

2010 North Georgia Annual Conference Session
“Ordinary to Extraordinary: Wake Up and See Where God is Moving”
Bishop B. Michael Watson, presiding

ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEWS WRAP-UP

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Young Adults Gather for Pre-Conference Kick Off

More than 50 young adults gathered at the Two Story Coffee House in Athens Tuesday night to fellowship and to get acclimated before Annual Conference officially began. Bishop Mike Watson and Margaret Watson stopped by to greet the young adults.

Online Registration: An unqualified success

The registration process was simple this year thanks to the new online registration process, which kept lines and confusion to a minimum. A total of 2,329 delegates pre-registered online. As of Thursday afternoon, 184 delegates registered and paid on site.

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

Laity Orientation

The praise band from Toccoa First UMC performed as participants in the Laity Orientation session gathered Wednesday morning. Athens Host Committee member Johnny Fowler welcomed the group, Conference Youth president Emily Hinson opened with prayer, and Lay Leader Jane Finley led the orientation. Highlights included:

- The Board of Laity representatives invited all lay people to consider participating in Lay Speaking Ministries, Leadership UMC, Lay Revitalization Ministry, and Lay Mission Training. Find more information at www.ngumc.org.
- Laity celebrated the 669 churches that paid 100 percent apportionments.
- Next year at Annual Conference, elections will be held for lay and clergy delegates to 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Guidelines for laity elections are found on page 124 of the Annual Conference Handbook.

Bishop Watson preaches opening worship service

The 144th Session of the North Georgia Annual Conference opened with worship and a sermon by Bishop B. Michael Watson. The service was led by Barbara Day Miller, a deacon in the North Georgia Conference and assistant dean of worship and music at Candler School of Theology. Bishop Watson preached on Genesis 28:10-19, challenging members of the conference to wake up and see where God is moving in our land, in this place.

"Are you willing? Are you ready? Are you able?" he asked. "Because the power of the Holy Spirit is among us."

Bishop Watson identified many of the issues that can create barriers within the church, including differences in size, political leanings, finances, ethnicity, culture and social issues. "But Jesus Christ came to transcend all those barriers," he said.

He emphasized our mission as United Methodists to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. "It is absolutely vital that we fulfill our mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ," said Bishop Watson. "God wants to do the extraordinary and tag—you're it."

SESSION ONE

Greetings from Athens and Host Committee

Athens District Superintendent Gary Whetstone, Athens Mayor Heidi Davidson, and Vice President of the University of Georgia Tom Jackson welcomed the North Georgia Conference to Athens.

United Methodist Publishing House

Damien Turpin, manager of the Cokesbury store on Lawrenceville Highway in Decatur, greeted the conference members on behalf of the United Methodist Publishing House. The Cokesbury website, www.cokesbury.com, has been redesigned to make shopping easier. The publishing house is developing a new translation of the Bible to be called the Common English Bible, available in the fall of 2011. For more information and sample books, visit www.commonenglishbible.com.

Georgia Florida United Methodist Federal Credit Union

This year the Credit Union celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. The report highlights included:

- Renovations of the Marietta office were recently completed.
- Jonathan Curtis, director of development, is available to speak at local churches. All North Georgia United Methodists are eligible for credit union membership.
- Conference Youth president Emily Hinson was awarded this year's North Georgia Conference Credit Union scholarship.

Bridges of Mission

This new initiative of the Office of Connectional Ministries seeks to build relationships between the North Georgia Conference and ministry partners around the world. The first Bridge which launches this year is to Uganda. Rev. Stephen Soulen, chair of Bridges, spelled out some ways that conference members can offer support.

- Sponsor a child at Humble Place School in Uganda for \$1,600 per year (200 Sunday school classes or groups are being sought to help with this project)
 - Build a security wall around the Humble Place School
 - Build a girls dormitory for the 80 girls who are currently sleeping in two classrooms
- For more information, visit www.ngumc.org/bridges

SESSION TWO

Service of Ordination and Commissioning

The North Georgia Conference commissioned 32 provisional members, ordained seven full connection deacons, ordained 18 full connection elders and recognized one elder from another denomination on Wednesday evening, June 16. Bishop B. Michael presided over the service and preached.

