

The Woman's Pulpit

April-
June
2020

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Ethiopia—

Rapid Church Growth Challenges Seminary

Ethiopia's population is growing. It is a country in quick development but also one where poverty, ethnic conflicts and natural disasters have placed many people in a precarious situation.

In the midst of this flux is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, (EECMY), a growing church with a current membership of more than 9.3 million believers. Its congregations reach across all the country's nine regions.

But how do you preach the Gospel in a country of more than 80 languages? And how do you secure a strong theological foundation among those who are to take on the preaching role?

Facing the challenges of this fast-growing church is the Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, which has a long tradition of theological education. It is almost as old as the church itself, which since its beginning in 1963 has been a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Its president, Rev. Dr. Bruk Ayele Asale, tells the story of an institution that faces and is taking on many challenges in changing times and an institution that remains firm in the belief that theological education is the foundation on which the church's ministry must stand. Today Mekane Yesus teaches 1,400 students across four colleges of Theology, Music and Media, Management and Leadership and Theological Studies.

"We have so many young people who are passionate to serve the church, and to spread the Gospel," he said, while explaining that this does not come without challenges. The seminary is at the brink of the capacity of its facilities, and is coming out of a transition period of changing funding structures and scholarship models.

A particular challenge, he said, is getting women into ministry.

"Women's ordination has been fully

accepted in the EECMY, but women are still underrepresented at seminary," he said. "We are strongly pushing now for full scholarship programs for female students."

Reflecting on the role of the seminary in a church with 9,000+ congregations and several thousand emerging ones, Bruk shared the seminary's vision of an academically more fully equipped facility, of better developed campus sites and of increased capacity.

Seminary vice president Dr. Haragewen Abraham Kinde described recent

work in rebuilding the seminary campus in Bishoftu, Oromia regional state, reviving its ministry after a 40-year down period. "We know from the Bible that God's miracles often happen after 40 years," she said.

"Ethiopia's population is growing and the tradition is still strong to bring your children to your church. If you are Mekane Yesus, your children become Mekane Yesus. Our church is growing and we have to prepare for it." Bruk added. (Lutheran World Information)

UMC Worldwide Ratifies Women's Equality Amendment

United Methodists around the globe have amended the denomination's constitution to proclaim men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The newly adopted measure also commits United Methodists to work toward ending discrimination against women and girls.

By November 6 the amendment had received 92.2% of the annual conference votes submitted to the Council of Bishops, the council's secretary, Bishop Mande Muyombo, announced. He leads conferences in the North Katanga area of Congo. This vote, which started in May, took place over the months following at annual conference sessions spread across four continents.

"While we still have much progress to make, this is an indication that we as a church do acknowledge and embrace women at every level of the church," said Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, president of the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women. She also leads the East Ohio Conference in the U.S. United Methodist Church.

The full amendment United Methodists have ratified says:

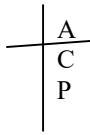
"As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God.

The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women's and girl's equality and well-being."

Carol Napier, a member of Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church in the U.S. North Georgia Conference, submitted the original amendment to the 2016 General Conference.

"I introduced the constitutional amendment for all the girls around the world who are raised in churches that tell them in subtle and not so subtle

(Continued on page 2)



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United Methodists—

(Continued from page 1)

ways that they are second—class citizens—and for the women who have worked so hard to eliminate sexism in the church,” said the longtime Sunday school teacher.

“Now we have a powerful tool to help transform our churches into places that live God’s truth that women and girls are made in the image of God and therefore are of infinite worth. I give thanks to the One who created us all and calls each one of us to be an instrument of healing and justice.”

Dawn Wiggins Hare, top executive of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, said Napier’s amendment shows the power of one person to make a difference. The commission, created by General Conference in 1972, has the task of working toward the elimination of sexism in the life of the church.

“What is so significant that the church has affirmed the biblical teaching that women are created in the image of God,” Hare said. “The fact that this was from a laywoman in North Georgia just represents the full inclusion as well as the power and spirit of women in the church, including our wonderful laywomen.”

