



JULY - AUGUST 2025

Sending forth

From the Pastor



The Rev. Richard Moeller

What, it is late June, already?? If it would quit raining, we could have a great "Welcome Summer!" party. The weather has been so crazy. Hopefully it will settle down and we can have an amazing summer.

You received an email from Tom Bone announcing the West Virginia Annual Conference has made their pastoral appointment for Concord United Methodist Church for Conference Year 2025-26.

Joyce and I are honored and excited to serve Concord and this wonderful Family of Faith for another year. We look forward to what God has in store for Concord, each of you, and us. I pray for God's guidance for each of us.

July 4th is coming quickly. I hope you all enjoy the holiday and are careful as you celebrate. Athens-Concord Town Social is coming up August 17th. Concord UMC will have a presence at this event. Invite lots of friends to stop by our tent and visit.

I have always said there is a self-fulfilling prophecy about summer church attendance. People are on vacation during the summer, have family and friends in to visit, and attendance at church seems to go down. So, some people think because "no one else will be there, we aren't going to go today." Let's not think this way.

We have great worship with a lot of people or just a few. It's always better when there are a lot of your family and friends in attendance with whom to share worship. But even with just a few, we can have spirit-filled worship.

Please see Moeller, page 4



The Rev. Debra Wallace-Padgett (front center), bishop of the West Virginia Area, stands beside a cross as she convenes the final ceremony of the 2025 Annual Conference, on June 14 in Buckhannon. Clergy in white robes stand in pews at Wesley Chapel during the Service of Licensing, Commissioning, and Ordination.

Quoting Methodism founder John Wesley, the Rev. Debra Wallace-Padgett began her first annual conference business session as bishop on June 11 with the words, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

Attendees heard the Bible verse from the Second Letter of Peter that provided the conference's

overall theme: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."

Sessions in Wesley Chapel dealt with stacks of required paperwork, but the three-day meeting at West Virginia Wesleyan College in

Buckhannon also provided opportunities for worship and encouragement.

In the laity session, the Rev. Robin Crews Wilson talked about the recent changes in the United Methodist Church and the need for church renewal.

Please see Conference, page 2

The Reverend Richard H. Moeller reappointed



The re-appointment of Reverend Richard Moeller was announced by West Virginia Annual Conference Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett on June 14.

The pastor will lead our congregation for another year, again juggling retirement, family gatherings – and his unique clock-making hobby – with a strong commitment to Concord UMC.

The chairman of the CUMC Staff-Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Tom Bone III, said, "We are grateful for Pastor Moeller's continued dedication and spiritual leadership, and the love and energy he gives to our church community. Let us welcome another season of growth, faith, and fellowship with Pastor Moeller as our guide.

Budget Snapshot

Total year-to-date:

Contributions Received

\$44,250

Apportionment Money
Received

\$2,656

Apportionments Paid

\$5,550

Church Statistics

WV Annual Conference

Membership, 2024*:

72,275

Membership, 2023:

78,767 (decrease of
6,492 or 8.24%)

Baptisms, 2024*:

413

Baptisms, 2023: 497

*from churches' Statistical
Reports of December 31,
2024.

WVUMC Budget /

"Opportunities for
Ministry," proposed 2026:

\$7,940,389

Budget, 2025:

\$9,323,008 (decrease for
next year of -14.83%)

Concord UMC 2024 "Fair
Share" Apportionment:

\$20,712

(100% paid!)

Concord UMC 2025 "Fair
Share" Apportionment:

\$22,198

Community Garden sprouts again



Planting Day
2025



How does your garden grow?



(Conference, from page 1)

"The landscape is different," she said. "God is calling us in a mighty way to step up and lead. ... This should be called a resurrection of the church. We are excited, but we know this is tinged with grief."

She noted, "John Wesley led people through tough seasons in his early ministry. He focused on discipleship. People. Making disciples of God to transform the world is our mission."

Wilson explained Wesley's definition of discipleship: "A disciple is growing in love. It is not a destination you reach. It is a journey you are on. It is not about perfection."

Later, the Rev. Amy Shanholtzer noted, "There's been change. We can't control change. What we are called to do is to be in obedience to Christ!"

