaries. This discourages people from responding to their calling in ministry. It is expected that by 2024, roughly 41% of existing clergy in the Central Texas Conference will have retired. The executive committee moves that three scholarships for \$25,000 each be created for the purpose of recruiting persons who show exceptional promise as future clergy in the CTC. In addition, we move that one scholarship for \$25,000 yearly be created for internships or specialized training for a college or seminary student who shows exceptional promise for local church ministry. The funds will begin to be redirected from TUMCA (Texas United Methodist College Association) in order to establish the set of scholarships beginning in January of 2016. The Center for Leadership has established the requirements and the process by which these scholarships will be awarded.

Bishop Lowry asked if there were any questions, Brian Young asked about removing Asbury Theological Seminary, as it is not a UMC seminary. Mike Young stated that the University Senate support Asbury. Additional discussion ensued, and one change was made to the proposal: Scholarship funding must be used at any United Methodist colleges, universities or seminaries or any University Senate-approved schools. The motion was seconded by Rev. Jim Newton. Bishop Lowry then called for a vote, the voice vote was too close to call, so Bishop Lowry called for a show of hands. Bishop Lowry determined that the motion carried as amended.

A motion with the required five signatures was received to remove the Southwestern University report from the consent agenda. Estee Valdez explained that the group is recommending non-concurrence and that it is felt that the body needs to be informed of any by-law changes because any changes could diminish the influence of the United Methodist Church.

Bishop Lowry invited Henry Joiner to speak to the body of the annual conference on behalf of Tim Brewster. Mr. Joiner has been a member of the committee working on these by-law changes, he spoke in favor of the by-law changes as

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printed. Scott Youngblood spoke in favor of the non-concurrence motion. Estee reiterated the committee's proposal. Bishop Lowry called for a vote, and the non-concurrence motion passed by a majority vote.

Joseph Nader, coordinator of campus ministry addressed the annual conference next, he described the work being done to enhance campus ministry. As they want to raise up future leaders of the church and world, two strategies being used consist of focusing on four year schools to enhance Wesley foundations at those locations. Annual campus ministry retreats as well as board retreats and fund raising. The first of the two focuses is a growing presence from within student body of local churches – people called into leadership in church. Young adults are meeting from various churches to encourage each other as well as a local presence of alumni at churches. They help create space to learn and grow together in scripture and their witness to the world. The other piece of the strategy is to operate two-year schools and operate them off of a four year model. They created their own model as there are not many two-year models out there. It is important to create a partnership between two-year schools and local churches, because if they can anchor to a local church, it keeps the relationship strong. A secondary strategy is to expand the reach of the campus ministry to make future culture makers of our world. We want to hit as many campuses as possible and are hope is to have a presence on no less than 5 campuses. In addition we are hoping to see new life in other campuses. Finally, we are hoping to create a system of preparing and sending campus ministers, some of this happens in seminary, but it can also occur at the campus level through involvement in the campus ministry.

Georgia Adamson presented a new award, the Francis Asbury award. Francis Asbury in 1791 challenged all Methodists to give the key of knowledge to your children. The nominee for this honor had done outstanding work with campus ministry. This first time award goes to Rev. Joseph Nader. Bishop Lowry expressed gratitude to Rev. Nader.

Georgia then presented two merit awards, Student Day Offering, a change to this award is that applications are no longer received through GBHEM. Both of this year's recipients are from the East District, Stefani Staton of White's Chapel, (accepted by Todd Renner) and Katie Lewis of Euless. These two scholarships are from the Central Texas Conference Merit Award.

Georgia Adamson then spoke about the United Methodist Young Preachers Festival & Conference. This is a road trip which Todd Renner is hosting and will take place July 15-18. The CTC is sending 10-young clergy who have agreed to have a sermon critiqued. All expenses are being paid by the conference. Georgia thanked Linda Spence for her assistance with this event.

Bishop Lowry said that Linda is not known to many; however she does heroic work for the conference, he asked Linda to stand and be thanked. He thanked Georgia for the Leadership Center report and the report was accepted as a whole by voice vote.

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TEXAS METHODIST FOUNDATION

TOM LOCKE

Bishop Lowry then introduced Tom Locke of Texas Methodist Foundation, Tom thanked the Bishop for the opportunity to be here and give this report. Tom said that the TMF total assets are well over 500 million dollars and he encouraged congregations to apply for loans and grants. In addition, he encouraged everyone to participate in leadership training. Tom also explained that their website had been updated to better serve. Tom concluded with the question, "What are you learning out there?" There is a dramatic difference in congregations that are consistently asking questions of what God is asking. There is a difference between ministry for people and ministry with people.

