

Your Connection to The Mississippi Annual Conference

The Circuit Rider

Published Wednesday | December 13, 2017

Living Out The POWER of We

"Why We Celebrate Jesus' Birth"

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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.



Bishop and Mrs. Swanson invite the Mississippi Conference to celebrate the birth of Jesus with glad and grateful hearts. The Swansons take a stroll down memory lane and share precious moments where they rejoice over the gift of family. View the entire Christmas greeting here: <https://vimeo.com/246790357>.



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.



Mississippi Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Living Out
The POWER of We

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www.mississippi-umc.org

word POWER

Isaiah 61:1-4 (NIV)

The Year of the Lord's Favor

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,[a]

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, **3** and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

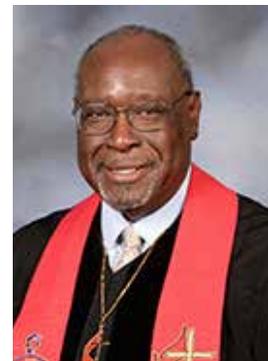
4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Bishop on the Move

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

January 9-11, 2018 (Tuesday-Thursday): Bishop Swanson will be in attendance at the Southeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops meeting in Birmingham, Alabama.

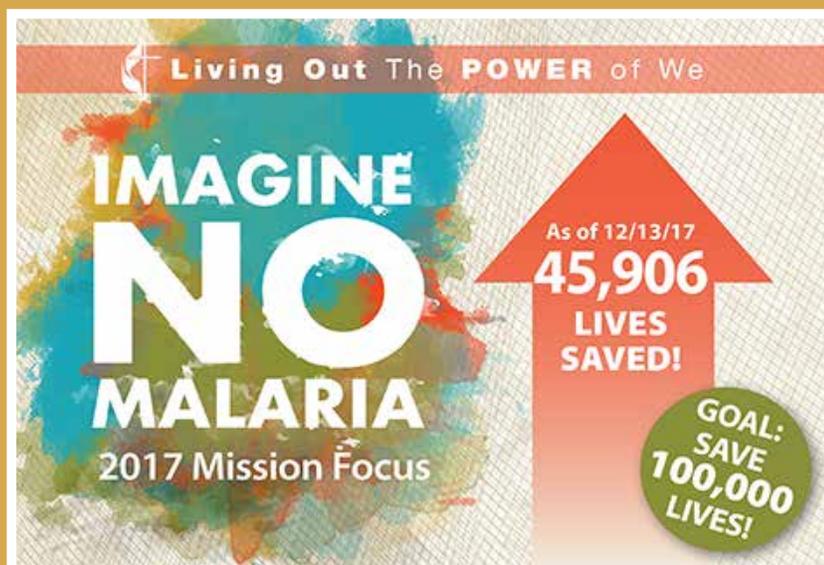
January 28-31, 2018 (Thursday-Sunday): Bishop Swanson will preach during the Epworth by the Sea Winter Conference at St. Simons Island in Georgia.



Miss. Museums Opening

Bishop Swanson's Joint Statement with Bishops Kopacz and Seage on Miss. Museums Opening

We are honored to join with the good people of our state in the celebration of Mississippi's Bicentennial, 200 years of statehood. We have no doubt that these two museums will illuminate the history, culture and numerous achievements of our state, and its people, and will help people everywhere comprehend and put into proper context our past and present, as well as help us better understand the challenges we face in the future. Visit <http://bit.ly/2zdiNke> to read the statement in its entirety.



Imagine No Malaria Update

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

Connecting

Conference Office Closing for the Holidays

The episcopal office and Mississippi Conference staff wish you a joyous celebration of the birth of Christ and a prosperous New Year! The conference office will be closed in observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays beginning Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. and will re-open on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at normal business hours.



UM-related Millsaps College Celebrates Rhodes Scholar, Noah Barbieri

From Millsaps College Communications

Congratulations to Noah Barbieri (*photo right*) of Belden, Mississippi. Barbieri is the newest Rhodes Scholar from Millsaps College and the school's second Rhodes Scholar in the past three years. Only 12 colleges and universities in the nation have had a Rhodes Scholar in two of the past three years: Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Navy, Notre Dame, Penn State, Princeton, Stanford, Virginia, West Point, Yale and Millsaps College.

According to Barbieri, "Tell your family, friends, neighbors: Millsaps is the place to be! I do not think I could have done it at any other place in the world."