Still, Hare acknowledged, the ratification was somewhat bittersweet. The commission had submitted another amendment promoting women’s equality that faced defeat in 2018.

The other measure would have added gender, ability, age and marital status to the list of characteristics that do not bar people from membership in the church. This amendment also had the support of United Methodist Women, Discipleship Ministries and the Disability Members Committee. The annual conference vote was 61.3 per cent—20,049 yes and 18,317 no.

The new amendment took effect last year and the United Methodist Publishing House is working on issuing the addition to the Book of Discipline as soon as possible. The Book of Discipline contains the constitution and other church policies and teachings. This amendment will be the Discipline’s new Paragraph 6.

(United Methodist News)

In the News

United States

The Rt. Rev. Lucinda Beth Ashbey was consecrated on January 11 as bishop of El Camino Real Diocese of the Episcopal Church.

On January 1 Presbyterian Church (USA) Christian educator **Agnes Peebles**, now retired, who served the Synod of the Trinity from 1973-87 as a Christian educational consultant for the Presbyteries of Carlisle and Donegal, celebrated her 100th birthday at Sherwood Oaks Retirement Community in Cranberry Township near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

At the Lakeside Historical Museum in Lakeside, New Jersey, IAWM past president **the Rev. Dr. Jeane B. Williams** has been honored with a plaque citing her lifetime of work recording the history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Her work is archived at the museum.

United Methodist pastor **the Rev. Rebekah Simon Peter** reflects on the power of spirituality, a surprise vision, and her work in leadership development in her latest book, *Dream Like Jesus: Deepen your Faith and Bring the Impossible to Life*.

Candler School of Theology **Dean Jan Love**, who is also professor of Christianity and World Politics, was appointed to serve as interim provost and executive vice president for academic affairs on December 16.

RCWP Ordination

San Diego, California

On February 1 Bishops Jane Via and Suzanne Thiel ordained **Kori Pacyniak**

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World's RCWP Bishops Ask Focus On Multiple Urgent Public Issues

25 November 2019

We, the undersigned Roman Catholic Women Bishops, call upon our brother bishops to re-evaluate their latest statement regarding the priorities for the Catholic people. On November 12, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a letter that will serve as the introduction to a voting guide that will be issued before the 2020 U. S. election.

In that document, the bishops cite a singular “preeminent priority” for Catholics to consider as they cast their ballots, which effectively dilutes the importance of all other prominent social issues.

We concur with and applaud the efforts of Bishop McElroy, Cardinal Cupich and Cardinal Tobin who warned the bishops against advocating for exclusive, single-issue choices. Pope Francis, in his exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, also pointed to the danger inherent in the reductionist approach of defending only one issue.

We are vitally concerned with the extremely urgent issue of a climate emergency, which will affect all of God's people and all of God's creation.

We are vitally concerned with U. S. immigration policies that separate children from their parents and hold children and adults in cage-like structures, while denying many asylum-seekers due process. In addition, we abhor the current efforts to deport DACA recipients. We are vitally concerned with gun violence, with overt and covert racism, and white supremacy in this country.

We are vitally concerned about the inequity of health care, especially as it pertains to the poor. We are vitally concerned with the lack of equality for women and the lack of respect for women's leadership both in the Church and society.

As people in search of the common good, we must grapple with many social justice problems without the limitations implied by one preeminent priority.

It is our fervent hope that all citizens will exercise their responsibility to inform themselves and weigh the consequences of each and every moral issue of the day.

