

## DAILY PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 11, 2014

**CLERGY SESSION** - Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar called the clergy session to order at 2:05 P.M. The Bishop asked the body to welcome his Administrative Assistant, Brenda Borchers, Bob Sweet as Parliamentarian and Ralph Oduor, the Conference Secretary. The Bishop thanked Sue Evans for her many years of service and asked the body to recognize her with applause, since this was her last Clergy session as Registrar.

David Abbott answered the Business of Annual Conference (BAC) question 17.

Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang and Peter Hey, Co-Chairs of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM), greeted the body then Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang opened with a prayer.

The rest of the meeting followed the Business of Annual Conference in order from Question 18. Sue Evans, the BOOM Registrar, assisted as necessary.

Bishop Devadhar asked that Will Jouko Green, SeungRi Victor Han, and Kenneth Erwin Mantler, be elected as Provisional Elders They were asked to leave the room. They were elected and then they returned to applause.

Bishop Devadhar asked that Julia Kerr Daley be elected as a Deacon in Full Connection. Bishop Devadhar asked that Theodore Frederick Crass, and Xia Jiao be elected as Elders in Full Connection. They were asked to leave the room. They were elected and returned to applause.

Other questions were answered and voted respectively, including those requiring 2/3 or ¾ majority votes. The entire report, with some corrections, was adopted. (See the Business of the Annual Conference.)

The Bishop asked permission to address the body. Permission was granted. He stated that the dates for the next session would depend on survey results. He reminded us that survey sheets were in registration envelopes and that we should complete the surveys in time for him to announce the results before the close of the session on Saturday. The key question was whether to hold the next session Friday-Sunday, or Thursday-Saturday.

Ernie Farrar and Deborah Shipp an update on the Imagine No Malaria (INM) campaign.

Vicki Woods said thanks for the first provisional academy 3- year team.

Susan Morrison requested that in future, those being introduced for provisional or full connection be each accorded a short introduction so we get to know a bit about them.

David Hoyt, Chair of the Board of Pensions, addressed issues of clergy pension plans and Health Insurance; followed by Q & A.

Following a motion and second, Bishop Devadhar declared the Clergy Executive Session adjourned at 3:44 P.M.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 11, 2014 - 7:00 P.M

**OPENING WORSHIP** - Celebration of lives saved through Imagine No Malaria (INM) with Jim Mentzer, Director United Methodist Foundation of New England, Bonnie Marden, Field Coordinator, Imagine No Malaria, Bishop Cliff Ives & Ellen Bridge, INM-Co-Chairs, Abraham Waya, Tsitsi Moyo, Sarah Ames, and the INM Ambassadors.

**OFFERTORY** – “Amazing Abundance” 3120 WS (Worship & Song) - Gifts are in support of Imagine No Malaria - the campaign to save lives and end this preventable illness in Africa through an integrated program of education, infrastructure, communications and simple bed nets.

**SONG** – “Imagine the People of God” by the Music Team.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** – 2 Cor. 13:4-14 and Matthew 28:16-20

**ZIEGLER AWARD SERMON** – Steve Garnaas-Holmes, the 2014 recipient, was the preacher. See addendums for his sermon text titled “Go Therefore”.

**MUSIC** - Hymn “Spirit of God” 2117 FWS

**DENMAN EVANGELISM AWARD** – Rick McKinley, Director of Congregational Development presented the award to Mrs. Jaesook Lee from the Boston Korean UMC, Andover, MA.

**LIFETIME OF DISCIPLESHIP AWARD** – Preachers’ Aid presented the awards to Nancy Hajek, Marie and Charles Frasier.

**JOHN BRYAN SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD** - Bob Moore, retired Elder of New England Annual Conference, presented the award to Suzanne Rudalevige.

**BLAINE AND LOIS TAYLOR FELLOWSHIPS** - Preachers' Aid presented the awards to The Rev. Walter R. Brown (58 yrs. of active and retired pastoral ministry), The Rev. C. Edward Claus (34 yrs. of pastoral ministry and 6 yrs. as DS), and the Rev. Huntley Halvorson (35 yrs. of parish ministry).

THURSDAY MORNING JUNE 12, 2014

**BIBLE STUDY** - 7:00 A.M. with Terry Teykl, Easton Dining Hall

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 12, 2014

**MEMORIAL COMMUNION SERVICE** - 1:00 P.M

Celebrating the Service of the Saints, Service of Word, Sacrament, and Remembrance. The Music Team played Gathering Music as Memorial Families & guests were seated.

**CALL TO WORSHIP** - (Litanies and Other Prayers: Year A. Cole and Tilson: 1992, 90. Abingdon)

One: God will pour out the Spirit on all flesh,

**Many:** And our daughters and sons shall prophesy.

One: Our old ones shall dream dreams,

**Many:** and our young ones shall see visions;

All: And all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered.

**WELCOME** - Bishop Devadhar

**SERMONIC HYMN** - "Stillness" - Mark Miller

**ACT OF REMEMBRANCE** - Margaret Bickford and youth member, Noah Spicer, remembered these saints:

CLERGY: Earl H. Bell, Herman B. Benjamin, William A. Campbell, Martin E. Cernak, Janet M. Crain, Richard A. Davis, Edwin Holt Hughes IV, John A. Kirk, Sr., Chuck Langbein, William R. Morley Sr., James B. Peden, Lucille Richard, John A. Russell Jr., Robert Sammons, Junille W. Shepardson, Douglas C. Smith Sr., Ronald W. Smith, Roland C. Stockbridge, Doris Turbill, Neal White, and Gale Ross Williamson

SPOUSES: Janet Allten, Elizabeth Austin, Barbara Batten, Sarah Ruth Bilberry, Elaine Boutwell, Barbara L. Bullens, Grace Dougherty, Ruth E. Gagne, Dorothy Green, Judith H. Guinn, Lorraine Holcomb, Keith McIntyre, Marion O'Brien, Barbara Porter, Rosalie Smody, Gladys L. Snedeker, and Robert A. Starbird Sr.

**SCRIPTURE – 1 Peter 4:7-17 (The Message)**

**MESSAGE** – "Gratitude" Lillian Daniel

**COMMUNION** – Bishop Devadhar with Bishop Ives assisting.

**BLESSING** – Bishop Devadhar led us in the Blessing at 2:30 P.M.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 12, 2014

HOLY CONFERENCING

**CALL TO ORDER** - Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar called the 21<sup>st</sup> session of New England Annual Conference to order at 2:44 P.M.

The Bishop and Rene Wilbur welcomed everyone. Bishop spoke "O Sing to the Lord a New Song for God has done Marvelous Things," and he has done marvelous things in you. It is a gathering of the United Methodist family. If you have questions, stop and ask questions for an answer. The Bishop welcomed Mark Miller and the musicians back to the NE Conference. Bishop introduced Terry Teykl who has been leading us in bible study. Terry brought greetings from his radio station in Houston, Texas, who says the Lord's Prayer every day at noon. He would like the NE Conference to join them in prayer with them and for our Bishop as well. Rene Wilbur led us in prayer.

**CONFERENCE MUSICIANS** –Mark Miller introduced the musicians. The musicians played "Blessed Be Your Name" and the conference joined in singing.

The Bishop welcomed the first-time visitors to conference. The Bishop introduced Robert Sweet (a retired Elder in Full Connection) as Parliamentarian. The Bishop welcomed our special guests: Laura Everett, Executive Director Mass Council of Churches, Rev. Frederick Moser, MCC Board member representing the Episcopal Diocese of MA, General Agency Representatives: Ron Coleman GBPHB, Jeffrey Campbell GBOD, and Terry Wiggin GBCS. Bishop thanked all those in extension ministries.

David Calhoun called attention to the Holy Conferencing guidelines. He also asked members to fill out the evaluations at the end of the conference. David noted INM Malaria receipts of \$18,000 and a matching grant of \$12,000 from Calvary UMC, Lewiston, ME.

**COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE** – Laurel Scott spoke about diversity on race and religions of all the world. While overt racism may have receded, globalization has brought us to the point of accepting diverse people from all parts of world. This year may be the last year that snapshots of Annual Conference are offered. Wednesday night; 24 people in leadership spoke of whom 11 were white female or 45% white female. Kristen Dart will take over at end of session as chair. The Commission needs representation from every group.

**COMMITTEE ON DISABILITIES** – Sheri Smith, Chair, requested all to be aware of persons with disabilities when going to dinner, parking, and around conference. If you want to volunteer your time, find someone with a red shirt.

**ORGANIZATIONAL** - Bishop Devadhar welcomed everyone to this session of the Annual Conference. Bishop introduced NME District Lay Leader Susan Chaffee, and a member of the Board of Laity, seated with him at the head table. She will be the first of many laity to assist.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Ralph Oduor, Conference Secretary announced the following:

1. Roll Call will be taken from the registrations at the registration desk.
2. When voting, vote with the green voting card included in the registration packet.
3. Correction to the Pre-Conference Booklet (PCB): It is “Green Mountain College”, NOT “Green Mountain Task Force” in the TOC and Index
4. According to our rules of procedure, any motion that is made must be in writing to the Secretary and Presiding Bishop before it can be acted upon. Motion forms are available from any of the ushers.
5. If you wish to be recognized, please raise and wave your voting card from your seat before moving to a microphone. This helps visibility in the front of the Chapel.
6. Original makers have authorized substitutes as follows:
  - Late-Breaking:  
RS-119, RS-205, and RS-209 and,  
Distributed separately:  
RS-203, RS-204
7. The current Consent Calendar is on page 3 of the PCB. The vote on the Consent Calendar is scheduled for Friday at 4:00 P.M. as an Order of the Day. No debate or amendments will be allowed. The instruction for removal of an item from the Consent Calendar is on page 4 of the PCB. As a reminder, to remove any item from the Consent Calendar, simply provide the Conference Secretary with a written request for such, signed by 10 members of the Conference, before the close of the session this evening (you may obtain the form for this purpose on page 92 of the PCB).

**ORGANIZING MOTIONS** – Ralph Oduor moved that the bar of the Conference includes the entire chapel, floor and the balcony. The motion was seconded and adopted.

Ralph Oduor moved that the agenda as adjusted in Late Breaking News should be adopted as the working agenda for this session. The motion seconded and adopted.

Ralph Oduor moved that Kristine Anderson, Glenna Keleher, Ruth Oduor, Ami Sawtelle, Josephine Sierra, and Kristin White, be elected as the Committee on Journal and Assistant Secretaries. The motion seconded and adopted.

Ralph Oduor moved that Nancy R. Allen, Fran Camacho, Cathy Cantin, June Carter, Sharlene Cormie, Larry Curtis, Beulah Digan, Melanie Fengler, Paul Hoffman, Nancy Kenty, Jean Marsh, Bob Packard, Kim Ryan, Shallon Sullivan, be elected as ushers and tellers with Fran Camacho as Head Usher/Teller. The motion seconded and adopted.

Ralph Oduor moved that those who have appropriately filed excuses with the Conference Secretary be excused from the sessions as requested. The motion seconded and adopted.

Ralph Oduor moved that all reports printed in the Pre-Conference Booklet be adopted and printed in the conference Journal. The motion seconded and adopted.

Ralph Oduor moved that all reports printed in the Late-Breaking booklet and those distributed separately to members on June 12, 2014 be adopted and printed in the conference Journal. The motion seconded and adopted.

