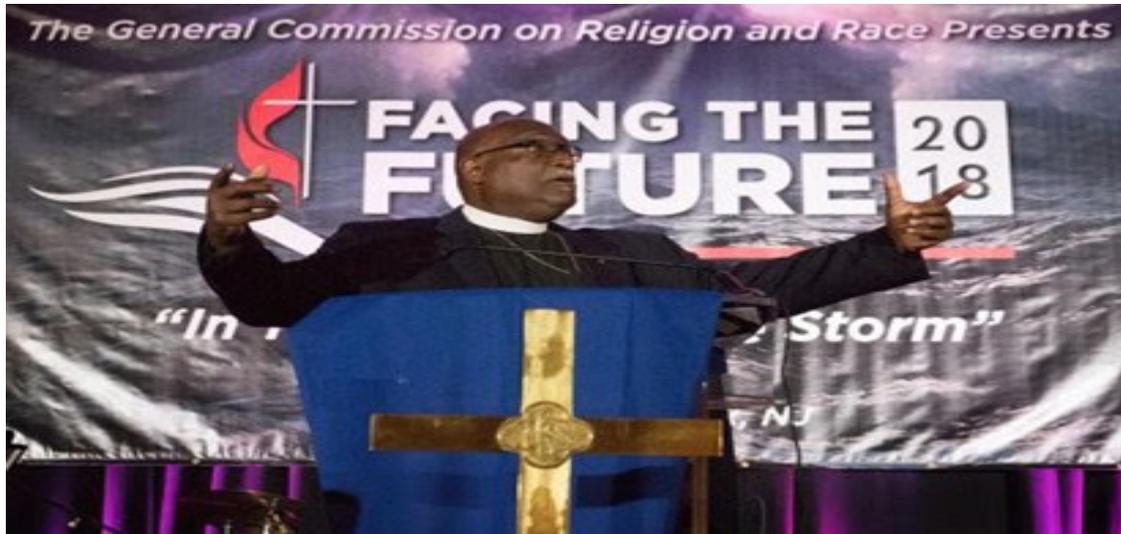


South Georgia pastor attends GCORR's Facing the Future conference



Ohio West Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer gives the sermon for opening worship at Facing the Future 2018. Photo by Joey Butler, UMNS

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Rev. Patricia A. Burns, pastor of Putney United Methodist Church, recently attended Facing the Future, a conference for pastors serving in cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments. Organized by The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR), it was held May 7-9 in Newark, New Jersey. Rev Burns attended the conference on behalf of the Conference Advocacy committee.

Directed by GCORR General Secretary Erin Hawkins and the GCORR Design Team, the conference's theme was "In the Midst of the Storm," developed from Matthew 14:22-27.

"At the opening worship service, Bishop Palmer challenged us to know 'who I is' because you can't lead or help God's people until you know yourself and that you are a child of God called into His service," Rev. Burns said.

The praise team provided a variety of musical genres and songs in various languages that made worship an inclusive and comprehensive experience, Rev. Burns said.

Eight workshops were presented dealing with topics including Preaching in the Storm; Worship as an Agent for Change; Intercultural Competency: Tools for Navigating in the Midst of Diversity; Self, Others, and the Space-In-Between: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity; Leading Change: Unleashing Commitment, Creativity, and Community; What We Don't Think We Think: An Inside/Outside Look at Implicit Bias;

Spiritual Formation with Various Spiritual Types; and Wespeth's Resources for Clergy Well-Being. Each attendee participated in two workshops of his/her choice.

“The ‘In the Storm’ personal testimonies of real-life CR/CC ministry experiences coupled with networking among other clergy reminded us that we are not in the boat alone,” Rev. Burns said. “The week following the conference opportunities were provided for small group follow-up and discussion of issues or challenges raised at the conference. Feedback from each small group was submitted to GCORR to better aid clergy just entering or those who have been in CR/CC ministry.”

At the closing worship service, Bishop Cynthia Harvey of the Louisiana Annual Conference challenged attendees “to get out of the boat, for the people are waiting.”