

Baltimore-Washington Conference

# e-connection

"Transformed Lives Transform Lives"

January 4, 2021

## Prayers of the People



*May the light of the star that once guided wise men to honor Jesus' birth, now guide us to recognize God and to see the Holy Spirit in the epiphanies of the daily experiences of our lives.*

# Pray

*A weekly prayer for the Baltimore-Washington Conference from the Appointive Cabinet.*

*"O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home;*

*A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone, short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.*

*O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, still be our guard while troubles last, And our eternal home."*  
(O God, Our Help in Ages Past, UMH 117)



Most gracious God,  
We give you thanks for your steadfast love.  
You have not changed in loving and caring for us.

We confess that the past year has been challenging in many ways. We are uncertain whether the new year is going to be better. Yet, we hope and expect that you will remain steadfast as you have been in the past.

As we begin this year, we yearn for God, who brings us new hope each day.

We pray that:  
the pandemic will end soon,  
no more people die of the Coronavirus,  
the economy will recover,  
justice prevails in our society, and  
no family will suffer from hunger.

Gracious God, grant us a strong faith that withstands all the things life throws at us. We lack nothing as long as we have you, O Lord.

Together, we call out in the words of Habakkuk 3:17-18:

*"Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,  
yet we will rejoice in the Lord,  
We will be joyful in God, my Savior."*

Amen.

## Rock(ish) registration is now open

**ROCK(ish) 2021** is a free interactive online experience for youth scheduled for Feb 5-6.

Friday night will feature an interactive time with Bishop Easterling, as well as music by Urban Street Level and the ROCK Mass Choir.

Saturday's session will offer a range of virtual interactive breakout sessions. Topics will include addressing racism, human rights, mental health, life after high school, and regional breakouts. At 9 a.m., there will be a youth-leader training.



[Register now](#)

## Discipleship Opportunities

**New People, New Places: A Wesleyan Lens of Fresh Expressions** is a yearlong [experience for congregations](#) that includes live webinar training, independent team learning of 17 modules at your own pace, and an ongoing cohort/incubator group to help you set goals and encourage you in the process. It means equipping United Methodists to go out into physical and digital spaces and to meet new people in new places to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them through ongoing relationships. The BWC's New Faith Expressions is one of the sponsors of this program, along with Path 1, so there is no cost to any of our churches. To learn more, contact the **Rev. Bill Brown**, director of New Faith Expressions, at [bbrown@bwcumc.org](mailto:bbrown@bwcumc.org).

**"Breathe: A Clergy Care Retreat"** will be held **Jan. 27** from 9 a.m. to noon. Led by **Rev. Twanda Prioleau**, this workshop will focus on statistics surrounding clergy burnout, avoiding the pitfalls that lead to burnout and finding your rhythm of rest. It is only when the soul can breathe does it open itself for healing. [Register online](#) by Jan 26.

**Best Practices for Church Cemetery Associations: The MidAtlantic United Methodist Foundation** will host a Zoom webinar on "Church Cemeteries: Best Practices for Cemetery Associations," which will include information on how to establish such a grave undertaking and manage an association. The training is on Tuesday, Jan. 12, at 9:30 a.m., and will be led by John Strawbridge, chair of the Conference Trustees. Join the Zoom webinar at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87808867770?pwd=TTJuYUY2Q0ZERUxrNm1SGY3VlBidz09>  
The passcode is "Cemetery."

**LEAD 2021**, a grassroots conference for lay and clergy leaders, will take place online Jan. 25-26. It will feature 14 speakers and leaders who will offer stories of how they've led through these unprecedented times. Baltimore-Washington's own **Rev. Alexis Brown** and **Holly Reynolds Lee** will be speaking at this year's conference. In addition to the talks, there are breakouts, networking opportunities, opening mixers, fun social activities, and more. [Learn more](#).

**Project Transformation**, the BWC's partner that runs a summer literacy program, is opening its summer internship application process for young adults to work with children and literacy this summer in Washington and Baltimore. Young adults seeking to live in Beloved Community and share God's transformative love, should apply by Feb. 1. Young adults can [apply online](#). If you have any questions about the internship, reach out to the Program Director, [Rhea Williams](#). Those who apply to Project Transformation are asked to consider the thoughts of **Valarie Kaur**: "Revolutions do not happen only in grand moments in public view but also in small pockets of people coming together to inhabit a new way of being. We birth the beloved community by becoming the beloved community... When a critical mass of people practice together, in community and as part of movements for justice, I believe we can begin to create the world we want, here and now."

