

2009 North Georgia Annual Conference Session
"Shalom: Transforming the World Through Health and Wholeness"
The Classic Center, Athens, Georgia
Bishop B. Michael Watson, Presiding

2009 Annual Conference Wrap Up

The purpose of this document is to help clergy and lay delegates communicate the business of the 2009 Annual Conference session to their local church membership. Please note that this is not a comprehensive report of all that occurred during the conference.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2009

Opening Worship and Holy Communion

The Hope for Africa Children's Choir from Humble Place School in Uganda opened worship with song and dance. Bishop Watson delivered the sermon, encouraged North Georgia to share the word of Jesus Christ with the world and to do no harm, do good, and attend to the ordinances of God. Bishop Watson and Bishop Daniel Wandabula of the East Africa Conference invited all members and guests to participate in Holy Communion.

Opening of Conference

- The Business Session of the 2009 Annual Conference opened with the historic hymn, And Are We Yet Alive. Bishop B. Michael Watson called the session to order. This is Bishop Watson's first Annual Conference since becoming the resident bishop of the North Georgia Area.
- Rev. Church Hodges, Johnny Fowler, Rev. Robin Lindsey, Tom Jackson, and Athens Mayor Heidi Davidson welcomed the conference to Athens.
- Rev. Richard Winn made a motion to request a freewill offering for the Hope for Africa Children's Choir. The motion was seconded and youth members served as ushers. Approximately \$10,500 was given.

Greetings from Cambodia

The Barte Family, United Methodist Missionaries in Cambodia, brought greetings. The United Methodist Church is very new to Cambodia, but currently has 5,000 members and 130 pastors. The Barte Family thanked North Georgia for being their home in the United States.

United Methodist Foundation

The United Methodist Foundation announced that it is celebrating 25 years in ministry in North Georgia. In honor of Bishop Watson and the clergy of the North Georgia conference, Bob Fletcher presented a donation of \$10,000 to the Central Conference Pension Initiative.

Georgia-Florida United Methodist Federal Credit Union

The Georgia-Florida United Methodist Federal Credit Union presented a \$1000 college scholarship to Nicholas Cooper-Kedrick, of North Decatur UMC.

CCPI

The Central Conference Pension Initiative recently received a gift of \$500,000 from a generous donor in Georgia, with the potential for an additional gift later this year if the churches in Georgia respond with significant participation. The donor has challenged the North and South Georgia Conferences to match the gift with a minimum goal of \$500,000. All church gifts and pledges received after May 7, 2009 will be counted toward the challenge.

Service of Ordination and Commissioning

Bishop Daniel Wandabula of the East Africa Conference preached at the service of ordination and commissioning. Bishop Wandabula, a former pastor in Uganda, has an episcopal area covering five nations, the countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda. He spoke about a call to transformation, reminding the new provisional members, deacons and elders that a call to ministry is a call to sacrifice. "Give everything you have and God will multiply it," he said. "When God calls he also empowers and enables."

- **Commissioned 18 Provisional Members:** Brent S. Bohanan, Amanda Ruth Garvin, Eduardo Roberto Stevens González, Rick Mark Goodspeed, William Herndon, Harden Paul Hopper III, Terry Allen Hunter, Edward Tillman Keen Jr., Elizabeth Ann Lobello, Belinda G. McCastle, Pamela Cobb McCurdy, Cynthia Goodwin McDonald, Nanada Nichole Middleton, John Wesley Privett, Jordan Sims Thrasher, Gigi Alisa Warren, Andrew Mahon Woodworth, Julie Houser Wright
 - **Ordained 4 Full Connection Deacons:** Christopher A. Barbieri II, Melanie Ann Martin, Carolyn Eloise Poling, Lynne Elise Faulkner Smith
 - **Ordained 20 Full Connection Elders:** Linda Grimes Birchall, Mark Lawrence Burgess, Beverly Wilkerson Casstevens, Jeanette M. Dickens, Charlene Seaborn Fuino, Geoffrey Ashland Grubbs, Thomas G. Hall, David Barton Hinson, James Thomas Hudgins, Kathryn Forester Lamon, Keith Evans Lawder, John Wayne Mattox Jr., William Bert Neal III, Karla Lynette Otroszko, Kenneth Ray Ott, Tara Raschel Paul*, Jamey David Prickett, Jessica Elizabeth Terrell, Stephen Walters, William Carter Zant
- * *Transitioning from Deacon to Elder*
- An offering was taken for the expenses of Annual Conference. Approximately \$6,000 was collected.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2009

Annual 5K Road Race

Some 119 North Georgia United Methodists were up bright and early to run the Annual Conference 5K through downtown Athens and along Oconee River Parkway. All proceeds from the race benefit the Hope for Africa Children's Choir.

