

The Annual Conference of the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church opened in Green Bay, Wisconsin on Friday, June 9th. The theme for the session was “On Earth as it is in Heaven” based on scripture from Philippians 2. As has become tradition of the Wisconsin Annual Conference, the session was opened by drumming by the Buffalo Creek Singers of the Oneida Tribe. Rev. Sue D’Alessio recognized the First Nations lands upon whom we gather.

Rev. Barb Certa-Werner led the assembly in an opening prayer invoking the Spirit’s presence in our gathering.

Opening Worship & Memorial Service:

The opening worship also included the memorial service for those who have died since we last met. The worship leaders’ procession transpired over several minutes, as chime sounds encircled the assembly. The bishop and liturgists emerged deliberately from within the circle of seated clergy and lay members. They took their places on the dais not with pomp or circumstance but with deliberate pace, anticipating a Conference that, in Rev. Certa-Werner’s opening words, represented a “new season” in the life of the Conference.

“Gather us in and hold us forever,” worshipers sang in the opening hymn. “Gather us in and make us your own. Gather us in, all peoples together.”

In his sermon, Bishop Hee-Soo Jung compared the last year to a windstorm, in which Jesus is as much as ever the solid rock. As we have been thrown about, Jung reflected on those things that have kept him grounded. “I love to get my hands dirty in the family garden,” which he tends with his 3-year-old granddaughter Sidney Grace.

In Jesus, Jung preached, we find salvation in building up instead of tearing down, healing instead of wounding, and in life instead of death.

In memoriam

A time of recognition followed in which Barbara Dick read names of those related to the Conference who have died since the last Annual Conference. A candle was lit, and a chime struck for each one.

Opening Plenary

The Annual Conference session opened with about two-thirds of Conference participants present at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. The remaining participating online. Bishop Jung opened with prayer for our “worshipful work,” acknowledging some gather excitedly, others anxiously.

Bishop Jung introduced those on the dais, members of Program & Arrangements, and other conference staff and leaders. Bishop Jung outlined the rules about who may vote and David Wood of GNTV reviewed the voting procedures for this hybrid Annual Conference.

Kevin Rice Myers presented action items to organize the Annual Conference:

Action Item wc 101: Authorizing a hybrid Annual Conference session for 2023. Approved 463 yes, 7 no, 3 abstain (98.5%).

Action Item wc 102: Session rules and procedures for a hybrid Annual Conference. Approved 468 yes, 2 no, 4 abstain (99.6%).

Action Item wc 103: Consent agenda. Approved 465 yes, 3 no, 5 abstain (99.4%).

- Camp promotion
- Youth ministries Sunday
- United Women in Faith Sunday
- Nominations for 2023-24
- Rental/housing allowances for retired/disabled clergy
- Covenant of affiliations:
 - Harbor House
 - Northcott Neighborhood House
 - UM Children's Services of Wisconsin

Action Item wc 110: Balloting procedures for election of provisional reserve delegates. Approved 444 yes, 6 no, 15 abstain (98.7%).

Background: In response to seven vacancies in our General Conference delegation since the last election in 2020, we may elect provisional reserve delegates in anticipation of the 2024 General Conference and 2024 Jurisdictional Conference.

Action Item wc 121: Approving bishop's appointments to Implications Committee. Approved 409 yes, 11 no, 23 abstain (97.4%).

Welcoming of Guests

Rev. Forrest Wells, accompanied by Rev. AHyun Lee of Garrett-Evangelical's faculty, introduced seven visiting members from the Dongbu Conference of the Korean Methodist Church. Bishop Jung presented gifts, including a Green Packers cap, to Bishop Kim. Deb Pattee and Heidi Careaga presented gifts to the delegation on behalf of the United Women in Faith. Rev. In-Wha Shon presented an icon written by Rev. Mark Klaisner. Lifting hands toward the delegation, the Conference sang *God is So Good*.

Action Item wc 400: Disaffiliation of local churches over issues of human sexuality. Approved 461 yes, 32 no, 0 abstain (93.5%).

The individual congregations seeking disaffiliation are listed individually in Action Items 23-401 through 23-443, workbook part 2. The disaffiliations would take effect June 30, 2023. As of July 1, 2023, they would no longer be United Methodist congregations.