After he completes his education, Barbieri ultimately wants to return to Mississippi and drive progress in his home state.



Mississippi Students, Recipients of Special Sunday Generosity

Share the good news with you congregations and celebrate that the office of loans and scholarships will be awarding over 2,500 students a total of \$5 million in financial assistance for 2017! Over 35 of those students receiving scholarships belong to the Mississippi Conference. Thank you for your support in recognizing United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday and Native American Sunday which help fund a portion of the General Board of Higher Education Ministry (GBHEM) scholarships. The remaining funds for these awards come from gifts, annuities and endowments GBHEM has invested and administered for decades.

There are many applicants who did not receive a scholarship due to lack of funds. Students who are members of The United Methodist Church may apply for a Fall 2018 GBHEM scholarship online between January 3, 2018 - March 7, 2018 at <http://bit.ly/2BIN6XZ>. Thank you again for your assistance, support and prayers for these students.

Foundation Short-Term Rate Rise, Effective Dec. 1

The Investment and Finance Committee of the Mississippi United Methodist Foundation voted November 7, 2017 to raise the interest rate paid on the Short-term Fund from two percent to two and a half percent effective December 1, 2017. The committee made the decision in order to return as much money as possible to your church or ministry. The new rate is well above market rates for liquid accounts like our Short-term Fund. The Short-term Fund requires no minimum balance, does not change any fees and funds are available a maximum of three business days upon request. Find out more information here: <http://bit.ly/2j2Z8KU>.



Disaster Response News

Subscribe to Disaster Response Updates

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 Subscribe to disaster response updates here: <http://mississippi-email.brtapp.com/subscribe>.



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>.



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. 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>.

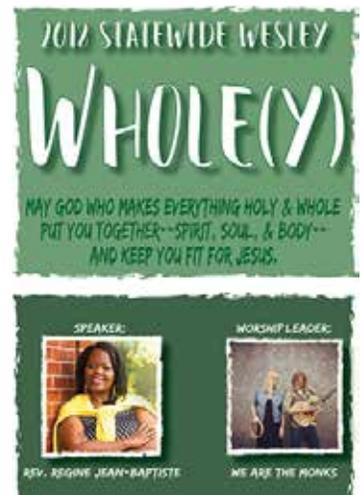


Wesley Foundations' Statewide 2018

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



Administry

Treasurer's Notes: Looking Ahead

By David Stotts, CPA and Treasurer/Director of Finance and Administration and Conference Benefits Officer

With Christmas and the New Year comes much administry work to be done. I would like to share a few notes with you that I think will help you in the close out of the 2017 year.

1. The renewal of the property and casualty insurance program has been completed and is going in the mail to each church. Although none of us want to see an increase, we are pleased the rate increase was limited to no more than 7.25 percent for most all of our churches. This is a good renewal given all of the losses sustained in the conference and around the world from hurricanes in Puerto Rico, the Eastern Seaboard, Florida and Texas. Please pay close attention to your insured values and the fact that values under \$120 per square foot are being insured at stated value. Buildings with values in excess of \$120 per square foot have been able to retain the blanket coverage. Please assist us in continuing this coverage by obtaining and filing an appraisal if you have not done so. If you need assistance with this, please call our risk managers at 601.956.5810.
2. Remember that you can only give credit for charitable contributions received in your office on or before December 31, 2017. If you receive checks in the mail, they must be postmarked December 31, 2017.
3. January 9, 2018 will be the close out day for mission shares and clergy benefits invoice. Please be sure your funds are in to us so that you can be recognized for your generosity in 2017.
4. Statistical reports must be filed by January 29, 2018. Please begin work on these so that you will have them timely filed. The forms are new for this quadrennium.
5. All W-2 forms and 1099 forms must be filed and mailed to the recipients by January 31, 2018. Clergy must receive a W-2 form, not a 1099.
6. Your year-end audit is due into your district office by June 30, 2018.
7. Your first 2018 mission share report and clergy pension invoice will be mailed on January 10, 2018.
8. Your final 2017 Mission Share report will be mailed on or before January 26, 2018.



Thank you for all the 'administry' work you do during the year. Without your gifts and talents, your church would not have good information for their work. Administration in a ministry -- I call that 'administry!'

As always, if you have any needs or questions, please call on us. We are here to serve and resource you! Blessings for a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Protecting Our Churches: Holiday Hazards

The holidays are an exciting and busy time. For churches, this time of year means holiday décor, special services and increased attendance, but with each of those comes some safety concerns. For a list of five safety reminders to ensure your holiday celebrations go on without a hitch, go to <http://bit.ly/2jV795n>.

