The Circuit Rider

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Share Your News in The Circuit Rider
Contact The Circuit Rider at news@mississippi-umc.org.

Living Out The POWER of We

Upcoming Resource from Bishop Swanson

2017 Special Edition of The Circuit Rider is now available to view online! Go to: http://bit.ly/2t7XYFm

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.

LOVE
GENEROSITY
JUSTICE
APPRENTICESHIP

Bishop On the Move

The people of The United Methodist Church are currently in disagreement on various issues and topics. To see Bishop Swanson share what resources are forthcoming in communicating our current context as a conference and ways we can deal with tension in the world, go to http://bit.ly/2mM8hJa.

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www.mississippi-umc.org
Psalm 62:5-12
Surely they intend to topple me from my lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse.[a]

5 Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. 6 Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
7 My salvation and my honor depend on God[b]; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. 8 Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

9 Surely the lowborn are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie. If weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath.
10 Do not trust in extortion or put vain hope in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.
11 One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: “Power belongs to you, God, 12 and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”; and, “You reward everyone according to what they have done.”

Bishop on the Move

Below are some of the events where Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. will be visiting in the upcoming weeks.

January 28-31, 2018 (Thursday-Sunday)
Bishop Swanson will preach during the Epworth by the Sea Winter Conference at St. Simons Island in Georgia.

February 5-16 (Monday-Friday)
Bishop and Mrs. Swanson will depart for a trip to the Holy Land along with host, Willis Britt for a once in a lifetime experience of the Holy Land.

February 21-24 (Wednesday-Saturday)
Bishop Swanson will be in attendance of General Commission of United Methodist Men (UMM) meetings, meetings of the National Association of Conference Presidents, UMM Foundation and conference Prayer Advocates and jurisdiction meetings in Nashville.

February 25-28 (Sunday-Wednesday)
Bishop Swanson will be in attendance of a Council of Bishops meeting in Dallas, Texas.

Imagine No Malaria Update

For more information: www.mississippi-umc.org/inm
Connecting

Student Cohort Produces Spiritual Growth

By Jasmine Haynes, Communications Specialist

Sounds of laughter erupted from a group of teenagers swapping funny youth group stories that soon drifted into a quiet contemplation as they explained a shared fear of the uncharted territory that they would soon be entering called 'college.' These students are from various regions of the state with different church sizes, and they met for the first time a year and a half ago when they decided to participate in the conference's student cohort.

Recently, the cohort met in person for the first time in several months and when asked about how they feel the cohort has impacted their lives, their comments varied but had one consistent element.

"I know so much more about everything now," said Sarah Jane Bishop, a senior from Long Beach, Miss. "The last year has been a year of growth for me and a big part of my overall spiritual growth."

Some other common points of progress for the group were engaging in relationship building and learning that it's okay to be uncomfortable. Each year, the students are tasked to plan and implement a shared mission event and discussed how one of their biggest challenges was stepping outside of their comfort zones. They also discovered that when you leave your comfort zone-one of the youth noted--"that's when God's got me."

Mark DeVries, founder of Ministry Architects and one of the adult leaders present with the group, explained that researchers did an experiment to see what would happen to an amoeba if it was continuously kept comfortable. Their results were that all the cells died. DeVries shared that like those cells, it's essential to our survival as living organisms to be uncomfortable sometimes so that we can grow.

"Here's how you know you're doing something important," said DeVries. "You'll face resistance and you'll feel a lot of opposition."

The cohort also spent time studying Jesus' miracles in Mark 1 and delving into being more deliberate about entering in God's presence.

This student cohort was developed collaboratively by the Mississippi United Methodist Annual Conference and Ministry Architects and designed to equip today's leaders from different church sizes, cultures and locations to grow and serve their various communities as lifelong disciples. The program is a two-year commitment and helps build the participants' sense of community.

For more information on how youth can apply to take part in the next student cohort, click here or contact Mike Howington, youth and families coordinator at 601.354.0515 or mhowington@mississippi-umc.org. The deadline to apply for the next student cohort is March 31, 2018. To see pictures from the cohort's weekend retreat, go to http://bit.ly/2rmY0ZL.