TEXAS HEALTH RESOURCES

BARCLAY BERDAN

Bishop Lowry next introduced Barclay Berdan of Texas Health Resources. Barclay reported that the relationship between the Central Texas Conference and THR is valued and continues to grow. He went on to say that Bishop Lowry will be on the board of trustees. He stated that the faith based culture at the health system has helped them become more holistic. THR was awarded the 1st recipient of 5-stars for "Patient Experience". Seven of their locations received an "A" grade for patient safety and they were named Fortune Magazine's best companies to work for list. Barclay went on to say that earlier this year, they opened a wellness center in Parker County and their comprehensive cancer center is ground breaking. He went on to say that they serve 1.4 million people annually and that they give back to their local communities through charity care and community benefits. Earlier this year they were tested by the diagnosis of Ebola, and were strengthened by the experience. Their pastoral care program is stronger than ever and their commitment to pastoral care continues. Barclay recognized the pastoral care leaders, he asked them to stand and the body recognized them with a round of applause.

Bishop Lowry recognized Randy Wild, Kyland Dobbins, and Brenda Wier as they serve on an advisory board for THR.

RESOLUTION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

RANDY WILD

Bishop Lowry asked Randy Wild to present the resolution on page 242 of the preliminary report, titled Eradicating Modern Day Slavery. Randy explained that this resolution had been reviewed by the mission support team and they recommended concurrence. Bishop Lowry asked if there was any discussion, there being none, he called for a voice vote, which carried unanimously.

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Randy reminded the body that petitions and resolutions need to be submitted 60-days before annual conference and that the date by which they would need to be submitted for the 2016 annual conference is April 4, 2016.

Randy went on to state that the resolution on 2016 health insurance options was distributed and will be part of the report considered on Tuesday. He then made a few announcements, gave a reminder that rehearsal would follow immediately adjourning today, and then the meeting was adjourned for the evening.

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FIFTH SESSION TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 9, 2015 BUSINESS SESSION

The Body of the conference gathered with song and Bishop Lowry opened the business session with a Bible passage at 8:00 a.m. and reported that following the ordination service, Carol Woods and Bob Holloway stayed to receive three people who heard a call to ministry. They will follow up with their home church districts.

Bishop Lowry Tanya Eustace, with Discipleship Ministries was present to be recognized and welcomed. She was asked to take our greetings to the Disciple Ministries board. Bishop Lowry explained that Kim Simpson also serves on that board as an officer.

GCORR ERIN HAWKINS

Bishop Lowry then introduced Erin Hawkins and lifted her up in celebration. She is from GCORR where she serves as General Secretary, and he said that she is the youngest general secretary of GCORR. Erin greeted the body of the annual conference and she thanked Bishop Lowry for the opportunity to be here with Rev. Rudy Rasmus, she explained that they had previously worked together. Erin acknowledged several people, first her mother, Elaine Hawkins, who was originally from Los Angeles, California, who has been touring annual conference across America. There are two members of the Central Texas Annual Conference, who are members of the GCORR board, they are Vince Gonzales and Rev. Sela Finau. Erin explained that GCORR has been transitioning and transforming the work of the commission, in 1968 the commission was founded by the General Conference and that it was at this conference that the UMC was formed by merging of EUB and MEC. A requirement was to do away with racial segregation and to begin to integrate their church. Many blacks were concerned about what would become of "Their" church. There was joy and optimism, but also a lot of fear about coming in main stream church. With this in mind, the GCORR was formed to monitor this process in annual conferences and to insure all rights were extended to those joining. Blacks and whites were not the only groups...other groups were also part of the work of GCORR, all ethnicities are the

concern of GCORR. How do we live into the covenant and commitment? Some may think of us as the monitoring agency – to secure proper representation for all. We have done important work opening doors, but when we look at what is happening in local communities, there still seems to be many divisions. If what we've learned about creating laws and opening legalistic doors, creating laws, equitable structures, but the relational avenues we've not done as well at. We have the laws, but not the relationships, we need to continue to push to make the playing field level, but we also need to build authentic relationships.

The crisis of the church is a crisis of relevance, people don't see the need for church. Many other groups offer what people find relevant, so as a result the church suffers. I believe that this lack of relevance is due to lack of relationships, the longer a church is in the community, the less likely they will KNOW the community. The community changes around us and we don't recognize them, we are disconnected. How do we get to crux of this matter? We need to insure that how we present ourselves outside the church, we need to show people that the church doesn't exist for us...it exists for others.

Intercultural competency, we need to have heart, mind and skill sets to lead where differences are present. When we grow in capacity to lead, learn and love, there is no point in time where I stamp you "Competent". There is too much diversity and difference. We must be constantly learning and growing. Knowing is not enough to build authentic relationships, you can be an educated fool. You have to have a heart for people and you must understand the populations, but also have the heart of Jesus Christ for when they show up in a package unfamiliar to us. We also need some skills, in communication, in conflict resolution, and mostly in building relationships. One of the aspects of GCORR is to provide resources to help you when you show up to do the work.

