

The Woman's Pulpit

January-
March
2021

NEWS ABOUT ORDAINED AND LAY WOMEN IN MINISTRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

IAWM Sets Virtual Assembly On Racial Justice for July

The next international Assembly for the International Association of Women Ministers, to be held on Friday and Saturday, July 30-31, will be virtual. Its theme will be "Holy Solidarity: Embracing Racial Justice As Women in Ministry."

Women ministers and scholars from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the United States and Canada, the Middle East and India will discuss how they are facing up to issues of injustice where they live, what kinds of support they derive from those of us in the worldwide church outside their countries and how we could all work together to provide additional support. We expect to learn from each other's struggles, insights and

learnings, to feel our oneness in service to God in these struggles, and to carry away a consciousness of our oneness in our struggles, in God's strengthening and in the way we will be more at one praying for each other because of the new awareness we have of our unity in Christ.

Opening worship, hospitality time and perhaps the biannual membership meeting are being planned for Friday, July 30. On Saturday panel discussions, short talks with discussion and questions, and breakout groups by region or continent are being planned. Those attending will be able to choose from among topics and speakers, with break times for meals and stretching. Specific times for presenters and topics will be sent ahead of time.

For this reason, among others, we are asking women from around the world to register for this Assembly. Registrar Carol Brown has designed the registration form found at the top of page 7 and asks that everyone planning to participate will fill it out and mail or email it to her (both addresses on p. 7). She will report how many members and friends have registered. So invite your friends to share the Assembly. You can also register with the Ticketspice. Carol will also announce how many women from each country will be participating.

Assembly co-chairpersons Vima Couvertier-Cruz and Marian Shearer have confirmed three presenters and will report at least six more in the next issue.

Three women who will present are:

Dr. Nora Arsenian Carmi, who

will speak about the Israel/Palestine situation, writes, "My Armenian roots and 69 years of Palestine experience have brought me to a strong conviction that the Armenian genocide and the Palestinian Nakbas 'catastrophe' that made me a refugee and the ongoing Israeli occupation and terrible injustice cannot be 'just' or a part of God's 'plan'."

Born in Jerusalem, Palestine, a few months before the establishment of Israel in 1947, she has, since 1967, been a permanent resident of East Jerusalem. Her family survived the Armenian genocide of 1915.

Postpartum in a Pandemic: 2 New-Mom Pastors Share What It Was Like

Having a baby can be challenging in typical times. But for United Methodist pastors in South Carolina with newborns in the midst of a pandemic, challenges brought both troubles and great blessings, reports Jessica Brodie of United Methodist News.

Looking back, both women, now doing well as are their families, reflect on not only what they went through but also some surprising blessings they discovered.

Rev. Meg Cook

Rev. Meg Cook gave birth to her son, Leonard, in May, experiencing not only labor with a mask on, but also the challenges of pregnancy, a major postpartum hemorrhage and moving to a new church—not to mention juggling a newborn and toddler—during what has been a wildly abnormal summer.

When the pandemic hit last summer, Cook was in her last trimester with her second child and pastoring Second United Methodist Church, Winnsboro—and getting ready to move to a new

church. Her first child, son Jimmy, had recently turned one and she and her husband, John, were excitedly preparing for a home birth with a midwife. Then came COVID-19 and all their plans went awry. Instead of a home birth, their unborn child had to be induced, and Cook found herself giving birth in a hospital. "No midwife or mom or anybody, just John and I and the doctors, all in masks." Cook let out an ironic laugh. "Labor with a mask on. That was no fun."

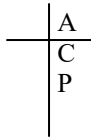
Both parents were thankful Leonard

She has served as a community builder in various religious and security civil society centers. She worked for the YWCA, Sabeel, a Liberation Theology center, and Kairos Palestine for more than 37 years and stays in close contact with the World Council of Churches' Assemblies and events.

Rev. Dora Arce-Valentin of Cuba serves as both the Moderator of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba and pastor of San Antonio de los Banos congregation. A minister for more than 25 years, she has also served as executive secretary for justice of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Dr. Lori Ransom of the First Nations of Canada works as an advisor of the Federal Schools for Indigenous and Northern Affairs in Canada. An Algonquin who has never lived on the reserve, she has a passion for healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. She is a member of the Steering Committee of Kairos Canada of the United Church of Canada and an ordained Presbyterian elder.

