

Your Connection to The Mississippi Annual Conference

The Circuit Rider

Published Wednesday | Jan. 18, 2017

The **POWER** of We

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Share Your News in The Circuit Rider

Contact The Circuit Rider at news@mississippi-umc.org.

Mission:

The mission of the Mississippi Annual Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Called to Fresh Vision



*The Mississippi Conference presence at the Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches in Atlanta last week was grand with 45 clergy attending. This event organized by United Methodists was open to all races and other denominations. In the section **Connecting** on page 2, Mississippi pastors, including white clergy who were present, discuss their perspective on the convocation.*



2016 Special Edition of The Circuit Rider is now available to view online! Go to: <http://bit.ly/28OxETH>

Purpose:

The Mississippi Annual Conference—empowered by love, generosity, justice and apprenticeship—forms spiritual leaders, faith communities and connections so more disciples of Jesus Christ transform the world.

Our Values

The Mississippi Conference Four Core Values are love, generosity, justice and apprenticeship. For more information, visit www.mississippi-umc.org/thepowerofwe.



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
The **POWER** of We

320-C Briarwood Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39206
601.354.0515 | Fax 601.948.5982
www.mississippi-umc.org

word POWER

Matthew 4:12-23

New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Begins to Preach

12 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. **13** Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— **14** to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

15 "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—**16** the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." [a]

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **19** "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." **20** At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, **22** and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Heals the Sick

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Bishop On the Move

Jan. 29-30, 2017 (Sunday - Monday)

Bishop Swanson will visit with the Meridian District laity and clergy. The laity meeting is at 4 p.m. at Central UMC in Meridian on Sunday. The clergy meets with him on Monday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



INM Update!



For more information:

www.mississippi-umc.org/INMeventideas

Connecting

Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches Open to All

By Tamica Smith Jeuit, Communications Specialist, Mississippi Conference

Photo right: *The Rev. Sarah Windham (centered) during a dinner with fellow clergy of the Mississippi Conference at the Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches.*

Anticipating her experience would be a positive one, the Rev. Sarah Windham of the Mississippi Conference United Methodist Church, attended the Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches in Atlanta, Jan. 10-12. She also expected to be one of a few Caucasians at the event planned by United Methodists – open to all races and denominations.

"We have to forget about color and just worship. I was very much at home, and I feel grateful for the experience. I thought, God I know you have something for me. Don't let me miss it."



Photo right: Mississippi Conference District Superintendents joined their pastors at for the convocation. Sitting left to right: Rev. Rusty Keen (Meridian), Rev. Mattie Gipson (Greenwood), and Rev. Stephen Cook (West Jackson). Standing left to right: Rev. Tim Thompson (Dir. Faith Community Formation), Rev. Cynthia Cross (Hattiesburg).



According to Windham, God granted her wish. The convocation's theme, "Called to Fresh Vision," resonated with her. Throughout the conference, she witnessed what she describes as worship without preservation.

"People were not looking around to check out everybody else. They were just praising the Lord, raising those Holy hands. It was encouraging to the way I respond and live in my call. It was a fresh vision. Now, all I have to do is figure out a way to put it to work," said Windham who pastors two predominately white congregations.

The other Caucasian clergyperson from Mississippi present was Meridian District Superintendent Rusty Keen. He stated that powerful worship, preaching, and teaching immensely blessed him.

"It was a mountain top experience. It was more than what I expected. It was probably one of the greatest spiritual experiences of my ministry. The Holy Spirit was alive and on fire," Keen expressed.

His district has the most African-American churches in the Mississippi Conference with 47. For this reason, Keen made the trip to support the 11 preachers from his area that went to the convocation.

"I learned there is a need for our African-American churches to have that boldness and desire to go beyond anything God has ever called them to be in the past. What I left with was a greater awareness of the power of worship in predominately African-American congregations. I left with a new vision and new spirit for how I lead as their chief missional strategist," said Keen.

At age 70, Rev. Rachael Pitts, an African-American attendee serving in the Mississippi Conference said she was very proud of the conference presence at the convocation with 45 pastors. They were among the largest groups.

Like her colleagues, she impressed with the leadership of the convocation.

"Many of them were young (ages) 20 to 30 and so committed to God's work and so open to God's work. There was a lot of encouragement and support for us (pastors) and what we are doing. It is so refreshing and reviving that all of the work of organizers has produced some fruit," said Pitts.

Plans are underway for the Mississippi Conference Convocation on the Black Church in October. Pitts added she is confident that Mississippi's leadership will plan an exciting gathering. She, Windham, and Keen will attend and urge others to join them.