In Christ,

+Suzanne Thiel, Bishop, RCWP-USA Western Region – Portland, Oregon suzthiel@yahoo.com

+Jean Marie Marchant, Bishop, RCWP-USA Eastern Region – Framingham, Massachusetts

+Nancy L. Meyer, Bishop, RCWP-USA Midwest Region – Brownsburg, Indiana

+Jane Via, Bishop, RCWP-USA Western Region – San Diego, California

+Patricia Fresen, RCWP South Africa – Johannesburg, South Africa

+Jane Kryzanowski, Bishop, RCWP Canada – Regina, Saskatchewan

+Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger, Bishop, RCWP Europe - Pettenbach, Austria

+Ida Raming, Bishop, RCWP Europe—Stuttgart, Germany

+Marie Evans Bouclin, Bishop Emerita, RCWP Canada – Sudbury, Ontario

+Merlene Olivia Doko, Bishop Emerita, RCWP-USA Western Region - Pismo Beach, California

+Andrea M. Johnson, Bishop Emerita, RCWP-USA Eastern Region – Annapolis, Maryland

+Sibyl Dana Reynolds, Bishop Emerita, RCWP-USA Western Region - Pebble Beach, California

+Joan M. Houk, Bishop retired, RCWP-USA Great Waters Region – South Bend, Indiana

World Council of Churches Assembly XI

**The 2021 Assembly of the World
Council of Churches
Will Take Place
In Karlsruhe, Germany
On September 8-15, 2021**

**IAWM's Assembly will take place
In conjunction with Assembly XI.**

**Watch for dates and
Add them to your calendar.**

April-June 2020/3

Ebony Bishops Seek Voice in UM Future

The Ebony Bishops of the United Methodist Church (African American bishops serving in the United States) have called on the denomination to include African-American clergy and laity in the ongoing discussions on the future of the church, as they provide the unique voice of hope for the future not only for the Black church, but also for the unity of the entire denomination.

In a statement released last October 21 by co-chairs Bishop LaTrelle Easterling of Baltimore-Washington Conference and Bishop Leonard Fairley of Kentucky Conference the Ebony Bishops said the voice of the Black church has, within its spiritual, historical and theological DNA, a word that needs to be spoken into the current conversations being held within the United Methodist Church.

“Our witness is grounded within the deliverance from enslavement, Jim Crow, the exclusionary practice of The Central Jurisdiction and the ongoing discrimination in our world,” the statement said, adding

“The Black church understands the prophetic witness required in *liminal* spaces, spaces of the already and not yet. Our faith, praise, stewardship and disciple-making focus did not and has not wavered, even as we yet await full justice and righteousness both within and without the church. The brokenness of our world and denomination can benefit from this steadfast experience and voice.” (United Methodist News)

Atlanta Center Creates Harris Justice Project

On November 16 the U.S. Episcopal Church's Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta, Georgia, launched the Bishop Barbara B. Harris Project to strengthen the church's efforts to address environmental injustice, health inequities, mass incarceration, the death penalty, inhumane immigration policies and other social justice issues.

It honors the first woman bishop in the Anglican world church (1989) who, at 89, continues to inspire by her ability to “thread the needle” of being “both kind and candid” in support of social justice issues. She attended the launch.

Global '16 Days' Effort Promotes End to Violence Against Women

The 16 Days of Activism for Ending Violence Against Women and Children is an annual global campaign from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day). The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) joined with other groups and faith-based organizations again in 2019 to focus on the theme, "Awareness, Action, Accountability."

SEMA

SEMA is a Swahili word meaning "speak out". It is also a name chosen by an international movement, a global network of victims and survivors working to end rape and wartime sexual violence currently with members in Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East.

On November 28 women representing national SEMA networks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi and Colombia brought personal testimonies to a public event in Geneva University.

The event, part of a three-day training program, included a panel discussion following screening of a film written, acted and directed by women and men survivors of rape in the war-torn DRC.

Tatania, from an eastern DRC village, who coordinates the survivor's network there, co-wrote the film and acted in it. She weeps each time she sees the film. "Making it was a first step towards breaking the silence and stigma," she said. Women and a few male survivors took part in the production because men also suffer from sexual violence in Congo, she said, and "male survivors are more stigmatized, but they hold their anger and pain, which is destroying communities."

