

Your Connection to The Mississippi Annual Conference

The Circuit Rider

Published Wednesday | November 15, 2017

Living Out The POWER of We

In This Issue

- word POWER 2
- Bishop On the Move 2
- Connecting 3
- Faith Communities 5
- Spiritual Leadership 5
- Administry 6
- Students 6
- Cares and Concerns 6
- Save the Date / Announcements 7
- Employment 7

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.

Having a Grateful Spirit in Troubling Times



Mrs. Delphine & Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr.
Thanksgiving Greetings

This year has been full of natural disasters and terrible acts of violence. However, Bishop and Mrs. Swanson encourage everyone to remember that even in the midst of tough times, God still calls us to be people with thankful hearts. The Swansons' Thanksgiving message to the Mississippi Conference can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/242158737>.



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



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
The POWER of We

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word POWER

Judges 4:1-7 (NIV)

Deborah

4 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. **2** So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. **3** Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the Lord for help.

4 Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading[a] Israel at that time. **5** She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. **6** She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. **7** I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'"

Update from the Commission on a Way Forward

To my sisters and brothers of the Mississippi Episcopal Area,

I am currently attending an Active Bishops Learning Retreat that began at the conclusion of our Council of Bishops (COB) Fall Meeting. The majority of our time together during the COB was spent receiving a preliminary report from the Commission on A Way Forward. The official report of what was presented and discussed during our three days together is in the press release following my statement. I ask that you read that document carefully and prayerfully. Please be aware of the following points.

We did not receive a final report from the commission.

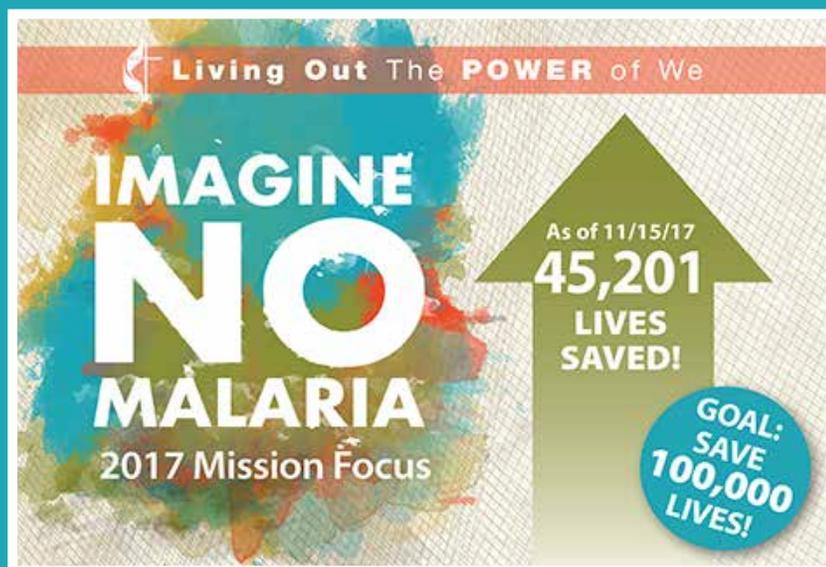
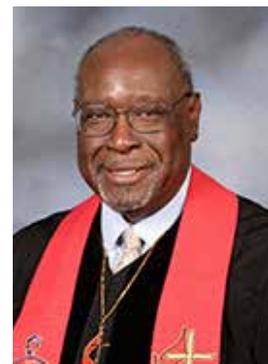
We did receive three sketches of organizational structures we might use given our expressed differences on the issue of The UMC's relationship with LGBTQ persons.

The Commission on a Way Forward is still hard at work and needs our continuing prayer.

I ask that after you read the press release (<http://bit.ly/2i1M5sD>) that you pause and pray for us to be what Jesus prayed in John 17 – that "we would be one."

Blessings,

Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr.



Imagine No Malaria Update

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

Update from the Council of Bishops

Pastoral Letter from the Council of Bishops

United Methodist Church bishops are calling on members of the denomination to engage in respectful conversations amidst growing conflict over political, religious and justice issues in many places in our world. Read the full letter here:

<http://bit.ly/2za1gLj>.



Bishop Ough's President's Address

President of the Council of Bishops, Bishop Bruce R. Ough delivers a president's address with updates on the Commission on a Way Forward and moments of celebration for the work being done throughout the connection in mission and ministry. View the address here:

<http://bit.ly/2zJK661>.

Pastoral Letter from the African Bishops

View the pastoral letter from the Africa Bishops here: <http://bit.ly/2hFns8M>.

Connecting

Conference Office Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving Holiday

The conference office will be closed in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24. We will re-open on Monday, November 27, 2017 at normal business hours. Happy Thanksgiving from the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church!

