

THE VISION

Thursday Update
June 5, 2014



Prayers, Approvals Mark Clergy Session

The clergy session began with an announcement by the Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Robert Walker, that Bishop Martin McLee would not be present for Annual Conference.

“Bishop McLee is receiving medical treatment under a doctor’s care,” Walker explained. He added that the bishop was in good spirits and was eager to return to his duties when treatment was completed. Rev. Constance Pak then offered a word of prayer for McLee’s recovery and healing.

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, episcopal leader of the New England Conference, was introduced to preside over the clergy business and the approval of the commissioning of nine provisional elders and deacons. The group also supported the ordination of 13 candidates as elders in full connection.

One of the ordinands, Jennifer Pick, was hospitalized due to pregnancy complications and could not be present. The body voted to allow her to answer the traditional ordination questions via cellphone. As Devadhar examined the candidates, Rev Vicky Fleming held a phone out and Pick could be heard clearly answering the questions – which drew some joyful laughter from the gathering.

Rev. Kenny Yi, who will be departing as the superintendent of the Long Island West District, drew on the Revelation reading about the experiences of the apostle John on Patmos Island in his message. He noted the need for clergy to develop themselves as leaders by being receptive to the vision of God.

“So much rises and falls on leadership,” he said. “You cannot grow your church beyond your leadership.”

He continued to stress that church growth starts with a vision – a vision we receive from God. “It is your vision or is it God’s?” Yi offered three ways to determine the source of one’s vision:

- God will provide “pro-vision” for the divine vision.
- “Tele-vision:” God’s vision will spread.
- “Re-vision:” If God is not in it, then one needs to listen more clearly for the voice of God.



Rev. Vicky Fleming, above center, holds a cellphone with Jennifer Pick on the line as Bishop Devadhar questions the ordination candidates. Rev. Kenny Yi, left, suggested new ways of listening for God’s vision. Ordinands Halley Low and Berndette Logan, below, are delighted to be approved at the clergy session.

Yi shared how he kept pestering the schools in one community he served to build relationships with the students.

“What the Lord puts in our hearts, we must put in action,” he said.

Bishop Devadhar and Bishop Alfred Johnson presided over Holy Communion as the session drew to a close. Devadhar thanked Johnson for mentoring him in the early days of his episcopacy in 2004.



Reminiscing Won't Grow Your Church

By Tom Coddington

Much like the clergy session, the gathering of laity began with a prayer of healing for Bishop Martin D. McLee, which was offered by Catskill Hudson District Lay Leader Margaret Howe and Conference Lay Leader Renata Smith.

Reverend Ann Pearson, who will retire June 30 after 13 years as director of connectional ministries, brought those gathered a message about the importance of their work in the church.

After reminiscing about growing up in Remington, Va., where her father was a community leader – one of four men who regularly gathered to reminisce – she urged churches to stop reminiscing.

“The New York Annual Conference has not lost membership,” she stated. “We have growing churches and vital congregations that are willing to make changes.

“Churches need to engage with the community, to move forward. New people need to be included. They may have new ideas that will work,” she added.

Pearson also pointed out, “The pastor can't do it all. Everyone needs to do God's work. There is power in the laity, to make churches grow. You have more power than you know.”

Pearson passed out some of her trademark “chirping chicks” to demonstrate the power of connectionalism. The chicks chirp only when the electrical circuits on the bottom are completed. Our ministries work best when we connect with one another and connect with our communities.

The lay members also heard from 17 individuals seeking to be elected as delegates to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional conferences. Those who had been nominated prior to the start of conference are Dorothee Benz, Fred Brewington, Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt, Dorlimar Lebron



Ann Pearson, above, offers her message in front of a backdrop of puppets; Margaret Howe and Renata Smith, at left, offer a prayer for Bishop McLee.

Malave, Roena Littlejohn, Ximena Varas, Stephen Allen, Robert Hunsinger, Derek Miller, Warren Whitlock and Ross Williams.

Another six were nominated from the floor: Rashid Warner, Yolanda Evelyn, Omar Hall, Daisy Tavarez, Jae Won Kim, and Michelle Broomfield Armstrong. Balloting will be called throughout Thursday and Friday.

Voting Set for Trustees

Nominees for the Conference Board of Trustees are:

- Deborah E. Bass, a former staff member of The General Board of Global Ministries
- Alfida Figueroa is a lay missionary and member of Broadway Temple UMC
- David Anmoo Rim, a member of the Central Korean UMC in White Plains.

Voting is scheduled for Friday morning.

Memorial Service Honors “Saints”

The 215th gathering of the New York Annual Conference was opened by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar on Wednesday evening. Devadhar, the episcopal leader of the New England Conference, was one of three bishops invited to substitute by Bishop McLee.

“May your Holy spirit take over this conference so that the things said about the Pentecost people can be said about us,” Devadhar prayed.

The evening first dealt with some of the business of the conference – operating resolutions and instructions on the use of voting devices – before moving into the service to remember those who have passed onto glory in the last year.