The DRC network of over 3,300 members works in five of the worst affected provinces to help survivors find access to physical and mental health care to begin healing. Some also find the courage to denounce the perpetrators, but impunity and corruption are widespread. Some, lacking faith in the system, accept gifts to not seek justice.

Angela, from Colombia, heads its survivor's network to raise awareness and give women back their dignity by developing leadership skills. She said rape cases are often treated with "unimaginable cynicism" and there is collusion between perpetrators and members of the legal system.

Other survivors cited cases of family

members who were threatened, harassed, even killed in an effort to stop the women from speaking out. Some governments still do not recognize rape as a crime and weapon of war. "We need to say that we are not responsible for what we've been through," said one survivor.

SEMA members also want to break the cycle of violence by educating children so that "they understand in their DNA that violence is unacceptable and wrong." They urge people of all countries and walks of life to become part of this prevention campaign by helping to spread their message and support their work.

A 16 Days Round-up

In Zimbabwe where over two-thirds of all women are victims of violence, congregations in the Greater Bulawayo area have launched a two-year strategic plan which began with a Western Diocese pastors capacity building workshop. Activities organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe during the 16 Days campaign include an awareness training with community leaders, a march with speeches, dramas, sports, music, poems and a modeling event where young men and women hold placards about equality and cooperation to end gender violence.

In Papua New Guinea men and women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church held 20 days of activism focused on ending domestic violence. At a peace march to launch the campaign participants wore orange to highlight the United Nations theme of breaking the silence and making women's voices heard. Where there are increasing reports of abuse against women and girls in public spaces such as markets and bus stops, the church is working to educate children and parents about respect, equality and right relationships.

In Latin America churches produced liturgies for services to mark the Interna-

tional Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, November 25, and International Women's Day, March 8. Trends by governments to roll back women's rights lead churches to insist on Luther's principle of the 'church as a community of equals' to challenge narratives of subordination and suspicion.

In India, where working for justice for women can be dismissed as a form of neocolonialism, speaking out against violence against women is an all-year-round activity. LWF Council member and women's desk secretary for the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India Ranjita Borguari describes the difficulty of speaking out. At first, she said, some church leaders said, "This is foreign policy; this is not our church." But through patient work by prophetic women and men, "a dialogue has started and the UELCI alongside (Christ Lutheran Church of India) has officially adopted its own gender justice policy."

In Myanmar on November 25 a presentation was developed to guide discussions that reflected on gender-related attitudes, norms and behaviors influencing their professional and personal lives. LWF Myanmar Gender and Protection Coordinator said, "Staff will write their individual commitments to promote gender justice and fight sexual violence on boards located in the different offices. Compliance...will be monitored throughout the year by our Complaints and Response Department."

In Sitwe, capital of Rakhine State, plays on domestic violence were organized in eight camps for internally displaced Rohingyas. In each camp about 100 people could take part in role playing to be done for and by children, emphasizing the importance of mobilizing men and boys in the transformation process.

LWF Myanmar also shared in a state-level and national campaign led by UN women, UNCHR and UNFPA. Under the global theme, "Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape" the campaign issues a call to listen to and believe survivors, to end the culture of silencing and to put survivors at the center of responses. Through diverse initiatives the campaign united government, civil society and non-governmental organizations to fight gender based violence.

(Lutheran World Information)

Remembering—

The Rev. Dr. Beverly W. James

(1955-2020)

The Rev. Dr. Beverly W. James, a minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA), died on January 23 in Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania. She was 68.

She began her life work as a Volunteer in Mission in Thailand teaching English as a second language for five years.

A graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, she served many congregations as Interim Pastor and had a strong commitment to assisting churches and pastors in times of transition. She served as Moderator of the Pittsburgh Presbytery for two terms. As adjunct faculty she taught at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, the University of Pittsburgh and La Roche College.

James earned a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Communications from the University of Pittsburgh, a Master of Arts in English from Carnegie Mellon University and an A.B. in English from Brown University. She was an accomplished violinist, avid reader, and movie lover and enjoyed spending time at the beach with her family.