**RETIREE'S RECOGNITION** - Peter Hey and Yoo-Yun Cho Chang Co-Chairs of BOOM recognized those that are retiring. Retirees came forward as their names were read: Linwood R. Arnold, Joan W. Berlin, William Scott Campbell, Gary Capen, Mari Clark, Maria L. Coleman, Ward M. Coleman, Janice W. Davis, Michael B. W. Davis, Priscilla Dreyman, Deborah A. Estey, Paula J. Fletcher, Marguerite C. Gage, Margaret D. Goad, Patrice H. Goodwin, Charles G. Hartman, Paul Hoffman, Joseph B. Jewell, Paula M. Payne, Bruce A. Pehrson, Marj W. Stark, Charles R. Stith, DanaBeth Wells-Goodwin, and Julia R. Wilson.

These retiring Local Pastors were recognized: Karen Gotowski, Frank O. King, David Moore, Kenneth A. Phesay, and Susan Yaruta-Young. Rebecca Mincieli presented the retirees with certificates of recognition.

Bishop Devadhar offered a prayer of thanksgiving for their ministry and asked their spouses to stand and be recognized.

We watched a retiree Video montage including the song, "Amazing Grace".

Yoo Yun presented those who will be ordained this year: Elders; Ted Crass and Xia Jiao, Deacon; Julia Daley.

Retiring Elders spoke to the ordinands: Linwood Arnold stated how the covenant is different. Clergy covenant is part of a covenant that binds clergy and laity together. Scott Campbell, assured them of a promise from those already ordained – "we will be there for you." DanaBeth Wells-Goodwin read from Ephesians "it is in Christ..." Proverbs 20 –"Love God and love the ones you are called to serve. Love them whether you like them or not..." "Embrace soul searching".

**ORDINANDS' HISTORIC QUESTIONS** –The Bishop asked the historic questions of the ordinands; "Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Etc.

After the ordinands replied to these questions, the Bishop invited everyone to rise and celebrate with them. Bishop had the BOOM, District Committees of Ministries members stand and be recognized for their work.

**RS-211** - James McPhee, Tri-State District Superintendent, moved the adoption - To Discontinue of the First UMC, South Portland. The motion was seconded and adopted.

**SUSPENSION OF RULES** - David Abbott moved to suspend the rules in order to consider three discontinuance resolutions in the Late-Breaking materials. The motion seconded and adopted.

**RS-213** - David Abbott, New Hampshire District Superintendent, moved the adoption - To Discontinue Grace United Methodist Church in Canaan, VT. The motion seconded and adopted.

**RS-214** - Rene Perez, Central MA District Superintendent, moved the adoption - To Discontinue Maynard UMC in Maynard, MA. The motion seconded and adopted.

**RS-215** - Brigid A. Farrell, Vermont District Superintendent, moved the adoption - To Discontinue East Haven UMC in East Haven, VT. The motion seconded and adopted.

**RECOGNITION OF CAMBRIDGE WELCOMING MINISTRIES, CAMBRIDGE, MA** - LaTrelle Easterling, Metro Boston Hope District Superintendent, led the recognition:

"Born of a call to offer the full grace and love of God to persons who are gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual, transgender, and queer, Cambridge Welcoming Ministries emerged in 2001. The founding pastors of this ground-breaking ministry were Rev. Tiffany Steinwert and Pastor David Kim. Other faithful and faith-filled leaders have included Rev. Dr. Kirk Van Gilder, Pastor Lisa Fagerstrom, and Pastor Marla Marcum.

While the full cadre of supporters is too numerous to list, the following persons were instrumental in bringing this burgeoning ministry to fruition: Allan Anderson, Barbara and Ron Boucher, Rev. Annie Britton, Rev. Scott Campbell, XonnaBell Clark, Sean Delmore, Rev. Nizzi Santos-Digan, Dee Dee Edmondson, Rev. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez, Carolyn Frantz, Bill Gillis, Pastor Will Green, Rev. Linda Littlefield-Grenfell, Rev. Dick Harding, Rev. Charles and Anona Hartman, Evan Johnson, Jessica Kimmet, Dan and Tallessyn Grenfell-Lee, Brian Liu, Trelawney Grenfell-Muir, Michele Naughton, Rev. Gary Nettleton, Rob Newell, Chelsea Paxton, David Petersen, Craig Sato, Jeremy Smith, Dawn Sorensen, Rev. Dr. Bryan Stone, Elizabeth Sweeney, Joe Takawaski, Tracy Woods, and Robert Wyckoff.

The congregation worshipped in various locations over its historic past beginning with Grace UMC in Cambridgeport, MA, then transitioning to College Avenue UMC in Somerville, MA, and finally with Harvard-Epworth UMC in Cambridge, MA. These congregations demonstrated tremendous generosity in opening their doors, but more importantly their hearts to this new community.

Cambridge Welcoming Ministries birthed many leaders, both lay and clergy, who are serving within the New England Conference and beyond. These men and women continue to serve the kin-dom of God with the strength and courage they gained through this beloved community.

Only God knows the complete number of hearts and lives that were touched, saved, healed, and inspired by the passionate work of Cambridge Welcoming Ministries. Although it will no longer gather as a worshipping community, the seeds that were planted will continue to bear fruit for years to come. The New England Annual Conference bears witness to the life and legacy of Cambridge Welcoming Ministries".

LaTrelle Easterling then led us in prayer for these ministries.

**CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN** – Joy Mueller showed slides on the statistics of our conference including the VT churches. Her report is included in this Journal. This year Joy focused on Mission Shares. Here is an extract from the report:

"It is often helpful to point out what is not included in the mission share formula. Here is a list of numbers that are not included in the mission share calculation:

- Capital expenses - such as a new roof for the church building or a heating system for the parsonage
- Mortgages or loans
- Mission spending - such as donations to UMCOR, Habitat for Humanity, or local projects
- The number of people - either membership or worship attendance The amount pledged
- The endowment of a church

Joy told the story of Strong UMC, ME, "I would like to close with one of these stories. As part of my work, I usually look carefully at "outliers" - data points that fall outside the usual patterns. The vast majority of our churches have 5 or less new professions of faith. The outlier: this church began the year with 81 members and reported 30 new members received by Profession of Faith. Now 30 is a very large number of new members - even for our largest churches so I was fairly certain that it was probably a 3 with an extra 0 entered inadvertently. The data point I was looking at came from the Strong UMC's statistical report. This congregation is located in Franklin County in the Mid Maine District. The town of Strong has a population just over 1200 people.

To my surprise, when I checked with the pastor, Connie Maginnis, the 30 was accurate. She told me that 2 years ago, the church held a Vacation Bible School and included people in the community. The people in the church invited families that had been attending VBS to come to church. The families mentioned that the time the church offered Sunday school/worship was difficult for their young children so the church responded and changed the time! The families started coming to worship and Sunday School. After 6 months and a sermon on baptism, these new families asked to be baptized. The pastor offered classes for the families and in April 2013, 7 children and 13 youth/adults were baptized; 30 people joined the Strong UMC by Profession of faith and 3 transferred their membership.

These families have become an active part of the ministry and mission for Strong UMC . You might say they have made the Strong UMC stronger! Pastor Maginnis was excited to tell me about a recent mission project for Imagine No Malaria. The newly confirmed youth found ways to creatively include the entire congregation. To everyone's surprise they raised \$1800 for this effort! This story is a good one as it shows how reaching out to the community, inviting people to church, listening to their needs, and being willing to change in order to accommodate can positively impact your congregation's ministry.

Of course there are more stories like this one among our churches and I hope that you share them with each other over the next few days. We can encourage each other to write new stories and maybe create a few more outliers, but most of all, strengthen discipleship here in New England."

Bishop Devadhar thanked Joy for her ministry.

**2014 STRATEGIC PLAN** – Herb Taylor and Evelyn Johnson presented their report (RS-216). The final report is included separately. Rene Perez spoke about Spiritual Life. Will Green spoke about Vital Faith Communities. Caryl Walsh and Erica Robinson-Johnson spoke about District Superintendency. Erica Robinson-Johnson spoke about Streamlining the Structure. Aida Fernandez spoke about Diversity and Inclusivity. We Chang spoke about Mission Shares. Herb Taylor spoke about the Next Steps.

The Bishop thanked the team for their work.

**POINT OF CLARIFICATION** – Stewardship is the final piece.

**GRACE** – Erica Robinson-Johnson introduced Rev. Frederick Moser, MCC Board member representing the Episcopal Diocese of MA, who brought us greetings from the Council and offered Grace.

**RECESS** - Bishop Devadhar declared a recess at 5:05 P.M.

THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 12, 2014

**CONCERT** – 6:30 P.M. Tina Luce centered us through her joyful and Spirit-filled music.

**OPENING WORSHIP** – 7:00 P.M

**EPISCOPAL ADDRESS** – Bishop Devadhar greeted everyone and then read Psalm 34: 1-3. He went on to highlight the importance of Christian community, and outlined three dimensions as we are formed in Christian community: Up, In, and Out. "The 'up' dimension of our Christian faith is lived out through prayer and worship as personal and community practices," the Bishop said. "The 'in' dimension of our Christian faith as individuals and as a community emphasizes the

importance of relationships with other brothers and sisters in our community of faith and people who live in our neighborhood. The 'in' dimension also pays attention to the nurture of our spiritual lives. And we go 'out' to our community and to our world as we become present to others and as we model servanthood to others." Read the entire address in the Addendum(s).

**RECOGNITIONS** – Bishop Devadhar introduced Thomas Gallen and David MacMahon of Preacher's Aid. Tom presented a symbolic check for their 2.5 million dollar pledge to the Together for Tomorrow Campaign, the balance of which will be fulfilled this year. Erica Robinson-Johnson gave a history of Preachers' Aid. Bishop celebrated the conclusion of the Together for Tomorrow Campaign, with Videos of Bishop Susan Hassinger and Bishop Peter Weaver thanking the Preachers' Aid Society.

**AWARDS** –The Bishop presented awards of thanksgiving to Bonnie Marden for her 15 years of service as Conference Choreographer and Director of Imagine No Malaria; Alexx Wood for her 8 years of ministry as Director of Conference Communications; and Heidi Chamberland for her 8 years of leadership as District Superintendent of Connecticut and Western MA District.

**APPOINTMENTS** – Bishop Devadhar appointed David Abbott as Dean of Cabinet and Beverly Stenmark as Secretary and all the DS's as the Cabinet. He also recognized and thanked all who served on the extended cabinet.

The Bishop announced the District Superintendent appointments: Rene Perez (CMA), David Calhoun (CWM), LaTrelle Easterling (MBH), Beverly Stenmark (MME), David Abbott (NHD), Pat MacHugh (NME), Seok Hwan Hong (RIM), Jim McPhee (TRI) and Brigid Farrell (VMT). The District Superintendents announced appointment changes by District; clergy and laity received their appointment letters.

The Bishop recognized those serving in extension ministries.

**CLOSING PRAYER**– Heidi Chamberland closed the session in prayer at 9:05 P.M.

FRIDAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 2014

**BIBLE STUDY** - 7:00 A.M. with Grace Imathiu, Easton Dining Hall

**OPENING WORSHIP** - 8:30 A.M - Gathering Music by Mark Miller and the conference musicians

Camp directors and counselors led worship.

**MESSAGE** – Lillian Daniel on "Friendship". -

HOLY CONFERENCING

**CALL TO ORDER** - Bishop Devadhar called the conference to order at 9:37 A.M.

**ORGANIZATIONAL** - Debbie Humm, RIM District Lay Leader was seated with the Bishop.

**COMMITTEE ON JOURNAL** - Kristine Anderson reported for the Committee on Journal that the proceedings of the previous day had been received and found to be in order. She moved their adoption. The motion seconded and adopted.

**COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP (COL)** – Leeda Marsh presented the Committee on Leadership Report and asked that corrections be submitted to her in writing. She also invited people to complete a spiritual gifts form and discern how their gifts and passions might be used for the Conference. The final vote on the Leadership Report would be Saturday morning.

**CAMPING MINISTRY VIDEO** – Jenn Carpenter, Director of Camp Aldersgate, presented the video on camping ministry.

**GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES** – Barbara Burnside, Conference Mission Coordinator, introduced the Board of Global Ministries reports.

Gary Richards and We Chang presented a report from Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON). 400 plus families have been served and 48 cases are in process. A video presentation shared the story of a family assisted by JFON. In Fall 2014, a third JFON site will open in Woburn, MA.

Bill Taylor presented the report of the Nicaragua Planning Committee. He reported that with the funds from the Conference, they were able to build a new facility in Quinta Amanecer. The facility includes a Hospitality mission, a gated yard with security guard and a Bed & Breakfast for \$40 / day.

Barbara Burnside recognized David Stackpole who retires after serving twenty years as the Conference Volunteer In Ministry (VIM) Coordinator. She then introduced Jeff Munson and Susan Baker as the new VIM Co-Coordinators. Doug Spanks was recognized, retiring as the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator. Gerard Piscitelli was introduced as the new Disaster Response Coordinator. Barbara also honored Bill Elwell, retiring as the ERT Coordinator in Vermont.

Janjay Innis, missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), witnessed to her experiences of mission and ministry. She introduced the different mission programs and presented an award to the Conference on behalf of the GBGM Advance for the most church participation in the Northeast Jurisdiction.

Bishop Devadhar recognized John McCullough from Church World Service. The Bishop said a prayer for John who lost a sister last year.

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN** – AJ Alexander and Arlene Mackie presented the United Methodist Women report and video. UMW's four critical areas of focus for the quadrennium are: Climate Change; Domestic Violence; Immigration; and Human Trafficking. Marcia Hoyt was recognized for her work with UMW.

**CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT** – Rick McKinley presented the Congregational Development report, sharing stories of church revitalization and new church starts.

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION (CFA)** – Bill Burnside, Ralph Howe and Erica Robinson-Johnson presented the Budget Report. The 2015 Budget will transition in order to fund the Five Critical Values (Spiritual Life, Vital Faith Communities, Diversity/Inclusivity, Leadership Development, and Stewardship). Included in the discussion were the 2015 Health Insurance plan costs.

**TRUSTEES** – Bernard Campbell presented the Conference Trustees Report and an update on property evaluation. There is a new District Superintendent parsonage for CTWMA and a new parsonage in process for the Camp Aldersgate site director. Bernie also thanked Paul O'Neil, Bruce Maxwell and Robin Grill, who are retiring from the Trustees, for their service with the Conference Trustees.

**RULES COMMITTEE** – Bonnie Marden and Erica Robinson-Johnson moved the adoption of RS-206. The motion was seconded and adopted.

Bonnie Marden and Erica Robinson-Johnson moved the adoption of RS-207. The motion was seconded and adopted.

**EQUITABLE COMPENSATION** – David Nicol presented Equitable Compensation resolution RS-208. The Committee asks that Section 6 (p. 85 of PCB) be referred to Committee and returned in one year in clearer form.

**CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT** – Rick McKinley presented amended RS-209 regarding the Hebrews 11 Funds. The motion was seconded and adopted.

**UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION OF NE (UMFNE)** – Jim Mentzer, the President, presented the report. He described the ways that UMFNE supports the New England Conference local churches in New England.

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** - Vicki Woods celebrated that the United Methodist General Board of Pension and Health Benefits divested from G4S. (It is a corporation which contracts with the Israeli Prison Service).

**UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION CREDIT UNION** – Donna Fowlie reported and introduced Garvin Warden a representative on the Board of Directors. Garvin spoke of the service centers for the Credit Union if you aren't near a credit union.

**GENERAL BOARD OF PENSIONS VIDEO** - David Hoyt presented the Pensions video.

**SONG OF PRAISE** - Mark Miller led us.

**GRACE** – Terry Wiggin, General Board of Church and Society led us in a grace before lunch.

**RECESS** – Bishop Devadhar declared a recess at 11:54 A.M.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON JUNE 13, 2014

HOLY CONFERENCING

**OPENING MUSIC** – Mark Miller with the conference musicians opened at 1:33 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER** – Bishop Devadhar called the conference to order at 1:37 P.M.

**ORGANIZATIONAL** – Charles Frasier, Central Mass District Lay Leader and the designated Board of Laity representative, sat at the table with the Bishop.

**BOARD OF LAITY (BOL)** – Rene Wilbur, Conference Lay Leader, referred to the Board of Laity report on Pg. 13 of the PCB. She recognized all who have served on the Conference Board of Laity. Rene noted the Board needs members. She encouraged us to seek out a member of the Leadership and Nominations Committee, and volunteer for the BOL. BOL also needs more District Lay Leaders. She asked the laity to "Step Up". Rene spoke of the BOL tasks for Annual Conference such as planning and holding a Laity Session, and reviewing the Videos for the Laity Address Challenge. The latter was accomplished by a Video Team from BOL.

**LAITY ADDRESS** – Rene Wilbur introduced Courtney Tabor-Abbott, the winner of the Video Challenge. Courtney, who has been blind all her life, presented the Laity Address. She is a 27-year old graduate of Middlebury College. She informed us that there is no cure for her blindness, nor is she looking for one. She based her address on John: 9, the parable of the blind man who was cured by Jesus. "We often focus on what needs to be fixed instead of how the person is already whole"

she said; adding, "Blindness is part of my wholeness. We shouldn't focus on where people need fixing, but where people need loving," she said.

**METHODIST CONFERENCE HOME, amendments of By-Laws** - George Hodgkins, President, moved the adoption of RS – 210. It was adopted.

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** Bishop Devadhar asked for permission to speak to RS–201 and RS–202. The body granted the request. He stated that the makers of the motions have changed the language to comply with the Book of Discipline. Thus he would not rule them out of order since the language is now "aspiration (al)"\*.

**RS-201 and RS-202, 2nd substitutes** - Kevin Nelson presented the resolutions whose substitutes were handed out on Thursday.

**SUSPENSION OF RULES** - Kevin Nelson made a motion to suspend the rules in order to consider RS-201. The motion was adopted with the required 2/3 majority.

Scott Campbell changed RS-201, line 43 to add after New England Annual conference... the word: may.

Scott Campbell changed RS-202, line 107 to change the word: urges to encourages.

**SUSPENSION OF RULES** - Scott Campbell made a motion to suspend the rules in order to consider RS-202. The motion was adopted with the required 2/3 majority.

Laurie Hezekiah-Cox from Grace UMC in Lynn, MA noted that some in the balcony did not have copies of the handouts of RS-201 and 202 substitutes. The Bishop stated the balance of the handouts would be available in the morning.

**RS-203, 2<sup>nd</sup> substitute** - Thomas Gallen moved the adoption. David Nicol made a friendly amendment that the word "two" be replaced with all. It was accepted. RS–203 as amended was adopted.

**RS-204, 2<sup>nd</sup> substitute** - Thomas Gallen moved the adoption. Bernie Campbell, Pleasant St. UMC, asked which version was under consideration. It was the handout of Thursday.

A concern was raised about disregarding the Book of Discipline.

James Arrison moved that the words: Whereas our Conference is not of one mind... be added before the word "Resolved". This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Dan Wilson moved that the words be amended to read: Whereas our Conference, just as the General Church, is not of one mind. It was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Questions and conversation about the Resolution came from the floor. Thom Gallen reread the updated motion.

Jim Blair submitted the following amendment to RS-204:

That #4 in the motion to affirm God's call to ministry and marriage be amended to say: "We strongly urge our New England congregations and their clergy to open their "hearts, minds and doors" to all couples regardless of gender."

The amendment was not adopted.

**CALL THE QUESTION** - Becca Girrell called the question on RS – 204. The motion was adopted with the required 2/3 majority. RS – 203 was adopted.

**REQUEST FOR A RULING OF LAW** - David Nicol raised the following: "Does RS-204 conform to Article XXII of the Methodist Articles of Religion (paragraph 104), strongly urging clergy and congregations to perform ceremonies specifically prohibited by the General Conference?"

Article XXII of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches, the second sentence seems to be violated by 'strongly urging' clergy or congregations to violate church law. The sentence that appears most relevant to me reads:

'Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.'"

Bishop Devadhar said "I have thirty days to answer this question to the Judicial Council."

**RS-205 substitute** from the Late-Breaking Documents - Sean Delmore of Lexington UMC, MA, moved the adoption. Questions and conversation about the Resolution came from the floor.

We Chang moved the following amendment to RS-205: Be it further resolved that the committee on equitable compensation study the possibility of uniform salary and bring a report to the 2016 session of the New England Annual Conference. The amendment was adopted

Tim Atwater moved the following addition to the amendment: That we also survey options to guarantee minimum salaries sufficient to support basic needs for all local pastors, appointed lay pastors, deacons and elders serving one-quarter time or more. It was accepted as a friendly amendment. RS-205 was adopted with the above amendments.

Bishop Devadhar announced that RS - 201 and RS - 202 would be addressed Saturday morning.

**ORDER OF THE DAY** – Ralph Oduor moved the adoption of the Consent Calendar on Pg. 3 of the Pre-Conference Booklet (PCB). Consent Calendar was adopted.

**REQUEST FOR A RULING OF LAW** – Bishop Devadhar said that “for the record, may I request the Conference Secretary to read for us the Question of Law that has been asked by David Nicol?”

Ralph Oduor read the same Question of Law submitted by David Nicol. The Bishop stated he had thirty days to answer so that it would go to the Judicial Council.

**AN INVITATION** (RS – 217) –Rebecca Girrell made a motion. There were questions of the timing and propriety of the motion. Bishop Devadhar confirmed that a motion from the floor was not subject to a twenty-four hour period of waiting. Barry Burdick offered the following amendment to the first sentence of paragraph 4: We believe God calls all persons to lay, and sometimes LLP, Associate Member and ordained ministry. It was accepted as a friendly amendment.

David Abbott moved that the motion be tabled until tomorrow and that copies of the motion be distributed. The motion was adopted.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Kelly Turney of BOOM and Ralph Oduor made announcements.

**PRAYER** – Beverly Stenmark led us in prayer for those experiencing health issues including Jim Cann, Dan Weaver’s wife and Jen Curran.

Bishop Devadhar introduced Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore, Boston University School of Theology.

**GRACE** – Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore led us in Grace before dinner.

**RECESS** - Bishop Devadhar declared a recess at 4:30 P.M.

FRIDAY EVENING JUNE 13, 2014 – 7 P.M

**ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING**

**WORSHIP** – Bishop Devadhar presided in the ordination and commissioning joined, among others, by retired Bishops Susan Hassinger and Jane Allen Middleton. Bishop Devadhar’s sermon is printed in the addendums. Local pastors licensed for the year were recognized.