Bishop Jung preceded the vote reading from a prepared statement, saying in part, "Connectionalism is at the heart of what it means to be a United Methodist. ... While many of us lament these decisions, we must respect the discernment that has taken place.

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“It is not a time for taking sides, expressing anger, or cheering and clapping. It is a time for prayer and generous care for one another.”

Rev. Paul Gregerson, chair of the conference Trustees, brought forth resolutions from 43 churches seeking to disaffiliate under ¶ 2553 of the Book of Discipline, which provided a limited window of time for congregations to do so, for reasons of conscience over issues of human sexuality. He reviewed the necessary steps which were previously published and are listed on the conference website.

Disaffiliating congregations will be released from the trust clause due to the window of exception that was created by ¶ 2553.

Before the vote, Bishop Jung thanked leadership for working through the difficult disaffiliation process with integrity. “I never thought I would be a bishop at this kind of moment in our church history. This is a difficult moment for your bishop. But I need to say to you, what a wonderful Conference you are.”

The bishop invited Rev. Sue D’Alessio to lead the Conference in prayer. “This is a challenging, tender and holy time,” she said, inviting the Conference to sing, *Jesus, we are here*. She read from Romans 12:1-2: “Be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you will discern what is the will of God – what is good, acceptable and perfect. ... So we, who are many, are one body in Christ ...”

Lay member Allan Lindsay, Oak Creek Community, asked about churches where fewer than a third of members voted if there was any follow-up with other members. Rev. Steve Zekoff responded: “Yes, and still being worked out. In some cases, some who did not participate in voting already have found their way to other church homes. ... In other cases, the conference is looking at more intentional ways we can be in ministry with these faithful members who want to remain United Methodist.”

Linda Pliska, retired clergy: “It’s with lament I stand to oppose, because I have no other option, this separation. It seems that in our churches we are looking at what separates us rather than what unites us. ... I would ask that each member here and each member that is disaffiliating agree to love one another in our differentness and not speak badly about one church or another.”

Dale Gumness, lay member, Bloomer, asked about smaller congregations for whom process of disaffiliation was out of reach. Rev. Steve Zekoff: “The United Methodist Church is a big-tent church. Even after disaffiliation, we will have a number of different beliefs. ... I do know, having worked with this bishop and cabinet and assistant, the commitment remains, ‘How can we remain engaged in ministry together?’ Will there be another opportunity for congregations to leave? We do not know.”

Christine Klais, Fennimore-Stitzer. “We were not aware of the disaffiliation process and wonder, what do we need to do?” Rev. Steve Zekoff: “This is legislation that was passed by the 2019 General Conference four years ago, we had a task force bring the policy for Wisconsin before the last Annual Conference ...,” and it was widely publicized since. The time is past for churches to seek disaffiliation under the provisions of ¶ 2553.

Rev. Kris Androsky, Elm Grove Community: Called the question. Requires two-thirds vote.

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Vote to call the question Approved 413 yes, 42 no, 18 abstain.

The main vote followed, preceded by Bishop Jung's prayer, and followed – while awaiting the vote results – by singing *Come and fill our hearts with your grace/peace/love*.

Vote to Approve Disaffiliation of Local Churches Under ¶ 2553 – wc400 – Approved 461 yes, 32 no

Following the close of Fridays session of Annual Conference, the laity and clergy each attended a fellowship gathering.

The Board of Laity sponsored an ice cream social at the KI Center, where over 50 laity enjoyed fellowship, conversation, and wonderful ice cream.

The Board of Ordained Ministry sponsored a gathering of the clergy at Titledown in Green Bay for a time of reconnection, fellowship, and food. It was a wonderful time of reconnection and fellowship of over 150 clergy and Board of Ordained Ministry members.

Saturday, June 10 Session

The Saturday session began with an opening devotion led by the worship team of Waupaca Area Regional Ministry.

Speaking in Spanish, Bishop Hee-Soo Jung welcomed Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary President Javier A. Viera, who was introduced by Rev. Barb Certa-Werner.

Viera recalled the bishop's "simple invitation" to come to the Conference and offer a Bible study that would help "continue radical inclusion and racial justice as the priority of our missional direction." Video from the morning Bible study can be found [here](#).