James is survived by two daughters, Julia and Jessica Mosely, a granddaughter, Aria Mullen and two brothers, Howard and David James.

Korean Anglicans Hold Forum On Gender-Based Violence

Led by Ruth Choi, Executive Director of Women's Mission Centre for the Anglican Church of Korea (ACK), women leaders in that church took part in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence for the first time in 2019, reported Rachel Farmer. Held in partnership with the Women's Bureau, an introductory keynote presentation by Sun Hee Yang, a general in the ACK was followed by a workshop to take forward advocacy and support the campaign across the churches.

Led by the Rev. Deborah Kim, director of the Gender Equality Bureau and the Women's Board, organizers focused on raising awareness on the various forms of violence and calling for work to prevent and end violence against women and girls. "The majority of women members do not pay attention to these issues and think we do not have any problems in terms of violence against women and girls or rape," said Choi.

Prayers were shared on eliminating violence through social networking services such as Facebook, BAND, KakoTalk and text messages. Orange ribbons were distributed with phrases such as "Safe Church without Violence" and "Calling for Peace" to all clergy and synod members of three dioceses. Choi promised the Women's Centre "will continue to work for gender equality and women's empowerment to change the world and the Church."

Prayer Calendar Additions

Please make the following changes in your Prayer Calendar:

Add: April 1-7 Thelma Arnott 291 Blake St Barrie, Ontario Canada UCCa

July 8-15 Anette v. Gerber PO Box 1612 Butler, PA 16003
anettevgerber@gmail.com UM

December 10-16 Marjorie Purnine 359 Buckingham Ave Syracuse, NY 13210 UCC

December 24-31 Jessie Smith St. Ambrose Episcopal Church 830 W Bonita Claremont, CA 91711 EPIS

New email: Beverly Jo Banyay bjb098@zoominternet.net

Bea Broder-Oldach bhbroder@gmail.com

Joanne Cox joannecox2345@gmail.com

Julia Sheetz-Willard jsheetz15@gmail.com

Carol Weiss RevMrs2@gmail.com

New Address: Deb DeBoer 600 Audubon Ln Oxford, MS 38655-2404

Marlis Stoner 24829 10th Ave S Des Moines, WA 98198-8533

Pamela J. Thomas 5830 Dalgliesh Dr Regina, Sk Canada S4P4M6

Jeanne B. Williams, Hamilton Arms, S. West End Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603

Mary Jane Winter 2210 Bryan Park Ave Richmond, VA 23228

Florida Has 3rd UM Prison Congregation

Added to about 35 U.S. prison congregations last November is "The Oasis at Lowell Correctional Institution" in Ridgick, about 15 miles north of Ocala, Florida. The Florida United Methodist Church chose the correctional institution (CI) because it is one of the most populous women's CIs in the U.S., housing about 3,000 residents (called inmates), including three on death row.

Called to serve this new ministry, is the Rev. Kristina (Kris) Schonewolf, most recently pastor of Belleview UMC in nearby Belleview. She completed state-mandated training, an exhaustive background check and had a three-hour tour at Lowell. Her background includes experience with Residents Encounter Christ, a nationwide interdenominational Christian jail ministry and work at a Delaware teen detention center. She says that on hearing about the opening she instantly felt called.

The move from a 175-member church to a prison with about 3,000 women many of whom have no financial means led her to move the inmates' offering to statements of how God calls them to use their gifts within that particular body of Christ.

Services are scheduled on Sunday nights; Bible studies on other nights. She also travels the state explaining her ministry and asking for support. She is building a base of volunteers from outside the prison to support the residents and help lead the services. A goal is for residents to grow into leadership roles.

She is also working to identify churches willing to be trained to welcome women as they are released from prison. She spent four "invaluable" days training with Renee Griggs, Executive Director of Prison Congregations of America. Griggs said prisoners need, upon their release to be "lovingly received and supported by spiritual mentors, along with a community of non-judging believers who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and resources to talk with them on their journey." That is not to provide social services. They would worship with the congregation and be confident that they would be welcome in the church.