**The deadline for submitting church statistical reports has been extended to March 1.** More information about the Statistical Reports can be [found here](#). In addition, church leaders will want to review the recently revised [2020 EZRA Table Instructions](#), which contains **updated guidance regarding worship attendance and COVID-19 grants/relief**.

## Advocacy and Action



The **BWC's Racial Justice Committee** has been committed to shining a light on systemic racism within our churches and within our society at large. We invite you to stand for justice at this pivotal moment in history. Here's how:

### **Equity 2.0 Cohorts starts Jan. 7**

Sign up for the EQ 2.0 Cohort, designed to help co-create a vision of a world rooted in belonging without racial bias and different forms of othering. If you are ready to take the next step and want to find encouragement to

stay the course to justice and learn evidence-based strategies for building beloved communities, sign up today. This cohort will serve as a support mechanism for making this call to action a priority. Built on a system of accountability, you will partner with others who've made a commitment to the work in building equity and justice for all of God's children. [Learn more](#). Join an [Equity 2.0 informational meeting](#) Thursday, Jan. 7, from 7 to 8 p.m.

- **Mapping a Path to Healing around the supper table begins Jan. 12**

For those looking to have rich and deep conversations with people within and beyond their circles through virtual suppers, we invite you to join in "Mapping a Path to Healing: A Journey to Beloved Community." One of the most significant ways to celebrate who we are and where we come from is often found through conversations that happen as we break bread together with those like and unlike us. We invite you to join us at the beginning of 2021 to engage in five "supper sessions" to gain the skills and tools needed to build a more equitable future by understanding each other. [Learn more](#). Join an [informational meeting](#) Tuesday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m.

- **Join a We Rise United Prayer Call on Wednesday, Jan. 6, from 7 to 7:30 a.m.**

Those participating in the online prayer will look to God for help, guidance, and support during this time, and as we journey forward towards reaching the goal of being an anti-racist Church. Join us

on the first and third Wednesdays of each month beginning in January as we lift our voices and be heard so that together, We Rise United. [Join the Zoom call](#). The passcode is 943338; or connect by phone at 301-715-8592.

## Young People's Ministry

**College Scholarship Applications now open:** The BWC awards scholarships for qualified students currently attending college, as well as high school seniors who plan to attend college in the fall of 2021. The application process is now open and closes March 24. A variety of scholarships are offered to fit the diverse needs of our students. To be considered for a scholarship, students must complete the full online application, which includes uploading their current transcripts and providing references from their pastor and another person in their church. [Learn more and apply](#).

## Wellness and Missions

**Virtual mission trip aids children:** Join in the spirit of mission, Jan. 12-14, on a journey to Zimbabwe, Kenya, and India to help children help themselves. Register for the ZOE Virtual Mission Trip, sponsored by the East Ohio Conference. The ZOE Zimbabwe Connection has been empowering orphans since 2005. [Learn more and register](#).

## Around the Connection

**Wesley Doctor of Ministry in Soul Care for Pastors, Chaplains and Clinicians; New Track Begins this May:** 2020 may be over, but it has taken a toll on us all, particularly for those called to care for the souls of persons and congregations: pastors, chaplains, and clinicians. Why not commit to self-care in 2021 and renew, refresh, and support your essential ministry in care and counseling by starting your Doctor of Ministry in Soul Care for Pastors, Chaplains, and Clinicians at Wesley? A new Soul Care cohort begins in May 2021. Deadline to apply is February 15. For more information, contact **Rev. Chip Aldridge** at [caldridge@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:caldridge@wesleyseminary.edu) or call 703-736-1549. View the course schedule at <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/soul-care/>  
To apply: <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/apply/>.

Also, save the date: **Wesley Doctor of Ministry Info Day Webinar**, Tuesday, January 12, from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Learn about all our Doctor of Ministry degree areas of focus at our upcoming webinar. Tour the Wesley campus virtually, explore 2021 tracks, Q & A, and more. Register to receive Zoom access to the webinar at <http://ow.ly/A0r150CYvfC>.

## Submissions?

Melissa Lauber, Director of  
Communications  
11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD  
20759  
410.309.3455 | [milauber@bwcumc.org](mailto:milauber@bwcumc.org)



**Baltimore-Washington Conference**  
The United Methodist Church