Morning Plenary

The morning session began with a video message from Council of Bishops President, Thomas J. Bickerton, "to architect the next vision of United Methodism". This video and an earlier message from Bickerton are available on the conference website.

Lay candidates for election as provisional reserve delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference were introduced:

- Gail Burgess
- Kathy Hartke
- Barbara Hill
- Linda Keene Hodorf
- Allan Lindsay
- Marie Severing
- Anna Hunter
- Daniel Radley
- Louann Lawson

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Statistical Report & Budget Presentation

Don Cramer reported highlights of the 2022 Conference statistical report. The full statistics presentation is available on the Conference website and YouTube channel.

Highlights:

- At time of most recent statistical report, Wisconsin had 448 congregations, with 47,243 professing members, continuing a longtime decreasing trend (10% of congregations submitted no or partial information)
- Assuming congregations who are disaffiliating, about 42,000 professing members would remain
- Based on compensation, about 30 percent of clergy are full-time (i.e. 30 percent of our congregations can afford a full-time pastor). About two-thirds of our members are attending churches that can afford a full-time pastor.

Sarah Sneider, conference treasurer and director of administration, presented the budget.

Highlights:

- Nearly 240 local churches paid 100% of their 2022 apportionments.
- We budgeted to receive \$6.1 million in apportionment revenue in 2022. We received \$6 million.
- Global Connections paid to GCFA was 100%
- Sales of closed churches netted \$555,000 to Foundation for New Ministry
- We have received \$3,964,166 from disaffiliating churches (unpaid apportionments, 12 months of apportionments, benefit premiums paid for May & June 2023, unfunded pension liability, estimated legal fees (\$10,000 each)
- Boy Scout settlement: Allocated settlement cost for Wisconsin Conference is \$208,096. Additional donations or reserve needed: \$157,719.
- 2024 budget was presented (will be **Action Item wc108**)
 - Details on Pages 31-45 of Part 1 of the Pre-Conference Workbook.
 - Disaffiliating churches represented \$880,000 in apportionments
 - To not punish remaining churches, estimated gross apportionments were reduced accordingly. A portion of the disaffiliating funds received will be applied to the 2024 budget.
 - Most committee budgets kept the same
 - General Church increased \$130,000

Conference Board of Laity Report

Ben Brancel, Conference lay leader, and Barbara Hill, Lay Leader for the North West district, reported on the on behalf of the Board of Laity

- New web page for the laity – www.wisconsinumc.org/laity
- Encouragement for all churches to hold a Lay Servant training program
- Certified Lay Ministry task force hopes to have a program in place by the end of 2023

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Retiree Recognition Service

Rev. Diane Rew delivered the sermon during the Retiree Recognition Service. Scripture was heard from Romans 12:1 and Genesis 26:2. An offering was taken for the United Methodist Church in Bolivia to purchase sewing machines that will empower women to work. Rev. Diane Rew, retiring this year from St. Paul's UMC in Green Bay, preached:

“So, here we are. ... We find ourselves in quite the place, these days. Not the place many of us would imagine when we began our journeys. ... But here we are.”

“For some, retirement decisions may be long planned. Others, maybe not so much. For some, it may hold more fear and anxiety than clarity and confidence. Either way, here we are.”

Afternoon Plenary

The afternoon plenary began with balloting for provisional reserve delegates to the postponed 2020 Jurisdictional Conference.

The first ballot election of provisional reserve delegates to the postponed 2020 Jurisdictional Conference to be held in July 2024. Lay members to vote for one, clergy members to vote for two.

Clergy results: Kris Androsky 82 (elected), Amelita Cajiuat 71 (elected), George Kafer 10.

Lay results (receiving 10 or more votes): Gail Burgess 52, Kathy Hartke 51, Anna Hunter 26, Barbara Hill 24, Allan Lindsay 19, Linda Hodorff 16, Daniel Radley 15. No election.