Persons Ordained and Commissioned were:

Provisional Members

Elizabeth W. Ackerman
David Scott Blackwood
Lacey Smith Bowcock
Kelly Falany Brumeloe
Alisha Luna Burch
James Allen Carmichael, Jr.
Emily Johanna Case
Mark Brantley Danzey
Daniel T. Dixon
Andrew David Erwin
Lori Lewis Ethridge
Heather A. Flaherty
Katharine Hinman
Anika A. Jones
Laura Arnold Jordan
Tonya Nicole Lawrence

Andrew Bradley Lett
Jonathan Raymond Mann
Rick Marson
S. Kathleen Mattox
Erik Ashley Mays
Margaret Grace Morrison
Jody Glenn Ray
Joshua James Roberts
Dalton Troy Rushing
Stacey Jean Rushing
Paul A. Thibodeaux
Kory Trinrud
Elaine Wilder
David Anthony Wofford
Anjeanette Noell Peek Woodworth
Blair Boyd Zant

Full Connection Deacons

Catherine Ann Boothe
Sharon Reneé Beasley Edgar
Eric Victor Fessler

Darren Keith Hensley
Shannon Elizabeth Karafanda
Joan Ruth Kinrade
Stephen Horace Napier

Full Connection Elders
Teresa Gale Angle-Young
Dawn Laine Britt
Charles Elliott Broome
Robert Lindsey Bruce
Brett DeHart
Mandy Sloan Flemming
Jeremy M. Lawson
Karen Maria Lyons
John Charles Merk

Larisa Fisher Parker
Glenn D. Parrish
Derek M. Porter
Andrew Lewis Postell
Theodore R. Rollins, Jr.
Julie Coriene Schendel
Michael Duane Stinson
Ross Denton Wheeler, Jr.
Brent L. White

Orders Recognized from Another Denomination

Randy Joe Strickland

Thursday, June 17, 2010

A strong start

The second day of the North Georgia Annual Conference began with a sudden burst of energy with 152 early risers competing in a 5K run.

And the winners are . . .

Brad Slavens was top finisher in the Fourth Annual 5K event in 18:13.1 Tim Emmett of McDonough was second in 21:12.2.

Rachel Hagnes of Athens was the top woman, finishing in 21:31.7. Of 152 starters on the warm, humid morning, 122 finished the race.

SESSION THREE

Generosity Summit planned

The Office of Connectional Ministries invites you to a conference-wide Generosity Summit September 11 at Peachtree Road UMC. The celebration of stewardship will include dynamic success stories and workshops on stewardship campaigns, capital campaigns, financial management, faith decisions and more.

For more information go to www.ngumc.org/enough.

Central Conference Pension Initiative

This year's Annual Conference Mission Offering—which brought in \$121,600 as of Friday—will go to the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI), the denominational campaign to fully fund pensions for retired clergy and surviving spouses who have served in conferences outside the United States. Bishop Watson announced that CCPI recently reached its initial goal of \$20 million. This year's offering will help CCPI to reach its next goal of \$25 million. Visit <http://www.ccpi-umc.org/> for more information.

Treasurer's Report (Part 1)

Keith Cox, Conference Treasurer, presented the first component of the Treasurer's Report. Highlights included:

- 2010 Membership - 356,279 (up 2,185)
- Professions of Faith - 6,622
- Average Attendance - 127,547 (down 3,323)
- 669 churches paid 100 percent apportionments in 2010.
- District with the highest apportionments paid: Athens-Elberton District which paid 93.4 percent.

Cox acknowledged four of the primary fiscal challenges this year:

- Unfunded liabilities - \$90 million
- Simpsonwood
- Lack of Conference Reserves
- Declining Apportionment Payment Percentages

Interim Report of the Annual Conference Task Force

Henry Bowden, chair of the Annual Conference Task Force, presented initial findings of the task force. The 17-member group divided major tasks into two groups, the Simpsonwood Retreat and Conference Center and other issues relating to ministerial compensation.

