

holston's vision:

God envisions
bold, passionate, and joyful
communities of faith
where the spiritual hunger
to worship God
and to serve Christ
sets disciples on fire
with Spirit-filled, risk-taking
love for all God's children
until Holston Conference
reflects the saving grace
and redeeming justice of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

—Adopted by the 2006 Holston Annual Conference



The Call

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southwest Virginia, and north Georgia

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Letters to the editor ("C-Mail") will be considered for publication. Letters should be no longer than 150 words and must do no harm to others.

United Methodist job openings and other church-related needs will be considered for publication in the "Exchange" section at no charge. *The Call* gives priority to Holston Conference churches and related groups.

To submit letters, news, or photos, contact: Editor, *The Call*, P.O. Box 850, Alcoa, TN 37701-0850, phone (865) 293-4130, fax (865) 690-3162, e-mail thecall@holston.org.

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Subscriptions to Holston's weekly e-mail publication, *The Call 2*, are free of charge. Sign up at www.thecalltwo.holston.org. ■

wings: | By Bishop James Edward Swanson Sr.



We all need a little help

Bishop James Swanson wrote this month's column during his "Exodus Experience" with the Wesley Leadership Institute.

I was on my way up to top of Mount Sinai and realized about a third of the way up that I was almost out of breath. I decided to stop and take a rest — then I looked up and there he was. An Egyptian Bedouin was standing there and asking me in halting English if I was going to continue. I responded that I would — as soon as I caught my breath.

He sat down with me and waited until I regained my breath, and then we were off again trying to get to the top of Mount Sinai. As we continued it was obvious to him that I was really laboring, and just about the time I was about to give up he reached out his hand and offered me support. My manly pride almost led me to reject his help, but there was something inside that said, "James, everyone needs some help every now and then. So what makes you any different?"

I took his hand and off we went, back on the climb. We eventually met a camel driver who offered his camel for me to ride the rest of the way up, for a price. I accepted, and we continued up the mountain.

I wish I could write to you that I made it to the top, but I met Delphine who had already ridden a camel up and was coming back down along with two other women. I decided that I needed to accompany them back down the mountain. I was fine with that, because I believed I had already experienced what God wanted me to experience on that mountain. He wanted me to realize that everyone needs help from others at some point in their lives. To accept help is not a sign of weakness but an acknowledgement of how God created us. We are social creatures. We were not created

by the hand of God to be independent, but we have been created to share mutual love and support.

I received news here in Bethlehem that back home in Holston Conference, John Tate and the finance staff announced that our congregations paid 89.24 percent of their Fair Share apportionments in 2007. I was excited that the Maryville District paid 100 percent of its Fair Share. I was equally excited that 697 churches paid 100 percent or more. I realized that almost 90 percent of our churches are aware that every now and then, someone needs a little help in the name of Jesus. Because of the apportionment, it appears that students who want an education but can't afford it will be helped. It appears that missionaries serving in remote places will get a little help. It appears that those who said "yes" to God's call to ordained ministry will get a little help. It appears that clergy who have retired after preaching the good news, visiting the sick, and sharing God's love with children will get a little help. It appears that a hungry person will now be fed because someone in one of our churches last year decided that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

I am sometimes in positions where I am the person who offers help. But on the day that I was tired and short of breath, a person named Awad reached out to me. I will never forget his support. No, I didn't make it to the top, but I certainly moved farther up the mountain than I would have without his assistance. I want to thank those churches that reached out a helping hand last year, and I want to encourage those who didn't to try a little harder in 2008. ■



exchange:

ROSSVILLE, Ga. — Simpson UMC seeks a part-time organist. Send resumes to: Rev. Natalie Smart, 601 McFarland Avenue, Rossville, GA 30741, or e-mail simpsonumc@bellsouth.net.

LOUISVILLE, Tenn. — St. Marks UMC seeks a praise and worship leader for a 9:30 a.m. Sunday worship service. Candidates must have vocal and instrumental skills and knowledge of contemporary, praise, and worship music. Send resumes to: St. Marks UMC, P.O. Box 37, Louisville, TN 37777. Church phone: (865) 977-6128. Office hours: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Church Street UMC seeks a full-time director of Kay Senior Care Center. Responsibilities include: working with memory-impaired seniors and caregivers; implementing and overseeing established program; complying with regulations; and managing staff, marketing, and budgeting. Education requirements are based on experience, but a degree or experience in social work, gerontology, or related field is preferred. Send letter/resume to: Rick Isbell, program minister, Church Street UMC, P.O. Box 1303, Knoxville, TN 37901, or risbell@churchstreetumc.org.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Wesley Memorial UMC seeks a part-time children/youth worker. Send resumes to: Rev. Ben Matherly, 6314 East Brainerd Road, Chattanooga, TN 37421, or call (423) 892-6446.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — First Farragut UMC seeks a part-time director of children's ministries (20 hours per week). Areas of responsibility include Sunday school, children's church, vacation Bible school, and Wednesday night activities. Send resume by Feb. 8 to: Children's Search, First Farragut UMC, 12733 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37934.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — First Farragut UMC seeks a part-time nursery director (15 hours per week) to schedule and supervise caregivers for preschool children during Sunday and Wednesday night activities and on other occasions. Send resume by Feb. 8 to: Nursery Search, First Farragut UMC, 12733 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37934.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Ooltewah UMC seeks a worship and creative arts director for 900+ members, with average attendance of 600 at two Sunday morning worship services. Worship style is blended traditional at one service and contemporary at the other two. E-mail resume and one-page ministry vision statement to office@ooltewahumc.org or to: Search Team, Ooltewah UMC, 6131 Relocation Way, Chattanooga, TN 37363. Web site: www.ooltewahumc.org. ■