Action Item wc 104: Resolutions related to clergy compensation. A) Past service annuity rate for 2024 shall be \$878 (5.9% increase). Approved 379 yes, 13 no, 11 abstain. B) Minimum compensation for elders, provisional members and associate members serving full time: \$48,679; for local pastors serving full time: \$44,041. Approved 394 yes, 8 no, 9 abstain

Board of Global Ministry report:

- Rev. Anita Lang: “We are working intentionally toward radical justice and inclusion.”
- Recognition of churches who earned Rainbow Covenant status in the past year
- Thelma Gregg Award for Mission presented to Rev. Paul Webster, General Board missionary for 27 years
- Rev. Mary Balson recognized for her last year serving as Mission Motivation chair
- More than 10,000 pounds collected for the 2022 In-Gathering was the most of any Annual Conference. After one day of collection this year, the truck is nearly full, with 1,258 personal dignity kits and more than \$4,000 received.
- VIM has two trips planned in 2024, including a new site at Jefferson, Iowa.
- Wisconsin has continued its partnership with the Bolivia Evangelical Methodist Church, including sewing machine and motorcycle projects. Rev. Lang presented to Bishop Jung a stole as a gift from the Bolivia EMC.

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Second ballot election of provisional reserve delegates to the postponed 2020 Jurisdictional Conference to be held in July 2024. Lay members to vote for one. Lay results: Burgess 67, Hartke 64, Hunter 34, Hill 28, Lindsay 16, Hodorff 12, Radley 10. No election.

Action Item wc 106: Proposed changes to conference policies. A) Reimbursement of expenses for ex-officio lay members of Annual Conference to attend AC sessions. Approved 351 yes, 44 no, 9 abstain. **B) Deletion of outdated items and streamlining of Group Health Insurance Policy, with addition of requirements for clergy retiring after Jan. 1, 2024.** Approved 386 yes, 16 no, 4 abstain.

General Board of Global Ministries:

David Scott addressed the conference as a representative of the General Board of Global Ministries. Some highlights from his presentation include:

- We participate in missions because of the commitment to our faith as exemplified in Hebrews 10:23-24.
- The General Board's areas of emphasis include missionary service; UMCOR, humanitarian relief and global health; the Yambasu Agriculture Initiative (YAI); and disaster relief and recovery work (e.g. Ukraine, for which \$27.3 million has been raised).
- Global Ministries support in Wisconsin: Urban Poiema UMC, Madison Korean Ministries, Milwaukee African American Ministry, Grace Bridge Korean UMC, and Portage UMC Mustard Seed Migration Grant supporting DACA recipients
- Wisconsin contributed \$1.4 million in Advance giving and supports 15 missionaries

Third ballot election of provisional reserve delegates to the postponed 2020 Jurisdictional Conference to be held in July 2024. Lay members to vote for one. Lay results: Burgess 105, Hartke 66, Hunter 23, Hill 20, Hodorff 13, Lindsay 10. No one elected.

Other Reports

- Executive Director Kerri Parker of the Wisconsin Council of Churches greeted the Conference. She spoke of the Ecumenism in Wisconsin needs the United Methodist Church in order to survive and that The UMC was vital in support of the Council's refugee response.
- Youth and young adults were welcomed to the Conference. Rev. Jean Waldron, the Conference guide for youth, introduced team members and youth and young adults representatives. One youth quoted the Rev. Krysta Deede: "Youth are not the future of the church, they are the now." A Northwest District Youth Council Team is forming, and other districts are invited to do so.
- Representatives from the Korean Peace Appeal, among them Rev. PyungAhn "Peace" Kim and Rev. AHyun Lee, addressed the Conference. "The Korean War began in 1950, and it has not ended yet." The team invited attendees to sign the Korean Peace Appeal. Collected signatures will be delivered to the UN and to the governments of the countries involved in the Korean War, including two Koreas, the U.S. and China in



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2023, the 70th anniversary of the armistice agreement. Fans were presented to the Conference attendees.

- Heidi Careaga updated the Conference about the Deaconess and Home Missioners ministry. We have one active Deaconess (Kady Herr-Yang), one recently retired (Judy Vasby) and two currently enrolled in the program (Heidi Careaga and Marie Severing, both of Janesville). Heidi and Marie anticipate being consecrated at the 2024 General Conference.

Fourth ballot election of provisional reserve delegates to the postponed 2020 Jurisdictional Conference to be held in July 2024. Lay members to vote for one. Lay results: Burgess 153 (elected), Hartke 45, Hunter 13, Hill 10.

Action Item wc107: Resolutions affirming the discontinuance/closing of local churches.