Contact Kris at pastorkrislci@comcast.net. (United Methodist News)

PC(USA) Gender & Leadership Study Opens Discussion

A 2016 study conducted by the Presbyterian Church (USA) Research Services “Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA)” identified two key findings: gender discrimination is still pervasive within the denomination, and almost half of its members are not particularly aware of it. The study is part of a larger research project assessing the status of women at all levels of the church.

The study was conducted in partnership with Racial Equality and Women’s Intercultural Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Study on the Status of Women Team created by the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. The two-fold goals were:

To learn more about how women participate in leadership in that church and

To gain deeper insights into the varying experiences of men and women in ministry, including similarities and differences in compensation, career trajectories, and decisions to leave the ministry.

A series of videos is being developed to give insight into this project. The series is intended as an educational resource for congregational use and relates to the Gender and Leadership report that was given to the 2016 General Assembly,” said Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, professor of theology at Bellarmine University. “It is hoped that this video series, which will be a part of the Academy, will be used for Sunday school classes or teachers or a confirmation class or other study groups.”

Hinson-Hasty said the videos can be used in training lay leaders as well as pastors. “We want to capture the attention and imagination of the next generation of Presbyterian and Reformed leaders,” she said.

Among women pastors surveyed in the 2016 study, 84 percent reported experiencing prejudice, harassment or discrimination based on their gender. Only about half of PC (USA) church members think gender inequality is a problem.

“How do you explain the disconnect?” asked Hinson-Hasty. “The video series will ask women in leadership roles in the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Women, based on their

UCC’s Eden Seminary Calls 1st Woman President

Early in December the Board of Trustees of Eden Theological Seminary, in St. Louis, Missouri, one of six United Church of Christ seminaries, announced the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Deborah Krause, a Presbyterian Church (USA) scholar, as its first female president. She will take office on July 1 as current president Rev. Dr. David Greenhaw retires.

She will guide the seminary as it works on multiple fronts to expand its role “as a leading resource for progressive Christianity and a catalyst for social justice,” said the news release.

A member of the faculty since 1992, Krause served the multid denominational seminary as academic dean from 2005 to 2018, completing a comprehensive curriculum revision in 2016 and leading inclusion efforts that have substantially boosted diversity on Eden’s campus. When elected president, she was professor of New Testament studies.

A prominent voice advocating for social justice in St. Louis and beyond, Krause has led efforts like the seminary community’s participation in the Ferguson Freedom Movement after the officer-involved shooting death of Michael Brown in 2014.

“Eden has served as a pillar of the progressive Christian movement, and I’m excited for the opportunity to help strengthen and expand its role in the

interaction with leaders across the denomination, what are some of the most effective ways they see pastors and other leaders addressing the disconnect.”

Other areas to explore in the video series include identifying other movements and people raising important questions of gender and leadership. How does equity fit into that conversation?

Hinson-Hasty says it is important that women’s voices across the church are heard in response to the issues and findings raised by the study,

“Videos will not focus primarily on white women’s voices, but an intentionally diverse group of women’s voices will be heard through the series,” she said. “We have intentionally videoed and recorded in different languages.”

(Presbyterian Mission Agency News)

coming months and years,” Krause said. “The theological education provided at Eden empowers church and community leaders to explore their faith, pursue racial equality, and promote interfaith collegiality and the resiliency of the church. We will work to build on this foundation moving forward.”

Krause was called after an intensive search process led by Eden Board of Trustees chair and former president and CEO of Parents and Teachers Dr. Susan Stepelton and board member and retired Energizer Holdings CEO Ward Klein. “We conducted an exhaustive search process over six months, working with a renowned national search firm” Klein said. “After hundreds of contacts and consideration of dozens of strong candidates, we are excited about the selection of Dr. Krause.”