Celebrating the Retirement of Gulfside Assembly's Mollie Stewart

The Gulfside Association, Incorporated, Board of Directors takes great pride in offering Mrs. Mollie M. Stewart (photo right) a retirement appreciation for serving the Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Mississippi. Stewart served as CEO, executive director, board of director's chairperson and board member for approximately two decades. Under her leadership, the Gulfside Assembly continued in various ministries and partnerships across the United Methodist connection, and Hancock County. Stewart led a diligent campaign for a rebuilding of the center that was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and impaired by the BP Oil Spill. We invite your presence and generous support for her at a retirement appreciation. The Mollie M. Stewart Retirement Celebration Brunch will take place April 21, 2018 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Crowne Plaza Hotel Atlanta Airport, 1325 Virginia Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30344. The cost for the Brunch is $60.00 per person.

In honor of Mrs. Mollie M. Stewart, a financial contribution is solicited before, during and after this event in honor of Gulfside Assembly Rebuilding Project. Please make your contributions and brunch payments to Gulfside Assembly Inc., which is a 501c3, and mail to the Mississippi Annual Conference address listed above.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Carolyn Malone Clark at cmalonec@outlook.com no later than April 10, 2018. For more information, go to http://bit.ly/2Dj9KSy.
Mississippi UM Foundation Announces Scholarship Application Deadline

The Foundation is moving up its scholarship application deadline in order to assist students in making decisions about school choices. The applications are due April 2, 2018 and award letters will be sent the first week of May.

Applications may be found on our website under download forms [http://ms-umf.org/download-forms/]. Or you may call or email the foundation to request an application. Please note that non-seminary students may only apply for up to four awards. Seminary students may apply for an additional three awards.

Students must be active in a United Methodist Church in the Mississippi Annual Conference. This is certified by the pastor's signature on the application form.

We are once again partnering with the Wood College Foundation in awarding 25 $1,000 scholarships for undergraduate students. Other foundation scholarships range from $200 to $700 per year. Seminary scholarships may be higher.

Subscribe Now to Conference News and Updates

Do you receive The Circuit Rider but not conference e-blasts or cares and concerns? To opt in to either conference cares and concerns to be notified of clergy and clergy spouse deaths, or subscribe to conference news and updates and stay current on Mississippi Conference happenings, go to http://mississippi-email.brtapp.com/subscribe. After clicking on the link, enter your name and email address and wait for an email that will give you the option of what communication you would like to receive.

Disaster Response News

Volunteers Needed in Miss. Counties Recovering from Disasters

If you have specific skills for which you would like to volunteer, or if you are not skilled at carpentry but feel a call to disaster response ministry, families in Washington, Perry, Lamar, Jones, Holmes and Montgomery Counties could use your help. Recovery efforts include installing attic stairs, drywall, interior doors, trim, fixtures, kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities; interior priming and painting and several other building-related tasks. If you are interested in being helping hands and a non-anxious presence in the lives of those affected by disaster, contact Mellie Jordan, disaster recovery project manager at 601.354.0515 or disasters@mississippi-umc.org.

Register Now for Upcoming ERT Training: Feb. 3

Those who feel called to providing a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster, are not only welcome but encouraged to attend an early response team (ERT) training. The registration fee is $40 and includes a manual, t-shirt, lunch, background check and leader expenses. For ERT certification, participants will need to attend the entire course. For more information and how to register for the February 3 training at Seashore United Methodist Assembly, go to http://bit.ly/2hFic11.
Readiness 360: A Ministry Tool

Readiness 360 is an online survey tool that assesses four critical capacities for multiplying thriving ministries: spiritual intensity, dynamic relationships, missional alignment and cultural openness.

Whether starting a new worship service, a new ministry site or even revitalizing an existing faith community, the Readiness 360 survey report can be a helpful tool. It will aid your congregation gain shared, unprecedented insight as to where you are (your unique strengths in your current context) so that any new vision, goal or ministry becomes more achievable.

