

inside: keeper of **the call**

The Rev. Roy Howard has saved every issue of the conference newspaper for the past 50 years. (Why?)

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swanson's **back**

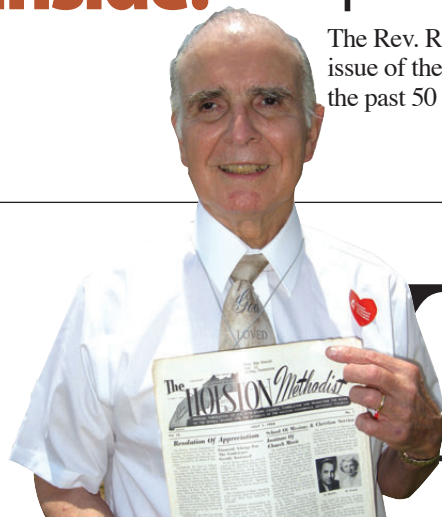
Bishop James Swanson has been reassigned as resident bishop of Holston Conference through 2012.

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hot breakfast for **hikers**

And that's just *one* of the things we love about Tazewell District. "MyDistrict" returns.

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The Call



August 2008

HOLSTON CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

www.holston.org

OUCH!

Yes, it hurts. But Holstonians are coping with the high cost of gas. So far.

By Annette Spence

Bishop James Swanson gets 32 miles per gallon from his Toyota Avalon. He travels more than 1,900 miles each month for his ministry. What changes has he made to adjust for the high cost of gasoline?

None.

"I realize the cost of gas is an additional burden on our pastors, and I would pray that congregations would especially help those pastors who have several hospitals they must visit or those on circuits," Swanson said.

"But I have not cut back because I believe the bishop serves as a connecting link between all of the congregations within a conference and around the world. I believe it is important to the people to know that their work and commitment does not go unnoticed."

The Rev. Rodney Lawson travels 47 miles between his home and three East Tazewell Circuit churches each Sunday morning. During the week, he visits hospitals and homes and attends meetings, logging more than 1,000 miles for his ministry during an average month.

When the weather is good, Lawson saves

money by driving his Honda Gold Wing motorcycle, which gets 45 miles per gallon. His Nissan pickup truck gets 25 to 30 miles per gallon.

Otherwise, Lawson hasn't changed his routine. "I'm a circuit rider, and my motorcycle is my horse," the Tazewell District pastor says with a laugh.

Like many of the ministers and ministries in Holston Conference, Swanson and Lawson are painfully aware that each tank of gas is eating up a budget that is already tight. But most continue to do what they're called to do, while making small changes along the way – and beginning to worry about the people with fewer resources.

Bearing the brunt

At Midtown Valley United Methodist Church in Oak Ridge District, youth know that if they can find a way to church, somebody will make sure they get home. "If they call, we will also pick up on request," says Kathy Thompson, whose youth group includes as many as 50.

After Wednesday-night Bible study, a Midtown youth leader might drive the church van for two hours to help deliver the students back home.

See **Ouch**, page 4

Pump up

Here's what Holston members paid for a gallon of regular during the week of July 21:

Rev. Curtis McKee
Conference evangelist
Ringgold, Ga.

\$3.98

Yolanda Miranda
Pleasant View UMC
Abingdon, Va.

\$3.94

Rev. Ann Robins
Ebenezer UMC
Knoxville, Tenn.

\$3.89

Rev. Richard Rudesill
Bethel-Vonore UMC
Vonore, Tenn.

\$3.69

Fielden Sanders
West End UMC
Wytheville, Va.

\$3.71

*Info compiled by
JaNaé Swanson*

Illustration by Millie Meese

CMYK