(Presbyterian Mission Agency News)

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Columbia Seminary Announces Pastoral Excellence Programs

Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, U.S.A., offers two colloquies from its Center for Lifelong Learning this year. The Colloquy for Mid-Career Clergy, is set for September 9-11, 2020 and January 4-8, 2021 and the Colloquy for Women of Color for September 14-16, 2020 and January 25-27, 2021. Participants must commit to attend both sessions.

Co-facilitators for the Colloquy for Mid-Career Clergy are Dr. Betty Pugh Mills and the Rev. Jonathan W. Ball. Mills was most recently pastor of Hampton Baptist Church in Hampton, Virginia; she previously served Grace Baptist church in Richmond for more than 20 years. Ball, a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), is coordinator for Clinical Pastoral Education at Northside Hospital in Atlanta Georgia.

Total program fee for this colloquy is \$600. and includes five meals during each session. On-campus housing is available at special reduced rates.

The Colloquy for Women of Color features three facilitators: Karma Bowen-Johnson, Lilian (Luky) Cotto and Jhuyn Oh. Bowen-Johnson is assistant pastor at Turner Monumental AME

Church in Atlanta and director of Christian Education for both the Atlanta North Georgia Regional Conference and the Atlanta East District of the AME Church. Cotto, a native of Guatemala, serves as a missionary of the United Methodist Church's GBGM-National Plan for Hispanic-Latino Ministry and is engaged in church planting in New Jersey. Oh is director of Mid-council Ministries for the Presbyterian Church (USA) and has served as interim pastor, associate pastor and hospital chaplain.

Cost of this program is \$550. and includes five meals at each session.. On-campus housing is available at special reduced rates.

For more information, email the CCL at lifelonglearning@CTSnet.edu. (Presbyterian News Service)

Some European Bishops Support Changes in Roman Catholic Policies

The Bishop of Osnabrück in Germany is pushing for progress in the Roman Catholic Church on the questions of women's leadership, blessings for gay couples and optional priestly celibacy.

Bishop Franz-Josef Bode made an appeal in a December 27 interview with German Evangelical Press Service expressing his desire to see women ordained as deacons and for them to take on more positions of authority at both parish and diocesan levels. Earlier he made headlines by appointing a woman 'pastor' to a parish in his diocese with authority over the parish priests.

Though not going as far as Bode, Bishop of Innsbruck Herman Glettler described the veto on women's ordination as an 'injustice,' a 'wound' and 'inequality,' though he urged Catholics to focus instead on the fact that women are being included more and more in high levels of administrative responsibility that do not require ordination.

Bishop in Linz in Austria Manfred Scheuer lamented that the ban on women priests, by the unchangeable vote of tradition, had left a 'deep wound'

in the Church's ordained ranks he said he could understand.

On the subject of pastoral care for gay couples Bishop Bode was equally clear: the basic principle of love should be the moral-theological yardstick for all human relationships, including partnership and sexuality.

Bode thereby hinted at the possibility of establishing official Church blessings for gay couples—in the line, at least, of recent suggestions of German Bishops' President Cardinal Reinhard Marx.

Although sounding positive notes for women and homosexuals, Bode warned against expecting too much, too soon. Yet, he said, a particular church might make suggestions taken up by the universal Church, as, for example, the discussion being given to the Amazon synod vote on possible ordination of married men and optional celibacy.

Church Voters Accept Refugees

In December people of faith in Bismarck, North Dakota, convinced county commissioners to welcome refugees to their community. The action was required by an executive order U.S. President Donald J. Trump issued requiring state by state action to receive refugees, an unprecedented requirement.

The Rev. Gretchen Deeg, pastor of Bismarck United Church of Christ, one of several religious leaders present, said she, her church and her clergy colleagues wanted to make sure Burleigh County would accept refugees. Two commissioners were for acceptance, two against and one was undecided.

"There were at least four rows of clergy and religious orders sitting in a block near the front," she said. "In addition there were faith leaders from various denominations scattered around the room. All arrived in collar for the vote."