They first focused on Simpsonwood. Highlights included:

- The task force employed business consultants to study the Retreat Center operations.
- A debt of \$6 million was due to SunTrust Bank in April of this year. Just six weeks ago the Georgia United Methodist Foundation agreed to refinance the entire debt.
- The Task Force has preliminarily concluded that the long-range operation of the Retreat Center at Simpsonwood is not financially viable.
- The Task Force has studied alternative uses for the Simpsonwood property and approached the board and management of Wesley Woods Senior Living, Inc. about the possibility of using the property for a continuing care retirement community. Wesley Woods is performing preliminary research on need for a CCRC in the Norcross area.
- A motion was made, and approved, to empower the Task Force to seek a legal ruling on whether the Conference may legally divide or sell the property.
- For more details, read the memo from the Task Force to Bishop Watson on handbook pages 132-135.

Celebration of small membership churches

The Parish Life Committee of the Office of Connectional Ministries lifted up the vital ministry of small membership churches and acknowledged that 75 percent of North Georgia churches have 150 or less in worship.

Georgia United Methodist Foundation

On January 1, the North Georgia UM Foundation and South Georgia UM Foundation merged to form the Georgia United Methodist Foundation. Highlights from the report included:

- A new addition of Socially Responsible investments
- The Foundation awarded 31 \$1,000 scholarships to United Methodist students this year
- More information on the Foundation is available at www.gumf.org.

Recognition of retirees

The conference celebrated the ministry of 23 retiring clergy. They represent a cumulative 640 years of service. The retirees are:

Ed Cook	Ferris Hardin
Al Cunningham	King Harris
Roy Daniels	David Hicks
Ron Fearneyhough	Wayne Hopper
Joe Hassell	Joy Ledoux
Charles Moon	Mary Gene Lee
Walt Pledger	DeDe Leetch
Wayne Williams	Ann B. McCord
Ben Abney	Laurence McCullough
Les Connell	Patricia Pace
Avery Dodd	Woodrow Williams
Emile Ennis	

SESSION FOUR

Service of Remembrance

Praying in unison, the North Georgia Conference said, "We bless your holy name, O God, for all your servants who, having finished their course, now rest from their labors." The mission offering was collected at the service raising \$92,000 for the Central Conference Pension Initiative.

The Conference recognized the following clergy, clergy spouses and laity who served on conference or district committees:

Laity	Jean Scruggs
Earnesteen Camp	Brenda Jones
Jonathan Adams	Tom Bell
Alvin "Al" John Rowe, Jr.	

Deceased Spouses

Else Branham, wife of Rev. Lee Branham
Ida Mae Crane, wife of Rev. Lawrence Crane
Caroline Drinkard, wife of Rev. Eugene Drinkard

Linnie Lou Jernigan, wife of Dr. Allen Jernigan
Charley Temple Lewis, wife of Rev. William Harold Lewis
Mary Nysewander, wife of Dr. Dwight Nysewander
Lois Phillips, wife of Rev. James Phillips
Mary AnnPollard, wife of Rev. Randy Pollard
Cynthia Reamsnyder, wife of Rev. Terry Reamsnyder
Freddie Robinson, husband of Rev. Minnie Robinson
Phyllis Taylor, wife of Rev. Russell C. Taylor
Patience Tinsley, wife of Rev. Carroll Tinsley
Cheryl (Cheri) Witt, wife of Rev. Andy Witt

Deceased Clergy

(May 2009-May 2010)

Bobby Lee Anthony
Mack Driver
C.W. Edwards
Bond Fleming
Curtis D. Gillespie
Reynolds Greene

Allan Kirton
Robert A. Lanford
Beth Luton
Marcus Martin
John Wesley Pace
Emmett Rappe
Dan Rice
Gordon Thompson

75th anniversary of the Upper Room

Sarah Wilke, publisher of the Upper Room, joined the North Georgia Conference to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the publication. This year the Upper Room will publish its 1 billionth copy. To view the video or learn more about the Upper Room, visit www.upperroom.org/75.

Council on Finance and Administration Report

The \$25,295,067 budget proposed by the Council on Finance and Administration was approved by the Annual Conference. This represents a decrease of \$614,933 over the 2010 budget.

