

The Bulletin

Join us as 100 percent of our congregations become 100 percent vital and thriving

A Christmas Message from Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

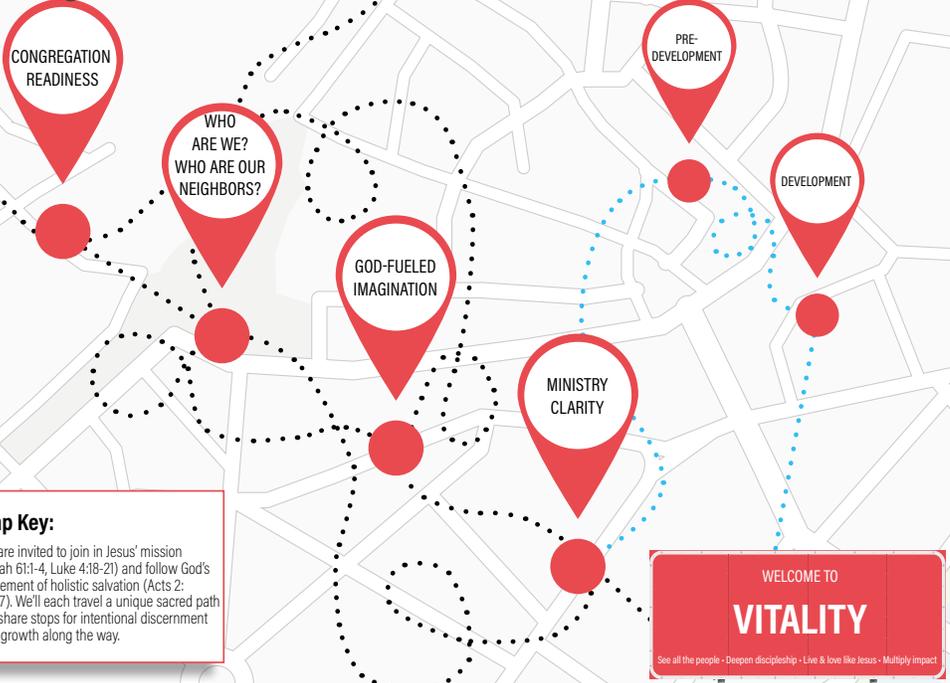
Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling | Episcopal servant, Peninsula-Delaware & Baltimore-Washington Conferences

MAP to Vitality

Across the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences, churches and spiritual leaders are embarking on Missional Action Planning, an ancient/new approach to church that places relationship with God and one's community at the center of our lives.

Missional Action Planning (MAP) creates directions for shaping one's faith so that we can create the abundant life promised in John 10:10. MAP calls on faith groups to make sure they are healthy and ready to do deep spiritual work. Once they begin to feel vital, they're asked and explore: "Who are we and who are our neighbors?" The answers to these questions lead to a process of discernment and God-fueled imagination as leaders discover what God may be calling the church to do and taking risks to discover the best ways of being in mission and ministry. Churches then focus on being in partnership with their community in meeting needs and developing plans for growth and sustainability.

On the regional level, districts are also developing MAP plans, with teams of committed people seeking to discern the needs of their neighbors and how the people of God can begin to address those needs. Each person and church involved in MAP travels a unique and sacred path. As these journeys begin and deepen, we pray that God will travel with you along the road to vital faith.



Map Key:
 We are invited to join in Jesus' mission (Isaiah 61:1-4, Luke 4:18-21) and follow God's movement of holistic salvation (Acts 2: 37-47). We'll each travel a unique sacred path but share stops for intentional discernment and growth along the way.

Bishop's message *A Journey of Healing and Transformation*

Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling
Episcopal servant, Peninsula-Delaware & Baltimore-Washington Conferences

An excerpt from Bishop LaTrelle Easterling's Lenten Message. See the complete message at <https://www.bwcumc.org/news-and-views/a-lenten-message-from-bishop-latrelle-miller-easterling/>

As we enter into this 40-day Lenten season to pray, listen, reflect and repent, we surrender ourselves to Jesus and allow him to continue the beautiful work of transformation in our lives.

This journey is really a journey of healing – allowing ourselves to be healed. It's healing us from anything that separates us from God; healing us from anything that prevents us from taking on the mind of Christ; healing us from our collective brokenness; healing us from the inside out. As this transformation occurs, we begin to see the world differently. We put aside fear, mistrust, arrogance, and privilege, and begin to live as people who are sincerely willing to wash one another's feet. We embody forgiveness and reconciliation. We embrace one another in agape love. We humbly stand as one at the foot of the cross. That is our Lenten journey. May it be so.

Living Like Christ: A Banquet of Spiritual Exercises

This Lent, United Methodists are joining in a Banquet of Spiritual Exercises as they seek to “Live Like Christ.” You can start the adventure at www.bwcumc.org/lent2024.

Written by the Rev. Rod Miller, Living Like Christ draws on foundational principles from the book and the movement of Positive Intelligence, also known as PQ. The Lenten online resource offers six weekly themes with devotional materials, a prayer and a prompt.

PQ, Miller said, “points to the mysterious and wonderful unfolding of God’s love and power within.” It is a tool for unblocking wisdom and assisting us in more fully becoming the people God created us to be. PQ stresses, said Miller, that it’s not what you believe, but how you practice and live.”

Part of this practice is participating in spiritual disciplines and taking time for devotional practices. Below are six prompts from “Living Like Christ” for you to consider this Lent:



Building spiritual muscles: Reflect on what spiritual practice you consistently do that feeds your soul. Which spiritual practices do you want to do more of? Don’t feel like writing? Alternatively, take a picture of something that reminds you to make time for spiritual disciplines.



Gratitude: Reflect on: “What and who am I paying attention to?” Who gives you every perfect gift? Are you relying on your own strength or on the grace of God? Don’t feel like writing? Alternatively, take a picture of something that makes your heart glad.



Honoring your pain: Ponder and then write your response to the prompt: “God, right now I feel...” Alternatively, take a picture that captures how you feel and “how it is with your soul.”



Unblocking Love: Take some time to journal your thoughts on the question: “What’s preventing me from feeling/hearing/attending to God’s still, small voice?” Or, if you’d like to approach this from a different angle, take a photo that illustrates a fear or anxiety that you’re moving beyond.



Making Space for the New to Emerge: 1 Cor. 3:9 says that we are God’s field. What does that mean to you? What do you believe that God is wanting to grow in you?” Or, if you prefer, go out into nature, and find a field or garden where God’s magnificent work is on display and take a picture to remind you of what is possible when new things emerge.



Deepening Awareness: In poetry or prose, describe the last time God granted you new insight. What needs awakening in you now? Take five to ten photos of the same thing, each time reimagining new ways of seeing that thing. How many new perspectives can you find?