A) Madison: Bashford. Approved 404 yes, 8 no, 9 abstain.

B) Madison: Wellspring. Approved 404 yes, 6 no, 11 abstain.

C) Wittenberg: New Horizons. Approved 410 yes, 4 no, 6 abstain.

D) Beetown. Approved 405 yes, 7 no, 7 abstain.

E) Milwaukee: Summerfield. Approved 398 yes, 12 no, 10 abstain.

- Report from Rev. Lori Lossie, chair of New Ministry Strategy Board: New ministries in new places for new people for the transformation of the world.
 - Within the past year, Wisconsin Conference has started new ministries, bringing the total to 23 new ministries supported by New Ministry Strategy Board

“I can talk about lists of places and numbers of new ministries. But what it all comes down to is stories of transformation,” Lossie said.

- Rev. Scott Carlson, Director of Congregational Development, reported on:
 - District Strategy Teams, where pastors and lay people look around for places where God is at work and people are gathering, so we can pray about whether God is calling a ministry there
 - New Ministry Strategy Board, who receives requests for funding and support for such churches. “My hope is that next we’ll be celebrating not one, not two, not three but four new ministries.” One is hoped to be a new ministry in Plymouth, Wis., which in part comes out of a disaffiliation in Waldo.

Bishop Jung recognized years of service among clergy for 25 year, 50 years, 60 year, and 70+ years

Bishop Jung asked the historic questions of the candidates for ordination, assisted by Ty Hines and Krysta Deede of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

State of the Church Address

Bishop Jung delivered his State of the Church address and discussed the changing landscape of The United Methodist Church. Bishop spoke of the disaffiliation process and the forming of the disaffiliation discernment team. The Boy Scouts lawsuit process was addressed and how we are finalizing a rightful

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resolution to the lawsuit. Bishop Jung called us to strive for a change in our behavior so we can be passionate advocates for all, no matter the demographic of our communities. Bishop Jung also discussed the recommendation that came out of the 2022 Jurisdictional Conference, that Wisconsin enter a joint relationship with the Northern Illinois Conference. A team has been appointed that will work to cast a future together. Bishop Jung closed his report with a message that in 2024 he will have served his allotted time in Wisconsin as our Bishop. "You are my dear people, my dear friends, my spiritual colleagues, and sojourners. So, in 2024 I will push hard with you. To be salt and light in the world, a true beloved community, not just propaganda, but in the real sense of the kingdom together."

Following Bishop Jung's State of the Church address, Elaine Moy gave a report of the General Commission on Religion and Race via video. She commended Wisconsin for having commitments not present in other conferences. Resources were also offered and those can be found on the GCOR website: <https://www.gcorr.org/>.

Via video, Rev. Chris Bethke, representing Archives and History, presented the Lois C. Olson Ministry of Memory award to Rev. Wilmer T. Bloy.

Service of Covenant and Renewal

Worship began with the Conference singing *The Church's One Foundation*. In the call to worship, attendees declared: "We gather to mourn our brokenness, to acknowledge our need for healing and to seek our future as your people." The Scripture was heard from the Gospel of Luke, [Chapter 8:26-39](#), from The Message.¹ Bishop Jung gave the meditation on the scripture. "We are determined to not be enslaved to chaos anymore. Not to be possessed by spirit of separation anymore. Not to have exclusive faith, but to live the future with an open mind and love all people regardless of who they are without any conditions." Bishop cited the poem by Amanda Gorman, "[The Hill We Climb.](#)"²

The service of anointing was introduced from James 5:14-16a. Several in the assembly received oil to take to stations, where dozens of people came forward to be anointed. The service ended with members standing and singing *The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve*.

Sunday, June 11 Session

Opening devotion

The day began with opening devotion in song and spoken word.

Bishop Don Ott (retired) greeted the Conference and offered blessing.

Bible study

Led by Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary President Javier A. Viera.

He began by thanking Bishop Ott for his long-time service as a Trustee at Garrett-Evangelical.

¹ The Message (MSG) © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson

² Gorman, 22, read her poem at the inauguration of President Joe Biden on Jan. 20, 2021.

Dr. Viera restated the bishop's "simple invitation" to come to the Conference and offer a Bible study that would help "continue radical inclusion and racial justice as the priority of our missional direction."