Institutional equity, how do we practice what we preach? We have the principles, but sometimes we don't do what we say. Whenever we create others with less value than us, when we proclaim that all are welcome, we need to continue put into place to make all part of the church. We've not talked about what progress looks like, one of the things we say in GCORR is that we must monitor our progress, not people. What is the vision of the future? How can we help each other? We're great at setting goals and creating metrics, what we are not great at is what will the church look like when we are successful in diversity? One of the parts of institutional equity is having vital conversations. A congregation is a conversation, it's a conversations with God, but also a conversation we have with those we serve and serve with. We talk a lot, but not so much about what is important, or difficult, and mostly what is uncomfortable. Many white brothers and sisters say they are willing to engage in conversation, but I walk away being labeled racist. Brothers and sisters of color, likewise feel labeled as a trouble maker or a rabble rouser, etc. If we want to experience vitality, we must talk about the things that matter, not only to ourselves, but to those who we seek to serve even when it's tough and feels unsafe.

We can discuss impacting issues, however, people are waiting for us...they want

to know what the church can offer. Vital conversations, resources, how do we model these things? The mission of GCORR is to increase the capacity of the church at every level to be contextually relevant to reach more, younger and diverse people. So, as I think about how that work relates on the ground...how does this empower local ministry...especially the peace about leading learning and loving across lines of difference.

King Solomon just built the temple and there was a dedication that brought people from all over. There was church. In response, God filled the temple with fire to consume the sacrifices. His presence was undeniable. Then God came to Solomon and gave him a warning, a command, if, then statement. Once the celebration is over, let's get down to vital conversation. Isn't that how it is? After the Churchy church, the church is over, God comes to us and speaks, a come to Jesus moment when we can't get away.

If...then from God, humble is the first command, that's not a mistake. If we look at all the others pray, seeking God, Turn from wickedness, turning to God, all these change when viewed with humility. Cultural Humility is crucial. It's not only about learning about others, it's also about learning about us, where biases, stories, shortcomings exist. Awareness of expectations, hold frailties of imperfections, then we can build relationships. To develop competencies needed to build up the church. It's for everybody, not just for the privileged, the unprivileged are also in need of competencies. When we surrender to God we can be transformed. Envision where the hurting in your community are. What would happen if your church was not there? We think we have the answers, so we don't go looking, we think we have them figured out and so we can't come from a place of humility. We fail to recognize the humanity of each other, that they are God's children, we must recognize the humanity in others.

We think we already know the story but fail to check if the story is true or the whole story. We often hold onto the story, however we must realize that no one group is guilty. Erin then told a story about visiting New Orleans and their tour guide experience. He was a phenomenal guide but his appearance was off putting. We all have biases and preconceived notions. We've already made up our minds. We must to be willing to go beyond our created stories.

God gave Solomon the declaration: Prayer and peacemaking- prayer is the beginning...we enter the presence of God- God gives us peace. We should pray about those things we are concerned about. If we don't have peace in our hearts and in our relationships with others, we will struggle in our efforts. In prayer we realize that we don't belong to the world but to God. Peace is not the work of our hands, but the gift of Christ among us. When we humble ourselves, we realize we don't have all the answers and our prayers change. The peace, transformation, love, and break thru that we are seeking for others- take place in us first. That can only happen if we are humble.

Seek God's face, we do things to draw near, when we do it with humility, God sends us on a journey to places we may not otherwise go. There we will find

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God's face in unexpected places and people. When I first started working for Commission, I was 24, and when I became general secretary I was 30. It was tough...I felt immense pressure to perform and to prove myself. I was hired to turn the agency around, it was exhausting, especially in the Methodist church. Early on, we made some tough decisions, we released 85% of the staff and hired new staff, and it took several years to get over that. It took me to my knees, I began to question everything, and the more I tried to be faithful the more I seemed to be ticking people off! Just know that if you are working to make changes, God bless you, seek God's face and see it in the face of mentors and supporters who protect you from political battles and converted skeptics. You sometimes have a vision but others don't accept it immediately. The commission came through these changes and came out stronger and better. Seeking God...allows God to show up. Remember that humility is needed to allow you to recognize God. That's why God showed up to Solomon in the middle of the night, no distractions.

Turn from your wicked ways, usually they are a matter of our arrogance. We have to turn all the way back to God. A movement of the will inspired by the realization that we've spent our time on things that don't matter. Turning around is God's gift to us. I was invited to be part of a group and part of the experience was learning about other faith practices. A Seik taught us about TURNING prayers. Being a still point in a turning world, we need to keep focus on God. There is a song that goes with it and we got used to it and I got it, but when the music stopped I could not find the leader, I staggered all over and never found the leader. Sometimes we get so caught up in the turning, that we have our eyes on God, but once the music stops, we are staggering. We have to be attentive to what we are turning toward. So we have to seek the face of the Teacher, Christ in our midst.