(Continued on page 7)



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Church Leader Finds Her Call Confirmed by COVID-19 Ministry

About thirteen years ago, reports Urs Schweizer, then 50-year-old Györgyl Valyi was invited to Hope United Methodist Church in Budapest, Hungary. She had never seen anything like this congregation before. The group was mixed, even some homeless people attended services and there was a pronounced social sensibility that still characterizes the congregation today.

At that time two older members were studying theology and when Vályi saw their enthusiasm, she wanted to expand her knowledge by studying theology as well. Without any particular aim. Simply out of interest, and, most important, without any idea that God might have a plan for her.

She studied while working full time as a beautician and entrepreneur and caring for her bedridden grandmother for several years. "God gave me the strength to do all this," she said, adding that without God's help she would probably have given up.

As part of an internship in a home for seniors she led weekly Bible studies; she continued this work after completing her studies with a focus on social counseling. At the same time more and more ministry opportunities opened up for her in the United Methodist Church and she was asked by the church leadership to take over the responsibility for Hope Church, the smallest of three in Budapest.

Vályi hesitated, but said she read John 15:16 and had the impression that God was speaking to her in the words, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." So she said yes. "I began to understand that this turn of my life was not an accident, but God's plan," she said.

Now she leads the church as a mission worker. After 40 years as a beautician and entrepreneur she was suddenly a beginner again. Her service in the church presented her with hurdles that had to be overcome, "and it taught me humility," she said. "I had to grow and learn day by day, not only in my knowledge of the Bible but also as a leader."

At the end of her first year she became insecure because of the many difficulties she faced. Was this really what she was supposed to do? Again God spoke to her through the Bible: "Listen to my advice. Do not go to another field to gather corn." (Ruth 2:8)

The COVID-19 pandemic brought her

a new vocational certainty as during its challenge contacts via the internet and telephone moved the members even closer together. "There are not many of us—about 15 or 20 people gather regularly for services. We keep in close touch, pray for each other, and spend time together." Above all, she said, everyone serves people on the fringes of society and helps to ensure that hope is planted in people's hearts in a very practical way.

"Our average age is between 60 and 65, but because we are responding to calls from God we also draw strength from above," she said.

"Zsóka Lászlóné Rácz makes visits to seniors. With Nora Kerner's help, we have supported a Hungarian-speaking community in Transcarpathia (Ukraine) financially and in other ways. Marika Sándomé Dávid works with street children and visits Roma families in Tabánya (60 kilometers from Budapest). Betti Erzsébet Kenyeres and her family have a Christian literature ministry. Kata Karadalin Kardos is committed to helping people moving from alcohol disease to a new life."

Vályi trusts God has prepared wonderful things for the church and waits for them to become visible. She works to make Hope Church a church of hope for all whose lives it touches.

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Latin America Pastors Share Biblical Reflections on Gender Justice

Women in ordained ministry across Latin America and the Caribbean are sharing biblical reflections to support members of their communities and shed light on their work for gender justice at this time of pandemic. The ongoing series of Bible studies, re-reading Old and New Testament stories through a contemporary feminist lens, began in the spring of 2020 as most countries across the region went into strict lockdown to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

With people confined to their homes church leaders worked to find new ways of connecting to parishioners and offering hope to women in increasingly difficult situations. The Women and Gender Justice Network of churches in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) belonging to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) began to share short reflections that could be used by individuals and by women's groups meeting online for study and prayer.

Drawing on feminist biblical hermeneutics that have been developed over recent decades to help combat injustice and violence against women the reflections are rooted in the everyday experiences of women working in their local Lutheran communities. The 19 Bible studies are available in Spanish, Portuguese and English on the LWF LAC website and are intended to be shared as widely as possible for use across the region and beyond.

Rising Economic Injustice

The first reflections were presented by two of the network coordinators, IAWM member Rev. Angela Trejo Haagar of the Mexican Lutheran Church on the story of Elisha and the widow's oil, and by Rev. Ofelia Davila Limpe from the Lutheran Church of Peru on the parable of the workers in the vineyard. Both use the texts to reflect on the rising economic injustices facing women as a consequence of the global pandemic.