In a sermon on opening day, retired bishop Gregory V. Palmer declared God's invitation for us to participate in God's work of saving this world.

As Christ sat with sinners, so the church is meant to go and find the people on the margins of society, even and especially if it courts criticism, Palmer said.

"We have declined because we are disinterested in the people that the Gospel is interested in," he preached.

In the midst of the prepared reports, the conference was told that

New Vision Depot in Raleigh County. Flooding during early June had devastated parts of northern West Virginia, and the Depot was busy sending cleaning kits – also known as "flood buckets" – out from their dwindling supply.

Wallace-Padgett challenged the conference to donate enough cleaning kits by the end of July to double the Depot's stockpile – which, at that time, numbered approximately 950 buckets.

During one report, the bishop noted 125 church closures, adding that churches "have life cycles" and that each decision includes "a chance to start something new."

Friday worship included recognition of clergy retiring from the conference. This year that included our former pastor, the Rev. Felica Wooten Williams, and former district superintendent the Rev. Joe Kenaston, who delivered a memorable sermon during conference.

The business of the church included passing a resolution setting a minimum salary for pastors that represented a 2.5% increase from the current figures. For "Division 1 Clergy," the minimum is \$43,050.

The conference budget for

2026 was decreased due to a decision to shift medical insurance obligations from the conference level to individual churches and charges. This, plus a drop of more than 7 percent in apportionments to the general (worldwide) church, helped produce a 14.83 percent decrease from the 2025 budget.

Among numerous reports approved with one blanket motion, the Southern District moved the election of three District Trustees who worship in Athens: Greg Ball, David Mann and Lynn Mayberry.

At the session's concluding worship service, pastoral appointments within the conference were displayed on a video screen as the assembled worshippers prayed in unison, "Through these appointments, God – pastor and congregation, serving together – may we be for every community your living Body of Christ."

"We thank you, gracious God, for raising up among us faithful servants. Clothe them with your righteousness, and grant that we, with them, may glorify you by giving ourselves to others."

This story includes reporting by Tom Bone, Pam Braden, The Rev. John Langenstein, and Audrey Stanton-Smith.

McDowell Water Project boosted

5K Race at Conference Raises More Than \$5K

By Audrey Stanton-Smith
WVUMC News

Residents in McDowell County will have hundreds more gallons of clean water, thanks to the inaugural West Virginia Annual Conference 5K.

The Thursday evening event drew 116 runners and walkers, between the ages of 12 and 90. They looped through the West Virginia Wesleyan College campus, athletic fields and river walk.

The participants, along with non-racing financial donors, raised \$5,363 for the McDowell Water Project, serving a county where many water sources are contaminated.

"That translates to 14 years of clean water," said event organizer Rev. Brandon Moll.

Moll explained that the 500-gallon water truck that currently serves McDowell County costs \$30 a month to fill six times. The water truck, also known as a "water buffalo," was purchased



with a grant from The United Methodist Committee on Relief's Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program.

Also, during a floor session of the Annual Conference, first-hand accounts told of people in the state's southern coalfields melting snow for drinking water; piped water used during showers that burned residents' skin; and the difficulty of cleaning up flood problems when "black water was coming from the faucets."

Organizations continuing to work together to ensure clean water access for residents throughout southern

West Virginia include From Below: Rising Together for Coalfield Justice, WVUMC Disaster Response Ministries, the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia, and Hope in the Mountains.

If you would like to donate to the McDowell Water Project, visit www.wvumc.org and click "Donate."

Additional information:

Beginning in 2025 volunteers will make six deliveries each month to areas of McDowell County that are most neglected. Expenses incurred will be upkeep and maintenance of the trailer, fuel for volunteer vehicles, and the purchase of water to be delivered. Your support of this effort will witness the love of Christ to our neighbors in need and remind them that they are not forgotten.

This is a partnership between the West Virginia Conference Disaster Response Ministries, the churches of the Welch Charge and other community volunteers.