Business Session

In the morning business service, members of Annual Conference:

- Voted on 32 Amendments to the Constitution of the United Methodist Church (visit www.ngumc.org/ac2009 for results).
- Heard the report from the Housing and Homeless Council. The top giving churches to the Homeless Offering in 2008: Griffin First, Johns Creek, Peachtree City, Athens First, Hickory Flat, Roswell, Cascade, Hillside.
- Heard a report from the Conference Young Adults. Jasmine Smothers and Margaret Freeman reported that 80 young adults gathered before Annual Conference at the 2 Story Coffee House for fellowship and discussion. Smothers and Freeman encouraged congregations to send young adults to conference as well as nurture young adult clergy.
- A motion to continue the work of the Young Adult Task Force for another three years was approved.

Recognition of Retiring Clergy

Annual Conference recognized 20 retiring clergy who together represent 514 years of service: James Lawrence Lockett Jr., E. Parks Davis, Ronnie O'Neil Flowers, Edward Jackson Best Jr., James Burton Drew Sr., Thomas Alfred Kerr, Martha Evelyn Randall, Norris Franklin Long Jr., Larry Harold Woodall, Cornelius Ebenezer Minor, James F. Shumake, Terry Lavern Thompkins, Gerald R. Varnado, Otis Odell Pickett Jr., Sandra Peeler Fendley, Sandra Smith Franklin, Elizabeth Moore Caine, Bettye Jean Holland, Larry Gray Naylor, Henry Richard Campbell

Memorial Service

The Conference memorialized many faithful servants who passed away May 1, 2008, through May 1, 2009. Rev. Al Turnell delivered the sermon.

- **Deceased Clergy:** F. Lamar Cherry, Luther E. Cooper, J. Douglas Gibson, Harvey C. Holland, Ted G. Langford, James W. McAlister, Alton H. McEachern, J. Carlisle Phillips, Clyde R. Smith, Carl A. Standard, Gilbert Steadham, Donald J. Welch, and Charles R. Williams.
- **Deceased Clergy Spouses:** Helen Alderman, Valeria Bridges, Mary Laird Crandall, Gussie Farmer, Joyce Floyd, Dora Lawton, Carolyn Luke, Rachel McDougal, Eather Melson, Marion Mitcham, Gladys Standard, and Florence Watkins.

- **Deceased Laity:** Helen West Hoard, Margaret Ramsey, Ruth Schnatmier, Frances Sowers, Lucille Walker, and Eleanor Willingham.

Communications Report

Office presented a video "A Day in the Life of the Conference Communications Staff."

Jamie Jenkins introduced two guests:

- Sarah Wilke, CEO of the United Methodist Reporter, spoke about the partnership between the North Georgia Advocate and the Reporter, the national United Methodist Church newspaper. To subscribe to the North Georgia Advocate, visit www.ngumc.org/advocate and signup by mail, phone or online.
- Larry Hollon, General Secretary of United Methodist Communication, introduced the new Rethink Church advertising campaign. Hollon encouraged local churches to visit www.rethinkchurch.org to download resources or www.10thousanddoors.org to see the website seekers are directed to visit. A Rethink Church welcome training will be Aug. 1 at Peachtree Rd. UMC.

Conference Treasurer's Report

- Membership is 354,094, a gain of 4,007 over last year
- Profession of Faith are 6,670 (+186)
- Average Worship Attendance was 130,870 (-2,304)
- Church School Membership is 18,447 (+3,747)
- Gainesville District paid 100% of its apportionments for the 9th year!
- North Georgia was again the highest payer of General Church apportionments

Conference Finance and Administration

After a report from CF&A Chair Hank Huckaby and Vice Chair Steve Wood, members of Annual Conference:

- Approved a revised spending plan for 2009 with a reduction of \$1,023,000.
- Approved a 2010 budget of \$25,910,000. This reflects a decrease of 1.3 percent over 2009 approved budget. Total decrease is \$342,000.
- Approved a recommendation to add a special offering Sunday for Action Ministries.
- Approved the addition of a \$30 registration fee for Annual Conference members.
- Approved the creation of a task force to be appointed by the bishop to define a better coordination, efficient, and effective array of programs and ministries to facilitate the mission of the church in "making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

Mission Worship Service

- Nebaza: Thank you Jesus. The children of the Hope for Africa Children's Choir brought members of Annual Conference to their feet as they performed for the second time this week. Bishop Daniel Wandabula preached at the service on the topic, "Called to be Faithful," and the scripture Matthew 28:18. "God calls us through the power of the Holy Spirit to mission," said Bishop Wandabula.
- Offerings from local churches for the Central Conference Pension Initiative were collected. As members left, a second offering was received for the ministry of the Hope for Africa Children's Choir.