Stop Hunger Now

The day ended with the sounds of clapping and cheering as hundreds of volunteers celebrated the completion of a meal assembly project for Stop Hunger Now. When the work was done, more than 200,230 meals were ready to be sent to feed school-age children in Nicaragua.

“This is something that people really get excited about,” said John Page, associate pastor of Athens First UMC, who helped organized the effort. “There is a great deal of joy and enthusiasm that is evident. I have overheard people saying this is the kind of project they want to bring to their churches.”

Indeed, approximately 250 volunteers – some in shirts and T-shirts, others still in suits from conference – went about their two-hour shifts with obvious joy. The cheered whenever a gong rang out, signifying another 5,000 meals had been completed, and occasionally broke into song.

Three conference rooms, with a combined length of approximately 40 yards, were needed to set up accommodate the tables of volunteers.

Teams of workers, each with thin blue hair nets or baseball caps, carefully measured out packages filled with rice and soy protein, fortified with 21 essential vitamins and supplements.

Friday, June 18, 2010

Packed house for Laity Lunch with Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed

Kasim Reed, Atlanta's mayor, delivered a passionate, personal and challenging message to a sold-out banquet hall at Friday's Laity lunch. He was warmly received and closed to a sustained standing ovation. "The Methodist Church has truly inspired and informed by life," Reed said. "It made me the man I am today."

Georgia Commission on Higher Education

"God is doing extraordinary things through our colleges and Wesley Foundations," said Cindy Autry, director of the Georgia Commission on Higher Education and Campus Ministry. Students from Paine College, LaGrange College and the University of Georgia Wesley Foundation addressed conference along with Leigh Martin, Campus Minister at Reinhardt University, who asked members of the North Georgia local churches to help in two ways: by contacting the Campus Minister at colleges students from your church will be attending, and telling your student about the Wesley Foundations and Georgia United Methodist Colleges and Universities.

The Advance

The Advance is the designated giving arm of The United Methodist Church. Amanda Mountain, mission specialist with The Advance and the General Board of Global Ministries, shared some highlights, including:

- North Georgians donated \$657,391 to The Advance in 2009.
- Project 10-Fold - a movement that launches 100,000 people in 10 days - is scheduled for October.
- Find more information at www.advancinghope.org.

Camp Glisson and the Camp and Retreat Ministry Task Force

Director of Camp Glisson, Russell Davis, greeted the conference on behalf of the campers and staff of Camp Glisson. Highlights from the report included:

- Glisson celebrated its 85th anniversary this year.
- Development of an update to Camp Glisson's master plan is underway.
- Camp Glisson is debt free.

- A task force will be established to study the needs and possibilities of future growth of the camping ministry of our conference.

Connectional Cafe

The Office of Connectional Ministries is launching a new model of training for the Conference. In the coming year training will be geared toward smaller audiences. Churches, individuals and districts will be served according to needs. Connectional Ministries is committed to recruiting extraordinary faculty.

Office of Communications

The Conference Office of Communications encourages you to connect, be informed, and be inspired by subscribing to the Conference e-newsletters: Weekly Update, Monday Morning in North Georgia and Prayers and Celebrations. Subscribe at www.ngumc.org/site/stayconnected.

North Georgia Advocate

Advocate editor Glenn Hannigan encouraged each conference delegate to subscribe to the paper. For just \$25 per year (or \$23 for people over 65) receive the Advocate twice a month along with the denominational newspaper, the United Methodist Reporter. For more information and to subscribe, visit www.ngumc.org/advocate.

United Methodist Women

"Faith, hope and love in action" is the focus of the Conference UMW. Their work this year has included advocacy, mission trips and work days, serving, educating and offering creative fellowship opportunities. This spring more than 140 North Georgia women travelled to the United Methodist Women's assembly in St. Louis, Missouri. For more information on the UMW, visit www.ngumw.org.

Action Ministries

This year volunteers gave 50,000 hours of volunteer service through the programs of Action Ministries. In addition, the agency held its first conference-wide special offering. Mark your calendars for this year's Action Ministries special offering in November. For more information on Action Ministries, visit www.actionministries.net.