Commissioned as Provisional Elders: Will Jouko Green, SeungRi Victor Han, Kenneth Erwin Mantler

Ordained as Elders in Full connection: Theodore Frederick Crass, Xia Jiao

Ordained as Deacon in Full connection: Julia Kerr Daley

**CALL TO FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN MINISTRY** - Bishop Devadhar invited those who wanted to make a commitment to some form of full-time ordained or pulpit ministry to come forward for a time of prayer and dedication. These persons answered the call and came forward:

Borchers, Brenda C.  
 Bragdon, Margaret  
 Cooper, Sophia  
 Fagerstrom, Lisa  
 Filiault, Stephanie  
 Gardiner, Patricia  
 Gold, Kim

Letterlough, Jr., Theron  
 MacDonald, Robert J.  
 Nelson, Sharon  
 Stone, Daniel  
 Winnicki, Wanda  
 Wright, Christy

SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 14, 2014

**BIBLE STUDY** - 7:00 A.M. with Grace Imathiu, Easton Dining Hall

**OPENING WORSHIP** - 8:30 A.M - Gathering Music by Mark Miller and the conference musicians

**CELEBRATION OF MINISTRIES** – Call to worship celebrating the ministries of the conference - Recognizing those whose lives sparkle with Christian faith, Licensed Local Pastors, Lay Servant Ministers, Certified Lay Ministers, Missionaries, Deaconesses and Home Missioners. Local Pastors were presented. Anne Hillman was recognized as the newest Deaconess.

**MISSIONARIES** – The Bishop made a call for offering for Youth Mission of Peace to India this year.

Mission of Peace video was shown.

**SCRIPTURE** – Acts 10:1-16

**MESSAGE** – Lillian Daniel on “Change”.

**HOLY CONFERCING**

**CALL TO ORDER** - Bishop Devadhar called the conference to order at 9:48 A.M.

**ORGANIZATIONAL** – Bob Hout, CMA District Lay Leader is seated with the Bishop

**MONITORING REPORT** – Laurel Scott reported. Leadership reflects the diversity of the Conference; 75% were white male and female. There were no persons of color during the financial presentations. White males (60% plus) dominated in comments from the floor. It means that “we have a lot of work to do.” Think of what happened with Donald Sterling and the NBA”. The GCORR module will be in use henceforth. The work will be done in programs and at the District level all during the year.

Sheri Smith stated it is hard to see those with disabilities. We need to be aware of other’s disabilities, visible and invisible. Let us be mindful of our neighbors.

**COMMITTEE ON JOURNAL** - Kristine Anderson reported for the Committee on Journal that the proceedings of the previous day had been received and found to be in order. She moved their adoption. The motion was seconded and adopted. She also moved the minutes of today’s session be adopted and printed in the Conference Journal. The motion was seconded and adopted.

**ORGANIZATIONAL** – Ralph Oduor noted the resolutions RS-201 & RS-202 are on the table down front, and the motion “An Invitation” by Rebecca Girrell will be distributed from floor and balcony.

**ROLLING RIDGE** –Larry Peacock, Director, reported and showed a video of the story of Rolling Ridge.

**2014 STRATEGIC PLAN** – Herb Taylor and Evelyn Johnson-Moore of the Strategic Planning Team presented their report (RS-216). He clarified that the set of priorities in the report is what we are voting in the report today and not where they fit in the section of the report. See the Executive Summary in this Conference Journal. The Complete Report is in the 2014 Conference Journal Online.

The conversation included several motions to amend:

Katherine Mitchell moved that Lay and clergy representatives to the nominating committee be elected by the body at the Annual Conference. The motion was seconded and adopted.

Bernard Campbell, President of Conference Board of Trustees moved to append Appendix A and the Strategic Committee Plan Report to allow the President of the Conference Trustees as a member of the Connectional Table. The motion was seconded and adopted.

Bernard Campbell moved that on page 9 of Late-Breaking Documents, the requirement that lay leadership attend training events be changed from “~~require~~” to “highly recommend”. The motion was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Kevin Nelson moved that the Strategic Planning Team mandate be extended until a fall session of the AC for the purpose of taking appendix A and developing it into enabling legislation that spells out the changes the plan would make to our conference structure. This motion was decided by counting the votes. The motion was not adopted (175 Yes, 246 No).

The adopted Plan includes a Mission statement edit which in totality now reads: “Our mission as the New England Conference is to equip, connect, and support local, regional and global ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – LaTrelle Easterling, MBH District Superintendent, asked and led us in prayer.

The 2014 Strategic Plan (RS-216) was adopted.

**COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP (COL)** – Leeda Marsh noted corrections. The final version will be printed in the Conference Journal.

Bishop Devadhar declared us convened as the Board of Directors, for the election of officers, as Leeda moved the elections for the Board of the United Methodist Foundation of New England. All nominated were elected.

Bishop declared us adjourned as the Board of Directors of the United Methodist Foundation of New England.

Bishop declared us convened as the Board of Directors, for the election of officers, as Leeda moved the elections for the Board of the Methodist Home. All nominated were elected.

Bishop declared us adjourned as the Board of Directors of the Methodist Home.

Leeda moved the adoption of the COL (RS-212) report as amended. It was seconded and adopted.

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – Bonnie Marden noted the percent of clergy (upward of 80%) and laity representation on the committee’s report, whereas the Discipline calls for an equal balance.

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – Leeda Marsh led us in prayer for Black Feather who passed.

**CFA** – Ralph Howe and Bill Burnside moved the adoption of Budget Resolution RS-119. There was a period of Q & A with some amendments.

Bonnie Cragen moved that Mission u - line 37 - must use lower case "u" for legal issues.

Sandra Bonnette Kim moved that \$500 be restored to line 58 (Ethnic). It was accepted as a friendly amendment. RS-119 as amended was adopted.

**EQUITABLE COMPENSATION** – David Nicol moved adoption of RS-208. The motion with amendment was seconded and adopted.

**INM** – Bonnie Marden led a period of testimonials from churches about INM pledges and how many lives are being saved.

**SUSPENSION OF RULES MOTION** - Elizabeth Bailey-Mitchell moved to limit speeches to 1 minute each, 1 for and 1 against. The motion was seconded but not adopted.

**MOTION TO EXTEND THE SESSION** – James Arrison moved that the session be extended to 12:30 PM. It was seconded and adopted.

**RS-202** - Kevin Nelson moved the adoption of the handout substitute motion. It was seconded.

There was a period of Q & A with some amendments.

Virginia Hart, Christ UMC North Hampton, moved that on lines 95, 102, 107, 110 – change “~~Bishop Devadhar~~” to “the bishop of the New England Annual Conference”. It was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Virginia Doran moved that “Wherever R-202 states ‘whereas the NEAC’, that it be changed to ‘whereas some in the NEAC’ on lines 38, 43, 94, 110”. The motion was seconded but not adopted.

**POINT OF ORDER** – David Nicol noted commitment to pray the Lord’s prayer at noon. Nizzi Digan added to pray in your own language. The conference prayed the “Lord’s Prayer” in unison.

**MOTION FOR A WRITTEN BALLOT ON RS-202** - David Nicol requested a written ballot. It was seconded and adopted with the support of 62 votes (minimum requirement is 42). The written ballot resulted in the adoption of the amended RS-202, as follows: 283 Yes, 97 No, 4 Abstain, 1 Invalid, and 2 Blank.

**MOTION TO EXTEND THE SESSION** – Sean Delmore moved that the session be extended to 1:00 PM. It was seconded and adopted.

**RS-201** - Kevin Nelson moved the adoption of the handout substitute motion. It was seconded and adopted.

**MOTION** – Rebecca Girrell moved the motion titled “An Invitation” (RS-217). It was seconded.

Sean Delmore - Lexington, moved that the fourth paragraph: strike rest of paragraph after NEAC “~~extends our invitation to people who~~”: and replace with “wish to explore if their call to ministry might be affirmed and/or lived out in the New England Annual Conference.”

Final paragraph, first sentence: strike the words (after upon) “~~awareness of instances of individuals being subjected to discrimination or unfairness in the ordination process,~~” and replace with “request from a candidate/potential member, or an individual inquiring on their behalf,”

Final paragraph, add to the last sentence: “in accordance with Disciplinary and Annual Conference requirements.” These were accepted as friendly amendments.

Rene Perez moved that in the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph, first sentence delete “empowers and”. It was accepted as a friendly amendment.

“An Invitation” (RS-217 as amended) was adopted.

**OFFERING RESULTS:** - Bishop Devadhar reported the results. These are the updated numbers:

- Imagine No Malaria \$16,835.58 (plus a challenge grant of \$12,000)
- Ministerial Ed Fund \$3,614.15
- Conference Youth \$5,139.95
- Mission of Peace \$2,542.18
- Nicaragua Neck Wallets \$376.00

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** - Bishop Devadhar announced that the 2015 AC Dates are June 11-13, 2015. He thanked the body for their input on the dates for our annual conference session. There was an overwhelming response for ending our work on Saturday, rather than meeting on Sunday.

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE** – Bob Sweet acknowledged Bishop Devadhar and how privileged we are to have him in New England.

**CONFERENCE CHANCELLOR** – Bill Hewig stated that the (social justice) resolutions were aspiration (al) meaning to encourage, stand with; words of a dream and expressions that the Annual Conference allows. These are acceptable by the Judicial Council.

**CLOSING PRAYER** – Rene Wilbur led the prayer.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN** – The Bishop called for a motion to adjourn. It was so moved, seconded and adopted.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Bishop Devadhar adjourned the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the New England Annual Conference at 1:04 PM.

**STATEMENT ON RS-201 AND RS-202** – \*With the permission of the Annual Conference, Bishop Devadhar addressed the body on Friday afternoon, June 13, 2014 - Bishop Devadhar from his chair: “Friends, we are in Holy Conferencing and as a presiding officer, I need to say something to you very prayerfully before I properly mention about the resolutions before us. Do I have your permission to say a few words?” (Permission granted by voice acclaim). “Because I am doing this as a presiding officer, I would like to excuse myself from the table.”

Bishop, from the Speaker’s podium: “Friends, I say this not to convince anyone to change your mind but I just want to share this in the spirit as part of our Holy Conferencing.

“In 2004 when I was a candidate for the episcopacy, I shared with the interviewing teams that I am not where the Book of Discipline is when it comes to the exclusionary language of not allowing our brothers and sisters of the LGBT, now LGBTQ community, in sharing their gifts and graces fully in the United Methodist Church. I also said to all the interviewing teams, I hope and pray that our church will remove this restrictive language from our Book of Discipline. Simultaneously, I also indicated that if I were elected as a bishop of the church, I would follow the Book of Discipline with love and grace, but that I would use every opportunity I had to teach and dialogue on this important issue which is tearing the fabric of our ministry and mission.

“Today I sit on the chair not as Sudarshana Devadhar with my own opinions and wishes, but a bishop of the United Methodist Church assigned to the New England Conference with specific presidential and residential duties and responsibilities as expressed in the Book of Discipline. Therefore, with deep pain, anguish and sorrow, I was going to rule out of order, resolutions #201 and 202 in our booklets. However, God is good (all the time – the body responded). In the spirit of Holy Conferencing, the makers of the motions have agreed to revise them to make them aspirational in language.

Now the Judicial Council in their Decision #1120 said ‘An annual conference may adopt a resolution on human sexuality that is aspirational in nature; however, an annual conference may not negate, ignore or violate the Discipline, even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections to those provisions’.

So friends now all these resolutions are coming before us. Let the authors introduce them. I am not going to say anything but I just want you to know that is what has happened now, to change the language to make it aspirational. Now let the makers of resolutions #201 and 202 come and present them. Friends, no, there are no losers and winners, in the Kingdom of God. Let us do this all, prayerfully”.

See the Bishop’s Ruling of Law after Addendum #3.

**Addendum #1 – EPISCOPAL ADDRESS** Wednesday, June 12, 2014:

**UP – IN – OUT**

**2014 Episcopal Address**

**Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I greet you in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! My wife, Prema, joins me in expressing joy for all of you and for the privilege of serving among you and with you.

A psalm of David comes to mind as I begin this time with you this evening:

“I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
My soul makes its boast in the LORD;  
let the humble hear and be glad.