Constitutional amendments voted on

By Tom Bone III

One task at each of the United Methodist Church Annual Conferences this year is to vote on four proposed amendments to the church constitution, which were passed in 2024 by the worldwide General Conference of United Methodists. The amendments were voted on by the West Virginia Annual Conference on June 13.

The amendments will not take effect unless they get at least two-thirds approval by all Annual Conference voters worldwide. Those aggregate voting results will probably not be released until November. Results of individual Annual Conferences are not being divulged.

The Annual Conferences were not permitted to make any changes in the content, so that the same wording would be voted on by all conferences. Delegates could, and did, debate

the meaning of the wording, but could not change it.

If Amendment No. 1 ("Regionalization") passes, the church will have nine regions: one for the United States and others to encompass Africa, Europe, and the Philippines.

No region could create its own constitution, or adopt policies in violation of the church's General Book of Discipline. Further, a regional conference could not alter the denomination's Doctrinal Standards, Social Principles, or statements describing Our Theological Task or The Ministry of All Christians.

Regions could, among other things, develop practices around marriage ceremonies, funerals and other rites that align with cultural contexts and laws in each country. They could also set standards for lay membership, clergy ordination, and licensed ministry. They could issue their own regional Book of Discipline, hymnals and other liturgical resources.

Bishop Tracy Smith Malone has said the amendment would "expand the Church's witness, embrace the cultural diversity, strengthen the connection and empower each missional context."

Amendment No. 2 ("Inclusiveness") would add "ability or gender" to the statement that "All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible" to participate in our worship and to obtain membership.

Amendment No. 3 ("Racial Justice") would replace existing language by calling for "confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy, in every facet of life and in society at large."

Amendment No. 4 addresses educational and service requirements that pastors must meet before they could be elected delegates to General Conferences.

Calendar



Friday, July 4
4th of JULY

Sunday, July 6
11 AM – Worship

Thursday, July 10
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Sunday, July 13
11 AM – Worship, Holy Communion, Children's Church

Monday, July 14
7 PM — Tom Bone's Cartoon Show Reception, Bluefield Arts Center

Thursday, July 17
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Sunday, July 20
11 AM – Worship

Thursday, July 24
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Sunday, July 27
11 AM – Worship & Children's Church

Thursday, July 31
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Saturday, August 2
8 AM — Men's Breakfast
Anderson Hall

Sunday, August 3
11 AM – Worship & Holy Communion

Thursday, August 7
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Sunday, August 10
11 AM – Worship & Children's Church

Thursday, August 14
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Sunday, August 17
11 AM – Worship
1 PM – Town Social

Thursday, August 21
6 PM – Yoga, Anderson Hall

Sunday, August 24
11 AM – Worship & Children's Church

If you are watching services from home and want a hymnal to join in, let us know and we will get you one! Please email:

secretary@concordathens.org

Church staff

Pastor:

Richard Moeller

Church Secretary:

Jayne Ford Jones

Worship Leader/Vocalist:

Elizabeth Muldoon

Musician/Technician:

Justin Hill

Technician:

Matthew Thomas

Custodian:

Carol McManaway

CrossTalk Designers:

Tom Bone III

Jayne Ford Jones

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Summer is here! Music in the Park

Saturday July 12 Pieces Of One 7pm to 9pm

Lumberjack Grill Food Truck

Saturday July 19 Triple Threat 7pm to 9pm

Lumberjack Grill Food Truck

Saturday July 26 Pubknockers 7pm to 9pm

PVHS Band Bake Sale



(Moeller, from page 1)

One thing I would encourage is to invite others to share our worship.

I look forward to seeing what God has for us this coming year. We can do some great things for the Kingdom if we think outside the box and work together for new

and different things.

Thank you for trusting me to lead you this coming year. I look forward to a productive and exciting year.

Yours in Christ,

Athens-Concord Town Social

Saturday, August 17th

Join us for the 37th annual community event! Live music, lots of vendors (including food), car show, children's games and giveaways, and more! All on the front lawn at Concord University.

Shakespeare's "King Henry V" will be performed at Pipestem Resort State Park on July 18-20 and at the Concord Fine Arts Center on July 25-27. Admission is free. Donations to the Appalachian Shakespeare Project are welcome.



CONCORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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