When we turn away...from...then we have to find our way all the way back around to bow with humility. When we do the "if's" the promise is forgiveness and healing. We have trees and there is disease throughout. We try to do something, we might lop off the obvious signs and think we've cured it, but the challenge returns. Maybe we tie two branches together to strengthen, but we need to heal at the root, the people. Healing has to happen with us before it can spread to the rest of the system. If we want to be part of a tree that provides shelter, we have to be vital, we have to receive and then extend the healing to others. God does the healing and we are channels for healing. We are entrusted with the reconciliation of the world. We are agents of reconciliation on God's behalf. Mission is to Make disciples...The world is never saved in grand messianic action, but in gentle accumulation. God is inviting us to hold up our end of the bargain. The invitation is always there to be the hands and feet of reconciliation. When we do we'll be able to lead learn and love across lines of difference.

Bishop Lowry presented a gift to Erin Hawkins for her service and to express our love and deep gratitude.

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CONFERENCE CORE TEAM REPORT TOM HARKRIDER

Changing the UMC is a difficult thing to do, Tom then showed the Exodus project timeline graphic. He explained that it was implemented in 2011, and the evaluation began in 2014. Mike Bonem was engaged to perform this evaluation, and his recommendations begin on page 29 of the preliminary report. As Tom presents the report, he asks the following questions:

1. What is the next great step in our learning?
2. What are the biggest opportunities and challenges and what is conference roll in equipping local churches to meet them?
3. What does effective pastoral leadership look like and what is the conference role in developing?

EXODUS PROJECT MIKE BONEM

Tom then turned the floor over to Mike Bonem who reviewed his report, which can be found in its entirety beginning on page 176 of this journal, in section “G” Reports – Core Team.

Tom Harkrider discussed the next steps and stated that “As you reflect on the presentation and the report, there will be a form for evaluating the AC”, the three follow up questions will be available to you. On June 16 the core team will meet at a retreat, and following that retreat, a new task force will be formed to align the budget in response to these questions. He thanked those who responded to the surveys of the evaluation process.

Bishop thanked the reporters. Asked that everyone take time to respond to the evaluation survey for Annual Conference. Bishop then stated that there has been a mass of work behind this report, he thanked the Center leaders, especially Georgia Adamson. He then expressed his thanks to the entire Core Team and asked them to stand to be recognized. The body gave the team a round of applause. Bishop stated that he feels there is great impact occurring as a result of the core team’s work.

Bishop Lowry next introduced Brenda Wier, who presented the report for the Center for Mission Support.

CENTER FOR MISSION SUPPORT BRENDA WIER

Brenda explained that this report will lift up the ways that people are engaged in mission work. She said that there are many stories in areas of Risk taking mission

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and service, intentional faith development, engaging in ministry with the poor and global health. Rev. Jim Monroe and Rev. Sue Owens were featured in a video about their mission-work in Africa. Brenda reviewed accomplishments in Africa. Right here in our midst in the form of disaster response in West, Granbury, Cleburne and Acton. Again this spring we've been cleaning up after the floods in the Central Texas Conference and our neighboring conferences. As we are finishing in West, we want to show you the work we've done. Case managers are still working there. A video was shown about West's rebuilding following the explosion. Brenda then introduced Laraine Waughtal and invited her to come up and speak about the work that is being done in West.

Laraine Waughtal thanked the body for their contributions to West which touched 605 families. 132 total losses, 102 rebuilds, 32 homes sold. In addition, the conference assisted 102 renters, 20 medical, and 31 nursing home employees. The Nursing home is the 2nd largest employer in West and it will reopen this summer. We have also helped with hotels, rentals, utilities, furnishings, prescriptions, and gift cards. To date, a total of 1.1 million dollars has been invested in West. \$400k alone, came as grants from UMCOR. Because of our involvement with case managers, we have helped facilitate 5,280,000 plus dollars. Our hope is to be done at the end of the summer; but the rain has slowed work. We are currently working in the final 14 rebuilds. In addition, we have sent funds and support to Wimberly, San Marcos, Sisco, Eastland, Ranger and Tyler.

Brenda noted that the Central Texas Conference was the only conference to increase giving between 2013 and 2014, and she stated that we have the highest number of churches participating in advances. Two plaques were presented to CTC, one for giving to Latvia and the other for the highest increase in missionary support in 2014. Bishop Lowry noted that he boasted about this to the other bishops. These plaques will be hung in the new conference center at TWU.

Laraine noted that she believes our success is related to hearing the missionaries when they are available in local churches. Flood relief is in progress in all affected areas of Texas. Bishop Lowry has appealed to the conference for giving. Many areas have no flood insurance because flooding has not occurred there before. Bishop thanked Laraine for her work within our conference and beyond. He encouraged the body to follow the website in order to stay up to date on how to participate and contribute to relief efforts. Communicate with the center for Mission Support directly.