Imagine No Malaria Lenten Guide Online

Photo right: Cat Foster, a staff member for the Mississippi Conference, takes a moment to read the *Imagine No Malaria Lenten Guide*. In addition to online copies, a few guides will be available in conference district offices in February.



Embrace Lent through the Imagine No Malaria Lenten Guide. In this daily series are writings from Mississippi Conference church leaders and stories of how Imagine No Malaria, an arm of The United Methodist Church, is saving lives around the globe. The guide also includes a Giving from Abundance Calendar for Lent. The calendar encourages people every day to think about their access to resources and services that support health. The proposed gift amounts may generate \$50 to \$100 over the course of Lent.

Imagine No Malaria is the Mississippi Conference Mission Focus. The conference is raising money to buy enough nets to save 100,000 lives from the deadly malaria disease before the annual conference session in June 2017. Download the Imagine No Malaria Lenten Tool Kit: <http://www.mississippi-umc.org/inmlent>.

Georgia Needs ERT Volunteers

Photo right: In support of the South Georgia Conference, Mississippi Conference's disaster response coordinator, Rev. Kenny McGill (pictured) is spreading the word-help is needed.

Areas of Albany, Georgia suffered severe damage due to recent inclement weather. South Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church, disaster response coordinator, Luis Morales is asking for aid from emergency response teams (ERTs) and other volunteers to help clean up debris. South Georgia is partnering with Samaritan's Purse, who will be coordinating with Dougherty County. Volunteers can contact Morales via phone at 478-216-7729 or via email morhill@gmail.com.



For more information, visit <https://spvolunteernetwork.samaritanspurse.org/albany-ga-tornado-response/>.

Moore Community House Year in Review 2016

Photo right: Since 2007, Moore Community House's Women in Construction program has trained more than 300 women. Photo courtesy Moore Community House.

Did you know that Moore Community House's Women in Construction Program celebrated its biggest announcement in the program's history last year? The details are in a special year in review notice that is being circulated. Since 1924, Moore Community House serves the families of the Mississippi Gulf Coast by providing early childhood education, and workforce training for women in the construction and advanced manufacturing field. To read about Moore Community House year in review, 2016, go to <http://us14.campaign-archive2.com/>.



Video Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

Mississippi's Methodist Hour broadcast is sharing a two-minute video tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. To view it and share the link with others, go to <https://vimeo.com/180908481>.

Snapshots: Living Out The POWER of We

Disaster Response

The Mississippi Conference Disaster Response Team values partnerships. Conference case workers were in Shaw, Mississippi recently for orientation with Mennonite Church volunteers. With the assistance of AmeriCorps workers, Methodists also assisted with painting a home for a family in Delta.



Board of Global Ministries

The Mississippi Conference is well-represented at a General Board of Global Ministries gathering in Atlanta, Georgia. Attendees have participated in activities ranging from discovering gifts to a simulation on privilege.

Faith Communities

Come to The Well

By Cynthia Laird, Certified Lay Servant Senatobia District, Mississippi Conference

Photo right: *The Rev. Corey Truett sharing God's word.*

Photo below right: *From left to right, Paul Cline, Sean Gilliam, Elizabeth Bellipanni, and Nelson Coile. In this photo, they were on the countdown to worship. Photo credit Cynthia Laird.*

On Sunday, Jan. 8, 2017, The Well at Lewisburg celebrated its "Worship-Versary" (one year anniversary of joining in worship) led by Reverend Corey Truett. During most of that year, services were held at The Well's parent church, Maples Memorial UMC, in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Recently, the congregation began worshipping in their building in the Lewisburg community located at 56 Vaughn Lane, in Olive Branch.

The new location is still undergoing renovations. In addition to weekly worship, The Well will provide a place for ministry to all ages, outreach, and service to the community, and will soon offer a café as a place for people to gather. Each cup of coffee purchased will help farmers and workers in Honduras have fair wages, and help with building projects and sharing the gospel. Furthermore to the outreach abroad, The Well plans to put 10 percent of the profits from the coffee sales back into the Lewisburg community. Some of the outreach projects (before the opening of the coffee shop) included: tailgating at the home games of some of the local schools, running the scoreboard for 9th grade and junior varsity football teams. Other projects include speaking at events, praying for the teachers, providing recycle bins, providing coffee pots and coffee for teachers, giving hand warmers to teachers on morning car duty, and more.

