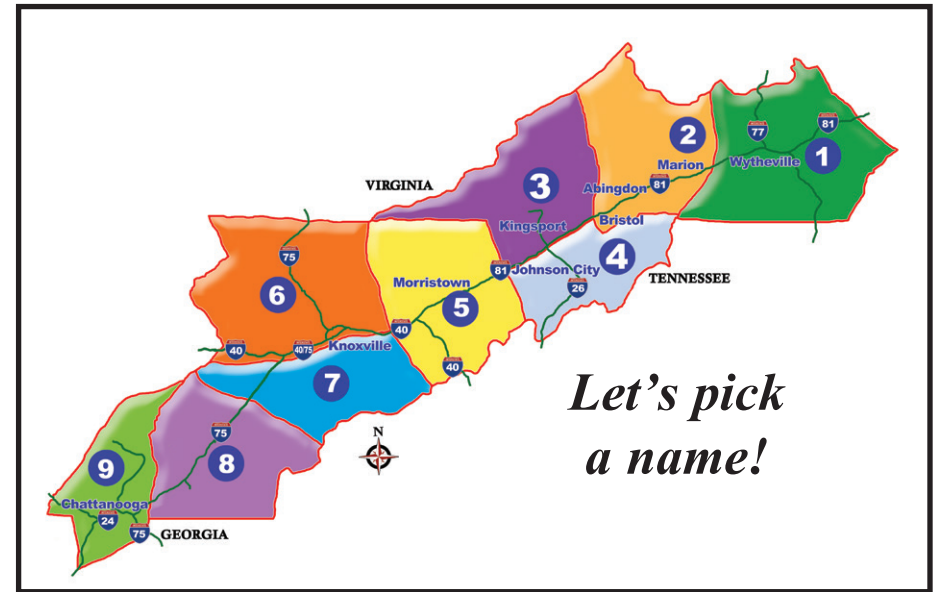


Holston Conference Strategy Team

October 2017



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In the Scriptural Story, we see that names matter to God.

Names matter because they communicate connection. Pharaoh's daughter names the baby she picks up out of the little ark-basket "Moses", connecting him forever to his watery voyage from death to life. Naomi ("pleasant") renames herself Mara ("bitter") when she loses her connection on this earth to her husband and sons. The risen Jesus calls Mary's name to show her that death cannot break the connection of life with God.

Names matter because they clarify calling. When God calls Abram and Sarai to leave everything that is familiar and follow God to the Promised Land and begin the family that would be a blessing to everyone, God gives them name changes to seal the deal. Jesus renames Simon as Peter, calling him to bold and faithful actions that will build the Church. Paul and other New Testament writers refer to Christians as "beloved". 1 John 4:7 links this name to our calling: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

How might naming our new districts be an opportunity to more deeply connect with the communities God has entrusted to us? How might it compel us to live more clearly into our calling to be the Church through bolder actions and greater love?

Continued on back

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Continued on back

Guided by the Holston Conference Strategy approved at the 2017 Annual Conference, every part of our conference life is gearing up to strengthen our churches as we minister in our individual communities and together in the world.

The first step is making sure our districts are aligned to work easily with neighboring congregations and to have the financial and people resources needed to be effective and efficient in our witness. With the adoption of the conference strategy, we approved moving from twelve districts to nine districts. Using input from the members of each district, the district superintendents and the bishop have fulfilled their responsibility to identify the new district lines and the churches that will be in ministry in each district. You can view the new district map and lists of churches by visiting strategy.Holston.org.

Now it's time to select a name for each of these nine new districts and your help is needed. The goal is to have district names that represent the gifts and unique characteristics of the people and places of each part of the Holston Conference. As you consider name options, please avoid using the names of towns, cities, counties, or people. Pray, imagine and help us choose the names that represent who we are and who God would have us to be.

Please submit your suggestion for a new name for your district to your current district office no later than November 1, 2017. Everyone in your congregation is invited to share a suggested name. A committee named by your district superintendent will compile the submissions and determine the top three choices. Between November 15 and 30 you will have the opportunity to vote on your favorite district name from these three choices. New district names will be announced on December 14.

You may submit your suggestion below by mailing, e-mailing, or dropping this form off at your current district office. Contact information for each district office is available from your pastor or at strategy.Holston.org.

Thank you for your input! It's an exciting time of anticipating how God will continue to act and how we will continue to respond as the people called Holston.

Suggested New District Name _____

Your Church and Location _____

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