O magnify the LORD with me,  
and let us exalt his name together.” Psalm 34:1-3 (NRSV)

Indeed, let us thank God for the mighty blessings showered upon us continuously.

I thank God for the blessings I have in each of you. I am grateful for your support, love, and encouragement, especially to those who minister with me on a daily basis. I give thanks for my coffee/tea/prayer partners. My hat's off to those who are faithful in attending the days on the district, pre-Lenten gatherings and the solemn, yet sacred, occasions of clergy funerals. And, I give thanks for all of you who serve as members of this Conference, faithfully serving in your local communities and on District and Conference ministry teams. It is with deep gratitude and great appreciation that I applaud my precious companions and colleagues in my Episcopal journey, both at the Conference and District level for their ministry as my colleagues. Conference Lay Leader, Conference Chancellor, members of the Cabinet, Extended Cabinet, Conference staff, District administrative assistants, and members of my Episcopal team, will you kindly stand? Brothers and sisters in Christ, will you show your appreciation for their ministry? On behalf of all of you, I welcome Erica Robinson-Johnson to her first Annual Conference as my Episcopal associate. Brenda and Erica are indeed a blessing! I have been so fortunate in my journey as a pastor, District Superintendent, and as Bishop to have been blessed by secretaries, Episcopal associates, administrative assistants, and others who have enabled me to journey towards perfection! Thank you, all.

Tonight I celebrate you, and the great blessings we share together as New England United Methodists.

Together, we are making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world...one church, one town, one child of God at a time. Let me share some examples of our conference in action.

Churches from two different districts have partnered to create a new ministry. One church offered a scholarship grant to a struggling church that enabled the opening of a daycare at their location for low income families.

A church that was rife with conflict and relationship problems persevered through work with a consultant, and now with a lay person serving as pastor, they are reaching into their community and developing leadership outside the church doors. They solicited a local business to help send gift boxes on Valentine's Day to their adopted troop in Afghanistan and got donations *and* volunteers. At church suppers, they invite people to participate in their various mission efforts, and people thank them because it affords them an easy way to participate. They are a small congregation, but for the first time in many years, worship attendance is growing, and they are paying 100% of their mission shares.

More than one church is reporting record numbers in Bible Study participants. Imagine 100 men at a monthly Bible study! A Disciple class of 20!

Together, we have already saved more than 50,000 lives for Imagine No Malaria. While thanking all of you who have been passionately generous in this great campaign, may I encourage and plead with all of you to help us reach our goal of saving one hundred fifty thousand lives!

As a conference, we have the highest number of churches participating (68%) in Second-Mile giving to the Advance in the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

When one youth returned from the Taizé pilgrimage last year, his father asked what we had done to his son. He said, "You brought back a totally different kid!" During this academic year, this same precious youth lost his best buddy to gun violence. You can imagine how traumatic that was. But do you know what? This youth approached his pastor asking for help to return to Taizé for the opportunity to sit with the brothers and talk about how to strengthen one's walk with Christ in difficult times. I want to thank the pastor, staff, members, and leaders of this youth's church for placing ministry before dollars!

I invite you to share my gratitude and joy at the faith of a young boy at one of our churches who waited with his mother at 9 in the morning to share a prayer with me:

[show video]

These examples are only a few of the stories from our Conference. Wonders and signs of God's grace and power are alive in New England! Thanks be to our Creator God in and through the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Will you kindly repeat with me the words of the Psalmist:

**"I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
My soul makes its boast in the LORD;  
let the humble hear and be glad.  
O magnify the LORD with me,  
and let us exalt his name together." Psalm 34:1-3 (NRSV)**

Walbert Buhlmann's 1978 book *Coming of the Third Church* talked about the paradigm shift in the global nature of the Church and its impact on churches in the northern and southern hemispheres. In this, "'challenging', 'daring', 'provocative.' [and] 'shattering,' [book],...He sees the Church's mission to humanity entering a new phase, one in which new questions are being asked (and radical answers given) because the situations in which people find themselves today cannot be handled along time-honored lines. The church world-wide is confronted with tremendous problems but has unprecedented opportunities for making 'the good news' known to disoriented people. Now is not a time for lamenting the passing of earlier glories; it is a time for realistic appraisal of the nature of the tasks ahead and for courage and resourcefulness in using the means available for tackling them."<sup>1</sup> I still remember Bishop Sano making a reference to this book in his opening sermon at the 1996 General Conference in Denver, Colorado, although I am not sure it received much attention.

In her book *Altar Call: Inviting Response to the Gospel*, Donna Schaper reflects on what Walter Brueggemann describes as three First Testament images for "church." "One is the *Davidic*, or temple-based people; the other is *wilderness*; and the third is *alternative community*. We talk a lot about wilderness, but we may actually be moving out of wilderness into an alternative community. With regard to numbers we do not act like alternative communities so much as temple-based people! We are preoccupied with the declining size of our congregations."<sup>2</sup>

Two decades later, Donna Schaper's book was published, and I am sure not much attention was given to it, either.

The United Methodist Church has lost nearly 4.2 million members in the United States since Buhlmann's book was published in 1980. Three million of that 4.2 million have been lost since Schaper's book came out in 2001.

Friends, we are in the wilderness. We are in the wilderness as a church, as a Conference, and as a denomination. However, as people on a pilgrimage, getting to the Promised Land is our destination. I am thankful for our strategic planning team's focus on spiritual formation, leadership, building and connecting relationships, to move us forward. I know some of our churches have already begun doing some alternative ministries which will help us to get out of the wilderness!

This evening I want to focus our attention on the missional opportunities that are present for us as disciples of Jesus Christ in light of the theme of our Conference: "On the wings of love powered by presence and service."

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<sup>1</sup> Walbert Buhlmann. *The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978, back cover.

<sup>2</sup> Donna Schaper. *Altar Call: Inviting Response to the Gospel*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001, p.14.

Friends, we serve a God who is on a mission. Perhaps the most popular verse of the gospel of John could be construed as God's Mission Statement: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3:16 NRSV)

Note that "the Church" is not mentioned in this statement. God's mission is to the *world*. The object of God's love is the *world*. It is not that the Church has a mission. Rather, the *Mission* has a *Church*. The distinction is important. The Mission belongs to God. Those of us who are part of the Church seek to align our ministries and ourselves where God is already working and present.

Elaine Heath and Larry Duggins speak to the great opportunities the Church has in this new era of missional alignment in their book *Missional. Monastic. Mainline*. 3

According to Heath and Duggins, the term *missional* means "sent out," and refers to "the fundamental Christian identity of the church being God's sent out people. This identity is both communal and individual."<sup>4</sup>

Heath and Duggins point to great new opportunities for mainline Christian denominations, yet they begin by offering words of repentance for the Church that has too often mirrored the values of a consumerist society and empire and that has unintentionally, and sometimes intentionally, caused pain through the exploitation of others in the name of the Church. "All around us," they write, "There are living souls who cry out to be liberated from religiously framed violence, from exclusion, labeling, shaming, attacking, de-humanizing violence done blasphemously in the name of Jesus. We must heed what they say, and repent. Otherwise, we cannot become the face of Jesus to our neighbors, nor will we recognize the face of Jesus in them."<sup>5</sup>

This act of repentance is important as we transition from the Church that *was* to the Church that *will be*. We need to acknowledge the hurt and pain that has been part of our history. And we are invited to live into something new, something more Christ-like. We are human and we will make mistakes. We will sin. Yet the invitation here is to live into something much more in alignment with the Kingdom of God that Jesus brought into being with His presence.

Heath and Duggins find hope in new expressions of Church that are missional and monastic. They give practical advice on how to form intentional Christian community and see the hope that these communities give for living out Christianity in a way that is authentic and Christ-like. They insist that smaller, missional communities can live side by side with traditional forms of Church. They invite our existing churches to serve as "anchor churches" for missional, monastic communities and insist that a symbiotic relationship be forged between the "yin" of the larger Church and the "yang" of the smaller community.

Recently I learned of a United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas, which serves as an example of an "anchor church" in relation to an intentional community. The most multi-ethnic/multi-cultural church in its conference, 500 people gather each weekend for worship at Westbury UMC. Among the church family, several members have formed "intentional community" — a manifestation of "new monasticism." Two couples and a single woman moved into an apartment complex a mile from the church. They have separate apartments but meet daily for prayer and have created a "rule of life" together. They focus on a specific mission together, which is to minister to refugees who live in an adjacent apartment complex. They help the refugees navigate life in the United States and are forming Christian community with them at gatherings held each Wednesday night. The anchor church, Westbury UMC, sends volunteers to help them in their mission.

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<sup>3</sup> Elaine Heath and Larry Duggins. *Missional. Monastic. Mainline: A Guide to Starting Missional, Micro-Communities in Historically Mainline Traditions*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Heath and Duggins, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

This evening I want to frame my remarks around a simple three-part formula, which has been articulated many times, and by many people, and recently in Reggie McNeal's book, *Missional Communities*.<sup>6</sup>

There are three dimensions to our work as Christians who form community: Up, In, and Out. Whether we are part of a house church, comprised of 14 people in a neighborhood of Portland, Maine, or part of a larger church in Shelburne, Vermont, we can live out our alignment with God's mission through these three dimensions of Up, In, and Out.

The "Missional Church" may take on new forms of Christian community—that is, forms that may *seem* new to us. Sometimes things that seem "new" are just new approaches to very old ways of doing things. Heath and Duggins shed light on "new monasticism," which is a re-invention of forming Christian community that has been around for centuries. They define "new monasticism" as people who choose "to live in a Christian community with a focus on service, especially with the poor and marginalized. It is 'new' because people are reimagining what it means to be 'in community,' and are shedding some of the historical restrictions [of monasticism] like celibacy . . . and lifelong vows."<sup>7</sup> Persons who choose to live in this form of community live out a call to "a life and an order that lives in the way that Christ lives by presenting a real-life example of that love and way of life."<sup>8</sup>

Other forms of "missional church" may look very much like the Church we have always known. We are living in a new era of Christianity and as leaders we need to keep one foot in the old way of understanding Church and the other foot in the new [Note: "like straddling two hemispheres"—Someone promised me a slide that could accompany this point where his spouse has one foot in the northern hemisphere and one foot in the southern when they were in Quito, Ecuador].

The Good News is that "Up, In, and Out" applies to old *and* new and provides a framework for us to go forward in these changing times. Let's look at each of these dimensions.

## UP

Jesus modeled for us a close, personal relationship with God and invites his disciples to have a personal and close relationship with God. The "up" dimension of our Christian faith is lived out through prayer and worship as personal and community practices.

This March at a gathering on the theme of "Passionate Spirituality," I spoke to the importance of prayer. In the prayer Jesus taught us, there is no mention of "Church" or of Jesus himself. "Jesus gave his disciples a prayer . . . Jesus gave the Church a prayer . . . Jesus gave people of all faiths a prayer."<sup>9</sup>

Jesus' prayer is addressed upward to God and draws our attention to aligning ourselves with God's Mission. "Christ is challenging us to have a personal connection with God as Abba, a loving parent who cares for all of his children."<sup>10</sup>

Jesus taught his disciples and teaches us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Elsewhere, Christ is also clear: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well." (Matthew 6:33)

When we make the extension of God's kingdom our priority, everything will naturally fall into place. Sadly, many Christians confuse "Church" with the Kingdom of God. "Church" means people of God and is a part of the Kingdom of God. The goal of the Church is not to maintain a building or an institution, but to join others in extending the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>6</sup> Reggie McNeal. *Missional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> "Living the Lord's Prayer," a sermon preached by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, North Andover, MA: Rolling Ridge, March 18, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

That is why we can say, “the Church does not have a mission; the mission has a Church.” The upward dimension of our faith and ministry seeks alignment with God.