Truett spent 20 years in youth ministry, and also served as an associate pastor, college minister worship leader, and young adult pastor. He relates that during that time, a pattern emerged, and it became clear to him that God was sending him from place to place to rebuild youth ministries. Other pastors told him he needed to consider church planting. In late 2014, his spirit became uneasy, and he knew that God was up to something. He sought the counsel of a former pastor and was told that he needed to be church planting. At that point, Truett accepted the call for a new direction in ministry.

At that time, Rev. Andy Ray, past Senatobia District Superintendent, sent Truett to be evaluated as a candidate for church planting. Once assessed, Truett and his wife, Heather, were brought to DeSoto County to view the area. Both of them were excited about the opportunity for ministry there. Truett felt an unmistakable spiritual draw to serve in the Lewisburg community. He said that his "children have grown up in the ministry and see the church as their second home." He further stated that he could not be more supported than with his precious family.

The Well's congregation has participated in the Acts Bible study and has shared stories of their life and faith journeys. Some people have come to The Well where they began to understand, for the first time, that they did matter to God. Others have come to The Well with an idea of how the church is done, only to learn that church can be so much more than they ever imagined.

Christians everywhere can be a part of this ministry even as they serve in their home churches. Ways to serve include: (1) prayer for the ministry to have an impact in the community, and to reach people for Christ; (2) financial gifts of any amount; (3) volunteer work at the church; and (4) donation of items such as toys or other supplies for the children and nursery ministries. To learn more about The Well ministry, visit the website www.LewisburgWell.com.

Mosquito Tree for Imagine No Malaria

Eastlawn UMC, Pascagoula, MS

Photo right: *Eastlawn UMC's released this photo of their mosquito tree.*

The Christmas tree at Eastlawn United Methodist Church in Pascagoula, Mississippi is now called the mosquito tree. Instead of tucking the tree away until next year, the tree will be visible a few more weeks as the congregation collects funds towards the Mississippi Conference Mission Focus Imagine No Malaria. The conference is raising money to buy enough nets that will save 100,000 lives from the deadly malaria disease. Eastlawn members draped their tree with a net to symbolize the life-saving role of nets in the fight against malaria. One net can save up four people from the deadly malaria disease that is carried by mosquitos. So far, Eastlawn has collected \$2,028.00.



Weekend Food Backpack Program

Photo right: *Tupelo First UMC volunteers prepare bags of food for school children in the community. Photo credit Tupelo First UMC.*

The weekend food backpack program, serving over 250 pre-kindergarten through sixth graders attending Tupelo Public Schools, is fortunate to have volunteers packing the bags from area United Methodist Churches as well as other denominations who are led to support the children in the community. Led by Tupelo First UMC, program funding is through community donations and the United Way of Northeast Mississippi. Children who are struggling with food insecurity are provided a small sack of basics to help them curb hunger during the weekend when school is not in session. At the cost of \$3 per child, teachers who refer the children to the program report they

hear gratitude in the "thank you's," but even more importantly they see it in the child's smile and their improved grades. If you want to donate or volunteer, contact Cathy Grace at cgrace720@aol.com, or call her at, 662-312-1395.



This Little Light of Mine Success

The Independence United Methodist Church conducted a campaign called "This Little Light of Mine" to raise money for The Methodist Children's Homes of Mississippi. Members put a strand of lights on a tree for every \$25 donated. They collected \$1900 and added 76 strands of lights. On Sunday, Dec. 18, 2016, Mike Ferguson presented a check to Mike Duggar, CEO of The Methodist Children's Homes of Mississippi. Duggar spoke to the congregation about how, because of Christ, The Methodist Children's Homes exists to promote healing in hurting children, providing hope to troubled families.

Photo right submitted by Diane White, Independence UMC.



Save the Date | Announcements

Mission Mississippi Collective Prayer Time

Jan. 19, 2017

Mission Mississippi is calling people to them for collective focused prayer time following the recent presidential election that has Americans divided into many levels spiritually, racially, and politically. "As we move into a new year and inaugurate a new president we want to pray for reconciliation and healing." Prayer time is 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Jan. 19, 2017.

For more information, go to <http://missionmississippi.org/year-long-prayer-initiative/>.

The Letter to the Hebrews

January 20 - 21, 2017

Dr. Ben Witherington III from Asbury Theological Seminary will be at Christ United for a teaching seminar on the meaning and symbolism of The Book of Hebrews (1.0 CEU). The early registration fee is \$50 through January 9, then increases to \$75. Online registration is available at www.christunitedjxn.org, or complete the form [<http://bit.ly/2hW0PXt>] and mail with your check. For more information, contact Catherine Hames at 601-914-7116 or chames@christunitedjxn.org.