Another Bible study, written by Rev. Marcia Blast of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil to mark Mother's Day, asks how the story of Jesus and the Syrophenecian woman relates to mothers struggling to feed their sick or hungry children and today's deepening financial crisis.

A further three reflections published early in June offer contemporary insights into Jesus' visit to the house of Martha and Mary, the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Genesis story of

Abram and his wife Sarai. They are presented by Rev. Mariela Pereyra of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina, Rev. Karen Ninnette Castillo of the Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala, and LWF Council member Rev. Karla Steilmann of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate in Argentina.

Stigma, Sickness and Healing

A reflection by Rev. Hanna Schramm, the first woman ordained in the Lutheran Church in Chile, explores the theme of stigma, sickness and healing through the story of Jesus' encounter with the bleeding woman. "There are still a lot of taboos around topics regarding women's bodies," Pastor Schramm says, but these days "women are starting to talk about the suffering they have experienced, like the bleeding woman, at the hands of the health system."

Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer parish, where she normally leads services in German and Spanish, are cautious about reopening after more than five months of quarantine. She shares some of the challenges that women like her currently face as they seek to balance the demands of work and children and family commitments. Raising her voice to be heard over the sounds of her five-year-old twins playing in the background, she recounted how residents in her neighborhood were only allowed out twice a week at the height of the lockdown.

"I try to speak with empathy because that's the key to opening hearts and helping people respond to the difficult situations of injustice for women in Chile," she said

Fall additions to these reflections, focused on the theme of Reformation for Reformation Sunday, October 31, are also found on the LWF LAC website.

(Lutheran World Information)

UN Asked to Safeguard Gender Equality Gains

On October 1 in New York City the Lutheran World Federation urged world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly to "safeguard the gains made in gender equality and women's empowerment and to commit to further action."

The statement was released to coincide with the high-level meeting of the UN GA marking the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing, China, in September 1995. Representatives from 189 nations at that conference adopted a platform for action, spelling out a vision of equal rights and opportunities for women and girls everywhere.

In the statement the LWF said: "We celebrate the milestones made, but lament the slow pace of progress, the gaps that remain, and the backlash against women's rights driven by state and non-state factors opposed to gender equality." A quarter of a century after the Beijing conference, it notes, women continue to experience multiple forms of gender-based discrimination and violence.

New Dimensions of Inequality and Discrimination

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and turned a spotlight on new dimensions of inequality and discrimination," the declaration says. "Available statistics reveal that domestic and partner violence has increased sharply during COVID-19 and lack of access to response services has further aggravated the situation." Globally, women and girls are underrepresented socio-economically and in political life, it continues, while an estimated 130 million girls worldwide remain unschooled.

The statement calls on all governments and the international community to fully implement the commitments and obligations contained in the Beijing declaration and platform for action, as well as those enshrined in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), an LWF group working for gender-equality goals.

(Lutheran World Information)

Episcopal House of Deputies President Is Lead Signer of LGBTQ Support Brief

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies, was the lead signer on a friend of the court brief filed last August 14 with the Supreme Court of the United States. The brief, signed by 430 U. S. interfaith leaders, concerns a case involving religiously affiliated child welfare agencies that refuse to place foster children with LGBTQ families. It argues the First Amendment guarantee of religious liberty is strengthened, not constrained, by nondiscrimination policies.

The House of Deputies, which includes nearly 900 clergy and laypeople, is one of two legislative houses of General Convention, the Episcopal Church's governing body. In 2012 Jennings became the first ordained woman elected president; she has been re-elected twice, in 2015 and 2018.

The brief, filed last August, supports the City of Philadelphia in a suit brought against it in 2019 by Catholic social services and other child welfare agencies. They claim that their right to the free exercise of religion allows them to refuse to license same-sex couples as foster parents under terms of a taxpayer-funded contract. The 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in the city's favor in

2019; the agencies appealed to the Supreme Court.

"Any suggestion that 'religion' or 'people of faith' as a whole reject LGBT equality is false and insulting to millions of Americans of faith," reads the brief. "And given broad and growing religious support for LGBT equality, any claim that enforcing antidiscrimination provisions in government contracts will discourage faith-based organizations from providing social services is, at the very least, vastly overstated."

A decision from the Supreme Court is expected by June.

(Episcopal News Service)

SMU Names Lisa Garvin Chaplain And Minister to the University

On October 1 the Rev. Lisa Garvin joined Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, as chaplain and minister to the University. She is the first woman in that role.