The primary means by which we find intimacy with God is through this upward movement in prayer, worship, and devotion on a daily basis and together with others in communal worship. The upward dimension can be experienced in small or large gatherings of Christians—in house churches, in the worship of intentional Christian communities, or at 11 am on a Sunday morning in a church on Main Street.

## IN

When we join The United Methodist Church, we promise to live out our discipleship through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. What does “Presence” mean when we no longer live in Christendom? What does it mean to be present in today’s world? How do we live into the ministry of presence?

When we speak of “presence” in the fulfillment of our membership vows we must go beyond mere attendance at worship. By “presence,” we refer to presence to our inner selves, to our significant others, and to our neighbors. Elaine Heath and Larry Duggins encourage us to “To show up, pay attention, cooperate with God, and release the outcome.”<sup>11</sup>

People can become so distracted these days with their smart phones, iPads and other gadgets. You can be standing or sitting right next to someone who is texting and though they are beside you, they are not “present.” Thus, there is a nuance to the call to “show up, pay attention, and cooperate with God” today. There is a call to be *truly* present by engaging with others. Elaine Heath and Larry Duggins help us understand that living out this simple rule is being *contemplative*. It is part of what it means to be a spiritual person in today’s world. It is integral to the “in” dimension of living out our Christian faith.

The “in” dimension of our Christian faith as individuals and as a community emphasizes the importance of relationships with other brothers and sisters in our community of faith and people who live in our neighborhood. The passionate devotion of believers manifests the “in” dimension of faith and is in itself a witness to others.

The “in” dimension pays attention to the nurture of our spiritual lives. Jesus surrounded himself with disciples and was present unto them as he taught them about prayer, healing, and the power of God to bring wholeness to life. When we create discipleship systems in our churches and missional communities we are honoring the “in” dimension for we are helping one another deepen our walk with God. Faith formation is so vitally important to our Christian journey as we practice what John Wesley referred to as “works of piety,” including public and private prayer, partaking of holy communion, reading and meditating on scripture, and practicing personal and communitarian fasting.

In order to help with the “in” dimension, I am recommending three books for laity and clergy to read together this year:

1. *Spiritual Kaizen: How to Become a Better Church Leader* by Bishop Grant Hagiya<sup>12</sup>
2. *Lead Like Butler: Six Principles for Values-Based Leaders* by M. Kent Millard and Judith Cebula<sup>13</sup>
3. *Seven Levers: Missional Strategies for Conferences* by Bishop Robert Schnase<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Heath and Duggins, *op.cit.*, p.17, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Grant Hagiya. *Spiritual Kaizen: How to Become a Better Church Leader*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> M. Kent Millard and Judith Cebula. *Lead Like Butler: Six Principles for Values-Based Leaders*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Schnase. *Seven Levers: Missional Strategies for Conferences*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014.

These resources will be a blessing to you and to the church as you build community and nurture spiritual growth. Additionally, may I strongly encourage you to read other books on the Bishop's reading list at the Cokesbury display table here at Annual Conference.

## OUT

We are to live out our faith through the dimensions of "up, in, and out" as we build relationships with one another in our communities of faith and as we build relationship with those who live in our parish areas. Remember, when a pastor is appointed, he or she is not only assigned to a specific church but to the community where that church is located. One is appointed to a parish area and to the people who live there whether they are members of our churches or not. Laity is invited to understand their ministry in a similar way. As lay brothers and sisters, think of yourselves not so much attached to a church, but rather as part of a community of believers sent by God to give expression to the love and ways of Jesus. The Church is our outpost from which we engage others in mission.

When we fulfill the membership vow of upholding the Church through our "service" we are referring to this aspect of engaging our community. Service refers to actions we take as individuals and as part of groups to engage in hands-on ministry. We are invited to live out our "presence" and "service" in the greater community in which we are located.

I remember how Pastor Frank served as a model for this ministry of outreach. The church he served housed a pre-school. Each morning, parents would drop off their children before going to work. Pastor Frank made a point of greeting parents as they came into the school. He learned their names. Often the only interaction was a simple "hello" or "good morning." But he was there. Over time, a familiarity grew between the parents and Pastor Frank. When Pastor Frank would speak in public forums, the parents felt that they already knew him. Over time they would come to him with pastoral concerns even though they were not members of the church. Pastor Frank's *presence* was at the same time a *service* to people in the community. Members of Frank's church caught on to this mode of servant leadership and began to build bridges of love and understanding with the community through their own community involvement in Scouts, Kiwanis, Rotary, and Parent-Teacher associations. They began to live out what Heath and Duggins advocate: they were showing up, they were paying attention, they were cooperating with God, and they were releasing the results. They cared. This was the way they lived the "out" dimension of faith.

Up, in and out. We go "up" to God through prayer, worship, works of piety, and devotion. We go "in" to deepen our understanding of what it means to be a Christian in today's world as we nurture our discipleship and fellowship with other believers. We go "out" to our community and to our world as we become present to others and as we model servanthood to others.

Up, in and out.

So friends, what does "Up, in, and out," mean to us as people of God, as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ? What do we need to do to insure that we are not about maintaining the institution but passionately committed to extending the reign of God?

## UP

First and foremost, we need to be firmly grounded and soaked in prayer, making sure that we not only say the prayers but act out those prayers in action and witness. I hope and pray when we come to the next Annual Conference, we may give testimonies to the transformation that is taking place in our midst because of prayer. We are getting ready to elect delegates to the 2016 General Conference. (Some Conferences are already doing so this year.) Let me assure you that as Presiding Bishop, I will stay out of it completely. However, may I call upon all of you to be prayerful about whom you and other Conferences send as delegates. Will you kindly pray, pray, and pray that our General Conference will reclaim Wesley's Intentional Holy Conferencing and move away from placing all our energy in making it a legislative body dancing to the tune set by lobby groups and selfish interest groups not listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us! May our delegates be in

prayerful Holy Conferencing and discern together what it means to be a truly global Church with gifts of God's diversity and inclusivity present at every level of the Church. May our delegates recommit themselves to celebrating the global nature of our Church while simultaneously allowing the Annual, Jurisdictional, and Central Conferences to be the churches God wants them to be for such a time like ours. May the 2016 General Conference liberate our Annual Conferences to do ministry and mission in a new way, fully allowing the Holy Spirit to blow new and fresh winds of the Pentecost, lifting high the Cross of Jesus Christ and manifesting the glory of God everywhere!

Friends, let us pray, pray, and pray that God would raise leaders for the 2016 General Conference who are committed to keeping the global nature of our Church, unity in the midst of our diversity, and remaining deeply committed to breaking the modern-day colonialisms of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, poverty, injustice, and inequality! May we pray to God to raise leaders who think outside the box and make room for the gospel of Jesus Christ to become fresh and powerfully rooted in the soil of New England!

## IN

In our attempt to build authentic relationships in Christian community and to nurture one another in our spiritual lives, I encourage all clergy to share their call stories in worship this year. Does your congregation know the story of God calling you to ministry? Even if they have already heard your story, I want you to plan a day this year to tell your call story in worship. Then, I ask that you take a special offering to contribute toward a fund to support spiritual renewal and continuing education for clergy. The money collected will supplement the Ministerial Education Fund. This act of offering will help ensure growth of spirituality and relationships, something Christ Himself encouraged.

## OUT

Finally, let us celebrate the work of the Strategic Planning Team and let us not be afraid to embrace the bold and courageous steps they recommend! Let us keep their momentum going...may we be inspired by the Boston marathoner who lost her legs in last year's bombing, yet had the courage and passion to come and finish the race this year! As part of this continuing journey of moving out of the wilderness and enabling us to create missional communities everywhere in New England, may I call upon the financial and physical stewards (Conference Council on Finance and Administration and Trustees) of our Conference to reach out to General Council on Finance and Administration to help examine the financial and physical strength of our Conference and offer guidance, so we may take part in the extension of the reign of God as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. May this enable us to birth alternate communities all around the Conference, so our faith communities will be full of people from all backgrounds, colors, and races enabling us to claim and celebrate the Church of the Pentecost!

Up, in and out.

May we encounter God in new and transforming ways as we seek to deepen relationships with God, each other, and our neighbor. May God bless us in our work and ministry together.

We are the Church – God's people flying high on wings of love, powered by our ministry of presence and service in the New England Annual Conference.

**Addendum #2 – Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar's Ordination Sermon, June 13, 2014**

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4: 1-16  
**"STAY HUNGRY! STAY FOOLISH!"<sup>15</sup>**

Ephesians 4:1-16 (New Revised Standard Version)

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people."

9 (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended] into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) 11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As I recall my own ordination, and as I reflect on my 39 years of ordained ministry, I wish I had time to sit down and write stories of the humor, fun, love, pain, and sadness related to that ministry. Many times, like many of you, I wonder and laugh at myself saying, "Did I say that? Did I mean it? What a fool I am... did I really do that?" One of those favorite stories is about Russ Horning.

In 1982 I was appointed pastor of a three-point charge in the extreme northern part of New York State, approximately 70 miles from Montreal and 80 miles from Ottawa, Canada. I tell you, I had fun! If my Bishop had kept me there until retirement, I would not have had any regrets! One of the churches had only eight worshippers on a Sunday morning when I got there. I was working hard to bring people to church. I was everywhere. I poured coffee at church dinners. I visited the local fire station. I attended ball games at school, just to have as many contacts as possible in the community. When I could, I would go to the hospital twice a day. One of the families that joined the church through Confession of Faith was the Horning family. Russ Horning grew to be exceptionally active in the church, and even became a lay member to the Annual Conference.

One day Russ came to me and said, "When are you going ice fishing with me?" Ice fishing! Coming from South India I had never heard words like "fly fishing" or "ice fishing." Those of you who know me personally know that outdoor activities are not high on my list of priorities! There were many stories and jokes surrounding ice fishing on the St. Lawrence River, stories such as to remember to drill very large holes in case you catch a fish with large shoulders, or because some parts of the St. Lawrence River are considered international waters, to make sure the fish you catch has the proper passport.

Russ would not let me off the hook (no pun intended). How could I say no to Russ - Russ who did so many things in the church? Finally I said I would go. When the day came, Russ picked me up at the parsonage; I was bundled up in layers of clothes and arrived with Russ at the banks of the St. Lawrence River. Russ said, "Come on, Suda. Let's go!" and started walking with gusto onto the frozen ice. I was a nervous wreck. After two or three minutes, I asked Russ, "How far do we

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<sup>15</sup> Title borrowed from Steve Jobs' commencement address at Harvard University, 2005.

have to go?" He replied, "Do you see the shacks out there in the middle of the river? We need to get into one of those shacks." I tell you - I was following Russ, but I was not with him. I was already stressed. To release my anxiety, I asked Russ funny questions like, "Russ, would you say that I am walking on the water?" Russ would answer me with a smile on his face, "Yes, Suda, you are walking on water...but remember it is frozen water!" Finally, we got into the shack and Russ lit a fire and started drilling through the ice. Now I was really afraid. I forgot all about ice fishing and started asking myself, "What happens if the ice melts or cracks? Am I going straight into the hole?" Soon, Russ hollered, "I got one! Here's our first fish." I was not at all interested in looking at the fish because I was still worrying. "What if the ice melts so fast that we both go into the hole? Why did I say I would do this? What has gotten into me to say yes to this? Was I in my right mind when I said yes to ice fishing? Am I a fool? Should I be so hungry to bring people to the church even at the cost of saying yes to things just to make people happy? Is the money I make worth this?"