Mississippi Conference's Own, Rev. Kevin Kosh Featured in 'Best and Brightest' Story from GBHEM

This fall, 20 Black College Fund (BCF) Lina H. McCord ambassadors will visit local churches from November 19 to 26 for the second annual BCF Thank You campaign. These visits serve as a means to thank congregations, provide a first-hand account of how BCF apportionment dollars are used and show why the church's investment in the students matters.

Rev. Kevin Kosh, (*photo right*) chaplain, religion and philosophy professor at Rust College, serves as a lifelong Black College Fund ambassador. Read more: <http://bit.ly/2zlh6K4>.



Miss. Methodist Children's Homes Needs Your Help This Christmas

Christmas is a busy time for all who love the Lord and glory in celebrating the birth of our Risen Savior. At MCH, the holidays are no different. We get to show the love of the Lord with children who may have never heard of the God who loves them as a Father. Sharing this message with 80 children in our group homes and foster homes across the state is a big undertaking and we need your help. Listed below are a few ways you, your family or your congregation can be a part of this critical time of the year for some of the most vulnerable children in Mississippi.

1. Adopt a child's Christmas Wish list. We want children at MCH to have the full Christmas experience and remember their holidays at MCH with fondness for years to come. You can adopt a wish list (<http://bit.ly/2myKYG3>) for the holidays and make this a Christmas they will never forget.

2. Help us to provide year-round care for our children and send a gift of love to someone on your list this year. Select an item from our Christmas Catalog (<http://bit.ly/2jvSLTZ>) in honor of someone and we will send them a card and personal message in your name from MCH. This is great for your book club, your Bible study group or anyone who has a heart for missions.



3. Participate in the MCH Little Light of Mine Special Offering (<http://bit.ly/2mxTk0L>) on December 10 at your United Methodist Church.

UMCom's True Meaning of Christmas Tour Stops in Miss. Dec. 6

The United Methodist Church is hitting the road in December in a gift-wrapped touring truck, decked out to share fellowship from city-to-city. Metro-area United Methodist churches will host a come-and-go event at the Renaissance Mall at Colony Park in Ridgeland from noon to 4:00 p.m. bustling with holiday foot traffic. The festivities include free hot cocoa, a chance to join in a community service project and an invitation to join local congregations for Christmas services and events. You can even share prayer requests or engage in a conversation about the true meaning of Christmas. Read more about the tour here: <http://bit.ly/2myMaJx>.



Disaster Response News

Bishop Swanson Explains How You Can Aid Disaster Recovery

As several regions of the country are still journeying on the long road to recovery, people are anxious to do something to serve those in need. However, assistance without organization can be harmful instead of helpful. In this video (<http://bit.ly/2A5tLKf>), Bishop Swanson explains how the Mississippi Conference can be helping hands and a non-anxious presence in the lives of those affected by disaster.



Register Now for Upcoming ERT Training: Jan. 27 and 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 January 27 training at Madison United Methodist Church, go to <http://bit.ly/2gAXXBH> and the February 3 training at Seashore United Methodist Assembly, go to <http://bit.ly/2hFlc11>.



A Message from the Disaster Response Coordinator

Hello, I wanted to take a minute to reach out to you and say thank you for the wonderful job that you all have done in supporting the Mississippi Conference Disaster Response Ministry and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) by producing the thousands of cleaning buckets that we have received. I'm excited to announce that we have no need for any more cleaning buckets at this time.



However, if you have specific skills for which you would like to volunteer, or if you would like to receive notifications about future training or service opportunities, please email James Mason in the connectional ministries office at jmason@mississippi-umc.org.

Again, thank you for all of your hard work. Blessing to you all.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Kenny McGill, Mississippi Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

Faith Communities

Get Church Planting and Revitalization Tips via Text

Text "faithcommunity" to the number 95577 to receive tips, updates and details on church planting and revitalization. Please note: there is no space between "faith" and "community." For more information, contact Jane Horstman at jhorstman@mississippi-umc.org or 769.243.7072.



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. It also points your church toward specific steps that builds on these areas of strength, leading your church toward renewal and a future that is befitting of the Gospel. Find more details here: <http://www.mississippi-umc.org/readiness360>.



Spiritual Leadership

Commit to Serve: Attend Upcoming Lay Servant Schools in 2018

Lay servants are to help the local church or charge in any way in which their witness or leadership and service inspires the laity to deeper commitment to Christ and more effective discipleship. This includes the interpretation of scriptures, doctrine, organization and ministries of the church.

Find times, dates and other details about all the district lay servant schools within the Mississippi Conference here: <http://bit.ly/2hGhuo6>.

