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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*  
*Friday, December 22, 2017*

The Holston Conference Strategy Team ('HCST') met for its regularly-scheduled meeting on December 14, 2017 to continue its work to evaluate the health of Holston Conference and to implement the components of the Comprehensive Conference Strategy Plan designed to strengthen our connection for relevant and innovative ministry and shared mission.

This was the sixth full meeting of the HCST since the adoption of the Comprehensive Conference Strategy Plan at Holston Annual Conference in June 2017.

The Holston Conference Strategy Team received the results from each District's election to choose a name for its District. The names of the nine new districts are printed below, and can also be found on the Holston Conference website at [www.holston.org](http://www.holston.org).

The Conference's 9 new districts were created by action of the 2017 Holston Annual Conference in accordance with Paragraph 415.4 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline. Following Annual Conference, and in accordance with the same provision in the Book of Discipline, the district superintendents and the Bishop then determined the geographical boundaries of each district utilizing feedback from a Conference-wide survey on district characteristics and subsequent follow-up with district conferences throughout this past fall. The new district locations and boundaries were formally announced on October 15, 2017.

During October and November, districts solicited suggestions for names for each of the 9 new districts from clergy and laity throughout each district. Then each district named a committee to select the top 3 choices for a new name. Finally, church members in each district chose the final name by an election held simultaneously throughout the Conference from November 15 to December 8. The name receiving the most votes in each district is listed below:

District 1 – The **New River** District

District 2 – The **Clinch Mountain** District

District 3 – The **Appalachian** District

District 4 – The **Three Rivers** District

District 5 – The **Mountain View** District

District 6 – The **Tennessee Valley** District

District 7 – The **Smoky Mountain** District

District 8 – The **Hiwassee** District

District 9 – The **Scenic South** District

The Conference Strategy Team was especially pleased by the large number of persons participating in the election process across the Conference. It was also noted that everyone will be learning and growing accustomed to the new district names together over the year ahead – but that the names chosen by the districts reflect ‘who’ they are, and not simply ‘where’ they are.

Restructuring the Districts is just one part of a larger Comprehensive Strategy Plan to place Holston Conference in a stronger position to generate new and innovative ministry to make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. Realigning the 12 districts into 9 districts achieves greater balance of resources across the Conference. Not only do most districts now have more resources for ministry, but this structure – along with other elements of the Comprehensive Strategy Plan – create greater opportunity for district superintendents to live into their emerging role as ‘Chief Missional Strategists’, as envisioned by the United Methodist Church.

The names chosen by each district will be used in an official capacity beginning on January 1, 2018.

Along those same lines, the Strategy Team began the process of planning an event this Spring for each new District to come together in community to share in fun and fellowship, to get to know each other better and form new relationships in support of new mission and ministry throughout Holston Conference. Additional details will be announced following the January 2018 meeting of the Holston Conference Strategy Team.

Finally, as the work of determining the new 9 districts of Holston Conference draws to a close, the logistical work of transition within each district continues, along with the other elements of the Comprehensive Conference Strategy Plan.

The next meeting of the Holston Conference Strategy Team is scheduled for January 30, 2018.

Please continue to maintain the Holston Conference Strategy Team in your prayers as it seeks guidance to fulfill God's vision for the future of Holston Conference.

*About the Holston Conference Strategy Team –*

*The Holston Conference Strategy Team initially convened in September of 2015 to evaluate the life of Holston Conference and to find more effective ways to share a contemporary and relevant vision for bringing people into a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ. The Team is comprised of up to 15 members and includes laypersons, local church pastors, district superintendents, members of the Conference executive team and the Bishop. The Strategic Plan proposed by the HCST was formally adopted by the Annual Conference in June 2017.*

For more information about the HCST and its members, please visit [www.holston.org](http://www.holston.org), or contact us at [holstonstrategyteam@gmail.com](mailto:holstonstrategyteam@gmail.com)