"I am elated to be joining the SMU community," Garvin said. "To serve as your chaplain and minister to the university community is a dream come true. I look forward to all the ways we can grow together in wisdom and faith. I am eager to engage

SMU's rich diversity and expand the table of religious life on The Hilltop."

"Rev. Garvin's appointment is the result of a national search and we are delighted to welcome her to SMU. She brings to the table talents and passion uniquely valuable at this time in our history," said K. C. Mmjeje, Vice President for Student Affairs.

While SMU is home to Perkins School of Theology, one of five university-related United Methodist schools of theology, the university is non-sectarian in its teaching. Among students reporting a religious preference 28 percent are Roman Catholic, 14 percent are Methodist and 46 percent are from other Protestant denominations. Eleven percent of the students represent other religions, including Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.

A native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Garvin comes to SMU from Emory University where she served as associate

dean of the chapel and religious life for eight years. She was also director of Ministerial Services for the Bishop's Cabinet in the Mississippi Conference 2008-2012 and chaplain to her alma mater, Millsaps College, 2005-2008. She has a lifelong commitment to church-related higher education.

An ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church, Garvin holds an M.Div. degree from Emory University's Candler School of Theology, a Juris Master of Human Rights from Emory's School of Law and a bachelor's degree in European Studies.

She serves as a general director of the General Board of Church and Society and chairs its Advocacy Work Area. She has a special interest in human rights and racial justice.

(United Methodist News)

ELCA Schools Name Presidents

Dr. Lori Varlora took up the presidency of California Lutheran College in Thousand Oaks and Berkeley, which houses Pacific Lutheran Seminary, on September 30. She is the first woman to be named president there and the first non-Lutheran to head the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America college. She was also the first woman named president of Hiram College in Ohio.

"I'm very excited for what that's going to mean for me as a leader, but also as a learner of the Lutheran perspective," she said. "I've always gravitated toward mission-driven institutions. I came to explore Cal Lutheran and—peripherally—the ELCA. I am very taken about what it means to be a part of the institution at this very moment."

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Varlotta earned a B.A. degree at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, an M.S. from Syracuse (New York) University and a Ph.D. from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Her eleven years at Sacramento, California, State University climaxed in becoming senior vice president of planning, enrollment management and student affairs before leading Hiram. She has also served at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, and the University of San Francisco.

United Lutheran Seminary

The Rev. R. Guy Irwin, formerly bishop of the Southwestern California Synod of the ELCA, has been called as the first president of ELCA's United Lutheran Seminary, with campuses in Gettysburg and Philadelphia, Penna.

He is also the first openly gay and partnered bishop, the first openly gay bishop among the churches in the Lutheran World Federation and the first Native American bishop. He has served on the ELCA Conference of Bishops as a liaison to the ELCA Church Council and as chair of the bishops' Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee.

A member of the Osage nation, hailing from Pawluska, Oklahoma, he earned his B.A. from Harvard University, his M.A., Master of Philosophy and Ph.D. from Yale University, was a Fulbright scholar and studied at the Universities of Tubingen and Leipzig on an IREX grant. (ELCA News)

Wisconsin Church Provides Ontario VCS Via Radio

People in Sandy Lake, Ontario, Canada, are neighbors and mission partners to Lodi United Methodist Church south of the U.S./Canadian border in Wisconsin. The indigenous community located in northwestern Ontario is accessible only by plane, so last summer the pandemic raised a greater challenge to the hope of continuing the Vacation Church School they have been sharing than anyone in either community could have imagined.

For five years the Lodi UMC had sent adults to Sandy Lake to share in Christian kinship, teach Vacation Church School to the children, and participate in community programs. Each summer the Wisconsin team would bring with them hats, scarves and prayer shawls that Lodi women had knitted.

When COVID-19 challenged this sharing in 2020, God piqued imaginations in both places. Most families in the remote island community of Sandy Lake do not have the luxury of home internet. But Sandy Lake has a radio station that everyone listens to.

A group from the Lodi church designated a week, sent materials in advance via international mail, and placed a call to the Sandy Lake radio station every day to provide VCS to the children.

During July and August, as the Lodi church hosted a bi-weekly Summer concert with local musicians in its parking lot, people were encouraged to donate hygiene items for the school in Sandy Lake. Four boxes of hats/scarves and 134 soap bars were sent to the island.

