

A heart of wisdom
Service of Remembrance honors three late bishops, six spouses

By Jessica Brodie

LAKE JUNALUSKA, North Carolina—One of the realities of life is that our days are numbered, so let's fill our days with wisdom and a faithful heart.

That was the word from Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, who preached the Service of Remembrance at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference Thursday morning, Nov. 3.

Taylor drew from Psalm 90:12, which reminds us, "So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (NKJV).

Taylor lifted up the three bishops and six spouses who passed away since the last in-person jurisdictional conference: Bishops Bevel L. Jones III, R. Kern Eutsler and Robert Spain, and spouses Thelma H. Newman, Dorothy S. Lee, Jean Stockton, Mary Ann Hunt, Linda Carder and Rose King.

She'd met all of those being remembered in the service except one, recalling touching or funny stories—such as Jean Stockton, a fashionista who introduced so many to liturgical dance, and Linda Carder, loved so deeply across Holston, Mississippi and Tennessee conferences, who loved Lake Junaluska and the fellowship of bishops' spouses. Bishop Jones had been her pastor during my high school and college years and officiated her wedding.

"We don't know how many days we have, but we only have so many," Taylor reminded the body. "Because they are, we are invited to gain a heart of wisdom."

A wise heart, according to the apostle Paul, is a heart filled with faith, hope and love.

"All of us gathered here today believe the church is of God and will be preserved until the end of time," she said. "All times are uncertain. (But) our faith is in eternal God who made the heavens and the earth."

The service opened with the hymn "Give Me Jesus," then a greeting led by Emily Ballard and a prayer for illumination led by Derrick Scott.

After Taylor's sermon, the Rev. Virginia Kagoro led the body in the statement of faith, and Bishop L. Jonathan Holston served as liturgist, offering a prayer for the saints and faithful departed.

The hymn "On Jordan's Stormy Banks" closed the service.