Morning plenary

Bishop Jung opened with prayer, and then introduced Conference Chancellor Marshall Schmitt.

Schmitt recounted the challenges the church has faced. Echoing Viera's Bible study, Schmitt said, "The only way we will be able to address issues is that in some way we are going to have to change. We are going to have the will to reconcile with those with whom we disagree, and to heal those who have been harmed."

Fifth ballot election of provisional reserve delegates to the postponed 2020 Jurisdictional Conference to be held in July 2024. Lay members to vote for four. Vote results: Hartke 152 (elected), Lindsay 133 (elected), Hunter 133 (elected), Hodorff 113 (elected), Severing 87, Radley 87, Lawson 51. Delegation voting is complete.

Deb Pattee, vice president of the Wisconsin United Women in Faith, addressed the conference. She reminded the Conference of the organization's new name and symbol. She shared news that Sally Vonner is newly elected as General Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the UWF.

Cabinet Address

Dean of the Cabinet Tsuker Yang gave the Cabinet address. Your bishop and your Cabinet pray we can live together in our diversity. We lament the congregations that are leaving but congratulate them on their new futures.

We are not only living in a challenging and changing time, we also are living in a new time. In order for us to face a new time, requires a new strategic mindset for ministry ... even a new sense of purpose and vision for all. We can no longer dwell in the past. It would be insane to hope for our past to be our future again. We must move on.

However, we cannot look at the future without looking at our present. Where we are:

- Celebrate the election of Rev. Dan Schwerin to the episcopacy
- Rev. Barb Certa-Werner being appointed assistant to the bishop, and Rev. Peace Kim appointed as North West District Superintendent
- Thanking the disaffiliation team for its work, as well as others who were involved. For Bishop Jung setting the bar high "that would do the process faithfully and gracefully." We lament it, but we did what was needed to be done, and our hearts are at peace.
- Appointments continue to be a challenge, though nearly all full-time appointments are made. We welcome many clergy who are new to the Conference.
- In 2024, the Conference Board of Laity will begin to implement the Certified Lay Minister program.
- The Wisconsin Conference plans to host its own school for licensed local pastors beginning in 2024.

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- We need church planters to help start new churches.
- We will not abandon those members who wish to remain in the UMC if their congregations have disaffiliated.
- First UMC in Wausau has leased its building for \$1 a year to a Community Foundation, which has taken over maintenance and repair of the building but the church retains full use for 99 years. The church will therefore also become a community center.
- The Wisconsin Conference is preparing to become part of a joint episcopal area (with Northern Illinois) in late 2024.

Reading of Appointments

Bishop Jung, with the district superintendents, read the fixing of appointments. There are twenty-two appointments to be supplied; (NE 5, NE 4, NW 1, SE 8, SW 4)

DS Yang presented a gift to Bishop Jung on behalf of the Cabinet

- Julie Wiedmeyer was introduced as new executive administrative assistant
- Heidi Careaga and Kristy Yang were recognized as district administrators
- Angela Ullrich (event planner) and Lori Denoyer (administrative assistant) were recognized from Ministry and Outreach

Other Reports

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary President Javier A. Viera brought greetings from the seminary.

Kathy Hartke, Community UMC, Elm Grove, presented an update on the 2022 Wisconsin AC resolution re: calling on Discipleship Ministries develop sex-education curricula. That until such time, *Our Whole Lives* and *Sexuality and Our Faith* be recognized as approved curriculum.

Rev. Allie Scott presented an update on the 2022 Wisconsin AC resolution imploring lawmakers to act beyond thoughts and prayers in response to gun violence.

Don Kim and Lamarr Gibson of the Connectional Table leadership team addressed the Conference.

Proposed Beloved Community initiative ³

A participatory theater was presented, directed by Amy Sarno, associate professor of theatre, Beloit College. The scene: Worshipers talk after the service about their first impressions of a new preacher in a cross-cultural appointment.