Early Response Team Training

Jan. 21, 2017

Spread the word; Early Response Team training is at St. Luke's UMC, Jackson, Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017. The Rev. David Newton and Rev. David Cumbest are the training leaders. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2hVYtNr>.

Camp Wesley Pines Confirmation Retreat

Jan. 27-29, 2017

Camp Wesley Pines will host its annual confirmation retreat Jan. 27-29, 2017. Designed for students in grades 5-8, the Friday night through Sunday event will feature Trey Skaggs as the main speaker. Workshops will include United Methodist history, stole making, missions and social justice, and sacraments and worship. New this year is a workshop for Children's ministers. For more information,

call 601-892-2341, or contact Lauren Hutto at lauren@heritage-umc.org or check the Camp Wesley Pines website at wesleypines.com.

Camp Lake Stephens, Confirmation Retreat 2017

Jan. 27-29, 2017

Confirmation retreat is designed to complement the confirmation program offered through your local church for students in grades 6-8. This retreat is a wonderful opportunity for confirmands throughout the Mississippi Conference to be in community and learn together what it means to be a Christian in the United Methodist tradition. For more information, call 662-234-3350.

Clergy Leadership Conference

Feb. 6-8, 2017

Early Bird Registration Ends This Friday, Jan. 6

The 2017 Clergy Leadership Conference will be Feb. 6-8, 2017 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Brandon, Mississippi. Rev. Dr. N. Graham Standish will lead this year's conference themed, "Leading a Church to Discern and Do God's Will." Those who attend the conference will receive 1.5 CEUs. Early Registration ends Jan. 6, 2017.

For more information, go to <http://www.events.centerforministry.com/assnfe/ev.asp>.

ERT Training at Eastlawn UMC

Feb. 11, 2017

Eastlawn United Methodist Church in Pascagoula, Mississippi will be the meeting place for Early Response Team (ERT) Training on Feb. 11, 2017. The church is at 2502 Ingalls Avenue. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2jfPFST>.

The Gathering 2017

Feb. 24-26

The vision behind The Gathering is to create a high energy weekend conference for students to gather from all over Mississippi to celebrate the Lord and Savior. Organizers are committed to create a weekend event that is first-class quality with the best worship teams and communicators. Go to www.mississippi-umc.org/thegathering for early bird registration and more.

Lay Servant School Sponsored by Desoto Cluster

Feb. 25, 2017

The Desoto Cluster is hosting lay servant school at Hernando UMC on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017. A barbecue lunch plate will be provided for \$5. Brochures with registration forms will be available later.

View instructors here: <http://bit.ly/2k5YbQm>.

50th General Meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)

March 8-11, 2017

The 50th General meeting anniversary for BMCR is March 8, 2017, in Cincinnati, Ohio. The theme is Celebrating a Legacy of Faith, Hope and Renewal More Rivers to Cross, More Milestones to Reach. For more information about registration and hotel reservations, go to <http://bit.ly/2igmYRs>.

Sticky Stories Preaching from Jesus' Parables

March 8, 2017

This Camp Lake Stephens event -Sticky Stories Preaching from Jesus' Parables-features Charles Maynard, a United Methodist minister, storyteller, and author. The Center for Ministry will award ½ CEU credit to participants. The cost is \$30 and includes lunch.

Go to <http://bit.ly/2k8pjCp> to download the flyer. To register before the March 6 deadline go to <http://bit.ly/2jEts07>, or call Sally at 662-234-3350.

Announcements

Advertise in the 2017 Special Edition of The Circuit Rider

Order advertising in the 2017 Special Annual Conference Edition of The Circuit Rider.

2017 rates can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2iPA1bY>.



Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training Program

In times of disaster, the visible presence of the Church is an essential and effective ministry that brings God's hope and healing to people affected. United Methodist Committee on Relief's Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training is a one-day local church readiness program to equip volunteer trainers to respond.

For more information contact Rev. Kenny McGill at MSUMCOR@mississippi-umc.org. Click here to print a promotional flyer about Connecting Neighbors.

UM Appalachian Ministry Network Grant Application Now Available

Attention New Albany, Tupelo, Starkville, Senatobia, Meridian, and Greenwood Districts

The United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network 2017 Hunger & Poverty Grant applications are now available, twice a year. The upcoming UMAMN deadline is March 1, 2017. The second deadline is Sept. 1, 2017. To receive conference level signatures, applications must be received by the conference office (320-C Briarwood Drive, Jackson, MS 39206) no later than Feb. 13, 2017, and Aug. 1, 2017.