**Assembly XI
Of the World Council of Churches
Will Meet In Karlsruhe, Germany
August 29-September 8, 2021.**

**IAWM will meet in Assembly
At Bethany Retreat Center
Outside Karlsruhe
Preceding the WCC Assembly
At the Bethany Retreat Center
Outside Karlsruhe.**

**Watch for details
In future issues.**

Korea's Male Methodist Clergy Outnumber Females 4 to 1

The Rev. Chan-hee Kim has spent ten years compiling a comprehensive report on statistics of the Korean United Methodist community as well as a directory of Korean clergy members in the denomination. Among his findings: the number of elders in full connection is 750, or 69.93 percent of Korean clergy members. Of the 750 elders, 609 are men (81.2 percent of the total) and 141 (18.8 percent) are women.

The total number of 1,073 clergy includes 855 men, 278 women and 226 retirees.

"I volunteered to make an address book with the help of the Association of Korean United Methodists ten years ago," he said. "It would give me great pleasure if this data were used to strengthen the connections in our community."

Looking at clergy appointments and age, Kim discovered the number of active pastors serving Korean churches is 274, accounting for 33 percent of the total. Among these, 258 clergy (94.1 percent) are men, showing a serious imbalance in the number of male and female pastors serving Korean churches. In the case of senior pastors, the gap is even wider, with men accounting for 96.7 percent (230 out of 238), even though women make up 20.32 percent of all active Korean pastors.

The Rev. Grace Pak, former director of Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Leadership at the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race, said the small number of female pastors in Korean churches should be viewed as another form of discrimination and a

systemic problem for the denomination.

"I don't think each conference cabinet is willing or interested in sending female pastors to Korean churches," she said. "In order to send female pastors to Korean churches, the conference and the Korean churches must coordinate to prepare, train and work together, instead of labeling Korean churches as sexist but doing nothing."

The Rev. James Chongho Kim, lead pastor of Flushing First United Methodist Church in New York, also pointed out that women pastors have had few opportunities for training and ministry to serve Korean churches, and suggested that this should be resolved systemically.

"Women pastors need additional training and preparation to be successful at and appointed to a Korean church, but the conferences have not done it that way," he said.

He suggested a systemic approach, such as creating teams between the annual conference and the Korean community, and deliberately training and preparing women pastors to serve Korean churches so that they can succeed.

(United Methodist News)

Korean Elder Explores Proverbs 31 To Empower Strong Self-Image in Women

As a Woman of Color Scholar doctoral candidate at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, Korean Methodist Elder Rev. Sun-Ah Kang has adopted a cross-cultural approach to explore how Confucianism impacts cultural teachings of the Bible book of Proverbs chapter 31.

Kang's desire to make space for women in theology drew her to the WOC program. In South Korea, she says, Confucianism "still influences many men's and women's lives and culture and social systems. So naturally (it) impacts Christians and Christian reading as well."

"There are many teachings of Confucianism saying women have to be obedient and subservient to the husband. I've witnessed so many Christian women say

only my sacrifice for my household is worthy and praiseworthy because the Bible says so. That kind of reading is really not good because it hinders them from realizing themselves."

Through her work Kang hopes to help women understand Proverbs 31 as a supportive and empowering text that recognizes them and their work as worthy, just one of many possible deeper connections she hopes to make between theology and local churches.

(United Methodist News)

Remembering—

Rev. Dr. Micheline Kamba Kasongo

(1968 -2020)

Born on February 16, 1968 the Rev. D. Micheline Kamba Kasongo was the Franco-phone Africa coordinator of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Disability Advocates' Network (EDAN). She was a member of the WCC central committee from 2006 and a professor at the Faculty of Theology at the Université Protestante au Congo. She also led IMANENDA Ministries, a pastoral ministry for people with disabilities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Kasongo first joined the ecumenical family when she was recommended by her church, Eglise du Christ au Congo, Communauté Presbyterienne de Kinshasa, to attend the WCC 8th Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998.

During the Assembly she joined the other participants with disabilities to establish the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network, a forum through which the pioneer members who had been invited to the WCC Assembly could institutionalize disability issues into the work of the Council. EDAN afterwards became a program of the WCC after the recommendation of the central committee meeting held in September 1999 and expanded its network to the regions to incorporate representatives from all the member churches of the WCC.