Brenda pointed out that we have a heart as big as Texas. Her husband serves on a search & rescue team and reports that there is much work to do. Grants are available for new and innovative mission work. A video about Arlington Heights Five and Two food truck ministry. (Five loaves & two fish) Jesus said, "You feed them." This came about when they took inventory of the gifts and graces of the church. Those from Arlington Heights were asked to stand to be recognized. The body expressed thanks with a round of applause. Brenda said that if anyone has an idea and is in need of seed money or start-up funds, you are encouraged to call the CFMS and apply for grants.

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Brenda invited Maddie Pittman to come up and give the CCYM report.

Maddie Pittman reported for CCYM regarding the ongoing youth missions. Maddie spoke to the two CCYM retreats, which had a combined total of 384 youths who participated at these retreats which were held at Glen Lake Camp. Celebration Confirmation was attended by 297. Our mission trip numbers have increased by about 200 from 2014 to 2015. Maddie expressed gratitude to adult supporters, CCYM leaders and to the Annual conference. Bishop Lowry pointed out that CCYM is among some of the finest work done by our conference. Maddie stated that Glen Lake Camp is also a great place to experience the Lord and has been for the past 75 years. She encouraged everyone to volunteer at Glen Lake.

Brenda noted that Glen Lake Camp is an awesome ministry. Mike Ford will be the interim director for the summer. Brenda then introduced Mike Ford and Karen Oakley to the body.

Brenda, stated that new opportunities will be offered to support churches in faith formation discipleship. She went on to say that we are in conversation with our local churches, and that many of these churches need support in disciple making. Brenda stated that Amber Massingill, who is not in attendance today, will be coming on staff as of July 1st appointed to Faith formation and disciple making to work with local congregations.

Brenda asked the question, "What if we could build the mission momentum so that all churches will be working outside the walls on the same weekend? We are reviving a conference wide day, and we are currently building momentum so that all would be involved on the same day or weekend. The Central Texas Conference Serve is scheduled for September 13. Kaitlyn will be in the conference office to coordinate the event.

Brenda then invited Rev. Dawne Phillips to come up to present the Five Star Mission Awards.

Rev Dawne Phillips thanked Brenda and she then presented the Five Star Mission Awards. She noted that the award is intended to encourage a balanced approach to mission and service. She reviewed the criteria listed on page 140 in the preliminary report and she pointed out the banners that she said "become part of the church's identity." There are 8 new recipients and 68 continuing recipients listed on pages 140-141 in the preliminary report. In addition, she reported that 53 congregations are in covenant relationship with a missionary. She remarked that we had a 150% increase in churches giving and a 42% increase in dollar amount. She reviewed the criteria, noting that even small churches have the ability to be recognized. She then said that churches should pick up the awards packets at the Center table. Dawne then stated that Michelle Ivy is a young adult missionary who served in South Korea and is here and available to visit with attendees.

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Brenda said she hopes all have been inspired and energized. She thanked the centers and their staff members for their support. And on behalf of the centers she thanked the members of Annual Conference.

Bishop asked Randy Wild to present the consent calendar.

ADOPTION OF CONSENT CALENDAR

RANDY WILD

Randy explained that the consent agenda was presented yesterday morning. Proper procedure removed two items which have been discussed and dealt with. Randy moved for the approval of the consent agenda as printed. The voice vote carried unanimously.

The Resolution on 2016 Health Insurance Options will be handled during the board of pensions report later in the day. Bishop asked David Montoya to lead the body in prayer to close the session and bless the meal to follow.

SIXTH SESSION TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 9, 2015 BUSINESS SESSION

The Business session reconvened at 2:00 p.m. with the retirement service.

RETIREMENT SERVICE

JIM CONNER

The Retirement Service took place at Mansfield FUMC and those participating in the service as liturgists were Bishop Michael Lowry; Rev. Brenda Wier; Rev. Louis Carr, II; Rev. Don Scott; and Dr. Katie Long and worship support from Clint Blalock and Derrada Rubell-Asbell. The Retiring Class was introduced videos were shown after which, the retiree and spouse stood and were recognized. Retiring clergy for 2015 are: Dr. Thomas K. Beaty and Cindy (20); Dr. Ernest Alan Benson and Ora Mae (32); Rev. William Max Brennan (33); Rev. Jerry Phillip Galloway and Betty (23 ½); Rev. Elizabeth Spell Godbold (18); Rev. George Allen Grant and Darlene (15); Rev. Deborah W. "Decee" Horton and David (10); Rev. Reed C. Justus and Cathy (36); Rev. Johnny Frank Miller and Diana (38); Dr. Randal L. Riddile (26); Rev. Marilyn Schiffman and John (17); Rev. Billy Dean Strayhorn and Mary (40); and Rev. William Charles Wood and Cheri Kendrick (22).

Bishop Lowry commended the group and then enacted the symbolic Passing of the Mantle with retiring elder, Billy Strayhorn passing the mantle to John Nader and retired deacon Brenda Wier passing the mantle to Sarah Roberts. Bishop Lowry gave the Benediction and dismissed the assembly for a 10 minute break.

