

## Digest?

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# The Call

## Digest

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United Methodists march for civil rights on Martin Luther King Day.

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## 10,700 attend 'Resurrection' for youth

**GATLINBURG, Tenn.** – From east Tennessee, southwest Virginia and beyond, 10,700 teenagers, counselors, and workers attended the 29th annual “Resurrection” spiritual event for youth held Jan. 17-19 and Jan. 24-26 at Gatlinburg Convention Center.

Organized by the Holston Conference and led by a group of elected students representing each of Holston’s 12 districts, Resurrection is attended primarily by United Methodist youth but also attracts church groups from other denominations and regions.

The gathering features a spiritual message by a guest preacher and worship music by a Christian rock band. This year, the message was provided by the Rev. Andy Nixon, lead pastor of the Loft, a campus of Woodlands United Methodist Church in Woodlands, Texas.

Through personal stories and video, Nixon spoke to youth about accepting their own blessedness and brokenness and loving the mix in other people.

“There should be part of us that flat-out rocks,” said Nixon. “There is also part of us that is busted-out broken ... You’ve got to love both, because that’s what Jesus has done with you.”

For the second year, the featured band was The City Harmonic, originally from Ontario, Canada, inspiring youth to rush to the stage, pump their fists and sing aloud to anthems such as “Manifesto” and “Mountaintop.”

On Saturday evening, youth waited in line to buy the musicians’ merchandise or to get autographs and fan photos.

“The City Harmonic is by far the most popular band we’ve had at Resurrection,” said Andrew McElroy, comparing it to Starfield (2007-2009), Kristian Stanfill (2010), and Wayne Kerr (2011-2012). McElroy, age 18, is president of the Council on Youth Ministries and member at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in Johnson City, Tenn.

“They use a lot of common liturgy in their songs, so Christians are able to connect,” McElroy said. “The youth hear it in their churches but they’ve never seen it in this type of forum.”

Additional music and drama were provided by youth groups from Holston districts, each winning a chance to display their talents before thousands in contests conducted during the previous fall.

Youth groups arrive on Friday afternoon or evening,



Teenagers throughout Holston Conference look forward to ‘Resurrection’ held each January in Gatlinburg.

lodging in hotels or cabins and enjoying the restaurants and tourist attractions of the Smoky Mountain towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

In addition to the spiritual message provided by the speaker, youth are encouraged to participate in their own devotions after the convention-center sessions on Friday evening, Saturday morning, Saturday night, and Sunday morning.

“We came closer at Resurrection because of our devotional time,” said Spencer, age 17, of St. Elmo United Methodist Church, Chattanooga, Tenn. “Our youth group was kind of distant the last few months. This was like a family reunion.”

The Saturday evening session traditionally features an emotional “altar call” when participants are invited to come near the stage pray, hug, commit or re-commit their lives to Jesus Christ, or consider a lifetime career in the church.

The Sunday morning session features Holy Communion, celebrated by Holston pastors and the resident bishop. This year, district superintendents and Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor led the “breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup.” The groups depart for home after Sunday-morning worship.

Over two weekends, participants gave a total of about \$12,100 for education in South Sudan and about \$25,500 for Youth Service Fund. ■

# United Methodists march for Martin Luther King principles

**S**usan Montgomery got up early on a frigid Martin Luther King Jr. Day morning. She put on her hat and gloves and drove over to Martin Luther King Boulevard in east Knoxville, Tenn.

Montgomery, chair of the Holston Outreach/Advocacy Team, marched in the Martin Luther King Day parade on Jan. 20.

"I've marched in the parade at least five times now, and it's always very meaningful," she said. "This was the first time that I've stayed for the service afterward [at Greater Warner Tabernacle AME Zion Church], and it was also very moving."

This year, Montgomery carried a banner for Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee, along with a fellow member from Concord United Methodist Church, Kate Roos.

The banner read, "IWJ of East Tennessee 'welcomes the immigrant' and supports comprehensive immigration reform." The United Methodist Church supports immigrant rights as well as the observance of Martin Luther King Day through its "Social Principles."

"I walked in the MLK march because it honors a man who did much to open our eyes to the inequality that persists in Knoxville and in our country and that we often don't see," Montgomery said. "It would be wonderful to go from this celebration toward having conversations across race and class among the churches in Holston."

The United Methodist-related Emerald Youth Foundation also participated in the march, as well as the Rev. Jim Sessions, a retired United Methodist pastor and representative of Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee.

Other Holston groups also celebrated the birthday of civil-rights activist King, who "enriches and strengthens our social witness today,"

according to the resolution first adopted by the United Methodist General Conference in 1992.

Emory & Henry College organized a five-day celebration of concerts, lectures, and presentations. The theme was, "From Bondage to Freedom: What's Your Slavery Footprint?"

Keynote speaker was Justin Dillon, director "Call + Response," a film revealing that more than 27 million people worldwide are under slave labor.

"He really challenged us to do something about this tragedy," said the Rev. Mary K Briggs, Emory & Henry chaplain. "We can start by letting the companies with which we do business know that we care whether our things are made with products that are obtained by the proper means -- no child labor, no slavery, no human trafficking."

Elsewhere in Abingdon District, three other United Methodist churches joined in King community celebrations.

On Sunday, Jan. 19, Chilhowie United Methodist Church, a white congregation, worshiped at First Baptist Church of Chilhowie, an African-American congregation. The Rev. Sarah Slack was guest preacher.

Chilhowie UMC has had a long sisterhood with the Baptist congregation, Slack said. In 2007, the churches joined to bring a choir to sing at the Holston Annual Conference.

On Jan. 20, Abingdon residents joined in the 28th annual King celebration featuring a march from Charles Wesley United Methodist Church to Abingdon United Methodist Church. The walk was followed by music and readings at Abingdon UMC.

"This year the celebration also reflected on Nelson Mandela and the influence of Dr. King on his life," said the Rev. Sherrell Boles, Abingdon UMC senior pastor. ■



Church members Kate Roos (left) and Susan Montgomery carry an Interfaith Worker Justice banner during Knoxville's Martin Luther King Day.

**The Call** is the news source for Holston Conference. ● The Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church includes 897 churches in east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia. ● Our resident bishop is Mary Virginia Taylor. ● Our executive assistant is the Rev. Carol Wilson. ● Our office address is P.O. Box 850, 217 South Rankin Road, Alcoa, TN 37701. ● (865) 690-4080 ● www.Holston.org ● thecall@holston.org or info@holston.org ● Facebook.Holston.org ● Twitter @TheCall\_Holston ● Free e-news: thecalltwo.holston.org