United Methodist Children's Home

The North Georgia UM Children's Home seeks to give children a feeling of permanency they may never have felt before. The Children's Home asks local churches to reach out to the children by becoming Big Brothers, Big Sisters, volunteering, or making a donation. For more information, go to: www.umchildrenshome.org.

Aldersgate Homes

As part of its report, Aldersgate Homes named the first-ever Warm Heart Award recipient to Ken Lowery, a devoted long-time volunteer.

United Methodist Men

Jasper Russell, president of UMM invited men of the conference to become involved in their local church UMM or to charter a UM Men's group at their church. United Methodist Men focus on spiritual growth, service and disaster response. Mark your calendars for the UMM night at the Atlanta Braves on August 28 and for the Annual Men's Retreat at Rock Eagle September 24-26.

New Church Development

Tommy Willingham, director of New Church Development invited every congregation to get on board to help start and support new church plants in North Georgia. Highlights included:

- Three new church starts constituted: City on a Hill UMC, Redemption Community Church and IMPACT UMC.
- Four are preparing to constitute in the upcoming year: Arbor Pointe, Covenant UMC, Evans, Fellowship UMC, Dallas, UMC of the Way Lawrenceville.
- Three new church starts—Impact, the Orchard, and the Vine—have all committed funds to support Bethlehem UMC's revitalization efforts.
- A new church plant is being organized in south Clayton County.

Congratulations to Denman Evangelism Award recipients

Youth - Caitlin McKenzie

Laity - Henry Fuller

Clergy - Sharma Lewis

District Denman Award Winners

Athens-Elberton - Rev. Haydee Vidot, Athens Hispanic

Atlanta-College Park - Rev. Olu Brown, IMPACT

Atlanta-Decatur-Oxford - Rev. Michael Dunbar, Social Circle

Atlanta-Emory - Rev. Dr. Davis Chappel, Lawrenceville First

Atlanta-Marietta - Rev. Doug Thrasher, Hillside

Atlanta-Roswell - Rev. Michael McQueen, St. James, Alpharetta

Augusta - Ms. Patricia Flint, Union Point First

Gainesville - Ms. Amanda Ayer, The Highlands

Griffin - Mr. Wade Corley, Sunnyside

La Grange - Rev. Warren Huddleston, Providence

Northwest - Mr. Miles Terrell, The Bridge

Rome-Carrollton - Rev. Gregory Williams, Golden Memorial

Churches of Excellence in Outreach

Briarcliff UMC

East Cobb UMC

Elizabeth Lee UMC

Kelley Chapel

Loganville UMC

McEachern UMC

North Decatur UMC
Union Point First UMC

Churches Recognized by UMCOR for Outstanding Ministry to Refugees

Avondale Patillo UMC
Dunwoody UMC
Oak Grove UMC
North Decatur UMC
Northside UMC

Conference Committee on Youth Ministry

New Conference Youth leadership was recently elected. The new president will be Christian Higgins and new Vice President will be Asia Howard. Highlights of the report included:

- The youth have managed and distributed the Youth Service Fund
- Held YL2L (Youth Learning to Lead) retreat
- Sponsored four Spiritual Life Retreat weekends
- Held two Confirmation Experience weekends
- Will join other conference youth on a mission trip to the Bahamas
- Offered a Youth Ministry Institute as well as quarterly youth worker gatherings
- Celebrated the many partnerships between the committee on youth ministry and Camp Glisson, Office of Ministerial Services, the General Board of Discipleship, and the Conference Board of Laity

Resolutions

Members of the North Georgia Annual Conference adopted four resolutions, 701. COSROW Resolution, 702. Resolution on Program Coordinator for Creation Care, 703. Resolution to Establish an Annual Day for Men within The North Georgia Conference, 704. Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowance for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the North Georgia Annual Conference. The resolutions are found on pages 140-146 of the Handbook.

Please note: Any member of a United Methodist Church may submit a petition to General Conference 2012. Petitions are submitted through the Conference Committee on Resolutions in accordance with Paragraph 507 of the Book of Discipline.

Find photos, a pdf version of the Annual Conference Handbook, and more coverage of this year's annual conference at www.ngumc.org/ac2010.