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The Business session reconvened with the singing of a hymn. Bishop Lowry stated that the service years' totaled 786 for the retiring elders and local pastors.

Gary Lindley came forward to present an award which is a partnership between the CFE&CG and Discipleship Ministries.

ONE MATTERS DISCIPLESHIP AWARD

GARY LINDLEY

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Discipleship Ministries is partnering with annual conferences to encourage and renew their focus on discipleship, especially at congregations in the United Methodist connection where annual baptisms and professions of faith too often are nonexistent, by honoring churches with the new One Matters Discipleship Award.

One person matters to God and matters to us. The "One Matters Discipleship Award" is intended to celebrate the joy of inviting others into a life with Christ. We want to use the award to recognize a church that is turning zeros into positive numbers with a renewed focus on discipleship during 2015. We want to lift up the importance of discipleship and help interpret across the connection what zeros in professions of faith and baptism mean and what moving away from the zeros means," said Sara Thomas, Deputy General Secretary of Discipleship Ministries and Chief Strategist for Vital Congregations. "Each "1" in those categories represents a transformed life – a life that matters to God, and a life that should matter to us."

More than 70 percent of the UMC congregations in the United States did not baptize anyone age 13 or older in 2013, and 55 percent did not baptize anyone age 12 and under, according to the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA). In addition, 50 percent of local churches did not have any professions of faith that year.

"Making disciples is much more than statistics; it is about lives changed by God's grace," Thomas said. "We have an opportunity to help celebrate the fact that one life matters ... and continue to help congregations identify ways to invite people into a relationship with Jesus through the United Methodist Church."

The award, which includes \$1,000 and a One Matters Discipleship Award plaque, will be presented to the pastor and lay leaders of a congregation which has done significant work to make its zeros from previous years become positive numbers. The monetary award is designed to encourage continued growth in the area of discipleship."

In 2015, the inaugural year for this award in the Central Texas Conference, we celebrate the congregation of Olney's First United Methodist Church and the Rev. Harrell Braddock.

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Bishop Lowry, as a point of parliamentary inquiry regarding the vote on Asbury Theological Seminary by a person who voted in favor, recognized a motion that was made to reconsider and it was seconded. Was voted by voice and carried. A second motion made by Jim Conner stated that the Scholarship must be used at any of the United Methodist colleges, universities, and seminaries as well as any seminary endorsed by the University senate, was made and seconded.

Georgia noted that the Center would support the amendment.

Bishop called for a show of hands. He instructed members on how to vote. The motion carried. Bishop Lowry then asked Mike Hall to come forward and give the Conference Trustee report.

CONFERENCE TRUSTEES

MIKE HALL

Mike Hall explained that as with many reports, most were approved by the consent agenda. However, 3-items, 2 for informational purposes and 1 for a vote. The changing to MinistrySafe was approved during the 2014 annual conference and the timeline can be found on page 211 of the preliminary report. There are 3 more steps to complete with a target date of July 1st to begin implementation. During charge conferences, the policies will be shared. Then trustees will begin follow-up with churches not in compliance. He also stated that these policies will need constant oversight and revision and the executive leadership team will suggest changes as needed. A motion was made for adoption of the policies found on pages 211 through 241 in the preliminary report. This motion was carried by voice vote.

The first informational item is regarding background checks, questions have been asked about how to ask questions and conduct job screenings. Training for this will be held at FUMC Arlington. Steve McIver, presented information pertaining to the second information item which is concerning the construction of the new service center. We have a current service center located on Bailey Avenue, which is now under contract for \$1,850,000. He then shared some history of the conference houses as well as noting that the service center will move into its new location sometime in late June or early July. In addition, he stated that we currently have two conference centers named and they are, the Lamar Smith Center for Evangelism and Church Growth and the Sydney Roberts Center for Leadership. We will be leasing the building for 12 years from TWU and the plan is to have an open house on September 25th at 2:00 pm by TWU.

A video was shown explaining the history of the building and the development of the plan to build a new building. Mike thanked Mavis Howell and other staff members for their assistance with the work of the Trustees. Other members of the trustees were asked to stand and be recognized. Bishop Lowry lead a round of applause to express appreciation and he acknowledged the tremendous amount of work that has been involved with this process, in addition, he stated

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that the sale price of the building was \$250,000 higher than anticipated. The Parliamentarian suggested that the report in its entirety be re-voted. Georgia Adamson made a motion to adopt the report in its entirety as amended.

Someone went to Mic 8 and asked to speak against the resolution found on page 104 in the preliminary report. He states that he has concerns that it is called a scholarship; however it states that there will be a contract signed and if the contract is not fulfilled, the student would have to repay any funds received. He feels that this takes us away from sending students to UMC schools or universities. Bishop Lowry asked if anyone else wanted to speak to this. Louis Carr, II is for the proposal, as he served on the committee and TUMCA takes funds away from our conference and distributes them. He feels that we can build within the ministries of our conference.

