

2018 Holston Annual Conference Summary

General Conference

- **General Conference 2019** – a special session will be convened Feb. 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis, Missouri to address an overwhelming number of proposals related to same-sex marriage, the ordination of gay clergy, and related topics. Holston delegation will consist of 16 members.
- **Council of Bishops** - created a Commission on a Way Forward to examine paragraphs in the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and explore options to strengthen the unity of the church, expected to be released July 8, 2018.
- **Service of Unity** - included an educational presentation by Alice Williams, member of the Commission on a Way Forward, and prayers for delegates to the General Conference 2019.
- **Annual Conference Considered Two Related Resolutions:**
 1. Tabled a resolution, "Towards an Inclusive Reading of the Bible," calling for full and unrestricted inclusion of gay and lesbian persons.
 2. Approved a substitute motion to the resolution "Equality Through Love," instead calling for the Holston delegation to study the upcoming Council of Bishops report and set up listening stations prior to General Conference 2019.
- **Constitutional Amendment on Women's Equality** - voted on during Annual Conference:

This amendment is an affirmation that, as part of our core foundational beliefs, the United Methodist Church will forever stand against any actions, organizations, or individuals that discriminate or dehumanize women and girls.

Results will not be released until all annual conferences have voted and the denomination releases the final outcome.

Holston Conference

- **State of the Church** - Bishop Taylor praised Holston's camp ministry ("one of the most dynamic camp ministries in the country"). She reported that 308 churches received new members on profession of faith in 2017 and challenged congregations with few children to offer confirmation classes and to use the conference's MissionInsite tool to learn more about their communities.

Statistics	Total Amount	Net Change from 2016
Membership	160,563	Down 1,725
Worship Attendance	59,357	Down 2,482
Church School Attendance	26,822	Down 303
Professions or Reaffirmations of Faith	1,605	Down 109
Adults and Young Adults in Small Groups	35,162	Down 5,415

- **Comprehensive Strategic Plan** - approved by Annual Conference in 2017: Strategy Team reported that progress has been made – most notably the downsizing of Holston Conference from twelve to nine districts.
- **Memorial Service** - celebrated the lives and ministry of 39 clergy and clergy spouses who passed away during the past year.
- **Congregational Development Ministry** - presented a video and several speeches supporting a recommendation to purchase a \$5.3 million Connexion property in Sevierville, Tennessee: Annual Conference voted not to purchase the Connexion property.
- **Three motions were addressed during the “New Business” session:**
 1. Referred a motion to change current restrictions and guidelines for “New Business” to the Committee on Rules and Order and to the Annual Conference Planning Committee.
 2. Tabled a motion to affirm current Book of Discipline paragraphs related to human sexuality.
 3. Referred a motion to provide funding for nationwide searches to hire Wesley Foundation directors to the Council on Finance and Administration.
- **Resolutions for Closing Churches** - approved by Annual Conference
 1. St. Andrews UMC in Knoxville, Tennessee
 2. Bascom UMC in Lebanon, Virginia

Finance

- **\$9.25 Million Budget for 2019** - approved by Annual Conference:
Includes paying 100 percent of Holston's apportionment to the general church.
- **Commission on Equitable Compensation** - report approved, setting a 2 percent increase for minimum salary levels for clergy in 2019.
- **Council on Finance and Administration** – report approved, including a 2 percent salary increase for conference staff and a new formula to set district superintendents' annual salaries at \$104,527 in 2019.
- **Board of Pensions and Health Benefits** - report approved, setting 2019 rates for the local-church direct invoice for health insurance at \$844 per month.
- **Young Clergy Initiative Grant** - Holston Conference application accepted. Board of Ordained Ministry is awaiting further details about the grant.
- **Alcoa Conference Center** - refinanced by Board of Trustees with a 13-year loan at a fixed rate of 5.025 percent, fulfilling the \$1 million balloon payment that was due on the building.

Missions

- **General Board of Global Ministries** - presented a plaque to Bishop Taylor, celebrating Holston's place in the top 10 of annual conferences in giving to UMCOR.
- **Hands-on Mission Project** - Bishop Taylor blessed four trucks packed with 8,586 "kits" valued at \$215,681 and bound for Africa. Collected by local churches, the food, health, home, and school supplies will support children in Zimbabwe and United Methodist schools in Liberia.
- **South Sudanese Refugees** – \$110,191 to continue providing shelter and education for 36 orphans, pastors and mission staff in Uganda, where many South Sudanese refugees have fled from violence, conflict, and food shortages in their homeland.
- **Change for Children** - \$61,335, distributed annually to aid children's ministries in Africa and Holston communities.
- **Czech Republic** - Bishop Taylor commissioned the Rev. Mark Hicks and Heather Hicks to serve as missionaries at the English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Prague, Czech Republic, beginning December 2018.
- **Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century** – a United Methodist initiative expected to help five African-American churches in Holston become more effective in mission and ministry.
- **Appalachian Trail Chaplain** - Bishop Taylor commissioned Minta "Blueberry" Ray as Holston's first female chaplain.

Service of Ordination, Commissioning, Recognition, and Sending Forth

➤ **Annual Conference 2018**

Ordained 12 elders

Commissioned 7 provisional elders and 2 provisional deacons

Recognized 1 associate member

Licensed 15 local pastors

Recognized 24 retiring clergy

Commissioned Corrina Sisk-Casson as Deaconess, following her consecration in May during the United Methodist Women's Assembly in Ohio

- **2018-2019 Ministerial Appointments** - confirm Dr. Laurence Hesser, pastor of New Tazewell United Methodist Church.

Reference

- **Final Reports** - 2018 session of the Holston Annual Conference, visit ACNews.Holston.org
- **Annual Conference 2019** - scheduled June 9-12 at Lake Junaluska, N.C.