³ **Working mission:** To build an inclusive community of belonging rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ and affirming of the sacred worth of every person, motivated by kindness, compassion and love for all life, inside and outside our doors. **Working objectives:** We live into “Beloved Community” by 1) Affirming the full participation of all genders, sexual orientations, races, cultures, classes, abilities, ages, and nationalities in reclaiming, reviving and renewing our UMC mission; 2) Educating and empowering disciples engaged in the work of justice, reconciliation and liberation for all people; 3) Resolving conflict with a renewed sense of purpose and hope drawing on the strength of our unity in our diversity.

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In the participatory theater, members of the Conference took turns replacing one of the cast to try out a different scenario.

Afternoon Plenary

Rev. Rebekah Wagner, participating online, offered opening prayer. Bishop Jung then led the Conference in singing, *Spirit of the Living God*.

Rev. Eric Doolittle, chaplain at North Central College, brought greetings from the United Methodist-affiliated university in Naperville, Ill.

Bishop Jung thanked Rev. Steve Zekoff for serving as chair of the disaffiliation task force.

A video greeting was received from Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta. Gammon is one of 13 United Methodist seminaries and the denomination's only historically black theological school.

Naomi Annandale, Director of Research and Strategic Evaluation for Discipleship Ministries, presented the One Matters Award to Goodman Union Protestant Church and pastors Linda Pliska and Deb Spira. The award is presented to a small church in recognition for making new disciples.

Action Item wc105: Proposed revision to Conference Rule 2.2.0 re: membership tenure of lay members to Annual Conference. Approved 306 yes, 3 no, 3 abstain (99.0%).

Gail Burgess, chair of the Wisconsin Conference Committee on the Episcopacy, reported to the Conference. The committee meets with the bishop five or six times a year. She reiterated that the Wisconsin Conference-Northern Illinois Conference shared ministry team will begin meeting soon to plan for the two conferences to be served by one bishop.

Lisa King presented the General and Jurisdictional Conferences delegation report. The delegation was introduced. General Conference is scheduled for April 23-May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, N.C. The deadline for additional petitions is Sept. 6, 2023. Delegation members met in person at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference last November at Fort Wayne, Ind. Resolutions passed at the Jurisdictional Conference are presented in Part 3 of the 2023 Pre-Conference Workbook, p. 17 ff. They include:

- Ethics code for delegates to the North Central Jurisdiction
- Leading with integrity (during time of transition in the UMC)
- Supporting formation of a U.S. Regional Conference
- Queer delegates' call to center justice and empowerment for LGBTQIA+ people

The delegation urges the Conference to live out the aspirations of these resolutions, as a way of living in beloved community that Jesus modeled.

Rebecca Henry, Conference nominations chair, addressed the Conference. She presented the following action item:

Action Item wc 109: Nominations Committee Report. Approved 341 yes, 6 no, 16 abstain, 98.3%

Conference Treasurer Sarah Sneider and Council on Finance & Administration chair Steve Miller led deliberation on the 2024 budget, as presented earlier in the Conference.

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Action Item wc108: 2024 Proposed Conference Budget. Approved 352 yes, 17 no, 12 abstain, 95.4%.

Sue D'Alessio and Claudia Deede, chair of the Program & Arrangements Committee, addressed the Conference. They thanked those who led the conference, GNTV for producing the online portion, the audio-visual crews, video production crews, and conference staff. Additional gratitude was expressed to the many people who serve on Program & Arrangements, for AC worship leaders and musicians, the Boards of Laity and Ordained Ministry. More than 100 people were involved in producing this year's Annual Conference.

Bishop Jung, in closing, led the Conference in singing *When Peace Like a River*.⁴ He then prayed a closing prayer. "In the kingdom of God, we are siblings together."

Service of Ordination

The service of ordination and commissioning was held following the conclusion of the plenary session, beginning at 4p. Bishop Kim from the Dongbu conference preached the sermon and the Harmony Choir, directed by Rev. Sangwook Park, lifted us up with music.

Materials from this Annual Conference, in print and video formats, will be available as soon as possible on the Conference Web site, <https://www.wisconsinumc.org/annual-conference>

The 2024 Annual Conference will be held in person at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay, June 7-9, 2024, followed by a training day on June 10, 2024.

Summary notes prepared by:

Rev. Steve Scott, Janesville Cargill UMC

Lisa Wink, Director of Communications

⁴ When peace like a river attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well with my soul."
It is well with my soul;
it is well, it is well with my soul

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