Bishop Lowry explained that this came from the leadership of the executive committee. Bishop then called for a voice vote, all in favor of the report in its entirety? The motion carried

Bishop Lowry introduced Rev. Frank Briggs, chairman of the Board of Pension, and asked him to come and give the BOP report.

BOARD OF PENSION REPORT FRANK BRIGGS

Frank Briggs addressed the conference, he asked Kory Koch to come and speak about the resolution regarding health care.

Kory Koch stated that he had been hoping that someone else would stand up and talk about what I'm going to talk about. He stated that he'd been praying that God would have someone else step up, in fact, I've been waking up in the middle of the night thinking about this issue and after I saw the preliminary report, my sleepless nights returned. The late Ken Dean used to say, "God didn't wake you up at 2 am to come tell me what to do", so here I am and I'm just hoping I can get some rest after this. For many of you, this may seem like a knee jerk reaction, so I will ask you in advance for your patience. Before I get to the meat of my presentation, I would ask you to turn to page 197 in the preliminary report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and he thanked Randy Wild, Frank Briggs and Shawn-Marie Riley. He acknowledged their work and stated that there is no perfect plan for every clergy however, I believe that the current plan that we have been asked to approve creates problems for our smaller churches. Recognizing this leads to the fact that no matter what plan is put in place, some qualifying clergy will benefit and some will not. The mandated groups were listed. I believe this plan will place a crippling burden on small churches.

He described the history of the group plan. For most of the past 12 years this has been acceptable and good because many have healthcare needs that would

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not be covered if you left the group. Preexisting conditions are no longer an issue. This has resulted in small churches being served by those who are exempt from the health care plan because they cannot afford the mandated plan. The plan is DE energizing and un-equipping. It also has detrimental effects on clergy families. There is no perfect plan. Glaring imperfection. A feature of the affordable health care act makes it such that any employer offered health care plan disqualifies employees from receiving subsidies.

He offered a scenario of a student local pastor making the minimum pay grade. Total 2145.00- 26,945/year. Church gives \$9000. Leaving 17,945 for pastor to pay. Leaving 14,255 to live on for the rest of the year. Does not include deductibles, or out of pocket. He finds he is not eligible for subsidies. This hurts the small churches because it makes recruiting young pastors. Kory shared his story. Of "old" parenthood. He noted that he will be paying family health care until he is in his 60's. He then describes the changing situation as people qualify for Social security. Beginning 2016, CTC won't be taking the secondary.... Therefore his expected healthcare cost will double. This affects a broad spectrum of clergy families. As varied as our needs are, there are many avenues to provide healthcare. There are other sources, the exchange, spouses' healthcare, etc. Every family is unique. The petition asks that we end the mandated plan and give a health care allowance to shop for coverage on the exchange. P 639.7. Some other conferences have already done this. By ending the mandated coverage, benefits would be more affordable to all clergy and to our churches. I propose that we end the group plan and set up an allowance of \$9000 paid by the churches.

Bishop Lowry invited Randy Wild to speak about this topic. He noted that the Board of pensions has not had a chance to study this resolution. He agreed there is no perfect plan. Keep the word plan in mind. When you talk about a clergy system, you need a plan. He predicted the conference will enter the ACA in 2020. All board of pension members are members of churches. We have been struggling with the plight of every church, the PPO premium in 2009 was \$668/mo. And the plan in 2016 is \$735/mo. Premium holiday was given the last three months a couple years ago. Every dollar we can save in admin can go to ministry. Deductible has gone from \$250 to \$1,000/yr., and the CTC deductible depends on the plan chosen. Every one of these is lower than the minimum in the ACA. The Great Plains conference voted to move their clergy to the ACA. As claims became apparent some were subject to at 25% increase in premiums.

An unintended consequence is that once a church sets their budget it's very difficult to amend that budget for a different insurance category and the new pastor. Randy then covered the ineligibility for subsidies and explained that the pending law suit may make subsidies unavailable in states on federal exchange. Clergy were surveyed and many models of insurance were studied. What was discovered in these models was that on the high end 10% of our clergy would be eligible for these tax credits/subsidy, approximately 20% would be on the fence leaving 70% of our clergy ineligible for the tax benefits. Another unknown is that the Supreme Court may decide that tax credits are not permitted, which would

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make healthcare unaffordable. A couple other things are that there will no longer be any preexisting conditions and that the premiums can be 3-times more for an older adult than a younger adult. The conference must continue to provide adequate support to our clergy. We would most likely have to hire an agency and additional staff to provide these benefits, and our best guess is that the increased cost to the conference may be up to \$250,000.00 in additional defined contributions.