The members of Bismarck UCC were an important organizing presence behind that vote," Deeg said. "Our members have been mentoring, collecting donations for and volunteering alongside refugees for years and made many phone calls to organize turnout for Monday night's meeting and contact the county commissioners.

Many of the 500 present spoke out, including refugee employers and entrepreneurs, and asked for the opportunity to fill the 30,000 open jobs in Burleigh with more refugees. Burleigh County Commissioners voted in favor of giving consent to refugee resettlement.

The UCC church had cancelled Monday Bible study so people could be present at the event. On Sunday the Church Council wrote a letter to the county commissioners on behalf of the over 400-member congregation, noting that Burleigh County is a better community, both socially and economically, because of the gifts and talents of their refugee neighbors.

"Only three counties in North Dakota have the resources to accept refugees," said Deeg. "We get 20 to 30 people a year on average. About two dozen came last year. Most settle in Fargo or Grand Forks; most of the people who come here choose this place because they have family ties."

(United Church of Christ News)

In the News

England

On November 19 the consecration and installation of two women bishops, **Dover Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin and Reading Bishop Olivia Graham**, at St. Paul's Cathedral in London was followed by a reception at Lambeth Palace hosted by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. Hudson-Wilkin, the first black Anglican woman bishop, will act as suffragan bishop of Kent as well as Dover's bishop, freeing the archbishop to fulfill his responsibilities as leader of the worldwide Anglican Church and as head of the Church of England.

India

Early in December in northeast India the Evangelical Churches Association, its newest member, hosted the first of a series of consultations on Gender, Leadership and Power planned by the **World Communion of Reformed Churches**. The series seeks to advance WCRC's vision of living out the call to community and commitment to justice enabling and inviting churches to take part in God's transforming mission of gender justice and partnership.

South Africa

Noting with deep dismay last October the ongoing violence against women in South Africa and globally, the Women's Fellowship of the Anglican

Church of South Africa took to the streets to campaign and showcase their commitment in full support of ending such violence. Provincial President **Lucille Henniker**, acknowledging that the voice of women survivors of violence is almost not heard, said, "Through this campaign, we are encouraging women to break the silence by sharing their personal experiences. We endeavor to create a culture from which the dignity of each person, created in the image of God, is seen, respected and honored."

United States

Bishop Cynthia Fiero Harvey was elected president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops on November 6.

On November 25 **the Very Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas**, currently dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, was named to the Bill and Judith Moyers Chair in Theology at Union, a position previously held by the Rev. Dr. James H. Cone.

The Rev. Isaiah Shanequa Brokenleg has been named staff officer for racial reconciliation for The Episcopal Church. A member of the Presiding Bishop's staff, she will work to catalyze and organize Episcopal efforts to embrace and practice Becoming Beloved Community, the church's long-term

commitment to racial reconciliation, healing and justice.

The Rev. Martha "Marty" Stebins, consecrated Episcopal bishop of Montana on December 7 as its first female bishop, became the 100th female bishop elected since 1989 in the worldwide Anglican Communion. High-ranking leaders among them in addition to **Hudson-Wilkin** (see above) are former **U.S. Episcopal Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts-Schori** (2006-2015), **Anglican Church of Canada Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls**, elected in 2019; Archbishop of Perth, Australia **Kay Goldsworthy**, elected in 2017, and Bishop of London **Sarah Mullally**, elected in 2018, who fills one of the five permanent bishops' seats in the House of Lords, ranking third after Canterbury and York.

The Rev. Rebecca Driscoll heads the newly-created American Baptist Churches' Ministry for Creation Justice where she brings a sound biblical and theological foundation to the work of creation care and supports creation care ministries in the church's 33 regions.

(Sources: Anglican News Service, World Communion of Reformed Churches News, Anglican Church of South Africa News, United Methodist News, Union Seminary News, Episcopal News Service, supplemental research, American Baptist Churches' News.)