



Friday June 7, 2024

# 2024 Daily Circuit



## Bishop: 'Reclaim the Good News'



Photo by Sarah Wilmoth

By Audrey Stanton-Smith

Citing Luke 2:10, Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez called on the body of Annual Conference to share the love of Christ with as many people as possible and live together as a connectional family.

"Like the people of Luke's time, the people of today need good news," the visiting bishop from the Upper New York Conference said during the opening worship of the 2024 West

Virginia Annual Conference. "We need a fresh and renewed sense of joy in our lives," Burgos Núñez said. "The world is filled with bad news, horrible news, scary news. The world is filled with despair, with fear, with brokenness, with more frequent natural disasters that are getting worse every time because of climate change, wars that are born out of a sinful desire for power and intolerance, a polarized society due to political and religious extremism, and the persistent evils of racism and national exceptionalism that insist on labeling some people as less than."

But amid that chaos is good news, the bishop reminded the congregation.

"We celebrate that God's love for us is so big that God gave us Jesus so that all who call upon his name and believe experience healing and abundant lives," he said. "... We are humbled by the realization that Christ died for us while we were still sinners."

The joy that comes from that good news must carry us through this season of change.

Read the full article at [www.wvumc.org](http://www.wvumc.org).

## State of the Church: 'Embody the Love of Christ'

By John Langenstein

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball delivered the 2024 State of the Church Address Thursday evening at Annual Conference.

Beginning with a survey of the work and struggles the church has faced across her 12-year tenure as bishop, she highlighted how God has walked alongside the people of God to see them through their hardships.

"Thank you, God, for meeting us, abiding with us on this journey of life and faith," she prayed.

Moving to General Conference, the bishop highlighted the spirit of love and respect shared between delegates. Even contentious matters were handled with kindness, and the atmosphere and consensus between delegates made it clear that "Jesus

was present," Steiner Ball said.

The bishop said she believes this spirit can also define the West Virginia Conference.

"We are called to continue to embody the love of Christ in our interactions with one another and in the ways we engage in ministry together," she said. "Our unity is in Christ. ... It is more important than ever to engage in respectful dialogue, compassionate listening, and prayerful practice with one another."

Read the full story and watch the video at [www.wvumc.org](http://www.wvumc.org).



Photo by Jonathan Nettles

## Today's Schedule

8:30 AM

Plenary Session @ Wesley Chapel

11:30 AM-1 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM

Plenary Session

4:30 PM

Historic Questions and Retirement Celebration

6 PM

Dinner with Ice Cream Social to Follow

Where in the painting is Francis Asbury?



# Cranes From Across the Connection Have Roosted in Wesley Chapel!

By John Langenstein

The West Virginia Conference Justice and Advocacy Team began an initiative in February to create visual prayers for peace. Inspired to act by the ongoing conflict in Gaza, the cranes represent over 6,000 prayers for an end to the war. Diann Nickerson, certified lay minister, was among those who blessed the cranes, having previously taught a class and written a devotional for those who folded the origami avians across a five-week period. Rev. Cindy Briggs-Biondi, pastor of Saint Marks United Methodist Church, also blessed some of the cranes, praying that

they, “might take flight in our heart to make us instruments of your [God’s] peace...” The initiative took off beyond West Virginia – reaching Wisconsin, Maine, and Virginia. Rev. Lisa Fox, annual conference prayer coordinator and member of the congregational vitality team, composed a breath prayer and attached it to each crane. The prayer is simple, “breathe peace in me and through me.” Attendees are encouraged to take a crane home with them as a reminder of the need for peace, the good news of Christ’s perfect peace, and to pray for the same.



Photos by Bill Eades

## Associates, Licensed Pastors Celebrated

By Jim Minutelli

Licensed pastors and associate members from all over the West Virginia Conference gathered at Chapel Hill UMC in Buckhannon on Thursday for lunch, recognition, and a time of devotion, hosted by the Fellowship of Licensed Pastors & Associate Members of the West Virginia Conference.

Gwen Wolford, interim chair of the Fellowship, told the group how vital their role is in the connection and thanked them for their service.

She shared that the Fellowship advocates for licensed pastors all over the country and

shared a short devotional with the group.

Loretta Isaiah, superintendent from the Little Kanawha District, shared her appreciation while stating that the West Virginia Conference has more licensed pastors than any other Annual Conference in the United States.

“Thank you for everything you do to fulfill our purpose of the church as we focus on sharing Jesus Christ with others,” was the main message of Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball as she addressed attendees.

Visit the organization’s website at [NFAMLP.org](http://NFAMLP.org) for more information.



Gwen Wolford addresses NFAMLP. Photo by Jim Minutelli

## Laity Gathering: ‘Respond to God’s Love’

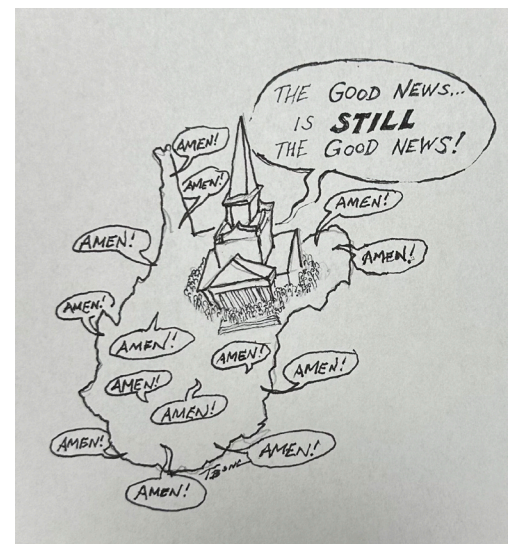
By Audrey Stanton-Smith

The most newly elected bishop for the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church addressed a dining hall of more than

400 laity Thursday afternoon at the West Virginia Annual Conference and called on them to think about why they do what they do.

“We all start as laity in our ministries,” said Christi Wilkerson, outgoing conference lay leader, as she introduced the Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez, the first Puerto Rican and Hispanic bishop in the Northeast Jurisdiction.

Burgos Núñez spoke about the importance of fostering an intentional and healthy ethos of collaboration between clergy and laity in ministry — a combination he called “clayity.”



Comic by Tom Bone



Ellen Krimmel, left, and Judi Kenaston, enjoy refreshments and discussion during Thursday’s laity session. Photo by Melissa Paugh

Read the full article at [www.wvumc.org](http://www.wvumc.org).