Find more details here: http://www.mississippi-umc.org/readiness360.

Introducing Millsaps’ Youth Spiritual Formation and Worship Resourcing Academies

Dear Mississippi Annual Conference,

If you are interested in studying the scriptures, learning major movements in 2,000 years of Christian Church tradition, experiencing new avenues of prayer and spiritual direction, gaining skills to ask hard questions while growing in faith, contact Rev. Paige Swaim-Presley at swaimpk@millsaps.edu, director of the Center for Ministry at Millsaps College, or or visit the website for more information (601.974.1488 | www.centerforministry.com).

The Center for Ministry is currently developing plans for a Millsaps College Youth Academy for Spiritual Formation anticipated to begin in the summer of 2020. High school students from across the conference will spend several days at Millsaps learning about the creative aspects of writing liturgy, the meaning of sacraments and the intersection of loving God and neighbor through a Wesleyan lens. The students will engage hard questions so that they will be better prepared to become future leaders for the transformation of the world as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Additionally, plans are underway for an Academy for Worship Resourcing beginning sometime in 2020-2021. This academy will offer learning opportunities for the planning of worship services, the meaning of various patterns of worship, how to lead music, write liturgy and understand the rhythms of the church calendar. Participants will learn how to corporately invite the Holy Spirit into worship services and to reflect upon "why we do what we do" or "don't do what we don't do!"

If you desire further information about any of the above, go to http://bit.ly/2BdLk6U, or would like to schedule me to visit your church or small group, you may reach me at joey.shelton@millsaps.edu. May the three stranded cord of the love of God, the peace of Jesus Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit direct your theological task, your life-long learning, your recognition of God's work in the world and your joy-filled participation in and with "glory sightings" of God's grace wherever you may be.

Grace and peace and holy noticing be yours,
Rev. Dr. Joey Shelton, Millsaps College, January 2018

Wesley Foundations’ Statewide 2018

The Wesley Foundations Statewide annual retreat will take place February 2-4, 2018 at Timbercreek Camp in Morton, Mississippi. Statewide is an opportunity for college students to experience Christ for the first time or deepen their faith.

Wesley Foundations from across the state need your assistance with scholarships for students, vans for travel and travel finances.

If you have questions about how to get involved with your local Wesley Foundation contact Allyson Willis, campus ministry consultant at awilliscampusministry@gmail.com or 662.231.9929.
Administry

Protecting Our Churches: Fire Prevention
In this issue of Protecting Our Churches you'll find a list of precautions you can take to minimize the possibility of a space heater fire, electrical hazards and arson. To learn more, go to http://bit.ly/2mMj1ay.

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc. administers the conference property insurance plan and writes a monthly newsletter titled, Protecting Our Churches for the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Students

Tell Your Story at The Gathering 2018
If your life was a movie, what genre would it be? Action? Drama? Comedy? Themed, "Director's Cut," this year's weekend student conference aims to show youth that no matter the genre, their story, and their role in it are important to God. The Gathering: Director's Cut will take place February 23-25, 2018 at Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson.

Learn more about how students can attend this event and begin to let God direct their story here: http://www.mississippi-umc.org/thegathering.

Subscribe Now to Youth News and Updates
Whether you're an adult youth volunteer, youth minister or a parent who just wants to be more engaged in what's relevant to the life of your teenager, get plugged in to tips, news and updates on events dedicated to student ministry in the Mississippi Conference. Subscribe to youth news and updates here: http://mississippi-email.brtapp.com/subscribe.

Cares & Concerns

As you pause to pray this week, take time to ask for strength, peace and comfort for the families and friends of those listed below who have joined the church triumphant:

• With heavy hearts, we extend our sympathy and love to the family of Rev. Everette Watts, upon his recent death. We give thanks to God for his witness.

• It is with sadness that we announce the death of Rev. Clifton LeCornu. He passed away December 20, 2017.