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Bishop asked if there was a second for Kory's motion and received a verbal affirmation of a second from the group. Bishop Lowry then called for discussion 3 for and 3 against the substitution, he asked that before speakers begin they need to declare whether they are for or against the substitution and limit their remarks to 3-minutes. Discussion ensued, questions were asked and answered. The Bishop then asked for a show of hands for approval of the motion, which includes the Boyd amendment, the Carr resolution on consultation, the Heyduck amendment, which will all go to the committee for consideration for next year. It also included the information on the default plan change and the amount to be paid, the motion passed unanimously. Bishop Lowry then asked for a show of hands for approval of the report, the approval of the report carried.

PROVIDENCE PLACE JUDITH BELL, PRESIDENT & INTERIM C.E.O.

Ms. Bell reported that Providence Place has a deep history of transformation. She explained that she is currently serving as the interim CEO and asked for prayers over her interview for CEO. She stated that they are transforming leadership structure and the care being given and that much discussion of core values led to the top value being "grace." Ms. Bell shared the story of Megan, who was homeless and pregnant. Megan moved in and had a very difficult time she didn't like following the rules; however she has since developed a whole new outlook on life. Ms. Bell then shared the story of Robert who is in the adult program. The goal of this adult program is employment, Robert was coached and he is currently working at Cracker Barrel, in fact, they have hired two more students. Robert says that those who don't hire disabled are missing out.

Ms. Bell stated that they are transforming and we are on the right path providing grace, she invited communication with Providence Place and herself.

COUNCIL ON FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION JOHN MCKELLAR

John McKellar presented the CF&A report (which was found on page 163 if the preliminary report) and said explained that there were three items to be reviewed, 2 of them are informational only, last year we discussed a gift to Lydia Patterson Institute, that report could be found on page 256. Scott Youngblood reported on the story of his mom, lifted up our commitment to mission, the response to

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emergencies with manpower and dollars. He stated that there is a crisis in El Paso, children are in need, everyday 400 children cross the bridge on foot to receive an education. Scott explained that LPI has an excellent administration staff as well as teachers; however what they need is technology to be successful. Our conference has committed to give \$300,000 for 4 new classrooms for a superior education. It will take all of us to achieve this, he asked everyone to take this back to their local church and ask them to respond. He asked everyone to be creative, be generous, and that the first step towards this is prayer. Scott stated that planning will be done at the conference level. A short video was then presented and the president, Dr. Socorro de Anda spoke to the body of the conference. Dr. de Anda explained that the Central Texas Conference has made history and that LPI has added two grades and a middle school thanks to the capital campaign commitment. They are using smart boards and other technology thanks to the conference and there will be a plaque hung to recognize the gift. Dr. de Anda stated that this year at LPI 93 seniors graduated and 92 of them have been accepted to college or university and during the graduation ceremony it was announced \$1.6 million in scholarships just from Methodist colleges and universities. Dr. de Anda said that at LPI we are about educating, but also about serving the church, she thanked the conference for the impact they have on young peoples' lives.

Bishop Lowry highlighted the effort and asked that Scott Youngblood be received.

John McKellar asked everyone to turn to page 169 in their preliminary journal to Report 13, he explained that this would reduce the apportioned funds from 3 to 1. He went on to explain that this will simplify accounting, reduce mistakes, as well as, give more flexibility. Please note, this does not change giving, just the reporting. John stated that there is a calculating tool on the CTC website.

Bishop Lowry called for the vote to approve this report, it carried.

John McKellar stated that regarding the 2016 Budget, there was one change during conference, TUMCA changed \$50,000. These funds were shifted to another line and the bottom line of the budget didn't change. He thanked the staff and the body responded with applause. CF&A members were asked to stand and they were recognized with applause. John thanked the conference for their record of giving and he noted some highlights and thanked districts for their giving. Bishop Lowry noted that our giving is "Stellar" in the connection.

Georgia Adamson presented the nominations and leadership development report and moved for its adoption. Bishop Lowry called for the vote and the report was approved unanimously.

Bishop Lowry stated that the volunteer staff was released early and he asked all White's Chapel staff as well as the conference staff to come forward for recognition. He recognized the White's Chapel technology and conference technology crew. He thanked the signing interpreters. Bishop Lowry said that there were 2,754 kits turned in along with monetary donations. He stated that

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\$10,847 in offerings were received and will be divided between the designated accounts.

Bishop Lowry reminded everyone that the evaluation is on the website and that videos will be posted on the website. He asked members of annual conference to leave their name badge holders on district tables.

The appointments sheets were distributed, and Bishop Lowry announced that the 2016 Annual Conference will be held in Waco at the conference center. Next year, we will look at focusing on energizing and equipping, we will have Allen Hirsh with us.

SETTING OF APPOINTMENTS & SENDING FORTH SERVICE BISHOP MIKE LOWRY

The Bishop confirmed the appointments as printed. He led the clergy of those staying in their place of ministry and their laity in a reading, and then did the same with those who were moving to new appointments. He then led the whole assembly in a covenant.

Bishop Mike Lowry adjourned the Central Texas Conference at 7:45 p.m.



Bishop J. Michael Lowry
President



Dr. Randy Wild
Conference Secretary