Her PhD in theology at the University

of Kwazulu Natal in South Africa in October 2001 concerned "Developing a Holistic Education Programme Through Contextual Bible Study with People with Disabilities in Kinshasa, DRC: IMANENDA as Case Study." After that research she decided her contribution would be to provide an educational program for persons with disabilities who would serve the church, theological institutions and training centers for clergy because she believed that the Bible is a powerful instrument and source of change and authority towards developing a positive identity for persons with disabilities.

She was able to actualize this when she started the Masters program in Social Transformation as a result of her doctoral work.

She has also done research, published several books, written articles in various journals and made presentations both nationally and internationally in the area of theology, gender and disability.

"It is with great sorrow that the World Council of Churches receives news about the passing away of the Rev. Dr. Micheline Kamba Kasongo, an outstanding theologian and ecumenist who contributed enormously to many areas of the ecumenical movement," said Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan Souca, interim General Secretary of the WCC.

"Her voice was essential to our work to bring about justice and peace. The thoughts and prayers of the ecumenical community are with Rev. Kamba's family and friends. We are grateful for her service and contribution to the World Council of Churches and the global ecumenical movement. Her memory will be alive in our midst."

Dozens of colleagues joined him in commending Kasongo's contributions to specific areas of their life and work as well as her courage and grace.

A Service of Thanksgiving for Kasongo's life and work was celebrated on the Zoom platform on August 6.

(World Council of Churches News)

Remembering—

Rev. Adita Torres Lecano

(1959-2020)

Pastor President Adita Torres Lecano, leader of the Iglesia Luterana del Peru (IL-P), died on August 10, her 61st birthday, of COVID-19. She was 61.

Elected president in May 2019, she was also one of the first five Peruvian ministers ordained in that church in 1999. The others were Revs. Irene Ponce, Benjamin Navaro, Pedro Bullón and LWF Regional Secretary for Latin America, the Caribbean

and North America, Rev. Dr. Patricia Cuvatti. Before then churches had been pastored by missionaries and, in some cases, by lay leaders.

Torres began her ministry serving the church as a youth. Early involvement as a Sunday school teacher and later in the Diakonia Institution led her to continue her theological interest at a Methodist seminary under the guidance of Lutheran pastors. She earned her B.Th. from the Latin America Bible University in Costa Rica.

In his letter extending sympathy to the IL-P Lutheran World Federation General Secretary Rev. Dr. Martin Junge recounted the calm and pastoral presence Torres brought to the vocation of justice and peacemaking.

"By smiling, breathing deeply, Adita affirmed a spirituality of care and action. As a world leader she has been a faithful ambassador of her work at the local and national levels."

"Unity and diversity has characterized our ministries while trusting God's work even during challenging times when the church experienced divisions," said Cuvatti.

In a memorial service held online from Peru many remembered how she championed, up to the end, the need for income development programs and food and health care assistance to fight economic hardships the virus was bringing to Peru. (Lutheran World Information)

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Registration Form

Virtual IAWM Assembly, July 30-31, 2021

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Births—

was a healthy baby, and soon they were home. But then came trouble. Fifteen days after giving birth Cook experienced a major postpartum hemorrhage and had to be rushed to the hospital by ambulance.

Some church members were incredibly supportive and helpful, but the timing was tough; Cook was forced to lie in bed and heal while her home was being packed up for a July move to the United Methodist Church in Cayce as senior pastor. “Everything hard happened all at once,” Cook said. Then things got better.

Upon arriving Cook said she was met with incredible support, not only for her as pastor but for her role as a working mom with two very young children. From being flexible about her working schedule and adjusting hours to offering child care at every church event Cayce has offered what she and her husband call “a huge, huge gift” to their family by accommodating their circumstances. All have settled into their new routine, grateful for a loving and flexible church that works with them. No one minds when the pastor preaches on occasion with her newborn in a baby sling. In fact, they love it.

Rev. Tiffany Knowlin-Boykin

Rev. Tiffany Knowlin-Boykin gave birth to Kaleb in February and for both the first few weeks were peaceful. She was on leave from her job as senior pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church, Columbia, and looking forward to a summer getting to know her new baby and figuring out the how-to of motherhood. Then COVID-19 changed everything.