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

Now Accepting Applications for Student Cohort 2018

This student cohort has been 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 comfortable with questions and doubts. This two year commitment is designed for high school students. Cohort applications must be received by March 31, 2018. For more information and how to apply, go to <http://bit.ly/2zdpHpP>.



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.brapp.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. Lynette Little**, upon her death Tuesday, December 12. We give thanks to God for her witness, love, life and laughter.
- It is with sadness that we announce the death of **Erna Paseur**, widow of New Albany District local pastor Rev. Charles Paseur. Mrs. Paseur passed away Wednesday, December 6, 2017.
- **Faye Wiygul**, surviving spouse of Rev. Hershel Wiygul, passed away Monday, November 27.
- We give thanks for the life and ministry of **Trudy Cessna**, who passed away Monday, November 20. Cessna was a long-time Hattiesburg District secretary and part-time local pastor. She retired from her work with the district some time ago, but continued to support the office as needed.

Save the Date | Announcements

Intensive Five-Day Safe Sanctuary Policy Online Workshop January 8-12, 2018

Prepare for your children and youth programs with this five-day online workshop for congregations that don't have a Safe Sanctuary policy or whose policy is outdated, needs revision, doesn't meet the needs of current ministries, etc. Participants will learn why congregations should have an up-to-date policy, what the policy includes generally and specifically, and how to get a policy written, approved and implemented - or edited. Since this is an intensive workshop, participants will need to be involved on the site every day to receive a completion certificate. This course is eligible for 0.5 CEU. The cost is \$50. Go to <http://bit.ly/2AGP31n> for more information or contact Lisa Buffum at beadisciple@sckans.edu or 620.229.6246.

Overflow, a Youth Event January 12-15, 2018

A Camp Lake Stephens tradition for over 30 years, Overflow is an opportunity for Mississippi youth grades seven through 12 to gather for play and fellowship. With phenomenal messages, powerful worship, small group sessions and the opportunity to grow in their faith. For the first time, Overflow will be a four day/three night experience! The cost is \$150 per person and it covers all meals, lodging and programming. **The deadline to register** [<http://bit.ly/2o4mAg6>] is **December 22, 2017**. If you have any questions, email chap@camplakestephens.com.



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 deadline for early registration is December 15 and the cost will be \$110 per person. 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.



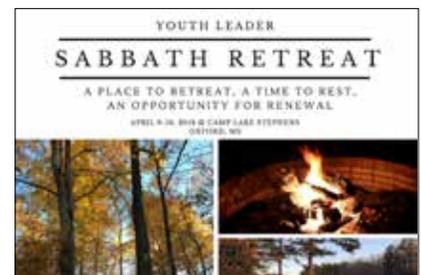
Interfaith Peace Conference at Lake Junaluska March 1-4, 2018

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>.



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>.

Announcements

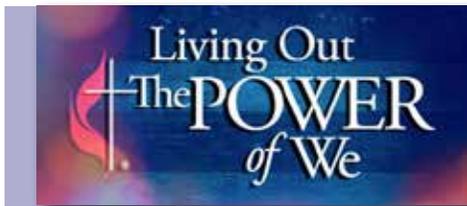
Start a Givalanche of Good with Methodist Children's Homes

One gift can turn into something really big by starting a 'Givalanche.' Not only will your gift make a difference in the lives of foster children at Methodist Children's Homes of Mississippi, but you can honor a loved one with your donation. They will receive a Christmas card acknowledgement of your thoughtfulness in their name. Watch this video [<http://bit.ly/2AKuxwQ>] to learn how a givalanche works and donate to the Methodist Children's Homes of Mississippi here: <http://bit.ly/2B0V32g>.



Society of St. Andrew Alternative Christmas Cards

Share healthy food with hungry people this Christmas and order alternative Christmas cards. For 20 years, a Society of St. Andrew Alternative Christmas Card has been just the right gift. Through this very popular program, you can delight your honoree with a fine art print Christmas card, while your donation shares 500 servings of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables with hungry people, in your honoree's name. To learn more, go to <http://endhunger.org/acc/>.



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>.

- Americorps VISTA Position
- Director of Children's Ministry
- Director of Music and Worship Arts
- Executive Office Administrator
- Executive Director-Lake Junaluska
- 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_Kix8IbYuHKRMLjg
- 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!