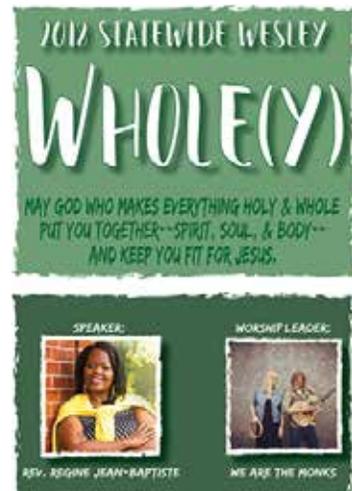


Wesley Foundations' Statewide 2018

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 Alison Willis, campus ministry consultant at awilliscampusministry@gmail.com or 662.231.9929.



Administry

Administry Courses Coming to an Area Near You

This financial leadership training provides counsel and guidance to strengthen the administrative and financial abilities of the local church treasurer, financial secretary, finance committee members and church business administrators. Register today!

- District Office, Meridian District - Nov. 18, 2017 (<http://bit.ly/2xy29eX>)
- Williamsburg UMC-Collins, Hattiesburg District - Dec. 9, 2017 (<http://bit.ly/2feyFZa>)



Protecting Our Churches: A Safe Holiday Season

While the use of lights is a common practice during holiday decorating, displaying them on tall roofs, windows and railings can be tricky. When decorating your church, it is important to consider ladder safety. Injuries that occur when using ladders often happen to staff or volunteers who are unfamiliar with the equipment. Being educated on ladder safety can help protect the church and lead to safe holiday decorating. Read more here: <http://bit.ly/2A4hber>.

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>.



Stay Connected to Youth Updates Through ConnectText

Get updates on youth events and student ministry resources delivered right to your phone. Opt in by texting the keyword "msumcyouth" without any spaces to the number 95577. Shortly thereafter, you'll receive a reply letting you know that you opted in successfully. We promise not to bug you by sending more than four messages a month.

Cares & Concerns

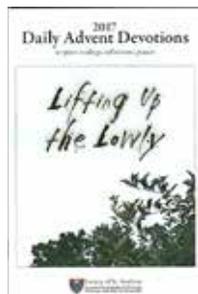
As you pause to pray this week, take time to ask for strength, peace and comfort for the families and friends of those listed below who have joined the church triumphant:

- **Rev. Wilfred Thomas "W. T." Mayfield**, a retired elder in the New Albany District passed away October 10, 2017. Condolences may be sent to the family at 634 Swaney Rd., Holly Springs, MS 38635.
- We give thanks for the life and ministry of **Shirley Holston**. Holston passed away in Ennis, Texas Monday, October 2, 2017. She was the widow of Rev. Wilton Holston. She and her husband served United Methodist churches in Mississippi and Georgia including Shiloh, Boling Street, Cary and Flowood.
- It is with sadness that we announce the death of **Duncan Clark**, retired full member of the Mississippi Conference and long-time worker in the mental health field. Clark died October 2, 2017.
- **Rev. Harold Headrick**, a retired elder with the Hattiesburg District, passed away October 1, 2017. He lived in Arroyo Grande, California. If you would like to send a sympathy card you may do so to his son, David Headrick at 860 Lawrence Dr., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

Save the Date | Announcements

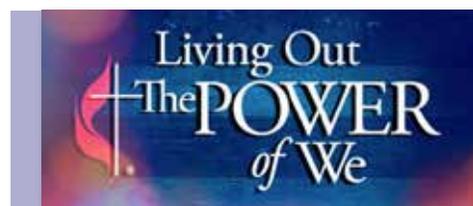
United Methodist Student Day November 26

United Methodist Student Day calls the church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The UMSD special offering provides scholarships for qualified United Methodist applicants. Find a leadership kit that has everything you need to empower your congregation to give generously here: <http://bit.ly/2cH9X60>.



2017 Daily Advent Devotions Now Available

Reclaim the spiritual dimensions of the Advent season this year with Lifting Up the Lowly, a timely devotional booklet from the Society of St. Andrew, as relevant as today's news. The Advent devotions program offers an opportunity for your congregants to give in support of Society of St. Andrew's feeding ministries, reflecting Jesus' own concern for the least, the last and the lost. Written by pastors and lay people from all walks of life, each day's devotional offers depth and meaning in our fast-paced world. Download the devotions here: <http://endhunger.org/advent/>.



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>

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 <http://www.mississippi-umc.org/employmentopportunities>.**

- Executive Director-Lake Junaluska
- Connecting Coordinator
- Director of Youth and College Age Ministries
- Youth and Communications Assistant
- Executive Director of Camp Lake Stephens
- Graduate Residency in Youth Ministry at the Center for
- Youth Ministry Training (CYMT)
- Minister to Youth, Children and Families
- Youth Director
- Youth Minister

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_Kix8lbYuHKRMLjig
- 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!