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2009

Business Session

- The Consent Agenda was adopted.
- Nominations committee report was adopted.

Offering Totals

- Bishop Watson announced that more than half million dollars have been given during this annual conference to God's ministries.
- The Mission Offering for CCPI - \$227,000 in cash and checks
- Pledges to CCPI - \$231,000
- Cash and pledges previously received for CCPI - \$544,000
- Total from North Georgia for CCPI - \$1,002,000
- Hope for Africa Children's Choir - \$20,000+
- Annual Conference Expense Offering - \$6,000

Constitutional Amendments

Bishop Watson announced results from voting on the Constitutional Amendments. They are posted at www.ngumc.org. Note that these votes will be added to the aggregate vote of all United Methodist Annual Conference members' votes world-wide. To be adopted, two-thirds of the aggregate vote must be yes.

Board of Pension and Health Benefits

Approximately 175 people participated in ProCheck Health Screenings this week.

Connectional Ministries

Go to the website! At www.ngumc.org/go you'll find events, demographics, stewardship resources, information about POWER Teams, church consults and more.

Denman Awards

Denman Award recipients for evangelism were: Rev. David Lee Davis of Hamilton Mill UMC, clergy, and Frank Hooper of Jodeco Road UMC, lay. District Denman Awards were presented to Ben Cathey at The Orchard UMC (ATHN), John Cromartie at Cummings First UMC (GNSV), Sharma Lewis at Wesley Chapel UMC McDonough (GRFN), Mark Jordan at The Lighthouse UMC (LAGR), Mike Shearon at Tunnel Hill UMC (NWST), Frank Boone at Wesley Chapel UMC Villa Rica (ROCA), Don Harp at Peachtree Rd UMC (ACPK), John Beyers at Conyers First UMC (ADOX), Greg Porterfield at Wesley UMC Evans (AGST), Tom Davis at Due West UMC (AMAR), Katie Wright at Rock Springs UMC (AMRY), and Michael McQueen at St. James UMC Alpharetta (AROS).

United Methodist Children's Home

Erika Knocks, a 17-year-old high school graduate from the UMCH, spoke to the conference about her experience as a resident at the Children's Home. She begins college in the fall. Members were encouraged to promote the Work Day Offering to give children like Erika a chance to succeed.

Action Ministries

Visit www.actionministries.net to view the redesigned website and for more information on the case management, supportive services, education, transitional housing, food and feeding, and residential addiction treatment programs of Action Ministries.

Camp Glisson

Received greetings from Camp Glisson campers and staff. 2,593 campers attended Camp Glisson last summer. More than 2,500 are registered this year.

New Church Development

New Church Development shared stories of lives changed by new church plants and mission churches. The board of New Church Development thanked Parks Davis for five years of service as director. Davis then introduced Tommy Willingham, the new director of New Church Development.

Board of Laity

Heard from the Board of Laity about Lay Speaking Ministry, Lay Mission Training, Lay Revitalization Ministry, and Leadership UMC.

Simpsonwood

Announced the launch of the Center for Spiritual Renewal at Simpsonwood. It is a new effort by Simpsonwood to offer originating programs. The first program will be Aug. 21-23, "Treatment and Healing: Beyond Pills and Procedures."

Move Day and Future Sites

- Move Day is set for Thursday, June 25, 2009.
- Future sites and dates of Annual Conference are June 16-18, 2010, at Athens Classic Center, and June 14-17, 2011 at Athens Classic Center.

Sending Forth

- Bishop Watson thanked the North Georgia United Methodist family for their warm welcome and wonderful spirit.
- "We are all being sent - lay and clergy," said Bishop Watson. " Are you ready to be appointed? Are you ready to say, 'Yes, Lord, here I am?' Dear God, let it be."
- Bishop Watson read the names of all clergy receiving first time appointments.