Twenty-nine clergy persons, spouses and widows, and five lay members were honored.

“My heart is filled with joy and gratitude because my ministry has intersected and been enriched by many of the people on this list tonight,” said Rev. Fred Jackson, conference secretary. He then he asked the families and friends of those whom he would name to stand to receive the support and gratitude of the gathering.

Those honored were:

CLERGY

William W Ross
 Sylvester McLearn
 Walter W. Pitt Jr.
 Roger Floyd
 Vincent William Watson
 John G. Wall
 Hector Manuel Navas
 Barent S. Johnson
 Alfredo Cotto-Thorner
 George Czar
 Betty R. McKinney
 Madeline McDonald
 John Edwin Swords
 Jack Larry Sharp
 Robert Swyres
 Elven Riggles

SPOUSES OF CLERGY

Geraldine Johnson
 Robert G. Titus
 Sunghee “Sam” Lee
 Bonnie Jean (Ecker) Pinto
 Margaret Rosalie Howlett Jones Monkman
 Louise Purnell
 Rev. Lewis C. Johnson

WIDOWS OF CLERGY

Dorothy Dier
 Dorothy P. Pollard



A dancer, above, adds a dove to the tree cradled by giant hands; John Wesley makes an appearance below; a dancer adds her graceful moves

Sarah Marion (Williams) Droppa
 Lois Anderson
 Evelyn Cole Viets

DEACONESES
 Nazgul “Naz” William

LAITY

Ernest L. Swiggett
 William Listwan
 Douglas Nicholson
 Pastor Doris Foltz Arnold (retired local pastor)
 Albert Cooks

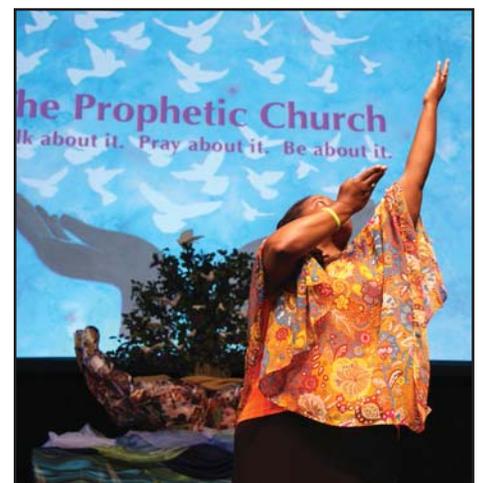
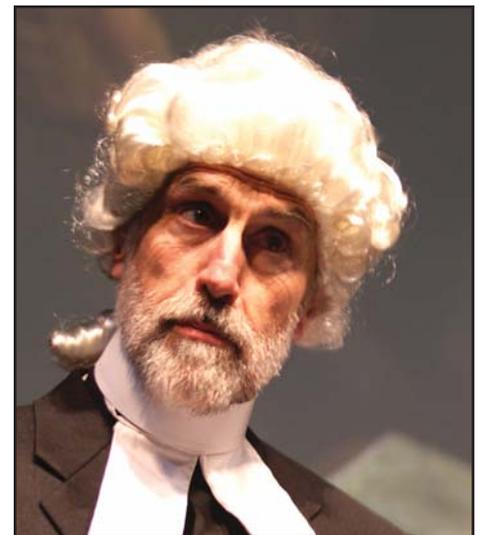
The evening was choreographed with an incredible mix of music, drama, dance, preaching. The dancing even included a group of youth stepping out to the popular song, “Happy,” by Pharrell Williams.

The two outstretched hands at the center of the altar cradled a tree that was gradually filled with doves by three dancers dressed in white.

Guest preacher Rev. Dr. Zan Holmes questioned the gathering about the size of their egos with Luke 23:14-30 as scripture.

He suggested, that like the disciples, we have lost their way because we argue about who is best, and fail to give credit to God, or to those on whose shoulders we stand.

“What would happen in the church if we didn’t care who got the credit?” he asked. “If we gave God the glory and checked our egos at the door?”





Wednesday nights service was an incredible mix of remembrance, music, drama, dance, preaching, and communion. Bishops Devhadar and Johnson, above, lead communion with Ximena Varas; Rev. Dr. Zan Holmes, right, urged us to keep our egos in check; and John the Baptist offered some cautionary advice, below.



We Welcome Our Presiding Bishops

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, episcopal leader of the New England Conference, was elected to the episcopacy in July 2004, and served the Greater New Jersey Conference for eight years before being reassigned to New England in 2012.

Bishop Alfred E. Johnson was elected to the episcopacy in July 1996, and was assigned to lead what were then the two conferences in the New Jersey Area. He retired from the active episcopacy in 2004, and a year later was appointed as the lead pastor to bring together three congregations in Greenwich Village as The Church of the Village.

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, a daughter of the New York Annual Conference, will lead the recognition, commissioning and ordination service on Saturday. She was serving as the superintendent of the Connecticut/New York District when she was elected to the episcopacy in 2004. She served the Susquehanna Conference before retiring in 2012.