These are the types of existential questions that cause us to reflect on the ministry and mission God is calling us to do as clergy and laity!

Paul challenges us to remember that it is not the diplomas we hang on our walls or the schools from which we graduated that are important. Rather, it is our ministry and the application of our God-given gifts in bringing people to their full stature in Christ. That should be the foundation of our ministry! Paul does not say to equip the saints to build church buildings with designs by the best architects in the country...[but] to "build up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (verse 13). However, before he challenges us clergy and laity to "equip the saints," he is clear in telling us, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints..." (vs 11,12). Let me also caution that Paul is not talking about an exclusive list of gifts. In his first letter to the Corinthians and also in his letter to the Romans, he lists other spiritual gifts.

The word used for "the equipping of the saints," *i.e. katartisman*, belongs to the family of Greek words used for surgery in setting the bones of a body so all parts are connected. Some Biblical scholars are also of the opinion that it is the same family of Greek words that is used in the gospel when Jesus calls his early disciples and makes reference to "mending their nets" (Matthew 4:21). Intrigued by this thought, I called a leading medical practitioner and professor at a medical college to ask what the essential mark of a successful surgeon might be. He replied, "A successful surgeon should have thorough knowledge of each and every internal organ of the body and also its relation to surrounding structures. He or she should be able to cut out the unwanted parts without damaging the nearby tissues, blood vessels, and nerves. He or she should be a good decision maker with a tough mind, tender heart, and sturdy hands, fully realizing when not to operate or when to operate. A successful surgeon is a person with a lot of patience and is a good team player in working with a surgical team."<sup>16</sup>

This description of a surgeon can relate to the "equipping of the saints for the ministry." It is clear that Christian ministry is all about using our gifts to the best of our abilities. Eugene Peterson beautifully paraphrased it for us earlier in the chapter when he paraphrased the words of St. Paul: "I want you to get out there and walk - better yet, run! - on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline - not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Friends, the world around us is changing faster than we can imagine or comprehend. Ministerial styles are changing. Congregations are changing. Values and traditions are changing. Alban Institute, made up of consultants and resource people, was founded nearly four decades ago to help congregations. It is now shutting its doors. In the last two years, research says 20% of the U.S. population has claimed no religious affiliation, and the latest indicators say that number is now 29% among the millennials (ages 18-30)<sup>17</sup>. So we are living in a world where there is great opportunity to explore all kinds of new ministries. Bishop Kenneth H. Carter Jr., in his book **The Gifted Pastor: Finding and Using Your Spiritual Gifts**, writes: "According to Heifetz, 'Leadership cannot be exercised alone. The lone-warrior model of leadership is heroic suicide.'" We are all tempted by the great man or great woman theory of leadership, even as it is applied to

<sup>16</sup> Statement by Dr. E.V.S. Maben. Professor and Head of the Department of Internal Medicine. A. J. Institute of Medical Sciences. Mangalore. India.  
<sup>17</sup> *Christian Century*, April 16, 2014, p.9

ministry...Heifetz speaks of two types of partners: confidants and allies. Confidants are coworkers, often with other gifts, who help us to see things in perspective. [Bishop Carter writes] "Allies, in Heifetz's language, most closely parallel the role of the mentor in spiritual gifts...Mentors make the expression of our gifts possible. And, in our own positions of authority, we can be the patrons of gifts of others."<sup>18</sup>

Friends, needless to say, I stand before you today by the grace of God. Furthermore as a lay person and later as clergy, I have been blessed with confidants and allies - confidants who tried to get my attention by using the Bill Cosby language, "Hey, hey, hey." And mentors who pushed my envelope to explore the gifts in me. What an awesome responsibility God is giving each and every one of us - clergy and laity alike - to use our gifts and the gifts of others, not for our safekeeping, but to build the body of Christ.

Let us not be naïve. God is calling you at this time to do ministry in churches and communities where people want you to join them in driving ecclesiological BMWs. This stands for "bellyaching, moaning and whining." In moments like this, get out of ecclesiastical BMWs and remind yourselves of this story: "One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, 'My son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.' The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: 'Which wolf wins?' The old Cherokee simply replied, 'The one you feed.'"<sup>19</sup>

My dear ordinands and all of us, it is my hope and prayer that we all feed the Good Wolf. Paul wrote, "... the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things." (Galatians 5:22-23, NEV)

As much negativity, pessimism, and hopelessness around ministry that exists in the world, I am telling you tonight: you are going into a world where there are endless opportunities to do ministry! Be a good wolf! Feed the good wolf in you! Stay hungry and foolish. Let me hasten to say: foolish enough to do things filled with the love of God, the compassion of Jesus Christ, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but not foolish enough to get yourselves in trouble!

"Equipping the saints" is as challenging and freshening as it was in the time of Paul. Paul must have been writing this letter from a physical prison! Thanks be to God! Though you and I are not in prison, we go to communities to partner with laity, youth, and children to prepare them to be skillfully in ministry, despite our theological, spiritual, ecclesiological, racial, cultural, economic, and sociological divides! We are going there to keep them hungry for justice and peace ministries, to challenge, inspire, and stimulate them to be fools for Christ, filled with the love and grace of God, acting with the compassion of Christ, and depending fully on the movement of the Holy Spirit. There may be parishioners, young adults, youth, and children sitting in your pews on Sunday mornings who may be very quiet and hesitant to use their gifts. Guide them! Nudge them! Invite them to use their gifts!

Let us watch carefully and listen to what others are saying about the church! A few years ago Bono said: "The Jubilee movement wasn't a bless-me club; it wasn't a holy huddle. These religious guys were willing to get on the streets, get their boots dirty, wave the placards and follow their convictions with actions, making it really hard for people like me to keep their distance. It was amazing. I almost started to like these church people."<sup>20</sup>

What about us? What about you, ordinands? Are you willing to rethink Church so the Bonos in our communities find it hard to stay away from the United Methodist Churches?

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as we are commissioned and ordained tonight, what does all this mean to us? What does it mean to be an apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher in these kairos moments of our human history? Equipping the saints for the ministry and mission is an awesome joy! If you are not going to be joyful about ministry, if you are not willing to be the servant leader that Christ wants you to be, do not do it!

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth H. Carter Jr., *The Gifted Pastor; Finding and Using Your Spiritual Gifts* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001) pp 171-172.

<sup>19</sup> Jim Wallis: *The Great Awakening: Seven Ways to Change the World: Reviving Faith & Politics*. Harper One, 2008, p.267.

<sup>20</sup> Taken from Bono. *On the Move*, as quoted in Richard Stearns. *The Hole in our Gospel: What Does God Expect of Us? The Answer That Changed My Life and Might Just Change the World*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009, p.226.

God is sending you into the world as leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century who, according to Rev. Dr. Philip Potter, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, must have certain qualities. Once he was asked, "What does it mean to be a leader in this culture, in this time?" He answered, "You've got to have a screw loose and a death wish and a sense of humor." When asked what he meant by that, he replied, "You're going to have to have a screw loose. It means that you've got to realize that you can't screw things down too tightly, that you've got to leave room for the Holy Spirit, and you've got to leave room for change. And secondly, to have a death wish means that if you're going to be a leader, you're going to have to make some choices that will not altogether go across with everybody. And so, to bear a cross is a part of being a leader today." And then lastly, he said, "You've got to have a sense of humor, meaning that you've got to know that the devil never smiles, you've got to keep him frowning. And so that means that you have a sense of humor and you laugh at yourself and you laugh sometimes at others and you begin to move in an arena of humor that keeps you going. You've got to laugh sometimes."<sup>21</sup>

My dear ordinands, commissioners, clergy and laity, God is calling each and every one of us by name through Paul to remind us of the gifts we have. These gifts are given to us with purpose. Tonight, Xia, Ted, Will, and Victor come to you with the gift of pastoring; Julie comes to you with the gift of evangelism, and Ken comes to you with the gift of teaching. Jay, who was just ordained last week, comes to us with the gifts of being a pastor and prophet. Allow them to use their gifts to the fullest! Julie, Xia, Ted, Will, Victor, Ken and Jay, what a joy it is to go to a young child or adolescent, tell him or her, "I see a missionary in you," and enter into dialogue.

However, to do this ministry joyfully, we all need to stay foolish enough so the devil will not come near us - and foolish enough to say "no" to an appointment even if the salary is great and the parsonage is super, when in your present appointment, you are truly transforming the lives of people. That is why I say, and I really mean it, if my Bishop had kept me in this three-point charge all my life, I would have had no regrets because I was having fun! Though I was riding silently on an ecclesiastical BMW as Russ was taking me ice fishing, I was wrong! I wish I had learned back then what Elaine Heath and Larry Duggins invite us to do (and to which I made reference in my Episcopal Address last night): "To show up, pay attention, cooperate with God, and release the outcome." If I could have taken their advice back then, I would have been much less anxious and would have learned the importance of showing up, paying attention despite personal reservations. I could have cooperated with God and thereby released the outcome of my circumstances. I learned a lot from this experience. Russ challenged me to go places I did not want to go, to understand the church from another person's perspective, and to see God in places beyond my imagination.

Stay hungry for the word of God! Stay hungry to make use of the leadership and resource days so you may learn from people like Nadia Bolz Weber, Kenda Dean, Bishop Alfred Johnson, Bishop Violet Fisher and others about how to do these ministries in new ways while enjoying every moment of it. On a Sunday morning when you stand in front of the people to share the word of God, and as you try to connect them to the world behind and around them, enable people to see the gifts in themselves. Challenge them, inspire them, and push them to see the gifts of others, too!

Laity and Clergy, as I reminded all of you last night, God is calling us to get out of the wilderness and go to the Promised Land as we venture to new ministries. Yes, it is a muddy job, but it is not so bad if we keep smiling. It is not easy, but it can be done if we stay hungry and stay foolish. So, in the words we heard sung for us earlier, our hope and prayer is: "God, please ready us for a brand new start."<sup>22</sup> Amen.

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<sup>21</sup> Rev. Dr. Philip Potter, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, during the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Australia.

<sup>22</sup> Lindy Thompson. "Teach Me to Fly", adapted.

**Addendum #3 – SERMON - June 11, 2014**  
***Wilbur C. Ziegler Award for Excellence in Preaching***

**“Go Therefore”**

Steve Garnaas-Holmes  
 Ziegler preacher,  
 New England Annual Conference, June 11, 2014

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had summoned them. When they saw the risen Christ, they paid homage; though some had a hard time believing what they were seeing. And Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of Abba God, and of the Only Begotten, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything that I have commanded you. And trust this: I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

—Matthew 28.16-20

“Go, therefore. Make disciples. Baptize. Teach them to live in the way I taught you.” Pretty simple, pretty easy huh? What could possibly go wrong?

It’s such a bold, simple, encouraging message, it’s easy to worry that somehow it will get messed up. Maybe that’s partly because when we say, “Go therefore, and make disciples” it doesn’t sound like it did coming from Jesus when we say it. There’s an edge of anxiety in our voices. That’s partly because we’re a little bewildered: things are not going the way they are supposed to. We have done our best, but we are having a hard time of it. Our churches are shrinking, wondering how to reach young adults, hobbled by newspaper headlines about church trials, unsure how to minister in a changing world. A lot of people look at their churches and say, “We built it but they did not come.” Well, they’re not going to come. They’re not supposed to come. We are supposed to *go*.

