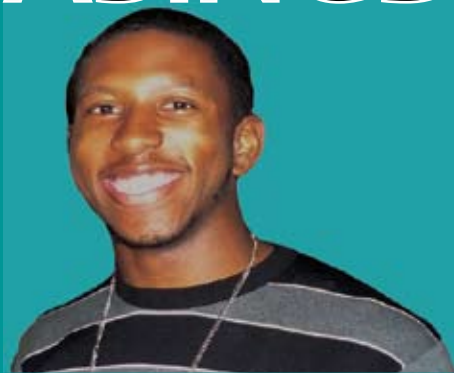
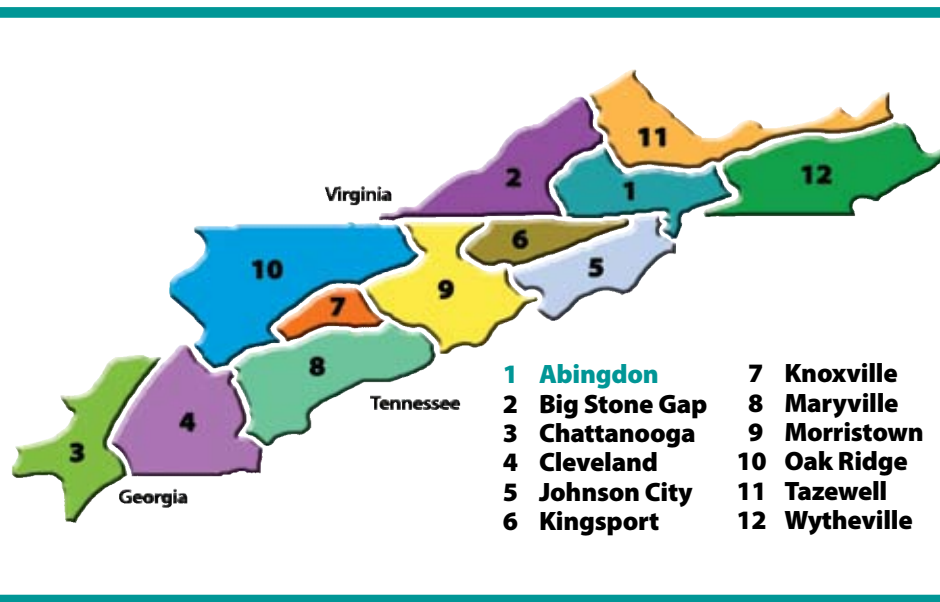


mydistrict ABINGDON



Anthony Jones, 18, is active in Bristol Outreach Ministries and has been a member of the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) for four years. He plays football and runs track for Virginia High School and hopes to attend Emory & Henry or UVa College at Wise. This is his district.



Wii | Lebanon Memorial | Barter | Harry Howe | Hungry Mother | Smyth | Blackwell's Chapel | Bettye | El Patio | Mountain City | Bill Crump | Saltville

Abingdon District is one of 12 districts in Holston Conference. It includes 51 charges comprised of 93 churches and 4 preaching stations. The district includes Washington, Smyth, Russell, and Scott counties in Virginia. Fourteen churches are located in Tennessee – in Johnson and Sullivan Counties.

- **Largest membership church:** State Street with 1,087
- **Largest average worship attendance:** Pleasant View with 387
- **Smallest membership church:** Ebenezer and Munsey, both with 11
- **Smallest average worship attendance:** Zion Hill with 9
- **Oldest church:** Mahanaim and Munsey, both created in the 1790s
- **Youngest church:** Pleasant View, 46 years old
- **Congregation with largest growth:** Blackwell's Chapel with 41.5 percent in average worship attendance (from 41 to 58). Also: Sulphur Springs UMC of Lebanon with 14.8 percent in membership (from 61 to 70).

Who's the boss? The Rev. Kim Goddard has served as district superintendent for the past six years and is projected to receive a new appointment in June. The incoming chief is the Rev. Mike Hubble, who served Reynolds Memorial UMC from 1984 to '89. As administrative assistant for the last 33 years, Bettye Duncan has seen a lot of superintendents come and go (she's on number 7). She claims she "got along with them all," but admits she's "weepy" about Goddard's upcoming departure. Duncan grew up in Smyth Chapel UMC; she now attends Emory UMC. The district office is located on the border of Abingdon's historic district, in the equally historic former parsonage of Charles Wesley UMC.

Road trip: Named after the ancestral home of Martha Washington, Abingdon has a 20-block historical district that includes Barter Theatre ("State Theatre of Virginia") and the Martha Washington Inn (built in 1832). A few *geographical* miles away is the Bristol Motor Speedway, which can seat 160,000 devoted fans and pack



Project Crossroads



Emory & Henry



Anderson Street block parties



hotels and campgrounds in a circumference of 100 miles. North of Abingdon, Marion is the home of the Hungry Mother State Park and the Lincoln Theater, built in 1829.

Road warriors: All those race fans in town: A chance for ministry? You betcha. The Rev. Keith McGrew leads a Holston contingency that participates in Raceway Ministries, an ecumenical group that serves campgrounds around the Bristol speedway and other tracks around the country. On a typical race weekend, McGrew and crew help keep the campgrounds safe at night, provide golf-cart rides to the disabled or impaired, offer counseling, and organize morning worship services. McGrew is pastor of Benham's Circuit, which includes Campground, Mary's Chapel, and Booher's Chapel UMC. Other Holston congregations send volunteers and supplies, too.

Best-kept ministry secrets: On the third Sunday of each month, the youth group at East Marion Circuit plays Wii (bowling and golf) with residents of Francis Marion Manor nursing home. The seniors benefit from the "physical therapy" and all ages benefit from the interaction, according to Pastor Donna Hester. The youth director at Pleasant View UMC, Stan Green, has started a post-prison re-entry ministry that teaches former inmates how to work at a related restaurant and gift shop. (More info to come in *The Call*.)

Other good works:

- Anderson Street's "Weed and Seed" program for the community
- Pleasant View staff member Yolanda Miranda's expanding Hispanic ministry
- Crossroads Medical Mission, based at State Street UMC
- Chilhowie's sisterhood with the nearby African-American Baptist church

Remember our connections: Emory & Henry College (in Emory) enrolls 1,000 students from 24 states and 10 countries. Project Crossroads (in Marion) makes a lot of people smile by organizing volunteer groups to repair roofs, build handicapped ramps, and other rehab projects for God's needy children. ■

what's cool in mydistrict