Most of the community sheltered in place but her husband, Kareem had to go to work every day. She was alone at home struggling with what she now realizes was post-partum depression, trying her best to breastfeed, care for Kaleb and survive. “It was just me and the baby and was—oh, my—very overwhelming,” she said.

Kaleb had latch issues at first but because of the pandemic she had nobody to help her and make sure the baby was getting enough to eat. She also could not go for her six week postpartum check-up for months. “It was a very, very scary, overwhelming time. There was so much anticipatory anxiety. What happens if this goes wrong?”

In May, when Kaleb was three months old, her husband became ill with the

coronavirus. “I had to call 911 in the middle of the night, and I couldn’t go with him,” she said. He was in the hospital for a week and she was alone with Kaleb, desperately worried and struggling to stay afloat.

Eventually they decided to risk COVID exposure. Her mother-in-law came to stay with her to help. Then her parents came. Soon her husband was released without needing surgery. Things went back to relative normal. “The biggest difficulty was the isolation, not having anyone around,” she said.

Wesley congregation loves babies and it was hard for both her and them that they could not meet Kaleb in person. They were only seeing pictures of him on Zoom. As her maternity leave ended she faced the issue of child care.

Two members came to help on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “They were such a gift to me. We call them bonus grandparents.”

A silver lining: “I would never have had so much time with Kaleb if it hadn’t been for the virus. And Kareem, who had just started a new job, had time with us, which has been a true gift.”

Another learning was to accept help from friends and neighbors. “Best of all, I continue to learn how to be wife, mom, pastor and just Tiffany.”

In the News

France

Four of the **seven Roman Catholic women** who delivered their dossiers applying for appointments to ecclesiastical positions on July 22, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, to the Vatican embassy in Paris received individual interviews from the Vatican ambassador to France, Archbishop Celestino Migliore between September 14 and October 2. The three not called had not provided telephone numbers. Those interviewed had opportunity to describe why women as well as men should have opportunity to hold the offices for which they were qualified, but none was offered possible consideration for such a position.

Germany

In September the Roman Catholic **Osnabrück Diocese**, with the backing of Bishop Franz-Josef Bode, who is also vice president of the German episcopate, invited women to contact their parish council or pastoral team to organize an opportunity for them to preach at a weekday Service of the Word. Although centered on the week of September 13 to 20, to coincide with the feast of St. Hildegard of Bingen, the campaign planned to organize additional events after those dates.

South Africa

Among featured speakers at the 10th Annual Desmond Tutu Peace Lectures held on October 7 were 23-year-old **Vanessa Nakate**, a climate activist from Uganda who has been leading a drive for justice related to race, media representation and climate, and Swedish climate activist **Greta Thunberg**.

Switzerland

On May 19 Roman Catholic Bishop Charles Morerod of the Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, appointed **laywoman Marianne Pohl-Henzen** as “Episcopal delegate” of the German-speaking Vicariate of Fribourg. She fills the office of “Episcopal vicar” open to men, assisting the bishop in governing the diocese, having “the same executive power (throughout the whole diocese) as that which belongs to the bishop” within Fribourg.

She is married, has three children and four grandchildren.

United States

Five women became new bishops of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America synods that met virtually in July and August. They include the **Revs. Virginia Abeischer**, interim, to lead South

Carolina Synod, July 25; **Tessa Moon Leiseth**, bishop of Southeastern Iowa, August 7; **Joy Mortensen-Wiege**, South Central Wisconsin, August 29; **Amy Odgren**, Northeastern Minnesota, August 29 and **Laura Barbins**, Northwestern Ohio, September 12.

On August 20 **Rev. Diane Akiyama** was elected the 11th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon.

Dr. Lisa Dellinger, Native American scholar preparing to become a United Methodist elder, has earned her Ph.D. in theology, history and ethics from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston Illinois, Women of Color scholarship program, the 49th scholar and second Native American to complete this program.

Born in Queens, New York City, **Dr. Ivy Taylor** was named last August as the first woman and 12th president of United Methodist related Rust College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, oldest among Black UMC related colleges. The Black woman is also a former mayor of San Antonio, Texas.

(Bridget Mary's Blog, Novena News via Bridget Mary's Blog, Episcopal News Service, Equal Rites, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America News and United Methodist News).