Still, Jesus’ command to “Go therefore” kind of haunts us. Jesus gathers us to give us his spirit with which to take the gospel out into the world. But we’re not quite sure how to do that. The trick is, the gospel that we take into the world is not a doctrine, not a social program, not the Nicene Creed, not a political agenda. The gospel is a person, a relationship, a story. It will not do to take our beliefs out into the world. We have to tell the gospel story, the Jesus story, the story of the salvation of the world. There are a lot of stories with which to frame the gospel, and they all work fine. Here’s one: “On the night in which Jesus gave himself for us”— now there’s a great mission statement for a church, huh? “To give ourselves for others until there is nothing left.” Anyway— “on the night in which Jesus gave himself for us he gathered with his beloved at the table and he took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them.” Now, we could go out into the streets and tell that story, but mostly people would just say, “Yeah, well, whatever.” It will not be enough for us merely to tell the story; we will have to live the story. We will have to *be* the story. We ourselves will have to be the living bread that Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and gives to the world.

Jesus took the bread. It sounds like nothing in particular, but in fact we have all been “taken.” God takes us out of our own self-directed lives and plunks us down into God’s life, into God’s story, into the Reign of God. All of us are here because in some way we have been taken. “When you were young you went where you chose, but when you are old someone else fastens a belt around you and takes you where you did not think of going.” Sometimes it is a gradual process, and sometimes it’s so sudden and dramatic and disorienting that it’s like an alien abduction. If you doubt me ask Saul of Tarsus. He got taken. I bet you know what that’s like. You were just tooling along minding your own business, doing what you chose, seeking your own goals. And then God got a hold of you and took you off of that path and now you are somewhere beyond where you yourself could have chosen. Isn’t that right? Haven’t you been taken? If you have, raise your hand. You can say it with me, “I’ve been taken.”

Maybe you are one of those who was just doing what you are supposed to do, studying chemistry or working in finance, and God took you. Maybe it was a clear, sudden word or maybe it was an oozing sneaking suspicion, but at some point you heard God say, "Go into the ministry." And you probably said, "Sorry, wrong number." But you've been taken. Do you know that? If so, raise your hand. You can say it with me. "I've been taken."

And we have all been taken through some pretty hard times. Personal disasters, marital crises, professional train wrecks, terrible diseases, stupid decisions, dark times— we've all experienced them— and here we are. We're still alive! We've been brought through. "Some through the fire, some through the flood, some through the water but all through the blood," God leads us along. No matter what terrible trials you've been through, you didn't come on your own. No matter how hard you had to swim just keep your head above water you know someone was holding you up the whole time. There is that voice echoing in our hearts, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, because you are precious in my sight, and I love you." We have been brought through. We have been taken. Do you know that? Do you want to say that with me? "I've been taken."

This is our story. This is the gospel story that we have to take out into the world. It might be amazing, or surprising, or even bewildering, sometimes it's downright confusing. But it's not because God wants to mess with us— God wants to bless with us. Just like Jesus blessed the bread, God blesses us. The blessing is not accidental or an afterthought or a byproduct, it's the whole point. God takes us in order to bless us, so that we will be a blessing. You know what it's like when you simply try to do your best and sometimes you're not sure if it was best or even very good at all, but somehow by the grace of God some kind of blessing happens anyway. You just do something ordinary and it turns into a miracle! Because you've been blessed. You said something kind to someone who was feeling dejected or rejected, and without your even knowing it they experienced the grace of God. You thought you'd just help out with a little fundraiser for Imagine No Malaria, and pretty soon you are not only raising money but you were saving lives and you are not just involving a couple of children but all the people in the church, and it was changing your church, and it was making disciples— and you really didn't mean to do all that. But you've been blessed. Do you feel like that? Raise your hand. You can say it with me. "I've been blessed."

Those trials and tribulations you've been brought through, you didn't just survive. They taught you something. They helped you become who you are. They might've even been awful experiences, but there was some kind of blessing in them, because God was there. You know, it's interesting: the people of God, the nation of Israel, did not name themselves after Abraham or Moses King David. They took the name of good ol' brother Jacob— good for nothing, ne'er-do-well Jacob, who got himself a new name: Israel. Because we wrestle with God. That wrestling is the heart of our faith. Our faith is not a belief but a conviction, and there's a difference. Our faith is the faith, the trust, the commitment of Jacob, wrestling with the Angel: "I will not let you go until you bless me." We do not let go of this world, and even our troubles in this world until we get the blessing from them, because God is always in it. And if there is some challenge or difficulty from which you have not gotten a blessing that just means you're not done with it yet. Don't let go until you get the blessing. Because always what God takes, God blesses.

Maybe one reason we feel so bewildered with the challenges in the life of the church these days is that we've wanted to let go of the trouble before we got the blessing. Maybe we just need to hang on and wrestle a little more. Maybe we need to trust more deeply that there is blessing even in the troubles. We have to trust this blessing. It's so important. It's the only thing that will lead us to wrestle with those angels, to "go therefore" into a dark and needy world— because here's the thing. After the bread is taken and it is blessed, then it's broken. And the crappy deal is that the breaking comes *after* the blessing. We want it to be that you give your life to Jesus and everything is fine. But it's usually the other way around; you give your life to Jesus and then you take up a cross and the cross hurts. Our faith really boils down to resurrection, and if you want to get resurrection you have to go through death first.

The fact is that we are taken and we are blessed, and we are also broken. I think maybe one reason the United Methodist Church has a hard time taking off in flight is that we are burdened with the weight of our brokenness and we don't know it. I think we are in more grief than we let on, even to ourselves. Clergy who are in the itinerancy have spent our lives making and leaving friends. We've been taken from churches we didn't want to leave, or sent to places where we didn't want to go. It's not necessarily bad, but we don't have any place to grieve that. Church members have said goodbye

to pastors they liked, and the very next Sunday there's a new one in the pulpit, and they're supposed to be welcoming, but they haven't had a chance to grieve the one they lost. Church members look at their congregations and remember what it used to be like 30 or 40 years ago, and sometimes what they feel is sorrow and loss. Laypeople and clergy alike know what it is to give up on dreams, to let go of hopes that we have had and realize they will not be fulfilled. We've all been brokenhearted. And we don't have anywhere to talk about it. But we can at least say it out loud. Have you been broken? You can say it with me. "I've been broken."

I think we would do well to go down the road and borrow a confessional booth from the Catholic Church and set it up right here in the corner at Annual Conference. Clergy need a place where we can go and get down on our knees and say out loud the names of all those parishioners we have hurt, or let down or misled. Because we never have a place to talk about it. We spend too much energy trying to pretend that it's not so. We need a Western Wall where we can go and write down the names of all those people for whom our hearts broke and we didn't or couldn't do a very job of helping them, all those churches we feel like we failed, write those names on a little piece of paper and fold it up and stick it in the cracks between the stones, and step back and pray for God's mercy. Every pastor has those names we want to say and nowhere to say them. We work hard to maintain a bearing of joy and competence and authority, but secretly we are brokenhearted. Do you feel that way? You can say it with me. "I've been broken."

Some of you church members have watched your churches mistreat a pastor, undermine his ministry, resist her leadership, underpay her— and maybe you are part of the problem, or maybe you did all you could to change the situation, but you couldn't fix it. All you could do is stand by brokenhearted, and pray. Have you felt that way? You can say it with each other. "I've been broken." We clergy have wounded each other. We have stood by and watched each other suffer or struggle, and not said a word, not reached out. We have watched as our sisters get appointed repeatedly to small, struggling, difficult, isolated churches, way underpaid, and maybe we expressed sympathy, but secretly we were glad because we didn't have to go there. Our whole family is broken.

And yes, even the Bishops and District Superintendents have been broken. You might be one of them, who has had to appoint someone to a church that you knew was going to be a sorry match, but you had no other option. All you could do was stand by brokenhearted and pray. Maybe you had warm collegial relationships with other clergy, and then you were appointed a D.S. and they walked away from you. And then we have all asked you to be our leaders, to give us what we need, without a thought of what you needed. We can all say it. "I've been broken."

Now, it's not a bad thing to be broken. What's hurtful is to not *recognize* our brokenness, to spend so much energy pretending that it is not so. What's hurtful is when we fail to recognize the power that we have. When a stranger bumps into you on the street it's just an accident. But when the church hurts you, that's theology. The gospel is not a set of beliefs; it's the good news about how God treats us. And the way we "go therefore" and proclaim the gospel is the way we treat others. When the church mistreats people it doesn't just hurt their feelings, it wounds their souls. Imagine what it feels like — not just the doctrine it communicates, but what it *feels like* deep down — to be told that who you are and how you experience love is "contrary to Christian teaching." I don't care what theology you're from, that's got to hurt. The truth is that people don't just get hurt and come to church for healing. Some people get hurt in church, and *leave* for healing. I've heard a preacher's kid say, "I don't want to be part of an institution that would treat anyone the way I have seen the church treat you." I've heard a clergywoman say, "I feel more safe and accepted walking into a Wal-Mart than into a church."

Our brokenheartedness, the wounds deep in our souls, make the brokenness in our institutions so much more painful. The reason declining churches or floundering missions are so discouraging for us is that they tap into this deep pain. This is not bad. In fact, maybe it's the way it's supposed to be. The point is not that we shouldn't be broken, but that we shouldn't lie about it. Maybe that's part of our disconnect with the world. The church seems to be aware that we are taken and blessed and given, but we're not too clear about the broken part. But for some of the people out there that Jesus sends us to, the broken part is the only part they know. No wonder they're not coming! We need to be honest about our brokenness. We need to claim it not as a fault, but as part of the process.

Because here's the mystery. Jesus didn't break the bread by accident. Maybe the brokenness that we experience in the church is because God is taking us, and blessing us, and breaking us—breaking us on purpose, so that God can give us to the world in a new way. Maybe the breaking is not something we should be ashamed of. Maybe we should look for God in the

breaking. Because in fact we are given. Broken and messed up and sorry and wounded, just like this, we are given. We are the broken people God needs to give to this broken world. Maybe the church can be more radically welcoming to the outcast if our own walls have tumbled down. Maybe we can work for justice in the world more effectively if we have honestly confronted our own injustice. Maybe we can be present for those whose lives are shattered if we ourselves are bearing the pieces of broken lives, held together by nothing but the grace of God.

“Consider your own call, sisters and brothers: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are” ( 1 Cor. 1.26-28). Maybe God chooses a church that is so messed up to be a healing presence in the world that thinks it’s just fine.

This is the real gospel we are charged to take out into the world. This is the story that people need to hear: that they, too, are taken and blessed and broken and given. Maybe giving people the courage to live out this story of God’s grace is what it means to “teach them to carry out all that I have commanded you.” The gospel that we are taking out into the world is not that we are pretty great, but that we have died and we have been raised with Christ. The Gospel is the story of death and resurrection. Maybe God is inviting us to enter into the death and resurrection of the church. Maybe this is not decline. It’s just Holy Saturday.

We are the people, the church, that God takes and blesses and breaks and gives to the world with a lot of love. Because that’s what it means to follow the man with holes in his hands who is out among the poor and the outcast and the brokenhearted, not just smiling above them, but one of them. This story of God’s grace is the gospel that we carry out into the world when Jesus says “go therefore.” Jesus asks us to make this kind of disciples— who are taken, blessed, broken and given, who know this graced way of living, in the name of Abba God, of the Only Begotten, of the Holy Spirit. And trust this: Jesus says, “I am with you always.” The whole way! Jesus was in this all along. Even to the end of the age.

Will you pray with me?

God of grace, in the hands of our crucified Savior, take us, bless us, break us, and give us for the sake of the world.

We thank you for your love, and we pray for the faith to receive your blessings, to be mindful of your presence, and to listen for your voice; and for the courage to trust your deep desire for us, surrendering everything to your love, living in harmony with your grace. Amen.