Save the Date | Announcements

Confirmation by the Sea
January 26-28, 2018
This confirmation event is targeted for students ages 10-13 and will take place at Seashore United Methodist Assembly located at 1410 Leggett Dr. in Biloxi. Early bird registration ends January 3, 2018. Rev. Brad Corban will be the speaker and the list of worship leaders include Rev. Domini Henry, Rev. Clair Dobbs, Rev. Tanya Edwards-Evans and Rev. Bruce Case. For a registration packet or more information, go to http://bit.ly/2As2U7W.
Camp Lake Stephens Confirmation Retreats
January 26-28, 2018 and February 2-4, 2018
Confirmation Retreats at CLS are designed to complement the confirmation program offered through your local church for students in grades six through eight. These retreats are a wonderful opportunity for confirmands throughout the Mississippi Conference to be in community and learn together what it means to be a Christian within the United Methodist tradition. **The regular registration deadline is January 19, 2018 and the cost will be $140 per person.** If you have any questions, email chap@camplakestephens.com.

Interfaith Peace Conference at Lake Junaluska
March 1-4, 2018
In polarizing times, how can we communicate with civility and respect while upholding our core values and religious traditions? Join us for "Meeting the Other: Can We Talk?" At this multi-day event, Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders offer lectures, worship, music, prayer and meditation to guide us in learning to talk across differences. Those attending can gain 1.5 CEUs. For more details and how to register, go to [http://bit.ly/2o1XFKa](http://bit.ly/2o1XFKa).

Camp Lake Stephens Youth Leader Sabbath Retreat
April 9-10, 2018
All youth leaders are invited to join us for a time of community with fellow leaders to experience the beauty of God in the midst of creation, to discern where God continues to lead us in our respective ministries -- and of course -- to just have fun at camp! The $50 fee will cover lodging, four meals and all programming. Spouses and family members are also welcome to attend for a minimal fee. Contact program director, Chap Fenwick at chap@camplakestephens.com for more information regarding retreat details.

PAUMCS Annual Conference
April 12-14, 2018
Themed, "Make a Joyful Noise," the Professional Administrators of The United Methodist Connectional Structure (PAUMCS) is having their annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee. The deadline is March 13, 2018 to reserve a room at the PAUMCS rate. Free airport shuttle service is available to and from the hotel. Additional information will be included in your welcome letter. For a list of seminars, schedule or events and more information, Read the brochure: [http://bit.ly/2AsByOV](http://bit.ly/2AsByOV).

Announcements

Society of St. Andrew's Short-term Mission Trips
February 25-March 1/ March 4-8/ March 11-15
Come glean oranges and cabbage to feed people in need of healthy food across Florida. Farmers donate the food; we pick it and deliver it to local agencies, including the Salvation Army and area food banks and food pantries.

2018 Scholarships Offered for UMEIT: USA and NWCU Events
The Council of Bishops is once again offering scholarships for young adult, first-time participants to attend the National Workshop on Christian Unity and United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training in the United States (UMEIT: USA).  Please let young adults, aged 21-35 know!

The National Workshop (NWCU) and UMEIT: USA occur parallel to each other once a year in a different area of the United States. This year they will be held in Silver Spring, Maryland April 16-19, 2018.

The NWCU is an opportunity for Christians who care about ecumenical and interreligious ministry to learn and network.  UMEIT: USA is the annual training in the US for Methodists engaged in ecumenical and interreligious ministry through the church.

The Council of Bishops will offer up to six scholarships, at $300 each, to assist young adults with the costs of attending.  To receive a scholarship application, either email jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org or look for the posting at [http://bit.ly/2mP13VV](http://bit.ly/2mP13VV).

Registration for the NWCU and UMEIT: USA is open via [www.nwcu.org](http://www.nwcu.org).  The scholarship application is due to jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org no later than February 28.
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 http://www.mississippi-umc.org/employmentopportunities.

- Director of Communications
- Part-time Music Minister
- Chancel Choir Director
- Disaster Recovery Jobs in Florida
- Graduate Residency in Youth Ministry at the Center for Youth Ministry Training (CYMT)

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!

Four-part Bible Study: Living Out The POWER of We
With Bishop James E. Swanson Sr.
Link to access the videos: http://bit.ly/2l1bUbW