Application must be received by the cycle deadline to be considered for the current cycle.

Maximum grant amount is \$2,500.

Grants cannot be used for agency/ministry operating expenses, but may be used for non-agency/ministry resource persons.

Grants must be used for projects within the geographic region of Appalachia and that serve a majority of Appalachian people.

Here are the counties in Mississippi that fall inside the Appalachian region:

Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Itawamba, Kemper, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Winston, and Yalobusha.

Priority will be given to applications addressing causes and barriers related to hunger and poverty.

Project must be church-related-local, district, conference or ecumenical (must have active United Methodist involvement).

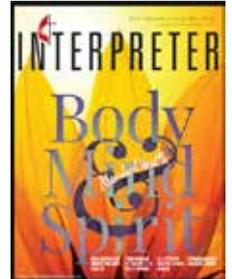
Apply for a grant: <http://www.umamn.org/grants/apply-grant/>

Receive UM Interpreter

Local churches can receive up to five free print editions of Interpreter and unlimited free editions.

The Interpreter is published by United Methodist Communications as a ministry magazine for the members -- lay and clergy -- of The United Methodist Church. The magazine's focus is on the ministries of individual members and local congregations, the resources and leadership provided by other parts of the connections and, to a limited extent, individual faith stories.

To access the current and archived issues and to subscribe, Go to <http://www.interpretermagazine.org/about/writers-guidelines> and visit the Magazine tab.



Hotels for 2017 AC Session

Hotels with special rates for the 2017 Session of the Mississippi Conference are now available online.

View the list here: <http://www.mississippi-umc.org/2017hotels>. Check back often for updates.

UMC Events

Visit www.umc.org/news-and-media/looking-ahead-upcoming-events to see more educational opportunities and other upcoming events in the life of The United Methodist Church.

Methodist Tested Recipes

Luscious Potatoes

2 lb. Southern-style hash browns	1 (16 oz.) carton sour cream
2 ½ c. grated Cheddar cheese	½ c. melted butter
1 can of mushroom soup	2 c. corn flakes cereal
1 tsp. salt	
1 tsp. pepper	

Mix potatoes, cheese, soup, salt, pepper and sour cream in a bowl. Pour into greased 9x11-inch glass baking dish. Mix butter and corn flakes: spread over potatoes. Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees.



— By Pansy Favors from "Loaves and Fishes, A Collection of Favorites"
from St. Paul UMC, Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Employment

As a courtesy to the Mississippi Annual Conference, job announcements from across the United Methodist connection are featured in *The Circuit Rider*. To submit an employment notice, send an email to news@mississippi-umc.org. Postings are not guaranteed to appear more than once in Mississippi Conference publications. **To read a description of job opening(s) listed below as well as other listings, go to www.mississippi-umc.org/employmentopportunities.**

- **Director of Youth and Children's Ministries at Coffeerville UMC, Coffeerville, MS**
- **Director for Youth and their Families at Peachtree Road UMC, Atlanta, GA**
- **Part-time Choir Director at Johnston Chapel UMC, Pike County, MS**

Stay Connected

- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/pages/The-Mississippi-United-Methodist-Conference/436491529732524
- **Twitter:** https://twitter.com/Mississippi_UMC
- **You Tube:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSRtxv_Kix8IbYuHKRMLIjg
- **Flickr:** www.flickr.com/photos/119483421@N02/

Stay Connected with ConnectText

Mississippi United Methodists with the ability to receive text messaging via phone are encouraged to sign up for ConnectText. The service is another option for people to stay informed about important dates and other conference happenings.

To sign up for ConnectText:

1. Remember, you must have the ability to get text messages on your phone.
2. From your mobile phone, text the letters 'MSUMC' to the number 95577 and press send.
3. Wait a few seconds for a confirmation text and you're connected!

Mississippi Conference's Mobile App—MY MSUMC

MY MSUMC—the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church's official mobile app—is available at no cost on all iPhone, Android, Galaxy and Blackberry phones and their corresponding pads and tablets. MY MSUMC allows easy access to the latest conference events, local UM news and *The Circuit Rider*. The MY MSUMC app presents users with a unique opportunity to interact with the conference by submitting prayer requests, recording audio of personal testimonies and posting comments via facebook and twitter. Plus, the 'Our Districts' feature shows a comprehensive list of district contact information and even directions from the user's current location—all from a mobile smart phone or tablet device.