

Annual Conference,

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Other highlights of the annual meeting for Holston's 910 churches and other ministries and groups:

Preaching: Bishop Larry Goodpaster, resident bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, will preach at Sunday night's and Monday night's worship. Bishop Richard Looney will preach at Tuesday morning's Retirement and Commissioning Service. The Rev. Angela Hardy Cross, associate pastor at Colonial Heights UMC, Kingsport District, will preach at Tuesday afternoon's Memorial Service. Bishop James Swanson will preach at Wednesday's Sending Forth Service.

Study: The Rev. Kim Goddard, Abingdon District superintendent, will lead Monday's "Offer Them Christ" lesson. Evelyn Laycock will lead Tuesday's "United Methodist Way" lessons.

Music: The First Richlands UMC choir, Tazewell District, will sing at Sunday's opening worship. The Sequatchie Valley Combined Choir, Chattanooga District, will sing at Monday night's worship. First-Centenary UMC, Chattanooga District, along with Chattanooga-area musicians, will present the "Duke Ellington Sacred Concert" on Tuesday night. The Hope for Africa Children's Choir from Uganda will sing during Wednesday's Sending Forth Service.

Finance: The Council on Finance and Administration will present a \$15.9 million budget for 2009, reflecting a .77 percent increase over the 2008 budget. The Board of Pensions and Health Benefits will present an alternative rate structure for participants in the medical insurance plan. The changes are part of an overall evaluation of the existing plan that included bidding out existing coverage. Changes will become effective Jan. 1, 2009. The Direct Invoicing Task Force will bring a recommendation to implement direct invoicing on Jan. 1, 2010. A "listening post" will be scheduled Wednesday in Terrace Auditorium.



UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

The Hope for Africa Children's Choir (above), from Uganda, will sing at Wednesday's Sending Forth Service.

The First Richlands UMC Choir (at right), of Tazewell District, will sing at Sunday night's opening service.



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Photo (above) courtesy of SEJ Communications

Registration will not be held at Harrell Center, but at the newly constructed Bethea Welcome Center (above), located just inside the Lake Junaluska Assembly entrance. Among the materials members will receive at registration: A reusable grocery bag and the book, "Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living" (pictured at right).

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Resolutions: Four resolutions will be considered by the Annual Conference, as they appear on pages 163-166 of the "Book of Reports." Two are submitted by the Creation Care Action Team, and involve local food self-sufficiency and energy audits for parsonages, new buildings, and renovation projects. One resolution is submitted by Bob Swing of First Oak Ridge UMC, recommending study and dialogue on United Methodist materials dealing with homosexuality. A fourth is submitted by the Rev. Todd Chancey of Apison UMC, requesting treatment of the obese through the conference health insurance plan.

Awards: The Denman Evangelism Awards and Francis Asbury Award for higher education will be presented on Wednesday morning. Also at this time, the first-ever graduates of the Youth Ministry Institute will be recognized.

Walk for Change: Members will again be encouraged to promote good health and raise money for children's ministry by walking around the lake or along the rose walk. More information will be provided at the Walk for Change tent between Harrell Center and Stuart Auditorium on Tuesday. Also Tuesday at the tent: Members can have their photos made with a life-size replica of Bishop James Swanson for a \$5 donation. Recipients of the 2008 Change for Children grants will be recognized at 12:15 p.m.

Special meals: Several groups will gather over breakfast, lunch, or dinner during the four-day event; a complete list is provided on page 8 of the "Book of Reports." The Clergy Spouse Luncheon is Monday, noon, at First Waynesville UMC. Tickets are \$11.50, available through district offices, and must be purchased by June 2. For information on child care, contact Susan Collins at ladyarwen@charter.net. The Local Pastors Lunch will be held on Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. in the Terrace hotel, room 319.

Sponsors: These sponsors are providing refreshments during social times: Holston Methodist Credit Union, Holston Conference Foundation, Cokesbury Bookstore (Johnson City and Knoxville stores), Hiwassee College, Tennessee Wesleyan College, Emory & Henry College, Asbury Inc., and Holston Home for Children.

Media coverage: Daily news will be provided in a special on-site version of *The Call*. PDF files of *The Call* (AC) will be posted late each evening at <http://holston.org>. ■